

## Virginia Is Leading The Way For Our Nation's Quarter Millennial Birthday

By Barrett Baker, peninsulachronicle.com

*When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.*

So begins “the unanimous Declaration of the thirteen United States of America,” which was adopted by the Second Continental Congress meeting at Pennsylvania State House (later renamed Independence Hall), in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on July 4, 1776.

While the nation begins preparations for the country's 250<sup>th</sup>—also known as the semiquincentennial or quarter millennial—birthday in 2026, Virginia is already celebrating many of the events that led up to the drafting of America's most historic document, and the [Virginia American Revolution 250 Commission](#) (VA250) is leading the way.

One such event coming up in March is the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of Virginia's Committees of Correspondence, which first came together on March 12, 1773 at Raleigh Tavern in Colonial Williamsburg. The committees of correspondence were established prior to the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War to establish a system of communication between the 13 colonies to educate citizens on their rights, coordinate opposition to British Parliament, and later to rally support for American Independence.

In light of that anniversary, the Virginia American Revolution 250 Commission has invited their counterparts from every other state in the union to gather in Williamsburg to discuss how the states can best coordinate and collaborate on the national milestone coming in 2026.

Other upcoming events in Virginia include a commemoration of the Yorktown Tea Party, where local residents boarded the British ship *Virginia* on November 7, 1774, and dumped two half-chests of tea into the York River; and Lafayette's Grand Tour, where the commander of the French troops that forced British commander Cornwallis to eventually surrender at Yorktown, returned to America to tour the 24 states of the new country between July 1824 and September 1825. At that time, he was the last surviving major general of the American Revolutionary War. In 2025, there will also be re-enactments of Patrick Henry's famous “Give me liberty or give me death” speech.

In other words, there's more going on than just the celebration of a nation in 2026.

“So much more, and it has already begun,” said Cheryl Wilson, executive director of the Virginia American Revolution 250 Commission. “We are developing a robust website ([va250.org](#)), and on that we already have a statewide calendar of events, including some that are already occurring. I think one thing that is important to note is that every locality in Virginia is involved. The

Commission requested that each locality form a local VA250 committee. So, as they start to come on board, you'll see those local committees and contacts for them. They will be doing localized events as well."

Of the 134 localities in Virginia, there are probably 100 contacts listed on the site right now and more will be coming. The Commission has grant money for localities that form a committee and pass a resolution of support. That matching funding can be used to put together events, for marketing purposes, or to develop content.

Since the nation as we know it now basically began with the colony at Jamestown, it's only fitting that Virginia takes the lead.

"Virginia is really seizing the national stage with this," said Wilson. "We like to say that Virginia's history is the nation's story."

For those who would like to get involved with local activities, Wilson suggests going to the [VA250.org](http://VA250.org) website, sign up for their newsletter, and keep an eye on social media. There are Facebook and Twitter links on the site.