

09 NEWSOME FARM AND CEMETERY

Newsome Farm was founded on October 20, 1869, when five former slaves, Lemuel Stone, Jeremiah Hines, Eli Cornelius, Berry Cornick and Abraham Woodhouse, purchased a parcel of land known as "Newsum or Foremans" tract containing 220 acres. By 1887, the property was surveyed and laid out into lots. Newsome Farm grew into a settlement of 70 homes. In 1977 the city began rehabilitating dilapidated homes, providing a water and sewage connection for every home, constructing a drainage system, paving roads and adding sidewalks.



Improvements, and with the leadership of a dynamic civic league, helped to develop an integrated "ideal community."

www.vaaccvb.org *Daniel Smith Road and Baker Road, 23462

10 VIRGINIA AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER (VAACC)

This site features a public art installation by nationally renowned artist Rich Holland titled "Portraits from a Place of Grace." This public art installation was commissioned by the Virginia Beach Office of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the Virginia African American Cultural Center (VAACC.) Each portrait in the installation represents a resident of each of the 14 historically Black neighborhoods in Virginia Beach. The portraits reflect the dignity, resilience and hope of several generations.

www.portraitsofgrace.us

*Newtown Road & 744 Hampshire Lane, 23462



11 EBENEZER BAPTIST CHURCH



Established in 1859, this is among the oldest surviving churches in Virginia Beach. Originally a small log cabin with no floor, the church grew quickly with updated and additional buildings to accommodate the congregation. The early church had several

distinguishing features including a pedal organ, stained glass windows, two wood-burning stoves, a bell tower and a large upstairs gallery. *965 Baker Road, 23462

12 L & J GARDENS

This neighborhood was created in 1954 for middle-class Blacks during racial segregation. The neighborhood was developed by Black businessman and college graduate Walter H. "Crow" Riddick. The picture-windowed, split level, pillared ranch colonials set on meticulously tended lawns, showcased a mid-20th century community exhibiting the American Dream. In December 2019, the Virginia State Review Board determined that L & J Gardens is eligible for listing as a Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The City of Virginia Beach has received an Underrepresented Communities grant from the National Park Service's Historic Preservation Fund and the process to nominate the neighborhood to the NRHP is underway. Members of the Riddick family and several other prominent professional Black families still live there today.

www.vaaccvb.org *Northampton Blvd and Wesleyan Drive, 23502



13 SEATACK COMMUNITY



Fishermen of Seatack were among the first lifesavers along the entire Atlantic seaboard, and the original U.S. lifesaving stations at the oceanfront was named Seatack in 1878. The community was a pioneer for its significant achievements in segregated Virginia. The residents

of Seatack established schools, founded one of first Black-owned fire stations in eastern Virginia, and built churches, parks, a recreation center and a community day care. On May 21, 2013, Representative Scott Rigell read into the Congressional record to "honor the 200th- plus anniversary of the Seatack community, the oldest African American community in the United States." In December 2019, the Virginia State Review Board determined that Seatack is eligible for listing as a Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The City of Virginia Beach has received an Underrepresented Communities grant from the National Park Service's Historic Preservation Fund and the process to nominate the neighborhood to the NRHP is underway. Seatack is also the birthplace of world-renowned artist, writer and producer, Pharrell Williams. www.m.seatack.civic.org

*Birdneck Road, 23451

* A guided tour is in the process of being created. Please continue to check vaaccvb.org for updates on the guided tour and other projects. Special thanks to Dr. Amelia Ross-Hammond, founder and chairman of VAACC; and Edna Hawkins Hendrix, author and local historian.

A Self-Guided Tour of

AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

in VIRGINIA BEACH



The William Alexander Family, 1921
Image courtesy of The Hawkins Family

VIRGINIA BEACH
LIVE THE LIFE

Produced by
the Virginia Beach Convention & Visitor's Bureau
in partnership with the Virginia African American Cultural Center, Inc.

It is well-documented that Africans brought the skills and trades of their homeland to North America. Their expertise in navigation and agriculture helped shape the industry and waterways of the New World and Virginia Beach. Please note this is a self-guided tour. The buildings at locations 2 & 8 no longer exist. Except for locations 1 & 8, the locations listed below are privately owned, but visitors are welcome to drive by. For the remainder of the locations, please check websites or call ahead for hours and pricing.

01 FIRST LANDING STATE PARK



After the Great Depression, President Franklin D. Roosevelt launched the Civilian Conservation Corps to provide work for millions of young men, including 250,000 African Americans. An all African American regiment, Company 1371, constructed trails and built cabins in what is now known as First Landing State Park. Although Black workers built the park, they were not allowed to use it. In 1951, a group of local African Americans filed suit against the Virginia Conservation Commission for being denied entrance to the park. The suit wasn't heard until 1955, and officials chose to close the park that year rather than integrate it. The park reopened in 1965 to all ethnicities. www.first-landing-state-park.org *New Guinea Drive, 23459

02 SEAVIEW BEACH AND AMUSEMENT PARK

Between 1945 and 1965, Seaview Beach and Amusement Park was a vibrant, attractive and popular place where African Americans socialized, dined, danced and played during segregation. Seaview had an amusement park with rides and a midway, and featured shows by celebrities like Ella Fitzgerald, Dizzy Gillespie, and Louis Armstrong. WRAP DJ "Big Daddy Jack" Holmes established the well-known slogan, "See you at Seaview!" www.seaviewbeach.wordpress.com *Shore Drive at W. Great Neck Road 23451



03 OCEANA LODGE #69 PRINCE HALL AF & AM



Oceana Lodge No. 69 of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons was founded in 1892. Although the lodge was founded in 1892, this particular building dates to 1960. It's one of the oldest Masonic lodge halls in the region, and an important meeting place for the area's African American community. *1760 Potters Road, 23454

04 NIMMO UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Established in 1791, the Nimmo United Methodist Church building included a slave balcony that still exists today. By 1829, a small group of white members and people of color formed a separate congregation. A parcel of land across the road from Nimmo was acquired by the new congregation's trustees and they built a church there, later to be known as Olive Branch Methodist Church. The group reunited with Nimmo and conveyed their church and property to Nimmo's trustees in 1894. www.nimmochurch.com. *2200 Princess Anne Road, 23456

05 ASBURY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH



Originally known as Asbury United Methodist Church, this house of worship was founded in 1871 by African Americans in the rural community of Pungo. The original church was a log cabin structure that was replaced by a frame building in 1917. The church was damaged by a hurricane in 1944 and the current building was completed by 1949. The church's cemetery provides eternal rest for many Black leaders, including trustee Thomas Wright, an original surfman at the Cape Henry Life Saving Station. *1392 Princess Anne Road, 23462

06 PLEASANT RIDGE SCHOOL



The first Pleasant Ridge School, located adjacent to the Asbury Christian Fellowship Church, was a one-room schoolhouse that opened for Black children around 1886. Around 1918, the schoolhouse was destroyed by a fire. Another was built shortly after. In 1989, school alumni, with the help of donations and assistance from Sheriff Frank Drew, restored the schoolhouse. www.carolshouse.com *1392 Princess Anne Road, 23462

07 UNION BAPTIST CHURCH

In 1862 while under the threat of slavery, determined Christians walked down long dusty roads and rode in carriages to meet at the first structure known as "Bush Shelter" at Walk's Corner. Fast forward to present day and Union Baptist Church recently celebrated its 157th anniversary. The church is home to the first African American female Baptist pastor in the Hampton Roads region and has a congregation of 300 members. www.localprayers.com/US/VirginiaBeach *4608 South Blvd, 23452

08 PRINCESS ANNE COUNTY TRAINING SCHOOL



During segregation, Princess Anne County kept denying the African American community's requests for them to build a high school. So, the African American community raised money and bought land for a school. They raised additional funds and eventually, with the help of some grants, were able to get the county to build Princess Anne County Training School. This four-room school opened in 1938 as the first and only high school in Princess Anne County for African Americans. The Training School was renamed Union Kempsville High School in the early 1960s and the last graduating class was in 1969, very late in the desegregation process. Union Kempsville High School was razed and eventually another school was built on the land. Today, Renaissance Academy houses the Princess Anne County Training School/Union Kempsville High School Museum, which features exhibits and original artifacts from, students, faculty and the school. www.museumsvb.org *5100 Cleveland Street inside Renaissance Academy, 23462