

A Guide to the Judy Project: African American History at Richmond Hill research papers, 2019-2022

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Biographical Information

The Richard Adams House was constructed about 1790 by Richard Adams (d. 1802) on property purchased from the John Coles family. The property was inherited by his son, Richard Adams, Jr. (1760-1817), and later by Richard Adams, III, who sold it to Loftin N. Ellett in 1825. Ellett died in 1865 and his executors sold the house in 1866 to Bishop John McGill of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Richmond. The Adams-Taylor House was built in 1812 for James Smith on property owned by Richard Adams, Jr. When Smith died in 1817, the house was purchased by Jacob Galt Ege. The house was sold by court order in 1833 to William Palmer (1801-1870). Palmer sold the house to William Taylor in 1859, and Taylor enlarged the house that year. Taylor then sold the house to Richard A. Wilkins in 1860. The Richmond Diocese purchased the house from Wilkins in 1866 and requested that the Sisters of the Visitation establish a monastery and girls' school known as Monte Maria at the Richard Adams House. The Adams-Taylor House became part of the campus in 1880. Later construction on campus included the demolition of the Richard Adams House about 1929. By the 1980s, the Sisters of the Visitation planned to relocate to Hanover County, Virginia. An ecumenical group called Richmond Hill purchased the property in 1987 and operates the site as an urban retreat center.

Scope and Content

The Judy Project: African American History at Richmond Hill research papers, September 2019-November 2022, contains research materials gathered by Pam Smith, resident historian at Richmond Hill, to document the lives and dwelling of enslaved persons at the Richard Adams House and the Adams-Taylor House properties in Richmond, Virginia, now known as Richmond Hill. Papers include articles, birth records, census records and slave schedules, death records, deeds, insurance policies, marriage records, personal correspondence, poems, reports, wills, and related Richmond Hill programming and exhibit materials, as well as the website.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged

- Series I: Introduction
- Series II: Dwelling
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- Series VIII: Wilkins-Judy and her enslavers
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Scope and Content

Introduction contains information on the Judy Project exhibition, including information on owners of the property at what is now Richmond Hill; slavery and enslaved persons at Richmond Hill; and information on the dwellings located at Richmond Hill.

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Doug Sanford emails, re: Mutual Assurance Society database, 26 February 2022

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Richard Adams House in Houses of Old Richmond, by Mary Wingfield Scott, pp. 12-15

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For a Black Man Hired to Undo a Confederate Legacy, It Has Not Been Easy, New York Times, 17 April 2022

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Keast and Hood Structural Assessment Report, pp. 62-63, 18 December 2017

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Richmond Hill--Reports contains archaeological and architectural assessments of the dwelling of enslaved persons at Richmond Hill.

Richmond Hill Slave House, by Jobie Hill, Historic Preservation Architect, Founder of Saving Slave Houses, 15 January 2020

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Archaeological Assessment of Cultural Deposits Beneath a Damaged Walkway at Richmond Hill, City of Richmond, Virginia: Management Summary, by Tim Roberts

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Virginia Department of Historic Resources archaeological site record, 10 August 2021

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Report on Artifact Cataloguing and General Assemblage Analysis, Richmond Hill 2020 Walkway Project, by Carole Nash, Ph.D., James Madison University, 3 June 2021

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Richmond Hill Slave House Structural Assessment Report, by Springpoint Structural LLC, 4 April 2022

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Architectural Evaluation of the Richmond Hill Brick Outbuilding, by Douglas W. Sanford, Virginia Slave Housing Project, May 2022

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Further Investigation of the Richmond Hill Kitchen-Quarter and Its Relation to the Property's Brick Boundary Walls, by Douglas W. Sanford, Virginia Slave Housing Project, 26 October 2022

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Draft update by Tim Roberts, 3 November 2022

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Seeking the Unknown: A Ground-Penetrating Radar Survey of the Quarters and the Cemetery at Richmond Hills, Richmond, VA, by Paul S. Martin, Martin Archaeology Consulting, 10 March 2023

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Short form agreement for services with Baskervill, architect

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Series IV: Neighborhood Reports

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Scope and Content

Neighborhood Reports contains articles, letters, maps, reports, wills, and other documents concerning the history of Richmond, Virginia, including significant African American sites.

Preliminary Archaeological Investigation of the Lumpkin's Jail Site (44HE1043) Richmond, Virginia, prepared for the City of Richmond by Matthew R. Laird, Ph.D. James River Institute for Archaeology, May 2006

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Sentinel on the Hill: Monte Maria and One Hundred Years, pp. 24, 139-143; also tombstone for Earsell H. Jeffers (1897-1985)

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Letter from Pam Smith, historian at Richmond Hill, to Congressman Donald McEachin regarding the African American Burial Grounds Network Act, 22 October 2020

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Stoney Aims to Lease Shockoe Bottom Site linked to Slavery, Richmond Times-Dispatch, 20 September 2019

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Virginia Association of Counties regions

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Preliminary History of the Lumpkin's Jail Property

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Giving the Wall: A Tour of African American Historical Sites in Richmond, Virginia, 1619-1860, by Clifford R. Dickinson, The Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, 18 March 2001

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Series V: Coles-Adams

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Scope and Content

Coles-Adams contains records regarding members of the Coles and Adams families that owned the properties and were enslavers. Also includes records of enslaved persons at the Coles and Adams properties.

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John Coles (1705-1747)

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John Coles will, Albemarle County, 1791

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John Coles estate inventory and appraisal, Chesterfield County, 1816-1817

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John Coles petition (from Race and Slavery Petitions Project), 1843

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Walter Coles ca. 1690-1740

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Walter Coles (b. 1910)

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Walter Coles email, 18 May 2022

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Richard Adams papers--correspondence, receipts, accounts, indenture, will, 1763-1800

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Runaway ad for Ralph Chillingsworth, Virginia Gazette, 29 December 1775

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Thomas Adams--will and correspondence regarding enslaved persons, 1769-1785

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Scope and Content

Ellett contains records regarding members of the Loftin N. Ellett family that purchased the Richard Adams House and were enslavers. Also includes records of persons enslaved by Ellett. Records also contain information of African American families with the last name of Ellett.

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Loftin Newman Ellett--enslaved person birth records, 1852-1858

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James B. Ellett (1789-1856)

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James T. Ellett petition (from Race and Slavery Petitions Project), 1859

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Mary M. Ellett (Sherman) records

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Andrew Lewis Ellett census records, 1870, 1880

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Ann R. Garrett--enslaver of Robert?--census records and slave schedules, 1850, 1860

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Tazewell Ellett (1856-1914)

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Tazewell Ellett registration card, 1941

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Emeline Ellett and family records, 1860-1940

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Dabney Ellett and Martha Ellett records, 1870-1920

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Loftin Ellett slave schedules, 1860

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Scope and Content

Ege-Palmer-Taylor contains records regarding members of the Ege, Palmer, and Taylor families that purchased what became known as the Adams-Taylor House and were enslavers. Also includes records of persons enslaved by the Ege, Palmer, and Taylor families. Records also contain information of African American families with the last name of Palmer.

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James D. Taylor and family

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James Smith will, 23 December 1850

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Series VIII: Wilkins--Judy and her enslavers

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Scope and Content

Wilkins--Judy and her enslavers contains records regarding members of the Wilkins family that purchased

what became known as the Adams-Taylor House and were enslavers. Also includes records of persons enslaved by the Wilkins family, including Judy, for whom the Judy Project is named. Records also contain information of African American families with the last name of Wilkins.

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Edmund Wilkins and family

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William Wyche Wilkins

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John Douglas Wilkins and family

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Richard Wilkins (1815-1877) and family

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Margaret Adams Minge Wilkins and Mary Griffin Wilkins

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Search for an Old House in Virginia, Virginia Episcopalian, January 1991

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Series IX: Sister Mildred Dolbear

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Scope and Content

Sister Mildred Dolbear contains biographical and genealogical information on Sister Mildred Dolbear, a nun at Monte Maria, the predecessor institution to Richmond Hill. Includes information on racial identity in Catholic organizations and interracial familial relationships.

Sister Mildred Dolbear records

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Father and paternal grandparents

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Mother and maternal grandparents

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You Could Do the Irish Jig, But Anything African Was Taboo: Black Nuns, Contested Memories, and the 20th Century Struggle to Desegregate U.S. Catholic Religious Life, by Shannen Dee Williams, Journal of African American History, volume 102, number 2, Spring 2017

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Robb family petition (Race and Slavery Petitions Project), 1829

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Unlocking the Closet of Secrets: Slavery in the City of Mobile, Alabama

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Schmidt, Robb, Dolbear

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Robb's Folly: Lost Plazzo of the Garden District, Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans, 7 April 2017

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Series X: Descendants-Bijan Bayne

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Scope and Content

Descendants-Bijan Bayne contains information on the Avent, Shaw, and Wilkins families that descended from enslaved persons enslaved by the Wilkins family highlighting the ancestry of Bijan Bayne. Papers include census records and slave schedules, city directory entries, emails, genealogical records, marriage records, notes, and photographs.

Gerald Roer Shaw (father) and Geneva Bertha Halstead (grandmother)

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Bijan C. Bayne

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AfriGeneas Genealogy and History Forum Archive and AfriGeneas Slave Research Forum, 2002-2003

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Bijan Bayne email correspondence with Pam Smith, September-October 2021

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Gerald Shaw (b. 1934)

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Photograph--Shaw family(?)

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Wilkins-Avent-Shaw family

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Series XI: Descendants

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Scope and Content

Descendants contains articles, notes, and educational rubrics regarding descendants of enslaved persons and reparations, as well as census records, death records, emails, genealogical records, notes, and wills on the Adams, Brown, Early, Holmes, and Peoples families. Includes an open letter to the director of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts regarding the site where the Robert E. Lee Monument stood expressing concerns over the site's future.

Engaging Descendant Communities in the Interpretation of Slavery at Museums and Historic Sites: A Rubric of Best Practices Established by the National Summit on Teaching Slavery, National Trust for Historic Preservation and African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund, 15 October 2018

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A Nation Built on the Back of Slavery and Racism, Yes! magazine, Summer 2015

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Reparations, 6 October 2021

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James Madison's Plantation Vowed to Share Power with Black Descendants. Then Things Blew Up. Washington Post, 22 April 2022

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Montpelier Foundation Chooses New Leaders for Presidential Home, Culpeper Star Exponent, 25 May 2022

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Supreme Court to Consider Virginia Uranium Case that Divides a Rural County, Washington Post--Coles family, Pittsylvania County, 4 November 2018

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Email correspondence--Helena Holmes and Carol Dove, 2021

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Open letter to the Director of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts regarding the future of the former site of the Lee Statue

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Series XII: Research Assistance

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Scope and Content

Research Assistance contains articles, census records and slave schedules, genealogical records, marriage records, and other documents providing information on John Holt Rice, as well as the Anderson, Blunk, Finchum, Morton, Rice, and Taylor families.

Reverend John Holt Rice and Morton and Rice families

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Anderson family

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Blunk and Finchum families

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Taylor family, including African-Virginians and the Vernacular Building Tradition in Richmond City, 1790-1860 by Gregg Kimball, Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture volume 4, 1991

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Series XIII: Davenport

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Scope and Content

Davenport includes articles, biographies, census records, death records, genealogies, and other records concerning Isaac Davenport, Jr., and family members, as well as information on Davenport and Company. Records concern Davenport's personal and business involvement with slavery.

Isaac Davenport, Jr., (1814-1896) and family

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National Register of Historic Places--multiple property documentation form

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Black Davenports census records, 1870

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Series XIV: General

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Scope and Content

General contains articles, brochures, correspondence, emails, poems, presentations, programs, songs, and other documents regarding Richmond Hill, Shockoe Bottom, education, enslaved persons, racism and antiracism, reparations, religion and spirituality, and other topics.

Email correspondence with Elizabeth Varon, March 2021

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"On to Richmond" section on touring the city from the Richmond Times-Dispatch, 26 September 2010

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Thomas Fortune Ryan biography

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History of St. Francis of Assisi Parish: Part 4: Parish Growth and Priestly Vocations (1900-1930s)

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Richmond Hill: A Priest's Vision by the Reverend Benjamin P. Campbell, Episcopalian, Chaplain to the Bishop of Virginia, Priest-in-Residence, St. Paul's, Richmond

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Steeped in Prayer: People Come to Richmond Hill for Retreat--But Not for Escape in Virginia Episcopalian, May-June 1998

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Richmond Hill's daily cycle of prayer

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Feelings--color wheel; 4-way Prayer of Forgiveness; composite list of types of traumatic events

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A Litany for the Healing of Generations

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African Ubuntu Bible Study

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Virginia Secession Ordinance

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Koinonia Slave Trail Walk reflection sheet, 16 November 2019

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Executive Order Number Thirty-Two (Governor Ralph Northam): Establishment of the Commission to Examine Racial Inequity in Virginia Law, 4 June 2019

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Harvard Divinity School interview with Professor Cornel West, 4 December 2017

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Faith in the Cityby DeBorah J. Cannady, 20 January 2020

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Becoming Anti-Racist--Zones

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The Art of Hospitality: African Style, by Del Chinchén, 1 October 2001

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On Reparations, Let Impacted Communities Lead the Way by David Ragland, Melinda Salazar, and Tarell Kyles, 17 October 2019

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John Brown's Declaration and Constitution from The Intellectual Devotional.com, 11 August 2008

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Letter from Historic Richmond to Kim Chen, Office of the DCAO (Deputy Chief Administrative Officer), Economic Development and Planning, and Maritza Pechin, Manager, Office of Equitable Development, Department of Planning and Development Review, regarding the draft of the Shockoe Small Area Plan dated July 19, 2021, 16 August 2021

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Sitting on the Sidelines: The Historic Richmond Foundation Declines to Weigh in on the Shockoe Bottom Debate by Ned Oliver, 1 July 2014

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Songs: Canticle of the Turning, Cast Out, O Christ, Wonderful Words of Life Spirit, Pour Out, and Sanctus

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Prayer for Discernment and Wisdom When You Need God's Direction

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Black Dancers and Robert E. Lee Monument

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Correspondence and papers

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Zoom presentation, Womanist Wellness Workshop: Tilling the Soil, Exposing the Roots: Discovering OUR Ancestral Legacies, 2021

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Whole Truth History--Pam Smith at Virginia Theological Seminary, October 2022

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brochure--The Judy Project: Unearthing African American Stories at Richmond Hill, 2021

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Booklet--Seeing the Scars of Slavery in the Natural Environment: An Interpretive Guide to the Manchester Slave Trail Along the James River in Richmond, James River Park System

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Program--Dedication of Hearth Memorial to the Enslaved, William and Mary, 7 May 2022

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Brochure--Museum Guide Your History Museum Your History: Virginia Museum of History and Culture

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The Old City Cemetery: A Quick Guide (Lynchburg)

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The Black History Committee of the Friends of the Thomas Balch Library of the Town of Leesburg, Virginia: Our History, Our Mission, our Ongoing Commitment

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Cards--True Sons of Freedom, The Library of Virginia

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Poem--My Great Grandfather's Slaves by Wendell Berry

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Brochure--Cemeteries of Belmead Powhatan, Virginia

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Program--VCU Department of History Diploma Ceremony, 14 May 2022

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Brochure--John Jasper: Virginia's Celebrated Preacher

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Program--American Civil War Museum and Virginia Museum of History and Culture Present Legacies of Emancipation, 25 October 2019

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Series XV: Articles

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Scope and Content

Articles consists of articles regarding slavery and enslaved persons, African American cemeteries,

Absentee Ownership of Slaves in the United States in 1830, by the Department of Research of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History in The Journal of Negro History, volume 9, number 2, April 1924

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Genealogy of the Adams Family of New Kent and Henrico Counties, Va., by C. W. Coleman in William and Mary Quarterly, volume 5, number 3, January 1897

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Folder 18

Letters of Richard Adams to Thomas Adams, in Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, volume 22, number 4, October 1914

Box 6

Folder 19

The History of Enslaved People at Georgetown Visitation, by Susan Nalezty in U.S. Catholic Historian, volume 37, number 2, Spring 2019

Box 6

Folder 20

Disappearing the Enslaved: the Destruction and Recover of Richmond's Second African Burial Ground, by Ryan K. Smith in Building and Landscape: Journal of Vernacular Architecture Forum, volume 27, number 1, Spring 2020

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Historical Narratives: Abraham Maslow and Blackfoot Interpretations, by Kenneth D. Feigenbaum and Rene Anne Smith in The Humanistic Psychologist, volume 48, number 3, 2020

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Folder 22

Reconstruction in Richmond: White Restoration and Black Protest, April-June 1865, by John T. O'Brien in Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, volume 89, number 3, July 1981

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Black-White Relations in Richmond, Virginia, 1782-1820, by Marianne Buroff Sheldon in Journal of Southern History, volume 45, number 1, February 1979

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A Sense of Their Own Power: Self-Determination in Recent Writings on Black Virginians, by Philip J. Schwarz in Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, volume 97, number 3, July 1989

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War Letters of the Bishop of Richmond, edited by Willard E. Wight in Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, volume 67, number 3, July 1959

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Review of Where the Negroes Are Masters: An African Port in the Era of the Slave Trade, by Rebecca Shumway in William and Mary Quarterly, volume 71, number 3, July 2014

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Winney Grimshaw, a Virginia Slave, and Her Family, by Richard S. Dunn in Early American Studies, volume 9, number 3, Fall 2011

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The Peculiar Institution and National Honor: The Case of the Creole Slave Revolt, by Howard Jones in Civil War History, volume 21, March 1975

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Chapter II, Customs of Early Days in History of Howard and Cooper Counties

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