



## **VA250, Colonial Williamsburg to Host Nation's First Planning Event for America's 250th Anniversary**

***Representatives from 34 states convene on March 10-12  
to plan for commemorations around the nation in 2026***

WILLIAMSBURG, VA (March 7, 2023) — On March 10-12, the Virginia American Revolution 250 Commission (VA250) and The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation will host the nation's first event to launch multistate planning efforts for commemorating America's 250th anniversary in 2026.

Taking place on Colonial Williamsburg's historic campus, "[A Common Cause to All](#)" will convene nearly 300 representatives from 34 U.S. states and 50 Virginia localities to exchange ideas and begin collaborating on 250th anniversary events across the country. State and local representatives will discuss plans in progress and explore ideas for national conversations to connect local events throughout the United States, including opportunities for teachers and students.

"The VA250 Commission is honored to convene this esteemed group of historians and 250th planners from across the nation as we come together in collaboration and with a spirit of optimism, looking toward 2026 and beyond," said Virginia Del. Terry L. Austin, chair of the VA250 Commission. "Standing with other states, we will affirm our commitment to a national commemoration that is multi-faceted, invites participation, and celebrates the American story, much of which began here in Virginia."

The timing of the event reflects a historic moment that occurred 250 years earlier in Williamsburg, then the capital of the most populous of the 13 British colonies. On March 12, 1773, Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry and other Virginia lawmakers resolved to create intercolonial Committees of Correspondence — a vital network of communication among the colonies that would prove critical for the Revolutionary movement. Virginia quickly established its own committee, and within 14 months, all 13 colonies were exchanging information and mobilizing support through their respective committees.

"It seems appropriate that the first national event marking the 250th anniversary of our founding will take place in Williamsburg, given the role the city and Virginia played in creating a intercolonial movement in 1773," said Carly Fiorina, board chair of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. "We are honored to convene hundreds of state representatives to initiate

discussions of events planned for communities around the country. As importantly, we will weave these events into a national conversation about our country’s founding and the significance of that moment, today, for the nation and the world.”

States and communities are working hard to identify ways to mark this anniversary to acknowledge the local and global significance of what happened in North America in 1776 “and how those people not initially included used those words as a rallying cry for extending freedom, liberty to all for generations,” said Christy S. Coleman, a member of the VA250 Commission and executive director of the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation. “Historic sites throughout Virginia will highlight this incredibly rich and at times complicated history leading up to the summer of 2026.”

Key speakers at the event include: Bill Whitaker, award-winning correspondent for CBS 60 Minutes; Carly Fiorina, board chair of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; Jeffrey Rosen, president and CEO of the National Constitution Center; and Pulitzer-prize winning author and historian Stacy Schiff, among others. A complete list of speakers is available [here](#).

Other discussion topics, events and activities over the two days will include semiquincentennial opportunities for all Americans, convening a multi-state resolution of joint themes— as well as tours of both the [Williamsburg Bray School](#), a school founded to educate enslaved and free African Americans in the late 18th century, and the first permanent site of the [Historic First Baptist Church](#), one of the nation’s earliest Black churches founded in 1776. Both the school and the original church site are the focus of major research and preservation initiatives by Colonial Williamsburg.

“Williamsburg and Virginia were critical to our country’s push for independence,” said Cliff Fleet, president and CEO of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. “But, equally, a close look at 18th-century Virginia allows us to understand the significant role of slavery in the colonies and new nation, as well as what life was like for African Americans and Native Americans in that period. Colonial Williamsburg’s research, programs and exhibitions speak to the physical reality of life in the 18th century, as well as to the values and beliefs that contributed to the movement for independence. Equally, we are focused on sharing the experience of colonial life in all of its hardship and complexity, including the displacement of Native Americans and the treatment of African Americans, and what their experiences say about our country’s founding values.”

The 1773 resolution to create the committees of correspondence was drafted at the Raleigh Tavern in what is now Colonial Williamsburg’s Historic Area. To commemorate this historic event, a resolution of mutual support, collaboration and partnership will be affirmed on the steps of the reconstructed Raleigh Tavern in Colonial Williamsburg’s Historic Area at 1:45 p.m. on Sunday, March 12. The [public commemoration](#), which will feature a Colonial Williamsburg Fifes & Drums procession and an appearance by Thomas Jefferson, is open to the public.

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*The Virginia American Revolution 250 Commission (VA250), established by the General Assembly in 2020, serves to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, the Revolutionary War, and the independence of the United States in the Commonwealth of Virginia, where much of the nation’s history took place. The primary*

*goal of the Commission is to convene and facilitate a Commonwealth-wide commemoration and celebration, multi-faceted and inclusive of hundreds of partners and representatives of the wide array of histories, sites, stories, and communities that define Virginia.*

*The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation preserves, restores and operates Virginia's 18th-century capital of Williamsburg. Innovative and interactive experiences highlight the relevance of the American Revolution to contemporary life and the importance of an informed, active citizenry. The Colonial Williamsburg experience includes more than 600 restored or reconstructed original buildings, renowned museums of decorative arts and folk art, extensive educational outreach programs for students and teachers, lodging, culinary options from historic taverns to casual or elegant dining, the Golden Horseshoe Golf Club featuring 36 holes designed by Robert Trent Jones and his son Rees Jones, a full-service spa and fitness center, pools, retail stores and gardens. Philanthropic support and revenue from admissions, products and hospitality operations sustain Colonial Williamsburg's educational programs and preservation initiatives.*

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