



# Hampton

CONVENTION & VISITOR BUREAU

**Media Release**

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**EVENT HONORING NATIVE AMERICAN, EUROPEAN AND AFRICAN  
CULTURES THAT FORMED HAMPTON ON SATURDAY, APRIL 21 IN  
DOWNTOWN HAMPTON**

*--Hampton Heritage Day coincides with the International Children's Festival  
taking place in nearby Mill Point Park--*

**Hampton, VA** - The public is invited to join in commemorating the Native American, European and African cultures that shaped the city's early history at the sixth annual Hampton Heritage Day, a free celebration, Saturday, April 21, 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., in Downtown Hampton at West Queens Way and Kings Way in Downtown Hampton.

The event includes traditional music, dance, storytelling and other performances and presentations that take place on two stages throughout the day, as well as hands-on family

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activities, cultural displays and demonstrations, glass-blowing, blacksmithing, weaving, pottery and other traditional arts, crafts, and more. Young Audiences of Virginia joins the event in sponsoring performers presenting living history, interactive magic, and musical presentations that engage the audience with the past.

While this family-friendly event is filled with entertainment and fun, there is a greater purpose to the day's activities as noted by Hampton History Museum executive director Luci Cochran, "Our goal is not just to "show" and "tell" but 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 attending our event 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 a Native American Thanksgiving address in the Tuscarora (Skarure') Language from Greg "Two Hawks" Stephenson, a member of the Meherrin Nation (Kauwets'a:ka - People of the Water). An African Libation ceremony offered by Chadra Pittman Walke of The Sankofa Projects accompanied by an African drumming ensemble will honor the ancestors. Hampton Mayor Donnie Tuck will welcome those assembled to the day's activities.

Greg and Diane Stephenson will invite attendees to join in Iroquois welcome and social dances. An ensemble of Chickahominy dancers will perform a variety of ceremonial dances in traditional and contemporary regalia.

Special guests to this year's event, Native Pride, 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,

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Ojibwe, Dakota, Nakota, Menominee, Cree, Ho-Chunk, Navajo, and other tribes.

Demonstrations of Native American arts and crafts include pottery, beadwork, wampum making, twined basketry, quillwork, and gourd art.

Highlights of colonial-era life include several forges operated by the Tidewater Blacksmiths Guild, woodcarving, leather work 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.

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. 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.

A second stage and learning area sponsored by Young Audiences of Virginia includes “Colonial Daze,” featuring entertaining educator Harold Wood who uses props, costumes and magic to relate the history and geography of the original 13 colonies, as well as the people who contributed to making Virginia. “Come Freedom Come,” a living history

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presentation by actress Valerie Davis relates the true story of Marth Ann Fields, who escaped from slavery with eight children to Fort Monroe, and whose legacy lives on today. In “Weaving Beauty” artist Louise Dawkins introduces the history and practice of weaving through demonstrations and hands-on participation with visitors.

The Contraband Historical Society is bringing a full-scale replica of a Contraband cabin, not unlike the houses 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.

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 about Native American education and life at Hampton Institute (now Hampton University) featuring dozens of historical photographs also will be displayed.

**Sponsors**

Donna Berg, Downtown Hampton Development Partnership, Hampton Convention and Visitor Bureau, Hampton History Museum Association, Hampton Parks, Recreation & Leisure, and Young Audiences of Virginia.

For more information visit [www.HamptonHistoryMuseum.org](http://www.HamptonHistoryMuseum.org), follow the Hampton History Museum on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram or call 757-727-1102.

Partially bordered by the Hampton Roads harbor and Chesapeake Bay, Hampton, with

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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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**Images attached: credit Brennan Matthews Griffith**