

NEWSROOM

[Home](#) / [News](#) / [2026](#) / [February](#) / CNU Celebrates Virginia's 250th in Style

CNU CELEBRATES VIRGINIA'S 250TH IN STYLE

YEAR-LONG COMMEMORATION IS TAKING PLACE AT THE TORGGLER, IN CLASSROOMS,
ON THE FERGUSON FIELD, AND THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY.

by [Kelli Caplan](#) | February 25, 2026

Above: From left, Dr. Michelle Erhardt, Dr. Andrew Falk, Dr. Sherri Shuck-Hall, and Ashley Woodland, '13 History, who works at the American Revolution Museum at Yorktown.

Christopher Newport sits just minutes from the battlefields where the final chapter of the American Revolution unfolded.

In partnership with the Commonwealth of Virginia's official Virginia 250 Commission, the University has launched a year-long series of celebratory and educational programs to commemorate Virginia's 250th anniversary and the contributions Hampton Roads made to American history.

"We are the American Revolution in a microcosm here," said Dr. Andrew Falk, associate dean of Humanities and director of the [Institute for Public Humanities](#). "We are in the middle of the Historic Triangle."

Drawing on the faculty's deep knowledge of history and the University's many departments, Christopher Newport is launching a yearlong dynamic program titled, "[Revolution Close to Home: Hampton Roads and the Struggle for American Independence](#)." The commemoration, which includes a full slate of events, will play out across campus, in classrooms, at the Torggler Fine Arts Center, and in a dynamic exhibition coming this summer. It explores the history and enduring legacy of the Revolutionary era in Hampton Roads.

"The commemoration is significant for CNU and the community because it explores the story of America's fight for freedom through a local lens, highlighting the critical role Hampton Roads played in the Revolutionary War and our republic," Falk said. "It serves to remind the community that the path to independence was complex, contested and deeply rooted in our own local neighborhoods."

The various events bring together artifacts, immersive technology, and original research to create a perspective of the American Revolution not often seen, one that reframes it as a lived experience shaped not just by military, but by everyday people, places and objects.

"Ultimately, the array of events communicates one message: that the founding of the nation was a complex process rooted in community, political dissent, extraordinary heroism and sacrifice, and within a global context," explains Dr. Sheri Shuck-Hall, professor of history and director of CNU's Public History Center (PHC).

The exhibition, which opens in June, will feature student-driven research developed in collaboration with 18 regional museums and historic sites. These cultural partners are today often staffed by CNU alumni who work in the fields of public history.

"Our community partners have loaned artifacts and objects for display in the Torggler galleries to accompany students' digital exhibits featured on the PHC's website, [Explore History](#). "Together, these stories remind us that the path to American independence was complex, contested, and deeply rooted in the communities of Hampton Roads," explains Shuck-Hall.

Through art, performances, archaeological discoveries, and public talks, it is hoped that Captains and the members of the community will be inspired and awed by what happened just miles from campus.

"The involvement of multiple departments is critical to creating a multi-disciplinary perspective that goes beyond the standard history," according to Dr. Michelle Erhardt, associate dean of the [School of the Arts](#) and director of [Museum Studies](#). "Each discipline approaches a complex set of historical events with fresh eyes and communicates their perspectives with the community. By doing so, our commemorations remain relevant, thought provoking, creative, and approachable to everyone in our community."

The programming kicked off with a talk by [History](#) Professor Dr. Phillip Hamilton about the early stages of the American Revolution and how it relates to Virginia's history. The second event, "Hidden Voices: Black Perspectives on the American Revolution," was a talk by Marie St. Clair of the Hampton History Museum that marks Black History Month.

"It's really phenomenal," said Erhardt. "The 250th programming artfully melds history with technology, using virtual reality, podcasts, digital exhibits to display history in a different light."

In addition, there will be musical performances that explore the sounds of 1776, featuring fife and drum corps, ballads, and tavern tunes.

Starting in April, the Revolution will come to life with a performance of "Bound by Letters: Revolutionary War Correspondence of Lucy and Henry Knox," which features select readings of letters and diaries of the young couple who navigated their early marriage against the backdrop of the war and is directed by Professor Denise Gillman from the [Department of Music, Theatre, and Dance](#). In October, for "Hamilton" fans, Dr. Frank Garmon from the [Department of Leadership and American Studies](#) offers a talk, "Hamilton: the Man, the Myth, the Musical," which will present the backstory and the enduring influence of Alexander Hamilton.

"Performing art events adds sensory and emotional depth to the historical data, making the era more accessible and engaging," Erhardt said. "They provide a personal look at the human dimensions of the war. The visual arts are represented in the museum exhibition and in events spotlighting the ways the founding generation incorporated the arts to help define America's new republic."

On campus for a first-person augmented reality (AR) experience, there will be "Encampment Reimagined: An AR Experience on Ferguson Field," which will allow students to step into the 18th century virtually. Using AR developed by faculty in the [School of Engineering and Computing](#), and the departments of Theatre and History, Captains will experience a groundbreaking colonial encampment exploring soldiers' tents, tools, and daily routines of the Revolutionary era.

America's national motto is *e pluribus unum* – “out of many, one.”

“Throughout 2026 at CNU, the community will find that there is something for everyone because the story of our Revolution belongs to everyone,” Falk said.
