



U.S. Army Corps
of Engineers
Norfolk District

RESTORATION *News*

Former Nansemond Ordnance Depot Project Update • Volume 10 • June 2003

Reburial Ceremony Date Set

On May 6, the U.S. Army Corps completed its third planning meeting regarding the reburial of human remains that were found in an unmarked grave on the south bank of the James River during a restoration effort. "Seventeen members of the community graciously donated their time, resources, and inspiration to help plan what promises to be an unforgettable, educational, commemorative memorial service," says Adriane James, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Project Manager.

Fritz Whitfield of Little Bethel Baptist Church offered his insight on why the reburial is important to the community: "The reburial of this African American ancestor gives us the opportunity to reflect on our past and culture and enables us to pass that information on to future generations."

The reburial ceremony will begin at 11:00 a.m. on June 21 at the First Baptist Church on Mahan Street in downtown Suffolk. The worship ceremony will be jointly conducted by First Baptist Church, Little Bethel Baptist Church, and Macedonia A.M.E Church. "Anyone interested in attending this ceremony is strongly encouraged to do so. We are hoping to have a great turnout at this event!" says James.

A graveside service will be held immediately following the ceremony at Oakland Cemetery on Godwin Boulevard in Chuckatuck. The cemetery is

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Community leaders with Corps Project Manager Adriane James and Archaeologist Tim Thompson at second reburial planning meeting

Mark Your Calendar...

Reburial Ceremony



June 21, 2003
11 a.m.

Location:

First Baptist Church
Mahan Street, Suffolk

Come and join us at the memorial service.

Restoration Advisory Board Meetings



August 7, 2003
October 2, 2003
December 4, 2003

7 p.m. - 9 p.m.

All are Welcome!

Location:

Bon Secours Health Center at
Harbour View, 5818 Harbour View
Boulevard (Suffolk)

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adjacent to the Oakland Christian Church Cemetery and is owned and operated by Little Bethel Baptist Church.

The graveside service will be led by Rev. Donald Allen. It will include an African drummer during the procession, a libation (a religious ritual to link attendees with the past), and a solo/tribute to women (in the form of an old Negro hymn). During the ceremony, there will also be a vigil in which 19 women will release butterflies or doves in memory of this woman. The 19 women in the vigil relate to June 19th, also referred to as Juneteenth, the oldest known celebration of the ending of slavery.

June 19th, also referred to as Juneteenth, is the oldest known celebration of the ending of slavery. It dates back to June 19, 1865 when many slaves in the state of Texas first learned that they had been freed.

Despite an extensive archaeology study, the U.S. Army Corps was unable to identify the identity of this individual. The remains are believed to be that of a 20- to 24-year-old African American female who died around 1800. Since shroud pins were the only artifacts found in the unmarked grave, not much is known about her life, or the circumstances of her death. However, a scientific examination of her remains indicates that she lived a life of hard physical labor. She may have been one of the 4,400 slaves recorded in the census in Nansemond County at that time. In 1800, slaves made up about 40 percent of the population in the county.

A team of filmmakers associated with Little Bethel Baptist Church is

interested in producing a documentary about the reburial entitled “Treading a Slave Woman’s Path”. The documentary will answer questions about the woman being reburied and provide some historical information about where was she buried, why she was buried on the bank of the James River, how she was found, and who she was. The filmmakers plan to

interview Army Corps representatives and local historians and incorporate the reburial ceremony into the documentary as well. The filmmakers are hoping to submit the documentary to the Virginia Department of Education and Hampton City Schools to be run in high schools and junior high schools.

Special Thanks go to:

- Paul Gillis *Congressman Forbes’ Office & Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity*
- Fritz Whitfield *Little Bethel Baptist Church*
- Laurna Taylor *Little Bethel Baptist Church*
- Rev. Donald Allen *Little Bethel Baptist Church*
- Tiffany Wilson *Little Bethel Baptist Church*
- Lawrence Watford *Little Bethel Baptist Church*
- Rev. Steven Blunt *First Baptist Church, Mahan St.*
- Harvey Whitney *First Baptist Church, Mahan St.*
- Clifton Gwaltny *First Baptist Church, Mahan St.*
- George Richards *First Baptist Church, Mahan St.*
- Henry Blunt *First Baptist Church, Mahan St.*
- Charles Christian *NAACP & First Baptist Church, Mahan St.*
- William Hill *Crockett Funeral Home*
- Rev. Mae Lawson *Pastor, Macedonia AME Church*
- Brenda Lee *Macedonia AME Church*
- Bea Rogers *FNOD RAB Community Co-Chair*
- Rev. Larry Thomas *New Hope Baptist Church*

Web Site Links

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers FNOD Project Web Site:
<http://www.nao.usace.army.mil/projects/nansemond/welcome.html>
- Environmental Protection Agency:
<http://www.epa.gov/reg3hwmd/super/VA/nansemond/index.htm>
- Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ):
<http://www.deq.state.va.us>

Project Updates

Groundwater Monitoring

The Army Corps began a soil and groundwater sampling investigation in the TNT area (near the entrance of TCC Portsmouth Campus) in April. Surface and subsurface soil samples have been taken from 18 locations. Groundwater samples have been taken from 14 monitoring wells. The Corps is testing for explosives, metal, perchlorate, semi-volatile organic compounds, and Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs). The preliminary results of this effort will be available in June.

Dieldrin

The Army Corps has evaluated concentrations of Dieldrin across the site and has determined that Dieldrin is not a sitewide soil issue at FNOD. The Corps will address Dieldrin on a site-by-site basis. Two sites require further investigation including the Tire Pile/Paint Can Area and the Pesticide Drum Area. The Corps is planning an investigation in both areas to determine the extent of Dieldrin in the soil and is working with the regulators to determine an appropriate cleanup level. The Corps will then conduct a removal and additional

sampling to confirm that all affected soil has been removed. The Corps may also be required to conduct a risk assessment. These efforts are expected to be completed by the end of 2003.

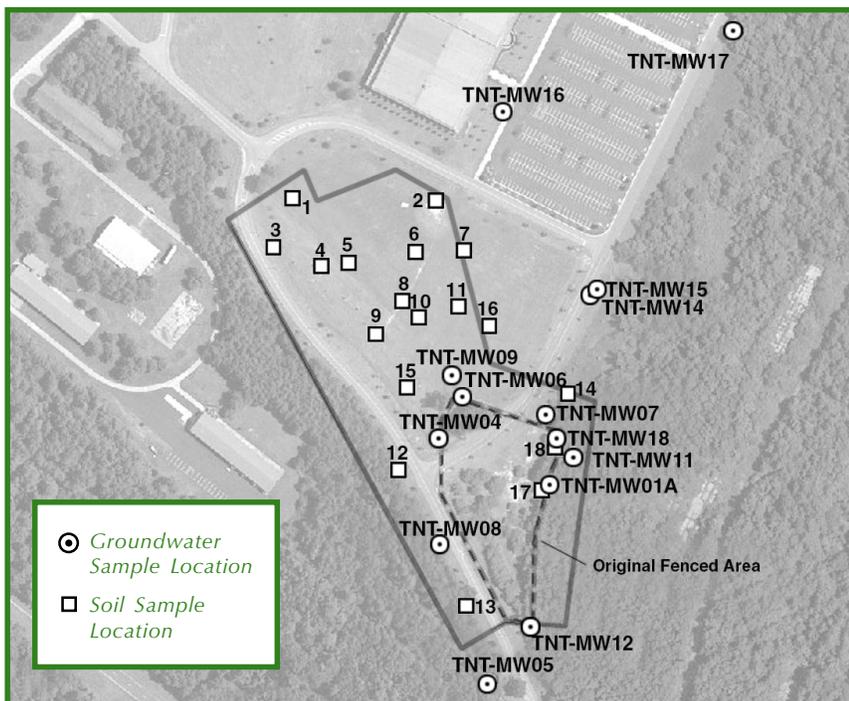
Ordnance & Explosives Clearing

TCC/TNT Area

Ordnance clearance efforts at TCC were delayed by the wet spring weather, and may not be completed until mid July 2003. Ordnance work is being conducted Monday through Thursday with Friday as a weather backup day. Two ordnance crews are working on site. The ordnance teams have fully delineated the area which contains small amounts of crystalline TNT and are now finishing investigations around the perimeter. The last effort in this area will be to remove the crystalline TNT.

GE Main Burning Ground

There are now 160 investigation grids on GE property due to the fact that more ordnance items were found along the northern and western perimeter of the original site. There are 73 investigation grids left to clear on GE property. The Corps is still awaiting approval to use mechanical sifting at the site which would significantly speed up the process. If approved, OE clearance efforts could be completed on GE property by 2005, a year to 18 months ahead of schedule and save approximately \$1 million.



TNT Investigation Area

For More Information:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Norfolk District
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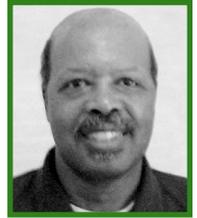
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Information Repository

Tidewater Community College Library
Phone: (757) 822-2130
Hours: 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. M-Th
8 a.m. to 4 p.m. F

Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) News

The Corps is pleased to welcome Carl Serrette to the Restoration Advisory Board. Carl lives in Burbage Grant and serves on the civic association's Political Action Committee.



Carl is originally from New York City. He's been married to his wife Valerie for 34+ years, and has four children (three boys and a girl), and ten grandchildren. He retired from NYNEX (now Verizon, formally known as New York Telephone Co.) as a Senior Systems Analyst in 1995, after 28 years of service. He moved to Burbage Grant in 1996.

Carl has been employed by United Property Associates (a property management company) since 1997 as an Auxiliary Operations Supervisor, assigned under the Senior Association Manager for Burbage Grant. His duties include common area maintenance, coordination of vendor contracts, and communication with the city, state, and the community to help resolve issues as they pertain to the community. Carl says "I've become civically active to do my part to sustain the integrity of Burbage Grant."

New RAB Member Opportunities

The Corps welcomes community involvement. If you are interested in receiving information about joining the RAB, please contact Sandra Chaloux at s.chaloux@ce-com.com or 800-232-7074.

All RAB Meetings are Open to the Public!

RAB MEMBER LIST

Adriane James
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Manager/ Gov't
Co-Chair
757-441-7701

Bea Rogers
Community Co-Chair
757-484-6001

James Bennett
Dominion Lands
804-819-2352

Fred Copeland
General Electric
757-483-5485

Russ Dudley
VDOT
804-786-5588

Tim Fink
TCC
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Bruce Johnson
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City of Suffolk
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