



## Colonial Williamsburg, Community Join to Commemorate Juneteenth 2021

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. (May 13, 2021) – Colonial Williamsburg joins partners including the City of Williamsburg, the Let Freedom Ring Foundation and William & Mary to commemorate Juneteenth with a series of special events beginning on June 19 – the date in 1865 when U.S. forces announced emancipation in Texas. We highlight this date today to celebrate the ending the institution of chattel slavery in the United States.

“Juneteenth is a time to commemorate, celebrate, educate and reflect on the Black experience in America,” said Deirdre Jones Cardwell, Colonial Williamsburg actor-interpreter and programming lead, quoting the vision statement developed by the Juneteenth programming committee. She continued, “By looking back, looking around and looking within, we are challenged to evaluate the foundations of inequality and move forward together, committing ourselves to the unfinished work of eradicating systemic racism. We invite members of the community and guests to join us on this critical journey.”

Observances begin at 10 a.m. June 19 on Market Square in Colonial Williamsburg’s Historic Area with music and a keynote address given by Professor Robert Watson of Hampton University on the meaning of Juneteenth. This hourlong program is free and open to the public, presented in partnership by William & Mary, the Let Freedom Ring Foundation, the city and Colonial Williamsburg.

“Freedom is a costly endeavor. When we don’t know our history, we are doomed to repeat it. Like the Sankofa bird that flies forward while looking back, we are moving forward while looking back to never forget our ancestors, our bondage, and our God who freed us to be His people and the sheep of His pasture,” said Connie Matthews Harshaw sharing a quote from the Rev. Dr. Reginald F. Davis that she said guides the work of the Let Freedom Ring Foundation.

Harshaw added, “In celebrating on June 19, we want to make sure that, as a community, we all understand the true meaning of June 19, 1865 — until we are all free, none of us are free.”

The Opening Ceremony is followed at 11 a.m. by a cookout at Chowning’s Tavern on Market Square, featuring a menu curated by award-winning food historian and chef Michael Twitty. Learn more about Michael Twitty and his work exploring Black culinary traditions of the south and their connection to the larger world by visiting his blog at [Afroculinaria.com](https://www.afroculinaria.com). The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation will donate a portion of the proceeds from the Michael Twitty Juneteenth cookout to the [Village Initiative for Equity in Education](#).

At 11:15 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. at the Play House Stage on Palace Green, Colonial Williamsburg’s Museum Theatre Department presents special Juneteenth performances of the play “Loquacious Lucy,” the story of an enslaved child who learns her friend has been sold. The play, part of

Colonial Williamsburg's Entertainments at the Play House, is open to guests with Colonial Williamsburg admission with limited capacity.

From 1-3 p.m., also on Market Square, the community presents "Remembrance: Honoring the Voices," featuring live presentations of oral history to honor and preserve the voices of our community to support learning, growth and healing through the power of the spoken word.

At 2 p.m., William & Mary presents a special virtual Juneteenth commemoration program, which can be streamed live at <http://www.wm.edu/juneteenth/watch>. The program will include a performance of "Evolution of a Black Girl" by actress Morgan McCoy; music from such acts as The Gonzales Sisters, The Three Tenors and Matthew Willard; and remarks from university and community leaders, including W&M President Katherine A. Rowe, Williamsburg Mayor Douglas Pons, Let Freedom Ring Foundation President Connie Harshaw and Cliff Fleet, president and CEO of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. The program will also include footage from the groundbreaking for W&M's Memorial to the Enslaved and a reading of the names of people who were enslaved by the university.

"William & Mary is excited to be a part of this community-wide effort as we celebrate the groundbreaking of the Memorial to the Enslaved and join in with our partners to honor the meaning of Juneteenth and share that often untold history in various formats throughout the day," said Chon Glover, W&M's chief diversity officer and co-chair of the university's Juneteenth committee. "William & Mary is delighted to be included in what we hope will become an annual area-wide celebration."

At 4 p.m. on the Charlton Stage, Colonial Williamsburg presents the dramatic program "Joy in the Morning," in which guests are invited to gather with members of the enslaved community to experience a music-filled message of hope. The program is open to guests with Colonial Williamsburg admission with limited capacity.

Also at 4 p.m. online, Colonial Williamsburg presents "CW Conversation: Juneteenth," the sixth program in its new, monthly virtual conversation series US: Past, Present, Future." The virtual series explores the intersection of current events, our shared history and the enduring promises of America. For additional information and to participate in the monthly programs, visit [colonialwilliamsburg.org/us](http://colonialwilliamsburg.org/us).

A special Virginia Arts Festival presentation of Williamsburg Live featuring Leyla McCalla, a former member of the Grammy-winning Carolina Chocolate Drops, begins at 7:30 p.m. on the lawn of the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg. Additional information and tickets are available by visiting [vafest.org/williamsburg-live](http://vafest.org/williamsburg-live).

The Juneteenth programming concludes at 9 p.m. with the debut of "Honor & Reflection," a contemplative multimedia installation at the ongoing excavation of the historic First Baptist Church's first permanent location on South Nassau Street in the Historic Area. "Honor and Reflection" is free and open to the public.

"Juneteenth is an important moment in our nation's history. It started a critical conversation that this country has yet to complete. The City of Williamsburg is honored to continue that dialogue in this commemoration," Mayor Pons said.

In addition to the day's activities planned at Colonial Williamsburg and William & Mary, the York-James City-Williamsburg NAACP branch will host a motor parade featuring classic & exotic cars from Hampton Roads Customs — many locally owned businesses will be promoted as well. The parade begins at 8:30 a.m. in Highland Park and will continue along Lafayette Street

and down Richmond Road before ending near Merchants Square. More information will be available soon at <https://www.yjcwnaACP.org/>.

Through Independence Day on July 4, Colonial Williamsburg will showcase its year-round programming that interprets the Black experience in early America. For the latest information and to purchase tickets, visit [www.colonialwilliamsburg.org/juneteenth](http://www.colonialwilliamsburg.org/juneteenth). Information on hotel accommodations and dining is available at [colonialwilliamsburgresorts.com](http://colonialwilliamsburgresorts.com). Additional information also is available by calling 1 (855) 692-8767, by following Colonial Williamsburg on [Facebook](#) and [@colonialwmsburg](#) on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

The health and safety of guests and staff is Colonial Williamsburg's highest priority, and site operations and programming are subject to change to ensure compliance with state COVID-19 guidelines. Face coverings are required while inside Foundation-owned buildings and their use is encouraged outdoors as well. Guests also are asked to adhere to social distancing guidelines during their visit to Colonial Williamsburg sites, when walking along Duke of Gloucester Street and in other publicly accessible areas. [Colonialwilliamsburg.org](http://Colonialwilliamsburg.org) lists additional guest comfort and safety guidelines to provide the safest experience for guests, the general public and Colonial Williamsburg's staff.

All Colonial Williamsburg employees have received special safety training to limit the risk of COVID-19 spread or infection. The training includes general and site-specific safety requirements such as basic sanitization procedures, use of face coverings where appropriate, and social distancing requirements to follow with colleagues and guests. Signs posted throughout the Historic Area, the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg and sites will remind guests of safety precautions to protect themselves and others from risks associated with COVID-19 exposure.

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*The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation preserves, restores and operates Virginia's 18th-century capital of Williamsburg. Innovative and interactive experiences highlight the relevance of the American Revolution to contemporary life and the importance of an informed, active citizenry. The Colonial Williamsburg experience includes more than 600 restored or reconstructed original buildings, renowned museums of decorative arts and folk art, extensive educational outreach programs for students and teachers, lodging, culinary options from historic taverns to casual or elegant dining, the Golden Horseshoe Golf Club featuring 45 holes designed by Robert Trent Jones and his son Rees Jones, a full-service spa and fitness center, pools, retail stores and gardens. The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization; philanthropic support and revenue from admissions, products and operations sustain its educational programs and preservation initiatives.*

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