



The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation
Williamsburg, VA 23187-1776

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New site, Hope’s Barber Shop, to Interpret “the Famous Barber” John Hope’s Remarkable Life of Enslavement, Freedom and Professional Acclaim

Ceremonial ribbon-cutting Sept. 17, attended by Hope’s descendant, precedes opening of the site to Colonial Williamsburg guests Oct. 1

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. (Sept. 14, 2017) – On Sunday, Sept. 17, Colonial Williamsburg hosts the ceremonial ribbon-cutting of its newest historic site, Hope’s Barber Shop. The site interprets the remarkable story of John Hope, also known as “Barber Caesar,” who endured enslavement before winning freedom and achieving professional success. It opens to the public Oct. 1.

Colonial Williamsburg welcomes to Sunday’s ceremony Peggy Hammond, a direct descendant of John Hope. Hammond is available for interviews following the ceremony along with Colonial Williamsburg Actor-Interpreter DeAndre Short, who portrays Hope, and other Foundation leadership and staff.

Hope was captured as a boy and sold into enslavement in 1743 to a York County tavern operator who advertised haircuts and gave him the name “Caesar.” His sale in 1768 for £150 indicates that he had acquired valuable skills, and in 1775 he was quoted by the *Virginia Gazette* as “Caesar, the famous barber of York.” Freed by his owner in 1779, five years later he was doing business in Williamsburg under the name John Hope, and had purchased and freed his own son, Aberdeen.

“Every day at Colonial Williamsburg we share with our guests the remarkable lives of African-Americans who comprised more than half our city at the time of our nation’s birth,” said Colonial Williamsburg President and CEO Mitchell B. Reiss. “Along with his fellow characters like Gowan Pamphlet, Aggy Randolph, Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson, John Hope offers guests a window on the courage and complexity that define America’s enduring story.”

Hope’s Barber Shop is accessible to ticketed guests from the north side of Duke of Gloucester Street between the Palace Green and Market Square. It is open Sundays through Thursdays starting Oct. 1 from 10 a.m.-noon and then from 1:30-3:30 p.m.

“We are committed to representing the past in ways that deepen our understanding of how American slavery and freedom developed inextricably,” said Ted Maris-Wolf, Colonial Williamsburg vice president for education, research, and historical interpretation. “John Hope’s journey from freedom at birth, through the Middle Passage and slavery, to a second freedom during the Revolution reveals a strength and resilience in the face of tragedy that continues to

inspire.”

Interpretation of Hope’s Barber Shop is possible thanks to the generosity of two anonymous donors who, in a joint statement, observed that “John Hope’s story of resilience, perseverance, and ultimate success is one that surely inspired his contemporaries, and can still inspire us all today.”

Members of the media interested in covering the ribbon-cutting ceremony at 11:15 a.m. Sunday should RSVP by 4 p.m. Friday, Sept. 15 to jstraw@cwf.org.

Colonial Williamsburg tickets and additional information are available online at colonialwilliamsburg.com by calling 855-296-6627 and by following Colonial Williamsburg on [Facebook](#) and @colonialwmsburg on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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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 400 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 45 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.