

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JUNE 6, 2012

TO: CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF OLD AND HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA DISTRICT BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

FROM: AL COX, FAIA, HISTORIC PRESERVATION MANAGER 

SUBJECT: CONTRABAND AND FREEDMEN'S CEMETERY

An application to list the Contraband and Freedmen's Cemetery on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places will be reviewed by the Virginia State Review Board and Historic Resources Board on Thursday, June 21, 2012. As a Certified Local Government (CLG), the Boards of Architectural Review are entitled to review and comment upon a draft National Register nomination and relay any comments or concerns to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. The BAR's comments will be forward to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Director and the Boards will review the nomination and consider any comments made within the sixty-day comment period.

On May 16, 2012, representatives from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources held a public meeting on the nomination at the Lloyd House. About thirty people attended and there was unanimous support for the nomination. The nomination is expected to be approved on June 21, 2012, as the DHR representatives indicated that there is considerable excitement at DHR concerning this new listing, and that they intend to use the nomination as a model for thoroughness, documentation and alignment with National Register criteria.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the BAR support the designation of this resource and find the Contraband and Freedmen's Cemetery eligible for listing on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places.

Attachment: *Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery National Register Nomination (DRAFT)*. Pamela Cressey, City Archaeologist; Francine Bromberg, Preservation Archaeologist; Laura Trieschmann, Architectural Historian (EHT Traceries), 2012.



Attachment



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Historic Resources

2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221

Douglas W. Domenech
Secretary of Natural Resources

Kathleen S. Kilpatrick
Director

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April 18, 2012

Al Cox, Historic Preservation Manager
City of Alexandria, Department of Planning and Zoning
P. O. Box 178
Alexandria, VA 22313
Re: Contraband and Freedmen's Cemetery, City of Alexandria

Dear Mr. Cox:

The Department of Historic Resources (DHR), Virginia's historic preservation office, is planning to present the enclosed National Register nomination for Virginia's State Review Board and Historic Resources Board for recommendation to the National Register of Historic Places and inclusion in the Virginia Landmarks Register.

On Wednesday, May 16, 2012, staff of DHR will host a public information hearing beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the Lloyd House at 220 South Washington Street in Alexandria, VA 22314. The purpose of the meeting is to present and explain the nomination process and results of register listing, to hear public comment, and to answer questions. DHR will forward the comments to the State Review Board, the Board of Historic Resources, and the agency director.

Additionally, because this resource is within your Certified Local Government, the Architectural Review Board (ARB) is entitled to a sixty-day comment period during which the ARB may review the draft nomination and relay any comments or concerns to the DHR. I hope you will consider the enclosed nomination at your next meeting and relay your comments to us. All comments will be forwarded to the SHPO Director and the Boards for consideration along with the nomination. We have scheduled the nomination for presentation to our boards on **Thursday, June 21, 2012**, and would like to receive your comments by that time in fulfillment of the comment period. This letter serves as notification initiating the sixty-day comment period and no further action will be taken on the nomination until we have received your comments or the full sixty-day period has passed.

I look forward to receiving your comments. Should you have any further questions regarding the nomination or the register program, please call me directly at 804-482-6099.

Sincerely,

Marc Christian Wagner
Director, Resource Information Division

Enclosure

Administrative Services
10 Courthouse Ave.
Petersburg, VA 23803
Tel: (804) 862-6416
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Capital Region Office
2801 Kensington Office
Richmond, VA 23221
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14415 Old Courthouse Way
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Western Region Office
962 Kime Lane
Salem, VA 24153
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Fax: (540) 387-5446

Northern Region Office
5357 Main Street
P.O. Box 519
Stephens City, VA 22655
Tel: (540) 868-7030
Fax: (540) 868-7033

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery
other names/site number Site #44AX0179/VDHR #100-0121-1085

2. Location

street & number 1001 South Washington Street N/A not for publication
city or town Alexandria N/A vicinity
state Virginia code VA county Independent City code 510 zip code 22314

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

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

national statewide local

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
 (Check only one box.)

Number of Resources within Property
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	district
2	0	site
0	0	structure
0	0	object
2	0	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

FUNERARY/Cemetery
Prehistoric Stone Tool Making Site

FUNERARY/Cemetery
OTHER/Prehistoric Archaeological Site
WORK IN PROGRESS/Memorial

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

N/A

foundation: N/A
 walls: _____

 roof: _____
 other: _____

Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery

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Narrative Description

SUMMARY PARAGRAPH

The Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery is located at 1001 South Washington Street in Alexandria, Virginia (*see Figures 1 and 2*). Most of the property is owned by the City of Alexandria and administered by the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities; the southern portion of the property is owned by the Virginia Department of Transportation as a right-of-way for Interstate 95/495 (Capital Beltway). Set at the southwest corner of Church and South Washington streets, the cemetery is directly adjacent to the George Washington Memorial Parkway (known as South Washington Street within the city limits). Church Street bounds the north edge of the site, and the Parkway (South Washington Street) is on the east. The site's southern boundary is the mid-point of the city block that was once extant before Interstate 95/495 was constructed. A wooded slope (the extension of South Columbus Street) marks the western extent.

The site, which covers about one-and-a-half acres, is on a bluff, which once overlooked Hunting Creek and Interstate 95/495. Currently, the surface view of the site does not provide any indication that a Civil War and Reconstruction-era African American cemetery lies underneath. Operated by the U.S. government between March 1864 and January 1869, the cemetery is the resting place of 1,711 recorded individuals, most of whom came to Alexandria seeking freedom, education, and opportunity. Early in the Civil War, runaway and captured enslaved African-Americans were popularly known as contrabands; following the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 and the 13th Amendment in 1865, they became known as freedmen. Although the cemetery was abandoned by the federal government, individuals may well have buried relatives and cared for graves informally for decades afterward.

Remarkably, the majority of the graves are most likely preserved, even though the site has been covered by streets, sidewalks, asphalt, and building slabs, as well as damaged in specific areas by gas tank installation, I-95/495 construction and grading. Archaeological investigations have documented 541 graves, and it is expected that hundreds of additional graves still exist under a street, sidewalk and building slabs. The archaeological work provided evidence that the cemetery's caretakers dug individual graves in an east-west alignment. Investigations also give indications that the cemetery was designed in some sections similarly to the contemporaneous soldier's cemetery (now Alexandria National Cemetery) with pathways between every two rows. The archaeological studies were undertaken to locate graves for protection purposes prior to the Woodrow Wilson Bridge improvement project and to inform the design of the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery Memorial, planned for 2012-2013. All graves will be protected during Memorial construction. Excavations also identified an 11-13-foot-wide carriage path, or lane, leading west for at least 170 feet through much of the cemetery from South Washington Street.

Records document that the cemetery originally had a white fence, a caretaker's shed, and shingles for marking graves. The wooden headboards noting names of the deceased disintegrated; thus graves cannot be linked to specific individuals. However, it is possible to discern graves of youth compared to adults. The names of those interred in the cemetery are known, as well as their dates and places of death, ages, and in some cases, cause of death through the recordation of Reverend Albert Gladwin, Superintendent of Contrabands, and his successors. The Gladwin Record, or Book of Lists, also permits contextual studies to identify the demographics—sex and age—and the neighborhoods of African Americans who died during this turbulent time with thousands of displaced people seeking refuge in Union-occupied Alexandria (*see Figure 3*).

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Excavations conducted between 1999 and 2007 yielded 4,210 Native American artifacts that indicate periodic use of the site from the Paleoindian through the late Middle Woodland periods (11,500 B.C. through 900 A.D.). The most intact sections of the Native American component are primarily located on the western side of the cemetery property and confined to the layer of a former surface that was buried during the construction of a commercial building on the lot. A remnant of this buried surface is also extant between the gas station and commercial building slabs. The excavations to look for grave shafts were limited in the area of the buried surface so that most of it still remains intact in the western part of the site. Artifact analysis indicates that the site served as an encampment for stone tool manufacturing and processing of plant and animal resources during the pre-colonial periods.

Narrative Description

Current Description and Setting

The 1.3-acre cemetery site is located at the southwest corner of Church and South Washington streets within the Alexandria Historic District, placed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places in 1968 and 1969, respectively (VDHR File Number 100-0121). This part of Alexandria developed in the first half of the twentieth century with low-rise garden apartment complexes, townhouses and small commercial buildings along Washington Street. Interstate 495 (Capital Beltway) and an exit ramp from the highway are located to the south. The ramp curves around to the west of the site to join Church Street. Both the Beltway and the ramp are screened from view by a sound-barrier wall. The George Washington Parkway (VDHR File Number 029-0228), a National Register property running from Washington, D.C. to George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens, forms the eastern boundary of the site. The eastern side of George Washington Parkway, directly across from the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery, is the site of St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery, which dates from 1795 and is the oldest Catholic cemetery in Virginia. Church Street forms the northern boundary, and a low-rise small apartment complex is situated on the north side of the street. Just west of the site, the ground slopes steeply toward an undeveloped lot with a small area of grass, bushes and trees that extends to the sound barrier of the ramp.

The cemetery site is predominantly an open area with seeded ground cover and sparse vegetation surrounded by a chain-link fence (*see Photographs 1-3*). Small bushes and trees are present along the southern and western edges of the property. The ground within the site slopes toward the west with an artificial terrace held back by a low brick retaining wall between what was formerly the site of a gas station built in 1955 and a small commercial building dating to 1959. The structures of these two buildings were demolished in April-May 2007, but the two concrete slabs and their foundations remain to protect the graves that are expected to be located underneath. The low retaining wall was also left in place to prevent erosion of soils and concomitant disturbance to the graves at the higher elevations to its east. At the western edge of the site, the ground begins to slope steeply down toward the undeveloped lot. The locations of 541 graves were identified during archaeological excavation, and a buried surface near the western part of the site yielded more than 4,000 Native American artifacts. Two feet of fill soil have been placed across the majority of the site to protect the cultural resources and graves; the only exceptions to this are in areas, such as the sidewalk and strip along South Washington Street, where topography precluded the placement of more than about one foot of fill.

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Historical and Prehistoric Setting

At the time of the Civil War, this property would have been a bluff top overlooking the confluence of Hunting Creek and the Potomac River (*see Figure 4*). From the bluff, the view to the east would have taken in St. Mary's Cemetery and the sloping land down to the river. To the south, the view would have looked down toward the shoreline of Hunting Creek. On the west, there was a drainage cut that would have carried water down from the bluff south into the Hunting Creek floodplain. The bluff was on the outskirts of the town, south of the more developed sections. Although the streets appear to have been platted in the area, they were not cut through; and the rights-of-way often remained in private ownership. South Washington Street in this area was undoubtedly a narrow path and ended at the Hunting Creek shoreline.

This historical setting is probably similar to what Native Americans would have seen just prior to the arrival of Europeans in the area—a bluff overlooking the confluence of the creek and river, with a small drainage to the west. Deciduous forests would have covered the hill top. The setting would have been ideal for the establishment of small encampments. Cobbles in the creek and eroding out of the slopes would have supplied raw materials for tool manufacturing, and the nearby river and streams would have provided abundant natural resources. However, when Native Americans first visited the site up to 13,000 years ago, the distance to the shoreline would have been greater, and the environment somewhat different. The Potomac River would have been carving down its channel east of the current shoreline. Grasses with small stands of conifers would have covered the bluff; these were gradually replaced by deciduous forests as the climate became warmer. Sea levels rose as the glaciers melted. The river and its tributaries both inundated and eroded the surrounding landscape to form the wide bays that now comprise the Potomac River and the mouth of Hunting Creek in this area.

Cemetery Description

Historical documents indicate that 1,711 individuals were buried at the cemetery, more than half of them children under the age of ten. Archaeological investigations, conducted at the site to ensure protection of the burials, identified 541 grave locations. It is likely that as many as 500 or more additional graves survive in areas that were not investigated since graves were recorded extending under the street and building slabs. Soil integrity is good in the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)-owned southern tier that was not fully investigated.

Historical records provide some understanding of what the cemetery would have looked like during its period of use. A wooden picket fence surrounded the property. It is thought that the fence was probably similar to the one originally built around the Soldiers' Cemetery (now known as Alexandria National Cemetery), although it was most likely less ornate. The Army Quartermaster Department supplied the headboards at the time of the burials. Each wooden headboard was probably white-washed and had the name of the deceased written in black lettering, as was the custom at Alexandria National Cemetery. A small shed was situated on the site for tools and biers.

Documents indicate that graves were "always kept prepared" by gravediggers who were freedmen themselves. The gravediggers dug each grave individually, and archaeological investigations showed that the graves were placed very close to one another in orderly rows. The archaeological work discovered lines of more than fifty graves extending north/south across the width of the cemetery parallel to South Washington Street. More than forty-five rows of graves have been recorded from the archaeological investigations that extend east/west

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parallel to Church Street. The historic cemetery was larger than what has been revealed by archaeology. Most of the northern section was graded and cut by Church Street. The southern section of the cemetery was cut back by I95/495 Capital Beltway construction, while the eastern edge is covered by South Washington Street. The western boundary has been negatively affected by utility excavation. An 11-13-foot gap between the rows probably served as a carriage path extending westward from an entrance on South Washington Street.

Historic Character-Defining Features

1. Cemetery – Archaeological investigation in 1999-2000, 2004, 2007 and 2011 identified grave shafts and a non-burial area interpreted as the carriage path into the cemetery. No grave markers, perimeter fence, or entry carriageway are visible today.
 - A. Grave Shafts – Archaeologists have discovered 541 grave shafts to date in the cemetery (*see Figure 5*). Historical records from 1864 to 1869 provide names of 1,711 individuals who most likely were buried at the site, but unrecorded interments may have continued for decades beyond the abandonment of the property by the federal government in January 1869. Graves were dug side by side, forming lines of north/south running rows parallel to South Washington Street. Graves are in a generally east/west orientation with the head of the coffin to the west. Many of the shafts were oblong in shape; others appear hexagonal, reflecting the shape of the actual coffin. The shafts range from eight feet to four feet in length, indicating that both adults and children were buried here. More than forty-five rows of graves have been identified. Oyster shells were found on what was the cemetery ground surface that covered some of the shafts. The ritual placement of shells on the surface of graves has been linked to African American burial traditions at other cemeteries. All identified grave shafts were documented according to standard archaeological practices. Survey data was collected to create an accurate map depicting all grave locations and shapes of each grave. Orange plastic snow fencing was used to cover the graves before a layer of protective fill, generally at least two feet in depth, was placed above them. The snow fencing will serve as a marker if any ground disturbance occurs in the future. Hundreds of additional graves are thought to remain in areas that are still protected, including the sections under two concrete slabs remaining from twentieth-century buildings, below the asphalt and sidewalk of South Washington Street and in unexplored areas.
 - B. Carriage Path – An eleven- to thirteen-foot-wide gap between rows of graves was uncovered running east to west from South Washington Street across about half of the site (*see Figure 6*). No graves were found in this area so it is thought to be an access way. It is directly across South Washington Street from an entrance to the historic St. Mary's Cemetery.
2. American Indian Tool Making Site and Camp – Archaeological investigations conducted by Potomac Crossing Consultants (URS Corporation) in 1999-2000 and by the City of Alexandria in 2004 and 2007 led to the recovery of 4,210 lithic (stone) artifacts from the cemetery site.¹ Although most of the finds consist of small flakes that are byproducts of manufacturing stone tools, a number of the artifacts are styles of spear points and knives that are temporally diagnostic. These diagnostics include types that indicate sporadic encampments by hunter/gatherers from as early as 13,000 until about 1,200 years ago. The oldest artifact discovered in Alexandria comes from this site—a spear point with a leaf-shaped blade and a flute (or groove) created near its base to allow for attaching it to a shaft. This tool type, known as a Clovis point, was used by hunters in the grassland environment that would have predominated in Virginia at the end of the last glacial era as early as 13,000 years ago.

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Although pre-colonial artifacts in disturbed contexts have been found across the site, the more intact sections of the Native American component are primarily located on the western side of the cemetery property and confined to the layer of a former surface that was buried by fill soils during the construction of the former commercial building on the lot. A remnant of this buried surface is also extant between the slabs of the gas station and commercial building. *Figure 6* shows the extent of this buried layer, which has potential to yield additional information about Native Americans in Alexandria.

The buried surface was discovered during the 2004 testing as a trench was excavated to look for evidence of grave shafts in the western part of the site. Hand excavation and screening of the buried surface layers led to the recovery of Native American artifacts from these contexts. No grave shafts were identified in the soil layers underlying the buried surface of the trench, indicating that it was in an area that was not used for interments. In addition, one of the buried surface levels yielded few historical artifacts, suggesting that it was relatively undisturbed by later activities. Given this level of integrity, the discoveries resulted in a determination that the Native American component of the site had local significance for Alexandria. As a result, the 2007 excavation strategy, developed in consultation with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, called for only limited testing to look for burials in areas where the buried surface was present. Most of the buried surface containing the Native American site component thus remains intact in the western part of the site.

Inventory

Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery (site)	1864-1869	contributing
American Indian Tool-Making/Camp Site (site)	11,000 B.C. – 900 A.D.	contributing

Endnotes

¹ Bernard W. Slaughter, George L. Miller, and Meta Janowitz, *Archaeological Investigations to Define the Boundaries of Freedmen's Cemetery (44AX0179), within the Property Owned by the Virginia Department of Transportation (Alexandria, VA: The Potomac Crossing Consultants, 2001)*; Francine W. Bromberg and Steven J. Shephard, *Alexandria Archaeological Testing of Freedmen's Cemetery (44AX0179) Alexandria, Virginia, June 2004 (Alexandria, VA: Alexandria Archaeology, 2007)*; Boyd Sipe, *The Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery, Data Recovery at Site 44AX0179, Alexandria, Virginia*. Draft report, 2012. Archived at City of Alexandria/Office of Historic Alexandria/Alexandria Archaeology.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHAEOLOGY/Prehistoric

ARCHAEOLOGY/Historic – Non-aboriginal

ETHNIC HERITAGE/African American

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

11,000 BC – 900 AD

1864-1869

Significant Dates

1864

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Native Americans

African Americans

Architect/Builder

N/A

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Period of Significance (Justification)

11,000 B.C.-900 A.D.: Archaeological investigations at the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery (44AX0179) yielded 4,210 lithic (stone) artifacts documenting periodic visits by Native Americans over 12,000 years. A quartzite Clovis point, which was discarded when the tip was broken off during its manufacture, is the oldest artifact. While the widely accepted date for Clovis type points is circa 9,500 B.C., re-calibrated radiocarbon dating in the region has more recently provided a circa 11,000 B.C. date for the technology. Other projectile point types demonstrate the use of the site during other periods, including Early/Middle Archaic, Middle

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Archaic, Late Archaic, Late Archaic-Early Woodland transition, and Late Middle Woodland resulting in a prehistoric period of significance from 11,000 B.C. to 900 A.D.

1864-1869: The Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery was established in 1864 by the U.S. Army Quartermaster General as a burial ground for African Americans. The cemetery was administered by the Quartermaster Department from March 1864 to December 1865 and then by the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (Freedmen's Bureau) from January 1, 1866 to January 12, 1869. The correspondence of Reverend Albert S. Gladwin, who served as Superintendent of Contrabands, to General John P. Slough documents that he laid out the ground for the cemetery in February 1864 and started burying individuals on March 7, 1864. A book of records contains the names and other information of those who died until the end of federal control over the cemetery in January 1869.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

The Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery meets Criteria Consideration D due to its association with historic events, specifically the pre-colonial sporadic occupation of the site by various Native American groups and the 1864-1869 use of the site as a cemetery for freedmen and contrabands.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and D for its national significance related to ethnic heritage (African American), social history, and historic archaeology, with a period of significance extending from 1864 to 1869. The cemetery also meets Criteria Consideration D. This cemetery, in which at least 1,711 African Americans were interred, is one of the few known burial grounds established and administered by the federal government for contrabands and freedmen during and immediately following the Civil War. An 1864 protest and petition by convalescing soldiers in the United States Colored Troops (USCT) was one of the earliest civil rights actions in Alexandria and resulted in the disinterment of 118 USCT buried in the cemetery and their reburial in what is now Alexandria National Cemetery. Archaeological investigations resulted in the identification and protection of 541 grave shafts, knowledge of the spatial design of the cemetery, and recordation of coffin shape and hardware. The comprehensive information found in the record book of death increases the information potential of the site. The observed continuation of graves under a sidewalk, street, and buildings' foundations documents the high likelihood that hundreds of additional graves may still survive. The site is also eligible for its local significance under Criterion D for its ability to yield information important regarding periodic Native American camps for stone tool making and processing plant and animal resources, with a period of significance extending from 11,000 B.C. to 900 A.D. Most of the prehistoric component remains extant in a buried surface layer at the western edge of the site.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

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The Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery is nationally significant in the areas of ethnic heritage (African American) and social history (under Criterion A) with a period of significance extending from 1864 to 1869. The cemetery is one of the only known burial grounds in the United States to be established and administered by the federal government for the interment of African American contrabands and freedmen during and immediately following the Civil War. Occupied by the Union army, Alexandria was a beacon for thousands of runaway slaves, many of whom fell victim to devastating diseases brought on by overcrowding and inadequate living conditions, despite the assistance of Northern philanthropists and aid workers. As a result, the U.S. Army Quartermaster Department established the African American cemetery in March 1864 on property taken from Francis Lee Smith, a Confederate sympathizer who was a cousin of Robert E. Lee and personal legal advisor to the general's wife, Mary Anna Custis Lee. The Superintendent of Contrabands managed the cemetery until December 1865, turning over operations to the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (Freedmen's Bureau) on January 1, 1866. With direction from the Quartermaster General's Office on the practices of interment expected to be continued, the Freedmen's Bureau administered the cemetery until January 1869, when federal rule ended in Alexandria. The Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery is the final resting place for 1,711 African American migrants, refugees, and freedom seekers who died in Alexandria and the surrounding vicinity.

Fallen soldiers of the U.S. Colored Troops (USCT), many of whom were brought to Alexandria because they suffered from illnesses or injuries incurred while engaged in battles against Confederate troops, were interred at the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery between May and December 1864. A petition was prepared in December 1864 by 453 sick, wounded, and dying soldiers of the USCT hospitalized at L'Ouverture Hospital who strongly expressed their desire and honorary right to be buried at the government-established military cemetery (*see Figure 7 and Continuation Sheet p. 8*). This petition and the refusal of African American soldiers to act as escorts for future burials at the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery is one of the first known organized civil rights protests in Alexandria. As a result, the 118 soldiers of the USCT buried at the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery were removed and reinterred over a three-week period in January 1865 to Section 27 of the Soldiers' Cemetery, now known as Alexandria National Cemetery.

The names, ages, death dates, and, in many cases, the locations of death of the African Americans interred at the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery were recorded methodically in the "Book of Records, Containing the Marriages and Deaths That Have Occurred, Within the Official Jurisdiction of Rev. A. Gladwin: Together with any Biographical, or Other Reminiscence that may be Collected, Alexandria, Va." The Book of Lists (Gladwin Record) survives at the Library of Virginia to provide significant insight into the lives and deaths of the once-enslaved African American population of Alexandria during and immediately following the Civil War. Coupled with the archaeological investigations conducted at the site, this information illustrates the burial practices undertaken in occupied Alexandria by the Quartermaster Department during the devastating years of the Civil War and by the Freedmen's Bureau during the intervening years of Reconstruction. With little surface indication of its existence and construction of a gas station and commercial building, the cemetery was virtually forgotten until the research historian with the Office of Historic Alexandria discovered newspaper articles recounting the establishment of a cemetery for contrabands and freedmen during the Civil War. Supported by other articles and maps, the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery was located at the intersection of South Washington and Church streets. The city of Alexandria bought the majority of the cemetery site from two owners and has been going through a five-year process of archaeology, research, design and interpretation to create the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery Memorial.

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The Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery is nationally significant in the area of Archaeology/Historic – non-aboriginal (under Criterion D) with the period of significance extending 1864 to 1869 due to the site's potential to yield information related to its use as burial ground for contrabands and freedmen between 1864 and 1869. The wood headboards that originally marked the graves have long since vanished due to deterioration, leaving no surface indication of the abandoned cemetery's existence. Yet, in the process of locating grave shafts to protect graves during the design and construction of the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery Memorial, significant information has been discovered relating to the coffin shapes and hardware, the placement of the graves, and the spatial layout of the cemetery with a central path. Although the unmarked site was disturbed by twentieth-century development, including the widening of South Washington Street in association with the 1932 construction of George Washington Memorial Parkway, the construction of a gas station with below-ground fuel tanks (1955) and commercial building (1959), and grading related to construction of Interstate 95/495, about one-third of the graves are known to have survived and are now protected. The investigations have resulted in the delineation of 534 grave shafts; an additional seven graves have been discovered under the sidewalk along South Washington Street. It is thought that perhaps as many as 500 or more additional graves may still be protected in the cemetery under the concrete pads of the mid-twentieth-century buildings and non-excavated areas. The archaeological information, when combined with the Book of Lists, which noted the names, ages, and places of death of those interred in the cemetery, increases the information potential of the site with regard to knowledge about the demographics of those buried, as well as understanding what constituted a proper burial for contrabands and freedmen during the Civil War by the U.S. Army Quartermaster Department and the Freedmen's Bureau.

In addition, the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery is *locally significant* in the area of Archaeology/Prehistoric (under Criterion D) with a period of significance from 11,000 B.C. to 900 A.D. Archaeological investigations have recovered more than 4,000 artifacts that provide evidence of the periodic use of the site throughout that time. Given the extent of urban development in Alexandria, the Native American site is one of few to survive in the city. It is the only upland site found to date in Alexandria at the confluence of a major stream like Great Hunting Creek with the Potomac River; other known sites are all on small, inland waterways. The oldest artifact identified is an unfinished quartzite Clovis point, the tip of which was broken during manufacture. This is the oldest artifact found to date in Alexandria, and its discovery establishes the date of the first human occupation in the city to have been about 11,000 B.C. Analysis of other artifacts from the site has suggested that it served as a camp site for processing plant and animal resources as well as a stone tool-manufacturing site. Some of the tool types recovered (wedge, spokeshave, spurs, possible ulu or semi-lunar knife) have not been found at any other site in Alexandria. Excavations at the site have thus expanded knowledge about American Indian activities, as well as time periods of occupation, in Alexandria.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

The Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery

African American life in Alexandria incorporated a wide spectrum of experiences in the nineteenth century. Although more than fifty percent of blacks were still enslaved at the time of the Civil War, Alexandria had one of the highest percentages of free blacks among southern towns. Newly freed people and runaways were attracted to Alexandria for its port and urban environment, which afforded jobs, as well as greater personal freedom and anonymity than rural settings. Free neighborhoods started in the 1790s and expanded throughout

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the nineteenth century. Enslaved and free peoples interacted on the streets, in work places, in homes, and in churches, although there were differences within the varying degrees of bondage, with some people enslaved for generations, while others were freed or purchased their own freedom.

When Virginia seceded in May 1861, Union troops occupied Alexandria, appropriating private land and transforming the seaport town for strategic purposes. Alexandria became a major base of operations and staging area for the Union army. It also became a beacon of hope to freedom seekers who took the war as an opportunity to escape slavery. Thousands of blacks primarily from Virginia, perhaps as many as 20,000, flocked to Alexandria. Arriving tired, hungry, and with few resources, the escaped slaves sought work, food, clothing, shelter, medical treatment, religious study, and education. Initially, government and military officials were required to send these freedom seekers back to their owners, but by May 1861, the concept of "contrabands of war" changed the situation, providing a legal basis through which Union officers did not have to return refugees, although still deemed to be "property," to their Confederate owners. However, this contraband status did not afford African Americans much relief or full freedom. Contrabands in Alexandria became known as "freedmen" with President Abraham Lincoln's signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, which became effective on January 1, 1863.

Concerns were regularly voiced about the tremendous influx of African Americans arriving in Alexandria, and the poor sanitary conditions in which they lived, which was blamed for numerous severe outbreaks of smallpox and typhoid. A new hospital was erected in 1862 "on the side of the lane leading to the burial grounds, south of the depot of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad" to aid those affected by these debilitating diseases.² Yet, the maladies spread rapidly with about six contrabands dying each day.³ In December 1862, the *Alexandria Gazette* documented that "one hundred and eighty-five... 'contrabands' have been buried in this place by the U.S. authorities since September 28th."⁴ In April 1863, the Freedman's Relief Society reported that since the start of the war two years earlier "about 800 have died" in Alexandria.⁵ Harriet Jacobs, a fugitive slave and outspoken activist, wrote in a letter that the "refugees were buried in this town by the Government, beside many private burials."⁶ The deceased most likely were initially interred at the Penny Hill Cemetery on the southern edge of Alexandria. Julia Wilbur, a freedmen's agent for the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, described the cemetery areas as "all green & nice but the potters field," where the "contrabands are packed away, oh, such a place!"⁷ In death as in life, class distinctions and race carried over with Penny Hill Cemetery serving as the burial ground for the less fortunate, often at the expense of the local government or military.

The mounting African American deaths, necessitated the establishment of a more proper and separate burial site by January 1864. This culminated in the federal government's taking of about 1½ acres of a 5½-acre tract on South Washington Street owned by Francis L. Smith. The *Alexandria Gazette* announced on March 4, 1864, that "a grave-yard for the burial of 'contrabands,' who may die in this place, has been laid off near the Catholic Cemetery."⁸ Its undeveloped status, its location on the outskirts of the city, and, most certainly, its ownership by a Confederate sympathizer who was related to General Robert E. Lee, made the property ideal as the site of the "new Freedmen's burial Ground" (see *Figure 4*).⁹

In his correspondence to General John P. Slough, Reverend Albert Gladwin recounted the order to enclose the 1½-acre tract and the beginning of burials:

with verbal orders from your Head Quarters [*sic*], in connection with Dr. Collins, I selected and laid out the grounds for the present Cemetery in February last, and reported back; and on the 29th

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day of the same, received a written order to superintend the building of a fence to enclose it, and that on the 7th day of March, I commenced to inter bodies there.¹⁰

The first of these burials, based on the dates of death two days before the cemetery was officially opened, would have included the one-year-old son of Lid Colly, who lived in Grantville; George Lee, a three-year-old boy from Newtown; Billy Berry of Haytie (age unknown); and John Lewis, who died at the age of two at the Prince Street Barracks. The Book of Lists documents that 1,711 African American civilians were interred at the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery.¹¹

Records for the Alexandria Freedmen Cemetery: The Book of Lists

In October 1862, Reverend Albert S. Gladwin began performing the duties of Superintendent of Contrabands, a position to which he was officially appointed on March 5, 1863. One of the responsibilities of the superintendent was recordation of deaths, burials, and marriages of the many freedmen living in and around the city. The information gathered was registered in the “Book of Records, Containing the Marriages and Deaths That Have Occurred, Within the Official Jurisdiction of Rev. A. Gladwin: Together with any Biographical, or Other Reminiscence that may be Collected, Alexandria, Va.” (*see Figure 3*). Reverend Eliphalet Owen, who acted as Gladwin’s secretary, was personally responsible for recording the information, as well as presiding over many of the funerals and tending to people’s needs. Owen continued to maintain the documentation until September 30, 1865, when the cemetery was taken over by the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (Freedmen’s Bureau). Now more commonly referred to as the Gladwin Record, or the Book of Lists, this document is divided into five distinct sections: monthly official report, personal record of deaths, supplemental ledger pages, ledger pages maintained by the new superintendent, and record of marriages. It is an invaluable document, although there are no plot numbers or maps. The document predates the 1864 establishment of the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery, but the dates permit attribution of specific individuals as buried there.

The first section, entitled “Monthly Official Report,” provided a numerical count of the deaths beginning in April 1862 and ending on December 30, 1865. It was started over six months before Reverend Gladwin unofficially began to serve as the first Superintendent of Contrabands and continued after his departure under Reverend James English Ferree. The “Personal Record of Deaths” recorded the names, ages, dates and places of death, and, sometimes, the causes of death and places of interment. These ledger pages began in March 1863, when Gladwin was officially appointed the duties of superintendent. The supplemental ledger pages were entitled “Burials from Hospitals, in the New Cemetery.” This section was also labeled as “Record of Deaths in the New Freedmen’s Hospitals.” It was maintained concurrently with the first ledger of personal records, and extended from February 19, 1864 until December 28, 1865. The ledger pages kept after the war by the new superintendents, then officially under the direction of the Freedmen’s Bureau, recorded the period from January 1, 1866, to January 12, 1869. Entitled “1866 Record of Deaths and Burials—New System,” the notations accounted for more than 600 persons, with data on coffins and grave diggers also provided. Significantly, this section stated, “there are already over 1200 bodies interred at the burial site,” presumably referring to the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery. The final section contained a “Record of Marriages” from March 9, 1863, until January 12, 1865, a period during which Reverends Gladwin and Owen performed many of the wedding ceremonies.

The Book of Lists documented the deaths of nearly 3,000 African Americans from April 1862 to January 1869. The tabulation occurring between March 1864 and January 1869 recorded the deaths of 1,711 people, all of

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whom most likely were interred at the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery.¹² It has not yet been determined how many interments were conducted after 1869, when the recordation of all deaths in town was performed by the Commissioner of the Revenue for Alexandria and the cemetery was no longer under the jurisdiction of the Quartermaster Department or the Freedmen's Bureau. These later interment documents, although collected by only two persons—George Duffey and Robert F. Knox—between 1869 and 1896, are incomplete with various pages and entire years not registered or missing. Notably, the surviving portions of the records of the Commissioner of Revenue do not document burials at the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery.

The official monthly report showed that more deaths occurred, or were recorded, in the first seven months (March to August 1863) of Gladwin's tenure than at any other time before. The tabulations document that, initially, more deaths occurred during the winter months, particularly from October to January. As the war raged on, more deaths occurred in the summer of 1864 than in the colder months because of the perpetually unsanitary living conditions, lack of nutritional food, spread of diseases, and numbers of USCT with battle wounds and disease.¹³ Analysis of the figures discloses that the number of deaths was highest in the years 1864 and 1865. The causes of death recorded in the Book of Lists were limited to less than four percent of all entries. The reasons listed included measles, typhoid, freezing and frostbite, pneumonia and acute bronchitis, "sudden lung hemorrhage" or consumption (tuberculosis), chronic diarrhea, and "miasmatic fever," which described diseases such as cholera that were believed to be caused by pollution or "bad air." Injuries, beyond those of wounded soldiers, were caused by drowning, skating, train and other miscellaneous accidents, and, in one case, a man who "dropped dead while unloading hides, just as he threw out the last."¹⁴ To combat the diseases, General Slough, who was the military governor of Alexandria, acted to maintain health and safety of the escalating refugee population. In October 1862, he appointed Charles Culverwell, a British doctor who would come to later fame as an actor, "to vaccinate the Contrabands at that place and take charge of the sick among them."¹⁵

Newspaper articles claimed the cemetery was the final resting place for "colored children, generally infants."¹⁶ Nearly half of the deaths reported in the Book of Lists were stillborn or children under the age of five, the frequency of which increased as the living conditions became more horrific as the war continued. Of the known ages, babies and children under the age of five had the highest mortality rate, with the second highest death rate being for adults between the ages of 20 and 25 years.¹⁷ Historian Wesley Pippenger and others who have analyzed the Book of Lists note "that the burial ground was not exclusively for children." Yet, with the reinterment of the adult males who served in the USCT to Alexandria National Cemetery, the "clear majority of those buried at the Contraband cemetery were minors."¹⁸

The Book of Lists, which sometimes noted the places of death, provided an insightful study of where the freedmen were residing during and immediately after the tumultuous years of the Civil War. Although a number of the recorded deaths took place at medical infirmaries such as L'Ouverture Hospital or at the various contraband barracks, the majority occurred in newly established freedmen's neighborhoods such as Grantville, Newtown, Washington Square, Petersburg, and Vinegar Hill, with some in a pre-war neighborhood, Haytie. Individual streets were also called out in the document—Alfred Street, St. Asaph Street, Cameron Street, Columbus Street, Commerce Street, Duke Street, Franklin Street, Fairfax Street, Water Street, West Street, Wilkes Street, and Wolfe Street.¹⁹

Cemetery Practices

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During the Civil War, the burial grounds under the purview of the Quartermaster Department incorporated traditional cemetery practices and respected mid-nineteenth-century attitudes toward death. Reports from various districts of the country document the standardization, which included the use of wood headboards bearing the name, company and regiment of the deceased (for soldiers); the allotment of nine by four feet for every grave with room between each; graded and gravel walks and roads; enclosing stone walls or picket fences; and coffins manufactured by employees of the Quartermaster Department.²⁰ Although the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery probably had less design of open spaces and hardscape, historical research and archaeological findings suggest that it had an overall appearance consistent with the burial grounds established for white soldiers by the Quartermaster Department, despite the fact that it was created specifically for contrabands and freedmen.

For the period from March 1864 until December 1865, the Quartermaster Department in Alexandria issued the coffins and provided the hearse for burials. As was the custom, freedmen were charged for funeral expenses, with the price of coffins ranging from \$2.50 to \$5.00 depending on the length.²¹ However, it was the customary practice to furnish coffins free of charge for "the contrabands as were too poor to buy them for their dead." Because of the great need for coffins during the Civil War, those intended for burial at the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery may have been initially constructed by local cabinet makers, who mass produced and stock piled them, rather than making them to order as was traditionally the habit. Freedmen may also have in some instances provided their own coffins, making them from salvaged wood or purchasing them locally. Prior to the establishment of the cemetery, the Quartermaster Department may have had government workers making coffins or they purchased them. The Book of Lists indicates that coffins were placed for storage at L'Ouverture, and provides an account of fifty different-sized coffins, including twenty-two that were just three-feet long, received in January 1866 from Freedmen's Village located at Robert E. Lee's Arlington House, where they were undoubtedly being produced by the African Americans living there.²²

At the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery, the individual graves were marked by headboards, which were provided by the Quartermaster Department. The markers, constructed of pine boards, were standard for the demarcation of soldiers' burial sites during the hostilities. Typical of military-issued headboards, they were whitewashed and marked with black lettering documenting the deceased's name. In keeping with military practices, the headboards for the soldiers of the USCT probably indicated the company and regiment in which they served. Following Christian burial traditions, the individuals were roughly aligned north/south in rows with their heads to the west and feet to the east. The Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery was described as "neat and appropriate" with "a fence to enclose it."²³

During the federal government's tenure from 1864 to 1869, the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery was maintained by grave diggers "first hired by Supt. [of] Contrabands [Reverend Gladwin] on authority of Military Governor of Alexandria [General John P. Slough] in January 1864. Randall Ward, colored, being placed in charge of the work and the same number have been employed ever since. One of these men is at the Cemetery from daylight till dark daily and at 2 P.M. each day all are there to attend to burials. Graves are always kept prepared."²⁴ Ward was assisted over the years by Joseph Stuart, Hezekiah Ages, and Joseph Thompson.²⁵ The burial of the deceased within four-foot-deep graves was explained in some detail:

When a death is reported to the Supt. it is registered in The Record Book of the Deaths and Burials. ...a Head Board is then prepared in accordance with the record. If before 1 p.m. a

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request for a Hearse is sent to the Depot Quartermaster, —if after 1 p.m. funeral is postponed till next day. No funerals on Sunday.

When the Hearse reports...the driver is given an order on Dr. Heard, Surg. In Charge of L'Ouverture Hospital for a coffin the size required, also the Headboard and address of the party at whose house the corpse lies.... Driver then proceeds to Hospital gets coffin, goes to house where corpse is, secures it and proceeds to burial ground and there the funeral is attended to by the men in charge of the place.²⁶

U.S. Colored Troops at the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery

The fallen soldiers of the USCT who died between May and December of 1864 in Alexandria were buried with honors in a separate military section of the new freedmen's cemetery. The first soldier to be interred was John Cooley of the 27th USCT, who died at the age of 23 of a remittent fever on May 5, 1864. Months after the burial, Reverend Gladwin described the event in a letter to General Slough:

...on the 5th of May, on the occurrence of the first death of colored soldier, the question was discussed between Dr. Bentley, Surg. In charge, and myself, as to where, and in what manner the remains should be disposed of; and it was then and there agreed that they should be buried in the new Cemetery, with military honors; and I was requested to act as chaplain in such cases, which I did until a chaplain was appointed. A division of the ground separate from that occupied by the burial of civilian was appropriated for that purpose, and about 120 have been interred there, and neat and appropriate. [Wooden] Headboards have already been obtained and set at most of the graves.

The ground thus occupied, either by itself or with a desired addition, could, if thought necessary, be enclosed so as to be a distinct Military Cemetery. It is the most accessible of any in the city, and every way a good location, and has been approved by visitors from various parts of the county, and may be beautified in any manner in which friends of patriots may desire.²⁷

In the absence of Reverend Gladwin, his assistant Reverend Eliphalet Owen or Reverend Leland Warring, himself a freedman, performed the funeral ceremonies at the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery. The events typically involved a contingent of black troops marching to the music of a military band as they escorted the deceased soldiers from the hospital to the cemetery.

Private Cooley was possibly the first black soldier to die at L'Ouverture Hospital. By all accounts, it appears most of the USCT interred at the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery died at L'Ouverture Hospital, which was constructed specifically for the care of the city's wounded and ill African American soldiers and civilians. Only about nineteen percent of the black soldiers buried at the cemetery actually died in battle, or as a result of their wounds. The majority succumbed to illness, the most common being consumption and chronic diarrhea. Other causes of death included dyspepsia, dysentery, and exhaustion, with a number of men succumbing to rheumatism and fever.

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Alexandria's First Known Civil Rights Protest

In December 1864, Assistant Quartermaster James G.C. Lee, directed that African American soldiers be buried in the Soldiers' Cemetery, now known as Alexandria National Cemetery, rather than the contraband burial ground. Created on June 1, 1862, the soldiers' cemetery was located on 5½ acres of land in which Lee had demarcated a specific section for USCT deceased. Lee started burying soldiers during December in this USCT section. However, on December 27, 1865, Rev. Gladwin, reportedly on the order of General Slough, redirected the hearse to the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery, and two USCT privates were buried. This action led to a USCT protest at L'Ouverture Hospital. As reported by abolitionist and aid worker, Julia Wilbur, in her diary, "Quite an excitement. The soldiers [at the L'Ouverture Hospital for black soldiers] are furious, refused to go as escort."²⁸ Captain Lee brought the matter to the attention of General Slough and Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs:

...I have recently learned that Mr. Gladwin, Superintendent of the Freedmen at this place has caused the interment of colored soldiers to be made at the contraband burying ground. This ground is not owned by the U.S., ...nor is it taken care of, as the regular cemetery is.

On learning this I directed that the interment of colored men, as well as white, be made in the military cemetery, keeping them in a separate portion. This has been done since then until Mr. Gladwin prevailed on Gen. Slough, Military Governor, to issue an order that they be interred at the contraband burying-ground. A copy of this order not being sent to me officially, I continued my duties, without conferring with Gen. Slough on the subject.

Yesterday however while the hearse and the escort were proceeding to the military cemetery, Mr. Gladwin and a part of soldiers arrested my driver, took him from my hearse and drove it where they pleased, the escort returning to the hospital. As might be expected, the most intense feeling on the part of the officers was felt, that this man, a citizen, should be allowed to interfere.

I therefore called on Genl. Slough in regard to the matter and after explaining the position of affairs he requested to get your orders in the matter, which should be final. He seemed to think that the only matter that stood in the way was that there are quite a number already in the contraband burying-ground but these could be removed very easily and without additional expense by the men who take care of the military cemetery.

It seems to have been the desire to have all soldiers in one place, as last winter I was required to disinter all in this neighborhood and Fairfax Seminary and have them brought to this place.

The feeling on the part of the colored soldiers is unanimous to be placed in the military cemetery and it seems but just and right that they should be....²⁹

Lee included a "memorial received...on this subject from the soldiers at L'Ouverture [*sic*] General Hospital" (see *Figure 7*). This petition was prepared and signed by 443 sick, wounded, and dying soldiers of the USCT, who strongly expressed their desire and honorary right to be buried at the Soldiers' Cemetery (see *Continuation Sheet p. 8-Maps And Additional Images*).³⁰ Private Frank Wade of Memphis, Tennessee, and Private Shedrick Murphy of South Carolina, both interred on December 27, 1864, were the last members of the USCT to be

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buried at the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery. As a result of the petition and protest by these hundreds of African American soldiers, the remains of 118 USCT were moved over a three-week period in January 1865 from the freedmen cemetery and reinterred in Section 27 at the military cemetery.

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Freedmen's Bureau at the Cemetery

By the close of the Civil War in April 1865, more than a thousand African American civilians had been interred at the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery in Alexandria under the direction of the U.S. Army Quartermaster Department. Operation of the cemetery, and the uninterrupted burial of the city's freedmen, continued under the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands. The Freedmen's Bureau, as it was more commonly known, was established by the March 3, 1865, enactment of the Freedmen's Bureau Bill. With the creation of the Bureau, the responsibility for issuing rations and medicine, as well as finding more permanent housing and paid employment, formally became the responsibility of the War Department under the Union army's General Oliver O. Howard. The Freedmen's Bureau, instrumental in the transition from slavery to freedom, was active in the reuniting and resettling of free families and assisting in the establishment of schools, churches, and businesses.

In Alexandria, affected by years of Union occupation, the activities of the Freedmen's Bureau were essential to reconstruction. The Freedmen's Bureau maintained their own tabulations, citing "there were no less than (8,000) eight thousand freedpeople in this city, according to the census taken during the fall of 1865. Of these about (5,000) five thousand fled from their homes during the rebellion, and sought an asylum here where they would be under the protection of the Army."³¹ The assistant superintendent of the Freedmen's Bureau in Alexandria cautioned that "there are all degrees of destitution among this unfortunate people, and the means being so limited, the assistance must be administered sparingly and to the most needy, and helpless."³²

Another of the primary responsibilities of the Freedmen's Bureau was the assumption of confiscated lands in the former Confederate states, border states, District of Columbia, and Indian Territory. This included the appropriated land of Francis Smith on South Washington Street that became the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery. When the cemetery, which remained active during this period, was turned over to the Freedmen's Bureau on January 1, 1866, Captain J.G.C. Lee provided direction on the practices of interment that were expected to continue:

Hereafter you will please take charge of all Burials by the Bureau in this District. All applications for the burial of deceased refugees and freedmen will be made to this office where a record of the deaths will be kept. Orders will be sent from here to you stating the ...name of the deceased person and date of death and these orders will be your guide in marking head boards. You will ascertain from the person presenting the order, the place at which the corpse is, and the size of coffin required. The two men at the burial Ground south end of Washington St are ordered to report to you. Randall Ward has had charge of the Ground for over three years. He will be instructed to bury only on orders from your office. You will please keep at your office a record of the burials, with inscriptions on each headboard. If the order sent you is simply to bury such a body, it will be construed so as to include the coffin, its delivery, where needed, the headboard (marked), the use of the hearse in conveying corpse to Burial Ground, and the labor at the Ground. If but a part is to be furnished as coffin alone or grave alone it will be so stated on the order.³³

The Freedmen's Bureau operated the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery from January 1, 1866, until January 1869, when federal government rule ended in Alexandria; the Bureau was disbanded under President Ulysses S. Grant in 1872. A report by Samuel Lee of the Freedmen's Bureau documented the "burying [of] freedpeople of

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the City not otherwise provided for. Since January 1st 1866 I have furnished coffins for and cause to be buried (324) three hundred and twenty four destitute freedpeople” at the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery.³⁴ The rate of interment, although constant, was much lower than during the years of the Civil War, with fewer than one burial on average per day in 1866; by the end of 1867, the number of dead had stabilized to around ten per month. During this period, 582 African Americans were interred at the cemetery, with the final number reaching 1,711 when the property was officially abandoned by the federal government and the Smith family regained control.

Retrocession of Francis Smith’s Property

It was widely assumed that the U.S. government was the actual owner of the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery. Seizure of land by the Union army was based on a federal act of July 17, 1862, that allowed the confiscation of houses and lots for non-payment of direct federal taxes. This law was used as a tool to impound the property of southerners who fought for the Confederacy or who abandoned their property and fled during the conflict. Yet, deeds indicate that Francis L. Smith was the only owner of the South Washington Street property during and after the Civil War, paying taxes regularly despite the establishment of the cemetery by the federal government. On May 5, 1866, Smith applied for and was granted “restoration of a lot of ground in this city,” having showed proof of his pardon to the Alexandria superintendent of the Freedmen’s Bureau.³⁵ He then offered to sell the property to the federal government, although neither the military nor the Bureau, which was still operating the cemetery, possessed the desire or sufficient funds.

In 1877, with the death of Smith, the cemetery property was bequeathed to his widow, Sarah Gosnell Vowell Smith. The family made several attempts for compensation from the federal government for their use of the property as a cemetery, which rendered it unusable for other purposes.³⁶ Compensation was, of course, mired in red tape, especially because the Quartermaster Department rejected its responsibility for the property. The Quartermaster General stated that “it is true, there were a few United States soldiers temporarily buried in these grounds, but their remains were removed therefrom [*sic*] to a National Cemetery, specifically established for military interments. So far as known, to this office there is no law, other than that providing for the establishment of National Cemeteries, which authorizes the purchase of land by the War Department, for burial purposes, without the special authority of Congress. This land however is not used as a National Cemetery, nor is it required for such purpose, and the provisions of the laws on this subject do not therefore apply in this case.” Despite the difficulties, the Smith family received notice that the “House of Representatives War Claims Committee has reported favorable upon the claim of Mrs. Sarah G. Smith, widow of Francis L. Smith of this city.”³⁷ Yet, the family never received compensation for the government’s use of their property.

There is scant information about the cemetery’s use after federal management ended. It has not yet been determined if or how many burials were conducted after 1869, when the cemetery was no longer under the jurisdiction of the Quartermaster’s Office or the Freedmen’s Bureau and the recordation of deaths in town was performed by the Commissioner of the Revenue for Alexandria. Undocumented interments and family maintenance may have occurred in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, the neglect and desecration of the cemetery is documented. In March 1892, the *Washington Post* published an article describing the much-ignored “old ‘contraband graveyard,’ at the end of South Washington street [*sic*] and just opposite the Catholic cemetery.” The article recounted that the owners allowed the neighboring brick yards to dig clay from the outer edges of the property and that the digging, “seconded by heavy rains, has resulted in unearthing many coffins and skeletons and leaving the outer graves in very bad conditions. Some time ago, it is said, coffin ends

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protruded from the banks like cannon from the embrasures of some great fort. There are many bones scattered around, and a visitor retired from the field yesterday afternoon with the shoulder-blade of some poor old black contraband who had found his last resting-place there in 1862. There is only one tombstone on the entire site. It is a small marble affair and bears the inscription: 'Moses James. Died September 4, 1865, aged seventy years.' ...the Old site has been used of late as a sort of potter's field."³⁸ Ironically, the newspaper articles from the late nineteenth century, unsuccessfully intending to spark public awareness of the Washington Street property, were discovered nearly a century later, raising interest in the history of African Americans in Alexandria during the Civil War and ultimately preserving the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery.

Physical Threats and Changes in Ownership

In April 1917, ownership of the property containing the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery was conveyed by Margaret V. Smith, the daughter of Francis and Sarah Smith, to Reverend Dennis J. O'Connell, Bishop of Richmond.³⁹ The Archdiocese in Richmond, which maintained control of St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery directly across South Washington Street, paid just \$10.00 for the property; they retained ownership until 1946. Aerial photographs from 1927 showed the severe decline of the property, which was no longer fenced and lacked the headboards indicative of a cemetery. Graves along the western edge of the cemetery had been exposed by natural soil erosion and the activities of the adjacent Alexandria Brick Company, which was established in 1884. A City tax map from 1939 identified the property as a Negro Cemetery, which by this time had no visible surface features indicating its significant heritage (*see Figure 8*).

Interest in the open land of the forgotten cemetery as a potential site for commercial development stemmed from the authorization of Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, a new road connecting Washington, D.C. to George Washington's Mount Vernon.⁴⁰ As part of the road construction project, South Washington Street, historically a little-used, dead-end path that terminated immediately to the south of the cemetery, was widened and extended to connect with the electric railway bridge over Hunting Creek. Construction of the concrete parkway, lined with curbs, sidewalks, and gutters, began in May 1931. As a result, the cemetery now fronted a primary transportation corridor running north/south through Alexandria, with some of the unmarked graves located under the sidewalks and probably the roadbed itself.

The Archdiocese requested the property be rezoned commercial in anticipation of selling it.⁴¹ Although the Planning Department objected to the change in status, the City Council granted the rezoning in June 1946 from C-2 Residential to D-2 Commercial.⁴² The commercial property at 1001 South Washington Street was sold three months later by Bishop Peter L. Ireton to trustee George Clay Landrith, who had an interest in real estate development.⁴³ Possibly because the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery was located directly across the street from St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery, which was under his purview, the Bishop of Richmond placed restrictions in the deed, stating alcoholic beverages could not be sold there and it could not be used as a service station.⁴⁴

Under the direction of several subsequent owners, the site was to be developed; plans included construction of a two-story motel and a seven-story hotel, which was approved by the Alexandria Board of Architectural Review but never undertaken.⁴⁵ Years later, on July 13, 1955, the Tidewater Associated Oil Company requested a building permit for the construction of a gas station on the cemetery property. Within days of requesting the permit and the sale of the land to the oil company, Bishop Ireton revoked the use restrictions he had placed on the property in 1946.⁴⁶ The permit to build granted to the Tidewater Associated Oil Company for the construction of a gasoline service station at the southwest corner of South Washington and Church streets (1001

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South Washington Street) inquired whether the land on which the building was to be erected was solid or filled; the land was listed as solid, with no mention of the 1,711 African Americans entombed on the property. In 1959, a permit to erect a store and apartment building was granted to Charles F. Gerber, who owned the western end of the cemetery site at 714 Church Street.⁴⁷ Hence, by 1960, the George Washington Memorial Parkway and two buildings with attendant grading dissected portions of the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery.

The cemetery site was also affected by the construction of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and the necessary approaches to meet the expanding population of Alexandria, and the larger Washington metropolitan area in the late 1950s. For the construction of Interstate 95/495 (Capital Beltway), encircling Washington, D.C., the landscape was graded, affecting the southern half of Block 459 where the cemetery was located. The *Alexandria Gazette* reported that the cloverleaf interchange with its two-tiered ramps was one of the last sections to be finished—and most costly because of the “poor soil and severe drainage difficulties.”⁴⁸ Having been relatively level (40 feet above sea level) during the Civil War years, the slope on the south boundary of the property changed from 40 feet to 20 feet as a result of the construction of the Capital Beltway and the exit onto Church Street. The six-lane navigational Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge was dedicated and opened on December 27, 1961; planning had begun in 1954 and construction commenced in 1958.

Rediscovery and Commemoration of the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery

By the late twentieth century, the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery had faded from the memory of Alexandria citizens, both black and white. Headboards and fencing indicative of a cemetery had decayed a century earlier and the construction of roads and buildings had further obliterated any physical evidence of the property’s heritage. Few remembered the property’s historic use. A few children who played there before the mid-1950s called it “the old cemetery lot.”⁴⁹ Documentation recounting the existence of the burial ground like records of the Quartermaster Department and the Freedmen’s Bureau survived, although they were well hidden within local and national archives. Deeds from the second half of the nineteenth century and maps from the early to mid-twentieth century made mention of the “Burying Ground” and “negro cemetery,” but eventually such notations ceased to be consistently recorded.⁵⁰

T. Michael Miller, research historian for the Office of Historic Alexandria, unearthed an article in the *Alexandria Gazette* recounting the military’s establishment of a freedmen cemetery while in occupation of the city during the Civil War. This 1987 finding led to the discovery of other articles and historic maps that identified the location of the cemetery at the intersection of South Washington and Church streets, across from St. Mary’s Catholic Cemetery. The documentation collected and published by research historian Wesley E. Pippenger in *Tombstone Inscriptions of Alexandria, Virginia*, was profound in the study of the cemetery. This 1995 publication included the discovery and transcription of Gladwin’s Book of Lists. The research identifying the historical significance of Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery was brought to the attention of Alexandria’s city manager in 1991 and the property was added to the Historic Preservation chapter of the Alexandria City Master Plan as well as submitted to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources for the Abandoned Cemetery Survey.

Inspired by an article in the *Washington Post* in January 1997 about the new Wilson Bridge project and “the burial ground known as the Freedmen’s or Contraband Cemetery,” Alexandria residents Lillie Finklea and Louise Massoud founded the Friends of Freedmen’s Cemetery for the purpose of preserving, commemorating, and researching the property. Their undaunted efforts raised public awareness and ensured preservation of the

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cemetery.⁵¹ That same year, the City Council, beginning a new tradition, adopted a resolution that the week of May 25-31 would be a Week of Remembrance, “in memory of the African American slaves who sought haven in our city and their descendants and those who seek freedom from injustice throughout the world.”⁵² In September 2000, a Highway Marker (E-109) identifying the cemetery was placed by the Virginia Departments of Transportation and Historic Resources at the request of the Friends of Freedmen’s Cemetery.

On January 31, 2007, the City of Alexandria acquired 714 Church Street, the site of the 1959 commercial building at the western end of the cemetery. Sunoco, Inc., owners of the property at 1001 South Washington Street, oversaw closing of the underground storage tanks. This process required the tanks to be emptied and cleaned of all liquids, dangerous vapor level, and accumulated sludge. The storage tanks, remaining underground so as not to further desecrate the cemetery, were filled with harmless, chemically inactive concrete slurry. This portion of the cemetery was purchased by the City in April 2007. The service station and 1959 building were both demolished in the following weeks. All foundations, footings, and asphalt paving were left in place in order to protect the graves.

On May 12, 2007, the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery was rededicated at a commemoration ceremony, complete with luminaries honoring the individuals interred at the cemetery. Each of the 1,096 luminaries noted the name of the deceased, his/her age at death, and sex, in addition to the name of the individual decorating the luminary bag. The rededication was the first phase of the Alexandria’s Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery Memorial Project. After years of archaeological preservation measures, public steering committee meetings, web-based design competition and public review of design and interpretation, construction of the memorial using funding from the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Improvement Project will begin in 2012. Memorial construction will follow guidelines set out in the contract specifications for construction and approved by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources for protection of all cultural resources. More than twenty individuals buried in the cemetery now have documented descendant families from research conducted by a genealogist. More than 100 descendent families await final documentation. Save America’s Treasures funding has provided design assistance for the Memorial as well as production of an archaeological report, a history of the site, a brochure, and web content to interpret the site to the public.

Archaeological Context of the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery

Archaeological studies in 1999 to 2000, 2004, 2007, and 2011 provided tangible evidence of the cemetery’s survival after more than 125 years of neglect and destruction. The goals of the archaeological investigations focused on the identification of burial locations to ensure protection during development and future maintenance of the site, and the recovery of information about the cemetery for use in the memorial design process. The series of archaeological investigations, with the most extensive conducted by the City of Alexandria in 2007, resulted in the production of a map of known graves and areas where graves probably still survive, as well as locations of an entrance, carriage path, and Native American artifacts (*see Figures 5 and 6*). Twentieth-century construction of roads and driveways cut soil from some areas of the cemetery, so that the coffin shapes and hardware were the first clues of a burial during the archaeological investigation in those locations. The site was dug under a Memorandum of Agreement with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources to ensure that no cultural resources would be adversely affected and all graves and associated artifacts remained *in situ*.

Of the 1,711 recorded graves once extant in the cemetery, 541 have been identified through archaeological investigations to date (*see Figure 5*). It is predicted that hundreds more graves still survive under the two

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concrete slabs of the mid-twentieth-century buildings and below the asphalt and sidewalk of South Washington Street. No grave can be associated with a particular person, because a list of plot numbers has never been discovered.

Historical records and archaeological information provide some understanding of the cemetery's historic landscape. A wooden, picket fence surrounded the cemetery. It is thought that it was probably similar to the one originally built around the Soldiers' Cemetery (now known as Alexandria National Cemetery), although it was most likely less ornate. The Army Quartermaster Department supplied the headboards at the time of the burials. Each headboard was probably white-washed and had the name of the deceased written in black lettering, as was the custom at Alexandria National Cemetery. A small shed was situated on the site for tools and biers. Graves were "always kept prepared" by gravediggers who were freedmen themselves.⁵³

The gravediggers prepared each grave individually, and the graves were placed very close to one another in orderly rows. Archaeological investigations discovered lines of more than fifty graves extending north/south across the width of the cemetery parallel to South Washington Street. More than forty-five rows of graves extend east/west parallel to Church Street. The 11-13-foot gap between the rows is probably served as the entrance to the cemetery and a carriage path extending westerly into the property. The historic boundaries of the cemetery and full extent of graves are not known. The total area was larger than the burial ground today given damage to each side from road and utility construction as well as grading.

The deceased were placed in coffins that could have been supplied by the family or purchased from the Union army. Standard coffin sizes were produced at 2½-, 4-, 5-, and 6-foot lengths for "destitute contrabands."⁵⁴ Whenever possible, the length of the grave shaft, or in some cases the coffin, was noted throughout the archaeological work (*see Figure 9*). Although it is not possible to determine the gender of the deceased, children's graves are distinguishable by their small size. Analysis of the death records shows that more than half of those buried in the cemetery were under the age of ten.

When the City archeologists encountered areas with disturbance, the upper parts of burials were often missing. Coffins were sometimes found just inches under the asphalt. The surveyed coffins are generally hexagonal in shape, which is indicative of the traditional "shouldered" style common in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Coffin screws and tacks were used to fasten the lid to the coffin box, and decorative hinges allowed the top of the coffin to be opened for viewing the deceased. A fragment of a coffin handle also indicates that the individual may have been carried by mourners to the grave. Gladwin's Book of Lists chronicles that chaplains officiated at some of the civilian services, while soldiers were buried with military honors. Although no grave goods were discovered, one set of burials in the western part of the cemetery did have a covering of oyster shells. Many other pieces of ceramic and glass were discovered during the investigation, but it is not known if they were associated with graves. Two Civil War-era bullets were also found. Further evidence of the desecration of some graves could be seen as coffin wood, coffin tacks, and, in some cases, human remains were found out of place, and some graves were completely graded away. White porcelain shirt buttons were also found. All artifacts associated with graves and human remains were recorded and left in place.

Materials from the twentieth-century use of the site were retained. The concrete and cinder block slabs of the gas station and commercial building remain, as well as a brick retaining wall and stair leading to the latter. They give tangible testimony to the period when the cemetery was disrespected and damaged (*see Photographs 1-3*).

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Native American Context

Archaeological investigations have determined that the site of the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery was periodically visited by various groups of Native Americans for up to 12,000 years. A total of 4,210 pre-colonial artifacts were recovered by archaeologists at the site. Analysis of the artifacts indicates that this upland setting near the confluence of Hunting Creek with the Potomac River served as a stone tool-manufacturing site as well as a camp site for processing plant and animal resources. This is the only upland site in Alexandria situated near the confluence of the Potomac with a major embayed stream.

Although ninety percent of the Native American artifacts found were classified as debitage (the by-products of stone tool manufacturing), the recovery of fire-cracked rock provides evidence that hearths were present. The assemblage also includes 59 utilized flakes, five scrapers, one endscraper, one spokeshave (a flake tool with a concave edge used as a scraper), three spurs (a sharp point used to work bone, ivory and antler), one wedge (used for felling trees), and one possible ulu (semi-lunar knife used in hide preparation). All of these artifact types are frequently interpreted as being associated with the exploitation of plant and animal resources in a camp setting. Several have not been identified before in Alexandria. These finds provide insight into the range of activities that were taking place on the site.

The use of the site began during the Paleoindian period, perhaps as early as 13,000 years ago. During this period, small bands moved frequently within territories throughout the area, hunting game and collecting plant resources in the spruce/pine forests and grassland environments that predominated as the Ice Age ended. The oldest temporally diagnostic artifact recovered is a quartzite Clovis point, which was discarded when the tip was broken off near the end of the manufacturing process as the point was being thinned to allow for attachment to a spear shaft (*see Figure 10*). This is the oldest artifact discovered to date in Alexandria, and pushes the date of the first human occupation in the city back to about 13,000 years ago. One other artifact may be associated with use of the site during this period—a quartz wedge, which was a standard component of the Paleoindian toolkit and served as a felling tool. In addition, three quartz spurs, sharp pointed fragments broken off of other tools, were discovered. Although these do not definitively date from the Paleoindian time period, endscrapers from this era often contained spurs that would have been susceptible to breaking off the larger artifact.

Other temporally diagnostic types discovered include an Early/Middle Archaic quartz Rice Lobed point fragment (6,500-5,500 B.C.) and two Middle Archaic quartzite Morrow Mountain II (5,000-4,000 B.C.) points. The hunting and foraging lifestyle of the Paleoindians persisted into the Early Archaic period, as the climate warmed and oaks and other deciduous trees began to invade the evergreen forests. By the Middle Archaic, sea level rise caused by the melting of the glaciers created ponds and inland marshes that became focal points for settlement. At this time, it is likely that the embayment of Hunting Creek was occurring from glacial melting, and the setting at the site would have been an attractive upland camp location overlooking the ponds and marshes that were forming.

The most intensive occupation of the site occurred during the Late Archaic through Early Woodland periods, which date from about 3,500-500 B.C. Artifacts from these periods include the following diagnostic types: a rhyolite Lamoka, a quartzite Savannah River tip, two quartzite Savannah River/Holmes points, two quartz Calvert points, a slate/hornfels Helgramite, and a quartzite Helgramite. By this time, rising sea levels were beginning to stabilize. A more sedentary lifestyle emerged, as Native Americans began to settle in seasonal camps near the major rivers to exploit shellfish and spawning fish, which became reliable resources with the

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stabilization of sea level. The occupation of the site at this time represents a camp for tool manufacturing and perhaps exploitation of upland resources. It is interesting to note that the assemblage from the site is characterized by a preponderance of quartz (86 percent of the total assemblage and more than 90 percent of the debitage). Quartz was a preferred material for the production of Halifax points during the early part of the Late Archaic period (3,500-2,500 B.C.) and for manufacture of Calvert points during the Early Woodland period. Given the discovery of the two Calvert types, it is tempting to speculate that the preponderance of quartz debitage indicates the most intensive tool-manufacturing activities at the site occurred during the Early Woodland from about 1,000-500 B.C.

The final known use of the site by Native Americans, represented by the discovery of a late Middle Woodland quartzite Potts point, occurred about 900 A.D. This date marks the beginning of horticultural activities with more permanent village settlements on arable land near the major rivers. The find from this time period in the upland environment may represent a dropped point during a hunting foray across the bluff.

Endnotes

² "Small Pox," *Alexandria Gazette*, 1 December 1862.

³ *Alexandria Gazette*, 29 September 1862.

⁴ "Local," *Alexandria Gazette*, 26 November 1862; also see T. Michael Miller, "A Time for Remembrance-The Contraband Cemetery" Memorial Day Address about Contraband Cemetery (May 1998), 1

⁵ *Alexandria Gazette*, 13 April 1863.

⁶ Harriet Jacobs to Pastor J. Sella Martin, 13 April 1863, The Harriet Jacobs Family Papers, vol. 2 (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

⁷ Julia A. Wilbur, Personal Diary, 1844-1894 (Magill Library Special Collections Division, Haverford College, PA), 15 May 1863.

⁸ *Alexandria Gazette*, 4 March 1864.

⁹ Wilbur diary, 5 May 1864.

¹⁰ Reverend Albert Gladwin to John P. Slough, 16 December 1864, Letters Received, 1862-1865, Records of the Military Governor of Alexandria, Records of the United States Army Continental Commands, Record Group 393, Entry 2053; National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.

¹¹ Reverend Albert Gladwin, Superintendent of Contrabands, compiler, *Arlington County Book of Records for the Alexandria Freedmen's Cemetery, 1863-1869* (Book of Lists), Library of Virginia, Accession Number 1100408. The original Book of Lists is archived in the Library of Virginia, Archives and Records Division, in Richmond, VA. It was carefully transcribed by historian Wesley E. Pippenger in 1995.

¹² Based on the "Book of Records, containing the Marriages and Deaths That Have Occurred, Within the Official Jurisdiction of Rev. A. Gladwin..." See Gladwin, Book of Lists, passim.

¹³ Gladwin, Book of Lists, 2.

¹⁴ Wesley E. Pippenger, *Alexandria, Virginia, Death Records: 1863-1896* (Westminster, MD: Heritage Books, 1995).

¹⁵ Tim Dennee, "African American Civilians Treated at Claremont Smallpox Hospital, Fairfax County, Virginia, 1862-1865," 30 September 2007 (Friends of Freedmen's Cemetery website), 7.

<http://www.freedmenscemetery.org/resources/documents/claremont.pdf>.

¹⁶ "Sensational Story," *Alexandria Gazette*, 1 January 1894; Reprinted by T. Michael Miller in *The Fireside Sentinel*, Lloyd House Newsletter, vol. 1, no. 9, November 1987, 78-79.

¹⁷ Melissa Mercer, "Gladwin Report: A Statistical Analysis" (Historical Archaeology student paper, George Washington University, 1996), 3-6.

¹⁸ Mercer, "Gladwin Report: A Statistical Analysis," 7; Wesley E. Pippenger, *Tombstone Inscriptions of Alexandria, Virginia*, vol. 2 (Alexandria, VA: Wesley E. Pippenger, July 1992), 10.

¹⁹ Mercer, "Gladwin Report: A Statistical Analysis," Appendix, 5-11.

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²⁰ E.B. Whitman, Chief of the Quartermaster District, Middle Tennessee; Report to Captain A.R. Eddy, 1 December 1865; Records of the United States Army Continental Commands, Quartermaster Department Papers, 1865-1868; Record Group 77, Entry 964; National Archives Building, Washington, D.C. and College Park, Maryland.

²¹ Pippenger, *Tombstone Inscriptions*, vol. 2, 10.

²² Gladwin, Book of Lists, 82-83.

²³ Reverend Albert Gladwin to General John P. Slough, 16 December 1864; Letters Received, 1862-1865, Records of the Military Governor of Alexandria, Records of the United States Army Continental Commands, Record Group 393, Entry 2053; National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.

²⁴ Gladwin, Book of Lists, 80-83.

²⁵ Randall Ward continued to maintain the cemetery while it was under the direction of the Freedmen's Bureau, acting as the sole gravedigger from September 1867 until December 1868. He remained in Alexandria until his death, although his official association with Freedmen's Cemetery ended on December 31, 1868, when the Freedmen's Bureau ceased to operate.

²⁶ Gladwin, Book of Lists, 80-83.

²⁷ Reverend Albert Gladwin letter to General John P. Slough, 16 December 1864, Letters Received, 1862-1865, Records of the Military Governor of Alexandria, Records of the United States Army Continental Commands, Record Group 393, National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.

²⁸ Edward A. Miller, Jr., "Volunteers for Freedom: Black Civil War Soldiers in Alexandria National Cemetery, Part I" *Historic Alexandria Quarterly* (Alexandria, VA: City of Alexandria, Fall 1998), 9; Wilbur diary, 26 and 27 December 1864.

²⁹ J.G.C. Lee, Assistant Quartermaster, to Major General M.C. Meigs, Depot Quartermaster's Office, Alexandria, VA, 28 December 1864; Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General; General Correspondence and Reports Relating to National and Post Cemeteries; Record Group 92, Entry 576; National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.

³⁰ U.S. Colored Troops to Major Edwin Bentley, Surgeon in Charge, at L'Ouverture General Hospital, Alexandria VA, 27 December 1864; Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General; General Correspondence and Reports Relating to National and Post Cemeteries; Record Group 92, Entry 576; National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.

³¹ Samuel P. Lee to Lieutenant Colonel William W. Rogers, 30 October 1866; Report of the working of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands from January 1, 1866 to October 31, 1866 inclusive; Record Group 105, Entry 3878; National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.; Also see Rebecca A. Newlan, "Free, Yet Not Independent" (Historical Archaeology student paper, George Washington University, 8 May 1997), 63. Copy archived at City of Alexandria/Office of Historic Alexandria/Alexandria Archaeology.

³² Samuel P. Lee to Brigadier General E. Whittlesey, 17 August 1867; Report of the working of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands from January 1, 1866 to October 31, 1866 inclusive; Record Group 105, Entry 3878; National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.; Also see Newlan, "Free, Yet Not Independent," 78-79.

³³ J.G.C. Lee, Assistant Quartermaster General, to Brevet Major John J. Hoff, 1 March 1866; Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General; General Correspondence and Reports Relating to National and Post Cemeteries; Record Group 92, Entry 576; National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.

³⁴ Samuel P. Lee to Lieutenant Colonel William W. Rogers, 30 October 1866; Report of the Working of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands from January 1, 1866 to October 31, 1866 inclusive; Record Group 105, Entry 3878; National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.; Also see Newlan, "Free, Yet Not Independent," 67.

³⁵ Samuel P. Lee, Superintendent; Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, 7 May 1866; Records for the Assistant Commissioner for the District of Columbia; Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, 1865-1869; Microfilm M-1055, Reel #6, Freedmen Bureau Papers; National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.

³⁶ Francis L. Smith, Jr. to Quartermaster General, Washington, D.C., 12 October 1877; Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General; General Correspondence and Reports Relating to National and Post Cemeteries; Record Group 92, Entry 225; National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.

³⁷ Samuel B. Holabird, Quartermaster General; "First Enclosure for House Committee on War Claims, H.R. 1131, Bill for the Relief of Sarah G. Smith, extx. of Francis L. Smith, Quartermaster General's Office" Washington, D.C., 31 January 1890. Copy archived at City of Alexandria/Office of Historic Alexandria/Alexandria Archaeology.

³⁸ "Alexandria Affairs," *Washington Post*, 29 March 1892.

³⁹ Alexandria Circuit Court, Land Records, Margaret V. Smith to Reverend Dennis O'Connell, Bishop of Richmond, 25 April 1917, Liber 66, Folio 132.

⁴⁰ In 1930, Congress authorized construction of the more extensive George Washington Memorial Parkway, which included Mount Vernon Memorial Highway.

⁴¹ Alexandria City Council Minutes, 25 June 1946, Alexandria Library Microfilm Reel 00473, 479.

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⁴² "Council Compacts: Rezoning Approved," *Alexandria Gazette*, 26 June 1946.

⁴³ Landrith, together with business partner Eugene J. Olmi, owned Belle View Apartments in Fairfax County. He was a member of the Virginia Highway Commission, serviced on the Fairfax County Planning Commission in the 1950s and early 1960s, and was on the Board of Supervisors in 1960. Landrith died in 1984.

⁴⁴ Alexandria Circuit Court, Land Records, Peter L. Ireton, Bishop of Richmond, to George C. Landrith, Trustee, 2 September 1946, Liber 233, Folio 104.

⁴⁵ "Proposed New Motel at Jones Point Bridge Site," *Washington Post*, 18 October 1953, M1.

⁴⁶ Alexandria Department of Code Administration, Building Permit #6368, 13 July 1955; Alexandria Circuit Court, Land Records, Mildred Koplin to Tidewater Oil Company, 29 July 1955, Liber 416, Folio 462; Alexandria Circuit Court, Land Records, Bishop Peter Ireton revokes use restrictions, Liber 416, Folio 460.

⁴⁷ Building Permit #7130, 25 November 1959.

⁴⁸ "Capital Beltway Section Opening By Mid-December," *Alexandria Gazette*, 18 November 1961, 1.

⁴⁹ T. Michael Miller, Memorandum to Pamela Cressey, 1 April 1997. Copy archived at City of Alexandria/Office of Historic Alexandria/Alexandria Archaeology.

⁵⁰ Alexandria Circuit Court, Land Records, Sarah G. Smith to John Tucker, 10 February 1868, Liber H4, Folio 531; Alexandria Land Use Map, Real Property Survey, May 1939, vol. II (Plat 126, Block 459, Right Rev. Dennis J. O'Connell, Bishop of Richmond); Office of City Engineer, City Map, revisions 1940, 1943, 1944, and 1946.

⁵¹ Alice Reid, "Cemetery Prompts Questions of Bridge: Freedmen's Graves Could Affect Wilson Plan," *Washington Post*, 30 January 1997, 1; William Connery, "History of Black Cemetery Buried No More," *Washington Times*, 11 June 2005.

⁵² Pamela Cressey, "A New Tradition Honors the Memory of Black Americans," *Alexandria Gazette*, 12 June 1997, 53.

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- Shephard, Steven J., and Francine W. Bromberg. "Excavations at the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery and Concept of the Proper Coffin in the Mid-Nineteenth Century." Paper read at the Alexandria Historical Society, The Lyceum, Alexandria, VA, 27 October 2010.
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- Slaughter, Bernard W., George L. Miller, and Meta Janowitz, *Archaeological Investigations to Define the Boundaries of Freedmen's Cemetery (44AX0179), within the Property Owned by the Virginia Department of Transportation, Alexandria, VA: The Potomac Crossing Consultants, 2001.*
- Washington Post*, Washington, D.C.
- Washington Times*, Washington, D.C.
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Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery

City of Alexandria, Virginia

National Archives

Microfilm M-1055, Reel #6, Freedmen Bureau Papers, National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.
Record Group 77, National Archives Buildings, Washington, D.C. and College Park, Maryland.
Record Group 92, National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.
Record Group 105, National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.
Record Group 393, National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other

Virginia Department of Historic Resources;
City of Alexandria/Office of Historic

Name of repository: Alexandria/Alexandria Archaeology

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): Site #44AX0179 and VDHR #100-0121-1085

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 1.275
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>321950</u> Easting	<u>4295750</u> Northing	3	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing
2	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing	4	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Beginning at a point in the southern right-of-way line of Church Street, said point being 27 feet east of the northwest corner of Tax Parcel 083.01.01.04 known as 714 Church Street; thence running in an easterly direction along said right-of-way line 257 feet to a point in the north line of Tax Parcel 083-01-01-03 known as 1001 South Washington Street; thence perpendicularly departing said right-of-way line and running in a northerly direction 15.7 feet to a point on the face of curb of Church Street; thence running easterly with said face of curb and around a curve to the right at the intersection of Church Street and South Washington Street to the face of curb on the West side of South Washington Street; thence running with the face of curb of South Washington Street to a point being 176.84 feet southward from the north boundary extended for the city-owned property located at 1001 South Washington Street: thence departing said face of curb and running westerly 309.74 feet, parallel to the southern boundary line of the city-owned property located at 714 Church Street

Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery

City of Alexandria, Virginia

thence running in a northerly direction 178.87 feet to the point of beginning and containing 55,558 square feet or 1.275 acres more or less.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary for the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery is based on a combination of historical and archaeological information. However, it should be noted that the historical limits of burial placements cannot be determined on any of the four sides of the cemetery. When Francis Smith's property was taken by the military government for use as the burial ground in 1864, his parcel extended 66 feet into South Washington Street on the east, was bounded on the south by an east/west line dividing the block between Church and South Washington streets into two equal parcels, stretched west to the west side of Columbus Street extended, and to the north included all of Church Street as well as the entire block between Church and Green streets. At the time, South Washington Street was a narrow road or path terminating to the south at Hunting Creek, and it is likely that neither Church nor Columbus streets were cut through. As a result, it is possible that burials could have been placed in all three of what are now the official rights-of-way for these streets on the eastern, northern and western sides of the property. On the southern side, it is also possible that burials could have been placed to the south of the official boundary of the Francis Smith property, as it is unknown how accurately this parcel line would have been marked during the period of cemetery use. Archaeological work has helped to define the limits of extant burials on the northern, western and southern boundaries of the property. Because boundaries may continue into South Washington Street, and archaeological investigations have not taken place in the street, the limits to the east are not known. Justifications for all boundaries follow below:

Northern Boundary

For 257 feet, the northern boundary runs along the north property line of the city-owned parcels at 714 Church Street and 1001 South Washington Street. This line corresponds to the north boundary of the cemetery mentioned in two property deeds: an 1868 deed of sale for the lot to the north of the cemetery citing its common boundary with a "Negro Burying Ground," and a 1917 deed conveying the cemetery to the Bishop of Richmond. As indicated above, given the extent of the Smith property, there is a possibility that burials were originally placed north of this line. However, archaeological work has shown that there has been subsequent grading, and even if originally placed, no graves are now extant to the north along the aforementioned 257 feet of the north boundary line. In contrast, in the northeast corner of the lot, grading has been less pronounced, and it is still possible that evidence of burials could still exist. This northwest corner was also the location of a small structure that appears in the Church Street right-of-way on the *City Atlas of Alexandria, Va, 1877*, by G.M. Hopkins. This structure may be the storage shed used by the three cemetery caretakers and mentioned in the record kept by Gladwin and others (1864-1869). The north boundary in this corner has thus been extended 15.7 feet north to the curb line of the street to include this area of less grading.

Eastern Boundary

The eastern boundary runs along the outer curb line of the western side of South Washington Street. Although legal descriptions of the eastern boundary of the cemetery place it past the center line of the street (66 feet 2 inches east of the current parcel line of the city-owned lot at 1001 South Washington Street), no archaeological investigation has been conducted under the asphalt of South Washington Street, and it is unknown if graves have survived grading for the street and placement of utilities. Archaeology has indicated that graves are definitely present in the sidewalk and that some graves extend right up to the curb line. Thus, the boundary follows the curb edge.

Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery

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Southern Boundary

The southern boundary is situated 176.84 feet south of the southern edge of the right-of-way for Church Street and runs parallel to the southern boundary of the city-owned parcel at 714 Church Street. The boundary lies within the right-of-way for Interstate 495 (Capitol Beltway) owned by the Virginia Department of Transportation. The historical southeast corner of Francis Smith's land that was taken for use as the cemetery was the midpoint of the South Washington Street block between Church and South Washington streets—176.84 feet from the southern edge of the right-of-way for Church Street; the boundary for the cemetery nomination follows this line. The southernmost grave found at the cemetery, which is located near the southeast corner of the property, lies just to the north of this line. Although burials could have been placed south of the line, topography changes to create an extreme slope south of this line down to the highway when I-495 was constructed would have graded away any burials that were present. It should be noted that during the Woodrow Wilson Bridge project, this slope was filled, and the area now appears relatively flat.

Western Boundary

The western boundary is placed to include the westernmost grave discovered during the archaeological work. Although the original Francis Smith property extended to the western side of the southern extension of the right-of-way for Columbus Street, archaeological work has determined that there is disturbance and deep fill in the areas west of the western boundary as a result of utility placement, including deeply buried storm sewers, within the right-of-way.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Pamela Cressey, City Archaeologist; Francine Bromberg, Preservation Archaeologist; Laura V. Trieschmann, Architectural Historian (with EHT Traceries)

organization City of Alexandria/Office of Historic

Alexandria/Alexandria Archaeology

date March 1, 2012

street & number 105 North Union Street, Suite 327, Torpedo Factory

telephone 703-746-4399

city or town Alexandria

state Virginia

zip code 22314

e-mail Pamela.cressey@alexandriava.gov

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional Items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery

City of Alexandria, Virginia

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery

City or Vicinity: Alexandria

County: NA

State: Virginia

Photographer: Jerry Dieruf. City of Alexandria, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities

Date Photographed: November 2009

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Aerial photograph of cemetery, looking east with Church Street is on the left and South Washington Street is at the top of the image.

Location of Original Files: DHR Archives

File Name: VA_City of Alexandria_Contrabands And Freedmen Cemetery_0001

1 of 3.

Name of Property: Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery

City or Vicinity: Alexandria

County: NA

State: Virginia

Photographer: Jerry Dieruf. City of Alexandria, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities

Date Photographed: November 2009

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Aerial photograph of cemetery, looking southeast with Church Street is on the left, South Washington Street is in the middle ground, I95/495 is at the top of the image

Location of Original Files: DHR Archives

File Name: VA_City of Alexandria_Contrabands And Freedmen Cemetery_0002

2 of 3.

Name of Property: Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery

City or Vicinity: Alexandria

County: NA

State: Virginia

Photographer: EHT Traceries, Inc.

Date Photographed: February 2011

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Cemetery from Church Street, looking southeast to apartments beyond site

Location of Original Files: DHR Archives

File Name: VA_City of Alexandria_Contrabands And Freedmen Cemetery_0003

3 of 3.

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name The City of Alexandria

street & number City Hall 301 King Street

telephone 703-746-4399

city or town Alexandria

state Virginia zip code 22314

name Virginia Department of Transportation, ATTN: Greg A. Whirley, Commissioner

street & number 1401 East Board Street

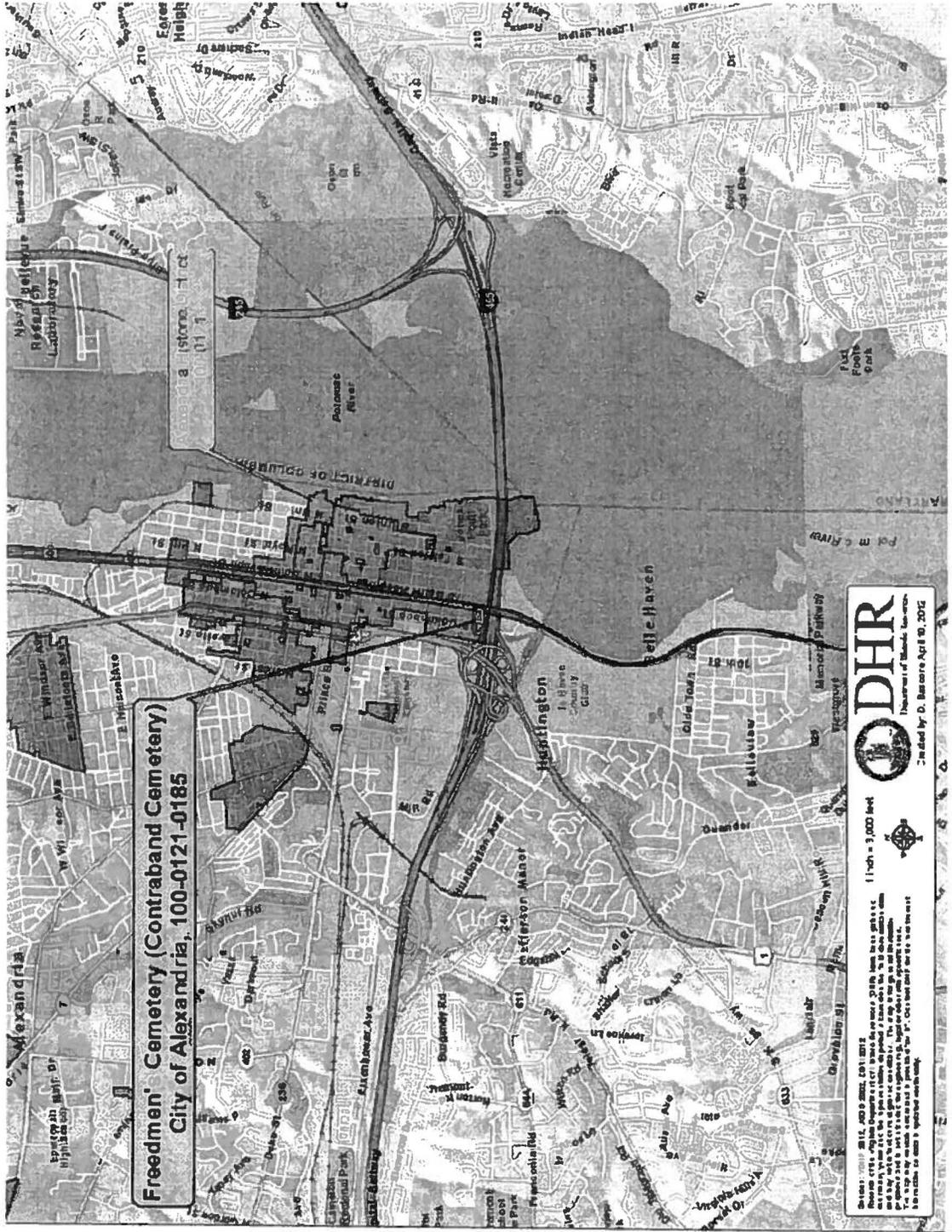
telephone 804-786-2801

city or town Richmond

state Virginia zip code 23219

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



Freedmen' Cemetery (Contraband Cemetery)
City of Alexandria, 100-0121-0185



1 inch = 3,000 feet

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Created by D. Bassano April 18, 2014

Contrabands and Freedmen's Cemetery, Representative Photographs

