

Making History Relevant

Seminars based on *Idea of America* are planned in 2019

The Idea of America, which Colonial Williamsburg originally created as a digital program for high school students and a book for adults, will now form the basis for special programs in the Historic Area. The programs will examine how the values that Colonial Williamsburg Foundation historians have identified as shaping our republic speak to the issues of today, and how lessons from our past can define our future. Those values, which are often in tension with each other, are freedom and equality, unity and diversity, private wealth and common wealth, and law and ethics.

The program will feature meetings with Thomas Jefferson and other Nation Builders; private tours of the Capitol, Raleigh Tavern, Palace and other selected sites where our founding values were first debated; debates about our values at the Hennage Auditorium; and meals as a group in historic taverns. Dr. John Oliver Wilson, author of *The Idea of America: Our Values, Our Legacy, Our Future*, will lead a closing discussion on the importance of our founding values to our nation and our local communities.

Wilson, an economist whose career has spanned finance, academics and government, is a member of the Foundation's President's Council and Raleigh Tavern Society. He founded and now directs the Idea of America Network, a nationwide program of seminars and projects for adult lifelong learners, as well as students in high schools, colleges and universities.

"Throughout our history, Americans have debated how to balance the values we hold most sacred, to find the common good and expand our founding values to be more inclusive of all citizens," Wilson said. "These programs show how relevant our history is to our current times."

Wilson added: "Ours is a nation based on the sovereignty of we the people. It's crucial that we reclaim the ideals and values that first gave birth to our nation, that have guided us through challenges and crises and even a civil war."

These new on-site Idea of America Seminars will take place in the spring and fall of 2019. Go to history.org/workshops for more information.

