

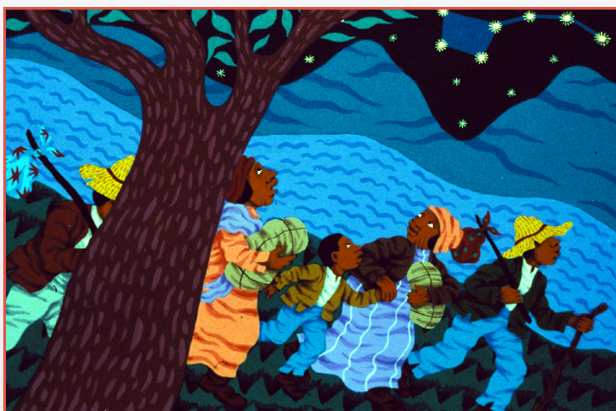


# African American Heritage

## A TIMELESS LEGACY

### DAY 1

**Visit the only large antebellum plantation house remaining on the lower Peninsula, Lee Hall Mansion.** Lee Hall's first owner, Richard D. Lee, successfully applied the principles of scientific farming, which were increasingly being used in the mid-Atlantic during the 1850s and 1860s. There were 38 enslaved African Americans who labored at Lee Hall prior to the Civil War. Their descendants, as well as other African Americans, Native Americans, and European cultures on Virginia's Lower Peninsula, produced a distinctive and vibrant cultural tapestry. Confederate generals Joseph E. Johnston and John B. Magruder also used Lee Hall as their headquarters during the initial phase of the 1862 Peninsula Campaign.



**In the afternoon, take a lunch break, then visit the Virginia Living Museum (VLM)!** Here you will come in contact with more habitats, wildlife, and plant species than you would encounter in a lifetime of outdoor adventures in Virginia. Enjoy the planetarium show, "Follow the Drinking Gourd," that will take you back to the days when freedom was nothing more than a dream for those held in slavery. The story is a poignant and inspiring tale of one African American family's desperate flight to freedom and how they used constellations to guide the way. The program is based on a children's book of the same name, written and illustrated by Jeanette Winter. This production also incorporates historical images from the local region.

**Tour The Mariners' Museum and Park and its USS Monitor Center in the evening.** This museum, designated by the U.S. Congress as "America's National Maritime Museum," connects people to the world's waters in the same way we are connected to one another! You will explore one of the largest and most comprehensive maritime history museums in the world. Among the many stories in the USS Monitor Center is that of Siah Carter, a courageous runaway slave turned permanent USS Monitor crew member, who remained in the Union Navy even after the sinking of his ship.



**While at the museum, enjoy dinner and a presentation with Frederick Douglass.** Mr. Douglass was born a slave in 1818, taught himself to read and write, and became one of the most famous African Americans in history. He published two autobiographies, as well as a weekly newspaper, *The North Star*, which was devoted to the abolition of slavery. He also became an advisor to presidents such as Abraham Lincoln and James Garfield.





## DAY 2

**Begin the morning by exploring the James A. Fields House.** James A. Fields (1844–1903) was born a slave in Hanover County, Virginia. In 1862, he and his brother escaped slavery and found refuge at Fort Monroe in Hampton. His restored home is historically significant for its long association with the development of the social and civic life of the African American community in Newport News. The house was used by Mr. Fields as his law office and primary residence from 1897 to 1903, and it was just one of 15 properties he owned in Newport News. Mr. Fields was also a teacher and member of the Virginia House of Delegates.

**Later, tour the Newsome House Museum and Cultural Center down the street.** The elegant Queen Anne residence, restored in 1899, belonged to J. Thomas Newsome (1862–1942) and his wife, Mary Winfield Newsome. Mr. Newsome was born to Joseph and Martha Ann Newsome, former slaves on Princeton Plantation, near Sussex Courthouse. After his schooling — which included Howard University's Law School in Washington, D.C. — Mr. Newsome became a respected attorney, journalist, churchman, and civic leader. He prospered as part of the post-Civil War South's new urban African American middle class. His residence was the hub of the local black community in Newport News and was visited twice by Booker T. Washington.



**Drive by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Plaza.** This site honors the legacy of Dr. King, who visited Newport News in 1958 and 1962, and spoke at the historic First Church of Newport News (Baptist).

**Visit the Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Center (DGCAC).** DGCAC features the Ella Fitzgerald Theater, named after Ella Fitzgerald (born in Newport News in 1917), and is located next to the Pearl Bailey Library, named after Pearl Bailey (born in Newport News in 1918). Explore DGCAC's permanent exhibition, Anderson Johnson Gallery, before enjoying a lunch break.

**Before departing for home, participate in an engaging, rhythmic drum circle!** Arthur Lopez creates a safe and supportive environment where participants can freely tap into their own creativity and experience a connection to the group through drums. "Creating unity in the community with drum circles" is Arthur's motto.

## Ready to explore Newport News?

For more information, please contact:

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