



MAILING ADDRESS
Post Office Box 7311
Richmond, Virginia 23221
www.vahistorical.org

STREET ADDRESS
428 North Boulevard
Richmond, Virginia 23220
804.358.4901



PRESS RELEASE
May 30, 2017

Lizzie Oglesby, Senior Officer for Public Relations and Marketing
loglesby@vahistorical.org 804.342.9665

Virginia Historical Society Celebrates 4th of July with Naturalization Ceremony Marks Opening of New Exhibition about George Washington

Richmond, VA — In celebration of the 241st anniversary of American independence on July 4, 2017, the Virginia Historical Society (VHS) will host a full day of patriotic festivities (with extended hours, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.), including a large-scale citizenship naturalization ceremony, the opening of a new exhibition, a community concert, and much more.

“This will be a grand day of ceremony and celebration,” said VHS president and CEO Jamie O. Bosket. “Whether you come to watch 100 new Americans pledge their allegiance, or you bring your friends and family to see the numerous artifacts related to our nation’s independence we have on display – especially in our newest exhibition on George Washington – there is something for everyone to enjoy. The VHS is going to be the new daytime destination for 4th of July activities in Virginia.”

The naturalization ceremony, held in partnership with the U. S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), will be the centerpiece of this new celebration. One hundred candidates for citizenship from nearly 50 countries will take the Oath of Allegiance on the front terrace of the museum (weather permitting) at 10:30 a.m. The ceremony will be officiated by the Honorable Roger L. Gregory, Chief Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.

A new exhibition in the Susan and David Goode Gallery, *Washington: The Myths and the Man*, will open at 9:00 a.m. This special exhibition curated by the historical society will feature a series of paintings by widely known Philadelphia artist Jean Leon Gerome Ferris (1863-1930). Thirteen beautiful oil paintings highlight how George Washington was often glorified through patriotism in the decades that followed his unparalleled public service. Visitors will be able to view the original diary Washington kept during his presidency and other materials that tell an accurate story of the man behind the myths. A number of iconic Washington-related objects will also be on display, including items that have rarely left the grounds of his Virginia home, Mount Vernon, such as his presidential chair and inaugural sword. The exhibition will be on display through October 2017, and is supported in part by the Robins Foundation.

In addition to the citizenship ceremony and new exhibit, guests are encouraged to picnic on the VHS’s front lawn where concessions will be for sale 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Also, the John Marshall High School Alumni Band will entertain guests with an outdoor concert from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. Inside the museum, a family-fun scavenger hunt will allow guests to explore the many objects on display that relate to America’s founding and citizenship. Behind-the-scenes tours, which will feature independence-related items in the museum’s archives, will be offered at 12:30, 1:00, 1:30, and 2:00 p.m. for \$5 per person. The citizenship ceremony, concert, and Washington exhibit are free and open to the public.

The Virginia Historical Society (VHS)—a privately funded nonprofit organization—collects, preserves, and interprets the Commonwealth’s history, linking past with present to inspire future generations. The VHS is located at 428 North Boulevard in Richmond’s Museum District. Hours are Monday – Sunday 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. for the galleries and museum shop, Monday – Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. for the library. For more information about the VHS call (804) 358-4901, visit vahistorical.org, or connect with the VHS on Facebook and Twitter.

###