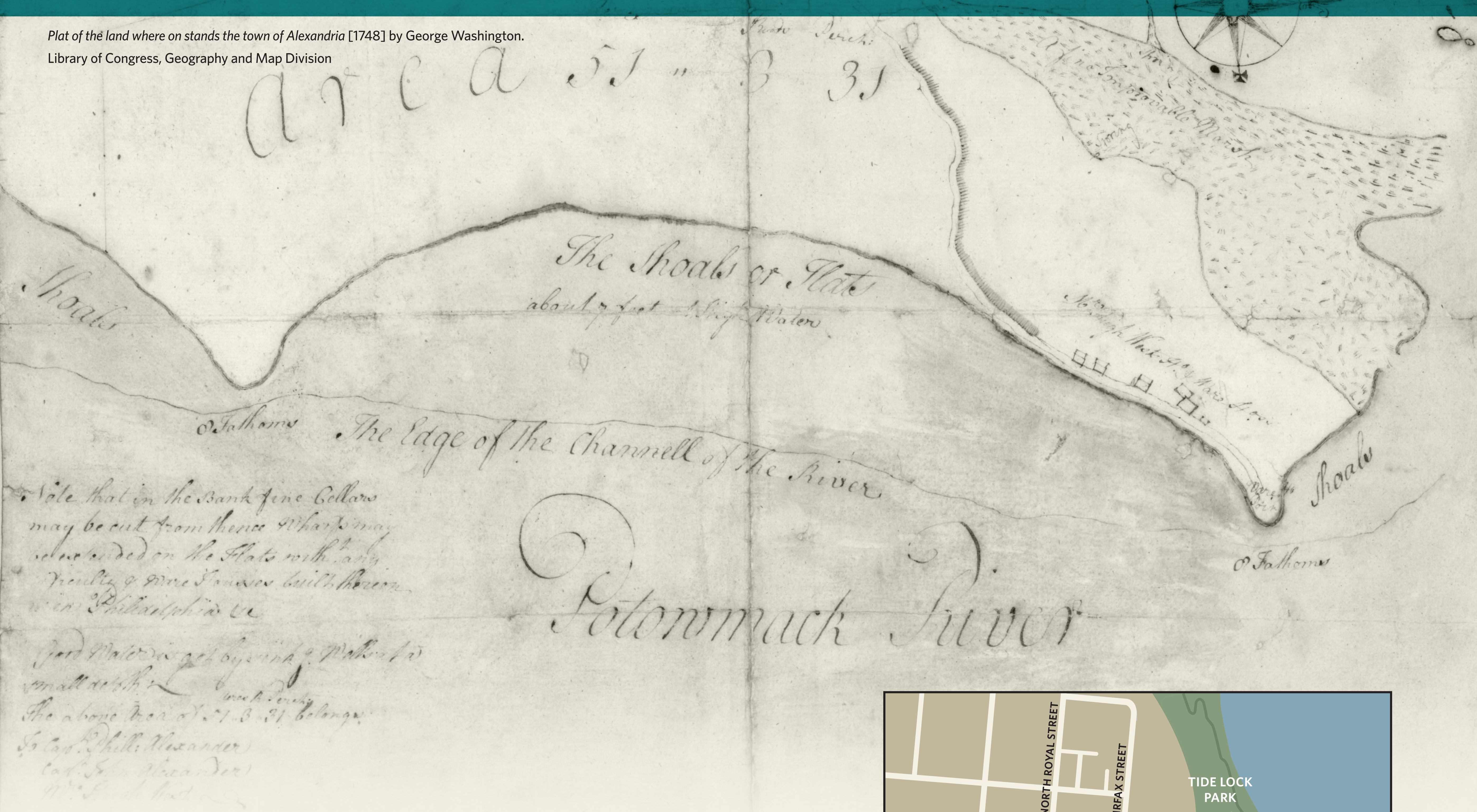


AFRICAN AMERICAN WATERFRONT HERITAGE TRAIL

Plat of the land where on stands the town of Alexandria [1748] by George Washington.
Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division



The African American Heritage Trail along the waterfront consists of two interconnecting routes. Both begin at Waterfront Park. Together, these trails illuminate the history of the African American community in Alexandria over a span of several centuries.

- 1 African American Neighborhoods**
Three African American neighborhoods straddled Oronoco Bay, just off the river's edge – what became known as The Berg and Fishtown to the south and west, and Cross Canal, to the north.
- 2 Fishtown**
In the 19th century, Fishtown existed at a time when the Potomac River was described as “full of business and fish.” Seasonally, free and enslaved laborers worked in Fishtown, cleaning and preparing fish for market.
- 3 Retrocession**
Alexandria was part of the District of Columbia beginning in 1801. The return of Alexandria to pro-slavery Virginia in 1847 impacted the lives of Black residents.
- 4 Torpedo Factory (3rd floor outside the Alexandria Archaeology Museum)**
The U.S. Naval Torpedo Station, Alexandria, was a workplace for African Americans during and after World War II.
- 5 Domestic Slave Trade**
Alexandria was once one of the country's largest centers of the domestic slave trade. Thousands and thousands of people were trafficked by ship from the wharves here on the Potomac to the slave markets of the Deep South.
- 6 Captain George Henry**
An enslaved ship captain sailed the waters of the Chesapeake, including those of Alexandria, before he sought his own freedom in the 1840s.
- 7 The River Queen**
This steamship, once the transport of President Lincoln and his generals, tells the story of the river as a place of leisure for African Americans in the 20th century.
- 8 Shipbuilding in Early America**
The experience of Charles, an enslaved ship carpenter's apprentice, illuminates maritime Alexandria.
- 9 Hayti**
Free African American residents formed a neighborhood called Hayti. Historical research and archaeological excavations help document this important place in history.
- 10 African American Neighborhoods in the Civil War**
Thousands of formerly enslaved individuals came to Union-controlled Alexandria to seek refuge and freedom. As a result, new neighborhoods appeared, including four in this vicinity.
- 11 Zion Baptist Church**
A small group of African Americans established Zion Baptist Church in 1864 at an earlier location closer to the river. At the end of the Civil War, Zion Baptist was one of five African American Baptist churches in Alexandria. In 1882, the congregation dedicated the new Zion Baptist Church where it still stands today.

..... The African American Heritage Waterfront Trail distance is 3.2 miles.

- ★ You Are Here
- North and South Trail Begin
- ☆ North Trail Ends
- ★ South Trail Ends

This map highlights stops with interpretive signs along the waterfront that relate to Alexandria's African American history.



To learn even more, visit <http://www.alexandriava.gov/go/4273>

Birds eye view of Alexandria, Va. [1863] by Charles Magnus.
Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division



CITY OF ALEXANDRIA EST. 1749



Created by the Alexandria African American Heritage Trail Committee, Alexandria Archaeology, and the Alexandria Black History Museum.