

African-American Heritage

Day 1

A.M. - Begin your African-American heritage exploration by journeying into the lives of two prominent Newport News citizens: Joseph Thomas Newsome and James A. Fields. Start at The Newsome House Museum & Cultural Center, where Joseph Thomas Newsome resided. The son of former slaves, he became a respected lawyer, newspaper editor, churchman and civic leader. When he died in 1942, a segregated city honored him by closing the city courts on the day of his funeral.

Located just minutes away is the James A. Fields house, where Fields, who was born a slave in Hanover County before escaping with his brother to Fort Monroe in 1862, lived and ran his business. He was one of the first twenty pupils to enter Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute (now Hampton University) in 1868 and graduated from Howard University's law school in 1881. Break for lunch at one of the nearby eateries.

P.M. - Spend the afternoon at the Virginia War Museum where, amongst other exhibits, you can explore Marches Toward Freedom. This gallery honors the contributions of African-Americans to America's military history since 1775 to the Gulf War. One such story is that of James Bowser, a free black who fought for freedom in the Revolutionary War. Generations of his family have lived in the Tidewater/Hampton Roads area for over 200 years.

If time allows, travel the short distance to The Mariners' Museum, where you will learn more about African-American heritage through stories and exhibitions, including that of Siah Carter, a young runaway slave turned permanent USS Monitor crew member. More African-American history can be explored in the Chesapeake Bay Gallery and the International Small Craft Center. Choose a restaurant for dinner, before relaxing for the evening in your Newport News Hotel.

Day 2

A.M. - Today you will travel to neighboring Hampton where you will tour the Hampton University Museum and campus located on Hampton's scenic waterfront. This Museum is the oldest African-American museum in the United States and offers the South's largest collection of multicultural art including a rare display of African pieces.

Founded in 1868 as the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, for the education of newly freed slaves, the now, Hampton University is home to six National Historic Landmarks. Also located here is the magnificent Emancipation Oak, which holds great significance as an African-American historical marker.

Enjoy lunch waterside in Hampton, before heading to nearby Fort Monroe for the afternoon.

P.M. - Spend the afternoon on a walking and discovery tour of Fort Monroe where Major General Benjamin Butler initiated the policy of declaring slaves who ran away from their masters "contraband of war." Visit the Casemate Museum and see the cell where Former Confederate President Jefferson Davis was imprisoned after the Civil War.

Return to Newport News and start your evening by dining on the city's signature food: seafood! Refer to your Restaurant Guide for restaurants specializing in this sumptuous fare.

Before retreating to your Newport News Hotel for the night, take an evening stroll around the impressive five-acre lighted fountain located in City Center at Oyster Point and visit the specialty stores adjoining it.

Newport News Visitor Center

13560 Jefferson Avenue • Newport News, VA 23603

757-886-7777 • Toll Free 888-493-7386 • Fax 757-886-7920 • www.newport-news.org

Newport News Virginia

Day 3

A.M./P.M. - Choose from the following options, depending on your departure schedule:

1. Using the map located on the inside of your African-American Heritage brochure, plan a driving tour through Newport News, incorporating the historical points of interest listed that you have not yet visited, including Lee Hall Mansion, Endview Plantation, Young's Mill and more. Tailor your drive to your departure schedule to ensure you see as much as possible in the time you have.
2. Travel to nearby Colonial Williamsburg, where you will feel as though you have stepped back in time to the 18th century. Here you will learn how slaves arrived in the area and, through living exhibits, will discover the contrast between the lives of slaves and free blacks.
3. Visit the Virginia Air & Space Center in neighboring Hampton, where the world-famous Tuskegee Airmen, the first black aviators to fly for the U.S in wartime combat missions, are honored with permanent exhibits.

Newport News Visitor Center

13560 Jefferson Avenue • Newport News, VA 23603

757-886-7777 • Toll Free 888-493-7386 • Fax 757-886-7920 • www.newport-news.org