The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation
2015 Annual Report
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE:  
A YEAR OF CHANGE  
~ 5-7

COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG  
HISTORIC AREA  
~ 9-13

THE ART MUSEUMS  
OF COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG  
~ 15

REIMAGINING  
OUR PRESENTATION  
OF THE PAST  
~ 17

FINANCIAL REVIEW  
~ 19-23

BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
~ INSIDE BACK COVER

“I am not an advocate for frequent & untried changes in laws and constitutions... but... laws and institutions must go hand-in-hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truths disclosed and manners and opinions change with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also, and keep pace with the times.”

~ Thomas Jefferson, 1816
Dear Friends,

It is my pleasure to share with you this report on the 2015 programs, operations and finances of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

2015 was a transformative—and exciting—year for the organization. Soon after I arrived at the Foundation in late 2014, we began to reimagine many of the programs we were offering our guests. We created new programs and tested bold initiatives—from launching an authentic archaeology dig for children to sending our own Gen. George Washington to Iowa and New Hampshire on a “campaign” to promote civic responsibility. Varied as our approaches were, our goals were always the same: to revitalize Americans’ interest in Colonial Williamsburg, to attract a larger and wider audience to our historic streets and to engage them in the remarkable stories of our Nation’s founding.

This was serious change undertaken at an aggressive pace, reflecting a genuine sense of urgency. Seismic shifts in America’s cultural and economic landscapes over the years had done serious harm to Colonial Williamsburg’s bottom line. Like so many other historical sites and museums, we had simply lost the attention of too many people. Younger Americans, in particular, appeared no longer to view us as relevant to modern life and culture. Meanwhile, America’s families had less time and money to spend on vacations. When they did travel, they faced a dizzying array of options—and they were choosing Colonial Williamsburg less and less often.

By 2015, there was no denying that our attendance numbers and our revenues had fallen too far, for too long. We had grown too reliant on the support of our endowment just to keep going. Something had to give. For Colonial Williamsburg to succeed—ironically, to remain the same in the most critical ways—it would have to change in others.

It was with all of this in mind that we entered an intense period of brainstorming, testing new ideas and economizing where we could. We piloted a popular new evening game called Escape the King, which weaves together 18th-century history, puzzles and ciphers, and held our first all-out celebration of Halloween, which drew thousands of people—many of whom had never visited us before. We boosted the number of interpreters on our streets and “up-lit” some of our most iconic buildings to make the Historic Area a more inviting and enjoyable place after dark. We also introduced our first mascot, Liberty, a canine Pied Piper of sorts whom children will happily follow to the educational activities we have to offer them.

And more generally, we found smarter ways of doing business. We refocused our advertising campaigns, concentrating our spending in markets where it would have the most impact. We harnessed the power of social media to increase our public outreach. We began collecting voluntary philanthropic donations at our store registers and ticket counters. At our Historic Area retail sites, like the newly reconstructed Market House, our interpreters and Products staff began working together more closely to create fun, dynamic experiences for guests.

Where did all of these ideas come from? As you might expect, we looked to our colleagues at innovative museums and historic sites throughout the country for inspiration. We sought guidance from experts in the fields of cultural tourism, hospitality and marketing. Most of all, we unleashed the creativity of our own staff by urging them to bring us their ideas. To this day, one of the first changes we made—at the wise suggestion of one of our employees—remains among the most popular: reviving the much-missed tradition of baking ginger cookies at the Raleigh Tavern Bakery. Since then, we have continued to research offerings that once endeared Colonial Williamsburg to many but, for one reason or another, were discontinued. In more than a few cases—candlemaking in the Historic Area, for example—we’re finding ways to bring them back.
And while it's early yet, our year-end results suggest we are headed in the right direction. In 2015, our revenues increased while our operating expenses dropped. I am especially pleased to report that our leisure ticket sales increased, reversing a worrisome trend. On the strength of this progress, we were able to invest more in certain areas of critical need—technology, staff training and the deferred maintenance of our buildings, in particular.

We will continue all of these efforts because—from an educational standpoint and a financial one—it is critical that we persuade a larger, younger and more diverse audience to come here. This is a full-fledged, no-holds-barred campaign, every day, we are working to persuade more people of what our donors and longtime visitors already know: that Colonial Williamsburg remains a unique, indeed critical, part of America’s heritage. That to this day, this place is a source of inspiration for people throughout the world who are striving for freedom and a better way of life. That the stories we tell here in countless, creative ways are as relevant today as ever to our politics, our culture and our daily lives. And finally: that a trip to Williamsburg is more than worth the time and money. It will be thought-provoking, moving and entertaining. It can also be relaxing, even rejuvenating.

That is a tall order, frankly, which few other places can deliver. Colonial Williamsburg can.

How can we accomplish all of this without losing our sense of who we are and the educational mission that has guided this Foundation from its earliest days? It is the question that inspires constant debate, discussion and soul-searching. As stewards of the glorious restoration that John D. Rockefeller Jr. made possible, we consciously strive every day to honor this extraordinary philanthropist’s vision for Colonial Williamsburg. What we sometimes forget is that Mr. Rockefeller was also a man of strong business sense. At once ambitious and idealistic, with a passionate regard for history and aesthetic beauty, Mr. Rockefeller was nonetheless a man who understood the critical importance of safeguarding the financial health and well-being of his creation—and that at times this would mean choosing pragmatism over personal preference.

Consider, for example, a story that John D. Green recollected in his 1957 memoir of his years at the Foundation. Green, Colonial Williamsburg’s first general manager of hotel and restaurant operations, recalled that once, while talking with Mr. Rockefeller about off-season declines in visitation, “I made so bold as to suggest to Mr. Rockefeller that what we needed was a few billboards on the highways.”

It was a “bold” proposal indeed since, as Green readily acknowledged to Mr. Rockefeller at the time, Mrs. Rockefeller was among the fiercest opponents of “that type of roadside advertising.” But to Green’s surprise, Mr. Rockefeller responded: “Yes, I know, Mr. Green. But this is business.”

In the end, Colonial Williamsburg did not get those “tremendous” billboards that Green envisioned. But a healthy brood of “colonial signs” did pop up along the highways leading into town—as far as 100 miles out—accomplishing roughly the same effect. “I think what a lot of people don’t realize today is that Mr. Rockefeller was the great philanthropist,” Green said. “I’ve always been impressed with his approach to our commercial ventures and our interest in them. I’m sure that if he had not been born to the purple, as it were, he would have made out very well as a businessman. He has a very keen business mind.”

Ninety years later, the business of operating America’s largest living-history museum continues to hinge on our collective ability to conquer financial challenges without losing sight of our fundamental educational mission. Colonial Williamsburg’s original benefactor would never wish this organization to stray from the core values on which it was founded. But I also believe he would want this Foundation to forever thrive—ensuring that it might draw many future generations to this hallowed ground so that they might better understand America’s story, and ultimately, themselves.

It is this mission, in its entirety, for which we owe Mr. Rockefeller sincerest thanks, and to which we dedicate our efforts today.
The interactions are engaging and organic,” said Ted Maris-Wolf, vice president of education, research and historical interpretation. “Each one tells a story to represent life here. They bring the people and the place to life. There are more costumed interpreters than in a decade with spontaneous vignettes unfolding with guests around every corner.”

Six new characters at Chowning’s Tavern sing the menu and interact with the guests in playful ways to create the authentic and immersive experience. Expanded Native American and African American interpretation brings a broader range of perspectives, and last summer’s successful Native American encampment will return bigger and better this year. Meanwhile, new stories about our Nation Builders are adding depth and dimension to that program.

If you haven’t walked down Duke of Gloucester street in a while, a visit today may surprise you. The city is more alive than ever with activity. Near the new Market House, a lady tries to sell her chicken with great fanfare. Across from the post office, General George Washington stops his horse to give a young guest a coin to mail a letter. A young Thomas Jefferson and young Martha Washington inhabit the streets as the newest additions to the Nation Builders program.
“We are the family field trip.”

“We are trying to connect the 18th century to the 21st century,” said Maris-Wolf. “We are bringing back classics and adding entirely new programs to reach a broader audience of all ages.”

New 18th-century vehicles and animals also bring the town to life. Additional horses will pull a new carriage and a new oxen cart will soon be available to ride. A small flock of sheep will be led through town with an added shearing and yarn-spinning demonstration. An 18th-century fire engine (reproduced from the original in the DeWitt Wallace Decorative Arts Museum) positioned near the Magazine will invite guests to participate in a traditional colonial bucket brigade.

“We are working to marry world-class historical, architectural and archaeological research with engaging educational public programing for a wide range of guests,” said Maris-Wolf. “By adding fun, signature events, we are finding new opportunities to highlight this research in an accessible way.”

With this enhancement and expansion of our programming, Colonial Williamsburg aims to become more relevant, accessible and engaging. As the teaching of American history continues to lose emphasis in our schools, we believe this is more important than ever. And our efforts are paying off. In 2015, Colonial Williamsburg experienced its most successful summer season since 2008.

“Colonial Williamsburg’s Historic Area is the world’s largest open-air classroom. Where else can you do what we do here?”

In this report, we highlight the tremendous impact that the generosity of donors like you have made, along with upcoming opportunities where your support will make a difference. Your investment in this place underscores the importance of what happened here. As we continue to explore new ways to share Colonial Williamsburg with our guests and the world, your support is more important than ever.
Hands-on Programs
Building Detectives explores colonial houses through a researcher’s eye. In Escape the King, groups of guests use teamwork and problem-solving to break out of a locked room. Dig! Kids, Dirt & Discovery introduces children of all ages to real research and cultivates an appreciation for things of the past.

Renewed Favorites
The Windmill of Colonial Williamsburg was relocated to Great Hopes Plantation and continues to be restored as an important asset of 18th-century life. Windmill project donor Dave McShane said of his support, “I care deeply about history and architectural preservation, which are of course at the heart of Colonial Williamsburg’s mission. The windmill project provided a great opportunity to make a contribution that will both enrich visitors’ visual experience and help them better appreciate colonial life.”

New Additions
The new Market House opened last fall in the bustling town center. Our Historic Trades and Skills department expanded the number of sites open to guests and added music and military interpretation as well as new internships and apprenticeships for students and adults. Many have enjoyed meeting Liberty, Colonial Williamsburg’s new canine mascot. New signage and wayfinding, along with evening up-lighting of six iconic buildings, makes it easier for guests to navigate the Historic Area.

Legacy Initiatives
In 2015, Colonial Williamsburg’s Teacher Institute celebrated its 26th anniversary. Over the years, the institute has hosted more than 8,500 participants with an impact on more than 2.5 million students. Teacher Chloe Masick of Long Beach, CA, said, “This experience has filled me with enthusiasm and a renewed desire to do the same for my students through the excellent model of storytelling.”

IN 2015
Ticket sales reached 574,300, which included a 5% lift in leisure visitation.

Hospitality room revenue grew 10.1%

“I absolutely love Williamsburg... Everyone was warm and friendly and I hope to be back again before too long.”
~ Caroline Macdonald

“The history lesson never ends, and no matter how much you think you know, there is always something more to learn with every visit at CW.”
~ Jerilyn J. Watkin

“What a tremendous learning experience. I give it five stars because there is no way to give it 10 stars.”
~ Ed McCloskey

~ Facebook reviews

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ART MUSEUMS OF COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG

Expanding Commitment and Space

Engaging and innovative exhibitions highlighting the Foundation’s world-renowned collections have captivated visitors for decades. Building on this tradition of excellence, the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg will be expanded and redesigned to create one of the nation’s premier museums. Once complete, the dramatically improved art museum complex will feature a striking, street-level public entrance and much-needed exhibition space with special galleries dedicated to fine art, musical instruments, tools and weapons, maps, and coins and currency as well as changing exhibits. The new space will also offer improved guest services with a new lobby, café, store and ADA accessibility. State-of-the-art climate controls will help ensure ideal artifact preservation.

To learn more about current museum exhibits or make a gift to support the museum expansion, visit history.org/history/museums

“Your spirit of generosity makes this all possible. It simply can’t be done without your philanthropic support.”
~ Ron Hurst, Chief Curator and Vice President for Collections, Conservation and Museums

MUSEUM HIGHLIGHTS

3% increase in museum attendance, the 3rd consecutive year of growth
15% increase in family programming participation
50% funding of $40 million construction goal for museum expansion reached

Landmark book, Early Seating Upholstery: Reading the Evidence, by Colonial Williamsburg conservator Leroy Graves published

2 new exhibits added – Silver from Mine to Masterpiece and Thunderbirds: Jewelry of the Santo Domingo Pueblo
Today’s businesses operate in a remarkably complicated environment, and Colonial Williamsburg is no exception. Numerous forces, including rapid advances in technology, declines in education funding and national demographic shifts, have changed the playing field, requiring us to take a long, hard look at everything we are doing. The changes we are making throughout the Foundation are ensuring that we:

- continue to promote our core educational mission
- generate revenue to support our mission
- provide the best value and experiences for our guests
- treat our employees as partners in all of Colonial Williamsburg’s endeavors

It is a tall order, but our results so far are encouraging. The keys to continuing our success are engagement and inspiration. That means sharing 18th-century life and ideals in a livelier, more hands-on way. It also means making smart business choices and honing our focus on the things we do best. Far from abandoning the past, the Foundation is welcoming more people—of all ages—into the future of history education.

The momentum generated in 2015 continues to move us forward.

As we reach back to revive important traditions and adapt to the changing market, 2016 and the years ahead bring:

- a new musket firing range
- a return of old favorites like candle dipping
- growth and adaptation of the livestock program
- additional family-friendly programming
- more evening programming
- renewing the Williamsburg Inn’s legacy as a 5-star property
- $2 million restoration of the Gold Course originally designed by Robert Trent Jones, Sr. with the help of his son, Rees Jones
- growth of the Williamsburg Marketplace product program
- investment in employee certifications and training
- redoubling our building maintenance and preservation efforts throughout the Foundation

The energy and excitement generated by these dynamic initiatives will keep Colonial Williamsburg in the forefront as a world-class institution, and in turn, keep what happened here alive in the hearts and minds of all who visit. Of course, none of this would be possible without the tremendous generosity and ongoing commitment of Colonial Williamsburg’s donors. Through your visionary support, you have become true champions for history education and preservation.

Learn more or make your gift online, please visit history.org/donate

“It’s the total experience. Historic Area interpreters, tavern food and music, Women’s History Month, African American programming, the smell of wood fires and beautiful gardens. I’d like Colonial Williamsburg to continue creating great memories for future visitors.”

~ Bonnie-Anne Briggs
Statement of Financial Position

The Foundation’s total assets were $1.2 billion as of December 31, 2015. The endowment, representing approximately 60% of total assets, had a market value of $713 million. For calendar year 2015, the endowment’s investment return was 2.9 percent, which compares favorably with S&P 500 returns of 1.4 percent.

Debt decreased by $12 million on a year-over-year basis due to the maturity of a tax-exempt bond issued in 1995 and scheduled bond amortization.

The Foundation’s net assets decreased by $58 million in 2015, ending the year at $800 million.

Operating Results

Total revenues for 2015 were $4 million higher than in 2014. Operating revenues, which include admission ticket sales, hotel and restaurant revenues, retail sales, and rental of commercial and residential real estate in and around the Historic Area, were $4 million higher than in 2014 reflecting an 8% increase in hotel and restaurant revenues and a 1% increase in admission ticket sales in 2015. Gifts to the Colonial Williamsburg Fund totaled a record-breaking $16 million, reflecting strong donor support of Colonial Williamsburg’s mission. Total revenues for the calendar year, including budgeted endowment support, were $185 million.

Expenses for 2015 of $223 million were even with the prior year, reflecting savings in major expense line items that offset investments in staffing and preservation and maintenance. Operating expenses exceeded operating revenues by $38 million.

Financial Reporting Formats

Colonial Williamsburg monitors and reports internally on the regularly recurring, or operating, revenues and expenses resulting from routine activities in order to assess the financial performance of educational and for-profit activities. It reports in the audited financial statements all revenues and expenses in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles to reflect the consolidated financial impact of all activities of the Foundation and its subsidiaries. A third reporting format is required by the Internal Revenue Service on Form 990, an annual information return for The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, the 501(c)(3) entity that is exempt from federal income taxes on most of its activities. The financial results on Form 990 represent the unconsolidated financial results of only this 501(c)(3) organization, the Foundation’s taxable subsidiaries—for example, Colonial Williamsburg Company—report their financial results separately on corporate income tax returns.

The operating results reported in the top half of the Consolidated Income Statement and Statement of Changes in Net Assets table shown in this report refer to ticket sales; all revenues generated by hospitality and products; unrestricted operating gifts and restricted gifts for operations spent for their intended purpose during the year; the budgeted amount of endowment support provided by our endowment spending policy; and all operating expenses of the Foundation and its subsidiaries.

Below the operating deficit line in the report we include non-operating items, such as the difference between the total return produced by the endowment and the budgeted endowment support; all other gifts and grants, that is to say, pledges; restricted gifts received but not spent; gifts for endowment and capital projects, and gifts of objects; gains on sales of real estate; and the financial statement impact of changes in generally accepted accounting principles. The combination of the operating and non-operating items is reflected as the change in net assets, which is consistent with the audited financial statements.

“I want to make sure the places I adore are provided for. If I can do anything to keep Colonial Williamsburg alive—both now and later on—I want to do it.”

~ Stephanie Pope

Sources of Giving 2006-2015

INDIVIDUALS 85.6%
GOVERNMENT 3.6%
FOUNDATION 5.5%
CORPORATE 5.3%
Looking Forward

In developing the Foundation’s 2016 financial plan, the goal has been to balance strategic investment and fiscal discipline with innovative program development throughout Colonial Williamsburg. These objectives require careful resource management, a learning culture, and willingness to improve the guest experience. The Foundation also remains focused on technology, providing an outstanding guest experience and recognizing its employees.

Condensed Consolidated Statements of Financial Position
As of December 31, 2015 and 2014
(dollars in millions)

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<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash and Temporary Investments</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>Other Current Assets</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fixed Assets, Net</td>
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<td>Investments</td>
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<td>Other Assets</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL ASSETS</strong></td>
<td>1,189</td>
<td>1,251</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Liabilities and Net Assets    |       |       |
| Current Liabilities (excluding debt) | 31    | 26    |
| Debt                          | 309   | 321   |
| Other Non-Current Liabilities | 49    | 46    |
| **TOTAL LIABILITIES**         | 389   | 393   |

| Net Assets                    | 800   | 858   |
| **TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS** | 1,189 | 1,251 |
### Financial Results

#### Condensed Consolidated Statements of Operations and Changes in Net Assets

**for the twelve months ended December 31, 2015 and 2014**

*(dollars in millions)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>2015</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Revenues:</strong></td>
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<td>Colonial Williamsburg Fund</td>
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<td>Gifts Restricted for Operations</td>
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<td>Annual Endowment Withdrawal for Operations</td>
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<td><strong>Total Operating Expenses</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Difference Between Operating Revenues and Expenses</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Non-Operating Revenues and Expenses and Other Changes in Net Assets:</strong></td>
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<td>Endowment Investment Income, realized and unrealized gains/(losses) used for non-operating purposes or retained in endowment</td>
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<td>Change in Postretirement Benefits</td>
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<td>Endowment, Capital, and Other Gifts</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td><strong>Change in Net Assets</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Net Assets at beginning of year</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Net Assets at end of year</strong></td>
<td>$ 800</td>
<td>$ 858</td>
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*The preceding selected consolidated financial information has been derived from the consolidated financial statements of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and Subsidiary. These have been audited by BDO USA LLP, independent auditors.*
“Colonial Williamsburg is special . . . What happened here is our history; spending time in this unique place helps me understand how we became Americans . . . I’m delighted to be a part of the Colonial Williamsburg family and to help safeguard this national treasure.”

~ Nancy Smith, Colonial Williamsburg supporter
Colonial Williamsburg

wishes to thank each and every donor, employee and volunteer who makes our work and progress possible. You truly exemplify the spirit of unity and giving on which our nation was founded.

THANK YOU!

Thomas F. Farrell II  
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