

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Pocahontas Island Historic District 2023 Update

Other names/site number: VDHR No. 123-0114

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: Pocahontas, Witten, Rolfe, Logan, and Sapony Streets

City or town: Petersburg State: VA County: Independent City

Not For Publication: N/A

Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X additional documentation move removal name change (additional documentation) other meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national X statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B C D


 Signature of certifying official/Title:

11-25-2023
 Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

 Signature of commenting official:

 Date

 Title :

 State or Federal agency/bureau
 or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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Introduction

The Pocahontas Island Historic District was listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register and National Register of Historic Places in 2006. This additional documentation has been prepared to document the history of indigenous peoples within the district during its period of significance. A significant number of Native American families, predominantly from the Pamunkey Indian Tribe, resided in Pocahontas Island throughout the 19th century. Due to inaccuracies in historic records, particularly census data, the 2006 nomination misidentified some individuals residing in the district who outwardly identified as Indian people despite that many were misidentified in historic records. These individuals maintained close connections with the core communities of their respective Tribes while living in the residential and commercial neighborhood of Pocahontas Island as residents, laborers, and consumers. Petersburg's attractiveness as a bustling industrial city, its riverine setting, its success as a commercial port, and Pocahontas Island's welcoming demographics as a community of people of color attracted Pamunkey Indian families whose fathers and sons had generational experiences of working Virginia's waterways for centuries. Research to date demonstrates that at least four generations of Pamunkey tribal members called Pocahontas Island their home from approximately 1815 to 1900. Today, Pocahontas is a quiet, residential neighborhood that consists of mostly frame, predominantly one-story dwellings that date from the turn of the twentieth century with only one still-extant pre-Civil War building. In 1993, a tornado ravaged the neighborhood and drastically changed its built environment. Many of the dwellings on the island were damaged or destroyed by the tornado, creating more open space than historically existed in this once densely populated, ethnically diverse, urban neighborhood. In 2020, the "Underground Railroad House" (123-0114-0016/ 44PG0471) located at 213-215 Witten Street was demolished due to advanced deterioration. The historic district now contains 46 contributing buildings, 6 contributing sites, and 14 noncontributing buildings. The noncontributing resources are houses built after the tornado to replace those destroyed by the storm.

This additional documentation includes only those sections of the current NRHP nomination form that have new or updated information. The historic district's level and period of significance have not been altered, and the district's historic boundary *has not changed* as a result of this additional documentation. Section 5 provides an updated count of contributing and noncontributing resources within the district and a new current function has been noted in Section 6. In Section 7, inventory entries for two properties, the "Underground Railroad House" (123-0114-0016/44PG071) and the Jarratt House (123-0114-0002/44PG0471) have been updated to reflect current conditions and to correct an erroneous archaeological site number for the Jarratt House. In Section 8, the updated statement of significance adds two new areas of significance, Ethnic Heritage: Native American and Social History: Civil Rights, that pertain to the Native residents of Pocahontas Island. In Section 9, additional cited references are listed. To conform to current National Park Service guidelines, location coordinates for the historic district have been recorded with latitude/longitude coordinates. A current aerial map and updated location map also have been attached to this additional documentation. The first provides an aerial view showing the vicinity of the Pocahontas Island Historic District within the City of Petersburg. The second map is a close-up view of the historic district that includes the updated location coordinates and boundaries for the two archaeological sites. Photos that show current conditions for the two properties mentioned above, the "Underground Railroad House (123-0114-0016/44PG0471) and the Jarratt House (123-0114-0002/44PG0470), also are provided.

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Section 5. Classification

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>46</u>	<u>14</u>	buildings
<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>52</u>	<u>14</u>	Total

Section 6. Function or Use

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION: Museum

Section 7. Description

Summary Paragraph

As described in the 2005 nomination for the Pocahontas Island Historic District, it is located on the northern edge of the city of Petersburg. Originally, Pocahontas Island lay across the main channel of the Appomattox River from the city's center, hence its name. A diversion channel cut in 1915 north of the island is now the main river channel and separates Pocahontas Island from Chesterfield County, while the former island now can be accessed by land from downtown Petersburg. The district today largely is a primarily residential neighborhood that consists of frame, one-story dwellings that date from the turn of the twentieth century. Just one early nineteenth building, the Jarratt House, survives today. Many early buildings within the district were lost to a tornado in 1993 that traveled diagonally across the island from southwest to northeast. More recently, in 2020, the "Underground Railroad House" (123-0114-0016) was demolished, although archaeology testing has shown it retains cultural deposits that allow it to be a contributing site (44PG0471). Today, the historic district contains 46 contributing buildings and 6 contributing sites, as well as 14 noncontributing buildings. The noncontributing resources are houses built after the 1993 tornado to replace those destroyed by the storm.

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Section number Additional Documentation Page 3**Narrative Description****213-215 Witten Street****123-0114-0016/ 44PG0471***Primary Resource Information:* **Multiple dwelling, Stories 1.50, Style: Other, pre-1839***Individual Resource Status:* Dwelling Demolished

Contributing Total: 0

Individual Resource Status: Archaeological Site 44PG0471

Contributing Total: 1

The one-and-one-half-story, frame, double house commonly referred to as the “Underground Railroad House” is no longer extant. It was demolished by the property owner on May 11, 2020. All above-grade traces of the building have been removed and the site is now a vacant lot. A contributing archaeological site (44PG0471) was not disturbed by the demolition and continues to be classified as a contributing site. This site consists of the archaeological component associated with the dwelling. In 2006, intensive professional investigation within the surrounding yard area, measuring approximately 110 feet (N-S) by 70 feet (E-W), excavated 25 test units. Most test units measured 2 feet square, although some adjacent to the house foundation were somewhat larger. Through this investigation, a significant concentration of artifacts dating from the early nineteenth century through the twentieth century, evidence of intact cultural layers, and a number of intact features, including a former bulkhead entrance to the house, were identified. Architectural materials retrieved included brick and mortar fragments, nails (cut, wire, and unidentifiable), iron hardware, slate, and window glass. Domestic artifacts included fish and animal bone; oyster and clam shell; a handful of kaolin tobacco pipe fragments; coal; and a large quantity of modern trash. A wide variety of ceramics were collected, including coarse earthenware, redware, Pennsylvania coarseware, terra cotta ware, Yorktown coarseware, Creamware, Pearlware, whiteware, Rockingham/Bennington ware, Yellowware, porcelain, Albany slip stoneware, American blue and gray stoneware, American brown stoneware, American gray stoneware, stoneware bisque, Nottingham stoneware, and ginger beer stoneware. A variety of glass hollowware fragments were identified, as well (amber, amethyst, blue, cobalt, gray, light green, olive green, dark green, milk, and solarized).

808-810 Logan Street**123-0114-0002***Primary Resource Information:* **Multiple dwelling, Stories 2.00, Style: Federal, 1819-1820***Individual Resource Status:* **Multiple dwelling**

Contributing Total: 1

Individual Resource Status: **Archaeological Site 44PG0470**

Contributing Total: 1

This dwelling, historically known as the “Jarratt House,” is the last pre-Civil War building still extant in the Pocahontas Island Historic District. It was individually listed in the NRHP in 2023. The City of Petersburg owns the property and has stabilized by rebuilding the rear elevation, which had partially collapsed at an unknown date, and repointing of the masonry and foundation. The window openings and entries have been boarded over to protect the interior rooms and the roof remains in good condition. This 2.5-story building has the further distinction of being the only brick dwelling within the district, the district’s only remaining example of Federal style, and the only example of an antebellum double house.

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In the 2005 nomination, Site 44PG0474 was erroneously assigned to the Jarratt House. Instead, the site associated with the Jarratt House is 44PG0470. In 2006, the 80' by 60' lot on which the Jarratt House stands was subject to professional archaeological investigations, including identifying the locations of since-removed rear, frame additions and outbuildings typically associated with an early nineteenth century, urban parcel behind a double house. These investigations yielded considerable evidence of intact cultural features, including those associated with the initial construction of the house as well as features likely associated with the former frame additions on the rear elevation.¹

The 2006 excavations included 22 test units, most of which measured 2' square or larger (Figures 1 and 2, below). The field investigations revealed that site soils were relatively undisturbed, with some of the lowest horizons evidently contemporary with (if not predating) the extant dwelling. Ample evidence of intact subsurface cultural features was documented, including what appeared to be a consistent builder's trench around the dwelling, postholes, possible pit and trench features, and other features likely associated with the later frame additions on the west (rear) façade of the house. A wide range of both domestic and architectural materials were recovered; in general, the artifact assemblage appeared to be consistent with the documented occupation dates of the house lot (ca. 1820 and later), although a few ceramics and wrought nails hinted at earlier activities, possibly on adjoining properties.²

¹ See Laird, Matthew. Archaeological Investigation of Six sites ... at Pocahontas Island, City of Petersburg, Virginia. Prepared for the Department of Planning and Community Development, City of Petersburg, Virginia, 2006. This report is on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

² Laird, 2006, p. 25.

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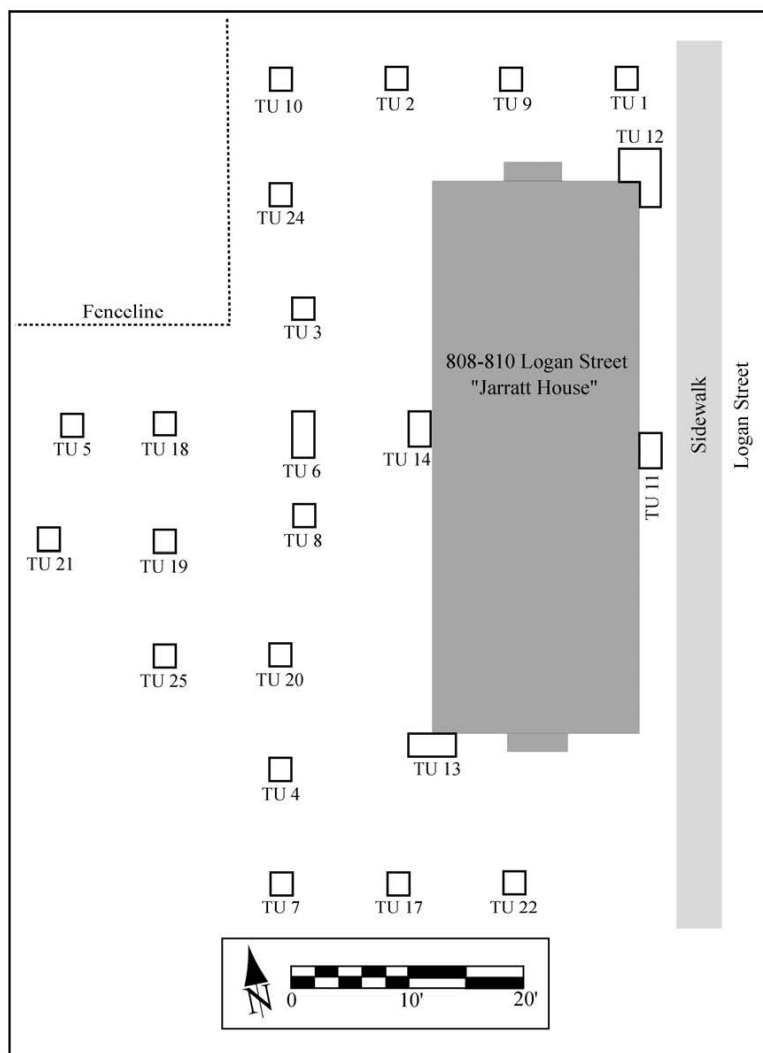


Figure 1. Location of 22 test units at the Jarratt House, (Laird, 2006, p. 8).

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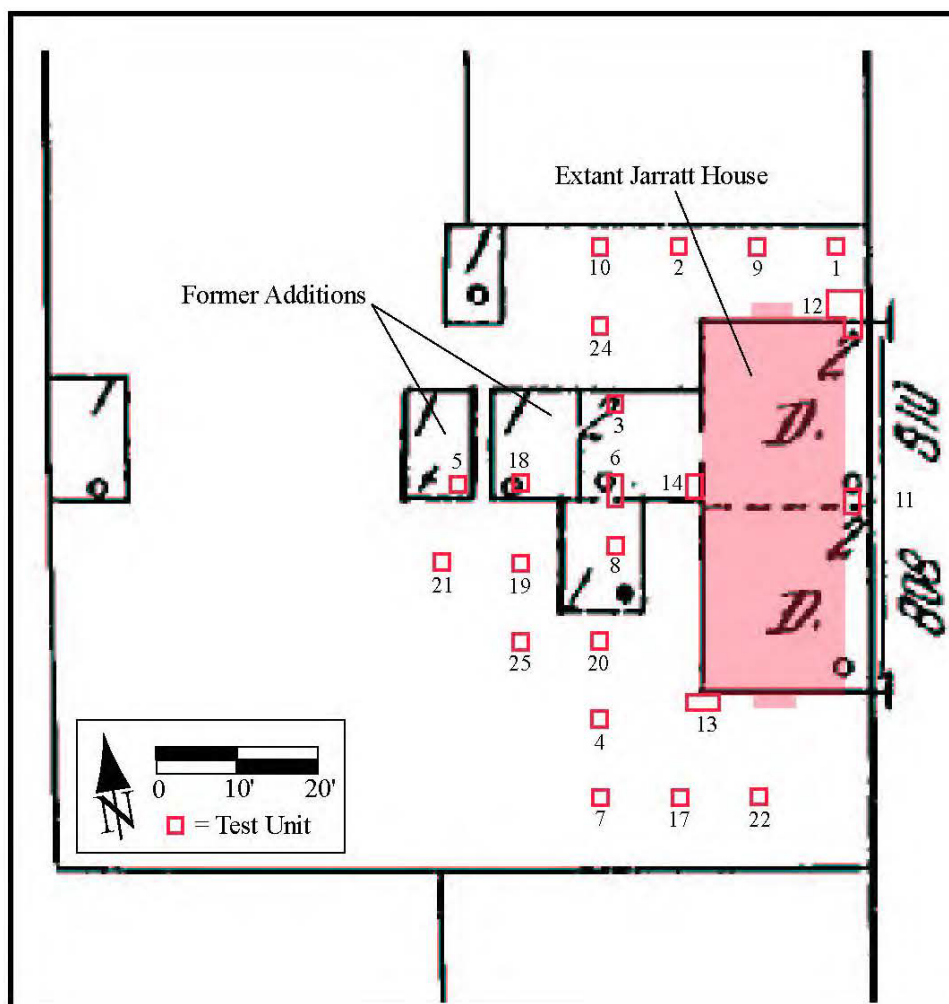


Figure 2. Test unit locations as projected on a 1915 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map (Laird, 2006, p. 7).

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Section 8. Statement of Significance

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ETHNIC HERITAGE Native American

SOCIAL HISTORY: Civil Rights

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Pocahontas Island Historic District's 2006 nomination requires an amendment because the history of indigenous peoples within the historic district's boundaries was not accurately addressed and represented as originally written. A significant number of Native American families, predominantly from the Pamunkey Indian Tribe, resided in Pocahontas Island throughout the 19th century. In some instances, the 2006 nomination included incorrect information from census and vital records in which tribal members were not identified as such, but instead were recorded as "black" or "negro." Surnames also were recorded inconsistently, making it difficult to trace kinship networks and to follow the close connections that the core communities maintained with their respective Tribes. During the first half of the 19th century, in order to secure their legal rights, many tribal members were required to petition their local government for recognition as a "free person of color," a legal classification for non-White people who were not enslaved. Tribal members who submitted such petitions not only sought to protect their rights within a racially organized society dominated by Whites, but to assert their identities as Virginia Indians and the continuity of their presence in Virginia. For these reasons, the areas of Ethnic Heritage: Native American and Social History: Civil Rights, with significance at the local level, have been added to the nomination.

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Indian residents of Pocahontas Island are not easily discernable for historians and other scholars unfamiliar with Virginia Indian history. Such research requires knowledge of Virginia Indian historical experiences beyond the 17th century, familiarity with the common surnames of Virginia's Tribes, and an understanding of the complex challenges Indian people faced in navigating their legal classification in a state that relied on a binary system of racial categorization which privileged the rule of hypodescent (also referred to as the "one drop rule") and therefore the existence of only two race-based identifiers – "white" and "colored."³ Thus, in government records created and maintained by White officials, legal classification by race was largely restricted to "white" or "colored," although other descriptive terms,

³ The "one-drop" rule refers to the legal concept developed in the American South to identify persons who were Black versus those who were considered to be White. During the slavery and Jim Crow eras, a person whose lineage included anyone of African descent, regardless of how distant the relationship was, would be classified as Black according to the "one-drop" rule. The assumption that a person of mixed lineage cannot be considered White has endured although legal restrictions associated with such lineage now have been rendered unconstitutional but social and cultural assumptions rooted in this distinction have persisted

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such as “mulatto,” historically denoted for most people a biracial identity of White and Black lineage but without the understanding that the classification also applied to Indian people regardless of their Indian ancestry and affiliation. The misconception that “full-blooded” or “authentic” Indians no longer resided in Virginia, coupled with the state’s binary racial classification, culminated in the passing of the 1924 Act to Preserve Racial Integrity. The Racial Integrity Act denied tribal members the legal right to be classified as Indians on vital records; White officials went so far as to change a person’s self-identified tribal affiliation in favor of the term “colored” in their efforts to erase the continued presence of Virginia Indians. The “paper genocide,” as it was known, had negative impacts for Virginia’s tribal communities that continued well into the 21st century.

Much of the documentary evidence available on the residents of Pocahontas Island, 19th-century census records in particular, does not clearly indicate that several of the individuals mentioned in the original nomination (and others who are discussed below) were Indian. Methods used to record racial classification in records, coupled with White officials’ limited understanding of Virginia Indian history in the Commonwealth, have contributed to the lack of inclusion regarding the historical experience of Indian families who lived and worked in Pocahontas Island. Therefore, highlighting the historic legal classifications of Indian people and the associated challenges as they pertained to the lives of several Indian residents of the Pocahontas Island Historic District are necessary corrections to the original nomination.

Historical Context for Indigenous Residency in the Pocahontas Island Historic District

Virginia Indian residency in urban centers was a common historical experience for tribal members as communities gradually moved away from traditional subsistence methods as the sole means for meeting economic needs and increasingly sought wage labor opportunities. Wage labor jobs often revolved around knowledge indigenous people gained from practicing traditional subsistence, and for many Virginia Indian communities, that meant working on the water. Knowledge of working the riverine landscape of Tidewater Virginia was vital for Indian people intercepting markets located in urban centers of Virginia, including Richmond, Norfolk, and Petersburg, and well beyond the state, such as in New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Washington D.C.

Petersburg during the 19th century was a thriving inland port that played a vital role in commerce and trade within the region. Given the riverine setting of Petersburg, its success as a commercial port, and Pocahontas Island’s welcoming demographics as a community of people of color, the neighborhood attracted Pamunkey families. Residing in Petersburg with their families provided Pamunkey men opportunities to work as watermen fishing for market or working the waterways as boatmen and sailors. For example, the 1860, 1870, and 1880 United States censuses recording East Ward residents reveal the dominant occupations for men were related to the water. The occupations listed included “Master of Schooner,” “Sailor,” and “Fisherman.”⁴

⁴ U.S. Census, 1860, 1870, 1880 Virginia, Schedule of Inhabitants, Dinwiddie County.

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While knowledge of working the waterways provided incentives for Native men to make the move to Pocahontas Island, Indian women, those from the Pamunkey Indian Tribe in particular, were also pushed to move from their core communities to Petersburg. Several Pamunkey women chose to move with their children and reside in the Pocahontas Island neighborhood most likely due to a Tribal law that stated “no individual who is not a descendant of a Pamunkey Indian shall settle among them.”⁵ This law shifted to focus specifically on Pamunkey women who were not allowed to hold allotments if they married non-Pamunkey men. Several of the documented Pamunkey residents listed as heads of households in Pocahontas were women who did not have known Pamunkey husbands. Whatever the motivation that led Indian individuals to reside and work in urban centers like Petersburg, like other people of color, they were forced to navigate the strict racial classification system of 19th century Virginia that restricted their movement across the landscape.

By the turn of the 19th century, Virginia Indians became increasingly subsumed within the larger population of people of color in the minds of White Virginians. The issues and laws that plagued African Americans in the region carried similar negative effects for tribal communities.⁶ Racist ideologies, policies, and environments were experienced by members of the Virginia Indian tribes throughout the nineteenth century as reservation lands were allotted and sold off, their ability to move freely and engage economically across the region was restricted, and they faced outward hostility to their identification as indigenous peoples. Virginia Indians not living on a reservation or within a locality that recognized its Indian population were required to register with the county or city government as a free person of color in the “Free Negro and Mulatto Register.” This was particularly true for tribal members living off of their reservations in Virginia cities such as Petersburg.

King William County, home to the only two still-intact Indian reservations in Virginia, was the rare exception.⁷ Cognizant of the large Indian population in King William, county officials did not require Indian individuals to join the Free Negro and Mulatto Register. For the Tribes that occupied lands, their appointed trustees issued certificates or “free papers” for individual tribal members, especially for those who left their reservation communities to engage in the economic opportunities that urban centers afforded. The City of Petersburg would not have recognized Indians as being exempt even when the Commonwealth passed a law in 1833 that made it a lawful option to issue certificates that identified individuals as the descendants of Indians and other people of mixed ancestry.⁸ Even with this legal avenue established for Indian people to be classified as such in city and county registers, tribal individuals residing in cities not cognizant of its Indian population were met with confusion from

⁵ Denry, Lewis, November 25, 1795, Lewis and Suzannah Denry Petition Collection, Virginia State Archives Legislative Petitions, King William County, Box 134, Folder 41. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

⁶ O’Brien, Jean *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians out of Existence in New England*. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), xxi.

⁷ Lavinia Sampson Free Papers, 1841, Petersburg Free Negro and Slave Records, 1787-1865, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

⁸ General Assembly. “An ACT concerning descendants of indians and other persons of mixed blood, not being free negroes or mulattoes,” (February 25, 1833), *Encyclopedia Virginia*, Virginia Humanities (07 Dec. 2020).

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officials regarding their identity and often had to struggle to be recognized and classified as Indians.

Indigenous Residents of Pocahontas Island

One of the largest Indian families living at Pocahontas throughout the 19th century included the Sampsons, who were recognized members of the Pamunkey Indian Tribe. Sally Sampson⁹ (Major) was the matriarch of three generations of Sampson families that resided in Pocahontas from at least 1815 through the 1880s. Sally was born ca. 1780 on the Pamunkey Indian Reservation and was the daughter of prominent tribal member John Sampson, Sr.. The elder Sampson was born and raised on the Pamunkey Indian Reservation, attended the Brafferton Indian School at the College of William and Mary in 1764¹⁰, and was a recognized tribal leader as “one of the chief men of that tribe.”¹¹ Sally Sampson married Thomas Major (born before 1776), who was listed as a “free man of color” with the occupation of sailor in 1821.¹² Sally’s free papers, certified on November 20, 1810,¹³ by James Johnson, trustee of the Pamunkey Indian Tribe, mentions Thomas Major as her husband, but did not distinguish if he was a member of the Tribe. However, Major was a popular surname among residents of the Pamunkey and Mattaponi Reservation communities in King William County.

On June 19, 1815, Sally and Thomas Major purchased Lot 13 in the neighborhood of Pocahontas for \$300¹⁴, and on January 1, 1816, they sold the northern section of the lot to Francis Pelham for \$150.¹⁵ Sally had what appears to be at least four children including John, Charles, Charlotte, and Lavinia Sampson, all of whom were born on the Pamunkey Indian Reservation in King William County. In 1820, Sally was listed as the head of a household comprised of 1 free colored woman and 1 free colored man, both between the ages of 26-45. She was also mentioned in the list of “free people of color” for Petersburg in 1821 as a laborer alongside her children Charlotte, John and Lavinia Sampson.¹⁶ Interestingly, Sally gave each of her children the surname of Sampson.¹⁷ Slavery was legal at this time

⁹ More research is required, but it appears that Sally may have had several siblings also living in Petersburg during the first quarter of the 19th century.

¹⁰ *William and Mary College, Catalogue*, 1859, p. 33, U.S. School Catalogues, 1765-1935.

¹¹ Pamunkey Indians: Petition, King William County, 1798-12-27, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

¹² List of Free People of Color in the Town of Petersburg for the year 1821, African American Narrative Digital Collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

¹³ Lavinia Sampson Free Papers, 1841, Petersburg Free Negro and Slave Records, 1787-1865, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

¹⁴ Petersburg Hustling Court Deed Book 4, 1811-1815, p.334. Local government records collection, Petersburg City Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

¹⁵ Petersburg Hustling Court Deed Book 5, 1816-1818, pg. 12.

¹⁶ List of Free People of Color in the Town of Petersburg for the year 1821. There is no mention of Charlotte.

¹⁷ The record is not clear on who the father of Sally’s children were; however, it is clear that Thomas Major was not their father as evidenced in his will that was executed on January 18, 1844, in which he willed his estate to his *daughter in law*, Lavinia Sampson. During this time, the term daughter in law often referred to stepdaughter.

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and a Virginia law enacted in 1662 stated that lifetime enslavement of a child followed the condition of the mother; thus, a free woman's children were free, while an enslaved woman's children were born enslaved.¹⁸ Because living on the Pamunkey Reservation was not an option for Sally Sampson, it would have been a safe and strategic decision to maintain her maiden name and to pass it on to her children. She also secured an additional layer of protection by ensuring her children were registered in the city of Petersburg as "free persons of color."

Sally registered John and Charles in 1817 and Lavinia in 1822.¹⁹ John Sampson was born ca. 1798 and was registered in Petersburg on October 18, 1817. He was described as "a lad of Colour (son of Sally Major, a free woman) about nineteen years old, five feet nine inches high, of a light-yellow brown Complexion [sic], has strait [sic] hair, cow lick in his hair, born free in King William County, said to be of Indian descent & by trade a shoemaker. Registered by desire of his mother."²⁰ Charles Sampson was born about 1799 and registered in Petersburg on April 2, 1817. He was described as "a free man of Colour, five feet nine and a half inches high in shoes, about 18 yrs old, of dark brown complexion [sic], born free in King William County, Registered at Request of his mother Sall [sic] Major."²¹ Lavinia Sampson was born around 1805 and registered in Petersburg on July 2, 1822. She is described as "daughter of Sally Major, near 5 feet 5 inches high, brown complexion, strait black hair, born free in the county of King William."²²

One noteworthy event in Sally Sampson Major's life included the purchase and emancipation of an enslaved man named Cuffy Ruffin. Sally purchased Cuffy from James McFarland, Jr., of Petersburg and submitted a deed of manumission for his freedom on July 19, 1838. Cuffy was described as "a man of dark complexion, about five feet seven or eight inches high and about fifty-five years of age."²³ Sally had to make a second deed of manumission on February 21, 1839, to ensure Cuffy was granted his freedom.²⁴ The relationship between Cuffy and Sally is not clear, and it is not evident why she purchased him and then set him free. There may have been a potential connection in residency as Sally and another individual named Billy Ruffin appear to be close neighbors according to the 1820 U.S. Census.²⁵ However, Ruffin was a popular surname in the city of Petersburg during the first half of the 19th century and additional research is required to clarify the relationships between the Ruffin and

(Petersburg Hustung Court Will Book 3, 1827-1849, p. 347).

¹⁸ William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large; Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia from the First Session of the Legislature, in the Year 1619* (New York: R. & W. & G. Bartow, 1823), 2:170.

¹⁹ I was unable to locate any register listing for Charlotte and only uncovered mention of her in the 1821 List of Free People of Color (List of Free People of Color in the Town of Petersburg for the year 1821).

²⁰ Registers of Free Negroes and Mulattoes, 1794-1865. No.877. Local government records collection, Petersburg City Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

²¹ Registers of Free Negroes and Mulattoes, 1794-1865, No. 843.

²² Registers of Free Negroes and Mulattoes, 1794-1865, No. 1170.

²³ Petersburg Hustung Court Deed Book 10, p. 491.

²⁴ Petersburg Hustung Court Deed Book 11, p. 3.

²⁵ U.S. Census, 1820 Virginia, Schedule of Inhabitants, Dinwiddie County, p. 728.

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Major/Sampson families.

Sally's daughter, Lavinia Sampson, is one of the most documented indigenous individuals living at Pocahontas Island during the 19th century. While she is addressed in the district's original NRHP nomination, she is not properly identified as a Native American person who was a member of the Pamunkey Indian Tribe. Thus, this amendment provides additional details on Lavinia's life and experiences residing in the neighborhood of Pocahontas Island. Lavinia had six children who were born and raised in Petersburg. They included²⁶ John Sampson, born around 1822; Sarah Sampson, born about 1824; Charles Sampson, born 1828; Rebecca Sampson, born 1831; Thomas Sampson, born in 1834; and Henry Sampson, who was most likely born between 1839-1841.²⁷

Lavinia attempted to have her children registered with the city by 1841, requesting that they be identified as Pamunkey Indians on the city's register of "free people of color."²⁸ Pamunkey tribal leaders and the Tribe's trustees provided testimony to the City of Petersburg that Lavinia Sampson had been born at Indian Town²⁹ and was the daughter of Sally Sampson and the granddaughter of John Sampson.³⁰ On February 18, 1841, the Hustings Court of Petersburg ruled that her children did not need to register as free Negroes since they were descendants of an Indian.³¹ Her efforts to register her family, as was required by law, and the insistence that her Pamunkey identity be documented, demonstrates that Lavinia Sampson clearly identified herself and her children as members of the Pamunkey Indian Tribe and understood the necessity to be recorded as free in order to secure their rights.

Not only did Lavinia maintain identity as a member of the Pamunkey Indian Tribe, she retained close familial and community relationships with tribal members who lived on the Pamunkey Indian Reservation. One court case in particular, John Leddy, etc. vs. ADMR of Jane Updike, etc., demonstrates the close connections between Pamunkey families residing in Pocahontas Island and those who lived on the Reservation. Jane Bradby Updike was the daughter of Ritta Bradby, a member of the Pamunkey Indian Tribe, and John Updike, a sailor born in Rhode Island, all of whom resided in Pocahontas Island. When Jane passed in 1863 with no children, Lavinia stepped in to pay for Jane's funeral expenses.³² Lavinia had close familial connections to the Bradby family as the Sampson and

²⁶ U.S. Census, 1850, Virginia, Schedule of Inhabitants, Dinwiddie County, p. 332.

²⁷ Petersburg Chancery Case # 19: ADMR of Lavinia Sampson vs John Hope & Wife. 1882. Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA. Henry Sampson is mentioned in this document, however he does not appear on any of the census records alongside his mother, Lavinia's household.

²⁸ Sampson, Lavinia Free Papers 1841, p.2-5.

²⁹ During the 19th century the Reservation was often referred to as Indian Town or Indian Island.

³⁰ Sampson, Lavinia Free Papers 1841, p.2-5. See also, Assistant Secretary Indian Affairs. 2014. *Proposed Finding for Acknowledgment of The Pamunkey Indian Tribe*. Office of Federal Acknowledgement, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C., p. 38.

³¹ Petersburg (VA.) Free Negro and Slave Records, 1787-1865, Local government records collection, Petersburg (City) Court Records; Hustings Court Minutes, 1841-2, p. 14. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

³² While the document is torn, it clearly states, "Jane Updike, a free woman of color departed this life about the

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Bradby families were intermarried. Because Jane Updike had no children, the inheritance of her estate resulted in a dispute involving several Pamunkey individuals living in Pocahontas Island and on the Pamunkey Indian Reservation.

The dispute arose when Martha Miles Bland, the daughter of “Nat” Miles, both Pamunkey tribal members, asserted that she was an heir of Jane Updike’s estate. Martha was Lavinia’s neighbor as evidenced in the 1860 census.³³ There is also evidence that Martha was close with Lavinia and her children. For example, Martha took in Charles Sampson Dennis’ widow, Mary Wilthall Dennis (Lavinia’s daughter-in-law), after Charles’s passing sometime before 1870.³⁴ The case brought interested parties from the Bradby, Miles, and Cook families together (all members of the Pamunkey Indian Tribe), including Jane’s uncles, Edward, William, Pleasant, and Sterling Bradby. Jane’s Bradby family members claimed they had rights to the inheritance as they were closer descendants to Jane than Martha Miles Bland. Because the Bradby individuals who served as plaintiffs in this case all resided on the Pamunkey Indian Reservation, on October 27, 1863, they elected to provide Lavinia Sampson with Power of Attorney to settle and manage the estate on their behalf.³⁵ For example, she managed the lease of the land the Bradbys inherited from the Updike estate, including a wharf on the Appomattox River.³⁶ In all, twenty-five Pamunkey played a role in the case, demonstrating that Pamunkey tribal members living at Pocahontas Island continued to maintain close social and family ties to the core tribal community that resided on the Pamunkey Indian Reservation.

Lavinia Sampson’s circumstances as a Pamunkey woman and person of color were highly unusual and significant given the time, due in part to the large amount of real estate she came to manage and own over the fifty years she resided within the Pocahontas Island community. Her first documented acquisition of land took place on November 16, 1821, when Sally and Thomas Major sold a quarter of the southwest portion of Lot. No. 13 to Lavinia, “the daughter of said Sally,” for \$200.³⁷ By 1850, Lavinia owned \$450 worth of real estate, and by 1860 she was documented as owning \$3,400³⁸ worth of real estate, all presumably within the boundaries of Pocahontas Island. At this time, Lavinia had purchased, and was residing within, the six-bay, brick, two-unit dwelling now known as the Jarratt House.³⁹ As mentioned in the original district nomination, it appears likely that Lavinia was hosting

month of October 1863 (?) intestate leaving some personal effects and a lot of land with the appurtenance on Appomattox River in that part of Petersburg called Pocah [page torn]” (Petersburg Chancery Court 1868:2).

³³ U.S. Census, 1860, Virginia, Schedule of Inhabitants, Dinwiddie County, p. 176.

³⁴ U.S. Census, 1870, Virginia, Schedule of Inhabitants, Dinwiddie County, p. 36.

³⁵ Petersburg Hustung Court Deed Book 28 1863-1866, p.38.

³⁶ Petersburg Hustung Court Deed Book 30 1867-1868, p.159.

³⁷ Petersburg Hustung Court Deed Book 8 1826-1832, p.158.

³⁸ U.S. Census, 1860, Virginia, Schedule of Inhabitants, Dinwiddie County, p. 176.

³⁹ The Jarratt House (123-0114-0002) has been nominated to the state and national register for individual listing. The nomination includes information about Lavinia Sampson and her family as well as the house’s history since its construction ca. 1820 through the late twentieth century.

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boarders⁴⁰ at the property, which was a prevalent economic endeavor for women during a period of very limited opportunities for wage employment. The practice among Pamunkey women owning and managing boarding houses has been documented in several urban centers (Richmond, Va., Philadelphia, Pa., New York, NY) and provides a small but demonstrable economic pattern that continued well into the first half of the twentieth century.⁴¹

Through her real estate acquisitions, Lavinia Sampson supported her children by providing personal loans to them and deeding to them property within the historic district. Lavinia deeded a portion of Lot 29 on February 25, 1854, to her son-in-law, John Hope, who was married to her daughter Rebecca. On April 23, 1863, she deeded a portion of Lot 13 to her son Thomas Sampson.⁴² In 1865, she loaned her son John fifty dollars to purchase Lots No. 40, 41, and 42, where he resided with his wife and children.⁴³ On September 22, 1866, Lavinia and her children deeded a portion of land they co-owned for \$300 to the Richmond and Petersburg Railroad Company. The lot was described as “lying on the north or northwest side of the second street, at the south end of Pocahontas Bridge fronting on second street thirty-five feet and running back to the Appomattox River.”⁴⁴ The original deed had been conveyed to Lavinia in 1858 by Robert Bolling.⁴⁵ Even when Lavinia no longer called Petersburg home when she moved to Cleveland, Ohio, in 1874 to be with her daughter Rebecca and son-in-law John Hope, she continued to own real estate in Pocahontas Island. Lavinia died in Cleveland on June 11, 1875, and she is buried in the city’s Woodland Cemetery alongside Rebecca and John Hope.

Lavinia’s children also resided in Pocahontas Island, married, and raised their children in the neighborhood. Interestingly, her sons changed their last names to Dennis from Sampson when they married. There is little information on who the father of Lavinia’s children was as she maintained the surname Sampson. However, when her son Thomas married, he identified his father as “John Dennis” on his marriage record.⁴⁶ Lavinia’s eldest son, John, married a woman named Emma⁴⁷ sometime in the 1850s. They had two children, Robert, born about 1855, and Sarah, born about 1864. John, like many men living in Pocahontas, worked on the water. He was listed as a Boatman in the 1850 census and a

⁴⁰ A John O. Tyree was one of the boarders. Tyree is a known surname among the Cherokee, Choctaw and Monacan tribes.

⁴¹ Spivey, Ashley. “Knowing the River, Working the Land, and Digging for Clay: Pamunkey Indian Subsistence Practices and the Market Economy 1800 – 1900.” PhD diss. College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA, 2017.

⁴² Petersburg Husting Court Deed Book 32 1869-1870, p.153.

⁴³ Petersburg Chancery Case #21 Lavinia Sampson vs. ADMR of John S Dennis. 1869. Library of Virginia.

⁴⁴ Petersburg Husting Court Deed Book 29 1866-1867, p.352.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Virginia Bureau of Vital Statistics 1853-1935, Marriages, King William County, VA. See also Assistant Secretary Indian Affairs. 2014. *Proposed Finding for Acknowledgment of The Pamunkey Indian Tribe*. Office of Federal Acknowledgement, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C., p. 38.

⁴⁷ Emma’s maiden name is not known at this time, and it is unclear if she was a member of the Pamunkey Indian Tribe or another tribal community.

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Sailor in the 1860 census.⁴⁸ It is not clear how or when John died, but the record shows that Emma was widowed and John stopped appearing as head of household on the census for his family by 1870.⁴⁹ Charles married Mary Wilthall around 1848. By 1870, Mary was widowed and was living with Martha Miles Bland.⁵⁰ It appears that Charles and Mary did not have any children, however, more research is required to glean additional information on Charles following his marriage to Mary.

Thomas Sampson traveled to King William County to marry Pamunkey tribal member and Reservation resident Keziah Langston in 1855. Keziah was born September 14, 1833, on the Pamunkey Indian Reservation. Her parents were John Henry Langston and Nancy Wynn, and both were members of the Pamunkey Indian Tribe.⁵¹ Once married, Thomas changed his surname to Dennis and Keziah moved to Petersburg. Thomas' occupation in the city was listed as a Sailor in 1860, a Laborer in the 1870 census, and a Fisherman in 1872.⁵² Thomas and Keziah had four children including John, born January 21, 1857; Theodora, born May 13, 1863; Theophilus, born January 13, 1867; and Thomas, born December 14, 1874. By 1880, Keziah was widowed and living at 811 Cross Street with her children.⁵³ Her son, John Dennis, was an adult by this time and his occupation was listed as Fisherman.⁵⁴

Three of Keziah and Thomas' children married fellow Pamunkey Tribal members, and all eventually left Petersburg to live with their spouses. These marriages further demonstrate the close connections to the core Tribal community residing on the Reservation.⁵⁵ Even when John Dennis moved back to reservation, he continued to have interests in real estate at Pocahontas Island, as demonstrated in an 1880 chancery court case involving him and his mother Keziah. John's father, Thomas, died intestate and, like other Pamunkey before him, owned real estate in the Pocahontas Island neighborhood of Petersburg.⁵⁶ Because Thomas did not leave a will, John and his mother had to petition the court for

⁴⁸ U.S. Census, 1850, Virginia, Schedule of Inhabitants, Dinwiddie County, p. 332; U.S. Census, 1860, Virginia, Schedule of Inhabitants, Dinwiddie County, p. 176.

⁴⁹ There is a John Dennis that died in 1864 during the siege of Petersburg. John was a Private in the 157th Pennsylvania Infantry and died fighting in the trenches. More research is needed to determine if this is the same John Dennis.

⁵⁰ U.S. Census, 1870, Virginia, Schedule of Inhabitants, Dinwiddie County, p. 36.

⁵¹ Virginia Bureau of Vital Statistics 1853-1935, Deaths, King William County, VA. Keziah Langston Dennis.

⁵² U.S. City Directories, Petersburg, VA, 1822-1995. <https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/165937177/person/172224444807/facts>. Accessed May 1, 2022.

⁵³ U.S. Census, 1880, Virginia, Schedule of Inhabitants, Dinwiddie County, p. 13.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Virginia Bureau of Vital Statistics 1853-1935, Marriages, King William County, VA. See also Assistant Secretary Indian Affairs. 2014. *Proposed Finding for Acknowledgment of The Pamunkey Indian Tribe*. Office of Federal Acknowledgement, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C., p. 38.

⁵⁶ Specifically, the documents state: Humbly complaining sheweth unto your Honor your complainant John T. Dennis that his father Thos S. [torn page] died intestate in the city of Petersburg on the 11th day of Jany 1880, leaving surviving here his widow Keziah Dennis and his only heir at law entitled to his real estate, his four children to whit, your complainant and Theodor O. Dennis, about 16 years old, Theophilus Dennis about 12 years old and Thos S Dennis about 5 years old, and seized and possessed in fee simple of two lots of land lying and

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rights to his real estate interests in Petersburg. John eventually married Pamunkey Tribal member Emma Collins on September 26, 1900, and lived the remainder of his life on the Reservation while working as a fishermen and farmer.

Theophilus Dennis married Pamunkey Tribal member Luzelia Bradby on December 7, 1903. Luzelia was born on February 10, 1870, to parents Edward Bradby and Katherine Sampson. Theophilus and Luzelia moved to the Reservation sometime before 1900, where Theophilus served as Chief at the turn of the century. In 1910, Theophilus' occupation was listed as fisherman.⁵⁷ The couple later moved to 1501 Main Street in the city of Richmond, where they were living by 1920 and where Theophilus was working as a millwright in a locomotive factory. Interestingly, they were also earning an income through taking on boarders.⁵⁸ However, by 1940 they were both retired and living back on the Pamunkey Indian Reservation.⁵⁹

Theodora Dennis married fellow Pamunkey tribal member George Major Cook in 1887 and moved to the Reservation to live and raise their children. Her husband George was a Tribal leader when they married and was elected as Chief of the Tribe in 1902 and served until his death in 1930. He is one of the Tribe's most renowned leaders, obtaining rulings from the Commonwealth's Attorney General that Virginia had no right to tax Indians living on the Reservation⁶⁰ or to draft members of the Tribe for military service as they were not considered citizens of the United States prior to 1924.⁶¹ Chief Cook also argued vehemently against the passing of the Racial Integrity Act in 1924 and for the right of Virginia Indians to legally identify as such. He did so through speeches, newspaper articles, letters to the editor, and appearances before legislative committees.

Theodora Dennis Cook worked closely with her husband to represent the Tribe publicly during this time, as the Commonwealth was actively denying the continued existence of indigenous peoples within its border. She was also a prolific bead worker and ceramicist and passed these traditional practices to her children. Theodora further was known as an "herbalist" within the community, meaning she had knowledge of native medicinal plants and the various ways they could be used to treat sickness and other ailments. She worked as a midwife to the women on the Reservation and to the Indian women living across King William County. Theodora most likely learned these practices from her mother Keziah, who was born and raised on the Reservation, where she would have been exposed to the traditional knowledge of the land and artistic practices of the Pamunkey.

being in said city and in that part of the same called Pocahontas. [Petersburg Chancery Court 1882: 2]

⁵⁷ *Proposed Finding for Acknowledgment of The Pamunkey Indian Tribe*. Office of Federal Acknowledgement, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C., p. 69.

⁵⁸ U.S. Census, 1880, Virginia, Schedule of Inhabitants, Henrico County, p. 20.

⁵⁹ U.S. Census, 1880, Virginia, Schedule of Inhabitants, King William County, p.16B.

⁶⁰ Office of the Attorney General, Commonwealth of Virginia, *Annual Report of the Attorney General for the year 1917* (Richmond, Virginia: Davis Bottom, Superintendent Public Printing, 1918), p. 160.

⁶¹ Office of the Attorney General, Commonwealth of Virginia, *Annual Report of the Attorney General for the year 1917*, p.163-164.

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The Pamunkey tribal members from the Sampson/Dennis, Bradby, and Miles families discussed in this nomination update provide only a glimpse into the complex, varied, and intersectional experiences of indigenous peoples and individuals with indigenous heritage who resided at Pocahontas Island in the city of Petersburg. Further potential for uncovering indigenous residency and experiences in the Pocahontas Island neighborhood remain to be investigated. For example, there are several other individuals identified as Indian in the 1870 census of the historic district, which is telling given that this census was the first to list “Indian” as a choice for racial identification (previous censuses limited choices to “white,” “black,” or “mulatto”). Some of these families include those with the surnames of Brown, Coleman, Norris, Slaughter, Price, Brooks, and Hare. The Norris and Brown families intermarried with the Sampson and Dennis families. The Colemans are particularly interesting given that at least six individuals with the surname were manumitted following court cases that ruled in their favor due to their descentance from an Indian woman.⁶²

Further research into Pocahontas Island’s Indian residents and their connections to one another, to their core communities, and to Petersburg’s enslaved and free Black communities is particularly relevant, given that scholarship regarding Native experiences in America’s urban settings is limited, even though it was a quintessential element of indigenous history, particularly in cities located along the Eastern Seaboard. This update to the Pocahontas Island Historic District’s nomination, and the light it sheds on the indigenous residents of Pocahontas Island, provides a much-needed snapshot of Native urban experiences during the 19th century. Discussion of this topic is particularly significant given that the history of Virginia Indians beyond the colonial period has rarely been given the attention it deserves. Virginia Indian contributions to the Commonwealth’s history continued well beyond the 17th century and their engagement with the economic, social, and political environment of 19th-century Petersburg demonstrates the complex experiences of and intersectionality between the city’s marginalized and underrepresented communities of Indian, enslaved, free Black, and mixed ancestry individuals.

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⁶² Registers of Free Negroes and Mulattoes, 1794-1865, Nos.11, 32, 33, 37, 132, 290.

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Section 10. Geographical Data

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 37.238930 | Longitude: -77.401140 |
| 2. Latitude: 37.238030 | Longitude: -77.396490 |
| 3. Latitude: 37.237540 | Longitude: -77.396630 |
| 4. Latitude: 37.236990 | Longitude: -77.397190 |
| 5. Latitude: 37.236170 | Longitude: -77.398940 |
| 6. Latitude: 37.236070 | Longitude: -77.399460 |
| 7. Latitude: 37.236410 | Longitude: -77.401130 |
| 8. Latitude: 37.236710 | Longitude: -77.402180 |

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9. Latitude: 37.236650

Longitude: -77.402570

10. Latitude: 37.237410

Longitude: -77.402460

Section 11. Form Prepared Byname/title: Dr. Ashley Atkins Spiveyorganization: Kenah Consulting LLCstreet & number: 415 Westham Pkwycity or town: Richmond state: VA zip code: 23229e-mail: aaspivey@kenah.comtelephone: 804 647 1409date: July 18, 2023**Photo Log**

Name of Property: Pocahontas Island Historic District

City or Vicinity: Petersburg State: Virginia

Photographer: Lisa Bergstrom

Date Photographed: March 29, 2022

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Digital, color photograph of Front (East) Elevation, standing to the North looking South, with portion of the Northeast corner showing masonry work

1 of 3. Jarratt House from northeast corner of façade, camera facing southwest.

2 of 3. Jarratt House rear elevation, camera facing northeast.

3 of 3. Site of 44PG0471, associated with the demolished "Underground Railroad House" (123-0114-0016) at 213-215 Whitten Street.

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1 of 3. Jarratt House from northeast corner of façade, camera facing southwest.

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2 of 3. Jarratt House rear elevation, camera facing northeast.

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3 of 3. Site 44PG0471, associated with the demolished "Underground Railroad House" (123-0114-0016) at 213-215 Whitten Street.



Legend

 County Boundaries

AERIAL VIEW - VICINITY
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City of Petersburg, VA
DHR No. 123-0114

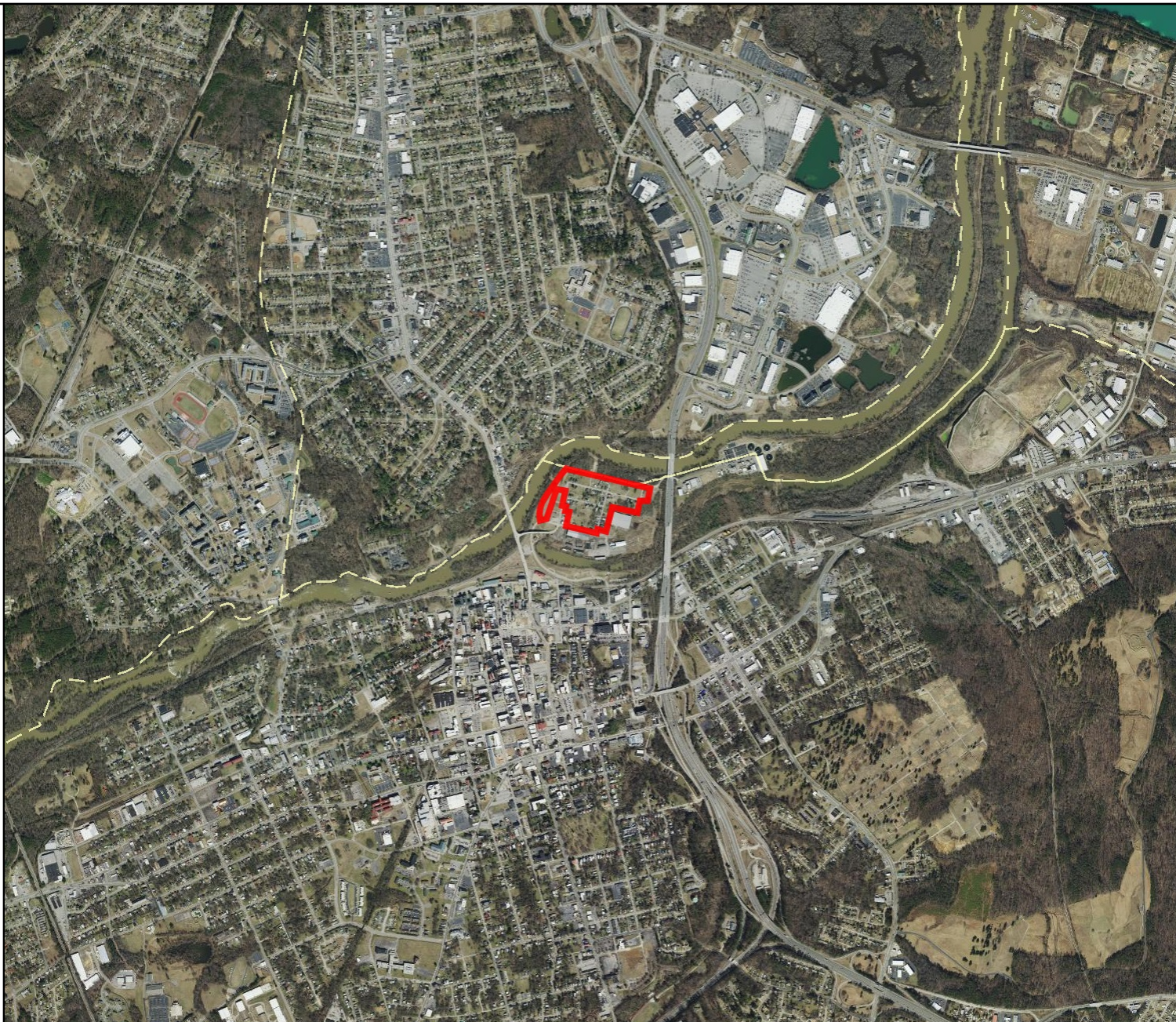
 District Boundary



Feet

0 600 1200 1800 2400

1:36,112 / 1"=3,009 Feet



Title:

Date: 7/18/2023

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Notice if AE sites: Locations of archaeological sites may be sensitive the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) and Code of Virginia §2.2-3705.7 (10). Release of precise locations may threaten archaeological sites and historic resources.



LOCATION MAP

Pocahontas Island Historic District 2023 Update City of Petersburg, VA DHR No. 123-0114

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

1. Latitude: 37.238930

Longitude: -77.401140

2. Latitude: 37.238030

Longitude: -77.396490

3. Latitude: 37.237540

Longitude: -77.396630

4. Latitude: 37.236990

Longitude: -77.397190

5. Latitude: 37.236170

Longitude: -77.398940

6. Latitude: 37.236070

Longitude: -77.399460

7. Latitude: 37.236410

Longitude: -77.401130

8. Latitude: 37.236710

Longitude: -77.402180

9. Latitude: 37.236650

Longitude: -77.402570

10. Latitude: 37.237410

Longitude: -77.402460



District Boundary



Feet

0 100 200 300 400

1:4,514 / 1"=376 Feet



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