



Hampton

CONVENTION & VISITOR BUREAU

Media Release

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Noted Historian Kevin Duffus Presents ‘Blackbeard’s Last Battle’ Lecture at The Hampton History Museum May 21

Hampton, VA - As a prelude to the Blackbeard Pirate Festival on June 2 & 3, and in conjunction with the exhibit *Pirates, Privateers and Buccaneers* (opening May 12), historian and documentary filmmaker Kevin Duffus, author of *The Last Days of Black Beard the Pirate: Within Every Legend Lies a Grain of Truth*, presents “Blackbeard’s Last Battle,” a special illustrated lecture to separate fact from fiction related to this iconic figure at the Hampton History Museum on Monday, May 21, 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

The notorious pirate Blackbeard stands among the most popular figures of early colonial American history, yet no one still knows who he really was. To this day, his identity, his origins, and his motivations for committing acts of piracy remain in contention. Did he hail from England, Jamaica, or the Carolinas? Was his surname Teach or Thatch, or

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something else entirely? Was he an undistinguished common sailor suddenly thrust into command of a pirate ship? Was he a former Royal Navy sailor and an aristocratic, Anglican slave-owning planter who inexplicably turned Jacobite and pirate? Or was he an ordinary mariner on a salvage mission lured to piracy by a mob of looters who became a pawn in an attempted political coup in proprietary North Carolina? And what happened to his treasure?

These conflicting interpretations have provoked hostile debate among historians. At stake are the credibilities of monolithic institutions and museums, the reputations of researchers and authors, the financial stakes of publishers, and the future of a popular historical narrative. For more than 45 years, award-winning research historian Kevin Duffus has followed the wake of the notorious pirate’s journey through history. Along the way he has discovered startling clues and pivotal waypoints in Blackbeard’s odyssey that point to a startling conclusion—one that many scholars do not want the public to know.

“Blackbeard’s Last Battle” is free for museum members, \$5.00 for non-members. This talk will take the place of the June installment of the museum’s regularly scheduled Port Hampton Lecture Series event which would have normally taken place on June 4.

Kevin P. Duffus

Kevin Duffus is a noted North Carolina author, filmmaker, and research historian who has made numerous historical discoveries. In fact, Wilmington's Encore Magazine once described Kevin as a real life combination of Indiana Jones, Dirk Pitt, and Ben Gates from the National Treasure movies. Kevin says it would be more accurate for him to be compared to Forrest Gump.

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When he was 17-years-old, he found, explored, and identified a sunken Confederate gunboat in an eastern North Carolina river. Two years later he found the grave of Blackbeard’s legendary sister, Susannah. Needless to say, he hasn’t been the same since. In the past 20 years he’s unraveled dozens of longstanding historical mysteries.

In 2002, he solved what was called “the greatest mystery of American lighthouse history” and found the 6,000-lb., 1853 Cape Hatteras Lighthouse Fresnel lens missing since the Civil War. His book, *The Lost Light—A Civil War Mystery*, follows the incredible 150-year odyssey of the lens.

He is also the author of *Shipwrecks of the Outer Banks—An Illustrated Guide, War Zone— World War Two Off the North Carolina Coast*, and the controversial and groundbreaking *The Last Days of Black Beard the Pirate*. His newest book released last summer, *The Story of Cape Fear and Bald Head Island*, spans 500 years of American history.

In his first career in television he produced programs and documentaries in England, East Africa, Central America, and the Philippines. His productions have been honored by the George Foster Peabody Award, the World Hunger Media Award, the Edward R. Murrow Award and the National Education Association Award. In 2014, the North Carolina Society of Historians named Kevin, NC Historian of the Year.

Pirates, Privateers and Buccaneers

At the Hampton History Museum May 12 through September 2, 2018

On loan by the South Carolina State Museum, this exhibit commemorates the 300th anniversary of the death of the notorious Blackbeard by telling his story and those of many other pirates. The thrilling presentation will draw those fascinated by desperadoes

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of the seas and dispel a number of popular pirate myths. Did pirates really make their victims walk the plank, and use words such as “arrgh” or “matey”? The display will also address the problem of modern piracy, dispelling another popular myth that pirates disappeared ages ago.

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.

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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