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## Big Anniversaries and Celebrations Make 2009 the Year to Visit Virginia

### Media Only

Richard Lewis  
Public Relations Manager

TEL (804) 545-5574  
CEL (804) 335-7056  
EML [rlewis@virginia.org](mailto:rlewis@virginia.org)

Virginia Tourism Corporation  
901 East Byrd Street  
Richmond, VA 23219-4048 USA

TEL (804) 545-5500  
FAX (804) 545-5501  
[www.virginia.org](http://www.virginia.org) (consumer)  
[www.vatc.org](http://www.vatc.org) (industry)

**RICHMOND, Va.** – 2009 is the year to live passionately on vacation in Virginia. As if nearly 140 wineries, 400 years of history, 3,000 miles of coastline and 34 state parks aren't incentive enough, '09 is full of major anniversaries, commemorations and celebrations in Virginia. From the 40<sup>th</sup> birthday of one of America's most loved tourism slogan to the 200<sup>th</sup> birthday commemoration for one of America's most famous poets, Virginia is ready to make vacations memorable. Here are just a few of the Virginia events and celebrations travelers can build trips around in 2009.

### 40th Anniversary of Virginia is for Lovers

The year 1969 witnessed man's first walk on the moon, the Woodstock Music and Art Fair and the birth of the Big Mac. That same year, Virginia launched a new tourism marketing campaign built around a new slogan, "*Virginia is for Lovers.*" Forty years later, "Virginia is for Lovers" is one of the most loved and enduring state tourism slogans in the country. At its core, "Virginia is for Lovers" represents a love of life and a passion for travel. In 2009, Virginia will celebrate 40 years of travel passions with sweepstakes, promotions, travel deals and celebrations throughout the state.

Travelers seeking the spirit of "Virginia is for Lovers" should look to the "Portraits of Passion," real Virginians whose passion for wine, music, history, food and adventure make travel in Virginia rewarding. Plan a trip to connect with these incredible Virginians, all featured on [Virginia.org/portraits](http://Virginia.org/portraits), who tell the true story of Virginia is for Lovers – Live Passionately.

### Edgar Allen Poe Birthday Bash in Richmond

A young Edgar Poe, who would eventually take on the middle name of Allen, made Richmond his home for some of his childhood and much of his adulthood. Two hundred years after his birth in 1809, *Edgar Allen Poe* remains one of the most celebrated figures in world literature. The inventor of the detective novel and an unparalleled wordsmith, Poe experienced some of his most successful years in Richmond as editor of the Southern Literary Messenger. The [Edgar Allen Poe Museum](http://Edgar Allen Poe Museum) in Richmond tells the life story of this gifted man through original artifacts, photographs and place. A Poe Birthday Bash, planned for January 19, 2009, kicks off Richmond's year-long commemoration. Not at all dark and dreary, the museum offers monthly social functions known appropriately as "Unhappy Hour."

## NEWS

### **65th Anniversary of D-Day at National Memorial in Bedford**

[The National D-Day Memorial](#) in Bedford will be a focal point of the *65th anniversary of D-Day* in 2009. The town of Bedford suffered as much loss as any community in America on the beaches of Normandy. At least nineteen Bedford-area men were killed in the landing of the Allied forces, a staggering number given the small population of that area in 1944. Bedford was selected as the site for the National D-Day Memorial based in part on its legacy of sacrifice. The anniversary commemoration will be June 6, 2009 with a ceremony including recognition of living D-Day veterans, music and guest speakers. That night more than 4,000 luminaries will be placed around the grounds of the Memorial to honor the Allied servicemen who died on D-Day.

### **TJ's First Night at Forest Hideaway – 200th Anniversary**

Monticello is world-famous as the residence of Thomas Jefferson, but it was not his only home. Jefferson built another stunning dwelling, [Poplar Forest](#), as a retreat and in 1809 when he spent his first night under its roof. Located near Lynchburg and Bedford, Poplar Forest was where Jefferson went to escape his hectic public life. Two hundred years after Jefferson first enjoyed Poplar Forest, visitors can learn about this ultimate Renaissance man. Poplar Forest was a working plantation with a significant slave population and visitors can view fascinating archaeological projects that are literally unearthing the history of the slave community there as well as the historic landscape around the main house. Currently undergoing an award-winning preservation, restoration and archaeology, Poplar Forest offers tours and special events.

### **Virginia's Crooked Road Turns Five**

Launched in 2004, [The Crooked Road: Virginia's Heritage Music Trail](#) celebrates five years as one of the most authentic and enriching cultural music destinations in the country. The Road connects some of the most famous bluegrass and traditional mountain music venues together, from The Carter Fold to the Rex Theater and Floyd Country Store, on a 250-mile trail that winds through beautiful southwest Virginia. 2009 will be a great time to visit one of Virginia's fastest growing tourist destinations.

### **Civil War 150th Anniversary Kick Off Conference**

The *150th Anniversary of the Civil War*, which officially begins in 2011, will be the focus of a Sesquicentennial kickoff conference at the University of Richmond on April 29, 2009. Top scholars from leading American universities and historic sites will discuss "America on the Eve of the Civil War." Admission is free, with seating limited to 2,500. While in town, take time to visit Richmond's famous Civil War sites including the [American Civil War Center at Tredegar](#).

## NEWS

### **Colonial Williamsburg Honors 30 Years of African American History Program**

[Colonial Williamsburg](#) ranks as one of the world's best living history attractions, portraying everyday life in colonial America with engaging accuracy. Its *African American history program* turns 30 in 2009 and continues to carry on its groundbreaking work. Centered around the Peyton-Randolph House and Great Hopes Plantation, the African American history program is a largely hands-on experience for the visitor that brings to life the daily regimen and emerging culture of the colonial slave community. Special commemorative programs include music, storytelling and a look at the lives of enslaved and free blacks during the American Revolution.

### **25 Years of Natural History**

The [Virginia Museum of Natural History](#) in Martinsville celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2009. An associate of the Smithsonian Institute, the museum's enticing new facility is the home to dinosaur fossils, working labs and recreated natural environments from around Virginia.

### **Five Years of Going Wild**

2009 marks the fifth anniversary of the completion of the [Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail](#), the nation's first statewide wildlife viewing trail, with more than 600 sites. The Piedmont Phase (the last of the three regional phases including the Coastal and Mountain regions) was dedicated at Monticello in September 2004. Virginia has one of the highest diversities of birds in the eastern United States, with nearly 400 resident and migratory bird species. The state also boasts one of the highest diversities of all wildlife in the eastern United States, with over 3,000 species of fish, reptiles, amphibians, mussels, crayfish, birds, mammals, butterflies and dragonflies.

### **Beyond 2009**

In 2010 Virginia will be celebrate the *75th anniversary of the [Blue Ridge Parkway](#)*, one of America's favorite scenic drives. The parkway is the most visited unit of the National Park System and winds its way through the highest mountains in the East. Incredible vistas, lush mountain backdrops, hiking trails, overlooks, endangered wildlife and an abundance of flora and fauna have greeted visitors here for generations. Look for special events along the Parkway as 2010 approaches.



## NEWS

*Civil War 150th Anniversary* events in Virginia will kick off in earnest in 2011. The 150th anniversary of the Battle of Manassas will be the first of a multitude of commemorations, special tours, conferences, re-enactments and other once-in-a-lifetime opportunities stretching until 2015, the anniversary of Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox. More Civil War battles were fought in Virginia than in any other state, and the Commonwealth will present the story of the war and of real people who experienced the war in Virginia in ways that will engage visitors on an emotional level.

Virginia invites travelers to live passionately on vacation. Visit [www.Virginia.org](http://www.Virginia.org) and start planning a trip to celebrate the many anniversaries and special events in 2009. Or call 1-800-932-5827 to request a free, Virginia is for Lovers – Live Passionately travel guide.

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