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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



### **Before the Revolution, the Seeds of Democracy were Planted at Jamestown**

**JAMESTOWN, VA** (Mar 12, 2026) - More than 150 years before the Declaration of Independence was signed, the Virginia Company landed at a swampy peninsula they would call Jamestown, which would become the capital of the growing colony and the center of colonial politics and trade for nearly 100 years. The events that happened here, from the first representative government to a failed rebellion, would ripple through the centuries to inspire our nation's Founding Fathers.

In his series of essays under the pen name "Novanglus," John Adams refers to Jamestown's March 1609 charter and the first General Assembly ten years later as precedents, writing "... it was not the sense of the ancestors of the Virginians that they were to remain subject to parliament as a supreme legislature." Thomas Jefferson wrote extensively on the government systems created at Jamestown in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* (and is also responsible for preserving many of the early records of the Virginia Company). As they debated the best form of government and the power of the "common weal," the events at Jamestown provided inspiration and warning.

You, too, can get inspired at Jamestown this year. Explore the beginning of representative democracy, the fate of Nathaniel Bacon's failed rebellion, the lasting impact of slave laws passed in Jamestown's Statehouse, and enduring treaties signed between Virginia's colonial government and Indigenous nations. These are the defining moments that laid the foundation for a new nation. As we approach this country's 250th anniversary, there's no better time to explore where it all began. Plan your visit now at [historicjamestowne.org](http://historicjamestowne.org).

While we reflect on the anniversary of the American Revolution, Jamestown is remembering another: the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bacon's Rebellion, a failed populist uprising that attempted to overthrow a government seen as elitist, with dire consequences for enslaved and Indigenous communities involved. With the generous support of The Jamestowne Society, Jamestown Rediscovery is hosting a series of living history programs titled *The Unfolding Rebellion*. These programs will tell the story of the rebellion, in real time, through the experiences of those who were there.

Additionally, Jamestown is honored to be a key partner for *Reconsidering Bacon's Rebellion at 350 Years* alongside Preservation Virginia, Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, William & Mary Office of Strategic Cultural Partnerships, the Pamunkey Indian Tribe, the Rappahannock Indian Tribe, and the Nottoway Indian Tribe with support from Virginia Humanities. As part of the year-long series, Jamestown Rediscovery is hosting Dr. Michael Blakey, the preeminent historian of Bacon's Rebellion and the profound effects the event had on the lives of enslaved and free Black people in colonial Virginia. The lecture with Dr. Blakey is on June 17 at Historic Jamestowne.

### **Special Events for 2026:**

Jamestown: Road to Revolution Lecture Series by Public Historian Mark Summers.

- March 28: *First Steps: the Assembly of 1619*
- April 25: *Road to Rebellion: Jamestown 1625-1675*
- May 30: *Failed Revolution: Bacon's Rebellion, 1676*
- June 27: *Road to Yorktown: Jamestown, 1781*

The Unfolding Rebellion, sponsored by The Jamestowne Society.

- April 25 & May 2: *Trouble on the Frontier*
- May 30 & June 6: *Kinsman and Namesake*
- June 27 & July 11: *The Governor's Counsel*
- August 29 & September 5: *Hostages*
- October 24 & 31: *Civil Unrest*

Reconsidering Bacon's Rebellion at 350 Years, presented in partnership with Preservation Virginia, Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, William & Mary Office of Strategic Cultural Partnerships, the Pamunkey Indian Tribe, the Rappahannock Indian Tribe, and the Nottoway Indian Tribe with support from Virginia Humanities.

- June 17: *Opportunities Lost: Bacon's Rebellion and the Denial of Class and Racial Justice in the United States*, a lecture by Michael Blakey, Ph.D., National Endowment for

the Humanities Professor of Anthropology, Africana Studies, and American Studies at William & Mary.

- September 19: *The Burning of Jamestown*, the 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Bacon's Rebellion

### **Signature Events:**

- April 11: *Archaeology Opening Day*
- May 9: *Jamestown Day*
- June 13: *Lord De La Warr Arrives at Jamestown living history program*
- July 4, 11, 18, 25, and Aug 1: *Join the Assembly: living history program. **Expanded for 2026!***
- August 15: *First Africans Commemoration*
- October 3: *Virginia Archaeology Day*
- November 7: *Native American Heritage Commemoration*
- December 12: *"At Christmas be Mery"*

More information on special events and daily tours can be found at [historicjamestowne.org](http://historicjamestowne.org).

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### **About Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation**

*The Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation, under the auspices of Preservation Virginia, preserves and shares the original site of James Fort and Jamestown, established in 1607. The Foundation is dedicated to uncovering, preserving, and sharing Jamestown's diverse history, and highlighting its major contribution to the foundations of modern American society. For more information, please visit [www.historicjamestowne.org](http://www.historicjamestowne.org).*