

# colonial williamsburg

*In 18th-century Williamsburg's shops, taverns, government buildings, and homes of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry and other Virginia patriots established the ideals—liberty, independence and personal freedom—that influenced the founding of our nation and have inspired Americans and others around the world.*



Colonial Williamsburg's Historic Area comprises 301 acres, which include 88 original 18th-century and early 19th-century structures and hundreds of houses, shops, public buildings and outbuildings that have been reconstructed on their original foundations.

The Governor's Palace is just one of the

highlights in the Historic Area. When it was completed in 1722, the residence of Virginia's royal governor was considered one of the finest buildings in British North America. The elegant and imposing residence was reconstructed on its original foundations and opened to the public in April 1934. It is furnished to reflect the occupancy of the last royal governor, the Earl of Dunmore. The Palace complex includes a stable, kitchen and related outbuildings, and elaborate gardens. The Palace celebrates its 75th anniversary as an exhibition building in Colonial Williamsburg's Historic Area in 2009.

The Capitol was the site of many important political events that led to Virginia's participation in the War for Independence. The most significant of these took place May 15, 1776, when Virginia's legislators unanimously adopted a resolution instructing their delegates in Philadelphia to introduce a resolution that the colonies be declared independent from England, nearly two months before the Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia. The Capitol celebrates its 75th anniversary as an exhibition building in Colonial Williamsburg's Historic Area in 2009.

One of Virginia's most important taverns during the 18th century, the Raleigh was established about 1717. It was the center for social, commercial and political gatherings, small private and large public dinners, lectures and exhibits, and auctions of merchandise and property. In 1769, when Governor Lord Botetourt dissolved the House of Burgesses, many indignant burgesses reconvened in the Apollo Room at the Raleigh to draw up a boycott of British goods. A similar meeting was conducted five years later when the assembly again was dissolved. Phi Beta Kappa was founded here in 1776. The original building burned December 11, 1859. The reconstructed tavern was the first Colonial Williamsburg exhibition building to open to the public, in

September 1932.

One of Williamsburg's original 18th-century buildings, the Courthouse of 1770 was the seat of local government and housed municipal and county courts until 1932. The building dominates Market Square, a green open space halfway between the Capitol and the college.

Inside public exhibition buildings, you'll find furnishings and accessories from one of the world's great collections of 17th- and 18th-century English and American antiques. The collection is among the most valuable of its kind, including a fully representative spectrum of furniture, silver and other metalwork, ceramics, textiles, prints and paintings.

More than 60,000 items have been assembled and are displayed in more than 200 period rooms. Exhibition buildings include the Capitol, Courthouse, Governor's Palace, Raleigh Tavern, Wetherburn's Tavern, Magazine, Public Gaol, Thomas Everard House, Public Hospital and homes of patriots Peyton Randolph and George Wythe.

Colonial Williamsburg's landscape and gardens grow gloriously-sumptuously formal, characteristic of the 18th-century penchant for elegant order. The re-created gardens of today, described by critics as among the great examples of the Western world, evolved from old maps of the town, landscape plans of Colonial Virginia plantations and England's gardens at the time of King William III.

Especially recommended is a tour of the formal garden at the Governor's Palace, worthy of at least an afternoon's dalliance, but a "must-see" no matter what your schedule.

## The Workplace

In the late 1700s, Williamsburg was a thriving community. Successful merchants stocked their shops with expensive English imports and crafts of all kinds made in the colonies. Merchants often met in the open area at the end of Duke of Gloucester Street, just before the Capitol wall,

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to set prices for tobacco and other agricultural products, or to trade.

Men in 18th-century Williamsburg involved themselves in occupations and businesses ranging from government and military service to medicine and wheelwrighting. Probably the largest program of diversified 18th-century trades in the world can be found in Colonial Williamsburg's Historic Trades shops, scattered throughout the colonial capital. Here you can find such artisans as the blacksmith, shoemaker, printer, cabinetmaker and wigmaker plying their trades and handicrafts just as they did in colonial times.

Guests can observe these skilled workers using colonial period tools fashioning articles of beauty, utility, and character. At the same time they'll learn much of the daily activities of the "middling sort" – men and women who conducted respectable small businesses. These shops are open year-round on rotating schedules.

To provide guests with a unique experience each time they visit, Colonial Williamsburg's Historic Trades provides a variety of seasonal programs and activities. Seasonal demonstrations include:

- **Secrets of the Chocolate Maker**—In the winter, spring and fall, guests can witness the long process of 18th-century chocolate making – from grinding cocoa beans to forming a chocolate patty to be grated into powder.
- **The Arts and Mysteries of Brewing**—Beer making demonstrations are held at the Palace Scullery in the spring and fall.
- **Brick Firing**—Each October Colonial Williamsburg's brickmakers build a kiln and fire bricks that were molded during the summer months.

## Minorities: African Americans and Women

In 18th-century Williamsburg, free and enslaved African Americans comprised 51 percent of the population. Their lives are detailed in several programs offered at two distinctive venues.

Great Hopes Plantation is an activity-based interpretive site that invites guests to witness a way of life that was found in 18th-century Virginia. Here guests watch the re-creation and evolution of an 18th-century plantation, learn about enslaved African-Virginians and their masters, and learn how they lived and worked

on a typical middle-sized rural Virginia farm.

While Great Hopes focuses on the rural life, the Peyton Randolph House site in the middle of Colonial Williamsburg's Historic Area presents life of African Americans in the 18th-century capital of Virginia. The newest African American program, "Two Worlds, One Roof, One Law," focuses on the paradox of American freedom and slavery by contrasting the perspectives and lifestyles of Peyton and Elizabeth Randolph with those of their personal servants Eve and Johnny, who, along with 25 other slaves, lived on the property during the American Revolution.

Women in the colonial period were wives, mothers, hostesses and sometimes business women or artisans. Upper-class women in Williamsburg were taught as girls to read and write, sew and properly entertain. They also were given music and dance lessons. As adults, upper-class women supervised their households, cared for their families, and enjoyed a constant round of balls and social gatherings.

Women of the "middling sort" and lower classes often worked in shops, businesses or craft workshops and developed skills as weavers, milliners and even printers. Others assisted in their husbands' shops or taverns and often managed these businesses after their husbands' deaths. Contributions 18th-century women made to their communities are the focus of Women's History Month in March. Scenes, tours, programs and special presentations explore the various roles that our foremothers filled in birthing a new nation.

## Leisure and Entertainment

As the capital of colonial Virginia, Williamsburg had an 18th-century reputation as the cultural center of the colony. Colonial Williamsburg continues that tradition today. Guests enjoy evening events that can be seen nowhere but here. Music, tours, colonial dancing, dramas and plays are offered at various locations throughout town. Programs include:

- **A Grand Medley of Entertainments** – This 18th-century "variety show," a forerunner of modern circuses and vaudeville, includes music, magic, feats of strength and other amusements guaranteed to please audiences young and old.
- **Listen My Children: Legends, Myths and**

**Fables for Families.** The 45-minute gathering offers fun and interesting stories that the whole family will enjoy. Storytellers share their tales by firelight as young and old hear some of the same



legends that entertained families of centuries past.

- **Dance, Our Dearest Diversion** - The Hall of the House of Burgesses comes to life as you experience one of the most favorite pastimes of colonial Virginians during this audience participatory program. The dancers discuss various types of 18th century dances, from country dances to minuets, and demonstrate

them for the audience. At various intervals throughout the program, the audience members will be asked if they wish to participate in the fun.

To make the most of your visit in Colonial Williamsburg you are advised to direct your questions to and buy your tickets at the Visitor Center. Just follow the signs or call **1-800-HISTORY**.

### Upcoming Events in 2009

#### Revolutionary City®

This program connects visitors to the tumultuous events of the American Revolution, presenting the stories of Williamsburg residents from 1774 to 1781 in alternating two-hour outdoor dramas that take place in their original locations. "Get Revved!!! Revolutionary City for Families and Patriots of All Ages!" is a new way for children and their parents to experience the exciting daily performances in the Historic Area by providing opportunities for youngsters to interact directly with various Revolutionary City characters in a more informal, intimate setting.

#### 30th Anniversary of Colonial Williamsburg's African American programs.

2009 marks the 30th anniversary of Colonial Williamsburg's African American programs. Colonial Williamsburg offers a variety of programs that demonstrate how African Americans, both free and enslaved, lived in the 18th-century capital of Virginia. Guests to Colonial Williamsburg's Historic Area can meet Nation Builders, 18th-century Williamsburg residents who helped shape their times and continue today to influence and inspire our ideals and visions of the American dream. At Great Hopes Plantation, guests follow an interpreter through the reconstructed 18th-century rural kitchen, slave quarters and agricultural and livestock fields for a look at day-to-day living for rural enslaved families during the program, "Workin' the Soil, Healin' the Soul." Colonial Williamsburg offers evening programs that explore additional facets of African American life. During the interactive program, "Papa Said, Mama Said," guests explore the significance of stories passed down from their elders. "African American Music" explores the diverse nature of African American musical culture in colonial Virginia.

#### "Sidewalks to Rooftops: Outdoor Folk Art."

The exhibition bears witness to the creative spirit that once enlivened the American landscape through 19th- and 20th-century

artworks that were exposed to the elements and survived. "Sidewalks to Rooftops" presents signboards, storefront figures, weather vanes, marine carvings, whirligigs, carousel animals and other objects originally intended for use outdoors. The exhibit celebrates the 19th-century predecessors of modern advertising, including painted signboards featuring eye-catching symbols and three-dimensional trade figures—such as cigar store Indians—that have largely disappeared from today's sidewalks, building facades and countertops. Through 2013.

#### Reconstruction of the Charlton Coffeehouse.

The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation is reconstructing Richard Charlton's Coffeehouse on its original foundations to recreate the 1765 hotbed of political, business and social activity adjacent to the colonial Capitol. The project is one of the most important reconstructions on the Historic Area's Duke of Gloucester Street in half a century. The reconstruction is designed to appear as close to the original structure as historical, archaeological, and architectural evidence permits. ■



## Fifes, Drums, Three-Cornered Hats . . . and ADVENTURES around Every Corner

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WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA

A variety of admission pass options provide for single-day, multiple-day, or year-round access to Colonial Williamsburg exhibition sites, art museums, and regular daytime programs. Purchase of an admission pass also includes free parking at the Visitor Center, access to the short movie Williamsburg—The Story of a Patriot shown in specially designed theaters at the Visitor Center, and complimentary use of Colonial Williamsburg's shuttle buses.