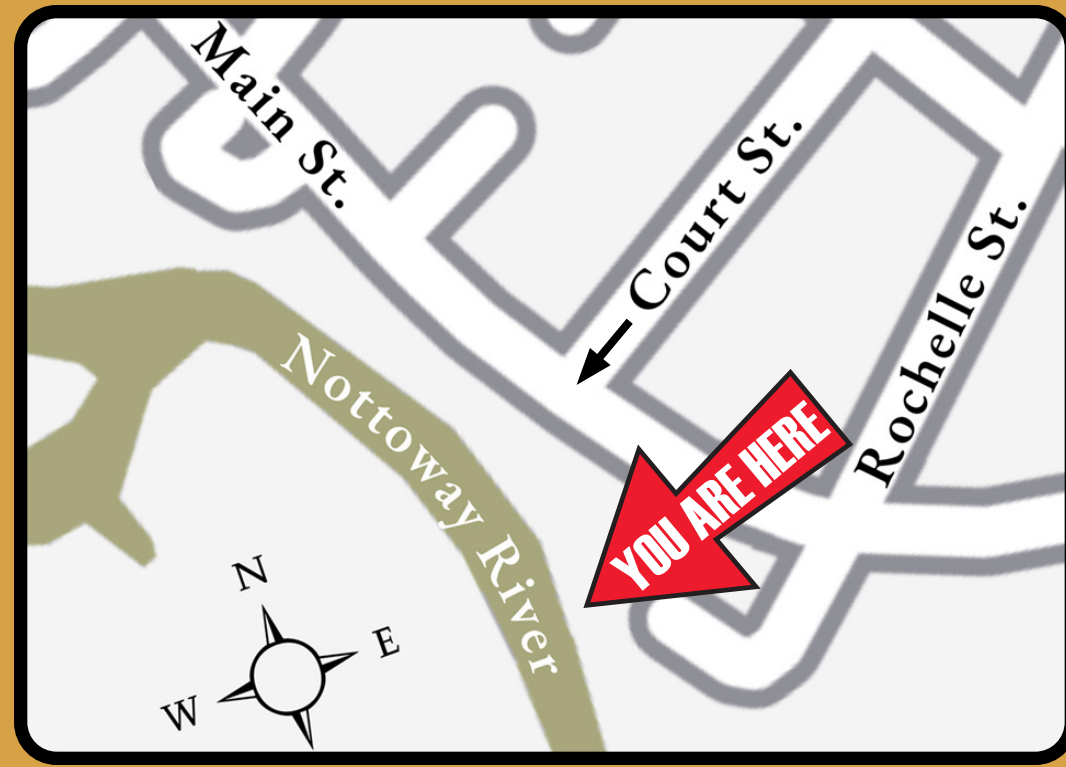


Southampton County

A DIVERSE AGRARIAN COMMUNITY



**NAT
TURNER
TRAIL**

1831
Southampton
Insurrection

Southampton County was established in 1749. Before the Europeans' arrival, the area south of the Blackwater River was inhabited by Native Americans, primarily the Nottoway Indians. According to the 1830 census, Southampton County mostly contained small farms and a few plantations such as "Sunnyside," "Oak Grove," "Belmont," and "Rose Hill." Only a small number of landowners owned more than 20 bondsmen. Nevertheless, more than 7,756 enslaved people of African descent were in the county. The minority White population (6,573 people) feared the consequences of a slave revolt.

Cash Crops

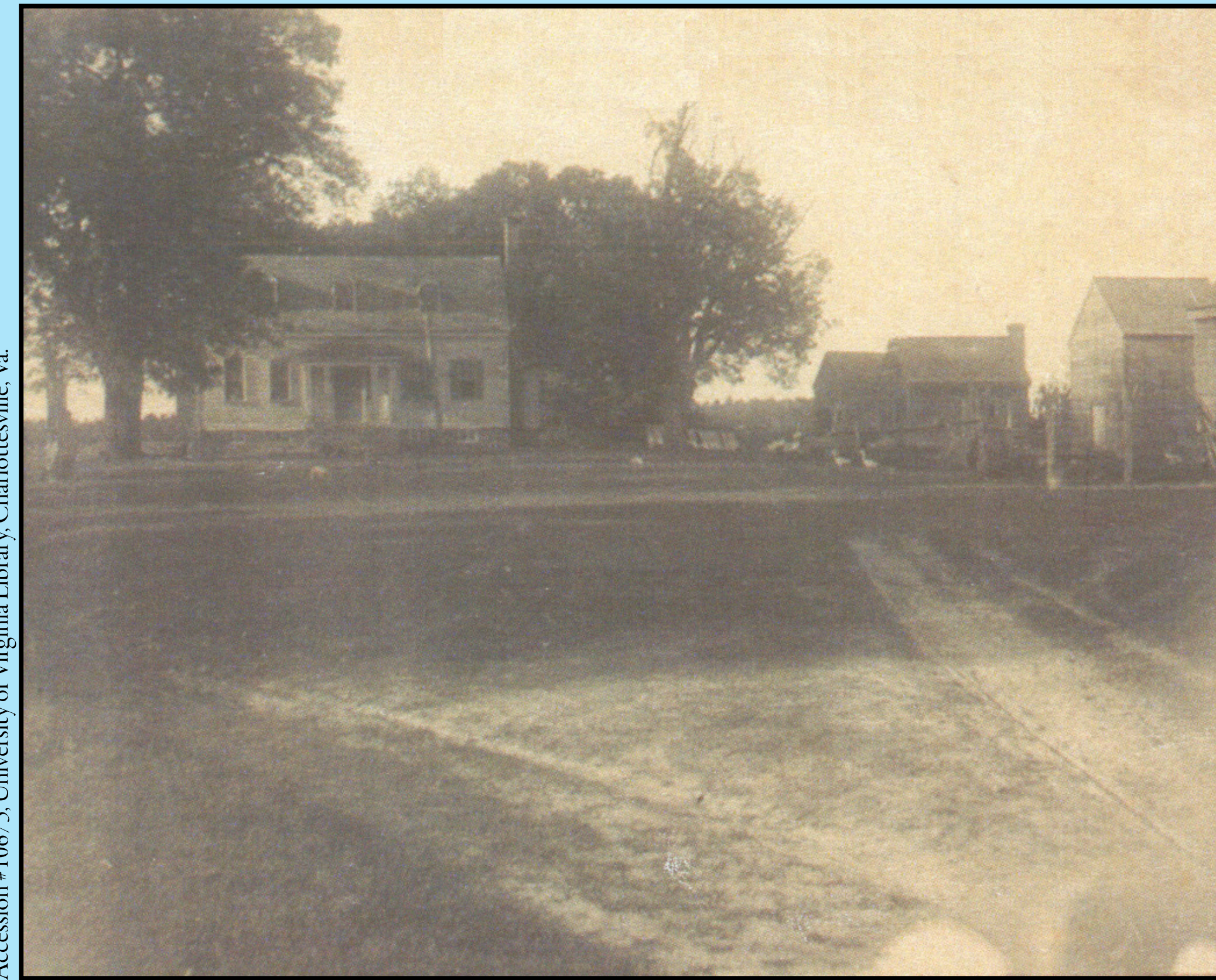
The county's primary products included tobacco, cotton, corn, brandy, and chattel people. The rapid rise of cotton cultivation in the Deep South prompted the interstate slave trade, making bondsmen Virginia's largest export during the five decades before the Civil War.

Quakers, Baptists, and the American Colonization Society

The 1830 census recorded that the county had 1,745 free Blacks, including Nottoway Indians. The Nottoways lived on a reservation in the county, and any "free white of mixed blood, not being a white person, nor a free Negro."¹ This number could be due to the influence of Quakers and Emancipation Baptists, groups that were crucial in expanding a community of "free people of color." Southampton resident David Barrow, a leading member of this Baptist sect, freed his enslaved workers in 1784.

1. As stated in Free Person of Color Not Negro (FPCNN) certificates.

Speech and Photographs Relating to Nat Turner's Insurrection, Accession # 10673, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Va.



"Belmont," Dr. Simon Blunt's plantation.



*"Picking cotton near Montgomery, Alabama."
J. H. Lakin, photographer, [186].*

Free Black people had limited freedom and had to petition the commonwealth to remain in Virginia after being granted liberty. Anthony Gardiner's family was one of many who was able to go to Liberia, Africa, via support from the American Colonization Society. Those who remained struggled. Five free Blacks were accused of being followers of Nat Turner. Only one, Berry Newsum, would be executed for his role in the insurrection.



Trajan Doyle's home, a typical ca. 1830 rural homestead.

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