



We have allotted the lower part of the Land containing two
Hundred and twenty five Acres with the following names
Nichols Co. Robin Frank Huffs Susan George Applegate
Dorcas George Jack Isaac Clark Grace Betty Little Amy Quaker
Sarah Barbara Nancy John Elias Henry - Four Horses
Twelve Hens twelve Turkeys Sheep Twelve Eggs - Four Chickens
Mellory Youngs Love three Dressing - Two Tea Balls Two pr
Iron Traps two Iron Traps Three Cleanings two pins two
Leather & three Soap Wicks One Loom and two Rags And
One Stone wheel

Solomon and Selvy his wife	
George	nearly grown
Rozall	16
Panthera	13
Minna	11
Brenda?	
Pompey	6
Hudzel	2
Nelly	9
<u> </u>	<u> </u>

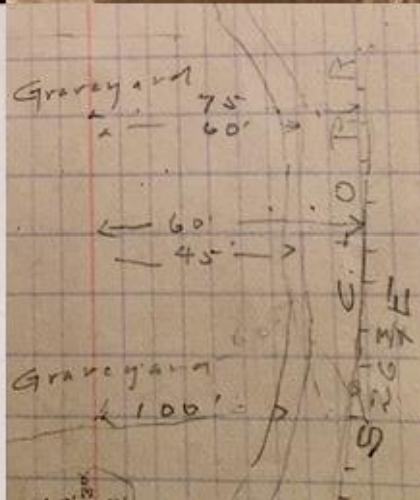


Skeletons Are Found On U. of R. Campus

Workmen widening a lakeside road on the University of Richmond campus yesterday uncovered two skeletons. The ravages of time had destroyed the wooden coffins in which they had been buried and most of the bones had decayed.

The skeletons were almost immediately reinterred.

Although university officials were unable to identify the skeletons, they pointed out that the area traditionally had been a burying ground for slaves in the Ante Bellum period.



“Knowledge of This Cannot Be Hidden”:
A Report on the Burying Ground at the
University of Richmond

Shelby M. Driskill

Spring 2025 update of “**Knowledge of This Cannot Be Hidden:**” A Report on the Westham Burying Ground at the University of Richmond, Inclusive History Project Report, submitted by Dr. Lauranett L. Lee and Shelby M. Driskill, December 2019



Henry Williams, also known as James Henry Ferguson (d.1915) was enslaved as a child by the last pre-emancipation owners of Westham and other tracts, properties which together contained much of what became the present University of Richmond campus. Williams described being kidnapped at a young age and sold several times before he was purchased and enslaved in Louisiana. During the Civil War he served with the United States Colored Troops, and as an elderly man, he returned to the Richmond area in search of his remaining family. He is buried in Greenwood Cemetery. His photograph, provided by Erin Holloway Palmer of Friends of East End Cemeteries, is the only known image of an individual enslaved by owners of land that would later form part of the university campus.

Cover Images (clockwise from upper left): [Advertisement: “Ro. C. Nicholas”], *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie & Dixon), January 15, 1767, 3, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; “Henrico County: surveyed and drawn under the direction of John Wood,” 1819, Library of Virginia; Henry Williams, formerly Henry James Ferguson, National Archives and Record Administration, image care of Erin Holloway Palmer, Friends of East End Cemeteries; W.W. LaPrade and Brothers, [Richmond College Roadways] Sketchbook 14, W.W. LaPrade Brothers Business Records, Library of Virginia; “Skeletons Are Found On U. of R. Campus,” *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, November 1, 1947 (Library of Virginia); “Westhampton Park Railway Company Park Tract,” United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site; [Solomon, Ailsy, and family], “Westham Negroes,” Read v. Read, Records, Virginia Chancery Court, Index no. 1872-020; [Division of enslaved population at Westham], Nicholas et al v. Ambler et al, January 1787, Virginia Chancery Court, Henrico County, Library of Virginia.

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“Knowledge of This Cannot Be Hidden”: A Report on the Burying Ground at the University of Richmond

Summary

- Between 1702 and 1865, land now home to the University of Richmond was held by numerous enslavers.
- The first documented connections between the land and enslaved individuals date to the mid-18th century.
- Research has recovered the names of hundreds of those enslaved by the landowners and some of the primary sources in which they were located contain fragments of their lives.
- Between the end of the Civil War and the turn of the 20th century, the Burying Ground remained undeveloped as the tract that contained it changed hands multiple times.
- 1901 to 1902: As part of the development of an adjacent parcel, contemporaneous documents including a map and business notes contain the location of what was then referred to as the “negro burying ground.”
- 1910: After land containing the Burying Ground was consolidated by a land syndicate for the development of a racially exclusive residential community, Richmond College paid just \$10.00 for the 251.5 acres that would form the majority of the new campus. This land included the Burying Ground.
- 1912: As the campus was developed, a surveyor working for the college indicated two boundaries of the Burying Ground during data collection for road development. Months later, the landscape architect for the campus alerted the head of the college’s Board of Trustees that “at least twenty graves” would be disturbed by planned road construction at the site. The description indicates the visibility of graves at the time, though no such indicators were recorded when the campus opened in 1914. It appears the road was installed as planned.
- 1935: A study of Zionsville, a local African American community founded after the Civil War, included a description of laborers on the campus revealing a “pile of bones and skulls” while digging not far from the Burying Ground, a description that points to the possibility that these were remains disinterred during 1912 road construction.
- 1947: Widening of the road revealed two graves and remains were relocated by the university. Two Richmond newspapers report on the incident and in both university officials are described attributing the remains to graves to enslaved individuals. One news item describes the institution having reburied the remains “a few hundred feet away.” The location of this reinterment is not known.
- Mid-1950s: Work on tunnels extending from the Steam Plant to Richmond Hall exposed “a series of unmarked graves.” The university was again described as reburying the remains at a location that is now unknown.
- A 2024 ground penetrating radar (GPR) study reported that at least fifty graves remain at the site.

Introduction

The original version of this report was submitted in December 2019, the first of a three-part examination of University of Richmond history. It considered a site near Westhampton Lake where human remains were discovered multiple times in the early to mid-20th century, providing recorded encounters with the site and evidence of multiple grave disturbances in the early to mid-20th century, and detailing the centrality of enslavement in the history of land that became the 20th century campus of the University of Richmond. The period in which enslaved individuals were forced to be part of the land's history lasted for more than a century. This update of the original report was released in April 2025.

Graduate and Independent Research

Between September 2018 and August 2019, Shelby M. Driskill conducted research focused on the site now known as the Burying Ground. First as a graduate student in the School of Professional and Continuing Studies' Masters in Liberal Arts program, and then as an independent researcher, Driskill used as her starting point limited descriptions of early to mid-20th century exhumations during campus development projects, considering the possibility that they referred to multiple encounters with the same site. She located a range of sources that shed additional light on the history and location of the Burying Ground and traced the historical ties between enslavement and the land's history, recovering the names of hundreds of individuals held by the many owners of several tracts. In the early 20th century, parts of these properties became home to what was at times referred to a Greater Richmond College, containing the relocated Richmond College and newly formed Westhampton College. This institution, along with the School of Law, would become known as the University of Richmond in 1920. Ms. Driskill worked in partnership with Douglas Broome (Information Systems) to determine the precise location of the Burying Ground and began sharing their research in Spring 2019, developing her graduate project [*Paths to the Burying Ground: Enslavement, Erasure, and Memory*](#) as a repository for their findings.

Inclusive History Project

In Fall 2019, then-President Ronald A. Crutcher responded to this research and to the recommendations of the Presidential Commission for University History and Identity by forming the Inclusive History Project. The project, led by public historian Dr. Luranett L. Lee, was charged with examining and providing reports on three subjects: the Burying Ground; Robert Ryland (1805-1899), first president of what would become the University of Richmond and prominent Baptist minister; and Douglas Southall Freeman (1886-1953), graduate of Richmond College, Pulitzer Prize winning biographer, and rector of the Board of Trustees.¹

While research coordinator for the Inclusive History Project, Driskill continued the Burying Ground research, examining the connections between present campus land and enslavement and seeking archival details of the site. Her findings in this period included additional information on

¹ The second and third Inclusive History reports were submitted in early 2021: Shelby M. Driskill, *A Season of Discipline: Enslavement, Education, and Faith in the Life of Robert Ryland*, January 2021, and Suzanne Slye and Luranett L. Lee, *The Virginia Way: The Life and Social Influence of Douglas Southall Freeman*, February 2021.

18th century landowners and correspondence that demonstrated institutional awareness of graves at the Burying Ground site in 1912. The research was distilled in the first Inclusive History Report, “*Knowledge of this Cannot be Hidden: A Report on the Westham Burying Ground at the University of Richmond*,” submitted by Dr. Laurant L. Lee and Shelby M. Driskill, December 28, 2019.

2025 Update

This update of the 2019 Burying Ground report provides additional images and further details of smaller tracts that formed the campus and the individuals pre-1865 landowners enslaved. It also includes findings from a 2024 ground penetrating radar survey of the site that located at least graves still in place at the Burying Ground.

The report’s title has also been updated, removing the distinction, “Westham.”

Report Organization

While the 2019 report on the Burying Ground was organized to first address the 20th century evidence of the burial site and disturbances of graves, the 2025 update is organized chronologically:

- **Section I: Enslavement & Landownership**
In what ways does the history of the land that includes the Burying Ground intersect with enslavement era landowners’ exploitation of those they held through direct enslavement or “slave hire”?
- **Section II: The Burying Ground**
What records and accounts are available that detail the location and nature of the Burying Ground?

Indigenous History and the Land

Approximately 50 miles from the University of Richmond campus, archeologists have dated evidence of human activity to 16,000 to 18,000 BCE.² In the Woodland Period (1,000 BCE to European contact), a number of tribes and linguistic groups overlapped in the area. Within two miles of the campus, the Fall Line of the James River marks the divide between the ancestral lands of the Powhatan and Monacan nations. Eastern Algonquin Powhatan, Siouan Monacan, and Siouan Tutelo-Saponi languages were spoken at or near this point of cultural overlap. Members of regional tribes traveled to and through the area as part of vital trading movements, as did others



Indigenous lands in the area of present day University of Richmond (Native Land, native-land.ca, 2018)

² “Cactus Hill Archeological Site,” *Encyclopedia Virginia*, accessed April 10, 2025.

who, like members of Erie region tribes, were displaced from their home territories by European activity and subsequent conflicts.³

Archival Silences

While research related to the Burying Ground has yielded many details of the land and those held by landowners through direct enslavement and the system of human leasing known as “slave hire,” historical research centered on the lives of enslaved adults and children is nearly always faced with archival gaps. In typical enslavement era records, biographical details of enslaved individuals are often limited and tied to the dehumanization of the slave system itself. Because present knowledge of the names of enslaved people and details of their lives often depend upon the records kept by those who enslaved them, individuals could go from birth to burial and rarely appear in the historic record as anything more than a number. In this research, hundreds of names and fragments of adults and children’s lives have been located in “runaway” notices placed in newspapers, deeds that detail the passing of individuals or groups of enslaved people enslavers, “hiring” agreements, and “slave insurance” policies. Still, many of those whose lives were most connected to this history may never be named or known.

Section I: Enslavement & Landownership

This section is largely focused on the property known as Westham, which contained the entire present campus for much of the 18th century. Following divisions of the tract, the remaining acreage of Westham included the plantation house across River Road from university property, land on the Westhampton College side of campus and, across Little Westham Creek, all or most of the Burying Ground. Enslavement era details of other tracts that make up portions of the present campus – those referred to in this report as the mill side tracts (most of the Richmond College side of Westhampton Lake and potentially a portion of the adjacent Burying Ground) and Paradise Farm (land at the top of the lake) – are also included.

See Appendix C for a timeline of land control. A table with the recovered names of those who were enslaved or leased through the “slave hire” by pre-1865 owners of current campus land can be found on the [Burying Ground Memorial](#) website. Additional information and document images can be found at [Paths to the Burying Ground: Enslavement, Erasure & Memory](#) (Shelby M. Driskill and Douglas Broome, 2019).

18th and Early 19th Century

1702-c.1715: Giles Webb Ownership

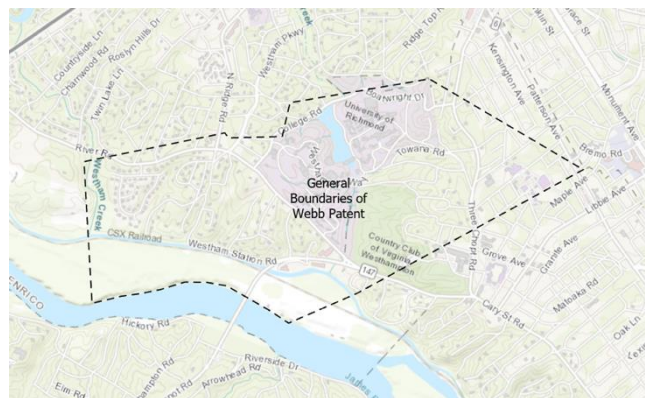
On October 28, 1702, Giles Webb (d.1713), a military and county official and enslaver, acquired 1,797 acres of land as part of the Virginia Colonial Land Office patent system.⁴ This method of

³ Madeleine Gunter Bassett, Christopher M. Stevenson, and Laure Dussubieux, “Re-Examining Trade Networks in Late Woodland Virginia (900–1600 CE): An LA-ICP-MS Analysis of Copper Artifacts,” *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports* 27, (2019): 1; Helen C. Roundtree, *The Powhatan Indians of Virginia: Their Traditional Culture* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 29; Robert Steven Grumet, *Historic Contact: Indian People and Colonists in Today’s Northeastern United States in the Sixteenth Through Eighteenth Centuries*, Contributions to Public Archeology (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995).

⁴ Giles Webb, Land patent, October 28, 1702, Library of Virginia, [link](#).

property distribution was designed to incentivize wealthy planters to import Europeans and captive Africans (as well as their descendants in the West Indies), adding to the colony's labor force. Planters received vast tracts of land in exchange for paying the transportation costs for large numbers of individuals. Some remained associated with the property while others did not. Giles Webb had already received significant holdings through the patent system, importing both Europeans and those described as "negroes" in 1692 and 1697.⁵ The 1702 patent for land that contained the present university campus provided him an additional 1,797 acres of land on the north side of the James River, "at a place known by the name Westham." The perimeter of the land was identified by its relation to "Lower Westham Creek," an early name of what is now called Little Westham Creek.⁶ In the Ambler Family Papers (1638-1810) at the Virginia Museum of History and Culture, a circa-1765 plat shows the former Webb patent before it was incorporated into a larger property. All but a small part of the present campus of the University of Richmond is close to the center of Webb's land.⁷

Like other land grants of the time, the language of the 1702 document details location and acreage, as well as the names of those whose importation formed part of the agreement. In the case of Webb's Westham grant, twenty-four individuals were listed with both first and last names, which generally indicates those of European descent. Following that list, however, are the words, "and twelve rights more." This additional dozen "rights" may reflect the importation of indentured Europeans or enslaved individuals.



General boundaries of Webb patent using boundaries from 18th century plat in Ambler Family Papers (Virginia Museum of History and Culture), GIS image by Douglas Broome

In his will recorded in 1713, Webb stated his wish to divide the population of those he enslaved, referring to them as "all my slaves that I have in Virginia." He bequeathed half of the group to his wife, Sarah Swann Randolph Webb.⁸ Research has not revealed details of Webb's use of the Westham land, nor whether individuals he enslaved were forced to labor there. Webb's acquisition of the Westham land, his importation of those referred to as either "negroes" or by only their first name, and his enslavement of others as reflected in his will do provide the first

⁵ Giles Webb, "Land Grant 29 April 1692," April 29, 1692, Library of Virginia; Giles Webb, "Land Grant 28 October 1697," October 28, 1697, Library of Virginia.

⁶ The creek name designation changed over time. Initially called Lower Westham Creek to distinguish between the creek and a smaller waterway to the west known as Upper Westham, it was later referred to as Greater Westham because it was larger than that to the west. At times, the creek is known simply as Westham Creek. Then, over time, "Lower" likely became conflated with "Lesser" and "Little" and the larger creek became known as Little Westham Creek, resulting in "Big Westham Farm" being located on what is now known as Little Westham Creek in 1832.

⁷ Giles Webb, "Webb, Giles, d. 1713? Plat, n.d., of land at Westham, Henrico County, Va.," Ambler Family Papers, 1638-1810, Virginia Historical Society.

⁸ "Will of Giles Webb of County and Parish of Henrico, Gent.," *Henrico County Wills and Deeds 1710-1714*, 218, Library of Virginia; also in Benjamin B. Weisiger, *Colonial Wills of Henrico County* Athens, GA: Iberian Publishing Company, 1998), 124.

example of the connection between those who controlled the Westham land and their accumulation of wealth derived from or increased by enslavement.⁹

c.1715 to 1763: Ownership by Randolph & Byrd Families

After Giles Webb's death,¹⁰ the property transferred to the ownership of the Randolph family.¹¹ During this period the Randolphs consolidated the land with a number of parcels, forming what ultimately became a 5,000-acre tract.¹² In the 1742 will of William Randolph II (1781-1742) he bequeathed what he described as "all my land at Westham with sixteen negroes" to his son, Peter Randolph (1717-1767).¹³ Peter Randolph attempted to develop a town on a portion of the Westham property in 1751, then sold the land to his brother, William Randolph III (1723-1761). On April 3, 1753, William Randolph sold the Westham plantation, now expanded to 5,000 acres on the north side of the James River to William Byrd III (1728-1777). Details in the deed reveal that the Westham plantation was then being worked by enslaved people. Randolph and Byrd agreed that those who were enslaved on the property by Randolph would remain until the harvest: "the servants and slaves of William Randolph shall be suffered to continue on the written lands until the 20th of October next ensuing to finish their crop."¹⁴

Both the Randolph and Byrd families were among the largest slaveholders in the colony. Peter Randolph enslaved 250 people, and at the peak of his wealth, William Byrd III enslaved over 1,000 women, men and children.¹⁵ There are no known records that provide the total number of enslaved individuals held by either family on the Westham plantation.

⁹ According to a transcription by researcher Paul Heinegg, individuals named and valued in the inventory of Webb's estate taken after his death in 1713 included "one negro man named Robin 30 pds.| Tero Indian 20 pds.|, Pat and Toney her child if slaves [likely meaning: if they are found to be enslaved] 30 pds.| Jenny 10 pds.| Frank Indian 10 pds.| 1 orphan girl named Pat Jenkins" (Paul Heinegg, "Free Indians," on *Free African Americans*, freeafricanamericans.com/free-indians.htm, accessed December 18, 2024). In addition to Tero and Frank, Peter was another indigenous man enslaved by Webb. In 1699, he was found guilty of murdering Henrico resident John Crostick and was executed (H.R. McIlwaine, ed., *Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia*, Volume II (Richmond: Davis Bottom, Superintendent of Public Printing, 1927), 154).

¹⁰ "Inventory of Capt. Giles Webb," *Henrico County Wills and Deeds, 1710-1714*, 240, microfilm, Library of Virginia.

¹¹ As of this writing, the specifics of the shift to the Randolphs are not clear. Webb's Westham Creek property may have been part of the transfer of a number of tracts of land from Thomas Webb, Giles Webb's brother, and William Randolph on September 8, 1716 (Thomas Webb to William Randolph (September 28, 1716), Deeds, Wills, Etc. 1714-1718, reel no. 7, 157, Library of Virginia.) Another possibility is that the land came to the Randolphs through their connection to Webb's widow, Sarah Swann Randolph Webb, also the widow of Henry Randolph (c.1665-1693).

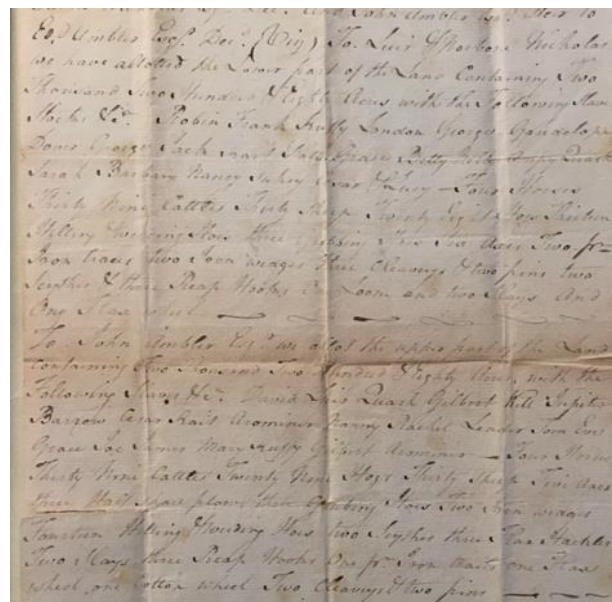
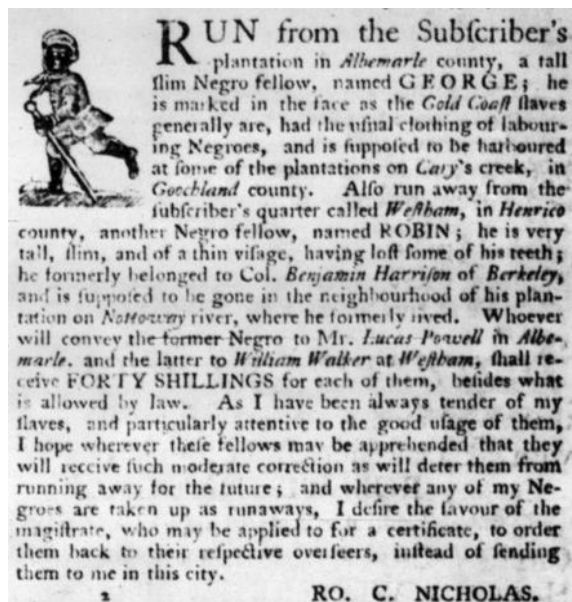
¹² William Randolph to William Byrd, January 17, 1753, recorded April 3, 1753, "Deeds, Wills, etc. 1750-1767." Microfilm. Library of Virginia.

¹³ W. G. Stanard, "Major Robert Beverly and his Descendants," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 3, no. 3 (January 1896), 263.

¹⁴ [Peter Randolph to William Byrd, January 17, 1753, Virginia Lee Hutcheson Davis and Gary Murdock Williams, *Henrico County Deeds: 1750-1774* (Westminster, MD: Heritage Books, 2007), 39-40.

¹⁵ Marc R. Mantrana, *Lost Plantations of the South* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009), 26; Trevor Bernard, *Planters, Merchants, and Slaves: Plantation Societies in British America, 1650-1820* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 134.

1763-post 1791: Nicholas & Ambler Partnership



Ro. C. Nicholas, [Advertisement], *Virginia Gazette*, January 15, 1767 (Colonial Williamsburg Foundation); Division of land, livestock, and enslaved adults and children, 1787, Nicholas v. Ambler, 1788 (Library of Virginia)

Robert Carter Nicholas (1728-1780) purchased the Westham land from William Byrd III in 1763 and spent significant time clearing titles from older land patents.¹⁶ When this process was complete, Nicholas had cleared many, though not all,¹⁷ of the titles for the 5,000 acres, the equivalent of approximately eight square miles.

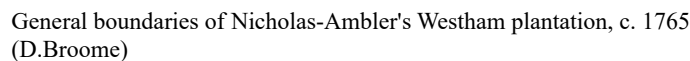
On January 5, 1765, Nicholas entered into an agreement to share ownership of Westham with Edward Ambler (1732-1768).¹⁸ Nicholas and Ambler agreed that “at their joint expense” they would “sufficiently stock the said land with Slaves, Cattle, Horses, Sheep, and Hogs, and likewise provide all necessary Houses, and Implements of Husbandry, and annually divide the whole Profits of the said Estate equally between them.” Neither man appears to have intended to live on the property. Instead it was to be an active investment and those enslaved there were to be treated as part of the working of the property. Nicholas and Ambler each committed to “constantly keep Thirty working Negroes on the said Land during the Term of Twenty Years next ensuing, and if any of the said Negroes should die within the said Term, that their places as the like equal Expense shall be, so soon as may be convenient, supplied with others.” Both men also agreed to share the expense of “maintain[ing]” the enslaved population, and both would own any children born of those they enslaved: “[t]hat the said Robert and Edward shall be equally interested in all the said Slaves and their Increase, and shall cloath [sic] and maintain them at

¹⁶ Victor Dennis Golladay, “The Nicholas Family of Virginia: 1722-1820” (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 1973), 92.

¹⁷ “George Jefferson to Thomas Jefferson, 1 August 1811,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, accessed September 29, 2019, [link](#).

¹⁸ Nicholas and Ambler, “Agreement,” Virginia Historical Society.

Within the first two years of the Nicholas and Ambler partnership, an enslaved man named Robin escaped from the Westham plantation. In January of 1767, Nicholas placed an advertisement detailing the escapes of two men: George, who had been held in Albemarle County, and Robin, whom he believed might be headed toward the Nottoway River area where he was once held on a plantation belonging to Benjamin Harrison (1726-1791). Nicholas claimed



In 1771, a devastating flood, known as the Great Fresh, resulted in the washing away of a significant amount of Westham estate topsoil and the destruction of a number of buildings. That year, Nicholas writes, “The Losses I sustain'd by the Fresh have obliged me to look out for more Lands to work my Negroes on.”²¹ It is possible that Nicholas was referring to moving enslaved

²¹ John Norton & Sons, *John Norton & Sons, merchants of London and Virginia : being the papers from their counting house for the years 1750-1795* (New York: A.M. Kelly, 1968), 301; Golladay, "Nicholas Family," 147.

people to one of his other plantations in Albemarle or Hanover Counties, but his wording points to the likelihood that this is the first known account of the “hiring out” of enslaved people linked to the Westham property.

After Edward Ambler’s death in 1768, Nicholas managed the Westham plantation, a Jamestown estate, and the interests of Ambler’s widow and sons.²² While the initial Nicholas-Ambler partnership stipulated that thirty enslaved people were to be placed on the property during their period of ownership, this number increased over decades. In the years after Nicholas’ death in 1780, the Westham land and the community of 44 enslaved individuals held there were divided among his heirs and those of Edward Ambler. The adults and children they enslaved were listed by name in a 1787 division document.

“Hiring Out”

Known as “slave hire,” the system of seasonal or yearly leasing of enslaved individuals became a key part of Central Virginia’s “slave society.” Following a 1771 flood that washed away Westham topsoil, Robert Carter Nicholas wrote that he was seeking “more Lands to work my Negroes on,” a likely reference to this leasing system. At least three later owners of the Westham land “hired out” those they enslaved to others through individual agreements and hiring agents. The Green family, at times owners of the mill side tracts and Westham, also “hired in” significant numbers of enslaved people.

In Richmond and other cities, annual “Hiring Days” between Christmas and early January resulted in the exchange of very large numbers of enslaved individuals each year. Subsequent sites of their forced labor included homes, small businesses, factories, fields and farms, and area coal pits. Many non-slave owning households would “hire” one or two enslaved people for a year at a time, and mine owners promised agricultural enslavers significant earnings if they leased those they enslaved to perform the dangerous work of coal extraction.

The system of leasing enslaved adults and children became a significant part of the Richmond area’s economy, and shaped the lives of thousands of enslaved individuals and families.

IMPORTANT TO THE OWNERS AND HIRERS OF NEGROES.—We lay before our readers a petition to the Mayor of Richmond, numerously signed by merchants and other business men, on a subject of great interest, not only to the petitioners themselves but to the owners of negroes, who hire their servants in this city: and we are permitted to add, that the ordinance alluded to will be rigidly enforced by his Honor and the police generally. The ordinance alluded to, is to prevent the obstruction of the principal streets of the city by slaves, brought here to be hired out. For years past, it has been almost impossible for ladies to pass along Main street, from 12th to 17th streets, between the 25th of December and 10th of January, for the hundreds of servants that literally jammed the sidewalks. Those having negroes for hire, have no more right to obstruct the street with them than a merchant has with his goods; and if they persist in doing so during the approaching season, we have very little doubt that they will be made to pay for it. The sixth section of the ordinance, alluded to, reads thus:

“Not more than five negroes shall at any one time stand together on a sidewalk, at or near a corner of the street. And negroes shall never stand on a sidewalk to the inconvenience of white persons having to pass by.”

Daily Dispatch, November 8, 1854
(Virginia Chronicle)

John Norton & Sons, *John Norton & Sons, Merchants of London and Virginia...* (New York: A.M. Kelly, 1968), 301; United States, Federal Census Slave Schedule, 1860, “B.W. Green,” Henrico County, Va.; “Important to Owners and Hirers of Negroes,” *Daily Dispatch*, November 8, 1854; “Pit Hands Wanted,” *Richmond Enquirer*, February 26, 1845; Coal Pit Hands Wanted,” *Richmond Enquirer*, December 19, 1845; “Negroes for Sale and Hire,” *Daily Dispatch*, January 11, 1864; John J. Zaborney, *Slaves for Hire: Renting Enslaved Laborers in Antebellum Virginia* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2012), 3

²² Golladay, “Nicholas Family,” 329. In the record of *Cary et al, Executors of Ambler v. Macon et al* (1803), amid other contested charges in a section dealing largely with the Westham plantation, Robert Carter Nicholas, and the heirs of Edward Ambler, one consideration was which family members paid for the shoes worn by enslaved people: “October 1770, 70 pairs of shoes charged to John and none to Edward Cary, when it was presumed they were for the whole slaves. The commissioner states that Edward had forty-two, and John ninety. One third part, therefore, should be charged to the former, and two thirds to the latter. The same occurs in May 1771, in November 1772, in November 1773, in November 1774, and in January 1776” (“Cary et al, executors, v. Macon et al, executors, October 1803,” in Daniel Call, *Reports of Cases Argued and Decided in the Court of Appeals of Virginia*, v. 4 (Richmond: Robert I. Smith, 1833))

c.1791 to 1811: Harvie Family Ownership

The section of the property held by Nicholas' son, Philip Norborne Nicholas (1773-1849), was sold to John Harvie (1747-1807) after 1791.²³ Details of this transfer appear in a subsequent deed and John Harvie's will, though the precise sale date is unknown. Following Harvie's death in 1807, the land transferred to his son, Edwin Harvie (1765-1811).²⁴ John Harvie and his heirs were enslavers and "hired out" those they enslaved, but no sources have been located that detail the enslavement of individuals on the Westham property during this period. Following the death of Edwin Harvie in the Richmond Theatre fire of 1811 his widow sold Westham to John Graham and his partner Thomas Taylor.²⁵

19th Century

1811-1823: John Graham Ownership



John Graham's portion of the Westham property ("Henrico County: surveyed and drawn under the direction of John Wood," 1819, Library of Virginia). At the time of Wood's survey, Little Westham Creek was known as Big Westham Creek.

²³ Will, John Harvie, Will, November 26, 1806, Accession 23531b, Personal papers collection, Library of Virginia.

²⁴ Will, John Harvie, November 26, 1806, Library of Virginia; Henrico County, VA, Chancery Court, *Lewis Nicholas v. Robert Carter Nicholas (executor). et al.*, Henrico County, Chancery Court Collection (1791-012), Library of Virginia.

²⁵ "Edwin James Harvie," *Enquirer* (Richmond, VA), January 4, 1812, 3, Virginia Chronicle; Thomas Taylor and John Graham partition deed, Henrico County, VA, DB 16:37, August 5, 1817, Library of Virginia; John Graham estate via Walter Dun, executor, to William Shapard, DB 22: 464, Henrico County, VA, January 4, 1821. Library of Virginia; John Graham, Will, Henrico County (Va.) Circuit Court. Records, 1766-1879, Robert Alonzo Brock Collection, Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California. Library of Virginia.

John Graham (d.1820) was a Scottish immigrant and an absentee land speculator in what is now Ohio where he controlled over 35,000 acres of land.²⁶ In central Virginia, he owned the Dover Coal Pits in Goochland County nine miles from Westham and a coal yard on Cary Street.²⁷ After returning to Scotland during the Revolutionary War period, Graham again made his home in the Richmond area in 1784.²⁸ By 1811, he was the co-owner of the Westham land that included a large part of the current campus.

In 1811, Graham and Thomas Taylor purchased 1,400 acres of the original Westham tract from the estate of Edwin Harvie and his wife Martha Harvie (1789-1859) and the two men partitioned the land in 1817.²⁹ Graham then controlled the eastern portion, approximately 700 acres of land that would retain the name Westham. An 1819 map shows Graham's name beside a mark that generally indicates a house but it is not known whether he resided at Westham during his ownership. Graham had extensive area holdings and what was described as a "comfortable dwelling house" in Richmond where he owned a considerable amount of land.³⁰ An advertisement for his Westham property after his death indicates that it was actively worked by enslaved individuals. It described "fifty prime slaves" who were to be auctioned with the property, including those described as "valuable tradesmen."³¹

As dictated in Graham's will, at his death the majority of his wealth was to be divided among his relatives in Scotland following the liquidation of all of his property, including the sale of the Westham land and the majority of the men, women and children he enslaved there and elsewhere. A small number of those he held were allowed to choose their next enslavers, while Jasper and Mary Crouch were emancipated in his will. The fifty people bound to Graham at Westham were scheduled to be auctioned with the land on January 4, 1821.³² The property did not transfer to its next owner until 1823, however, and it is possible that those enslaved there were included in the large auction in Richmond in 1821. An account of the Graham auction appeared in numerous national and international publications. It describes the sale of "more than a hundred" people and "about thirty more, male and female negroes, who would be disposed of at private contract with the privilege of choosing their own masters."³³ These details are consistent with the language of Graham's will which makes special provisions for a handful of enslaved people among the scores he enslaved. A few — Jasper, Mary, and Rachel — were emancipated and provided payments from Graham's estate. Others were allowed to select their next enslaver or, in the case of William, to have his father make that selection: "[I]f the said William behaves well... he may be sold to the person he chooses or his father Jasper may recommend."³⁴

²⁶ Hanno Sheerer, "'For Ten Years Past I have Constantly Wished to Turn My Western Lands into Money: Speculator Frustration and Settlers' Bargaining Power in Ohio's Virginia Military District, 1795-1810,'" *Ohio Valley History* (Spring 2014): 7.

²⁷ [Advertisement], Richmond Commercial Compiler, June 13, 1817, 1.

²⁸ Sheerer, "For Ten Years Past," 24.

²⁹ Partition, Thomas Taylor and John Graham, Henrico County, VA, DB 16:37, August 5, 1817, Library of Virginia.

³⁰ Sheerer, "For Ten Years Past," fn6, 24.

³¹ "Land and Slaves for Sale," *Daily National Intelligencer*, November 24, 1820, 4.

³² "Land and Slaves for Sale," November 24, 1820.

³³ "American Civilization," *Galignani's Messenger*, May 1, 1821, 2-3.

³⁴ Will, John Graham, Henrico County (Va.) Circuit Court. Records, 1766-1879, Library of Virginia.

Graham's coal pits in Goochland County, which were described as running on the forced labor of hundreds in 1796,³⁵ was the location of more individuals he enslaved. On November 17, 1820, Graham's executor, Walter Dun, had attempted to liquidate the Dover coal pits, the nearly thousand acres of land surrounding them, and the one hundred people enslaved there.³⁶ In the advertisement for the sale, Dun writes that "one hundred prime slaves" would be auctioned, "among whom are some valuable carpenters, blacksmiths, shoemakers & tanners." This auction was either unsuccessful or rescheduled for other reasons. On May 21, 1824, three and a half years after Graham's death, another advertisement for an auction of the coal pits, the land, and the people appeared in the *Richmond Inquirer*. On January 27, 1821, Graham's Westham land was sold to William Shapard (1770-1843).³⁷

The Graham Auction, 1821

At the time of his death in 1820, John Graham enslaved fifty individuals on his Westham property and at least 100 at the Dover Coal Pits in Goochland County. In his will, he asked that his land and those he enslaved be sold. Graham's also listed a group of people who would be given the chance to select their next enslavers. Those who were mothers would be allowed to keep their children under the age of four. Children four and over were sold with the rest of those Graham enslaved.

A letter describing the auction appeared in several national and international publications. It detailed the sale of "a man, a woman, and two small children, whom the auctioneer said he was instructed not to separate." The writer quoted the auctioneer who "disposed" of "more than a hundred" that day as well as several enslaved people who resisted being sold away from the area. The letter noted that the enslaved people hoped to avoid being sold to "two or three negro speculators from the southern and western states." The account closed with the letter writer's return to the auction site later that day, where he learned that 30 additional individuals had been sold through "private contract, with the privileges of choosing their own masters." He described this as the means by which young women might have the best chance of avoiding sexual exploitation and violence:

The ch[oo]sing their own masters... is a liberty of determining who they will not go to. Should a pretty mulatto woman be offered at public auction, the sale is generally well attended by bachelors, by one of whom she is usually purchased, and taken into keeping.

The family of four auctioned earlier was purchased by a Petersburg resident for \$840. Jacob voiced his resistance to being sold to a Louisiana trader and was purchased by an enslaver in the area. Despite his own resistance, Ponto was sold to James Grant, described as a "negro trader from New Orleans." Grant also purchased Billy. No additional details are known of those auctioned that day.

Sources: "Land and Slaves for Sale," *National Daily Intelligencer*, November 24, 1820; Will and codicil, John Graham, Circuit Court, Henrico County, Va., Robert Alonzo Brock Collection, microfilm, Library of Virginia (Huntington Library, San Marino, Ca.); "American Civilization," *Galignani's Messenger*, May 1, 1821, 2-3.

³⁵ Ronald L. Lewis, "The Darkest Abode of Man": Black Miners in the First Southern Coal Field, 1780-1865," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 87, no. 2 (1979).

³⁶ "Coal and other Lands, and Slaves for sale," *Daily National Intelligencer* (Washington, D.C.), November 17, 1820, 3.

³⁷ Graham estate to William Shapard, January 4, 1821.

1823-1832 Shapard Family Ownership

Land described as Graham's 700 acres at Westham was sold through his executor to William Shapard in 1823. He and his wife, Catherine Condie Shapard (1786-1875), combined the former Graham land with additional acreage and remained at Westham for over a decade, calling their farms "Big Westham" (the former Graham tract) and "Little Westham." They enslaved at least fifty-four people on their overall plantation. The Shapards began liquidating their holdings in 1832 after a period of apparent financial distress and as part of what they described as an effort to secure the future of their daughter, Willianna Shapard [later Willianna Tabb] (1826-1897). This process included the sale of their land, divided into two tracts, and the individuals and families they enslaved on the property.³⁸ An 1832 Chancery Court document provides details of the planned sale of the land as well as the names of the enslaved men, women and children held there:

*Charles, John Hindru, Big Davy Lunsford, Spy, Jack, Isaac, Freeman, Abram, Bob, William, Tom, Edmund, Caesar, John Holmes, Anderson, Ewin; Dick and Cloe his wife; Jesse and Betty his wife and one child [no name provided]; Stephen and Lavinia his wife and their children, Denniss, Patsy, Rosetta, Matildianna, and Andrew; Ned and Maria his wife and one child [no name provided]; Emanuel and Lucy Mead his wife and their children: Little Davy and Albert; John Allen and Lucy Allen his wife; Harrison, Ralph, Jim, Nancy, William; Children of Jenny (deceased) [children's names no recorded]; Dianna and children: Susan and Fanny; John Baker and wife Amelia and children: Maria, Godfrey, Claiborne, Eliza, Agness, and Edward*³⁹

An advertisement that appeared in the *Richmond Whig and Commercial Journal* on December 8, 1832 described the pending auction of "[t]he Negroes belonging to the Farms" including "a first rate boot and shoemaker."⁴⁰

³⁸ "Valuable Property For Sale," *Richmond Whig and Commercial Journal*, December 8, 1832, 2.

³⁹ *John Sheppard and Lewis Webb v. William and Catherine Shapard*, Henrico Chancery Court, no. 1835-015, Manuscripts Collection, Library of Virginia.

⁴⁰ "Valuable Property For Sale," *Richmond Whig and Commercial Journal*, December 8, 1832.

Following the sale of the portion then known as Big Westham Farm, which contained what is now the western side of campus, the property was sold to three brothers — Thomas, Robert and John Crouch.

Bob and the Blacksmith

Bob was among the more than fifty-five people William Shapard enslaved at Westham who were sold at auction on December 27, 1832. He was purchased by W.C. Day, who at the time ran a small school in Manchester, across the James River from downtown Richmond.

Three months later, Bob escaped Day's enslavement and what is known of him is drawn from an advertisement seeking his "deliver[y]." Day suspected that Bob was with a man, also formerly enslaved by Shapard, whom he only referred to as "the blacksmith." Rumors placed the blacksmith "on or near Elk Island" in the James River above Westham. Bob was described as having been injured during his former "hire" to the owner of the Midlothian coal pits, resulting in a pronounced stoop when he walked. His escape from Day is the last known account of his life and that of the blacksmith.

BOB, who was purchased for me last winter at the sale of Mr. Wm. Shapard's negroes, left my house last Easter, and is still a runaway. He is about fifty years old, bends forward when he walks, and limps, in consequence (as he says) of a fall which he had some years ago when at work in the coal pits belonging to N. Mills.

On the day that he left home, he was seen with the blacksmith, who was likewise sold by Mr. Shapard. I have been told that the blacksmith lives on or near Elk Island. I will pay the legal fees, and no more, to any person who will deliver him to me in Manchester, or give me such information as will enable me to get him again.

July 27—c2awtlf W. C. DAY.

"Education," *Daily Richmond Whig & Public Advertiser*, December 17, 1833, 3; *Daily Richmond Whig & Public Advertiser*, August 8, 1833, 3

Crouch Brothers Ownership (1833 - 1839)

Westham (known during this period as Westham farm) was purchased by the Crouch brothers from the Shapards' trustees on July 1, 1833. Less is known of the Crouches' land use during this period but some specifics of the brothers and details of those they enslaved emerge from newspaper items during the years before and during their ownership of the land. Prior to the brother's purchase of Westham, Richard Crouch (1790-1859) and Thomas Crouch (1788-1856) were engaged in a number of area business operations. The two were partners in a fabric store which sold luxury and "common" goods.⁴¹ Richard Crouch owned several properties in Richmond including a hotel close to the Capitol.⁴² Dr. John G. Crouch (1792-1837) and his brothers, along with Jesse Snead, owned coal pits and yards throughout the period that were described as among the "principal" mining operations in the area.⁴³

During the Crouches' ownership of the Westham property, several "runaway slave" advertisements and notices provide glimpses of those who were enslaved or held through "hire" by the brothers. According to an 1834 advertisement placed by Thomas Crouch, in which he offered a reward for the return of an enslaved man named Billy who had escaped from Westham, Richard Crouch "reside[d] in Richmond" while it appears that Thomas Crouch was more closely associated with the workings of the farm⁴⁴:

⁴¹ [Advertisement,] *Virginia Patriot* (Richmond, VA), December 28, 1816: 2.

⁴² [Advertisement,] *Virginia Argus* (Richmond, VA), July 28, 1809, 4.

⁴³ John H. Crouch, Last Will and Testament, October 21, 1836; Virginia, Wills and Probate Records, 1652-1900, Henrico County, Va., Ancestry.com; "Mineral Wealth and Resources of Virginia," *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, June 5, 1846, 1.

⁴⁴ [Advertisement], *Richmond Whig & Public Advertiser*, July 1, 1834, 3; [Advertisement], *Richmond Whig*, January 3, 1845, 3.

RUNAWAY from Westham farm, one week since, a negro man by the name of BILLY lately the property of Mr. Edmund Walls of Richmond. Billy is a short black fellow, about 21 years of age, with a blemish in one eye. He was sometimes employed at the coal yard in Richmond. A suitable reward will be paid for his apprehension and delivery to me, or to my brother, Mr. Richard Crouch, who resides in Richmond.

THOS. CROUCH

Westham, June 24, 1834

Although the majority of what is known of the life of Billy is contained in just three sentences, the listing for his escape in the *Daybook of the Richmond, Virginia Police Guard 1834-1844*, transcribed by Dr. Leni Ashmore Sorenson, provides two additional details about his enslavement and the effort to recapture him. While Billy was hired out to the use of one or more of the Crouches, he was still owned by Edmund Walls. Thomas Crouch offered to pay twenty dollars for his return.⁴⁵ During the Crouches' ownership of the Westham plantation, a number of other enslaved men escaped and appear in the police daybook. A man named Berkley (also called Burkley) who at "25 or 26 years old" was referred to as Thomas Crouch's "boy," escaped in April of 1836 and was recaptured by a police captain. He escaped again five months later and there is no record of another recapture.⁴⁶ A man named Lilytand escaped in 1837. There is no description of where he was held by Thomas Crouch and no indication in the police record that he was recaptured.⁴⁷

The daybook also contains several descriptions of enslaved men escaping from both direct enslavement and "hire" by the Crouches' coal company, Crouch & Snead. It is highly likely that the operations of the Crouches' coal pits in Goochland County was largely or entirely contingent on the labor of enslaved individuals.⁴⁸ Among those who escaped the pits was a man named Gabriel who remained free for six months until he was recaptured and "committed to the City Gaol [jail] as a runaway."⁴⁹ In August of 1837, three men escaped and were listed together in an August 27th entry in the police daybook. All three — Richard, Tom Jones and Ben Mines — were enslaved by others and "hired out" to Crouch & Snead.⁵⁰ In March of 1839, two men escaped from Crouch & Snead: Fitzland on the 2nd and another man named Richard on the 26th. Six months later, in an effort to pay the debts of the late John G. Crouch, Thomas and Richard Crouch sold Westham Farm to Clement H. Read and William D. Sims on September 20, 1839.⁵¹

⁴⁵ Leni Ashmore Sorenson, "Absconded: Fugitive Slaves in the 'Daybook of the Richmond Police Guard, 1834-1844'" (PhD diss., College of William and Mary, 2005), 100.

⁴⁶ Sorenson, *Absconded*, 130.

⁴⁷ Sorenson, *Absconded*, 63.

⁴⁸ Virginia General Assembly, "An ACT to incorporate Runnymede coal mining company in the county of Henrico," *Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia Passed at the Session of 1836-37* (Richmond: Thomas Ritchie, 1837), 208-209; "Steam Engine and Saw Mill For Sale," *Daily Dispatch*, January 8, 1853, *Virginia Chronicle*,

⁴⁹ Sorenson, *Absconded*, 133.

⁵⁰ Sorenson, *Absconded*, 157.

⁵¹ Thomas Crouch and Richard Crouch to Clement H. Read, DB 43:138, Henrico County, VA, September 20, 1839, Library of Virginia.

“Paradise Farm”

A relatively small area touching the upper eastern shore of present day Westhampton Lake was part of a tract known as Norborne Forest in 1826. According to 20th century secondary sources, it became known as Paradise Farm after its purchase by Dr. Thomas Patterson in 1832. Due to the frequent transfers of tracts considered in this report, family names are not used to identify land, therefore, despite not appearing in available contemporaneous primary sources, “Paradise Farm” is used as the designator.



1853 plat in which Paradise Farm is noted with the words “Mrs. Patterson’s land” (upper left); it also includes the mill and home of the Green family and Westham farm (then under the control of Williams Sims; “Simms land”) (Library of Virginia)

Philip Norborne Nicholas and his wife Mary Spear Nicholas (1780-1820) sold the Paradise Farm tract out of the overall Westham plantation property in 1806. It was purchased by John Harvie and following his death in 1807 was sold by his son and heir, Lewis Harvie (1782-1807), to John Robinson. Robinson and his wife⁵² held the land until 1826 when they sold it to William Boshier.⁵³ Boshier and his wife, Gabriella Boshier, sold the property to Dr. Thomas Patterson in 1833,⁵⁴ and according to two secondary architectural sources it was Patterson who had the home built on the property that still stands in the Carrington Court neighborhood between the campus and Forest Avenue.⁵⁵ Patterson’s wife was Susan G. Thomas Patterson (1798-1878; in at least one document she was referred to as “Susanna”). Following Thomas Patterson’s death in 1834, she retained the farm and resided there until her elder years.

Census entries and other records provide some details of those enslaved by Susan Patterson until full emancipation after the Civil War. She enslaved 9 adults and children in 1840, 9 in 1850, and in 1860 her primary Federal Census Slave Schedule entry records her enslavement of 10 individuals and her leasing of a 12 year old boy.⁵⁶ Additionally, she also “hired out” a 55-year old man she enslaved to the tobacco factory of her brother, [James Thomas, Jr.](#), a Richmond College

⁵² The Robinsons who owned the Paradise Farm tract may be John Robinson (1773-1850) and his wife, Agnes Moncure Robinson (1780-1862).

⁵³ John Robinson and Agnes Robinson to William Boshier, Henrico County, Virginia, August 23, 1826, Library of Virginia.

⁵⁴ William Boshier and Gabriella Boshier to Thomas Patterson, Henrico County, Virginia, December 30, 1833, Library of Virginia. Deed contains details of multiple transfers. The Boshiers may have been William Boshier (1789-1884) and Gabrielle (or Gabriella) Boshier (1791-1883).

⁵⁵ County of Henrico, *Inventory of Early Architecture and Historic Sites*, rev. ed. (Henrico County, 1978), 128; Richard Guy Wilson, ed., *Buildings of Virginia: Tidewater and Piedmont* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 293

⁵⁶ “Sus. G. Patterson,” United States Federal Census, 1840, Henrico County, Virginia, “S. G. Patterson,” 89-90 (Ancestry.com pagination); United States Federal Census, Slave Schedule, 1850, Henrico County, Virginia, Western District, 9 (Ancestry.com pagination); “Susan G. Patterson,” United States Federal Census, Slave Schedule, 1860, Henrico County, Western Division, 36 (Ancestry.com pagination).

trustee and significant donor.⁵⁷ Julia, a woman Patterson enslaved in 1861, gave birth to a son named George on May 7, 1861.⁵⁸ James Thomas, Jr. (who financed and held the note on Paradise Farm when Thomas Patterson purchased it in 1833)⁵⁹ frequently bought scores of shirts and other clothing from his sister intended for the many enslaved individuals forced to labor in his tobacco manufacturing operations. In 1852, he paid her for 49 coats, 12 jackets, 65 pairs of pants, and 111 shirts.⁶⁰ A receipt filed between 1853 and 1858 recorded Thomas's payment to Patterson for production of 350 shirts.⁶¹ Given labor conventions in Virginia's slavery-based society her apparent cottage industry was likely operated in whole or in part by those she enslaved.⁶²

1839-1855: Read-Sims Partnership

Negroes		Negroes		Negroes	
Stephen	\$ 30	John	\$ 350	George	\$ 150
Nancy	50	Betsy	150	John	250
Anna	500	Betsy	100	Charles & Clay	80
	500	Conner	150	Anna	400
William	200	Phil	50	Abraham	550
Thomas	400	Betsy	500	William	350
Isaac	200	Oliver	500	James	350
London	150	Charles	125	Paul	350
Ann	100	Sally	250	Jordan	300
Ben	75	Phil	50	James	200
Oliver	400	Hauman	100	William	450
Harmon	400	Ann	175	George	400
John Grimes	80	Betsy	75	James	400
Long	80	Charles	500	John	350
Phil	500	Rowell	500	Row	300
Isaac	500	Mary	750	Betty	150
Harmon	350	Oliver	300	Lydia	350
Isaac	500	Joseph	350	Oliver	500
Eliza	400	John	300	Oliver	500
Isaac	300	Betsy	125	John, Leman &	1300
Mary	250	Andrew	125	Carrie	
Charles	125	Scott	500	Jacob, Milly	
Phil	0	Ann	350	Ann	

Lists of those enslaved by Clement H. Read (Library of Virginia.)

Clement H. Read (1798-1845) and William D. Sims (d. c.1857) purchased the Westham property from the Crouch family for \$18,795.93 on September 20, 1839. At his death in 1845, Read was

⁵⁷ "James Thomas," United States Federal Census, Slave Schedule, 1860, City of Richmond, Virginia, Ward 2, 3. One transcription of "S.G. Patterson" in the list of enslavers who hired out to Thomas interprets this name as "S.A. Patterson," but a comparison to other middle initial A entries makes it clear that it was a poorly written G.

⁵⁸ [Julia (mother) and George (infant), Virginia Register of Births, 1853-1870, Henrico County, Virginia, May 7, 1861, Family Search.

⁵⁹ Deed of Trust, Thomas and Susanna Patterson, James Thomas, Jr. and James Boshier, and William Boshier, December 30, 1833, Henrico County, Virginia, Library of Virginia.

⁶⁰ Receipt, James Thomas, Jr. to Susan G. Patterson, 1852, James Thomas, Jr. Papers, Duke University.

⁶¹ James Thomas, Jr. to Susan G. Patterson, [filed between 1853 and 1858], James Thomas, Jr. Papers, Duke University.

⁶² In 1850 her family and her "farm manager" are the only free individuals recorded in Patterson's census entry. In 1860, apart from Patterson family members and her "overseer," one free white woman and two girls ages 12 and 14 were recorded. These three individuals may have had some relationship to her clothing production operation.

described as being “of Westham,”⁶³ indicating that he and his family, like the Shapards, resided on the property during at least a part of his period of ownership. Sims provided the funds for the purchase with the understanding that Read would repay him. The terms of Read’s will dictated that the land was to be sold upon his death with the proceeds going to Sims. Half of those that Read enslaved at Westham were to be given to Sims “at valuation, that is to be valued as the prices negroes sold for when we purchased the land.” The other half of the enslaved population were to be transferred to Read’s wife, Betsey Sims Read (1800-1859). This resulted in an appraisal of the 122 people enslaved by Clement Read, conducted by the Henrico County Sheriff and Westham neighbors. They recorded names of enslaved individuals and family groups on two lists, one of 99 adults and children and a second of 23. The second list also included assorted furnishings and “plantation tools,” and was likely part of the property settlement between William Sims and Read’s estate.

Despite the instructions in the will, Betsey Read and William Sims reached an alternate agreement and all of those enslaved by her husband shifted to her ownership. She and her sons relocated to Roanoke County, Virginia. Most, if not all of those she enslaved, remained on the Westham property until her son Thomas Read’s marriage in 1849. At that time the population of adults and children were divided between he and his brother, David S. Read.⁶⁴ Throughout a long legal battle between members of the family, references to the individuals formerly enslaved at Westham and the phrase “Westham negroes” appear in numerous documents, particularly items focused on the contested cost of caring for those who could not work.⁶⁵ The Chancery Court records in *Read v. Read* document the family’s dispute over the financial requirements related to those they enslaved.⁶⁶ They hold the most substantial known accounts of the lives of those held by the Reads at Westham.

⁶³ “Deaths,” *Richmond Enquirer*, October 31, 1845, 4, Virginia Chronicle.

⁶⁴ *Read v. Read*, 3.

⁶⁵ *Read v. Read*, 84.

⁶⁶ *Read et al vs Read et al*, Roanoke County, VA, Chancery Court, Index no. 1872-020, Library of Virginia, [link](#).

Following the removal of the enslaved population from Westham, Betsey Read and William Sims sold the land in 1855. Its purchaser, Benjamin W. Green, had been established in the neighborhood for a dozen years by the time he purchased Westham, and during that period had rapidly increased his landholdings and the numbers of those he enslaved.

Solomon and Ailcy's Family

Solomon, Ailcy, and their children were among the 122 people enslaved by Clement Read on the Westham land. While Read's family relocated to Roanoke County, Virginia after his death in 1845, most or all of those he had enslaved at Westham remained on the land for another four years. At the marriage of Read's son, Thomas, in 1849, the enslaved community was moved to Roanoke and the men, women and children were divided between Thomas Read and his brother, David.

Traces of Solomon and Ailcy's family emerge from records of the Reads' subsequent battle over the cost of their care. Their names and the ages of the children appear on an undated document labelled "Westham Negroes." In another, they were described as being in a "class of servants" that included "old and infirm negroes & children." A mention of a coffin for Ailcy in May 1857 was the only indication of her death. By 1860, Solomon's oldest children, George, Royall, and Parthena,

Child	Age
George	16
Royall	13
Parthena	11
Minna	?
Brenda	?
Pomfrey	6
Hodge	2
Nelly	9

were no longer listed with the family. They may have been "hired out" by the Reads or sold away. The last known description of Solomon's family appears in this 1860 document, when the widow of Thomas Read and her new husband sought financial compensation from Clement Read's estate commissioner: "Solomon, Minna, Brenda, Nelly, Pomfrey and Hodge were supported three months & clothed for the winter of 1857 &/58."

Clement H. Read, [Estate Property Appraisal,] Henrico County, VA Will Book 12: 145-146, Library of Virginia; *Read et al vs Read et al*, Roanoke County, VA, Chancery Court, Index no. 1872-020, image 3, Library of Virginia; *Read v. Read*, image 84.

1843-1865: Green Family Control

The Green family had previously resided in Richmond but in 1843 trustees for Julia A. Green (1816-1889) purchased the first portion of the family's area holdings, land which would eventually include most of the present university campus. The first Green purchase included the eventual family's homesite on the eastern side of Three Chopt Road and a farm that extended to the east and away from what is now the campus.⁶⁷ Her trust also held acreage on the western side of Three Chopt Road and a portion of that land is now part of the University of Richmond campus.⁶⁸ In 1848, a mill and surrounding 66.25 acres adjacent to the Westham estate and on the shore of what was then called Great Westham Creek, was added to Julia Green's wealth.⁶⁹ For

⁶⁷ Warner W. Guy and Mary P. Guy to Alexander Grant, Jr., Hamilton A. Crenshaw, Julia A. Green and children, DB: 47: 48, Henrico County, VA, July 28, 1843, Library of Virginia.

⁶⁸ Warner Guy to Grant & Crenshaw in trust for Julia A. Green, July 1843, deed, Henrico County, July 1843, Library of Virginia.

⁶⁹ Previously, the land which had belonged to Robert Gamble was sold to John Ambler and Christopher Thompkins in 1816. Following Ambler's death it transferred to his heir, Catherine Moncure, and her husband Henry. The Moncures controlled the land for approximately twelve years before it became a part of the Green family's Henrico holdings (Spotswood Lipscomb and Elizabeth Smith to Robert Gamble, Henrico County Deed Book 9: 375, July 18, 1811, Library of Virginia; Robert Gamble and Letitia Gamble to John Ambler and Christopher Tompkins, July 28, 1816, Henrico County Deed Book 14: 277, Library of Virginia; Catherine Moncure and Henry Moncure to

the purposes of this report, the Green family's property between Three Chopt Road and the millpond later known as Westhampton Lake are referred to collectively as the mill side tracts. The mill was indicated on contemporaneous maps and surveys as "B. Green's Sawmill" and "Green's Mill," operated by Julia Green's husband, Benjamin W. Green (1810-1872).⁷⁰ While Benjamin W. Green began purchasing properties in his own name, it is likely that the family's early holdings in the area were in his wife's trust to protect their home and some interests from lingering legal uncertainty related to accusations that he had embezzled a half-million dollars from the Bank of Virginia in 1840. Green spent parts of the next two years in prison, awaiting trials for multiple crimes, but eventually the charges against him were dismissed. The money he was accused of embezzling was never recovered.⁷¹

Over two decades in the enslavement era, Benjamin W. Green, Julia A. Green and their son, Benjamin W. Green, Jr. (1832-1878), acquired at least forty properties in the Richmond and Henrico area.⁷² Some of these were rental tenements in Richmond and others were large tracts of land adjacent to their original West End homesite and farm, an accumulation of property that increased the size of their contiguous tracts to at least 2,353 acres in 1865.⁷³ The family had reassembled at close to half the acreage of Nicholas and Ambler's 5,000 acre Westham plantation, and like all previous owners of the land, the Greens exploited the lives and labor of enslaved individuals.

Alexander Grant, Jr. and Hamilton A. Crenshaw, Trustees for Julia A. Green, Henrico County, VA, Deed Book 53: 506, Library of Virginia).

⁷⁰ Peter Smith Michie and N. Michler, *Richmond - 1865*, Library of Congress, "Smith's Map of Henrico County, Virginia From actual surveys by James Keily," (Richmond: Robert P. Smith and C. Carpenter, 1853), Library of Congress; "Robert Polk and Bro[.] Westham," Plats and Surveys 1786-1952, T. Crawford Redd & Bros., Tuckahoe Section, Business Records Collection, Library of Virginia.

⁷¹ "Gigantic Bank Robbery," *New-Yorker* 9, no.5 (April 18, 1840): 74; "Extraordinary Defalcation in the Bank of Virginia," *Richmond Enquirer*, April 14, 1840, 2, Virginia Chronicle, "Benjamin W. Green," *Sun* (Baltimore, MD), December 14, 1842, 2.

⁷² In the early 1850s, Benjamin W. Green, Jr. was a student at Richmond College (Poem, "Nov. 23rd 1852," Minutes, Mu Sigma Rho, 60, University Archives, Virginia Baptist Historical Society).

⁷³ "Smith's Map of Henrico County, Virginia," 1853; Michie and Michler, *Richmond - 1865*; Guy to Green, 1853; Julia Peyton to John Wickham, Benjamin W. Green and Edwin Walker, DB 70:361, Henrico County, VA, October 1, 1857, Library of Virginia.

Anaca

Before she was sold to Benjamin W. Green in 1847, her name was written *Annica*. On the day she was auctioned, someone spelled it *Anaca*. John Wickham (1763-1839), the man who enslaved her for over twenty years, once described her as being among the “Field Women & girls” on his plantation, Middle Quarter.

Annica was wife to Phil, mother to at least four children — Cloe, Fanny, Billy and Betcy — and grandmother to young Phil and Sally. Both Phil and Betcy had disappeared from Wickham’s plantation censuses between 1825 and 1835, but until December 1847, the rest of her family had remained together.

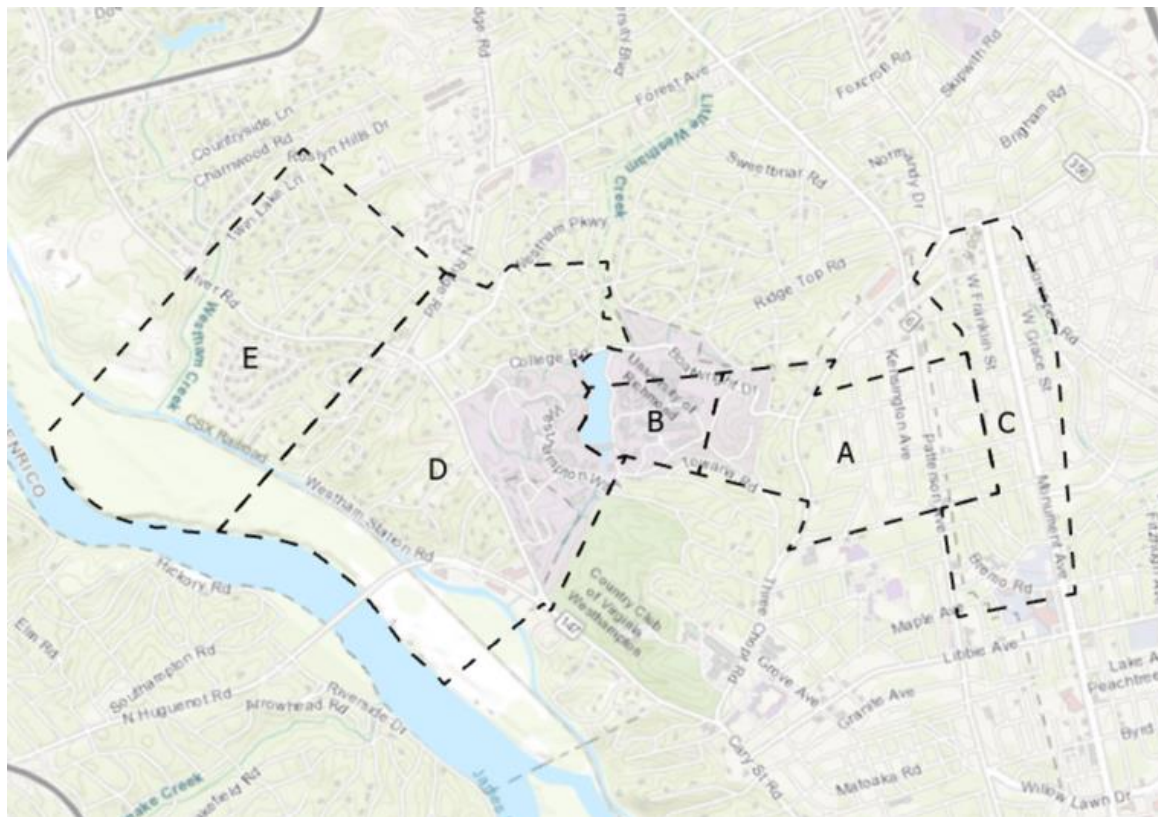
"	1 girl Mary	3 40	-
"	C. C. Co. 1 man Joe Tagueta wife Hannah	80	-
"	Benjamin Jenkins 1 Girl Louisa	4 70	-
"	James Green 1 woman Betty	1 10	-
"	B. W. Green 1 woman Anaca	5	-
		\$ 35.50	00
Charged.			
Commission 1 1/2 %		533	85
Cost for catalogues & furnished at sale		67	90
		601	45

At age forty-three, Annica was sold for five dollars to Benjamin (B.W.) Green, the owner of land that, in the 20th century, would become part of the University of Richmond campus. She was the only member of her family to be sold away. The appearance of her name beside that of B.W. Green on the 1847 auction list is the last known record of her life.

Wickham Family Papers, “Sales of Slaves at Ellerslie December 29th. 1847, by order of Messrs. B. W. Leigh and Wm. F. Wickham Executors of John Wickham decd.,” Mss1 W6326 c FA2 Box 3 Series 1 Folder 8, Virginia Historical Society

	Deed Date	Details	Location	Previous Owner(s)	Cost
A	July 1843	275 acres	Homesite, known as Roselawn, farm and a portion of what is now the Richmond College side of campus; sold to the trust of Julia A. Green	Warner W. Guy assembling land from George F. Guy, Samuel Cottrell and the Commonwealth of Virginia	4,500.00
B	July 1848	66.25 acres	Mill site; sold to the trust of Julia A. Green	Catherine and Henry Moncure	3,000.00
C	December 1853	240 acres	Adjacent to home site and original Green farm on opposite side of Three Chopt Road from current campus; sold to Benjamin W. Green	Property and former home of George F. Guy; Green installed his overseer, James Anthony in the former Guy home	7,200.00
D	August 1855	687 acres	Westham (626 acres) and adjoining 61 acres; Westhampton side of campus	Betsy Read and William Sims (Westham) and William Sims (61 acres)	30,000.00
E	October 1857	1151 acres and 27 enslaved people	Adjacent to Westham and west along James River; purchased by Benjamin W. Green in partnership with John Wickham and Edwin Walker; Green sole owner in 1861; 15 of the enslaved people become a part of Julia A. Green's wealth	Julia Peyton, widow of Bernard Peyton	20,000.00

Selected Green Family Holdings in Western Henrico County⁷⁴



General boundaries of selected Green family holdings in western Henrico County (D. Broome)

⁷⁴ Guy and Guy to Grant, Jr. and Crenshaw (Julia A. Green); 1843; Moncure and Moncure to Grant, Jr. and Crenshaw, (Julia A. Green); George F. Guy and Sarah E. Guy to Benjamin W. Green, Henrico County, VA, DB 63: 385, December 6, 1853, Library of Virginia; Betsy Read and William Sims to Benjamin W. Green, DB 67: 523, Henrico County, VA, August 8, 1855. Library of Virginia; Julia Peyton to John Wickham, Benjamin W. Green and Edwin Walker, DB 70:361, Henrico County, VA, October 1, 1857, Library of Virginia.



Shared boundaries of late enslavement era tracts (1833-1865) with contemporary features (D.Broome, Esri, World Imagery, April 20, 2025)

Agriculture, Milling, Livestock & Other Green Operations

In 2019 Lisa Denton (Henrico County Museum System) compiled data from the Agriculture Schedule of the Federal Census to rank yields on Henrico properties. Her work indicates that Benjamin W. Green, Sr. was one of the county's chief producers: tobacco (1st), wheat (2nd), butter (2nd), peas and beans (2nd), oats (3rd), and Irish potatoes (3rd).⁷⁵ While Green was listed as the producer in the Agriculture Schedule most or all of the cultivation and harvests were likely the result of forced labor by enslaved individuals. At various times between 1843 and 1865 Green also maintained a stable in downtown Richmond, an implements shop, a granite quarry, a dairy, his home on Three Chopt Road, coal pits, a mule and horse breeding and dealing operation, and at least four sub-farms that made up his estate that surrounded and included most of the current University of Richmond campus. Green continued the milling operation that had existed on the property before it was acquired by Julia Green's trustees in 1848.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Lisa Denton, Compiled Data Tables from Federal Census 1860 (unpublished), Henrico County, VA, Henrico County Museum System.

⁷⁶ United States, Federal Census Non-Population Industry Schedule, 1850, "B W Green," 1850 Census, Henrico County, VA, 139, image from Ancestry.com, accessed June 11, 2019, National Archives Records Administration T1132, roll 4, 139. "Smith's Map of Henrico County," Library of Congress; Peter Smith Michie and N. Michler, *Richmond - 1865* [Map], Library of Congress. Green owned multiple mills. The operation located on the present campus was referred to as a sawmill Smith's map (1853) and the Michie-Michler map (1865)] His entry in the 1850 Federal Census Industry Schedule records him as the owner of a grist mill. Green also owned another sawmill in partnership with Edwin Walker near the present day Lakeside area (Benjamin Green and Edwin Walker [Plat], Plat Book 5: 267, Henrico County, VA, Library of Virginia). It is possible the mill located on the present campus was converted as one or the other became a more lucrative option or that contemporaneous confusion was introduced by Green's owning a sawmill at another location.

Enslavement by the Green Family

The Green family's enslavement of adults and children predated their arrival in the area in 1843,⁷⁷ but it was as western Henrico County landowners that the numbers of those they held increased sharply. According to the Federal Census Slave Schedules of 1850 and 1860, in just a decade the number of individuals the Green family both leased and directly enslaved rose from 28 to 185.⁷⁸ Three members of the Green family controlled the lives of these enslaved adults and children: Julia A. Green, Benjamin W. Green, and their son, Benjamin W. Green, Jr.⁷⁹ At this writing, no private papers of the Green family that might contain information on those they enslaved have been located. Through deeds, news items, police documents, court records, and insurance policies, however, a number of names of those enslaved by the Greens or hired to their use by other slaveholders have been determined. Some are recorded on the lists below. An updated list of those held by the Greens and other enslavement era owners of the present UR campus can be found on the History page of the [Burying Ground Memorial website](#). Because the surnames of many individuals were not recorded, it is impossible to know if, for example, there were three men named William enslaved by Green over several years, or if the same man or men appear in different records.

Some of those known to have been enslaved or held by the Greens prior to their move to Three Chopt Road in 1843.

1835: *William (age 16); Sygh and Betty, parents of a young man also named Sygh (age 16) who escaped his enslaver and was suspected of trying to rejoin his mother and father;*

⁷⁷ Before Green's purchase of his Three Chopt Rd. property, a number of documents provide names of those he and his family enslaved. Dabney Family, William Watson Michie, [and Benjamin W. Green], [Claiborne hire] Papers, 1742-1928 (bulk 1825-1891), Section 118, Mss1 D1124 b 3927-3936, Virginia Historical Society; Richmond, VA, Hustings Court, Benjamin W. Green and Julia A. Green to Anthony Robinson and James Lyons (2nd) and the Bank of Virginia (3rd), DB 41: 64, April 6, 1840, Library of Virginia; Richmond, VA, Hustings Court, Benjamin W. Green and Julia Green to Alexander Hamilton, Jr. and Hamilton Crenshaw (Trustees for Julia Green), DB 42: 72, February 19, 1840, Library of Virginia; United States, Federal Census Population Schedule, 1840, "Benj. Green," 1840 Census, Henrico County, VA, 232, image from [ancestry.com](#), accessed October 25, 2018. National Archives and Records Administration M704. At the time of enumeration in the 1840 census, the Green family enslaved ten people including two boys under the age of ten.

⁷⁸ United States, Federal Census Slave Schedule, 1850, "B.W. Green," slave owner, 1850 Census, Slave Schedule, Henrico County, VA, 425; United States, Federal Census Slave Schedule, 1860, "B.W. Green," Eastern Henrico County, VA 24; "B.W. Green, employer," Ward 1, City of Richmond, Virginia, 15; "B.W. Green," Western Henrico County, Virginia, 35-36; "B.W. Green," Western Henrico County, Virginia, 49.

⁷⁹ In Henrico County birth records, Minnie (enslaved by Green, Sr.) was recorded as having given birth to a child at "Westham Cottage," the property adjacent to Westham that was controlled by Green, Jr., and it was he who reported her delivery and gave his father's name as her enslaver ([Child name not recorded; mother: Minnie], July 1858, Henrico County Register of Deaths and Births, Family Search). Isaac was enslaved by Green, Sr., but his death was reported by Green, Jr. (Virginia Births and Deaths Register, 1853-1896, December 10, 1859, microfilm, Library of Virginia). One of the "B.W. Green" entries in the 1860 Slave Schedule of the Federal Census may be an additional indication the Green family's sharing of enslaved individuals. Of the 42 individuals recorded in that entry, 18 were both "owned" by "B.W. Green" and hired out to "B.W. Green" (United States. *Federal Census Slave Schedule*, 1860, "B.W. Green [Jr.]," slave owner, 1860 Census, Slave Schedule, Henrico County, VA, 93, image from [ancestry.com](#), accessed August 31, 2019, National Archives and Records Administration M653). Julia A. Green enslaved numerous individuals through her trust, but given the conventions of the time it is highly likely her husband and his overseer(s) held significant control over their movements.

the unnamed husband of Isabella, a woman who escaped her enslaver and may have been seeking him; 1836: Betty, mother of Harry who escaped his enslaver and may have been seeking her; Dabney who escaped enslavement by Green; 1838: Betty and her son Zachareah, “hired” to Green; Isham, the husband of Mary Ann who escaped her enslaver and was suspected of trying to locate him at Green’s property; Claiborne, “hired” to Green as a laborer in his blacksmith’s shop; 1839: Sam, Jefferson, Frederick and John, escaped from Green’s coal pits; 1840: Nellie and her sons Tom (8) and Jim (10), Neany, Isham, James, Albert and Sally, listed in a transfer to Julia Green’s trustees and described as those enslaved in the Green household; list of enslaved people John, David, Maria, Phillis, William, Carter, Billy, Jimmy or James, Frank, Ann Sussy, Daniel, Bob, and their future children provided to trustees during Green’s settlement with the Bank of Virginia; Amy, described as “likely” in a police report,⁸⁰ escaped Green’s enslavement; Ceasor, formerly “hired” by Green and escaped from another hirer the following year; Dick, formerly enslaved by Green and purchased by “Mr. Paton,” escaped enslavement but was found dead; Hill, formerly enslaved by Green but was transferred to his creditors, escaped enslavement; Richard Vaden, formerly enslaved by Green then sold, escaped enslavement and was found dying; John Marshal, formerly enslaved by Green then owned by his creditors, escaped and was thought to have been seeking his wife; 1842: Tom, a 14-year-old boy enslaved by Green who escaped and was thought to have been seeking his mother who was enslaved in Church Hill⁸¹

The following are some of those who appeared in deeds, news accounts, and other sources following the Green family’s 1843 purchase of their first tract of land containing part of the current campus:

1843: John Wright, “hired” to Green, escaped along with his wife Lucy Roan who was “hired” to a boarding house; 1847: Annica, purchased by Green at auction; 1854: Washington, Stephen, Abram, William Pilcher, Edward, Monroe, Sam, Obey and Sugar Billy, named in the trial accounts of Washington, accused of burning down Green’s barn and straw rick; 1856: Joshua, enslaved by Green and accused of being in Richmond without a pass; 1857: John, Dilcey, Eliza, Molly, Obey, Billy, Sugar Billy, Harry and Charles Carter, passed to Green’s sole ownership after dissolution of his partnership with Edwin Walker; 1858: Polly Thomas or Polly and Thomas, in a death record appear as the parents of an unnamed infant, enslaved by Green; 1859: Letty, enslaved and insured by Green; Issac, enslaved by Green and died of pneumonia in Powhatan County;

⁸⁰ “Likely” in the context of enslaved individuals communicated good health, fertility, or attractiveness (Sharon Block, *Colonial Complexions: Race and Bodies in 18th Century America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 49).

⁸¹ Leni Ashmore Sorenson, *Absconded: Fugitive Slaves in the “Daybook of the Richmond Police Guard, 1834-1844”* [dissertation], College of William & Mary, 2005, 111, 114, 120, 133, 144, 168, 173; [Claiborne, “hiring” bond, Benjamin “B.W.” Green to William W. Michie], Dabney Family and William W. Michie, *Papers 1742-1928* (bulk 1825-1891) *Section 118*, Virginia Museum of History and Culture; Sorenson, *Absconded*, 181, 182, 186; Richmond, VA, Hustings Court, Benjamin W. Green and Julia A. Green to Anthony Robinson and James Lyons (2nd) and the Bank of Virginia (3rd), DB 41: 64, April 6, 1840, Library of Virginia; Richmond, VA, Hustings Court, Benjamin W. Green and Julia Green to Alexander Hamilton, Jr. and Hamilton Crenshaw (Trustees for Julia Green), DB 42: 72, February 19, 1840, Library of Virginia; deeds also appear in Louise Adamson’s, “The Old Brick House,” *Richmond Quarterly* 10, no. 4 (Spring 1988), 18-19; Sorenson, *Absconded*, 197, 204, 207, 209, 214, 245, 273.

1861: Moses, James, Silas, Paul, George Holmes, Albert, Anderson, Ben, Henry, Jefferson, Willis, Noah, David, Little Joe, Cary, Lucien, Mina, Maria, John, Old Joseph, Young Joseph, Frank, William, Joseph (child), Louisa, Ned, Charlotte Kitty, transferred to Green and three others along with 1,151 acres of land; Moses, hired out by Green to William Conner; **1864:** William, attempted to escape his enslavement by Green by following the retreating Union soldiers after Dahlgren's Raid; Sam and Curtis, both enslaved by Green, and Jacob, hired to his use, accused of theft from a store adjacent to Green's Richmond stables; George and Peter, enslaved by B.W. Green, Jr. and escaped his portion of the Green holdings at Westham; William, accused of theft and sentenced to thirty-nine lashes and thirty-nine more the following week; and Isaac, "hired" to Green and escaped from the Green farm ⁸²

These one hundred and one individuals are only some of those enslaved or held through leasing by the Green family before and during their ownership of the land that includes the current University of Richmond campus.

Post-Emancipation to 1897

Benjamin W. Green's property was seized on December 5, 1867 and a news item appeared the following day announcing his bankruptcy.⁸³ While the portion of the acreage that included most of the Richmond College side of campus and the Greens' holdings on Three Chopt Road remained in the family until the turn of the century,⁸⁴ Westham Farm was sold by trustees in 1868 after Green defaulted on his payments for the land.⁸⁵ In the years immediately following emancipation, those enslaved by the Greens appear to have moved off of the family's property. The 1870 census shows the Green family living at their Three Chopt Road home and no Black individuals are enumerated in the household.⁸⁶ Some of those formerly enslaved by the family

⁸² Sorenson, *Absconded*, 294; "A/c Sales of Slaves at Ellerslie December 29th. 1847, by order of Messrs. B. W. Leigh and Wm. F. Wickham Executors of John Wickham decd.," Wickham Family Papers, Mss1 W6326 c FA2 Box 3 Series 1 Folder 8, Virginia Historical Society, Image in Virginia Untold; The African American Narrative, Library of Virginia; Edwin Walker to Benjamin W. Green, Henrico County Deed Book 74: 4, April 4, 1861, Library of Virginia; Commonwealth v. Washington (A Slave), Executive Papers of Governor Joseph Ellis Johnson (1852-1856), Miscellaneous Reel 5407, November 13, 1854, Library of Virginia; "Execution of Washington," *Daily Dispatch*, November 18, 1854, Virginia Chronicle; "Suspicious," *Daily Dispatch*, December 30, 1856, 1, Virginia Chronicle; [Enslaved Infant,] "B W Green's," *Henrico County Register of Births and Deaths*, 1858, 135: line 53, Library of Virginia; "Insurance on the Lives of Slaves," *Chronicle: A Weekly Insurance Journal* LV, no. 17, April 25, 1895, 206; "Isaac," *Henrico County Register of Births and Deaths*, 1859, 137, line 31, Library of Virginia; Benjamin W. Green to John Wickham, Deed Book 75: 515, Henrico County, VA, February 21, 1861. Library of Virginia; "Recaptured from the enemy," *Daily Dispatch*, March 7, 1864, Virginia Chronicle.; "Commonwealth v. Richard Drew," Richmond, VA, Ended Causes, 1843-1866 (bulk 1860-1866), Library of Virginia.; "200 Dollars Reward," *Richmond Dispatch*, July 29, 1864: 1; Commonwealth vs. William a slave," November 3, 1864, Virginia Untold: African American Narrative Digital Collection, record number 000517660, Library of Virginia; Two Hundred Dollars Reward," *Daily Dispatch*, January 28, 1865, 2, Virginia Chronicle.

⁸³ "Seizures by United States Officers," *Daily Dispatch*, December 6, 1867, 1, Virginia Chronicle.

⁸⁴ Henrico County, VA, Chancery Court, *Lawton v. Buck*, Manuscript Collection (1950-001), Library of Virginia.

⁸⁵ Henrico County, VA, Wellington Goddin and James L. Apperson [Green trustees] deeded to Mary Ann Allen and Edward Winston, Deed Book 84: 304, Henrico County, VA, May 5, 1868, Library of Virginia.

⁸⁶ United States, *Federal Census Population Schedule*, 1870, "Benjamin W. Green," Tuckahoe Township, Henrico County, VA, p. 34, lines 33-40, image from Ancestry.com, accessed February 3, 2019;

purchased land in the area and helped to build communities of newly freed African Americans, neighborhoods then referred to as “settlements.”⁸⁷ Zionsville, Burrelltown, Westwood and a number of other communities within one to five miles of the former Green plantation were developed by those formerly enslaved by the Greens and their neighbors.⁸⁸ In 1873, Moses Bradford, previously enslaved by Julia Green through her trust, purchased land once owned by her husband.⁸⁹ She had also enslaved his three brothers. One of them, Silas Bradford, purchased a Three Chopt Road lot from her in 1884.⁹⁰

The Westham Farm property, containing what is now Westhampton College and including the Burying Ground site, transferred through four phases of ownership between 1868 and 1897: the Allen and Winston families (1868), and the Polk family (1868-1876), Dr. William A. McCandliss (1876-1894), and the McDowell family (1894-1897). On May 5, 1868, Mary Ann Stetson Allen and Edmund Winston purchased Westham Farm at auction for \$20,988.77 following Green’s default on payments. The property was described as being the same “626 acres two rods and five poles” that were conveyed to Green from Betsy Read and William Sims.⁹¹ Allen and Winston sold the property just twenty days later to Robert and John Philip Reybold “J.P.R.” Polk, both of New Castle County, Delaware.⁹²

The Polk family had an array of business and land interests in Delaware, North Carolina, and Virginia.⁹³ Beyond his co-ownership of the land with his brother, J.P.R. Polk (1845-1899) does not appear to have had any significant connection to Richmond or Westham Farm. Robert Polk (1837-1896) did have some Richmond associations before the purchase. In 1867, while still living in Wilmington, he entered into a brief partnership with a local businessman, W.G. Webb, with whom he formed a candle and soap business. The partnership ended just three months after it began.⁹⁴ After the Westham purchase, both Robert Polk and his brother, William, were associated with the farm at various times. Robert Polk judged a “trial of reapers,” an agricultural contest in the area in 1869 and his name appears on a survey of the Westham property in 1872.⁹⁵ William R. Polk (1828-1907) was described as being “of Westham” in an 1872 news item,⁹⁶ and the 1870 Agriculture Schedule of the Federal Census lists him as owner of the land. Before the

⁸⁷ Harlan, *Zion Town*, 6.

⁸⁸ Nichols, *African Americans of Henrico County*, 99, 119.

⁸⁹ Benjamin W. Green, Julia A. Green, and Edwin Walker to John G. Carter, September 1, 1856; John G. Carter trustees to H.L. Wigand, June 2, 1863; H.L. Wigand and wife to Moses Bradford, March 15, 1873 (deed record date), Library of Virginia.

⁹⁰ Julia A. Green to Silas Bradford, May 31, 1884 (deed date April 25, 1881), Library of Virginia. It is possible the years between the writing and filing of the deed were related to Bradford working off the amount or it was the result of some other agreement.

⁹¹ Green Trustees to Allen and Winston, May 5, 1868, Library of Virginia.

⁹² Robert Polk and J.P.R. Polk to William A. McCandliss, Henrico County, VA, Deed Book 97: 339, May 16, 1876, Library of Virginia. This 1876 deed contains the transfer information from Allen and Winston to the Polk brothers in 1868.

⁹³ “An Act to Incorporate the Salem, Delaware and Philadelphia Steamboat Company,” *Acts of the Legislature of the State of New Jersey* (Trenton: William Boswell, 1836) 37; William Harrison Polk, *Polk Family and Kinsmen* (Louisville, KY: Press of Bradley & Gilbert, Co., 1912), 509.

⁹⁴ “Limited Partnership,” *Daily Dispatch*, July 23, 1867, 3, Virginia Chronicle.

⁹⁵ “Robert Polk and Bro[.], Westham,” Plats and Surveys 1786-1952, T. Crawford Redd & Bros., Tuckahoe Section, Business Records Collection, Library of Virginia.

⁹⁶ “The State Agricultural Fair,” *Richmond Whig and Advertiser*, November 1, 1872, 1.

Civil War, William Polk ran multiple businesses in Richmond and was described in a family history as a Confederate sympathizer who made a fortune as a blockade runner.⁹⁷ Under his control, the Westham land produced Indian corn, oats and barley. Livestock on the property included horses, cows, and pigs and Polk paid \$1,600.00 in wages to laborers. No African Americans were recorded as residential servants in 1870.⁹⁸ In 1876, the Polks defaulted on their payments for the land and it was sold for \$18,000.00. As part of the transfer, a new survey clarified the acreage of the Westham property, shifting it from 626 acres as it had appeared on earlier deeds acres to 634 and one quarter acres.⁹⁹

Dr. William A. McCandliss (1822-1892) of Pennsylvania purchased the property on May 16, 1876 and resided in Philadelphia for the length of his ownership. During that period, the land was still actively used, either by people leasing the property or running it for McCandliss' profit. In 1879 there were 150 fruit bearing trees on the property, and 150 bushels of apples were produced. Additionally, corn, wheat, barley and potatoes were grown. McCandliss listed 400 weeks of hired labor paid for in 1880.¹⁰⁰ McCandliss died in Philadelphia in 1892 and two years later the land was sold to Wilbur C. McDowell (c.1850-1911) and E. Jessie McDowell (d.1937). Little is known of this period of ownership. The McDowells held the land for three years before selling it in 1887 to William Washington Browne (1849-1897), leader of the Grand Fountain of the United Order of True Reformers.

⁹⁷ Mary Winder Garrett, "Pedigree of the Polk or Pollock Family," *American Historical Magazine* 4, no.2 (April 1899): 152-154

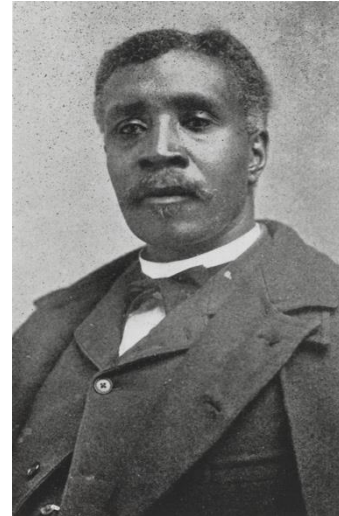
⁹⁸ United States, *Federal Census Non-Population Agriculture Schedule*, 1870, "William R. Polk," Tuckahoe Township, Henrico County, VA, 5, ancestry.com, accessed November 26, 2019. National Archives and Records Administration T1132.

⁹⁹ Polk and Polk to McCandliss, May 16, 1876.

¹⁰⁰ United States, *Federal Census Non-Population Agriculture Schedule*, 1880, "William A. McCandliss," Tuckahoe District, Henrico County, VA, 2, line 7, ancestry.com, accessed November 26, 2019. National Archives and Records Administration T1132.

1897-1909: The Grand Fountain of the United Order of True Reformers at Westham Farm

The United Order of True Reformers began as a fraternal organization committed to the temperance movement and became one of the leading African American mutual benefit associations of the post-Reconstruction era. William Washington Browne led its Richmond-based headquarters, the Grand Fountain.¹⁰¹ Browne was born in 1849, escaped enslavement as a teenager, and served on a Union gunboat before becoming a teacher and organizer for the temperance movement. In his early career, he argued that the mass incarceration of Black men for crimes attributable to alcohol abuse was leading to disenfranchisement and diminished Black political power, and that the use of free prison labor was driving down wages for those not imprisoned.¹⁰²



William Washington Browne
(Wikimedia Commons)

While maintaining the hallmarks of its fraternal beginnings, Browne led the organization toward his ideal of racial self-improvement, described by historian Donna Tyler Hollie as “an all-African American economy of goods and services, independent of government assistance.”¹⁰³ The group’s influence expanded rapidly between 1883 and 1909. Under Browne’s leadership, the True Reformers opened the first bank in the United States entirely owned and operated by African Americans. The organization’s headquarters, True Reformers’ Hall, was constructed in Richmond in 1891, designed by Daniel J. Farrar, Sr. (1862-1923), noted Black architect. The hall was built by Black laborers who were hired by Black contractors.¹⁰⁴ It housed a large theatre, and offices included those of *The Reformer* (the Grand Fountain’s newspaper). In total, the organization employed 296 people in 1896.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ The national organization was called the United Order of the True Reformers, with chapters, known as Fountains and Sub-fountains, located in cities and towns across the country. The Richmond headquarters was called the Grand Fountain of the United Order of the True Reformers. For the purposes of this report, the name “True Reformers” is often used to designate the Grand Fountain of the United Order of the True Reformers.

¹⁰² W.P. Burrell and D.E. Johnson, *Twenty-Five Years History of the Grand Fountain of the United Order of True Reformers, 1881-1905* (Richmond, Va.: [Grand Fountain, United Order of True Reformers], 1909), 24-26.

¹⁰³ Donna Tyler Hollie, “Grand Fountain of the United Order of the True Reformers,” in *Encyclopedia Virginia*, Virginia Humanities, last modified October 27, 2015, accessed February 17, 2019, [link](#).

¹⁰⁴ *African American Architects*, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/pdf_files/newdominion/AfricanAmericanArchitectsinVA.pdf, 139-141; David M. Fahey and D. Webster Davis, *The Black Lodge in White America: "True Reformer" Browne and His Economic Strategy* (Dayton, Ohio: Wright State University Press, 1994), 21.

¹⁰⁵ David M. Fahey, “William Washington Browne: Fraternal Society Leader,” in *Portraits of African American Life Since 1865*, ed. Nina Mjagkij (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 2003), 45.



The former Westham plantation house in the True Reformer era: (left to right) 1897 delegates to the organization's annual meeting and a view of the house, later refaced in the Georgian Revival style after its purchase by a member the Westham land syndicate (*Twenty-five Years History of the Grand fountain of the United Order of True Reformers*, 1909)

On August 30, 1897, Browne purchased what was then called Westham Farm. His intention was to create a home for the elderly, a place that would house what a later advertisement called “the aged and decrepit of the whole race.”¹⁰⁶ In a 1909 history of the Grand Fountain, written by the organization's secretary, W.P Burrell, and D.E. Johnson, Westham Farm was described in detail:

*[It contained] splendid water facilities, a pump, well, several springs, creeks, canal and river; excellent transportation facilities, county road passing through and railroad likewise; rich soil, well cultivated, with crops standing, and good woodland; with good location, having three prominent rises, giving splendid views of heavy lowlands and water courses; five ice ponds, two ice houses, stable, barns, and all appurtenances for model farming, and with splendid dwelling thereon.*¹⁰⁷

Following Browne's death from cancer just four months after the purchase of the farm, ownership eventually transferred from his name to the organization itself. The former plantation home, which still stands on the south side of River Road, was put to immediate use. An 1897 image of the annual meeting of delegates of the United Order of the True Reformers shows hundreds of people gathered there. In the dozen years the organization controlled the property the land was used as a working farm¹⁰⁸ and an excursion site.¹⁰⁹ A large section of the property was subdivided into 130 lots with the intention of creating an African American community called Brownsville in honor of the late leader. The farm often appeared in the organization's

¹⁰⁶ “The Grand Fountain. United Order of the True Reformers,” *Colored American* (Washington, D.C.), October 27, 1900, 12, *Chronicling America*.

¹⁰⁷ Burrell and Johnson, 267-268.

¹⁰⁸ “Henrico County Briefs,” *Richmond Dispatch*, July 27, 1902, 3, *Virginia Chronicle*; Thom, “True Reformers,” 811; “Mango's Message,” *Richmond Planet*, January 15, 1898, 1. In later years when the finances of the organization were in turmoil, the *Richmond Planet* raised the question of where the proceeds of farm produce had been directed (“The True Reformers,” *Richmond Planet*, February 18, 1911).

¹⁰⁹ “News of the Railroads,” *The Times* (Richmond, VA), September 7, 1901, 7; “Around Town: Social and Otherwise,” *Richmond Planet*, November 5, 1898, 2, *Virginia Chronicle*.

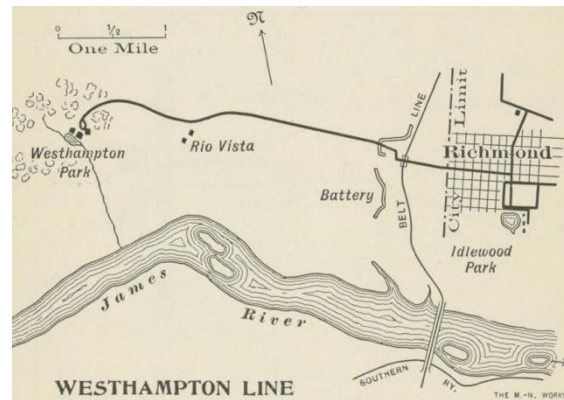
advertisements and newspaper articles and was featured in descriptions in *The Story of the Negro: The Rise of the Race From Slavery* by Booker T. Washington (1909), *The Bulletin of the U.S. Department of Labor* (1902), and *Economic Co-operation Among Negro Americans*, edited by W.E.B. du Bois (1902).

In an analysis of the work and achievements of the True Reformers published in the 1902 *Bulletin of the U.S. Department of Labor*, William Taylor Thom (1849-1930) wrote that, in December of 1901, Westham Farm “was being improved gradually; fruit trees had been planted; [and] arrangements were being made to test the feasibility of establishing a dairy farm to sell milk in Richmond.”¹¹⁰ According to the *Richmond Planet*, in August 1902 the first resident, “an aged woman from Philadelphia,” moved to the property, then renamed “Reformers’ Home for the Aged and Orphans.”¹¹¹ During subsequent years, other residents arrived. While the *Planet* later criticized the limited number of residents at the Reformers Home (of the 60,000 members of the True Reformers “not twenty-five people have ever been in the home at one time), in their 1909 work, Burrell and Johnson wrote that the farm was “a thing of beauty.”¹¹²

20th Century

The True Reformers and Westhampton Park Railway Company

In 1901, just two and a half years after William Washington Browne purchased Westham Farm for the True Reformers, much of the land on the opposite shore of Westhampton Lake was transferred from Green heirs to the Westhampton Railway Company. Railway parks were being constructed in these years to prompt ridership, and company stockholders planned to develop the property as a waterside amusement park at the end of their line. They hired Olmsted Brothers – a landscape design firm operated by the sons of Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903), famed designer of Central Park and numerous other private and public landscapes¹¹³ – to design a park that would rival others in the area. In a letter to the design company describing the land and the railway’s ambitions for it, Reuben Sheriffs, the park’s chief engineer, wrote that the newly acquired land was “admirably situated for artistic treatment.”¹¹⁴



Westhampton Park in *Trolley Rides in Cities and Country* (Library of Congress)

¹¹⁰ William Taylor Thom, “The True Reformers,” in *Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor, 1902), 811.

¹¹¹ “Reformers’ Home for Aged and Orphans,” *News Leader*, January 25, 1909, *Virginia Chronicle*.

¹¹² “True Reformers’ Old Folks’ Home Disclosures,” *Richmond Planet*, April 22, 1911; Burrell and Johnson, 341.

¹¹³ “Olmsted Brothers” was later referred to as “Olmsted Associates.”

¹¹⁴ Olmsted Brothers and Reuben Shirriffs, [Letter to “Olmsted Bros.” from “R. Sherriffs” of Westhampton Park Railway Company], June 8, 1901, *Olmsted Associates Records: Job Files, Westhampton Park Railway Co.; Park; Richmond, Va., 1901 to 1902*, Library of Congress, [link](#).

Olmsted Brothers began to develop plans which eventually included a dancing pavilion, an arcade, a bandstand on an island constructed in the lake, and a lakeside stage and amphitheater. The designers requested a complete topographic survey of the property to facilitate their work, and the resulting drawing, which can be viewed [here](#), also included the survey of portions of the True Reformers' adjacent land: a triangle of property on the park's side of the lake and a significant portion of the organization's land on its opposite shore. The triangle, which included the Burying Ground, was described as vital for a planned road and the western shore would provide an attractive sightline from the primary park sites, protect against the possibility of a competing rail interest running a line to the park, and provide a location for a "hall of reflections" ride.¹¹⁵ The 1901 topographic map that included these acres and the park's property indicates the Burying Ground with the words "Grave yard." In his notes, Olmsted Brothers' project representative, H.V. Hubbard, described the site: "the land of the True Reformers runs in a little triangle onto the property of the park" and includes a "negro burying ground."¹¹⁶

While Hubbard recorded that the True Reformers were willing to sell the land desired by the park for "\$80 or thereabouts per acre,"¹¹⁷ rather than pay for the property, park stockholders sought to acquire it through condemnation, appealing to the Virginia legislature of a change to the company's charter which would give the private park the right to take the land. The charter was changed by the General Assembly on March 11, 1902, but the plan to take the "little triangle" was abandoned.¹¹⁸ This may have been due to the railway



True Reformers' shared boundary with Westhampton Park Railway Company, 1901-1902, with contemporary features (D. Broome; Esri, "World Imagery" [basemap], April 20, 2025)

consolidation that dissolved the Westhampton Park Railway Company in April 1902, bringing its holdings under the Virginia Passenger and Power Company.¹¹⁹ According to Hubbard, however, had the acquisition gone forward the location of the graves at the site would have prevented the planned road: "a very stringent law in Virginia forbid[s] the disturbance of a graveyard for any purpose if any relative of persons therein interred shall object."¹²⁰ This is a likely reference to the

¹¹⁵ Olmsted Brothers, [Memo to Reuben Shirriffs], September 11, 1901, *Olmsted Associates Records: Job Files, Westhampton Park Railway Co.; Park; Richmond, Va., 1901 to 1902*, Library of Congress, [link](#).

¹¹⁶ Olmsted Associates Records, "Westhampton Park Railway Company," January 14, 1902.

¹¹⁷ Olmsted Brothers and Hubbard, January 14, 1902.

¹¹⁸ "An ACT to amend and re-enact section 7 of an act to amend and re-enact an act entitled an act to incorporate the Westhampton Park Railway Company, approved March 7, 1900, approved February 15, 1901," *Acts Passed at a General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia* (Richmond, VA: Commonwealth of Virginia, 1902), 149; "Map of 100 Acres in Henrico Co., Va, sold by Westham Land Co., to Richmond College. Feb. 25th, 1910," Henrico County Plat Book 9: 118.

¹¹⁹ "All Are In One," *Richmond Dispatch*, April 24, 1902, 1, Virginia Chronicle.

¹²⁰ Olmsted Brothers and Hubbard, January 14, 1902.

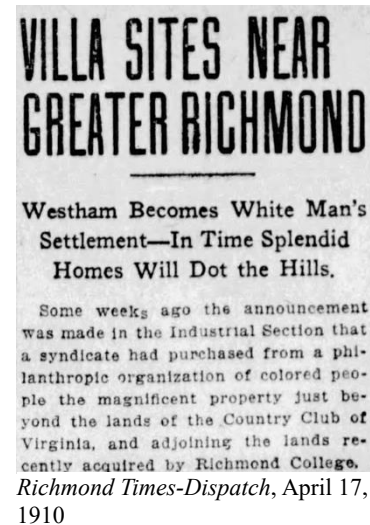
Virginia Code's protection of "any cemetery, grave-yard, or place of burial." The language of the law made no distinction between the graves of enslaved and free individuals.¹²¹

The Burying Ground remained in the hands of the True Reformers until the organization sold Westham Farm to land developers in 1909.

Westham Land Corporation and Richmond College

In 1909, a group of influential local figures formed the land syndicate later known as the Westham Land Corporation. Its members began consolidating large sections of land for the development of "villa sites" which together would form a racially exclusive neighborhood at a time when many of Richmond's wealthy white residents were looking for home sites outside of the city.¹²² In a deed dated December 7, 1909, the syndicate purchased the True Reformers' Westham Farm for \$93,412.50. As a way to meet its financial obligations, the organization had been encouraged to sell the property by State Insurance Commissioner Joseph R. Button after a period of mismanagement had led to its financial instability.¹²³ At least twenty-three Brownsville lots had been purchased between 1902 and 1909, and this complication required the True

Reformers and the Westham Land Corporation to complete a title clearing process for the former Brownsville location.¹²⁴ Despite the delay related to the Brownsville titles, another section of the land was rapidly transferred to Richmond College, which had been seeking a new location for its campus. 100 acres of former Westham Farm land and 151.5 acres of the former Westhampton Railway Park property were sold to Richmond College for ten dollars.¹²⁵ The future location of the institution at the center of the development was used by developers to



¹²¹ James M. Matthews, *Digest of the Laws of Virginia of a Criminal Nature* (Richmond, VA: J.W. Randolph & English, 1890), 111.

¹²² "Villa Sites Near Greater Richmond," *Times Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), April 17, 1910, 2, Virginia Chronicle. Working from this article's reference to race-based exclusion in the newly formed neighborhood, Genice Thomas (WC 2026) sought additional information while a summer research fellow with the University of Richmond Race & Racism Project (then under the leadership of Dr. Ernest McGowen). She worked with Shelby M. Driskill (Research Coordinator) and Rob Nelson (Digital Scholarship Lab and Faculty Mentor) to locate deeds for lots sold by the Westham Land Corporation in which covenants limited ownership to white buyers. Many of these lots were located on land previously laid out for the Brownsville neighborhood, which was to be available for Black purchasers.

¹²³ "Negro Officials Sued for Big Sum," *Times Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), May 5, 1911, 12, Virginia Chronicle; "True Reformers Truly Reformed," *Evening News* (Roanoke, VA), September 16, 1910, Virginia Chronicle; David M. Fahey, "Why Some Black Lodges Prospered and Others Failed: The Good Templars and the True Reformers," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36, no. 2, 348.

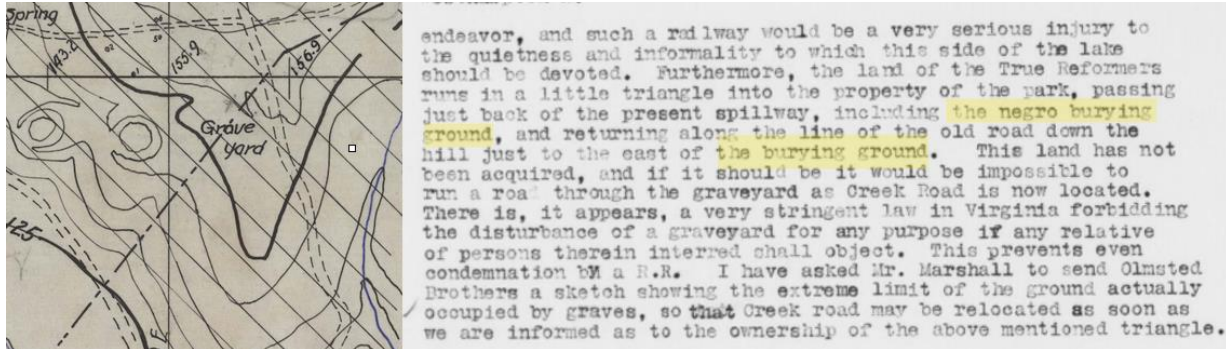
¹²⁴ Thomas A. Smyth, James C. Smyth, Abraham L. McLellan, John Landstreet, and Julian Gunn to LeRoy E. Brown, Josiah C. Robertson and W.K. Matthews, Henrico County, VA, Deed Book 188B: 81, December 7, 1909, Library of Virginia.

¹²⁵ The nominal cost of the land effectively made it a donation and it was treated as such by the Richmond College Board of Trustees. In the resolution authorizing acceptance of the two major tracts they were referred to as "gifts of land" offered by members of the syndicate (Richmond College, Board of Trustees, Minutes, February 8, 1910, University Archive, Virginia Baptist Historical Society).

entice potential buyers of surrounding lots. Together the two tracts would form the majority of the new campus with the Burying Ground located close to its center.

Section II: The Burying Ground

1901 to 1902: Olmsted Topographic Survey and Business Notes



Left to right, Detail of 1901 topographic map (Frederic Law Olmsted National Historic Site) and Olmsted Brothers business notes referring to the Burying Ground (Library of Congress)

At the turn of the 20th century, the property known as Westham Farm, containing the land to the west of Little Westham Creek and a small amount of its eastern shore – including a triangle of land that crossed the creek and encompassed most or all of the Burying Ground – was owned by the Grand Fountain of the United Order of the True Reformers, the African American mutual benefit association that had held the property since 1897.¹²⁶ Beginning in 1901, another tract of land on the lake’s northeastern side was being developed by the Westhampton Park Railway Company as an event and excursion site at the end of the Westhampton streetcar line.¹²⁷ Additional information on both the True Reformers and Westhampton Railway Park appear in Section I of this report.

As part of the preparations for park construction, Olmsted Brothers was contracted to design park structures and landscapes. A highly detailed topographic survey was created that included both the park’s land and acreage that the Westhampton Park Railway Company hoped to acquire from the True Reformers. On that property, at a promontory near a former millpond location (now known as Westhampton Lake) the label “Grave yard” was written.¹²⁸ Apart from designations for springs, the Burying Ground was the only precisely noted site on the map.

In notes between October of 1901 and January of 1902, Olmsted Brothers representative Henry V. Hubbard (1875-1947) referred to the True Reformers’ land that the park hoped to obtain several times, first describing its acquisition as necessary to the Olmsted Brothers’ design and then detailing the nature of the graves:

- “The land just back from the south shore of the pond, coming to the pond at its west end and running over to the brook, has not as yet been obtained from the “True Reformers”

¹²⁶ W.C. and Jesse McDowell to William Washington Browne, Henrico County, Virginia, Deed Book 154A: 40, August 30, 1897, Library of Virginia.

¹²⁷ Westhampton Park Railway Company Minute Book, 1901-1902, Virginia Electric and Power Company Records, 105, Business Records Collection, Library of Virginia.

¹²⁸ “Westhampton Park, Railway Company Park Tract,” Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site.

who ask a large price. On being asked, I said that I considered the acquisition of the land to the south very desirable [this included the triangle containing the Burying Ground], and the acquisition of that touching the pond on the west [the shore opposite the planned park development] necessary to the proper carrying out of the scheme.”¹²⁹

- After describing the Westhampton Park Railway Company plans to condemn land belonging to the True Reformers rather than pay the price of “\$80 or thereabouts per acre for 50 acres” that the True Reformers set, Hubbard wrote, “Furthermore, the land of the True Reformers runs in a little triangle onto the property of the park, passing just back of the present spillway, including the negro burying ground, and returning along the line of the old road down the hill just to the east of the burying ground. This land has not been acquired, and if it should be it would be impossible to run a road through the graveyard as [the proposed road] is now located. There is, it appears, a very stringent law in Virginia forbidding the disturbance of a graveyard for any purpose if any relative of persons therein interred shall object.”¹³⁰ This prevents even condemnation by a RR [railroad; here Hubbard is referring to the street railway company]. I have asked Mr. Marshall to send Olmsted Brothers a sketch showing the extreme limit of the ground actually occupied by graves so that [the road] may be relocated as soon as we are informed as to the ownership of the above mentioned triangle.”¹³¹

While Hubbard requested a sketch assuming that the park would eventually acquire the Burying Ground site, property plats before and after the effort to gain control of the land demonstrate that Westhampton Railway Park abandoned the condemnation plan and that the “triangle” remained in the hands of the True Reformers for seven more years. Despite requesting and receiving a change to the company’s charter that would allow it to condemn land for the purposes of a private park, the company may have altered its plans due to the effects of its being incorporated into Virginia Passenger & Power Company as part of a railway consolidation in April of 1902.¹³² No sketch showing the boundaries of the Burying Ground has been located in the records of Olmsted Brothers (Library of Congress) or those of Westhampton Park Railway Company (Library of Virginia).

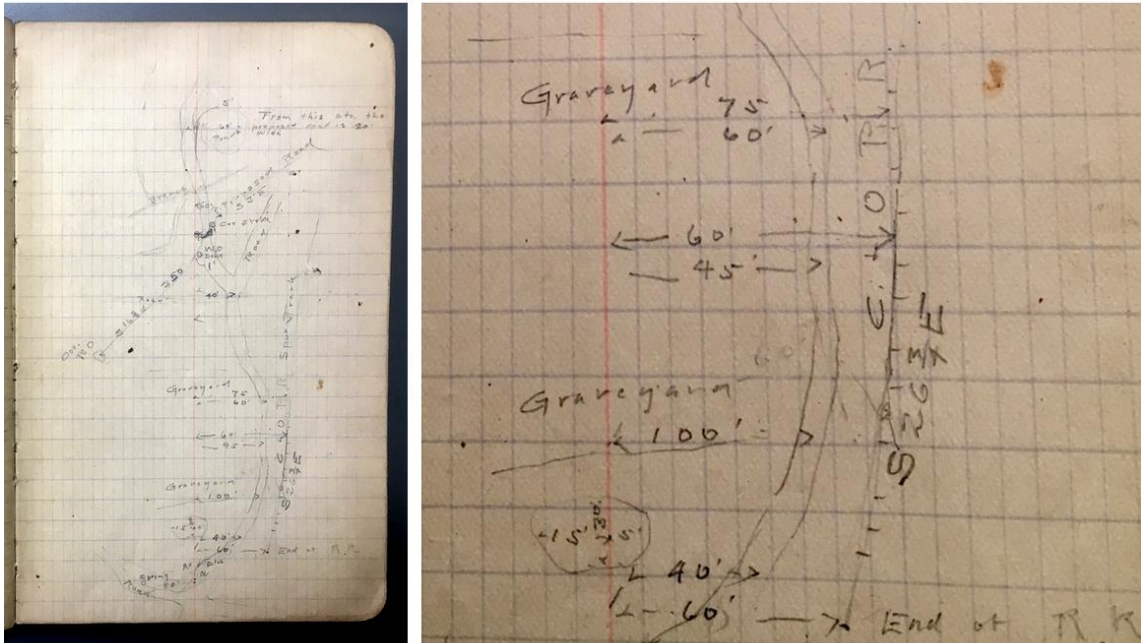
¹²⁹ Olmsted Brothers and H.V. Hubbard, “Westhampton Park Railway Company,” *Olmsted Associates Records: Job Files, Westhampton Park Railway Co.; Park; Richmond, Va., 1901 to 1902*, October 17-25, 1901, Library of Congress; rapid access facilitated by Dywana Saunders (Boatwright Library).

¹³⁰ James M. Matthews, *Digest of the Laws of Virginia of a Criminal Nature* (Richmond, VA: J.W. Randolph & English, 1890), 111.

¹³¹ Olmsted Brothers and Hubbard, January 14, 1902, 2.

¹³² “All Are In One,” *Richmond Dispatch*, April 24, 1902, 1, *Virginia Chronicle*.

1912: Richmond College Survey Sketch & Landscaping Correspondence



Left to right; page of W.W. LaPrade and Brothers sketchbook of Richmond College project and detail of Burying Ground boundaries (Library of Virginia)

In late November 1911, after Richmond College's 1910 acquisition of tracts that made up the majority of its new campus, Warren H. Manning (1860-1938), a Boston landscape designer known for his "wild gardens" style, accepted the role of advisor and began designs for land alterations, plantings, and roads.¹³³ Manning worked with an original site plan created by the architectural firm of Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson, adapting it to his vision for the campus while also responding to the college's financial constraints. The first year of active campus development saw an entwining of work by Manning, Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson; the Richmond architectural firm Carneal & Johnston; and day laborers hired directly by the college for clearing and road grading whose names were not preserved. Charles F. Gillette (1886-1969) and A.H. Smith were Manning's representatives in Richmond and coordinated the work of the men and mule teams. Landscaping work at the campus had begun in earnest in late winter and early spring of 1912. In April, a local surveying company, W.W. LaPrade and Brothers, conducted a site study to aid in the plans for new roads. A sketch from the study, found in a field notebook held by the Library of Virginia, shows a spur line (a rail line that extended off the C&O

¹³³ Robin S. Karson et al., *Warren H. Manning: Landscape Architect and Environmental Planner* (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 2017), 118, 208. Manning's approach to landscape architecture had already shaped the campuses of Mount Holyoke College, Massachusetts Agricultural College (University of Massachusetts at Amherst), and Cornell University. Later, his innovative use of map overlays and tracings using light tables became part of his design process in 1911 and are considered to be among the early foundations of Geographic Information System (GIS) technology, which was instrumental to key portions of the Burying Ground research (Karson, et al, *Warren H. Manning*, 4; William R. Miller, *Introducing Geodesign: The Concept* (Redlands, California: Esri, 2012), 7)

railroad along the James River)¹³⁴ and, roughly parallel to it, a section of proposed road. Perpendicular to both are two lines indicating boundaries, each marked with the word “Graveyard.”

Data from the series of proposed road sketches is included on three sheets of drawings located in the Charles F. Gillette papers at the Library of Virginia on which proposed roads for campus appear in sections A, B, C and D. At a May 24, 1912 meeting of the Committee on New Buildings and Grounds, chaired by Richmond College board president J. Taylor Ellyson (1847-1919), the minutes refer to the committee’s decision to proceed with three areas of road construction, “A, B and part of D.”¹³⁵ The portion of road alongside the Burying Ground location, now known as Richmond Way, is in section D.¹³⁶ On July 20, 1912, Manning wrote to Ellyson, and began by quoting his head foreman, A.H. Smith, who had recently encountered “at least twenty” graves during the clearing and removal of tree roots in preparation for road grading and construction:

Dear Mr. Ellyson:

I quote below portion of letter dated July 17 from Mr. A. H. Smith:

“I have a crew of men grubbing [removing tree and shrub roots after initial clearing] along road, which runs on over the old cemetery, and now that the under brush has been cleared away, we find that there are at least twenty graves that will come in about the center of the road. The cut [removal of material to achieve grade, shorten road length or both] in some of these places is four feet. We are not quite ready to put teams in there, but will be soon. Shall we go on regardless of these graves or are they to be moved?”

I think an arrangement ought to be made to have these bodies removed to some cemetery, because any of the necessary excavation will break into graves. Furthermore, it would be better if this spot were cleared from all human remains as they will be an incentive to students’ pranks which it will be well to avoid. Knowledge of this cannot be hidden.

I have instructed Mr. Smith to make a temporary road around this cemetery in his work until Mr. Gillette returns, as I prefer to have him take up this question. Mr. Gillette will be there I expect near the first week in August.

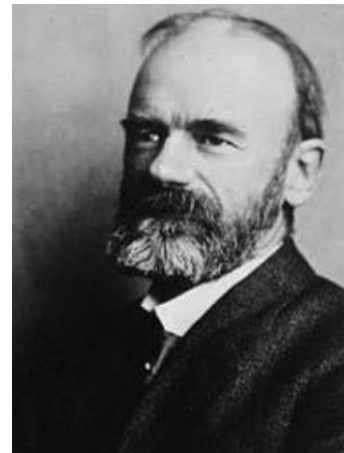
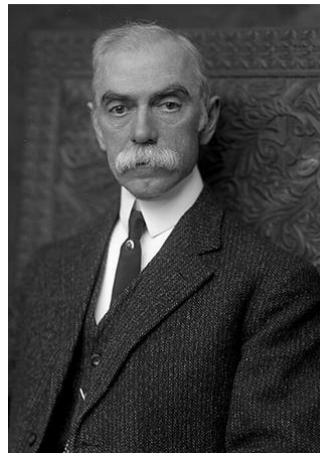
¹³⁴ “Survey for Richmond College at Westhampton,” *Field Book: No. 14* [April 18, 1912], 21, W. W. LaPrade and Brothers. Records, 1803-2001 (bulk 1900-1970). Accessions 40031, 43183, Business Records Collection, The Library of Virginia.

¹³⁵ Committee on New Buildings and Grounds, Minutes, May 25, 1912, *For the Centuries*, Boatwright Library, University of Richmond.

¹³⁶ [W.W. LaPrade and Brothers], [Layout plans (early)] [3 sheets], “928-53, Sheet 1” [Road Study], Charles F. Gillette, Papers, ca. 1880-1985 (bulk 1918-1969), accession 34472, Business Records Collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia; No date appears on this set of drawings, however the data from the April and May 1912 LaPrade road study has been transferred to it. It was also initialed by William Waverly LaPrade, and road sections are marked A, B, C, and D as they were described in the minutes of the Richmond College Board Committee on New Buildings and Grounds on May 25, 1912.

*Yours very truly,
Warren H. Manning¹³⁷*

Ellyson replied to Manning on July 23, 1912. After briefly addressing an issue raised in an earlier letter, he wrote, “I also note your letter of July 20th in regard to the road-way through the grave yard [sic]. Our Virginia law is very strict in its requirements in regard to private grave yards. I do not know that we will have any trouble in regard to this grave yard, but we will be careful to look into the matter by the time Mr. Gillette returns.”¹³⁸ See Appendix E for full images of this correspondence between Manning and Ellyson.



J. Taylor Ellyson (W.W. Foster, photographer, Virginia Museum of History and Culture) and Warren H. Manning (Wikimedia Commons)

While the July 20th letter does not state the section of road being considered, it appears that Manning and Smith were referring to the development of the road now called Richmond Way. An examination of three topographic maps indicates that the slope at this location would have required the cutting in described by Smith to achieve grade.¹³⁹ Searches of the minutes of both the Richmond College Board of Trustees’ the board’s Committee on New Buildings and Grounds have not yielded any information to supplement the Manning-Ellyson correspondence. While a large number of letters between the two are extant, they do not appear to contain additional mentions of graves at the Burying Ground.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Warren H. Manning to J. Taylor Ellyson, July 20, 1912, Virginia Baptist Historical Society.

¹³⁸ J. Taylor Ellyson to Warren H. Manning, July 23, 1912, Virginia Baptist Historical Society.

¹³⁹ During this research, consideration was given to the possibility that Manning and Smith were describing a small dirt road on the other side of the Burying Ground shown on the 1901 topographic map in an area that Cram initially considered for development. By spring 1912, however, a portion of that road shown on a drawing in the LaPrade field book was described as “abandoned” and it is not included in the drawing of road options that appears to have been provided by Manning to the Committee on New Buildings and Grounds (W.W. LaPrade and Brothers, “Survey of extension of road from Lake towards Three Chopt Road,” Field Book: No. 14 (May 30, 1912) 32). Only the road at the location of Richmond Way appears on known maps and plans after February 1912. This road follows the coordinates in the field book from LaPrade Brothers and those on the maps marked A, B, C and D in the Charles Gillette Papers at the Library of Virginia.

¹⁴⁰ Between June 18, 1912 and September 6, 1912, no records of meetings of the Committee on New Buildings and Grounds appear in a bound collection of minutes. Two documents, the November 6, 1912 minutes of a meeting of the Committee on New Buildings and Grounds, and a November 7, 1912 letter from Ellyson to Gillette, do mention a particular need to fence what each refers to as the “Lost Acre.” This refers to an area close to the stadium. After describing the need for fencing for the entire campus to prevent trespassing, the minutes state that the committee needed to have “the piece of land known as ‘The Lost Acre’ in the vicinity of the stadium...enclosed within the College property.” (University of Richmond, Committee on New Buildings and Grounds, Minutes, November 6, 1912, *For the Centuries*, Boatwright Library, University of Richmond, [link](#)). Additional correspondence also mentions graves in the area of campus, but it is a likely reference to an established post-Civil War graveyard three-quarters of a mile from the Burying Ground site. On November 27, 1911, Manning wrote to

1935: Zion Town: A Study in Human Ecology by Howard H. Harlan

In 1933, a University of Virginia doctoral student in sociology, Howard H. Harlan (born 1911), began research on the African American community of Zionsville, which occupied what is now the Ridge Road area to the northwest of the campus.¹⁴¹ Zionsville was begun by those formerly enslaved by the Green family and by Elmslie Higgenbotham, who owned an adjacent property.¹⁴² In the years that followed emancipation, the community grew and at the time of Harlan's research, it had a population of 233. In the study he published in 1935 as *Zion Town: A Study in Human Ecology*, Harlan provided historical context including its founding by Henry Pryor, who was forced to repurchase the land that started Zionsville. It was first bought from the Green family by "a number of emancipated slaves led by Henry Pryor."¹⁴³ After an initial payment, "the balance was to be paid for in labor and service."¹⁴⁴ A second purchase by Pryor was required when the initial agreement was disputed after Green's death in 1872.¹⁴⁵

Harlan also relates an incident in which a "pile of bones and skulls" was uncovered by laborers working below the dam that formed Westhampton Lake:

*Westhampton Lake, in the center of the University campus, was [Green's] millpond, and the dam marks the site of his mill. Some few years ago, a gang of laborers digging in the hollow just below this dam uncovered a pile of bones and skulls that are considered to mark the site of the old burying ground for Ben Green's slaves.*¹⁴⁶

"Some few," a phrase no longer in frequent use, typically indicates "some but not a considerable number."¹⁴⁷ The location Harlan described is in close proximity to the site marked "Grave yard" on the 1901 topographic map and the "Graveyard" boundaries on the 1912 LaPrade Brothers survey sketch. Harlan's awareness of the exhumation may have come from one or more of his Zionsville sources or from common knowledge in the neighborhood since, in his introduction, he describes his home as being within two miles of Zionsville and thus in close proximity to the campus.¹⁴⁸ The location of the exhumation a short distance from the known location of the

Carneal & Johnston and requested a copy of a map mentioned on another document already in his possession. In describing the location it featured, Manning wrote, "I notice on the white print which you have sent me that there apparently is another sheet which takes in that part of the ground toward the cemetery up the valleys which are sources of streams that are tributaries of the lake" (Manning to Carneal & Johnston, November 27, 1911, University Archives, Virginia Baptist Historical Society). "[U]p the valleys" is consistent with the location of a post-Civil War graveyard belonging to the Sons and Daughters of Ham, an African American burial organization. That cemetery is located in close proximity to significant lake tributaries.

¹⁴¹ Howard H. Harlan was a graduate of the University of Richmond (RC '33). He was later Professor of Sociology at Birmingham Southern College in Birmingham, Alabama from 1946 to 1963. His professional research was published in *Social Forces*, *American Sociological Review*, and the *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology of Northwestern University*.

¹⁴² Brenda Dabney Nichols, *African Americans Henrico of County* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2010), 7.

¹⁴³ Harlan, *Zion Town*, 14.

¹⁴⁴ Harlan, *Zion Town*, 15.

¹⁴⁵ Harlan, *Zion Town*, 16; Nichols, *African Americans of Henrico County*, 119.

¹⁴⁶ Harlan, *Zion Town*, 14.

¹⁴⁷ "Few, adj., pron., and n," Oxford English Dictionary Online, retrieved December 2019.

¹⁴⁸ Harlan, *Zion Town*, iv.

Burying Ground points to the possibility that the “pile of bones and skulls” were remains exhumed and relocated during road installation in 1912.¹⁴⁹

1955-1956: Exhumations During Steam Tunnel Upgrades

N. Where there any unique or unusual situations that you discovered during the construction of the tunnel?

E. Yes! When we were digging the tunnel from the power plant toward Richmond Hall we uncovered a series of unmarked graves. In fact it stopped the work and the University arranged to have the bodies buried someplace else. I had heard that, when the road was installed that leads to the Commons, that graves were also discovered at that time, but I do not know any of the details of those graves.

Above, excerpt of oral history interview of Wiley & Wilson Company engineer Edgar B. Boynton (Boatwright Memorial Library); right, 1901 topographic map (Olmsted National Historic Site), details from 1973 campus plan showing steam tunnels in solid red between the Steam Plant and Richmond Hall (Perkins & Will Planning Consultants), and contemporary features (D. Broome, Esri World Imagery, April 20, 2025)



Beginning in 1949, Wiley & Wilson Company began a multiyear series of engineering projects at the university, including the updating of the campus steam distribution system. During excavation for the improvement of sections of steam lines between what was then called the Power Plant and the Science Group, buildings that included what is now Fountain Hall, workers uncovered more human remains.¹⁵⁰ This site corresponds to the Grave yard indication on the 1901 Olmsted topographic map and the area of the 1947 exhumation. A 2002 *Collegian* article focused on the history of the steam tunnels isolates this portion of the Wiley & Wilson work between 1955 and 1956.¹⁵¹

In an oral history interview in 1993, Wiley & Wilson supervising engineer for the project, Edgar B. Boynton (1899-2000), detailed the uncovering of graves when he was asked if there were any “unique or unusual discoveries” during the steam tunnel project:

¹⁴⁹ Historian Lynn Rainville details the funeral practices of those who were enslaved on plantations in the region in her 2014 work, *Hidden History: African American Cemeteries in Central Virginia*. The mortuary process began with a “death watch... singing and praying and ‘keep[ing] the spirit company’” followed by the cleaning of the body, which was often performed by elderly women on larger properties. As word of the death was shared beyond the boundaries of a plantation, a coffin was often made, though in some circumstances the body would be wrapped in a shroud. At the time of interment, enslaved individuals on the plantation and those from nearby who were able to receive passes would process with the body to the burying place. Following burial, a grave was often marked with objects – shells, broken pottery and other items that, while beautifully and spiritually symbolic, would not be considered useful by a potential thief or to the enslaver. The burial site might be visited again weeks or months later for a “second burial... which celebrated the departure of the soul or ‘spirit’ and ensured the deceased ‘a place in the company of the ancestors’” (Lynn Rainville, *Hidden History: African American Cemeteries in Central Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014), 54-56).

¹⁵⁰ Ed Boynton (supervising engineer, Wiley Wilson Company) oral history with Neil Bromilow, February 19, 1993, Boatwright Library, University of Richmond.

¹⁵¹ Margaret Morris, “What Lies Beneath,” *Collegian*, April 18, 2002, 13; Esri, “World Imagery” [basemap], scale not given, “World Imagery,” December 15, 2019, <https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=10df2279f9684e4a9f6a7f08feb2a9> (January 5, 2019).

*Yes! When we were digging the tunnel from the power plant toward Richmond Hall we discovered a series of unmarked graves. In fact it stopped the work and the University arranged to have the bodies buried someplace else. I had heard that, when the road was installed that leads to the Commons, that graves were also discovered at that time, but I do not know any of the details of those graves.*¹⁵²

No record of the exhumations during the steam tunnel project were located during searches of minutes from meetings of the University of Richmond Board of Trustees.

2019-2024: Ground Penetrating Radar Studies

In September 2019, the university used the services of NAEVA Geophysics Inc. to determine if ground penetrating radar (GPR) would reveal the locations of any graves remaining at the site. While the results of the initial survey were inconclusive, a second survey in 2023, conducted in preparation for the construction of the Burying Ground Memorial, resulted in the location of at least fifty graves at the site. The memorial design was adapted to protect these gravesites.

2025: The Burying Ground Memorial

After years of planning and development following the January 2020 release of the original version of this report, the Burying Ground Memorial was dedicated on April 23, 2025.

¹⁵² Oral history, Edgar B. Boynton by Neil Bromilow, February 19, 1993, Boatwright Memorial Library.

Appendices

Appendix A: Pre-1901 Westham Owners

The Westham land tract included the entire campus during most of the 18th century. Following divisions, its boundaries included the Westhampton College side of campus and most or all of the Burying Ground.

Owner(s)	Period of Ownership	Property name; area in relation to current campus	Burial locations(s)
Giles Webb ¹	1702- circa 1715	Westham; all or most of campus	St. John's Church, Richmond, VA
William Randolph and Peter Randolph ²	Circa 1715-1753	Westham; entire campus	Wilton, Henrico County, VA
William Byrd, III ³	1753-1763	Westham; entire campus	Requested burial at Old Westover Church
Robert Carter Nicholas, John Ambler and heirs ⁴	1763- post 1791	Westham; entire campus	Robert Carter Nicholas, Farrington (Hanover County); Edward Ambler, Jamestown; John Ambler, Shockoe Hill Cemetery
John Harvie and Edwin Harvie ⁵	Post 1791-1811	Westham; Westhampton College	John Harvie, Belvidere Estate family plot; Edwin Harvie, Monumental Church Crypt
John Graham and estate ⁶	1811-1822	Westham; Westhampton College	Dover Coal Pits
William Shapard ⁷	1822-1832	Big Westham Farm; Westhampton College	Shockoe Hill Cemetery
Thomas, John and Richard Crouch ⁸	1833-1839	Westham; Westhampton College	Thomas Crouch, Hollywood Cemetery; Richard and John Crouch, Shockoe Hill Cemetery
Clement H. Read and heirs ⁹	1839-1855	Westham; Westhampton College	Clement H. Read, Watts Family Cemetery (Roanoke County, VA), reinterred at Fair View Cemetery; David and Thomas Read, Bellevue Cemetery (Hollins, VA); Betsy Sims Read
Benjamin W. Green ¹⁰	1855-1868	Westham; Westhampton College	Hollywood Cemetery
Mary Ann Allen and Edmund Winston ¹¹	1868-1868	Westham; Westhampton College	Mary Ann Allen, Hollywood Cemetery; Edmund Winston, unavailable
Robert, J.P.R. and William R. Polk ¹²	1868-1876	Westham; Westhampton College	Robert Polk, Riverview Cemetery (Wilmington, DE); J.P.R. Polk, Elmwood Cemetery (Charlotte, NC); William Polk, Riverview Cemetery (Wilmington, DE)
William A. McCandliss and estate ¹³	1876 - 1894	Westham; Westhampton College	Laurel Hill Cemetery (Philadelphia, PA)
W. C. and E. Jesse McDowell ¹⁴	1894 - 1897	Westham; Westhampton College	Hollywood Cemetery
William Washington Browne ¹⁵	1897	Westham Farm; Westhampton College	Sycamore Cemetery, reinterred at Woodlawn Cemetery

¹ Giles Webb, "Land Grant 28 October 1702," October 28, 1702; "Giles Webb," Find A Grave, accessed October 20, 2019, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/155952001/giles-webb>.

² William Randolph to William Byrd, January 17, 1753, recorded April 3, 1753, “Deeds, Wills, etc. 1750-1767; “William Randolph, III,” Find A Grave, accessed October 20, 2019, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/186173575/william-randolph/>; “Peter W. Randolph,” Find A Grave, accessed October 20, 2019, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/186594775/peter-w-randolph/>.

³ W. G. Stanard, “Major Robert Beverly and his Descendants,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 3, no. 3 (January 1896), 263.

⁴ Mary A. Stevenson, *Robert Carter House Historical Report, Block 30-2 Building 13 Lot 333, 334, 335, 336*, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library Research Report Series - 1604, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1990, <https://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/View/index.cfm?doc=ResearchReports%5CRR1604.xml>; Courtney Williams, “The Dead Yet Speak: 17th and 18th Century Gravestones in the Virginia Colonial Triangle,” (undergraduate honors thesis, College of William and Mary, 2012), 28, <http://scholarworks.wm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1471&context=honorsthesis>; “Col. John Ambler,” Find A Grave, accessed October 19, 2019, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/57091683/john-ambler>.

⁵ “Col. John Augustine Harvie,” Find A Grave, accessed October 20, 2019, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/6886068/john-augustine-harvie>; “Edwin James Harvie,” Find a Grave, accessed October 20, 2019, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/22846925/edwin-james-harvie>.

⁶ “Died,” *Richmond Enquirer*, September 26, 1820, 4, 5.

⁷ “William Shapard,” Find A Grave, accessed October 20, 2019, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/76885766/william-shapard>; “Catherine Condie Shapard,” Find A Grave, accessed October 20, 2019, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/100842197/catherine-shapard>.

⁸ “Dr. John G. Crouch,” Find A Grave, accessed October 20, 2019, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/8848928/john-g-crouch>; “Richard Crouch,” Find A Grave, accessed October 20, 2019, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/8848915/richard-crouch>; “Thomas Crouch,” Burial Records, Hollywood Cemetery, accessed October 20, 2019.

⁹ “Clement Haskins Read,” Find A Grave, accessed October 20, 2019, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/26389759/clement-haskins-read>; “Thomas C. Read,” Find A Grave, accessed October 20, 2019, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/86112125/thomas-c-read>; “David Simms [sic] Read,” Find A Grave, accessed October 20, 2019, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/86037673/david-simms-read>.

¹⁰ “B.W. Green” (d. 1872), Burial Records, Hollywood Cemetery, accessed October 19, 2019; “Julia A. Green,” Burial Records, Hollywood Cemetery, accessed October 19, 2019; “Benjamin Green” [Jr.] (d. 1878), Burial Records, Hollywood Cemetery, accessed October 19, 2019.

¹¹ “Mary Ann Stetson Allen,” Find A Grave, accessed October 20, 2019, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/92667943/mary-ann-allen>; research has not revealed Edmund Winston’s burial information.

¹² “Funerals Yesterday,” *Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), January 23, 1896, 2; “Funeral of Mr. Polk,” *Charlotte News* (NC), September 25, 1899, 1; “Death of William R. Polk,” *Middletown Transcript* (DE), December 28, 1907, 3.

¹³ “William A. McCandliss,” obituary, *The Times* (Philadelphia, PA), August 1, 1892, 5.

¹⁴ “W.C. McDowell,” Burial Records, Hollywood Cemetery, accessed October 20, 2019, <https://www.hollywoodcemetery.org/genealogy/burial-records>; “E. Jesse McDowell,” Burial Records, Hollywood Cemetery, accessed October 20, 2019.

¹⁵ “The William W. Browne Memorial,” *Richmond Planet*, June 28, 1919, 2

Appendix B: Selected Central Virginia Indigenous Organizations, Museums & Resources

Powhatan

The Powhatan Indians of Virginia: Their Traditional Culture (1992) and *Pocahontas's People: The Powhatan Indians of Virginia Through Four Centuries* (1996), both by Helen C. Roundtree, offer significant information on the Powhatan tribe and confederacy. The National Museum of the American Indian provides educational material related to the Powhatan people, including an examination of the history surrounding Pocahontas at the 400th anniversary of her death [archived link].

Monacan

The website for the [Monacan Indian Nation](#) contains historical information as well as details of tribal governance. In October 2019, University of Virginia Professor of Anthropology Jeffrey L. Hantman published *Monacan Millenium: A Collaborative Archaeology and History of a Virginia Indian People*.

Pamunkey

The Pamunkey Indian Tribe website includes historical tribal information and current information on tribal membership, government, and the Pamunkey Reservation, located in King William County, Virginia. The Pamunkey Indian Tribe Museum & Cultural Center, located on the reservation, is a resource for Pamunkey history and current educational events.

Cherokee

The Wolf Creek Cherokee Museum is located in Henrico County and provides exhibits of tribal artifacts, genealogical information, and educational offerings. A recent article in the *Virginia Mercury* details the ongoing work of the Wolf Creek Cherokee people to become the first Cherokee tribe recognized by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Nansemond

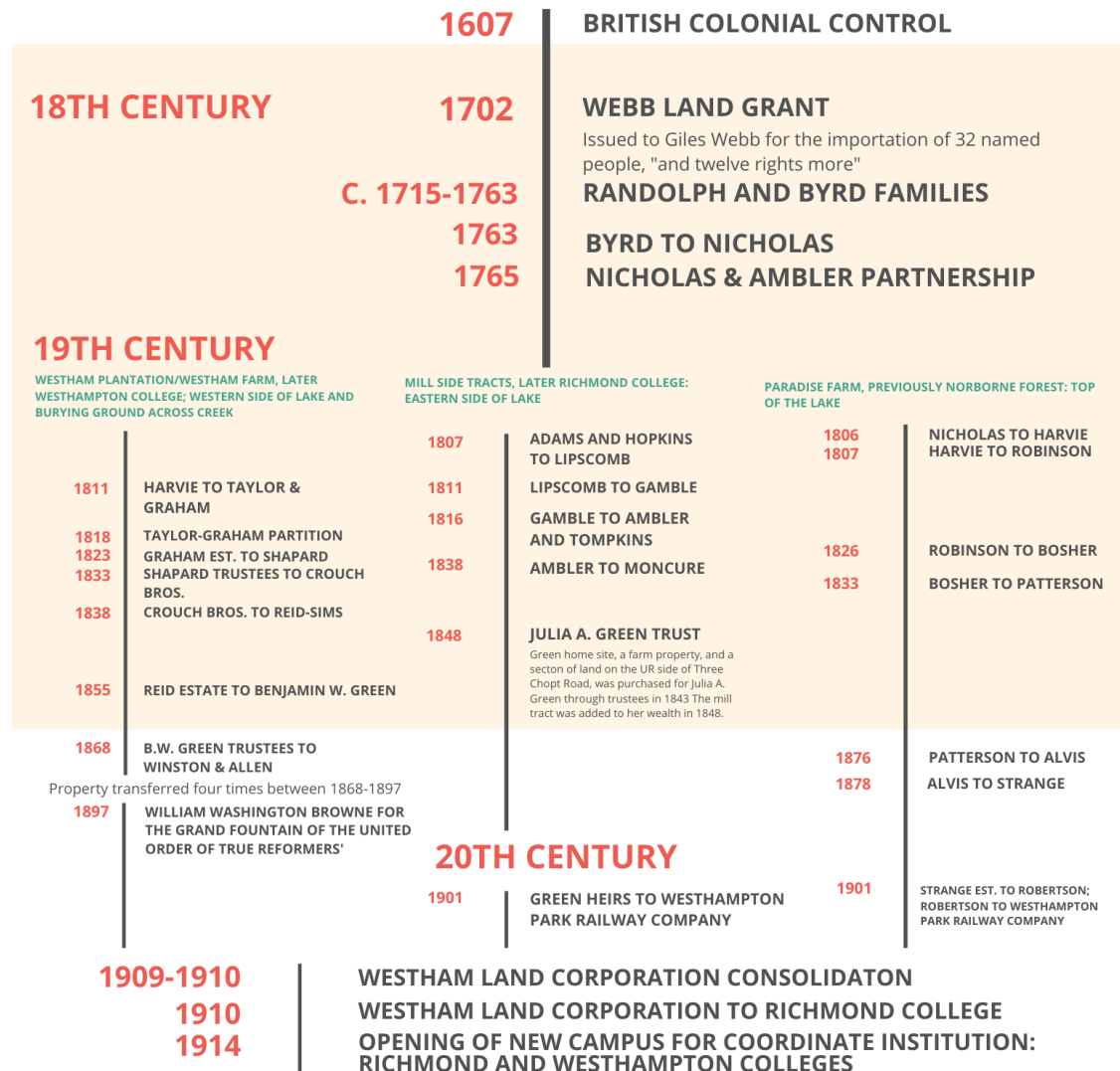
The Nansemond Indian Nation maintains a website containing tribal history, information on tribal enrollment, the development of Mattanock Town, and a schedule of educational events. The Virginia Department of Education provides information about the Nansemond [archived link], including displacement of non-Christianized members of the tribe in the 18th century.

Appendix C: Land Control

LAND CONTROL TIMELINE

INDIGENOUS LANDS

Cactus Hill settlement approximately 50 miles away dates to c.18,000 BCE. During the Late Woodland Period (1,000 BCE to European contact), the area around the present University of Richmond campus was the point at which the lands of the Monacan to the west and the Powhatan to the east met at the Fall Line of the James River.



UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

Significant transfers (not to scale) with enslavement era designated (Driskill and Broome, *Paths to the Burying Ground*)

Appendix D: Other Research Considerations

As part of the research for the 2019 version of this report, questions related to alternative explanations for graves was considered. Additional details have been added for the 2025 update.

Could these be the graves of former landowners?

Graves of all former landowners have been traced to other locations. Details can be found in Appendix A. The Burying Ground is also at a slight rise at very low ground when compared to the locations of the landowners' homes located on River Road, Three Chopt Road, and off of Forest Avenue. It would not be a likely place for wealthy enslavement era and post-Civil War landowners to bury their dead. It is consistent with locations where burying grounds for enslaved people are often sited, on land not optimal for cultivation but above the water table.¹⁵³ For purposes of differentiation in contemporaneous records and accounts, research was also conducted on other area burial places located outside the bounds of the University of Richmond: enslavement era family graveyards and the post-Civil War Sons and Daughters of Ham Cemetery.

Evidence demonstrates that the Burying Ground was not created by the True Reformers organization. In the early 19th century (nearly a century before the organization acquired the property) the Burying Ground site was kept as part of the Westham plantation by an angled line drawn around it. The Burying Ground was indicated with the words "Grave yard" on a 1901 topographic map, before the first resident of the True Reformers' home for the elderly arrived in 1902. This is consistent with William Taylor Thom's description of the organization's development of the home in 1901 when he wrote that no quarters had been built for residents and organization was "waiting wisely for a sufficient contribution of funds by the charitable public" before building planned structures accommodate residents.¹⁵⁴ Unlike some burial organizations in the Richmond area, the Grand Fountain of the United Order of True Reformers did not offer cemetery plots. Browne himself was buried at Sycamore Cemetery, then reinterred at Woodlawn Cemetery. The True Reformers were also willing to sell the Burying Ground site to the Westhampton Park Railway Company in 1902. No note of graves appear in the 1909 deed between the True Reformers and the members of the land syndicate later referred to as the Westham Land Corporation, nor is there a mention of graves in any previous or subsequent deed. Were the graves at the Burying Ground those of free people, it is likely that the site would have been noted in deeds, preserving a right of entrance for descendants of those interred there.¹⁵⁵ The absence of such a provision is consistent with older graves and a burying ground for enslaved rather than free people. The Burying Ground site was referred to as the "old cemetery" in 1912 correspondence. In 1947, university officials were cited as the sources of statements in which they associated the Burying Ground with enslavement.

Could these be the graves of Union soldiers killed during the Dahlgren-Kilpatrick Raid?

Based on historical research and a 2024 ground penetrating radar study, the number of graves the Burying Ground holds (as well as the added number disturbed and removed from the site in the early to mid-twentieth century) far exceeds those known to have been killed in action on Three Chopt Road in March 1864. Details below are provided for those seeking additional information.

On March 1, 1864, a group of approximately 500 Union soldiers led by Col. Ulrich Dahlgren moved toward the area from the west as part of what was intended to be a "two-pronged strike on the

¹⁵³ Rainville, *Hidden History*, 14.

¹⁵⁴ Thom, "True Reformers," 811.

¹⁵⁵ Such rights are found in numerous deeds in the antebellum period, including one of Green's purchases in the Patterson Road area adjacent to his homesite property (George F. Guy and Sarah E. Guy to Benjamin W. Green, Henrico County, VA, DB 63: 385, December 6, 1853, Library of Virginia). The deed included a description of two burying grounds in the area between Green's house and present day Horsepen Avenue. In the deed, the family of those interred preserved rights of ingress and egress to their family graveyards.

Confederate capital” with the goal of freeing Federal prisoners.¹⁵⁶ Most or all of Dahlgren’s column of men made their way down Three Chopt Road with a plan to turn east at the Westham Road (now Cary Street Road) and approach the city.¹⁵⁷ Their progress was interrupted by Confederates near the home and farm of Benjamin W. Green, who controlled hundreds of acres in the immediate area and thousands to the west, including the large majority of the current UR campus. After brief action close to the Green house, the fighting moved off the road and away from the present campus, briefly intensifying again at Hicks’ Farm (now a residential area between Grove Avenue and Cary Street Road). Following a powerful volley from the Confederate side, Dahlgren’s men retreated, following Three Chopt Road past Green’s home and farm. While the initial reports of the numbers of Union soldiers killed in the fighting in this area varied, most range between ten and eighteen.¹⁵⁸ A news account describes local people burying the dead,¹⁵⁹ and bodies were likely interred on one or both farms. In 1866 and 1867, the Federal Quartermaster’s Office was charged with the location and removal of the remains of Union soldiers on private property and in established Southern cemeteries. Remains were reburied in regional “National Cemeteries” established for the purpose. Two reports show Richmond National Cemetery as the location of reburied remains previously located at “Green’s Farm” (Seven sets of remains removed and reburied at Richmond National Cemetery) and “B. Green’s farm” (one unidentified person buried in a mass grave at Richmond National Cemetery).¹⁶⁰ The land known specifically as “Green’s Farm,” the location given by Union and Confederate soldiers who fought there,¹⁶¹ was at a distance of approximately a mile from the Burying Ground site near Green’s mill. A property Green added to his farm property in 1853, which extended his holdings to Horsepen Road, was known to have two existing burying grounds.¹⁶² Despite Green’s homesite and farm’s location on the opposite side of Three Chopt Road and at a distance from the University of Richmond, an assumed association between the campus and fighting at “Green’s Farm” is natural since, apart from the homesite, no evidence of Green’s significant farm property adjacent to that property remains. Neither Douglas Southall Freeman, University Rector and noted Civil War historian and biographer, nor Howard H. Harlan, author of the Zionsville study and resident of the neighborhood in the early 1930s, made connections to the Civil War when they addressed the discoveries of remains associated with the Burying Ground.

Could graves in what was referred to in 1902 as the “negro burying ground” be those of post-emancipation Black laborers?

Two significant periods of land use at Westham Farm — its ownership by the Polk family (1868-1876) and Dr. William A. McCandliss of Philadelphia, PA (1876-1894) — are reflected in the 1870 and 1880 Non-Population Agriculture Schedules of the Federal Census. The 1870 Agriculture Schedule shows \$1,600.00 being paid to laborers on the property (this amount could include wages or the amount of

¹⁵⁶ Bruce M. Venter, *Kill Jeff Davis: The Union Raid of Richmond, 1864* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016), 197, 55.

¹⁵⁷ Venter, *Kill Jeff Davis*, 202.

¹⁵⁸ “The Yankee Losses In Killed and Wounded,” *Daily Dispatch*, March 4, 1864, 1, Virginia Chronicle; Varina Davis, *Jefferson Davis, Ex-President of the Confederate States of America: A Memoir* (New York: Belford Co., 1890) 465.

¹⁵⁹ “The Raid on Richmond,” *Richmond Whig*, March 3, 1864, 1.

¹⁶⁰ United States, Quartermaster General’s Office, *Statement of the Disposition of Some of the Bodies of Deceased Union Soldiers and Prisoners of War Whose Remains Have Been Removed to National Cemeteries in the Southern and Western States*, Volume IV (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1869) 19; United States Quartermaster General’s Office, *Roll of Honor* (No. XV): Names of Soldiers Who Died in Defense of the American Union Interred in the National Cemeteries (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1868), 341.

¹⁶¹ Samuel Harris, *Personal Reminiscences of Samuel Harris* (Chicago: The Rogerson Press, 1897), 102; J.R. Haw, “That Fight at Green’s Farm,” *Confederate Veteran* 9, no. 17 (September 1909), 452.

¹⁶² Guy to Green Deed, Henrico County DB 63:385, December 6, 1853.

board; no distinction is made).¹⁶³ By using the average amount paid to laborers at the time, this total would be the equivalent of approximately 10-15 people working full-time.¹⁶⁴ In 1879, William A. McCandliss paid for 400 weeks of hired labor on the farm.¹⁶⁵ To date, no information has been located that provides the names of any permanent residents of the property in 1880. Because McCandliss was an absentee landlord who remained in Philadelphia during his ownership of Westham, he does not appear in the 1880 Population Schedule for Henrico County, and therefore tracing the farm and those associated with it is difficult. Most 1890 population census records were destroyed by fire in 1921. While the possibility of individual burials at the Burying Ground during these years cannot be ruled out, burials of free Black individuals on property owned by their employers appear to have been increasingly unlikely in the years after Emancipation. Among African Americans, church graveyards within a few miles of Westham Farm, family plots, and cemeteries operated by burial societies and groups such as the Sons and Daughters of Ham in Henrico and in the Richmond area are the known locations of many graves from the period. No note of graves or a plot appear in the 1909 deed between the True Reformers and the members of the land syndicate later referred to as the Westham Land Corporation, nor is there a mention of graves in any previous or subsequent deed. If the graves at the Burying Ground were those of free people it is likely that the site would have been noted in deeds, preserving a right of entrance for descendants of those interred there.¹⁶⁶ The absence this provision is consistent with older graves and a burying ground for enslaved rather than free people.

¹⁶³ United States, *Federal Census Non-Population Agriculture Schedule*, 1870, "William R. Polk," Tuckahoe Township, Henrico County, VA, 5, ancestry.com, accessed November 26, 2019.

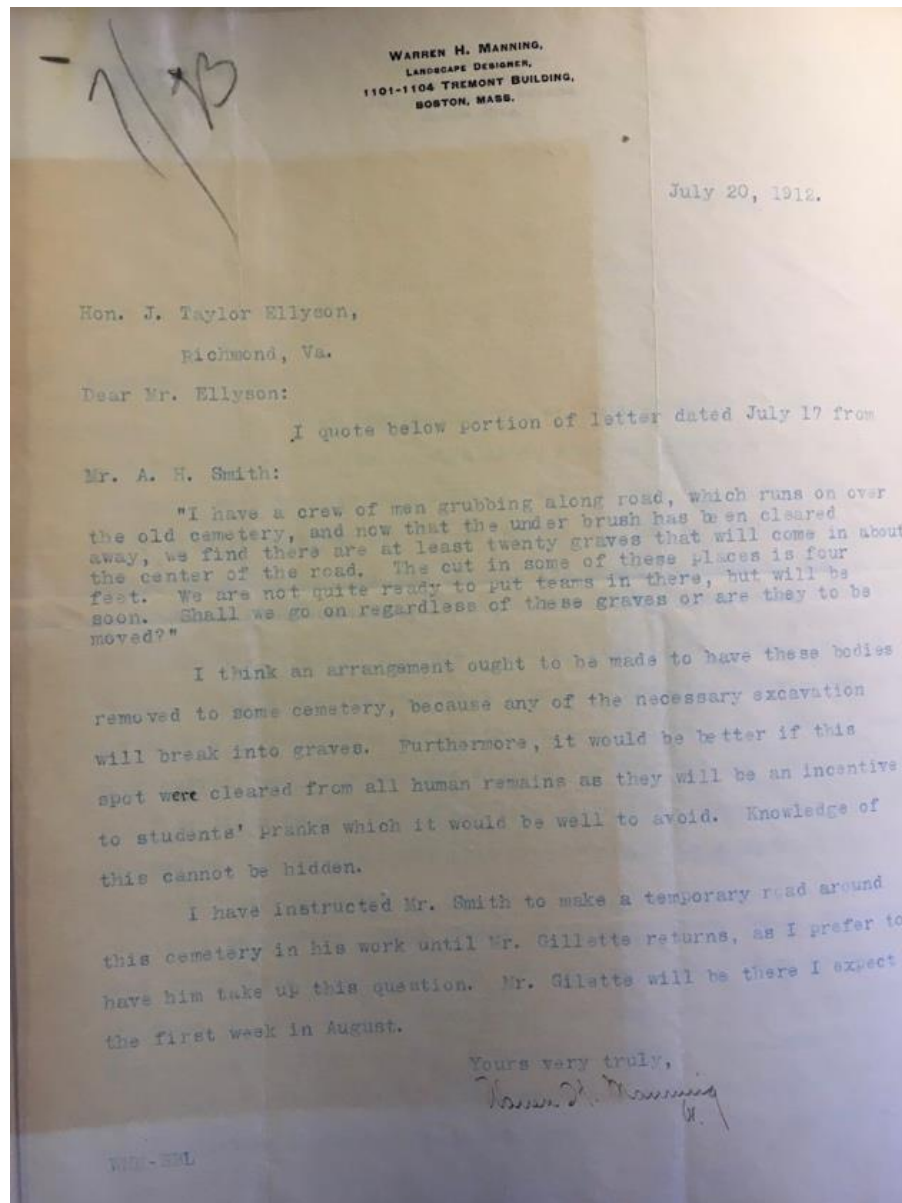
¹⁶⁴ George K. Holmes, "Table 11: Wages of Farm Labor," *Wages of Farm Labor, Bulletin 99* U.S. Department of Agriculture (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1912) 29, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101050723756&view=1up&seq=745>

¹⁶⁵ United States, *Federal Census Non-Population Agriculture Schedule*, 1880, "McCandliss, William A.," Tuckahoe District, Henrico County, VA, 2, ancestry.com, accessed November 26, 2019.

¹⁶⁶ Such rights are found in numerous deeds in the antebellum period, including one of Green's purchases in the Patterson Road area adjacent to his homesite property (George F. Guy and Sarah E. Guy to Benjamin W. Green, Henrico County, VA, DB 63: 385, December 6, 1853, Library of Virginia). The deed included a description of two burying grounds in the area between Green's house and present day Horsepen Avenue. In the deed, the family of those interred preserved rights of ingress and egress to their family graveyards.

Appendix E: Images of Manning-Ellyson Correspondence, 1912

Warren H. Manning's original letters related to the development of the new Richmond College campus and unsigned office copies of the replies of Board President and Chairman of the Committee on New Buildings and Grounds, J. Taylor Ellyson, are part of the University Archive housed at the Virginia Baptist Historical Society. Minutes of the Richmond College Board's Committee on New Buildings and Grounds were digitized as part of the 2015 *For the Centuries* exhibit and can be found [here](#).



Warren H. Manning [with excerpt of A.H. Smith correspondence] to J. Taylor Ellyson, July 20, 1912, University of Richmond, University Archives, Virginia Baptist Historical Society

Richmond College

July 23, 1912.

Warren H. Manning, Esq.,
#1101 Tremont Building,
Boston, Mass.

Dear Mr. Manning:-

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of July 19th and also the tracing of plan to show the land that we need from the Benson property, for which please accept my thanks. I also note your letter of July 20th in regard to the road-way through the grave yard. Our Virginia law is very strict in its requirements in regard to private grave yards. I do not know that we will have any trouble in regard to this grave yard, but we will be careful to look into the matter by the time Mr. Gillette returns.

Yours very truly,

Chairman Committee New Buildings.

Chairman Committee on New Buildings [J. Taylor Ellyson] to Warren H. Manning, July 23, 1912, University of Richmond, University Archives, Virginia Baptist Historical Society

Acknowledgements

Prior to the December 2019 submission of the Burying Ground report, important resources and insights related to the University of Richmond campus land and the Burying Ground as well as critical support for the research process was provided by numerous individuals. In the University of Richmond community, they include Elizabeth Baughan (Classical Studies), Ann Lloyd Breeden (Office of the President), Douglas Broome (Information Systems), then-President Ronald A. Crutcher, David H. Hale (Executive Vice-President and Chief Operating Officer), Sylvia Gale (Bonner Center for Civic Engagement), Darlene Herod (Virginia Baptist Historical Society), Amy Howard (then as part of the Bonner Center for Civic Engagement and the Office of the Provost), Robbie Jones (Virginia Baptist Historical Society), Lynda Kachurek (Boatwright Library), Jeffrey W. Legro (then Executive Vice-President and Provost), Justin Madron (Digital Scholarship Lab), Derek Miller (Bonner Center for Civic Engagement), Nicole Maurantonio (Rhetoric and Communications Studies), Robert Nelson (Digital Scholarship Lab), Dywana Saunders (Boatwright Library), Elizabeth Sheehan (School of Professional and Continuing Studies), Suzanne Slye (Inclusive History Project, 2019-2021), and Nathan Taylor (Virginia Baptist Historical Society). Others in the Henrico and Richmond communities have also shared their expertise and resources, including Lisa Denton (Henrico County Museum System), Brenda Dabney Nichols (educator, author of *African Americans of Henrico County*, Burying Ground Descendent, and organizer of the Burying Ground Descendants Council), Erin Hollaway Palmer (Friends of East End Cemeteries), and staff of the Library of Virginia and the Virginia Historical Society. Dr. Lynn Rainville (author of *Hidden History: African American Cemeteries of Central Virginia*) provided vital information on funeral practices of enslaved Virginians.

Since the release of the report in January 2020, additional members of the University of Richmond community and individuals in the surrounding area have inspired and supported further research related to the Burying Ground. They include descendants of those once enslaved by former owners of land now home to the university's campus (organized by Brenda Dabney Nichols), members of the Memorialization Committee (co-chaired by historian and President Emeritus Edward L. Ayers and Vice President for Information Services and Chief Information Officer Keith "Mac" McIntosh), President Kevin Hallock, Ann Lloyd Breeden, and Amy Howard. Advisor to the Memorialization Committee and public historian, Luranett L. Lee – who led the Inclusive History Project (2019-2021) – has provided ongoing support for Burying Ground engagement. Douglas Broome continued map-related research and contributed updated georeferenced images that appear in this report.

Shelby M. Driskill
April 2025