

# Special Edition for the 2015 UCI Races

*In the Spirit of  
Gabriel & Nan,  
Nat Turner,  
Solomon Northup,  
Madison Washington,  
John Brown,  
Mary Bowser,  
Elizabeth Van Lew,  
John Mitchell Jr.,  
Barbara Johns,  
Oliver Hill & all who  
struggle for Justice*

# FREE The Virginia DEFENDER

**A statewide quarterly newspaper published by the Defenders for Freedom, Justice & Equality**

**SPECIAL UCI EDITION - Issue 51**

**10,000 copies - Online at [www.DefendersFJE.blogspot.com](http://www.DefendersFJE.blogspot.com)**

**September 2015**

## Welcome to the UCI Road World Championships! And here's a brief history of Richmond, Monument Avenue & Shockoe Bottom



Photo by Phil Wilayto

This monument - owned and maintained by the City of Richmond - pays homage to Jefferson Davis, a slaveowner and president of the Confederate States of America. Richmond 2015, the organizer of the Richmond UCI races, has chosen to “showcase” this perverse “attraction” during the bike races. As the halfway point of the races, it will be presented to hundreds of millions of television viewers around the world as part of “the best of the Richmond region.” Two of the four Richmond 2015 chairmen are Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe and Richmond Mayor Dwight Jones - both Northern-born Democrats.

Richmond, Virginia, is one of the oldest cities in the United States. As such, it's rich with history.

And today it's also known for its fine universities, many prize-winning restaurants, an innovative craft-beer industry, a creative arts community and the beautiful James River.

Some of the history is well-known: Richmond was a center for patriotic ferment during the Revolutionary War and was the capital of the Confederacy during the U.S. Civil War.

Less well-known is its role as the center of the U.S. domestic slave trade.

In the three decades before the Confederacy was defeated in 1865, more than 100,000 women, children and men of African descent were sold out of the 40-50 auction houses of Shockoe Bottom, a down-

town district over which UCI cyclists will race.

The riders will pass by the sites of six to eight slave jails, places of horrible suffering and degradation. They will pass the African Burial Ground, where the great slave rebellion leader Gabriel was executed on Oct. 10, 1800.

Shockoe Bottom was a place of great misery, but also of great resistance. It deserves to be properly memorialized. It should be an international Site of Conscience, a place of truth-telling and reconciliation.

Instead, local developers, supported by our mayor, have targeted the Bottom for a commercial baseball stadium. So far, a determined community struggle, in which our organization has played a leading role, has managed to stop the desecration of this sacred ground.



This is a section of the sketch “Slave Auction at Richmond, Virginia” by English artist Eyre Crowe, published Sept. 27, 1856, in the Illustrated London News. Crowe visited Richmond with the noted British writer William Thackeray and had just finished reading the popular anti-slavery novel “Uncle Tom's Cabin.” He decided to see a slave auction for himself. At the time, Richmond was the center for the U.S. domestic slave trade. Between 1830 and 1865, some 300,000 to 350,000 people of African descent were sold out of Virginia to the cotton, sugar and rice plantations of the Deep South. Most passed through the 40-50 auction houses of Richmond's Shockoe Bottom.

But the fight is far from over. As recently as Sept. 15, Mayor Dwight Jones told a reporter that a Shockoe Bottom stadium is still a possibility.

Meanwhile, the mayor, along with Gov. Terry McAuliffe, U.S. Sen Mark Warner and representatives of the most powerful corporations in Virginia, are using the UCI races to “showcase” a part of Richmond history that is shameful: its role as the Confederate capital and as the post-war repository of the white-supremacist Myth of the Lost Cause.

Richmond - like most of our country - is in a struggle for its very soul. Will it fearlessly face the truth of its origins in slavery and the slave trade?

Or will it gloss over this past and continue to pay homage to the symbols of oppression?

These are questions this newspaper hopes to raise.

**“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” — George Santayana, Spanish-American philosopher, 1863 - 1952**



THE DEFENDERS  
for Freedom, Justice & Equality

PO Box 23202, Richmond, VA 23223  
Ph: 804-644-5834 Fax: 804-332-5525  
Email: DefendersFJE@hotmail.com  
Web: www.DefendersFJE.blogspot.com

The Defenders for Freedom, Justice & Equality is an organization of Virginia residents working for the survival of our communities through education and social justice projects.

We started out in June 2002. Many of us had relatives in the Richmond City Jail or state prisons and were concerned about the physical conditions of these institutions.

As we worked around these issues, we learned more and more about the connections between jails, jobs, poverty, racism, sexism, class, war and political representation. We began to organize around these issues as well.

We now have a quarterly, statewide newspaper, a monthly radio program and a website. Our members meet monthly to discuss issues and plan actions. We are affiliated with the Virginia People's Assembly, the Virginia Immigrant Peoples Coalition and the National United Antiwar Coalition.

If you agree with the principles below and want to work to make these ideals a reality, we invite you to join us.

Together, we can make a real difference in the life of our communities.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

We believe in Freedom

We believe that all people must be free to develop to their full potential as human beings. We must be free from hunger, from preventable diseases, from homelessness, from ignorance. We must be free to work and to provide for ourselves and our families. We must be free to pursue our education and to develop ourselves culturally and spiritually. We must be free from fear of the arbitrary use of police power and from the physical and cultural attacks of white-supremacist organizations. Women must be free from physical, cultural and emotional oppression. Children must be free from dangers like lead poisoning, asthma and sexual exploitation. Our youths must be free both from police harassment and the mindless violence of the streets. We must all be free from unjust wars fought in the interest of the wealthy few at the expense of the struggling many.

We believe in Justice

We believe that every human being has the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. And we believe that these rights are meaningless unless we also have the right to a job at a living wage, to decent housing, to adequate health care, to a meaningful education. We believe that all people have the right to stand equally before the law, to equal and fair treatment by the police, by the court system and in jails and prisons. And we believe that the death penalty is the ultimate exercise in injustice.

We believe in Equality

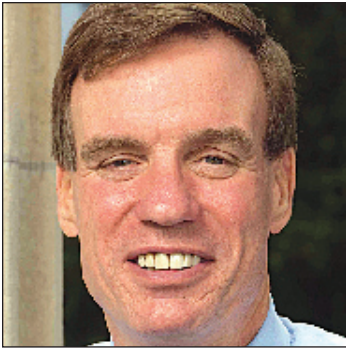
We live in the richest country in the world. But it's a country that owes its tremendous wealth to the barbaric oppression of Black labor on a historic scale, as well as the theft of American Indian and Mexican lands, the cruel exploitation of Asian labor and the labor of waves of poor European immigrants.

This country does not belong to the wealthy few who have claimed it for their own. As human beings, we all have an equal right to its resources. As descendants of those whose blood, sweat and tears paid cruelly for its development, we have a right to collective reparations. And as people who struggle every day with ongoing inequality, we have the right to affirmative action.

We believe that for any one of us to be free, we must all be free. We believe that for any one of us to have justice, we must all have justice. We believe that equality for anyone is impossible without equality for everyone

As members of The Defenders, we pledge ourselves to defend our community, its men, its women and especially its children, from all forms of oppression.

We pledge to fight for a world where all people can live in dignity, freedom and peace.



Sen. Mark Warner



Gov. Terry McAuliffe



Mayor Dwight Jones



Dominion Resources  
President, CEO & Chairman of  
the Board Thomas F. Farrell II

We tried. We really tried.

When we first learned that the organizers of the UCI bike races had made Monument Avenue the highlight of the event - and that the monument to slaveowner and Confederate President Jefferson Davis would be the prestigious halfway turning point - we were really taken aback.

The mayor had been saying that Richmond could expect 450,000 spectators, reporters from 100 countries and 300 million people from around the world watching on TV.

In other cities, local leaders are removing symbols of the Confederacy from public places. The mayor of New Orleans, the city that once had the largest slave market in the country, has called for taking down the city's statues of Davis and Gen. Robert E. Lee.

In fact, Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe was announcing that the state's Department of Motor Vehicles would no longer issue license plates bearing the racist image of the Confederate battle flag.

Even Richmond's daily newspaper, with its roots in the Confederate past, was calling for taking down the Davis monument.

But here were Gov. McAuliffe, Sen. Mark Warner, Richmond Mayor Dwight Jones (a former chair of the Virginia Democratic Party) and Thomas F. Farrell II, one of Virginia's most powerful

business executives, deciding that the Jefferson Davis monument was the best thing Richmond could highlight to the world.

So, on June 23, we wrote to the four chairmen, asking them to move the race route off Monument Avenue. We were only talking about six blocks. The organizers had already changed the route twice: once to accomodate the University of Richmond and once to better avoid some downtown traffic.

We heard back from Warner, McAuliffe and Jones: the race was staying on Monument Avenue.

"This is our heritage. This is who we are," said the governor, a former head of the Democratic National Committee, to a local TV reporter who asked him about our request.

(By the way, Gov. McAuliffe was born in Syracuse, N.Y. Mayor Jones is from Philadelphia. And Sen. Warner, also a Democrat, is from Indianapolis, Ind.)

On Sept. 13, we sent an email to the UCI International Committee in Switzerland, making the same request.

As of Sept. 16, we had not yet received a reply.

We tried. We really tried.

June 23, 2015

To: Richmond 2015 Chairmen of the Board Gov. Terry McAuliffe; U.S. Sen. Mark R. Warner; Richmond Mayor Dwight C. Jones; and Tom Farrell, Chairman, President & CEO, Dominion

Dear Chairmen of Richmond 2015,

In light of the recent racist massacre of nine African-Americans at a historic Black church in Charleston, S.C., and the resulting calls from Charleston Mayor Joe Riley, S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley, U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, President Barack Obama and many other national figures from both major political parties to remove the Confederate battle flag from the grounds of the S.C. State Capitol, the Defenders for Freedom, Justice & Equality are calling on you to change the route of the UCI Road World Championships bicycle race.

The race, scheduled for Sept. 19 - 27, is expected to draw some 450,000 people to Richmond, plus reporters from 100 countries and a worldwide television audience of 300 million. This likely will be the biggest sporting event held in the United States this year and will be spotlighting our city, state and country before the world.

At the present time, your organization has chosen to use this race to highlight Monument Avenue, a virtual shrine to the slavery-defending Confederacy, with statues of Confederate President Jefferson Davis; Generals Robert E. Lee, Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson and J.E.B. Stuart; and Naval Commander Matthew Fontaine Maury.

There also is one statue of an African-American, tennis champion and anti-apartheid activist Arthur Ashe, but your chosen route ignores him, making the Davis monument the highlight of the race by using it as the half-way turning point. The route includes having the cyclists ride their bikes directly over the sacred ground of Shockoe Bottom, for decades the epicenter of the U.S. domestic slave trade.

With international attention now focused on calls for South Carolina to end its official promotion of a flag that symbolizes the Confederacy and resistance to civil rights for African-Americans, continuing with this route as planned, during the Sesquicentennial Commemoration of Emancipation and the end of the Civil War, would put Richmond, with its status as the former capital of the Confederacy, in the worst possible light.

Dylann Storm Roof, the accused Charleston murderer, was an avowed white supremacist who delighted in showing online photos of himself with the flag of the Army of Northern Virginia, led by Gen. Lee.

But Roof is an individual. Your committee includes a U.S. senator, the governor of Virginia and the mayor of Richmond - all Democrats - and the leaders of many of Central Virginia's leading corporations, including Dominion, Genworth Financial, McGuire Woods, Williams Mullen, Atria, Kings Dominion, The Martin Agency, CarMax Inc. and Virginia Biotechnology Research Park, as well as Kim Scheeler, president & CEO of the Greater Richmond Chamber (of Commerce); Jack Berry, president & CEO, Richmond Region Tourism; and the other Jack Berry, Executive Director, Venture Richmond, an organization that itself includes the major movers and shakers in Richmond business.

We are well aware that many of these same officials were among the leading propo-

nents of building a stadium in Shockoe Bottom, a proposal that has been defeated - for now - by a sustained community struggle in which our organization has played a leading role.

We appeal to your own self-interest as well as your concern for the good name of our city when we call on you to change the route of this race. Otherwise, it is inevitable that the race will draw the kind of national and international scrutiny and criticism that could set back race relations - and tourism - in Richmond for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Ana Edwards - Chair, Defenders' Sacred Ground Historical Reclamation Project

Phil Wilayto - Editor, The Virginia Defender newspaper.

Cc: Directors of Richmond 2015; Virginia, National & International News Media

The Virginia Defender

A statewide quarterly newspaper published by  
**DEFENDERS PUBLICATIONS, INC.,**  
publishing arm of the Defenders for Freedom, Justice & Equality

**Editorial Board:** Ana Edwards, Phil Wilayto  
**Editor:** Phil Wilayto **Staff Writers:** Kwame Binta, Shelli Cumber, Ana Edwards, Kat McNeal, Janet "Queen Nzinga" Taylor, Phil Wilayto  
**Photographers:** Ana Edwards, John Moser, Phil Wilayto  
**Production:** Ana Edwards, Phil Wilayto  
**Tech Support:** Ana Edwards **Community Calendar:** Kat McNeal  
**Spanish Translation:** Guillermo Zamora  
**Advertising:** Ana Edwards, Kat McNeal, Phil Wilayto  
**Distributors:** Pamela Bingham, Kwame Binta, Cindy Bowles, Lillie "Ms K" Branch-Kennedy, Daniel Breslau, Margaret Breslau, Benjamin Bristoll, Bill Conkle, Ben Crabtree, Ray Doss, Willie Mae Doss, Weluna Queen Earth, Ana Edwards, Audrey Fisher, Paul Fleisher, Marlene Gartner, Nancy Gowen, Lorenzo Grandison, Martha Johnson, Lisa Lisanti, Talibah Majeed, Taylor Janay Manigault, Kat McNeal, Essie Miller, John Moser, Dieyah Rasheed, Audrey Smith, Sherlon Smith, John Steinbach, Janet "Queen Nzinga" Taylor, Vinny Weeks, John Whitworth, Phil Wilayto, Jeff Winder

**Subscription rates:** \$10/year general, \$5 for prisoners, \$25 for institutions.  
Checks or money orders payable to: **DEFENDERS PUBLICATIONS, INC.**

**We welcome letters, while reserving the  
right to edit for clarity, length and style.**

**To submit a letter, an item for the Community Calendar or to place an ad, contact:**

**The Virginia Defender**

PO Box 23202, Richmond, VA 23223 • Phone: 804.644.5834 • Fax: 804.332.5225  
Email: DefendersFJE@hotmail.com • Web: www.DefendersFJE.blogspot.com

Unless otherwise noted, all contents of The Virginia Defender are copyright (c) 2015



# What exactly does Monument Avenue honor?

When cities around the world host UCI races, they highlight the best they feel they have to offer.

Richmond is no different. When the race organizers planned the bike routes, one of the things they said they considered was “... showcasing the best of the Richmond region.”

Richmond 2015, the local race organizing committee, is made up of Virginia’s corporate and political elite. The committee chairmen are U.S. Sen. Mark Warner, Gov. Terry McAuliffe, Richmond Mayor Dwight Jones and Dominion Resources President, Chair and CEO Thomas F. Farrell II.

So what did they decide to “showcase” as the “best of the Richmond region”?

It was Monument Avenue – a virtual shrine to the Confederate States of America, a political entity founded to protect the right of slave-owners to own and exploit Black people.

In fact, the critical halfway point of the elite men’s and women’s races, around which the cyclists will turn 16 times, is the monument erected to honor Jefferson Davis, the slave-owning president of the Confederacy.

It’s worth noting here that Mayor Jones, Gov. McAuliffe and Sen. Warner are all Northern-born Democrats.

Since the brutal murders this summer of nine African-Americans in a historic Black church in Charleston, S.C., cities and states around the country are removing Confederate symbols from government-owned property, beginning with the Confederate battle flag.

But not in Richmond.

The Davis monument and other statues on this “prestigious” street are all owned by the City of Richmond, with the one exception of the Robert E. Lee statue, which is owned by the state of Virginia. And instead of removing them, Richmond 2015 is “showcasing” them.

These monuments are not holdovers from the Civil War. Except for the one statue dedicated to a Black person, tennis great and anti-racist activist Arthur Ashe, they were part of a wave of monument-building that took place 25 years or more after the Confederacy was defeated, a time when the gains that Black people had made as a result of the Civil War were being overturned.

The federal government had removed its troops from the South, a military occupation that had allowed Black people to gain and exercise social, political and economic rights in the period known as Reconstruction.

With the troop withdrawal, the same property-owning whites who had controlled the South made a near-total political comeback.

The Virginia Constitution of 1902 denied the vote to almost all Blacks and most poor whites. Across the South, public facilities were resegregated. Racist laws called the Black Codes restricted where African-Americans could live, work and worship. Defying these “Jim Crow” laws meant risking your freedom and even your life.

In 1924, Virginia passed The Racial Integrity Act - racial “cleansing” legislation affecting Black and Indian people to this day.

It would take the heroic Civil Rights and Black Liberation movements of the 50s, 60s and 70s before Southern Blacks could again win some measure of freedom.

Today in the capital of Virginia and former capital of the Confederacy, one out of every four Richmonders – most of them Black or Latino – lives in poverty. Even worse, that includes one out of every three children. This is the legacy of slavery and its aftermath.

The city government talks a lot about eliminating poverty, but its strategy really is to drive out poor people. Public housing is being torn down and converted to “mixed-income” neighborhoods. Selective enforcement of building codes is used to close down low-income trailer parks that serve a largely Latino population. The public schools are underfunded, but there is always money for spectacles like the UCI races.

We sincerely hope you enjoy your visit to Richmond. But while you’re here, please take the time to learn something about the present-day realities of American racism.

We’ll be living with it long after you’re gone.



This monument to the slaveowning president of the Confederacy was chosen as the prestigious halfway point of the UCI races. Insert: The City-owned landmark features the Confederate battle flag, widely viewed as a hateful symbol of racist terror.

## JEFFERSON F. DAVIS (1808-1889)

A native of Kentucky, Davis grew up on a plantation in Mississippi, graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, participated in several campaigns against American Indians, was elected to the U.S. Congress and then resigned his position to fight in the Mexican War (1846-1848), a predatory invasion in which the United States stole half of Mexico.

He later became a U.S. senator and a leading advocate for slavery before turning against his country and becoming the first and only president of the Confederate States of America.

A plantation owner, he owned more than 100 enslaved Africans. He is buried at Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond. His statue on



THOMAS J. “STONEWALL” JACKSON (1824-1863)

A Virginian and West Point graduate, Jackson fought in the Mexican War before leaving the U.S. Army to teach at the Virginia Military Institute. In 1861 he joined the Confederate Army, becoming a general under Robert E. Lee. He was mortally wounded by friendly fire in 1863.

Like the other Confederate military leaders depicted on Monument Avenue, Jackson used his considerable skills in the service of a brutal slavocracy.

Jackson and his wife, May Anna, owned at least six Black people, including a small girl named Emma, whom Jackson bought as a gift for his wife.

Monument Avenue was erected in 1907.

Here are a few of Davis’ thoughts on African people:

*“Generally, they were born the slaves of barbarian masters, untaught in all the useful arts and occupations, reared in heathen darkness, they were transferred to shores enlightened by the rays of Christianity. There, put to servitude, they were trained in the gentle arts of peace and order and civilization; they increased from a few unprofitable savages to millions of efficient Christian laborers.”*

And: *“You cannot transform the negro into anything one-tenth as useful or as good as what slavery enables them to be.”*

And: *“African slavery, as it exists in the United States, is a moral, a social, and a political blessing.”*

The monument honoring this avowed white supremacist is being used as the prestigious halfway turning point in the UCI races.



JAMES EWELL BROWN “JEB” STUART (1833-1864)

A Virginian and graduate of West Point, Stuart fought against American Indians in the West and participated in the suppression of John Brown’s Raid at Harper’s Ferry.

In 1861 he resigned his position as captain in the U.S. Army and accepted that of lieutenant colonel in the Confederate infantry of Virginia, advancing to the position of general in Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia.

Mortally wounded in a battle outside Richmond, he is buried in Richmond’s Hollywood Cemetery.

Stuart and his wife, Flora, kept two Blacks as slaves.



ROBERT E. LEE (1807-1870)

A Virginian and graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Captain Lee fought in the Mexican War. In 1859, as a U.S. lieutenant colonel, he led the military suppression of John Brown’s anti-slavery rebellion at Harper’s Ferry.

When Virginia seceded from the Union in 1861, Lee resigned from the U.S. Army and accepted command of the Confederate forces in Virginia, eventually commanding the Army of Northern Virginia – the army of the well-known Confederate battle flag.

Although Lee’s supporters like to say he did not own enslaved people himself, his wife “inherited” scores of Black people from her father.

Lee’s statue was the first to be erected on Monument Avenue, in 1890. Cannons boomed as 100,000 people watched the statue’s unveiling, signaling that white supremacy once again was in control.

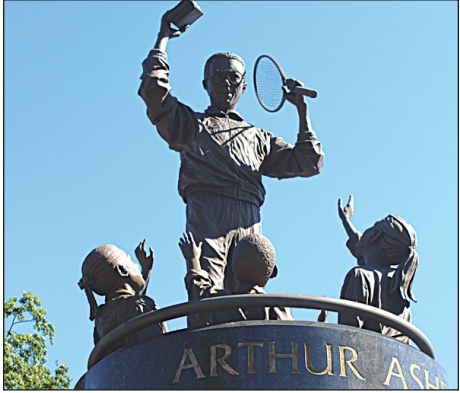


MATTHEW F. MAURY (1806-1873)

A Virginian, buried in Hollywood Cemetery, Maury was a skilled ocean scientist known as “Pathfinder of the Seas” and “Father of Modern Oceanography.”

With the outbreak of the Civil War, he resigned his commission as a U.S. Navy commander and joined the Confederacy.

Maury was opposed to slavery in the United States, although not on moral grounds. His “solution” was to propose the purchase and transfer of “surplus” enslaved Africans from the South to Brazil, which would not abolish slavery until 1888.



ARTHUR R. ASHE JR. (1943-1993)

Ashe is the only Black person or Richmonder with a statue on Monument Avenue. Ranked as the Number One tennis player in the world, Ashe also was a fierce opponent of South African apartheid. After contracting AIDS from a blood transfusion, he dedicated himself to educating people about the then-controversial disease. He was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

His statue was not included in the UCI route.



On March 19, 2015, the **Defenders for Freedom, Justice & Equality** held a press conference outside Richmond City Hall to announce the launching of a five-month-long community-based process for memorializing Shockoe Bottom, once the hub of the massive U.S. domestic slave trade.

What followed was a genuine and transparent process of collecting suggestions from the community for how this long-neglected area could be developed in a way that honestly tells the story of Richmond's central role in the slave trade, while still allowing for appropriate economic development.

Over the course of that month, **more than 100 people** participated in four open **Community Brainstorming Sessions**, held at Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church in the East End, the Humphrey Calder Community Center in the West End, the Dream Academy on North Side and taZa Coffee & Creme on South Side.

More than 24 pages of suggestions were then distilled down to a 3-page summary by staff members of the Washington, D.C.-based **National Trust for Historic Preservation**, one of the country's leading preservation organizations.

Then a **committee of 26 volunteers** drawn from the four community meetings held seven meetings, three by conference call, to create what became a two-phase proposal for a **Shockoe Bottom Memorial Park**.

That proposal was then presented to a citywide **Community Meeting** held Aug. 15 at Wesley Memorial. **More than 100 people discussed the proposal and then approved it by a unanimous vote.** The 18-page proposal can be read at:

**SacredGroundProject.net**

**The main points:**

**\* Create a 9-acre Memorial Park** – large enough to convey a sense of the enormity of the slave trade as practiced in Richmond from the mid-1770s to 1865, during which time more than 100,000 women, children and men were sold into lives of abject misery for the profits of the merchant class. Six of the acres are already reserved for memorialization: the site of **Lumpkin's**

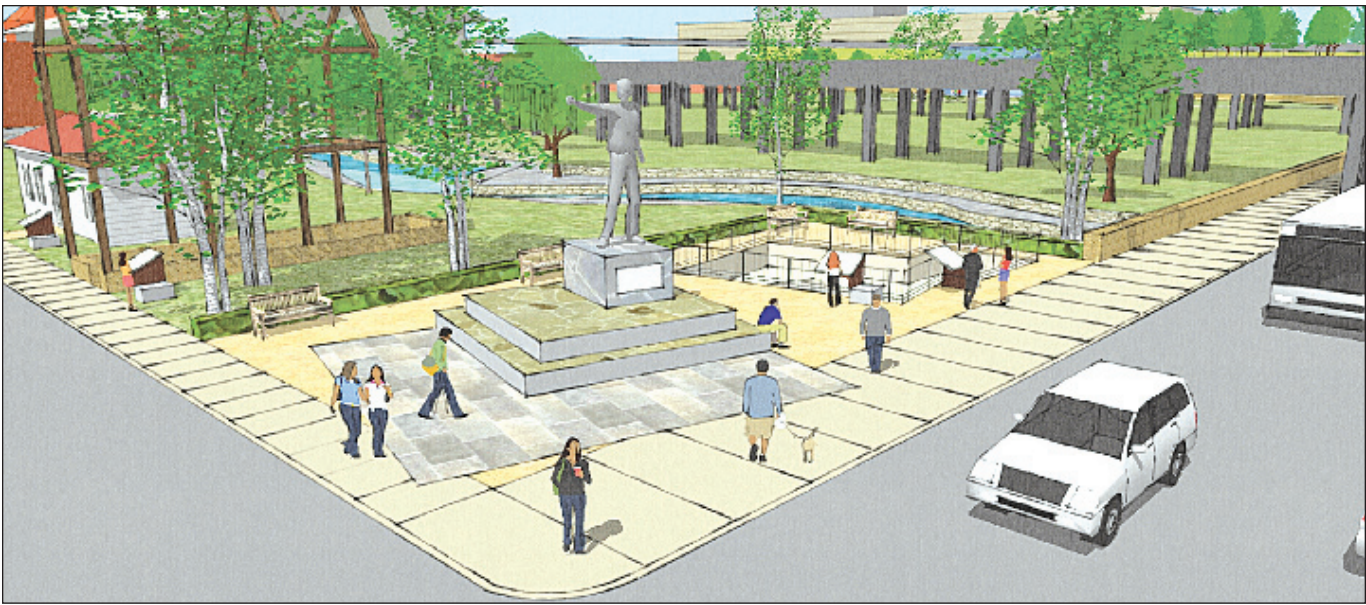
**Jail** and the reclaimed **African Burial Ground**. To these would be added the **two now-empty blocks** between East Broad and East Grace streets, from the CSX railroad tracks to 17th Street.

**\* Extend the Trail of Enslaved Africans** to wind through the park, with signage describing the various sites associated with the slave trade (Richmond historian Elizabeth Kambourian has identified nearly 100 such sites in this district.) and resistance efforts, large and small.

**\* Establish an Interpretive Center** – possibly in the newly renovated Main Street Station train shed overlooking the Memorial Park – to tell the entire story of Shockoe Bottom, from the indigenous peoples who first lived here, to the founding of the city of Richmond to the histories of the Quakers, Masons, the Jewish people, but concentrating on the central issue of the trade in enslaved Africans. That story should begin with the cultures of Africa as they existed before the first European slavers arrived; through the Trans-Atlantic slave trade; the suffering and the resistance; the Civil War and its aftermath; Reconstruction and its overthrow; the establishment of Jim Crow apartheid; Massive Resistance; the Virginia eugenics movement and the Virginia Civil Rights Movement.

**\* Symbolically recreate Shockoe Creek** in a way that recalls how Shockoe Bottom looked during the slave trade, acknowledges the environmental role of the creek and James River watershed in Richmond's development, and adds an attractive water feature to the park's green lawns, trees, shrubbery, paths, signage, monuments, and more.

**\* Finally, create a "Design Overlay District,"** which means some new zoning restrictions that would prevent inappropriate development in this uniquely important historic area. The proposal would **NOT** prevent appropriate economic development, but it would mean an end to the seemingly endless number of proposals to build a baseball stadium here.



# A Community-Based Proposal for a SHOCKOE BOTTOM MEMORIAL PARK

The community as whole, and particularly the Black community, must decide what it wants for the future of our uniquely historic Shockoe Bottom. Do we want to tell the whole story, or just a part of it? Do we want to begin modestly and grow as support grows, or commit tens of millions to a narrow project? And do we want to safeguard the historic integrity of this sacred ground, while allowing for appropriate economic development, or should we leave the future of Shockoe Bottom to the tender mercies of profit-driven developers?

## How would a Shockoe Bottom Memorial Park benefit Richmonders?

First of all, it would begin to **correct the historic wrong** of neglecting and even suppressing the real stories of how Richmond began, along with who profited from the city's development and who paid the terrible price.

And it would **create a tourism destination site** that would increasingly attract people from across this country and around the world – visitors who would stay in hotels and motels, eat in local restaurants and visit other sites in the area. Tourism brings in new money for existing businesses and creates new jobs. The more compelling the tourism site, the more it benefits the city as a whole.

As for the business contracts and jobs associated with the Memorial Park itself, we believe that these should go first to the **descendant community** that today still feels the effects of what happened here just 150 years ago.

**So that's the choice:** a community-developed proposal for a Shockoe Bottom Memorial Park that is beautiful and broader in its scope but less expensive to create, or a much more narrowly focused but more expensive plan that leaves Shockoe Bottom open to inappropriate development.

**Richmond today** bears the scars of our country's original contradiction: that the "Land of the Free" was founded as a slave society, and continued as such for 246 years. The effects of that history on today's social, economic and political issues have never been fully examined. Shockoe Bottom can be the place to finally conduct that examination.

The Memorial Park can be a 9-acre campus of beautifully and thoughtfully designed memorial and educational spaces -- walkable and technologically connected to our city's wealth of museums, libraries and universities. It can be a living **Site of Conscience** and a fitting legacy for this generation of Richmonders to gift to our children.

A Shockoe Bottom Memorial Park, located within a day's drive of half the country's population, can be a national site for truth, compassion, freedom and progress.

**Your voice is needed to make this vision a reality. To get involved, please contact:**

**Sacred Ground Historical Reclamation Project**  
of the **Defenders for Freedom, Justice & Equality**

PO Box 23202, Richmond, VA 23223  
Ph: 804-644-5834  
Email: DefendersFJE@hotmail.com  
Web: www.SacredGroundProject.net

## How much will it cost? Who will pay for it? Who will be responsible for it?

**Richmond City Council** has already pledged **\$5 million** for memorializing Shockoe Bottom. **The Virginia General Assembly** has pledged **\$3 million**, with **\$9 million more** in reimbursement funds if the City is willing to raise money. This is more than enough to purchase the few privately owned lots east of the CSX railroad tracks, remove the asphalt, install sod, shrubbery and trees, extend the Trail of Enslaved Africans and create signage. The Interpretive Center, recreation of Shockoe Creek, statuary and more can be built as the City raises funds, to be reimbursed by the General Assembly. In this way, we can begin with the money available and grow the site as interest increases, both here and around the country.

As for who will be responsible for the Memorial Park, the proposal calls for the creation of an **independent nonprofit organization**, working with a **Community Advisory Committee** made up of advocates with proven records of working for the reclamation and proper memorialization of Shockoe Bottom.

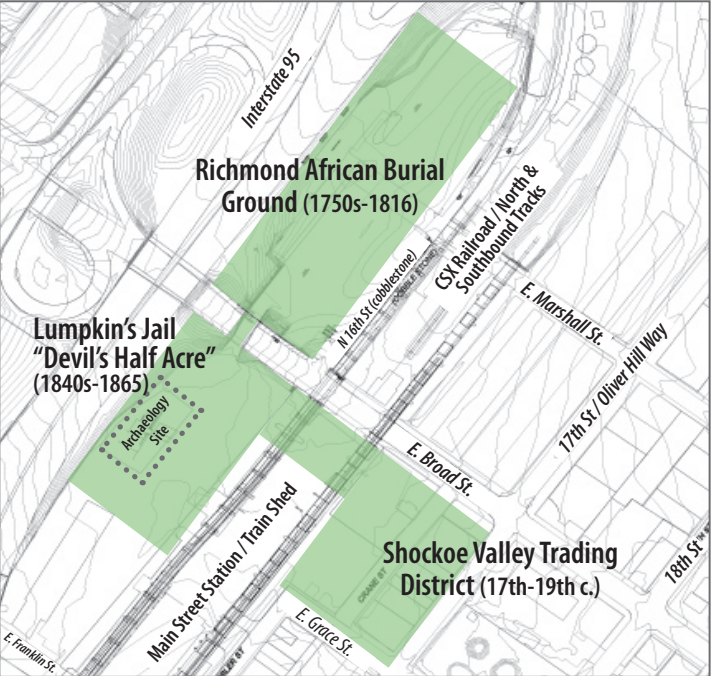
This proposal for a Sacred Ground Memorial Park is being delivered to the offices of the mayor and all members of City Council, with requests for meetings to discuss it.

And remember, the entire community process to develop this proposal was carried out by volunteers - unlike the mayor's plan for a Shockoe Bottom stadium, which cost city taxpayers more than \$500,000 in studies, plus tens of thousands spent by Venture Richmond to promote it.

## The mayor's plan

In contrast to this open, community-generated proposal, Mayor Dwight Jones held a press conference three days before the Aug. 15 Community Meeting to promote a much smaller but more expensive project: a pavilion to be built over the site of Lumpkin's Jail. **That plan does not include the African Burial Ground or any land east of the railroad tracks.** It was developed not as the result of a community process, but behind closed doors and then presented to the community for "comments."

And it would leave the rest of Shockoe Bottom vulnerable to commercial development of any kind. Note: all the other speakers at the mayor's press conference had supported his previous proposal to build a commercial baseball stadium in historic Shockoe Bottom – a plan rejected by the community.



Proposed 9-acre Shockoe Bottom Memorial Park Area