

For Immediate Release:

January 28, 2008

Virginia Honors African-American Heritage in February

*-Black History Month is excellent time to connect with Virginia's
historical roots-*

Media Only

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RICHMOND, Va. – Virginia is one of the most profound black history destinations in the country, with historical roots dating back to 1619. During Black History Month, attractions and destinations across the state honor African-American contributions to Virginia and the nation. Visitors can reconnect with the past through passionate interpreters, heritage sites and special events and exhibits across the state. The Virginia Tourism Corporation is highlighting statewide Black History Month events on www.Virginia.org, Virginia's official tourism Web site.

Jamestown

Black History Month destinations in Virginia include Jamestown, which recently commemorated its 400th anniversary. Africans were involuntarily brought to Jamestown in 1619, making Virginia home to the longest continuous experience of African-American culture and life in the United States. Newly expanded exhibits at Historic Jamestowne and Jamestown Settlement tell this compelling story with new interpretations and perspectives.

“Freedom’s Fort”

Fort Monroe in Hampton is the largest stone fort ever built in the United States and is a significant African-American historical site. Nicknamed "Freedom's Fortress," this Union-held fortification provided a safe haven for hundreds of runaway slaves during the Civil War. The fort's history is showcased for visitors at its Casemate Museum.

Hampton University and Museum

Founded in 1868, the Hampton University Museum is the oldest African American museum in the United States and features over 9,000 historical and fine art objects. The museum is situated on Hampton University campus, a National Historic Landmark and home to the Emancipation Oak, believed to be the place where President Abraham Lincoln's famous proclamation was read to Hampton slaves. Alumni of Hampton University include Alberta Williams King, mother of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Booker T. Washington, one of Hampton University's earliest students.

Booker T. Washington National Monument

Known as the Great Educator, Booker T. Washington was one of the most powerful and influential African-Americans in the United States. The monument to Washington at his birthplace in Hardy depicts how slavery and the plantation system worked on a smaller scale. The park's visitor center contains exhibits on Washington's life and legacy and offers an audio-visual program interpreting his career and accomplishments.

NEWS

Civil Rights in Education Heritage Trail

Virginia's Civil Rights in Education Heritage Trail is the first of its kind, dedicated to commemorating the civil rights struggles of African-Americans, American-Indians and women. The driving trail includes 41 sites in Central and Southern Virginia, each with a marker commemorating an event, place or person that profoundly affected the Civil Rights Movement. The trail's anchor is the **Robert Russa Moton Museum in Farmville**, where a student walkout on April 23, 1951, set in motion more than a decade of struggle for fair education in Virginia and the nation.

A Salute to Tuskegee Airmen

On February 2, members of the famous Tuskegee Airmen, the first African-American fighter and support squadrons, will be at the Virginia War Memorial in Newport News to share memories and personal stories of their service in World War II, Korea and Vietnam.

Jackson Ward – The Harlem of the South

Richmond's historic Jackson Ward neighborhood is home to the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia and the Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site. Walker was an ex-slave's daughter who became the first female bank president in America. The bank she founded, Consolidated Bank & Trust, still serves customers just down the road from the museum that honors her. Some of Virginia's finest African-American owned down-home cooking restaurants such as Croaker's Spot, are located in this historic black neighborhood.

The American Civil War Center at Historic Tredegar

One of Virginia's newest Civil War attractions, the American Civil War Center is one of the only places in the country to tell the story of the Civil War from the Union, Confederate and African American perspective. The Center's permanent flagship exhibit, *In the Cause of Liberty*, examines the story of the Civil War, its causes and its legacies.

Alexandria's Black History Museum

This historic museum in Northern Virginia includes the formerly segregated Robert H. Robinson Library, the Watson Reading Room, and the Alexandria African American Heritage Park. The museum will host several special events in February including an evening of poetry with author Kwame Alexander and the annual Black History Month lecture and soul food tasting.

Prestwold Plantation - Clarksville

The Prestwold Plantation in Southern Virginia, built in 1794, has one of the largest collections of slave writings in the country detailing plantation life from the slave perspective. Many of the original outbuildings remain and the original two-family slave house still stands on the manor house property.

Go online to www.Virginia.org to request a free travel guide and get updated information on statewide Black History Month destinations and events, or call 1-800-932-5827.

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Note: Information based on listings, attractions and events compiled from www.Virginia.org as of January 11, 2008.