



# Hampton

CONVENTION & VISITOR BUREAU

Media Release

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FIRST AFRICAN LANDING AT OLD POINT COMFORT, VIRGINIA IN 1619

## **Festival Honoring Native American, European and African Cultures That Shaped Hampton's Early History on May 18 in Mill Point Park, Downtown Hampton**

*Hampton Heritage Day is part of the Hampton 2019 Commemorative Commission  
Events*

**HAMPTON, Va.**— The **Hampton History Museum** host the **7<sup>th</sup> Annual Hampton Heritage Day** festival commemorating the Native American, European and African cultures that shaped the city's early history on Saturday, May 18, 10 am-6 pm, in Mill Point Park, Downtown Hampton.

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Sponsored by the **National Park Service** and the **Hampton 2019 Commemorative Commission**, the event includes traditional music, dance, storytelling and presentations that take place throughout the day, as well as hands-on family activities, cultural displays and demonstrations, glass-blowing, blacksmithing, pottery and other heritage arts, crafts and more. Food trucks and vendors of traditional clothing, jewelry, soaps and lotions join the event this year.

In the past this family friendly event had been held in conjunction with the International Children's Festival. Over the years, Heritage Day has grown to include more participants, and the April date had conflicted with major Pow Wows limiting Native American participation in Heritage Day. It is now being held as a separate event.

"It is significant that we have four Native American tribes represented at Heritage Day this year, along with the Minnesota-based Native Pride Dancers. We want to expand the story of what life was like for the people who were here before Europeans arrived," says Hampton History Museum executive director Luci Cochran. "Our goal is to honor those who came before us and focus learning from each other in a spirit of healing. We believe it is a great day if people gain understanding of who we are from our past and each other so that we walk away knowing more about our neighbors, ourselves and our community."

The day's events commence with an opening greeting given by Troy Atkins of the **Chickahominy Tribe**. An African Libation ceremony presented by Chadra Pittman of **The Sankofa Projects** accompanied by an African drumming ensemble will honor the ancestors. The Rev. Samantha Vincent-Alexander, Rector, **St. John's Episcopal Church** will offer an invocation. **Hampton Mayor Donnie Tuck** will welcome those assembled to the day's activities.

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**Performers and Presenters**

**Meherrin Indian Tribe** members Greg and Diane Stephenson will invite attendees to join in Iroquois welcome and social dances. Afterwards, Diane Stephenson will demonstrate finger weaving techniques and Greg Stephenson will share knowledge of his Native language. They are bringing Iroquois storyteller Gregory Cooper to the festival for the first time, and Smoke Dancer Patrick Suarez returns for his second appearance at Heritage Day.

**The Chickahominy Dancers** will perform a variety of ceremonial dances in traditional and contemporary regalia. Members of the **Pamunkey Indian Tribe** will show, demonstrate and sell traditional gourd art. Joining the festival for the first time, representatives of the **Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe** will offer traditional beaded and silver jewelry for purchase and lead arts and crafts activities.

New to the event last year, and returning due to popular demand to close the day's events at 5:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m., the **Native Pride Dancers**, will educate and entertain the audience on the beauty, skill and majesty of American Indian music and dance to honor the uniqueness and history of First Nations Peoples including the Meskwaki Nation, Lakota, Ojibwe, Dakota, Nakota, Menominee, Cree, Ho-Chunk, Navajo, and other tribes.

Highlights of colonial-era life include Historical interpreters from **Heritage Education** who will engage visitors with raw wool carding and weaving, embroidery, sewing, sail making, rigging and open-fire cooking demonstrations. Using their mobile hot box and portable studio, the **Missoula School of Hot Glass** will create glass vessels and objects on site. Members of the **Tidewater Blacksmiths Guild** will demonstrate and interpret their time-honored craft. Historical interpreter and craftsman Jay Templin will demonstrate 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century wood carving techniques.

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**The Itinerant Band** will perform music from the 17<sup>th</sup> century accompanied by dances in which the public is encouraged to participate. The award-winning bluegrass band **Bill Jenkins and The Virginia Mountain Boys** will offer authentic Appalachian music.

African music and dances will be performed by **Atumpan – The Talking Drums**, who will also engage the audience in interactive storytelling. Songs and stories of the African Diaspora will be presented by **The Legacy of Weyanoke** of the **Weyanoke Association for Red & Black History and Culture**. Performer **Dylan Pritchett** will pass on the rich African oral tradition of storytelling inspired by cultural folktales with a positive message that cross cultural boundaries. The vocal group **Musical Mosaic** will take attendees on a musical journey from spirituals of the enslaved up to gospel music of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century.

The **Contraband Historical Society** is bringing a full-scale replica of a Contraband cabin representative of the dwellings created by slaves who escaped to Fort Monroe during the Civil War. Neighborhoods of similar cabins sprang up in Hampton offering the formerly enslaved their first personal homes and private space. **Project 1619** will be on hand to relate the story of the first Africans in English North America.

**Community Groups and Cultural Organizations**

Other community groups include the **Aberdeen Garden History & Civic Association**, representing the 1930s Hampton neighborhood designed and built by African Americans that is on Virginia Landmark Register and the National Register of Historic Places; **Descendants of the Charity Family** of Colonial Virginia, among the first families of Virginia and free people of color; the **Hampton Public Library**, with books and DVD recommendations related to the history and culture of Hampton; **Hampton's Streetcar**

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**390 Project**, presenting a display about the restoration of the Peninsula's last remaining trolley.

Cultural and governmental organizations include **American Evolution-2019 Commemoration**, to highlight the events of 1619 that shaped America's beginnings; **Hampton 2019 Commemorative Commission**, to share their work to commemorate the 1619 arrival of Africans to English North America; the **Casemate Museum at Fort Monroe** with hands-on activities for Junior Ranger Day; **Citizens' Unity Commission**, which focuses on promoting diversity, inclusion and unity; **Sandy Bottom Nature Park**, with a reptile display and interpretive materials; **The Sankofa Projects**, which creates cultural & educational programs focused on the experience of the African diaspora; the **Weyanoke Association** will share information about the historical and cultural associations between Africans and Native Americans.

**Hampton History Museum** educator Kris Peters will lead an activity about historical dwellings where children can try their hand at building techniques used by Native American, Africans and European colonists.

An exhibit created by the **Hampton University Museum** about Native American education and life at Hampton Institute (now Hampton University) featuring dozens of historical photographs also will be displayed.

**Vendors**

A selection of vendors whose wares are reflective of the heritage nature of the event include: **Amade**, featuring African dresses, skirts, scarves, jewelry and art; **Graceful**

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**Gems**, handcrafted beaded jewelry; **Level Up Art**, African inspired stone and copper jewelry; **Linda's Handmade Goat Milk Soap**; **Nago Village**, African fashions and accessories; **RaEssence Shea Butter**, handmade lotions; and **While Waiting**, handmade Haitian beads.

**Food**

**Africanne on Main**, African cuisine from various regions; **Column 15 Coffee**, single-origin fair-trade organic freshly roasted coffee beans, and craft nitro cold brew; **Got Fish**, fresh fish and chips and hand-crafted sides; **Lmnz Twizted Pretzel**, artisan-made pretzels, dips and drinks.

**Sponsors**

**National Park Service, Hampton 2019 Commemorative Commission, Hampton Convention and Visitor Bureau, Hampton History Museum Association, Hampton Parks, Recreation & Leisure.**

**2019 Commemorative Commission**

The mission of the 2019 Commemorative Commission is to promote the history of the first Africans in the new world and to plan events leading up to a yearlong remembrance-commemoration program in 2019. In 2019, join the global commemoration of the 400th anniversary of four pivotal happenings in English North America's Virginia colony: the arrival of the first Africans, the arrival of women, convening of the first General Assembly, and celebration of the first Thanksgiving. The First African Arrival occurred at Point Comfort in 1619, present site of national monument Fort Monroe in present-day Hampton, Virginia.

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**Hampton History Museum**

The Hampton History Museum is located at 120 Old Hampton Lane in Downtown Hampton. There is free parking in the garage across the street from the museum. For more information call 757-727-1102 or visit [www.hamptonhistorymuseum.org](http://www.hamptonhistorymuseum.org).

Partially bordered by the Hampton Roads harbor and Chesapeake Bay, Hampton, with the 344,000 sq. ft. Hampton Roads Convention Center and the award-winning Hampton Coliseum, is located in the center of Coastal Virginia and the Hampton Roads metropolitan area. Hampton is the site of America's first continuous English-speaking settlement, the site of the first arrival of Africans in English North America, and is home to such visitor attractions as the Virginia Air & Space Center, Fort Monroe National Monument, Hampton History Museum, harbor tours and cruises, Hampton University Museum, The American Theatre, among others.

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