



# AMERICA'S 400<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

*The Journey That Changed the World*

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## **Jamestown's Cultural Roots Focus of Smithsonian Folklife Festival Three Cultures That Converged At Jamestown Meet Again On The National Mall**

Williamsburg, Va.—Visitors to the 41<sup>st</sup>-annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival will explore America's Native American, African, and English cultures that converged at Jamestown, Va., in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. This cultural trinity played an integral role in Jamestown's development and created a legacy that has shaped American history over the past 400 years.

America's 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, an 18-month series of events and programs honoring Jamestown as America's first permanent English settlement, explores the settlement's cultural heritage along with the traditions of free enterprise and representative government that began there in 1607. Jamestown 2007, the commemoration's lead planning organization, is sponsoring Virginia's role in this year's Smithsonian Folklife Festival, which explores the Roots of Virginia Culture and is one of 10 Signature Events being produced for this once-every-50-year commemoration.

“The intersection of Native American, African, English and other European cultures at Jamestown, forever changed the course of American history. The achievements, struggles and perseverance of these three cultures left an indelible mark on America's development,” said Jeanne Zeidler, Jamestown 2007's executive director. “America's 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary lets visitors experience the roots of Virginia culture from the perspective of the people most affected by it.”

The Jamestown narrative is a story of survival. It's a story about three cultures that converged at a time of great geographic and sociological discovery. America's 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary provides a platform for descendants of the three cultural groups from Virginia to tell their story from their own point of view. They will be joined by delegates from Kent County, England and Senegal, West Africa. Performers, artists, musicians, dancers, storytellers, chefs, farmers and artisans will assemble on the National Mall

in front of the National Museum of Natural History to tell America's story to nearly one million people over the 10-day festival.

Three "Learning Centers" will direct visitors to performances and demonstrations highlighting Virginia Indian, African and African American and English culture. Through exhibitions and activities, visitors will learn more about the history and culture of each group. Daily schedules will point visitors toward stage performances featuring the three groups, such as a daily dance program by Virginia Tribal members, African American blues music and English "tea-time" cooking demonstrations in the Garden Kitchen.

Other sections of the 2007 Festival will feature craftspeople, cooks and farmers from England, Senegal and various parts of Virginia working side-by-side to compare and contrast their skills. This includes building restoration experts, basket makers, potters and boat builders.

Some of the cultural elements to explore during the Roots of Virginia Culture program at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival include:

- Big Day Out Tribal Event: Representatives from the eight state-recognized tribes of Virginia (Chickahominy, Chickahominy Eastern Division, Mattaponi, Monacan, Nansemond, Pamunkey, Rappahannock, and Upper Mattaponi) will perform traditional drumming and dancing similar to a pow-wow presentation. Most of the participants have created their own regalia, which they wear on special occasions including pow-wows in their own communities. Saturday, July 7.
- Several representatives from Colonial Williamsburg will take part in this festival. Rex Ellis, vice president of the Historic Area, who serves as an advisor for the Roots of Virginia Culture and as a representative of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, will emcee several events.
  - From June 27-July 1, Harvey Bakari, manager of Colonial Williamsburg's Great Hopes Plantation, the Randolph House and African American interpreters, will serve as a presenter. In 2001, Bakari participated with Dr. Abdoulaye Camara, curator of the Museum of Art in Dakar, Senegal, in a program affiliated with the International Partnership Among Museums to discover historical connections between Virginia and Senegal during the colonial period. At the Folklife Festival, they will help visitors

understand the impact of Senegalese culture in Virginia through comparing skills practiced by Africans and African Americans in Virginia. Senegalese tradespeople will present their traditional skills of basketmaking, wood carving, blacksmithing, farming, cooking and other skills to compare with African-American skills that survived in Virginia.

- *African American Sacred Music Concert*: Madison Hummingbirds and The Paschall Brothers. Roots of Virginia's Mountain Laurel Stage, Friday July 6 at 6 p.m.
- *Stories in Word and Song*: Dave Arthur, Howard Bass, Rex Ellis, Anansegromma, Flory Jagoda, Karenne Wood, Vera Oye Yaa-Anna. Roots of Virginia's Mountain Laurel Stage, Sunday July 8 at 5:30 p.m.

The Smithsonian Folklife Festival is open daily from 11 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. from June 27 – July 1 and July 4 – July 8. Evening programs begin at 5:30 p.m.

*Jamestown 2007, a sub-agency of the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, is coordinating efforts to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Jamestown, Va., the first permanent English settlement in the Americas. The nation's first representative government, free enterprise system and culturally diverse society began at Jamestown. State, national, and international commemorative events to salute these legacies began in May 2006 and continue into 2008. Major corporate sponsors of America's 400th Anniversary include Norfolk Southern Corporation (NYSE: NSC), Verizon (NYSE: VZ) and The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. Other supporters include Anheuser-Busch Companies, Inc. (NYSE: BUD), AirTran Airways (NYSE: AAI), Dominion, James City County, Philip Morris USA, SunTrust, and Wolseley PLC/Ferguson Enterprises, Inc. More information about the commemoration is available at [www.Americas400thAnniversary.com](http://www.Americas400thAnniversary.com).*

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