

## TIMELINE OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY IN HAMPTON ROADS

- 1607** First permanent English colony in North America was established at Jamestowne, Virginia.
- 1619** "Twenty and odd" Africans from the Congo-Angola Region in West Central Africa arrived at Old Point Comfort, Hampton, Virginia. The vessel is believed to have been the Dutch ship "The White Lion."
- 1624** Anthony and Isabella Johnson gave birth to the first child of African descent born in America. The child, William Tucker, was named after Captain William Tucker of Kecoughtan in Elizabeth City where Anthony worked as an indentured servant.
- 1639** John Punch, indentured servant on Virginia's Eastern Shore, was sentenced by a judge to serve his master for the rest of his natural life. This ruling led the way for laws defining race-based slavery in the American colonies.
- 1661** Virginia's House of Burgesses established the lifelong servitude of Africans.
- 1667** Anthony and Mary Johnson, who were both free and Christian, owned more than 300 acres of land on the Eastern Shore.
- 1756** Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa arrived in Virginia as a slave. He learned to read and write, was baptized into the Anglican Church, and in 1766 bought his own freedom.
- 1772** The original Emmanuel A.M.E. Church, the oldest black church in Portsmouth, was constructed three years before the start of the American Revolution.
- 1775** Virginia's Royal Governor, the Earl of Dunmore, living in Williamsburg, offered to free slaves who would join the British Army.
- 1781** James Armistead served as a spy for Marquis de Lafayette in the American Revolutionary War. Armistead's information was pivotal to America's victory at Yorktown.
- 1790** Virginia's slave population was over 292,000. Freed blacks numbered about 11,006.
- 1799** Dred Scott was born in Southampton County, Virginia.
- 1831** Nat Turner's Revolt in Southampton County. Turner was caught before he could reach the Great Dismal Swamp.
- 1861** Frank Baker, Shepard Mallory and James Townsend, three runaway slaves, sought refuge at Fort Monroe and were declared "contrabands of war" by Major General Benjamin F. Butler.
- 1863** President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation.
- 1865** Congress ratified the 13th Amendment, abolishing slavery.
- 1868** Congress ratified the 14th Amendment, granting citizenship status to all persons born or naturalized in the United States. Hampton Institute was founded.
- 1870** Congress ratified the 15th Amendment, providing enfranchisement to those who had been denied the right to vote on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude.
- 1871** James A. Fields, lawyer and delegate, graduated from Hampton Institute.
- 1875** Booker T. Washington, educator and international leader, founder of Tuskegee Institute, graduated from Hampton Institute.
- 1896** Plessy v. Ferguson established "separate but equal" doctrine.
- 1899** The Newsome House, home of prominent Newport News attorney Joseph Thomas Newsome, was restored as a Victorian Landmark.
- 1921** The Phoenix Bank of Nansemond was built.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

**Brochure funding provided by:** General Motors; The Evelyn & Walter Hass, Jr. Fund; the Corporation for Public Broadcasting; The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations; Park Foundation, Inc.; Public Broadcasting Service; National Park Foundation; The Peter Jay Sharp Foundation; The Pew Charitable Trusts; and the Bank of America

Ken Burns' THE NATIONAL PARKS: AMERICA'S BEST IDEA is underwritten locally by presenting sponsor, Colonial Williamsburg, Children's Specialty Group and Blue Ridge Mountain Sports.

Research and content development provided by Robert C. Watson, Asst. Professor of History at Hampton University. Professor Watson has served on several advisory boards that focused on the interpretation of African American History, including the Advisory Board on African American Interpretation at Monticello, Somerset Place in North Carolina and Montpelier, home of James Madison.



5200 HAMPTON BOULEVARD | NORFOLK, VA 23508

(757) 889-9400

WWW.WHRO.ORG



# AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

*Comes Alive*  
IN HAMPTON ROADS



*Emancipation Oak, Courtesy of Hampton University*

## AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY COMES ALIVE IN HAMPTON ROADS, VIRGINIA

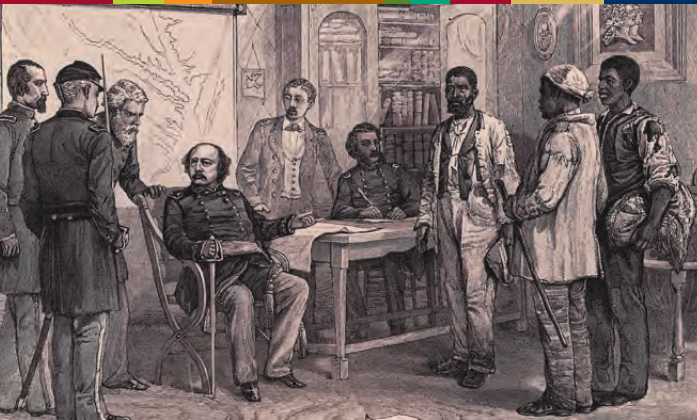
Located in southeastern Virginia and forming the southern shore of the Chesapeake Bay, Hampton Roads has deep roots in America's history. Jamestown is where the first English representative government met and where the first arrival of Africans to English North America was recorded in 1619. This brochure draws attention to the region's rich African American heritage and the significant role African Americans played in the founding of our democracy.

The brochure was produced in support of the Ken Burns' documentary, THE NATIONAL PARKS: AMERICA'S BEST IDEA. At its heart, the documentary is the story of an idea as uniquely American as the Declaration of Independence and just as radical – that the most special places in the nation should be preserved, not for royalty or the rich, but for everyone. It's a story of people from every conceivable background who were willing to devote themselves to saving some precious portion of the land they loved, and in doing so reminded their fellow citizens of the full meaning of democracy.

In keeping with this spirit, WHRO offers a map highlighting sites significant to early African American history.

The brochure is available in downloadable PDF format at: [www.whro.org/nationalparks](http://www.whro.org/nationalparks)





Old Point Comfort **Contraband Decision**, Courtesy of the Hampton History Museum, Hampton, VA

**1 Old Point Comfort at Fort Monroe** — Is the original landing site of the first Africans to an English colony in North America in August 1619. Fort Monroe is also noted for the important role it played as “freedom fortress.” In 1861, three runaway slaves sought refuge at the Union Fort Monroe and were declared contrabands of war by Major General Benjamin F. Butler.

**Visitor Information:**

Casemate Museum  
20 Bernard Road, Hampton, VA 23651  
Phone: (757) 788-3391  
[www.monroe.army.mil/monroe/sites/installation/museum/](http://www.monroe.army.mil/monroe/sites/installation/museum/)

**2 Jamestown Settlement** — Gallery exhibits at Jamestown Settlement chronicle the nation’s 17<sup>th</sup>-century beginnings in Virginia in the context of its Powhatan Indian, English and African cultures.

**Historic Jamestowne** — Historic Jamestowne is the site of the first permanent English settlement in North America and arrival site of the first Africans in America in 1619. Exhibits explain how their status changed from indentured servitude to slavery over the course of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

**Visitor Information:**

Jamestown Settlement, Route 31 South, Williamsburg, VA 23185  
Phone: (757) 253-4838  
[www.historyisfun.org/From-Africa-to-Virginia.htm](http://www.historyisfun.org/From-Africa-to-Virginia.htm)  
Historic Jamestowne, Colonial National Historical Park  
Phone: (757) 898-2410  
[www.nps.gov/colo](http://www.nps.gov/colo)



of two African American slaves who chose opposite sides in search of freedom. Visitors can also learn about the experiences of African Americans during the Revolutionary era at the museum’s re-created Continental Army encampment and 1780s farm.

**Visitor Information:**

Yorktown Battlefield, Colonial National Historical Park  
Phone: (757) 898-2410  
[www.nps.gov/colo](http://www.nps.gov/colo)

Yorktown Victory Center, Route 1020,  
Yorktown, VA 23690  
Phone: (757) 253-4838  
[www.historyisfun.org](http://www.historyisfun.org)



**Depiction of Maroon in Dismal Swamp by Osman**, Courtesy of Making America Collection, Cornell University Library

**5 The Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge** — This site was a refuge for hundreds of Maroons (runaway slaves) in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Nat Turner, who led the greatest slave revolt in United States History in Southampton County, Virginia in 1831, was captured before he could escape to the Great Dismal Swamp.

**Visitor Information:**

3100 Desert Road, Suffolk, VA 23434  
Phone (757) 986-3705  
[www.fws.gov/northeast/greatdismalswamp](http://www.fws.gov/northeast/greatdismalswamp)



**Emmanuel A.M.E. Church**, Courtesy of Emmanuel A.M.E. Church

**Visitor Information:**

**6 Emanuel (African Methodist Episcopal) A.M.E. Church** — Emanuel A.M.E. Church is the oldest church of any black denomination in the city of Portsmouth and is the second oldest church building in Portsmouth. The congregation dates back to 1772, three years before the American Revolution. The African Society met independently until Nat Turner’s Insurrection in 1831. Members worshiped with white Methodists for three years, then met under white supervision until 1864. Slaves and free blacks provided most of the funds and labor to construct the church in its present location in 1857.

**The Newsome House**, Courtesy of Virginia African American Heritage Program, Virginia Foundation for the Humanities



chapter of the National Negro Business League in Newport News and was active in both state and local politics and a member of the Lilly Black Republican party.

**Visitor Information:**

2803 Oak Avenue, Newport News, VA 23607  
Phone: (757) 247-2360  
[www.newsomehouse.org](http://www.newsomehouse.org)

**10 West Point Monument** — Located in Elmwood Cemetery in Norfolk, the monument was built in 1909 as a tribute to African American veterans of the Civil War and Spanish-American War. The monument represents Sgt. William H. Carney of Norfolk, who was enlisted in the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Volunteer Regiment. Carney was the first African American to receive the Medal of Honor during the Civil War.

**Visitor Information:**

West Point Monument at Elmwood Cemetery  
238 Princess Anne Road, Norfolk, VA 23510  
Phone: (757) 441-2576  
[www.hamptonroads.com](http://www.hamptonroads.com)

**11 Phoenix Bank of Nansemond** — Located in Suffolk, the bank was built to offer goods and services to the black community and to assist blacks who wanted to start their own businesses. Between 1900 and 1920, at least twenty black owned banks opened in Virginia.

**Not open for tours:**

**West Point Monument**, Courtesy of the City of Norfolk





**Arrival of the Africans,**  
Courtesy of The Colonial  
Williamsburg Foundation,  
Williamsburg, VA



Courtesy of The Colonial  
Williamsburg Foundation,  
Williamsburg, VA

### 3 Colonial Williamsburg

— The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation operates the world's largest living history museum. The Colonial Williamsburg story of a revolutionary city tells how diverse peoples, having different and sometimes conflicting ambitions, evolved into a society that valued liberty and equality. During the 18th century, half of Williamsburg's population was black. The lives of the enslaved and free people in this Virginia capital are presented in reenactments and programs throughout the Historic Area.

#### Visitor Information:

100 Visitor Center Drive, Williamsburg, VA 23185  
Phone: 1-800-HISTORY  
[www.history.org/Almanack/life/Af\\_Amer/aalife.cfm](http://www.history.org/Almanack/life/Af_Amer/aalife.cfm)



**French Artillery Park,** Courtesy of National Park Service, Colonial National Historical Park

**4 Yorktown Battlefield** — Site of the climactic battle of the American Revolution. Exhibits explain the role of African Americans during the Siege of Yorktown.

**Yorktown Victory Center** — A state-operated museum of the American Revolution. Gallery exhibits offer firsthand accounts

637 North Street, Portsmouth, VA 23704  
Phone: (757) 393-2259



**Emancipation Oak,** Courtesy of Robert Llewellyn, Remarkable Trees of Virginia Project

### 7 The Emancipation Oak

— Located on the campus of Hampton University (formerly Hampton Institute), the Emancipation Oak has been called "a living symbol of freedom for African Americans." The first readings of President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation in the South took place under the Oak. Designated as one of the "Ten Great Trees of the World" by the National Geographic Society, the Emancipation Oak remains a beacon of hope and light.

#### Visitor Information:

Emancipation Drive, Hampton University, Hampton, VA 23668  
Phone: (757) 727-5308  
[www.hamptonu.edu/about/emancipation\\_oak.cfm](http://www.hamptonu.edu/about/emancipation_oak.cfm)

**8 James A. Fields House** — James A. Fields graduated from Hampton Institute in 1871 and served as Commonwealth's Attorney and member of the House of Delegates. The house served as the first hospital for blacks in Newport News. It is privately owned, but visitors are encouraged to tour to gain insight into the lives of blacks who lived in the East End in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### Visitor Information:

617 27th Street, Newport News, VA 23607  
Phone: (757) 245-1991  
Email: [jafields@hotmail.com](mailto:jafields@hotmail.com)

**9 The Newsome House** — Located in Newport News, the Newsome House was the home of lawyer, journalist and civic leader Joseph Thomas Newsome. He was a friend of the great leader, Booker T. Washington. As a business man, Newsome organized a

Not open for tours.  
339 E. Washington Street,  
Suffolk, VA 23434

### 12 The Schoolhouse Museum

— Located in Smithfield, the museum is the renovated second room of the original Christian Home School, a Historic Rosenwald School, which was built around 1924. It stands as a reminder of strong black communities that demanded more education opportunities for their youth.



**The Schoolhouse Museum after Restoration,** Courtesy of The Schoolhouse Museum

#### Visitor Information:

516 Main Street, Smithfield, VA 23431  
Phone: (757) 365-4789  
[www.theschoolhousemuseum.com](http://www.theschoolhousemuseum.com)



**Aberdeen Gardens,** Virginia African American Heritage Program, Virginia Foundation for the Humanities

**13 Aberdeen Gardens** — A 440-acre subdivision located in Hampton, Aberdeen Gardens was begun in 1934 as a model resettlement community for black families. The residents of Aberdeen Gardens set a fine example of what of a community could do to meet the challenges of the Great Depression. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt visited Aberdeen Gardens in 1938.

#### Visitor Information:

57 N. Mary Peake Blvd., Hampton, VA 23666  
Phone: (757) 332-4042  
[www.aaheritageva.org](http://www.aaheritageva.org)