

Pocahontas Research Project

The Pocahontas Research Project has been initiated to document the richly historic community of Pocahontas Island in Petersburg. The project consists of three phases— 1) archaeology investigations, 2) preparation of a nomination for the National Register of Historic Places and 3) the hiring of a historian to build on previously conducted research by dedicated volunteers.

Archaeological investigations by **James River Institute for Archaeology** of Williamsburg, Virginia took place in December 2005 and January, 2006 and continued in March, 2006. Testing on the lots of the Jarratt House at 808-810 Logan Street and at 215 Witten Street, known as the “Underground Railroad House,” yielded a range of domestic artifacts dating from the early nineteenth century through the modern era. A previously identified prehistoric Native American site dating to as early as 6500 B.C. was reexamined. And finally, the brick foundations of the former Richmond and Petersburg Railroad depot, measuring 30 feet wide by 300 feet long, were uncovered at the intersection of Pocahontas and Sapony Streets. JRIA is currently in the process of analyzing the results of these investigations and will submit a final report to the City in the coming weeks.



The assessment of the integrity and potential significance of archaeological resources will help support the nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Preparation of this nomination was done by **Ashley Neville, LLC** of Glen Allen, Virginia. Surveys of architectural resources on Pocahontas Island were conducted in April 2006. The completed nomination was submitted to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources in July 2006.



On September 6, 2006, the State Review Board and Historic Resources Board voted to list Pocahontas Island on the **Virginia Landmarks Register**. The nomination is being submitted to the National Park Service for their consideration and listing on the National Register.



This project is being partially funded by generous awards from the Cameron Foundation and the Certified Local Government program of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

The Promise Land: The Story of Pocahontas Island

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AuZhC4Yscj8>

[Illusions Filmworks](#)

Published on Aug 20, 2018

Pocahontas Island is a small community located in Petersburg, VA, is one, if not the oldest African American community in U.S. history. For the first time ever, get a look at the fascinating history of this small community. The film also tells the story of the life of Mr. Richard Stewart, the Island's caretaker who has devoted his life to the preservation of this community and the dreams of the Island's past inhabitants. With interviews from community members, local and national historians, along with an amazing original score, The Promise Land celebrates local history and the power of community.