

‘Reign & Rebellion’ Two-Fold Special Exhibition to Debut November 5 at Jamestown Settlement and American Revolution Museum at Yorktown to Examine Monarchy’s Influence on the Old Dominion

WILLIAMSBURG, Va., October 31, 2022 — Discover Virginia through the lens of the Stuart monarchy, whose royal foothold impacted and influenced early America and shaped the struggles and determination of those who lived in the colony in the 17th and 18th centuries.

“**Reign & Rebellion**,” a special exhibition opening November 5, 2022 through September 5, 2023, will span the centuries across both museums and make connections between the past and our present, to illuminate how the Stuarts — and their legacies in Virginia — are closer than you think.



At Jamestown Settlement, the exhibition will consider how the reign of the Stuarts in the 17th century solidified Virginia’s identity as the Old Dominion, which had lasting impacts not only for the 18th century but for the world we live in today. At the American Revolution Museum at Yorktown, the exhibition will explore how the legacies of the Stuart era contributed toward Virginia’s distinct American identity, resulting in formerly loyal Cavaliers fighting for independence from Great Britain.

This thought-provoking exhibition will intertwine groundbreaking moments in Virginia’s history, provocative personal stories and showstopper artifacts that lay the path of Virginia’s road to Revolution. With the approach of the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, the exploration of the Stuart dynasty through “Reign & Rebellion” has never been more relevant.

Thought-Provoking Exhibit Themes Examine Religion, Politics and Power

When colonists arrived in Tsenacommacah and established the first permanent English settlement at Jamestown, they brought with them English history, culture and attitudes that entwined with those of Virginia’s Indigenous population and individuals forcibly brought from Africa. This convergence during the Stuart era prompted turbulent engagements with ideas about class, religion, the role of government and evolving constructs of race.

King James I (James VI of Scotland), the first Stuart monarch, wove the first pieces of the tapestry when he granted the charter for the Virginia Company. It was then King James whom the paramount chief Powhatan’s daughter Pocahontas met during her time in London. The same king promoted trade in Africa leading his heirs to establish the Royal African Company, which later supplied enslaved Africans to the colonies.

“Reign and Rebellion” will examine how the Stuart era continues to impact Virginia today: the role of religion and separation of church and state, who has rights as citizens, the function of government and the ongoing reckoning with injustice and social and racial inequality.



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“Reign & Rebellion” is supported in part by James City County and York County, with additional support from Dominion Energy: Actions Speak Louder, The Richard S. Reynolds Foundation, James D. & Pamela J. Penny, the Robins Foundation and Sue H. Gerdelman.

Rare Artifacts Weave a Tapestry of Personal Stories and Historical Events

The Rolfe Family Bible. A mourning ring of Charles I with a secret message. Indigenous and English objects reflecting religious and political authority. Shells, shards and remnants of items used by enslaved Africans. Along with the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation’s collection of 17th- and 18th-century objects, the two-part special exhibition will feature more than 125 artifacts on loan from more than 25 international and national institutions and private collections, including the Massachusetts Historical Society, Yale Center for British Art, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Pamunkey Indian Museum and Cultural Center, Muscarelle Museum of Art at William & Mary, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Fairfield Foundation, Lafayette College of Art, National Archives (Kew), Museum of the Shenandoah Valley, Special Collections Research Center at William & Mary Libraries, North Carolina Museum of Art, Museums at Washington & Lee University and The Valentine Museum.

Compelling Videos and Interactives Share Perspectives of Diverse Cultures

Multimedia and interactive elements at Jamestown Settlement will introduce visitors to the Stuart monarchy, Powhatan chiefdom and the arrival of West Central Africans under the Stuart reign through a series of crash course history videos, an interactive map showing the impact on life in Virginia of global distractions to the king on life in Virginia during Charles II’s reign, and moving projections of visuals illustrating American transitions of power and a video that will prepare visitors for the 18th-century story.

At the American Revolution Museum at Yorktown, a crash course history video will connect with Jamestown Settlement’s 17th-century story and its evolution in the 18th century. Visitors will experience an in-depth look at the education of Indigenous children at the Brafferton School and free and enslaved Black children at the Williamsburg Bray School through expert interviews with staff from partnering institutions, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and William & Mary. A contemporary audio experience will explore the evolution of slave code in Virginia from the perspective of those most impacted by the laws, people of African descent. A final production will connect people, events and lifeways during the Jacobite Rebellion with contemporary films and trivia.

‘Remember, Remember the 5th of November’ Through Dynamic Events

A series of special programs complement this special exhibition, including public lectures, special performances and opening evening event “Who Conspires?” — a one-night-only immersive escape room murder mystery after-hours on November 5 at Jamestown Settlement. Be one of the first to explore “Reign & Rebellion” before heading outdoors to uncover clues and discover the real history behind the November 5, 1605 gunpowder plot to blow up King James I and the Houses of Parliament. Spaces are very limited and admission to **“Who Conspires”** is \$30 per person, with more information and tickets available online at jyfmuseums.org/reign-rebellion-programs.

Special programs are sponsored by Dominion Energy and supported in part by the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, Inc. Annual Fund.

Admission to ‘Reign & Rebellion’

The special exhibition will be included with general admission to Jamestown Settlement and the American Revolution Museum at Yorktown: \$30.00 for adults and \$15.00 for ages 6-12 with a combination ticket. Visitors also can explore each chapter of this special exhibition with individual museum admission. Residents of James City County, York County and the City of Williamsburg, including William & Mary students, receive free admission. A selection of “Reign & Rebellion” merchandise is available in the museum shops. Parking is free.



About the Museums

Jamestown Settlement and the American Revolution Museum at Yorktown are administered by the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, an agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. Open daily 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Jamestown Settlement is located at 2110 Jamestown Road near Williamsburg, Va., and the American Revolution Museum at Yorktown is located at 200 Water Street in Yorktown, Va. The two museums are separated by a 30-minute drive along the scenic Colonial Parkway.

Learn more about “Reign & Rebellion” at jyf museums.org/reignandrebillion.

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IMAGES shown (from right):



Charles I Mourning Ring, circa 1648/49, Collection of the Maryland Center for History and Culture, Gift of Miss Clara Goldsborough Holloway; **Pikeman’s Half-Armor**, bearing the cypher of James I (1603-1625), Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, JS92.01a-e; **Rolfe Family Bible, 1580**, Special Collections Research Center, William & Mary Libraries; **Powhatan’s Mantle**, modern reproduction, Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation; **Copper gorget belonging to George Washington, circa 1774**, Collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society; **Charles II Teapot**, Unknown, near Staffordshire, England, 1755-1765, Wallace and Liza Pitzer Gusler; and **“The Negro’s & Indians Advocate...,” Morgan Godwyn, London, England, 1680**, Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, JYF2000.5.

“Reign & Rebellion” opens at Jamestown Settlement on November 5, with an immersive mystery escape room special event **“Who Conspires?”**

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