

## Small Artifacts Can Have a Big Impact.

In 2013, archaeologists working on a project in Fairfax County discovered beads on a site known as Accotink Quarter. These beads, now featured in the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History's Objects of Wonder exhibit ([Objects of Wonder | Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History \(si.edu\)](https://www.si.edu/objects-of-wonder)) allowed researchers to both date the site to the first half of the eighteenth century (1720-1760) but also to document a clear delineation in where enslaved workers lived versus the living spaces of their overseers. Additionally, the presence of beads on a site of enslavement provides insight into the lives of people who may have used them to retain West and Central African cultural or religious practices by creating adornments or talismans with beads.

You can visit these beads at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, where they are on loan through 2025.



*Glass Beads, African American, Accotink Quarter Site, 44FX0223. Fairfax County Park Authority, Fairfax County, Virginia, 1720-1760. Courtesy of the Fairfax County Park Authority and Thunderbird Archeology, a division of Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc.*

*Photography by James Di Loreto, Smithsonian Institution.*