

KEIO 2017

RICHMOND FIELDTRIP GUIDE

History of the Richmond Slave Trail
(Information for PAs and CIs to use when walking the Slave Trail)

Richmond is slowly coming to terms with its past as a major slave-trading market. The Richmond City Council Slave Trail Commission was established in 1998 to help preserve the history of slavery in Richmond, much of which had been destroyed, paved-over, or unacknowledged.

Realizing a general lack of knowledge about the slave trade — once so integral to Richmond — the Slave Trail Commission developed a walking trail that would physically outline the paths countless slaves traveled on their demoralizing journey through forced servitude. Research uncovered the existence of several dozen slave businesses in Shockoe Bottom along with the long-vanished Burial Ground for Negroes and the site of Lumpkin's slave jail: the tragic landscape where many enslaved African-Americans were severed from their families.

The Richmond Slave Trail, a self-guided walking tour of 17 sites, chronicles the trade of enslaved Africans to Virginia and their sale and shipment from Richmond to elsewhere in the Americas, until 1865, when slaves were emancipated.

The Richmond Slave Trail begins at Manchester Docks, which, with Rocketts Landing on the north side of the river, was a major port in the massive downriver Slave Trade, making Richmond the largest source of enslaved Africans on the east coast of America from 1830 to 1860. It follows a route traveled by some of the thousands of Africans who made their journey south by crossing the James River chained together in a coffle, or by getting on ships to New Orleans. The trail then follows a route through the slave markets of Richmond, beside the Reconciliation Statue commemorating the international triangular slave trade, past Lumpkin's Slave Jail and the Negro Burial Ground to First African Baptist Church, a center of African American life in Pre-Civil War Richmond.

Points along the Trail

- 1. CROSSING THE ATLANTIC: Wooded trail along river bank – access from Ancarrow’s Landing Boat Slip Eastern edge of parking lot
- 2. MECHANICS OF SLAVERY: Wooded trail along river bank
- 3. DESPAIR OF SLAVERY: Wooded trail along river bank
- 4. CREOLE REVOLT: Wooded trail along river bank
- 5. NATIVE MARKETS: Wooded trail along river bank
- 6. SLAVERY CHALLENGED: Top of access road near 300 Brander Street
- 7. RICHMOND’S BURGEONING TRADE: Maintenance area off of access road along floodwall
- 8. TRANSITIONS: East side of Hull Street (14th Street) north side of flood wall on access road – 1 Hull Street
- 9. MAYO’S BRIDGE: 14th Street Bridge (aka Mayo’s Bridge) at Mayo’s Island – 510 South 14th Street
- 10. USE OF ARMS: Richmond Canal Walk at the bottom of the southwest 14th Street stair access
- 11. KANAWHA CANAL: Pedestrian Bridge over Richmond Canal Walk southeast of intersection of Dock and 15th Streets
- 12. AUCTION HOUSES: Southeast corner of 15th and Cary Streets
- 13. RECONCILIATION STATUE: Northwest corner of 15th and Main Streets
- 14. ODD FELLOWS HALL: Northeast corner of 15th and Main Streets
- 15. LUMPKIN’S JAIL: West side of Main Street Station Parking Lot between Franklin Street and East Broad Street
- 16. RICHMOND’S AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND: Near intersection of N. 16th Street and East Marshall (at west side of parking lot)
- 17. FIRST AFRICAN BAPTIST CHURCH: Corner of Broad and College Streets

History of Lumpkin's Jail

From the 1830s to the Civil War, when Richmond was the largest American slave-trading hub outside of New Orleans, "the devil's half acre," as Lumpkin's Jail complex was called, sat amid a swampy cluster of tobacco warehouses, gallows and African-American cemeteries. In 2009, after five months of digging, researchers uncovered the foundation of the two-and-a-half-story brick building where hundreds of people were confined and tortured.

Though Lumpkin's jail stood only three blocks from where the state capitol building is today, except for local history buffs, no one had a clue that this was here. Destroyed in the 1870s or '80s, the jail and Lumpkin's other buildings were long buried beneath a parking lot for university students, part of it lost forever under a strip of Interstate 95. Preservation efforts didn't coalesce until 2005, when plans for a new baseball stadium threatened the site, which archaeologists had pinpointed using historical maps.

A century and a half ago, there would have been plenty of traffic back and forth between the upper level of the complex, where the master lived and entertained guests, and the lower, where slaves waited to be sold.

Robert Lumpkin, a "bully trader" known as a man with a flair for cruelty, fathered five children with a black woman named Mary, who was a former slave and who eventually acted as his wife and took his name.

Mary had at least some contact with the unfortunates her husband kept in chains, on one occasion smuggling a hymnal into the prison for an escaped slave named Anthony Burns.

Lumpkin began his career as an itinerant businessman, traveling through the South and buying unwanted slaves before purchasing an existing jail compound in Richmond in the 1840s. With a designated "whipping room," where slaves were stretched out on the floor and flogged, the jail functioned as a human clearinghouse and as a purgatory for the rebellious.

Burns, the escaped slave who, after fleeing Virginia, was recaptured in Boston and returned to Richmond under the Fugitive Slave Act, was confined in Lumpkin's jail for four months in 1854, until Northern abolitionists purchased his freedom. According to an account Burns gave his biographer, the slave was isolated in a room "only six or eight feet square," on a top floor accessible by trapdoor. Most of the time he was kept

handcuffed and fettered, causing "his feet to swell enormously...the fetters also prevented him from removing his clothing by day or night, and no one came to help him....His room became more foul and noisome than the hovel of a brute; loathsome creeping things multiplied and rioted in the filth." He was fed "putrid meat" and given little water and soon fell seriously ill. Through the cracks in the floor he observed a female slave stripped naked for a potential buyer.

Meanwhile, Lumpkin sent two of his mixed-race daughters to finishing school in Massachusetts. Lumpkin later sent the girls and their mother to live in the free state of Pennsylvania, out of concern that his own daughters might be sold into slavery to pay his debts.

Lumpkin was in Richmond in April 1865 when the city fell to Union soldiers. Shackling some 50 enslaved and weeping men, women and children together, the trader tried to board a train heading south, but there was no room. He died not long after the war ended. In his will, Lumpkin described Mary only as a person "who resides with me." Nonetheless he left her all his real estate.

In 1867, a Baptist minister named Nathaniel Colver was looking for a space for the black seminary he hoped to start. After a day of prayer, he set out into the city's streets, where he met Mary, Lumpkin's widow who said that *she* had a place he might be interested. After the bars were torn out of the windows, Mary leased Lumpkin's jail as the site of the school that became Virginia Union University.

History of Monument Ave

In the decades after the Confederacy lost, Virginians rebuilt businesses and housing in the war-torn capital of Richmond. They also rebuilt their egos on Monument Avenue. Monument Avenue is named for the statues of Confederate heroes — Stuart, Lee, Davis, Jackson, and Maury that line the street.

But these Confederate memorials say more about the era when they were erected than they do the Civil War itself. These statues were erected between 1890 and 1929, when the descendants of slave owners were eager to legitimize and dignify the South's lost lifestyle, and undo the progress of Reconstruction. When the first statue (a tribute to Robert E. Lee) was erected, the ropes used to transport the monument were cut up and distributed to the crowd – which was a common practice after a lynching. The statues were a conspicuous glorification of slavery and exoneration of slaveowners.

Since the Civil Rights movement, there has been a percentage of the population that have wanted the statues removed, because many interpret them as memorials romanticizing slavery and racism.

In the 1996, the city tried to appease the racial tension over the statues by adding the first African American to Monument Avenue, Arthur Ashe: Richmond native, tennis champion, and civil rights humanitarian. This was not without controversy of its own. Some supporters of the Confederate monuments believed the placement was not appropriate, and Ashe did not deserve the honor of being memorialized on Monument Ave. While others, happy that an African American was being commemorated on the street, were upset at the representation of Ashe (he is raising books and a tennis racket above children – meant to symbolize how he promoted the importance of athletics and education – but some think it looks like he is either taunting the children by keeping these items away from them, or about to strike the children with the objects), were upset the statue was placed the furthest from the city center – symbolizing he is less important than the Confederate soldiers, and were upset that his statue is the only figure facing away from the city center, again, seemingly showing disrespect for Ashe.

Within the past few years, racial tensions have increased throughout the country with the campaign and election of Donald Trump, incidents of police violence against black civilians, the Black Lives Matter movement, and the All Lives Matter backlash. Now more than ever there is public outcry for the removal of Confederate memorabilia from public space – South Carolina responded by taking down the Confederate flag at the statehouse, and New Orleans started removing their own Confederate Monuments.

Richmond's inaction caused some citizens to take matters into their own hands by spray painting "Black Lives Matter" on the Jeff Davis Monument a couple months ago.

Although the statues have not been removed, Richmond's new mayor, Levar Stoney, an African American, has proposed a different solution. He doesn't want to remove the statues. Some say it's because he doesn't want to lose tourism revenue. But Stoney believes tearing down the statues would not erase the history of the Confederate soldiers (which is the fear of the defenders of Confederate history) - it would only erase the history of the Virginians' need for glorification and romanticism itself, the history of racism that lasted long after Dixie was dissolved. Instead Stoney wants to put the monuments in context, to present an alternative perspective of the Civil War heroes. Stoney says that "without telling the whole story, these monuments have become a default endorsement of that shameful period – one that does a disservice to the principles of racial equality, tolerance, and unity we celebrate." He started a commission to explore ways to do this, and welcomes suggestions from the public. What are some ways you think these statues could be put in context?

Monuments:

J.E.B. Stuart (1833-1864) – Major General James Ewell Brown Stuart was a legendary figure of the Confederate army and is considered to be one of the greatest commanders in America.

Robert E. Lee (1807-1870) – General Robert E. Lee privately opposed the Confederacy and wanted the Union to stay in tact, but when he was offered a high position in the Union Army, he refused out of loyalty to Virginia and he chose to command the Confederate Army and defend his home state from attack.

Jefferson Davis (1808-1889) – Davis was the first and only president of the Confederacy. Prior to the Civil War, he was a politician who served as a U.S. Congressman, Senator, and Secretary of War.

Stonewall Jackson (1824-1863) – Thomas Jonathan Jackson earned the nickname "Stonewall" for his unwavering bravery in battle, "standing like a stone wall." General Jackson was instrumental in Confederate victories at several battles in Virginia.

Matthew Fontaine Maury (1806-1873) – Maury was the commander of the Confederate navy. He was known as "the pathfinder of the stars," for his published writings about sea navigation, oceanography, and meteorology.

Arthur Ashe (1943-1993) – Ashe was a professional tennis player, and the only black man to ever win the singles title and Wimbledon, the US Open, and the Australia Open. He contracted HIV from a blood transfusion, and spent the last years of his life founding the Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health to help those with inadequate health care.

History of Maggie Walker Statue

Maggie Walker (1864-1934) was the daughter of a former slave, a school teacher, and the first female – of any race – to found a bank in the United States. The bank, St. Luke's Penny Savings, gave loans to black business owners and residents at fair rates, then recycled the interest earned to keep building the African American community. Walker also used her leadership and success to improve the lives of African Americans and women through her service with several humanitarian organizations. Her home, located in Jackson Ward, the center of Richmond's African American business and social life in the early twentieth century, became a designated National Historic Site in 1976.

Just last month, the city unveiled the monument to honor Maggie Walker, the first statue in Richmond dedicated to a woman. The statue was erected in Jackson Ward, near her home and the bank she chartered. But there was controversy over this statue, too - this time not due to race, but due to the location.

The statue was placed at the intersection of Brook Road, Adams Street, and Broad Street, which required the removal of a 35-year-old oak tree, and the shortening of Brook Road. Some citizens objected to the killing of the beautiful tree, while others objected to covering up the end of Brook Road - which is one of the oldest turnpikes in Virginia, was the main entrance to Richmond in the late 1700s, and a remnant of the original street grid.

But since its unveiling last month, all citizens seem to agree that a statue dedicated to a woman, especially a native of Richmond who gave so much back to the community, is long overdue. As one critic stated, "Maggie Walker's bronze presence, and the achievements and humanity it symbolizes, brings immediate grace to a hard-edged city crossroads. And when the three shade trees grow large enough to provide a leafy canopy, this should become a much-needed and beloved oasis."

History of Virginia Union University

After the Civil War ended in 1865, and all slaves were emancipated, it soon became clear that freedom would not be enough to better the lives of African Americans. It could not sufficiently address the problems of a large, newly-emancipated population that had been systematically oppressed - denied training skills, opportunities, and even literacy itself. Fortunately, there were many who cared, and who would try to impart the education and skills necessary for the full enjoyment of citizenship, to the newly-freed population.

Like many other Historically Black Colleges, Virginia Union University was started to give newly emancipated slaves an opportunity for education and advancement. The school was originally founded in 1867 by the American Baptist Home Mission Society. It was called the Richmond Theological School for Freedmen, and as we learned earlier, it was located in the building that was formerly Lumpkin's Jail. The school became Virginia Union University when four black institutions, the Richmond Theological Seminary, Wayland Seminary, Hartshorn Memorial College, and Storer College, united in 1899.

Over the years, the school gained recognition for its outstanding academics, but it also was the target of racial violence when desegregation unrest was high in Richmond. In the late 1950s, the Ku Klux Klan even burned a cross on campus.

The VUU students responded to such violent racism by peacefully taking part in the Civil Rights Movement. In 1960, VUU students and faculty marched to downtown Richmond department store lunch counters in support of the Greensboro, North Carolina sit-ins to end segregation. 34 Virginia Union students were arrested for "trespassing" at the exclusive eatery. The arrest of these students, since referred to as "the Union 34" was the first mass arrest of the Civil Rights Movement. The courage of the VUU students inspired other Americans to fight for equality.

In the 21st century, Virginia Union University has an excellent reputation, and is still striving to educate African Americans, and fight for social justice.