Seeing the Scars of Slavery in the Natural Environment

An Interpretative Guide to the Manchester Slave Trail along the James River in Richmond

THE LAND BEFORE YOU WAS THE SITE OF SOME OF THE LARGEST trade in human beings in Virginia. In pre-Revolutionary Virginia, it was a minor destination for slave ships from Africa. In the middle of the 1800s, it was the major export facility in the United States for the resale of “surplus” plantation workers.

This tragic episode in Virginia’s history has evolved into a story of great success. Today, Virginia is the first state to elect an African-American governor, and her capital city, Richmond, has a government in which blacks and whites together share political power. This story mirrors the decline and rebirth of the waterway that carried this trade in enslaved people, the James River. This interpretive guide points out the scars of slavery that are still visible in and along the river today.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

- The trail starts at western end of the Ancarrows Landing / Manchester Docks Parking Lot.

- This self-guided tour will take you along the route that enslaved people walked. It is about 1 ½ miles one way—2 ½ to 3 hours for a group to go round trip. Older visitors should note that some of the route is along forest trails with uneven or slippery surfaces.

- There is usually a port-a-john at the 1 ¼ mile point—the Canal Walk on the northwest side of the 14th St. Bridge.

- In warm weather, be sure to bring something to drink.

Now, as it was 150 years ago, this walk can be a physically tiring, and emotionally draining, experience.

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You can find more information about the history of slavery in Richmond at richmondgov.com/CommissionSlave-Trail/
Walk across the meadow to the river, stand at one of the clearings and look out at the water. Think about early forms of transportation. Note how the river here is smooth, flat, and relatively slow. It is deep enough to bring up a small sailing ship and wide enough to turn one around.

Rivers were the roadways to the interior of America, and sailing ships were the only method of transportation to get across the Atlantic from Africa or Europe. Until the development of the railroad in the 1830s most travel was done by water.

It was easy to see why. Clearing trees and pulling stumps using oxen, mules, and human power was slow and difficult work. Repairing dirt roads was a never-ending task. And private landowners did not want other people to cross their land unless they got something for it. The early roads were deeply rutted, muddy, and rough—suitable for horseback travel or short trips in a farm wagon. The very best roads were made of logs placed side-by-side. Imagine riding in a wagon (sometimes without springs) for 20 miles over one of these “corduroy roads” and still having to pay a toll for the privilege! Water was the easiest way to travel.

The James River was one of the major arteries into the rich heart of the new nation. It is 100 miles from the mouth of the James River at Hampton Roads to Richmond. On the way, it flows through flat, sandy land, once ancient sea bottom, known as the coastal plain. Because the sediments were fertile and drained away surplus water, it was excellent for farming, once the trees were removed. Some of the first plantations in America were built on it. With the establishment of these huge, commercial farms came the impetus for a large, reliable labor force.

While small farms produced a variety of plants and animals to eat with little left over to sell, huge plantations like those at Berkeley and Westover produced mainly “cash crops”—primarily tobacco, but later wheat and other small grains. These required extra work to prepare them before they could be shipped. In the beginning, this was done by indentured servants—usually white men from Europe who bartered four to seven of years of servitude for transportation across the Atlantic and the chance to own a small parcel of their land afterward. The problem for the plantations, however, was that the supply of these semi-voluntary slaves depended on how bad economic and social conditions were in Europe. When there wasn’t a war, economic depression or religious persecution there weren’t enough new indentured servants.

Take the trail into the woods, stop at a point where everyone is surrounded by trees.

Somewhere in this area was one of the first buildings in greater Richmond—a brick structure that was part of the first agricultural development in the area:
The Falls Plantation. Just downstream of here, at Goode’s Creek, was William Byrd’s Trading Post—he actually took over and expanded the business from his uncle, Thomas Stagg, but Byrd made it famous. It was a stone building in a cleared area, probably with a wall of logs around it—in effect, a small fort. The need for this defense reflects a treacherous commercial world and reveals an early form of slavery practiced by American Indians.

This was the frontier in the early 1600s. The forests were thick and the plantations had not yet become large. There was an abundance of raw materials that could be shipped to Europe for a good profit, to meet the demand of their growing population. The skins of deer and elk from the wilderness, for example, could be purchased with the products of Western technology (metal cooking posts, fish hooks and knives) to cover the feet and hands of European aristocrats, wealthy women and businessmen with shoes, hats and gloves. And it produced good money.

This was a time of major change and social upheaval. Further north and west, for example, attacks by the French and English on one another’s villages and trading posts were a way of life. The stockpile of trade goods like metal knives, axes and fishhooks, guns and gunpowder, was a temptation. It was especially attractive to the more aggressive native peoples of the Iroquois Confederacy, who passed through the area raiding local Powhatan Indian villages. Having a small fort was the best way to protect an investment.

Through warfare there was a connection to slavery. On the Indian village level, the taking of hostages was a common practice for bargaining purposes, but sometimes women and children were simply captured to expand the population of a powerful village—a form of native slavery.

Trading posts, farms, and docks all changed the environment. Look around you at the forest. Many of the same trees and shrubs you see now would have been there then, but the forest would have seemed much different. As a mature forest, the trees would have been much taller and thicker. And since the Indians regularly burned the undergrowth to drive wildlife for hunting, the ground would have been more open. There would have been no honeysuckle vines (those came much later from Japan) and everything would have been in deep shade. What you see today is a new forest—about 25 years old. For most of the last several hundred years, the land at this commercial site has been almost bare!

Walk out of the woods to the grassy area. Look across the river and then to the left.

The original docks have disappeared. In the 1700s and 1800s, the docks up and down the river were made of wood. The stone structures you see on this side were built in the late 1800s for heavy cargoes like coal. The worn out wooden piers on the other side give a sense of how the earlier piers might have looked, even though those are probably from the early 1900s. Although the business of the slave trade took place on both sides of the river, it was concentrated on the Manchester side during the late 1700s and shifted to the Richmond side in the 1800s. The earliest trade took place on board the ships themselves.

Walk down to the stone docks. Find a place to sit and contemplate history, money, and morality. (This is a lengthy stop.)

In this 1858 Felch & Riches engraving white men are shown examining and whipping slaves and loading them onto a ship in Africa; meanwhile, at center, negotiations with native slave traders continue over the final price for the human cargo. Courtesy of Library of Virginia
ever, could be purchased from existing slave markets on that continent, were resistant to many diseases and had nowhere to escape, once here. To make the investment profitable, however, the slaves would need to stay a long time—in effect, to become permanent. This presented both a moral and legal problem.

Money Changed Morality—it underwrote the development of a race-based social philosophy. The Church of England was the moral force of the southern colonies of America. By its tenets, Christian men were born with free will, and could not be made into permanents slaves. For example, some African slaves were taken from a Spanish ship that had been seized in 1620 in Norfolk, for failure to pay for storm repairs, but they were set free after seven years by their new English masters, just as if they had been while indentured servants.

This moral understanding changed in the mid-1600s due to the pressure of the increasingly wealthy, but labor-strapped plantation owners, who were the primary contributors to the Church. A new social and moral understanding evolved based on racism: black-skinned African people could be made permanent slaves because dark people were not deemed equal to whites as human beings.

The contradiction in this new philosophy of treated slaves as less than human can be seen in the method of unloading this new labor supply. At large ports of entry, the persons that came off the slave ships were sometimes in such awful conditions that there were unloaded at night, by torchlight, so as not to offend and embarrass the white population. Although the importation of newly-enslaved black people to Richmond was not a major economic activity, the collection and exportation of existing Virginia slaves was big business. The trade in slaves took place on both sides of the river. Some walked, chained together, along the shoreline to your left.

The importation of newly-enslaved Africans to Richmond occurred for a relatively short time—primarily in the late 1700s. The importation of newly-captured African slaves was banned by Virginia in 1778, but the institution of slavery itself continued. Since Virginia’s plantations were well-established, there was no economic need for the increase in the population of slaves. But there were new plantations still being developed along the Mississippi River, and they did need more labor to pull stumps, cut trees and drain the swamps to make for farmland. Virginia had a surplus. An interstate American trade developed…and Virginia cornered the market.

In the early 1800s, Alexandria was the center of the trade. By 1820, Richmond became the nation’s leading exporter of surplus slaves because it had developed the best transportation system in the region. The James River was the original travel route, but over time, five railroads were developed, as were a better set of dirt roads. Africans could be bought at plantations in Eastern and Northern Virginia and easily shipped into, and out of, this central collection point for resale.

The slave trade was an integral part of the Richmond economy. The numbers were staggering. In the 1850s, as many as 10,000 people a month were sold. Prices ranged from a couple of hundred dollars to a couple of thousand per person. It is difficult to compare the actual value of things today with those in the past, but per capita income for white people was significantly less than $1,000 a year, so the value of a healthy, strong, young black man would be comparable to that of an expensive car today.

The annual value to the city at that time was several million dollars a year—in 1857 it was over $4,000,000—and might translate to somewhere between 10 and 100 times that much today. This represented an enormous amount of capital and exceedingly important business. It is easy to see why Richmond would be such a staunch supporter of slavery, even though it had little need to actually use them.
Imagine, for a moment, the large number of people who had jobs related to the movement and care of slaves—ship captains and their crews, farmers and food merchants, train engineers and work crews, guards and low-enforcement personnel, tradesmen who made and repaired boats, trains, and wagons, shopkeepers who sold cloth and other dry goods, and of course, the bankers and their staffs who financed the whole system. This helps explain Virginia’s extraordinarily strong commitment to “states’ rights” and the support of slavery, even though its agriculture was less dependent on slave labor than in states further south. It is interesting to note that other southern states actually complained about the economic stranglehold Virginia had on the slave resale market. This also explains Virginia’s strange support for the abolition of the international slave trade in the first place. It didn’t want competition from the less-expensive, newly-captured African slaves.

You can see the medical scars of slavery in the black population of America today. Sickle-cell anemia, a painful disease of black men, affects a greater percentage of African Americans than black Africans, even though it was, ironically, an African disease. Under slave working conditions, it was actually sometimes a health advantage because it provided immunity to malaria, a disease spread by mosquitoes, and therefore protected persons draining swamps and digging canals. Those who had lived long enough to have children and pass the trait on.

Black women were able to pass on to their children a partial immunity to another mosquito-born disease—yellow fever—an illness that sometimes devastated white society (this immunity trait had disappeared since it requires continual re-infection to work.) Salt retention and easy weight gain were advantages to Africans suffering the lack of adequate water and food during the privations of the Middle Passage—the slave ship route across the Atlantic. We see this manifested today in the percentage of African-Americans with heart and weight problems. The large number of out-of-wedlock births and the weaker role of black males in American society than in African societies may be more understandable in the light of the slave experience here—families could be torn apart at the will of the owner, and females were often left to raise children on their own. The scars of slavery are still visible and painful in society today.

Walk to the end of the stone dock. Look upstream toward the city.

In a strange way, this view has not changed in over 200 years. It was probably the first sight an enslaved person had of a city, whether being transferred from a tidewater plantation or shipped from the African continent. The cluster of big buildings that made up Richmond then was concentrated in the distance, as it is now—and the Manchester side was far less developed, as it remains today. Although there are fewer signs of the shipping business now, this view would have shown the docks and warehouses mostly on the Richmond side—there are still a few remnants that you saw earlier to your right. And, almost the only way to get from here to there would have been by walking the shoreline to the Mayo Island Bridge or hiring a small, hand-rowed ferry boat. Gull Rock, which is especially visible straight ahead at low tide, still marks the general limit of deep water for big boats.

In many ways, the view has changed. Observe the opposite shore, where the main construction materials for buildings are steel, concrete, brick, and glass—there are few wooden structures now.

Rectangular shapes dominate the architecture, and roofs are flat, rather than sloped. The area
is generally clear; there is no smell of wood smoke. Boats are actually rather rare on the river nowadays—a few outboard motor boats traveling for pleasure—while then, there would have been a flotilla of small sail boats and rowing vessels ferrying people and goods around the harbor. Today, there are rarely any commercial ships because the port of Richmond is now a mile downstream. The river itself looks different. Since most of the forests in the Piedmont have been cut to create farmland, the water is probably browner after rainstorms than in the beginning, because there are fewer tree roots to hold the soil (this is especially evident during the late winter and early spring when there is no grass either). And, society looks different. Slavery has been abolished and laws now mandate equal treatment for all people, regardless of their race or ethnicity.

Take the trail into the forest. Be careful of your footing. The trail is narrow, winding, and uneven. It can be slippery after a rain.

For slaves being taken to buyers in Richmond, torn from the sound of familiar dialects, the nurturing support of family and friends, and even from the comfort of recognizable agricultural views and comfortable ways of behavior, this passage through the riparian (“riverside”) forest would have been a frightening and painful experience. What next horror lay ahead in that distant, murky, view of a hillside crammed with smoky wooden structures? For newly captured slaves, unloaded after dark, what strange and terrifying creatures lay hidden by the thickening shadows of the torchlit night travel? And sometimes, how could one walk such a distance with muscles cramped and atrophied from having been chained in a tiny bit of floor space in the hold of a slave ship?

The next ¼ mile can be a metaphor for the slavery experience. It can be seen as a passage from the dark forest of fear and bondage into the light of knowledge and power. It can symbolize the passage from a rural plantation life to a more complex urban life. It can be the travel from the past into the future.

It is suggested that you walk the next five minutes in complete silence to contemplate these conditions…and the role of African Americans in society today. After that there will be several stops.

Walk to a steel fence with a concrete platform just beyond.

Steel and concrete are products of the 20th century. Rough-cut wood and baked clay brick were the materials of the 1700s and 1800s. In the distance to your right, you can see some 19th-century brick warehouses. They were used to process tobacco—a crop grown and processed by slaves.

The structure you are standing on is a safety valve for the pipe that carries dirty rainwater from the streets, and sewage from houses, to the wastewater treatment plant behind you. When there is too much rain, the CSO pipe backs up and the gate opens. For most of the history of Richmond, people have dumped their waste directly into the James. The Federal Clean Water Act of 1967 freed the river of pollution, in much the same way the 13th Amendment to the Constitution freed the South from slavery.

Continue on the trail crossing over two foot-bridges.

In a way, these bridges are symbols of our community’s desire to pass from ignorance and prejudice over to knowledge and caring. This forgotten part of our history affects us now, even as it did then.

This first bridge was built by a 16-year old Boy Scout; the second by a middle-aged businessman. Youths from
Douglas Freeman High School, The Methodist Home, and Virginia State University cut the trail and cleared the dock area. Adults from the Unitarian Church removed old flood debris and painted the pipes. Students from St. Catherine's and Trinity High Schools paid for the interpretive signage. A school librarian work with MRA/ Hope-in-the-Cities first identified the site. Volunteers of all ages, colors, and economic conditions worked to tell the story of the slave trail.

**Look for a large wooden beam. It will be located along the trail on the left.**

Measuring 13 inches by 18 inches and extending over 10 feet in length, wood of this size and odd shape is rarely cut now. Today, we use thinner pieces of standard sizes, and bolt or glue them together to make larger beams. Small parts are easier to move around...and there aren't as many huge trees available, either. The history of this beam is unknown, but it has the characteristics of wood that was used then. In the 18th and 19th centuries, lumber was sawed by hand and/or water wheel-driven mills.

The waterfalls of Richmond powered many sawmills just upstream from here, but on the plantations, away from the rapids of the Fall Line, male slaves sawed logs by hand. One man stood in a pit and pulled the long blade down. This made the cut. Another person stood on a platform over the pit and pulled the saw back up. It was a slow, hard process. Unnecessary cutting was avoided; so wood pieces might be very large.

**Walk to a steep drop-off with a fallen tree and the right side of trail with a view down to the water’s edge.**

In slave times the trail out have been a dirt road—a bit straighter, wider, and probably a little further away from the edge of the river. Enslaved people and other merchandise would have traveled on a path wide enough for wagons.

The fallen tree here is partly a result of undermining of the riverbank by water from a broken pipe that currently drains rainwater from a sand storage pit 100 yards to the left. Both are modern. Huge trees would not have been common along the river since wood was the main material for both construction and fuel.

Note how the remaining roots create the framework that stabilizes the riverbank. The soil is a mix of silt (clay and powdered leaves) and sand, washed in during the floods. If you visit in the spring or after a rain, you will note that the water will be brown with these same materials. The clearing of forest upstream promoted soil erosion there and deposits down here.

**Walk to a muddy bay along the shore. It is just after a short twist and slippery descent in the trail. (There may be a trashcan on the left.)**

The muddy cove ahead of you is the mouth of the Manchester Canal. Water no longer comes out here, so it is filling up with silt. (Construction of the floodwall altered the canal, water now enters the river ¼ mile upstream.) At one time, however, this water turned the water wheels that powered the 18th-century lumber and flour mills, and later, the turbines that powered the 19th-century paper factories and the 20th-century electric plants. It was even once hoped that this channel might become the entrance to a shipping canal that would go around the upstream rapids of the James. Investors decided to build on the Richmond side of the river where the land was less subject to floods and where the main part of the population already lived. That became the Kanawha Canal—the remains of which can be seen under the Lee Bridge and at Pump House Park by the Boulevard Bridge.

Black slaves and white immigrants (especially the Irish) dug canals together. Slaves were not necessarily cheaper to employ. Canal developers had to pay slave owners a year’s “rent” in advance, while immigrant laborers only had to be paid weekly. Slaves had to have money spent on them for food every day, whether or not the weather al-
allowed or work, while immigrants got their own food and were only paid for the actual time that they labored. The Canal Company was responsible for the health, security, and guaranteed return of each slave, whereas the immigrants were responsible for themselves.

The extra value in using slave labor was that they could not declare strikes, were sure to be there when needed, and were more resistant to swamp diseases.

**Walk up to the I-95 Bridge.**
The roar of engines and whine of tires mark the end of the woodland part of the trail today. In the 1800s, there would have been the shouts of boatmen, the creak and clatter of wagons, and the crack of drivers whips on draft animals and other creatures.

**Follow the road and go through the floodwall gate.**
Dedicated in 1995, these white metal gates are slid shut when large floods are predicted to push water into this area—21 feet at the City Locks river gauge, located along Dock Street. In the past, such floods have limited business growth on the broad, flat, low-lying land that comprises the “floodplain” of Manchester. On this side of the river, the floodwall goes about 1 mile upstream to the Manchester Bridge. On the other side of the river, it goes from 12th Street to the bottom of Chimborazo Hill. There have only been small floods (12 to 18 feet) since 1985.

**The trail goes up the gravel road on your right. Walk up the hill and along the top until the gravel turns to asphalt and the trail begins to go down. Stop where the trail begins to go down hill and the gravel trail turns to asphalt.**
Observe the panorama of the Mayo Island Bridge, the City Skyline, and the Falls of the James. Although the viewpoint would have been from a lower perspective, this is perhaps the point where slaves would have had their first (or last) image of Richmond. They would have seen the first bridge across the James River. It was built by the city’s first mayor, John Mayo, as a business venture in 1784. Now concrete, it was first made of wood. Now a sturdy public structure fashioned after a bridge in Paris, it was then a flimsy toll bridge whose loose boards shifted so much during high water that horses bolted and wagons sometimes fell in the river.

One thing has remained constant. The bridge has always been located in exactly the same place—at the end of the rapids, the lower edge of the Fall Line. It has always gone across the same part of this last island in the Fall Line, too. The toll booth was always in the middle. By making it quicker and easier to get people and products from the south side to downtown, the bridge undercut the traditional small ferryboat business that had been the only mode of crossing the river for 150 years. There are no signs left of their little wooden docks, once located along the muddy shores in the general area of the I-95 Bridge.

**Follow the paved trail beside the floodwall until you are about 50 feet from the bridge**
Look upstream, under the arches of the bridge. You can see that this marks the end of the flat water you have been walking beside and the beginning of the rapids. Granite rocks now protrude from the riverbed for the next seven miles. They do not end until Bosher Dam, site of the Willey Bridge. The continual stream of falling water gives it
the name Fall Line. Even small boats can go no further upstream.

In the springtime, migrating fish like shad, herring, and striped bass school up at this point before pushing their way through the current to go further upstream to spawn. Native Americans once speared and netted heavily in this area. Later, white and black fishermen set traps anchored to the large rocks. They are most visible during droughts and late summer water conditions.

The original wooden bridge was so wobbly that there were objections from wagon drivers to the practice of fishermen attaching their catches of big sturgeon to the bridge supports. They claimed that the huge fish made the bridge sway and caused the horses to bolt. The fish were often six to ten feet long.

Legend has it that Native American boys actually rode the backs of these big creatures as a rite of becoming men. These fish are rare today, but cleaner water and less commercial net fishing has resulted in the return of a few Atlantic sturgeon. One six-footer was measured near the Powhite Bridge by a raft guide, using his paddle, in 1998. The Mayo Bridge, however, is still a favorite fishing spot in April and May for people of all ages and races.

**View of Shockoe Creek Valley, Richmond, Virginia, by J. R. Hamilton, published in the May 12, 1866, edition of Harper's Weekly, depicts the valley of the Shockoe Creek, which was then a racially mixed neighborhood. Courtesy of Library of Virginia**

**Stop at a point midway between the island and the north shore**

The two small islands you can see on your left were once developed as a resort area, where wealthy white citizens came and strolled by the waterside. The larger one was Vauxhall Island, known as Vauxhall Pleasure Garden. Patrons could access the island on a footbridge from Mayo's Bridge and enjoy barbeque, a barroom, a shuffleboard court, fishing, and other amusements. Several important politicians drowned in the mid-1800s when the rickety connecting bridge collapsed during a small flood.

**Continue ahead to the floodwall gate which crosses 14th Street**

The sliding gates at either end of this bridge are the largest of the floodwall openings. This set takes about 20 minutes to close and two hours to seal tight with gaskets. The businesses of Shockoe Slip and Shockoe Bottom are protected from floodwaters now. Floods have always occurred, but they were not generally as severe as they have been in the last third of the 20th century. Cheap labor from slaves and immigrants allowed construction in the small section of the Richmond floodplain, where post-flood repair or rebuilding of structures was expected.

**Stop at the stairs that lead down to the Canal Walk**

Portable toilets are located one block from here. If you walk down the stairs and along the canal to the next bridge, you will find the units at the top of the stairs.

This waterway is a replica of the Kanawha Canal Turning Basin, where canal boats from the Great Valley of Virginia turned around for the trip back. The original site is five blocks from here, where the James Center has been built. The dangerous job of blasting and digging canals involved either slave or immigrant labor. Skilled, itinerant stonemasons from Europe usually did the design and placement of large cut stones for canal locks, basin walls, and aqueducts. Most of them came from Italy, and still do. Italian masons did some of the special stonework in this modern project, too.
Cross 14th Street at the traffic light
Go straight ahead one block and turn left on 15th Street. It is now three blocks straight ahead to Lumpkin’s Jail, the end of our journey.

Observe the brick building on the corner of 15th and Dock Streets
Early wooden structures gave way to other materials. This warehouse is typical of the architecture in the middle of the 1800’s for commercial structures in the area. Arched doorways (now bricked in) made it accessible by horse-drawn wagons. Supplies were hoisted by pulleys up to the square doors (now sometimes windows or walls) on the second or third floors. Look for low stone pillars that once protected the entrances from iron edges of wagon wheels.

Many factories in Richmond used slaves in manufacturing. The iron foundries at Tredegar Street and on Belle Isle are notable examples. It is interesting to note that slaves working in skilled jobs at these sites received comparatively good treatment. They were given a small amount of money to buy their own food and lodging plus identification papers to allow travel around town. Perhaps because of this comparative freedom, they were often considered more dependable and productive workers than unskilled immigrant laborers, who often struggled with both language and cultural adjustment problems.

The power of profits superseded the strictures of the slave system. Some slaves were illegally taught to read and write. This was a way to maintain records and boost company productivity.

Such treatment made Richmond one of the only places where sabotage was minimal and slave labor was a profitable industry.

Continue straight ahead to the intersection of 15th and Franklin Streets
What is now a parking lot was once the location of a notorious slave holding facility known as “The Devil’s Half Acre”—Lumpkin’s Jail. In Richmond, there were four major dealers and a variety of smaller companies—11 medium sized dealers, 19 auctioneers, and 15 “collecting agents”. Most slave commerce was located in the rectangular area bounded by Broad Street to the river, and 14th to 19th Streets. Lumpkin’s Jail was the largest and had the fiercest reputation.

Imagine a compound of six wooden buildings with a tall, wooden stockade fence around it. Inside was a pair of large, two story dormitories (one for men, one for women and children) and four support structures: a kitchen, laundry, supply shed, and office, with a back room for disciplining runaway slaves. The fence was a wall of sharpened logs pointing up.

Newly-arrived slaves were bathed and clothed. Their sores were medicated. Healthy slaves brought a better price. Treatment for recaptured slaves, however, was harsh and demeaning. One man captured in New York City was kept tied hand and foot for six weeks. He was forced to lick his food out of a bowl and defecate in his clothes. He was kept on display at Lumpkin’s Jail as a warning to other black slaves and as entertainment for some whites.

After the Civil War, this site played a special role in the development of education in Richmond. The two former dormitories became the site of the first school for former slaves. Later in the century, it became the site of the first institute of higher learning for African Americans in the state—Virginia Union University. In the beginning of the 20th century, this university moved to a new location on Lombardy Street in the west end of Richmond.

This center for education began as a request to help the previously downtrodden by the wife of the former jail owner. She herself was a former slave. Governor Douglas L. Wilder was a graduate of Virginia Union University and became this nation’s first elected African-American governor.
Conclusion

The scars of slavery can be seen in the society and the natural environment of Richmond today. They are fading, but it is important that we never forget what happened and how it changed us all.

Although many outward signs have gone, the remaining fragments of this Path of Paths still speak to the remarkable journey of our nation’s only unwilling, captive immigrants, and to their impact upon the land and the society of Richmond. A proud and determined people, they went from the hold of a slave ship to the state house of a nation.

And the James River, once clean, clear, and rich with wildlife, suffered the ravages of erosion, dam building, and industrial pollution, and has, at long last, begun its journey back to health and beauty.

Levy, Ash. Locust Alley between Exchange Place and Franklin St. Negro trader.

Tait, Bacon. Broad and 17th Sts. Private jail.


Botts & Omohundro. Southwest corner of Broad and 17th Sts. Traders.


City Hotel. Northeast corner of Main and 15th Streets.


Eagle Tavern. Southside of Main Street between 12th and 13th Sts.


Pulliam & Davis. Westside of Wall St. near Franklin St. (Office on Wall Street opposite City Hotel) Auctioneers and commission merchants.


Apperson, George W. Private jail in Birch Alley. Trader.

Sumner, George J. Eastside of 15th between Main and Cary. Auctioneer and commission merchant.


Taylor, James M. Corner of 11th and Bank Sts. Real estate agent and auctioneer.

Toler, John J. Westside of Central Railroad between Clay and Leigh Sts. Trader.

Payne, John R.D. Eastside of 11th St. between Main and Bank Sts. Auctioneer.


Pulliam, Peter. Westside of Locust Alley between Main and Franklin Sts. Trader.

Davis, Hector. Locust Alley between Main and Franklin St. (Pulliam and Davis). Trader.


Omohundro, S. Southeast corner of 17th and Broad Sts. and Alley west of Wall and Main and Franklin Sts. Trader.

Reese, Samuel. Eastside of 17th St. between Grace and Broad Sts. Birch Alley Negro Trader.


Johnston, Thomas M. Alley near Exchange Hotel (southeast corner of 14th and Main). Trader.

Toler and Cook. Pearl St., Lisle Row. General agents and collectors.

Abrahams, W. Northside of Clay St. between 17th and 18th Sts. Trader.

Staples, W.T. & Co. 12th St. between Cary and Byrd Street. Commission merchants.

Gouldin, William. 13th and Governor St. between Main and Franklin Sts. General agent and collector.


Wortham. Governor St. between Main and Franklin Sts. General agent and collector.

Atkinson, G.W. Birch Alley. Trader and private jail.

Bagby, Thomas J. 8 Wall St. Agents, General and collecting agents.

Blackburn, E.W. Birch Alley, Negro trader.


Eacho, E.D. 14th between Main and Franklin. Agents, general and collecting agents.


Hill, Robert. Wall between Main and Franklin Sts. Agents, general and collecting.


Jones and Slater. Locust Alley. Negro trader.

Jones, George Harris. 14th in Exchange Building. Agents, general and collecting.

Keesee, T.W. 13th St.

Kent, Paine and Co. Commission merchants.


Phillips, William S. 12th St. between Main and Bank. Agents, general and collecting.

Smith, A. 18th and Broad Sts. Negro trader.

Tabb, P.M. and Son. Corner of 14th and Franklin. General and collecting agent.

Chronology of the Slave Trade in Richmond
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1607–1699
Approximately 33,000 Africans imported into English mainland North America. (Fogelman, 69)

1690–1775
White Virginians bought approximately 100,000 imported Africans. Purchases of these slaves took place on ships, along the colony’s major rivers, and in some towns. The Manchester Docks were among such sale points. (Kulikoff, 65; Ward/Greer, 123; Minchinton)

1700–1775
Approximately 280,000 Africans imported into the Thirteen Colonies. (Fogelman, 70)

1775
August: Non-importation of slaves began in protest against British policies. (Ward/Greer, 22)

1775–1776
Several advertisements for the sale in Manchester of numerous Virginia-born slaves appeared in the Virginia Gazette. Manchester was now a center of large-scale sales of Virginians to new owners. (Ward/Greer, 123)

1776–1781
Richmond slaves subject to curfew regulations as well as ordinances against night time meeting, playing various games, and attending cockfights or horse races. Slave sales of produce in the Richmond market could occur only on Saturday afternoon and Sunday. (Ward, 123)

1777–1782
Purchases and sales of central Virginia slaves began to concentrate in Richmond. (Ward/Greer, 121)

1778
October: The Commonwealth of Virginia prohibited importation of Africans to be sold as slaves. (McColley, 165-67)

1780–1800
Richmond’s slave exporters relied primarily on ships to transport African Americans to other states’ markets. (Gudmestad, 56)

1782
Richmond population is 1,031, of which 428 were slaves. (Ward/Greer, 8)

1787
Deep-South delegates to the U.S. Constitutional Convention of 1787 told Virginian James Madison that the consequence of prohibiting them from importing slaves would be that the “slaves of Virginia would rise in value, and we should be obliged to go to your markets.” (McColley, 170)

Richmond trader advertised for one hundred slaves to sold out of Virginia. (McColley, 164)

1787–1807
The “organized interregional traffic in American slaves” became established. (Tadman, 12-21)

1790–1830
Alexandria dominated the market for slave sales in the Upper South. (Gudmestad, 12-13; Tadman, 47-82)

1790–1859
Estimated movement of more than half a million slaves from Virginia to Deep South states, of whom most (300,000–350,000) were traded rather than forced to migrate with their owners. (Tadman, 11-46)

1792
Virginia Governor “Light-Horse Harry” Lee reported that one reason for slave rebelliousness in Norfolk and on the Eastern Shore was the “practice of severing husband, wife, and children in sales.” (Twice, 1981)

1800–1850
Richmond traders relied more heavily on transportation of slaves by foot in coffles. (Gudmestad, 56-58)

1808
January 1: U.S. prohibition of slave importation took effect. British abolition occurred the same year.

1837–1840
Panic of 1837 damaged the slave trade; the business recovered in the 1840s. (Gudmestad, 84-85, 101-102)

1840
Richmond began to require slave traders to be licensed, reflecting the increasing number of such dealers. (Gudmestad, 29-30)

1840–1860
Partly because of railroad growth, Richmond moved ahead of Alexandria as a slave depot. Richmond now dominated the export of Virginia slaves. (Gudmestad, 35-36, 106)

1841
October 25: The ship Creole left Richmond with about 102 slaves on board, about 90 of whom were shipped to Robert Lumpkin. These and other slaves picked up in Hampton Roads were bound for the New Orleans slave market, but on November 7, Madison Washington and several other men took over the vessel, severely wounded the captain and killed a passenger. Two of the slaves were killed in the struggle. The slaves then forced the ship to stop at Nassau in the Bahamas, where almost all of the slaves escaped or were released by British authorities. (Sen. Doc. 51)

1846–1849
Richmond company of R.H. Dickinson & Brothers sold about two thousand slaves a year. (Tadman, 64)

1850–1860
Richmond Traders now relied more heavily on rail transportation of exported slaves. (Gudmestad, 58-60)

1852
Richmond levied taxes on slave-pen owners. (Gudmestad, 30)

1857
According to a Richmond Enquirer estimate, receipts for 1857 slave sales in Richmond auctions totaled $3,500,000. Another newspaper raised this estimate to $4,000,000. (Gudmestad, 107; Tadman, 63)

1860
Fifteen slave-trade companies, nineteen auctioneers, and fifteen “general and collecting agents” operated in Richmond. (Gudmestad, 123-24)

For the first time a Virginia law required slave traders to be licensed. (Gudmestad, 28)

1862
Silas Omohundro turned his slave jail into a boarding house. (Gudmestad, 120)

1867
Robert Lumpkin’s jail was converted to a school for former slaves (The Negro in Virginia, 293-94)