

# NEWS

FROM THE JAMESTOWN-YORKTOWN FOUNDATION  
*an agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia accredited by the American Alliance of Museums*



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## **AMERICAN REVOLUTION MUSEUM AT YORKTOWN NAME, EXHIBITION GALLERIES, FILMS TO DEBUT OCTOBER 15-16**

YORKTOWN, Va., September 22, 2016 – The American Revolution Museum at Yorktown, replacing the Yorktown Victory Center, achieves a crucial milestone on the road to realization with the debut of an introductory film, permanent exhibition galleries and the new museum name October 15 and 16.

Through comprehensive indoor exhibits and outdoor living history, the American Revolution Museum at Yorktown will offer a truly national perspective, conveying a sense of the transformational nature and epic scale of the Revolution and the richness and complexity of the country's Revolutionary heritage. Work continues on construction of a new outdoor living-history Continental Army encampment and Revolution-era farm, and a grand opening celebration March 23-April 4, 2017, will officially launch the new museum.

### **New Exhibits Will Dazzle, Inform**

In the 170-seat museum theater, "Liberty Fever" will draw visitors into the world of Revolutionary America, setting the stage for indoor gallery and outdoor living-history experiences. The introductory film is narrated by an early-19th-century storyteller who has traveled the country gathering stories about the American Revolution and shares his accounts using a moving panorama presentation of the time period.

The 22,000-square-foot permanent exhibition galleries will engage visitors in the tumult, drama and promise of the Revolution through period artifacts and immersive environments, dioramas, interactive exhibits and short films, including an experiential theater that transports visitors to the Siege of Yorktown with wind, smoke and the thunder of cannon fire.

Among close to 500 artifacts on exhibit will be a Declaration of Independence broadside dating to July 1776; a June 1776 Philadelphia printing of the Virginia Declaration of Rights, one of the inspirations for the U.S. Declaration of Independence; a coronation portrait of King George III from the studio of Allan Ramsay; one of the two earliest known portraits done from life of an African who had been enslaved in the 13 British colonies that became the United States; and an extremely rare early southern American long rifle.

The galleries will present five major themes. **The British Empire and America** examines the geography, demography, culture and economy of America prior to the Revolution and the political relationship with Britain.

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## American Revolution Museum at Yorktown Name, Galleries Debut – 2

**The Changing Relationship – Britain and North America** chronicles the growing rift between the American colonies and Britain. Within a full-scale wharf setting, issues of taxation and importation are brought into focus.

**Revolution** traces the war from the battles of Lexington and Concord in 1775 to victory at Yorktown in 1781 and the aftermath. The wartime homefront will be portrayed in three-dimensional settings that provide a backdrop for the stories of diverse Americans – Patriots and Loyalists, women, and enslaved and free African Americans.

**The New Nation** outlines the challenges faced by the United States in the 1780s – weak government under the Articles of Confederation, the unstable postwar economy and new social tensions – culminating with the creation of the Constitution as a framework for the future.

**The American People** explores the emergence of a new national identity following the Revolution – influenced by immigration, internal migration, and demographic, political and social changes. This section shows how the nation’s struggle for independence impacted not just America, but the world.

### **Visitors Interact With Historical Interpreters in Outdoor Settings**

The living-history Continental Army encampment and Revolution-era farm continue as an integral part of the museum experience while undergoing reconstruction and enhancement to support gallery storylines and expand capacity for visitor-participatory demonstrations.

The encampment, which represents a portion of an American regiment and includes tents for soldiers and officers as well as surgeon’s and quartermaster’s quarters, is adding a drill field and an artillery demonstration area with tiered seating that from the outside looks like a redoubt.

Situated just beyond the encampment, the farm will have a larger house, kitchen and tobacco barn and a new building representing quarters for enslaved people, along with crop fields, corncrib, kitchen garden and orchard. A specific 18th-century York County family has been identified to serve as a frame of reference for historical interpretation.

The encampment and farm remain open throughout construction. Visitors are invited to engage in an array of hands-on activities, from military drills to processing plant fiber for cloth.

The outdoor elements of the new museum will be complete in time for the grand opening celebration, March 23- April 4, 2017.

### **American Revolution Museum at Yorktown Continues a Revolutionary Tradition**

Located within the Jamestown-Williamsburg-Yorktown “Historic Triangle” and next to Yorktown National Battlefield, the Yorktown Victory Center opened in 1976 as one of three Virginia visitor centers for the Bicentennial of the American Revolution. The Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, the state agency that operates the Yorktown Victory Center and Jamestown Settlement, implemented structural and exhibit improvements in the 1990s, broadening the museum’s focus to encompass the entire Revolution.

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## American Revolution Museum at Yorktown Name, Galleries Debut – 3

The American Revolution Museum at Yorktown is the realization of a master plan adopted in 2007. The plan called for replacing the 1976 facility, with the new building positioned on the 22-acre site to allow for continued operation throughout construction, and repositioning and reconstructing the encampment and farm.

A new 80,000-square-foot building opened in March 2015, with a theater for showings of Revolution-theme films, an illustrated timeline spanning the second half of the 18th century, and a gift shop and cafe. An important element of the new building is an education center, with five classrooms and a separate entrance, to serve student groups and the general public with dynamic, interactive learning experiences.

Planning, building and exhibit construction, and renovations to the site, including living-history areas, are funded by the Commonwealth of Virginia. Major components of the project total approximately \$50 million. Private donations to the American Revolution Museum at Yorktown Campaign for Support are funding elements of gallery and outdoor exhibits, artifact acquisitions, and educational resources. Leadership donors to the campaign, with gifts and grants of more than \$500,000 each, include Dominion Resources, Sue and John Gerdelman, and York County.

### **New Exhibits Open During Yorktown Victory Celebration**

The debut of the American Revolution Museum at Yorktown introductory film, permanent exhibition galleries and name occurs in conjunction with Yorktown Victory Celebration, an annual event marking the anniversary of America's decisive 1781 Revolutionary War victory at Yorktown. During the October 15-16 weekend, visitors will have a first-time opportunity to explore the new indoor exhibits and, outdoors, participate in military demonstrations and witness performances of military music and artillery firings.

Located at 200 Water Street, the Yorktown Victory Center/American Revolution Museum at Yorktown is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. 2016 admission is \$9.75 for adults, \$5.50 for ages 6 through 12, free to residents of York and James City counties and the City of Williamsburg, including College of William and Mary students, with proof of residency. For more information, call (888) 593-4682 toll-free or (757) 253-4838 or visit [www.historyisfun.org](http://www.historyisfun.org).

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