

News Release
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Contact: Leslie Baker, 757/728-5316
leslie.baker@hamptoncvb.com
Seamus McGrann, 757/727-6841
mmcgrann@hampton.gov

Hampton History Museum hosts Virtual Talk on Early U.S. Navy Innovator

Hampton, VA – The Hampton History Museum will host a virtual talk by independent scholar Michael Romero, “Commodore James Barron and Innovation in the Early U.S. Navy,” on Facebook Live, Monday, January 3, 7:00-8:00 p.m.

Little has been written about Hampton-born Commodore James Barron (1768-1851) of the United States Navy. Existing scholarship on Barron fixates on two events: Barron’s five-year suspension from the service for failing to prepare his ship for battle during the Chesapeake-Leopard Affair in 1807 and his killing of Commodore Stephen Decatur, Jr. in an 1820 duel over fallout from that suspension. This overlooks decades of invention in which Commodore Barron worked to influence the early development of the Navy despite his lackluster combat record.

The son of a prominent officer in Virginia’s Revolutionary War Navy, Barron was commissioned as a lieutenant aboard the frigate United States in 1798. His service and early command experience during the Quasi-War with France and the First Barbary War was characterized by routine patrol and convoy escort duties. Barron was involved in the development of one of the Navy’s first signal books, designed and oversaw the installation of a ventilator for use aboard Navy ships, designed a steam-powered ram for harbor and river defense, and helped revitalize naval education shortly before the establishment of the U.S. Naval Academy.

Virtual Front Porch Music Series

The Front Porch Music Series will return on Wednesday, March 16, with a performance of traditional Irish music by the Celtic band Poisoned Dwarf.

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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 Science Center, Fort Monroe National Monument,

Hampton History Museum, Hampton University Museum, The American Theatre, among others.