

# The 400<sup>th</sup> Commemoration of the First Documented Africans in English North America

**Presenter:  
Ric Murphy**

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## I. Presenter Background



RIC MURPHY a Boston native, is the National Vice President for History, for the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society, and is an educator, historian, lecturer, and award-winning author of several books and historical publications. In his writings, Murphy explores the roles and rich contributions made by African Americans in United States history. He has served in elected and appointed positions within state and local governments, and has taught and lectured at the post-secondary level. He has served as Chairman of the Board of several private and community based organizations; on numerous national, local and not-for-profit Boards of Directors; on countless Advisory Boards to community-based organizations and not-for-profits; and has received numerous national awards for his public activism and community work. His family lineage dates to the earliest colonial periods of Plymouth, Massachusetts, and of Jamestown, Virginia. Mr. Murphy's lineage has been evaluated and accepted by several heredity societies, including the Daughters of the American Revolution; the National Society of the Sons of Colonial New England; the Sons of the American Revolution; the Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War; and the Sons and Daughters of the U. S. Middle Passage. Mr. Murphy was a Fellow at Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government; and he has a Masters in Urban Affairs from Boston University, and a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Massachusetts. Contact Info: [RicMurphy@ricmurphy.com](mailto:RicMurphy@ricmurphy.com)

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## **II. Introduction**

In 2019, all Americans will celebrate an important milestone in American history, the commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the first recorded Africans in English North America. Documented in early colonial records, these men, women and children were known as the “20 odd” Africans, and they arrived on the English ship White Lion, in the English colony of Jamestown in late August 1619 at Point Comfort, along the James River, and reportedly were sold in exchange for food. Their historic journey documents a fascinating story of international colonialism, piracy, enslavement, the law of English head rights and colonial indentureship. The importance of this history, for many present day African Americans is that many are probably descended from these first Africans and/or those who arrived in North America between 1619 and 1700. As the field of African American history has evolved over the past 50 years, the body of knowledge for the life and times of African Americans during the colonial period has grown significantly, and the 2019 commemoration will signal an important milestone in American and African American history, and a better understanding of African American participation in the Revolutionary War.

## **III. Presentation Goal**

- Provide contextual concept of how European colonialism impacted Africa.
- Explain where the “20 and Odd” Africans came from and how we know it.
- Document how the “20 and Odd” Africans came to English North America
- Prove that the “20 and Odd” Africans and early colonial Africans were not enslaved people.
- Discuss the historical importance of the “20 and Odd” Africans and why we each should celebrate their historic contributions.

## **IV. Learning Objectives**

- To increase participants knowledge of what the Middle Passage was and its importance to world history
- To introduce who the “20 and Odd” Africans of colonial Jamestown were and their importance to world history.
- To provide the historical context of the “20 and Odd” Africans and how DNA research can support genealogical research.

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- To describe how to take genealogical research and intertwined it with American and African history to make a compelling family story.

## V. Presentation

- **Introduction:** Introduce participants to the historical significance of the first documented Africans to American history.
- **European Exploration:** Describe how colonization of Africa benefited world economies.
- **The Bantu Empires:** Describe the advanced cultures of the Bantu civilizations.
- **The Settlement of Jamestown:** Describe the people and conditions of Jamestown in 1619.
- **São João Bautista:** Describe the voyage of the Africans who left Africa and how they arrived in English North America
- **The First Recorded Africans:** Describe the characteristics of the Bantu people who arrived in Jamestown
- **The Laws of Indenture:** Describe the clear distinctions of indenture.
- **The Birth of Enslavement:** Describe the evolution of enslavement.
- **Rebellion:** Describe how indentured frustrations impacted the evolution of enslavement.

## VI. Learning Outcomes

- Participants will be able to discuss the role of the church in African colonialism and documentation of the “20 and Odd” Africans.
- Provide contextual concept of how European colonialism impacted Africa.
- Participants will be able to explain where the “20 and Odd” Africans came from and how we know it.
- Participants will be able to explain how the “20 and Odd” Africans came to English North America
- Participants will be able to distinguish between the indentured servitude of the “20 and Odd” Africans and Africans in the late seventeenth century.

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- Discuss the historical importance of the “20 and Odd” Africans and why we each should celebrate their historic contributions.

## VII. Bibliography

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