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### **Jamestown expands programs on law and race with support from Virginia Law Foundation**

JAMESTOWN, Va. (October 31, 2023) –

The Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation (JRF) was recently awarded a \$25,000 grant from the Virginia Law Foundation to expand educational programming on the Rule of Law at Jamestown. "Legacies of 1619: Law and Race at Jamestown" will explore the transformative First Assembly and the codification of race-based slavery that took place within the walls of Jamestown's government buildings. With the support of the Virginia Law Foundation, JRF staff will enhance existing tours on the First Assembly, develop new living history programs, and offer in-person and virtual teacher training opportunities in 2024.

As researchers, historians, and educators, JRF is committed to inspiring and fostering constructive discourse in topics relevant to the independence and self-governance of Americans today. The value of civic participation in ensuring the representative nature of local and national governments cannot be overstated. Jamestown is visited by hundreds of thousands of ticketed guests every year who are lifelong students in their own right. As a history-focused organization, JRF strives to make historical research and interpretation accessible to all members of the general public.

Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation is fortunate to be a part of a world-class history community. Funding from VLF will support our continuing partnership with the Bob and Marion Wilson Teacher Institute of Colonial Williamsburg (CWTI) – a relationship of more than 10 years that equips educators from across the nation with new skills and content that they can use in their classrooms. "Legacies of 1619" teacher workshops at CWTI will support classroom learning about Jamestown's role in the development of America's legal system. Additionally, following the announcement of the 2022 VLF award supporting First Assembly programs, Jamestown partnered with the Legal History Society, a William & Mary Law School student organization under the leadership of faculty advisor Professor Thomas J. McSweeney. The Legal History Society is working with Jamestown staff to help research 17th- and 18th-century primary source material, such as court cases and legislation that will enhance living history programs and themed tours.

"As a legal historian, I am excited about the opportunity to work with the Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation to interpret the rule of law through new educational programs and resources. The Foundation's dedication to uncovering early America's shared history and engaging the public and students in a critical evaluation of our nation's birthplace is incomparable," Dr. McSweeney shared.

Public historian Mark Summers recently attended a luncheon with the Virginia Law Foundation and other grant recipients. He shared more about the project and why it's so important for historic sites to provide context for today's legal landscape and to encourage thoughtful civic engagement. "The legal ramifications of events at Jamestown echo through our nation's history into the Revolutionary War all the way to today. I'm grateful for the support of the Virginia Law Foundation, which has allowed us to explore such a complex topic and share with our audience in a meaningful way," Summers said.

"Legacies of 1619: Law and Race at Jamestown" will explore the great paradox of that pivotal year, in which the colony's leaders enacted reforms that symbolized the rise of liberty and self-governance for white, male settlers and also tipped the scales that led to the enslavement of Africans. Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation is grateful for the continued support of the Virginia Law Foundation in our mission to provide a rich and holistic understanding of our shared history.

[Images available for media use here.](#) Unless otherwise specified, all photos courtesy of Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation.

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#### *About Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation*

*The Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation 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. Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation is a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit. JRF jointly administers Historic Jamestowne alongside the National Park Service. Admission includes the James Fort site, New Town, and the Voorhees Archaearium Archaeological Museum, as well as walking tours, living history, and public programs. For more information about visiting Jamestown, please visit [www.historicjamestowne.org](http://www.historicjamestowne.org) or call (757) 856-1250.*