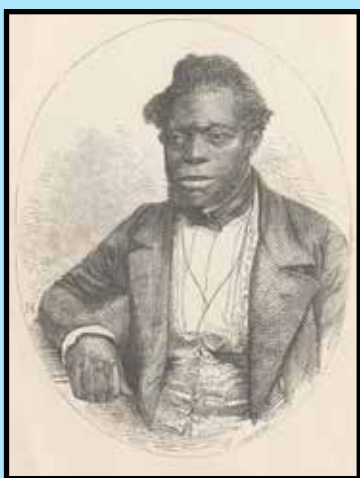


# Exploring Nat Turner's Rebellion

## Four Freedom Fighters

**Southampton County** was the birthplace of several important freedom fighters before the Civil War. The interstate slave trade from the Upper South to the Deep South caused the breakup of enslaved families. The rising desire for freedom caused many African Americans to seek ways to end slavery.

**Nat Turner** took the violent approach, organizing his rebellion. **Dred Scott** selected the legal process, resulting in the Dred Scott Decision. **Anthony Gardiner**, who became the ninth



**John Brown**

president of Liberia, followed the 'Back to Africa' movement fostered by The American Colonization Society. **John "Fed" Brown** became a fugitive, escaping via the Underground Railroad. He

made his way to Great Britain, where he published a book about his experiences as an enslaved person.

The stories of these Southampton County natives help define the evils of slavery. Through them, we can understand how the United States evolved into a nation where all men are created equal.

## Places to Visit

**Courtland, Virginia**, once known as Jerusalem, is a National Register of Historic Places District. Within the town, explore these cultural resources:

- A Museum of Southampton History - [SouthamptonCountyVaHistoricalSociety.org](http://SouthamptonCountyVaHistoricalSociety.org)
- B Rebecca Vaughan House - [NatTurnerTrailVa.org](http://NatTurnerTrailVa.org)
- C Heritage Village/ Agriculture & Forestry Museum \*
- D Blackwater Regional Library – [blackwaterlib.org/Courtland](http://blackwaterlib.org/Courtland)
- E Rawls Museum Arts – [rawlsarts.com](http://rawlsarts.com)
- F Rochelle-Prince House\*
- G Mahone's Tavern - [mahonestavern.org](http://mahonestavern.org)

\*For more information, visit [SouthamptonCountyVaHistoricalSociety.org](http://SouthamptonCountyVaHistoricalSociety.org)

Want to discover more? The Southampton County Historical Society offers a mobile guide to lead travelers to 21 additional sites associated with the 1831 Insurrection. Go to [Mobile-App.NatTurnerTrailVa.org](http://Mobile-App.NatTurnerTrailVa.org).

*This brochure was made possible in part by support from the Franklin Southampton Charities.*

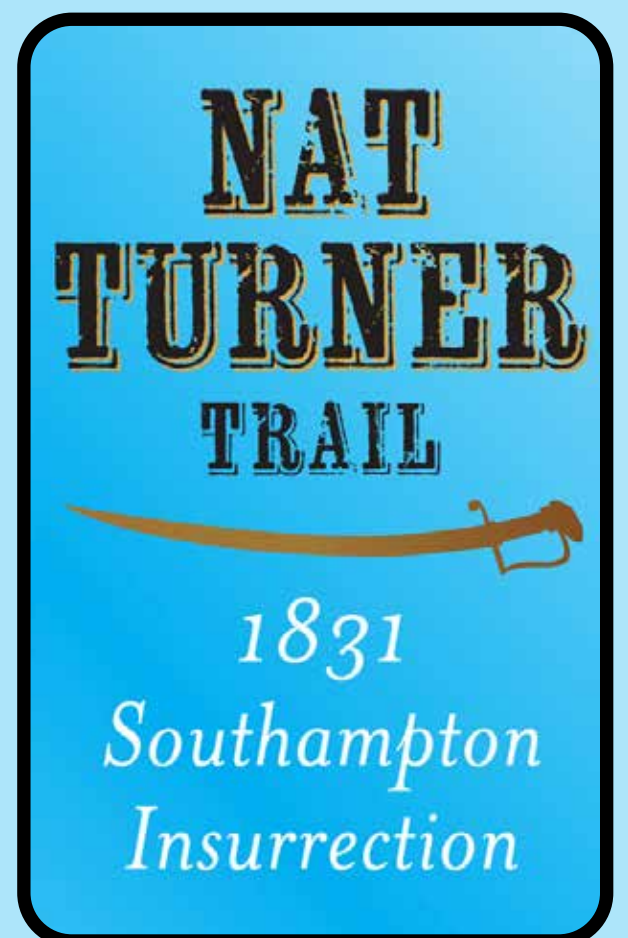
*Images courtesy of the Southampton County Historical Society*

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## A Walk Through History

### Tragic Events That Paved the Path to the Civil War



**COURTLAND, VIRGINIA**

**[NatTurnerTrailVa.org](http://NatTurnerTrailVa.org)**

*Presented by*

**The Southampton  
County Historical Society**

The 1831 Southampton Insurrection is a tragic yet meaningful part of American history. The August 21-23, 1831 uprising shocked the world and added fuel to the great national debate about slavery in the years that culminated in the Civil War and slavery's abolition. The insurrection was just part of the struggle to end slavery within a nation founded on the concept that all men are created equal. Yet, the nation still enabled the continuation of slavery.

Many issues caused some enslaved persons to seek their freedom; however, the most powerful attempted solution was the 1831 Southampton Insurrection, also known as Nat Turner's Rebellion.

On Sunday afternoon, August 21, 1831, Nat Turner met six of his followers in a remote infested swamp. A literate and preacher, Turner believed that he had seen signs from Heaven to release his fellow enslaved people from bondage.



**Nat Turner**

### Nat Turner Planning the Insurrection



Previously that year, a solar eclipse in February prompted Turner to strike. He told his followers that they must begin their revolution and to slay all enslavers they encountered. They had no weapons but they would obtain them from their oppressors. Numerous recruits would join Turner's army as it marched through Southampton County, striking hard for liberty.

They struck first at the Joseph Travis house in the late evening of August 21, thus beginning the revolt. Turner and his men had killed 57 enslavers when they left the Rebecca Vaughan House around noon. The last deaths of landowners occurred there. Turner's command now numbered about 60 men, mounted and armed with guns, axes, swords, and clubs. Turner decided to march to Jerusalem (now Courtland). However, their path was blocked by the Southampton Militia at Parker's Field and Cypress Bridge.

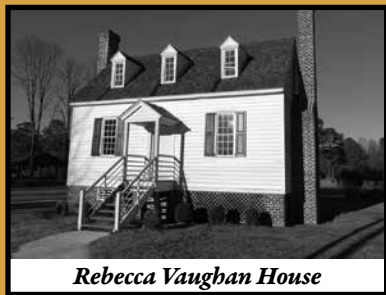
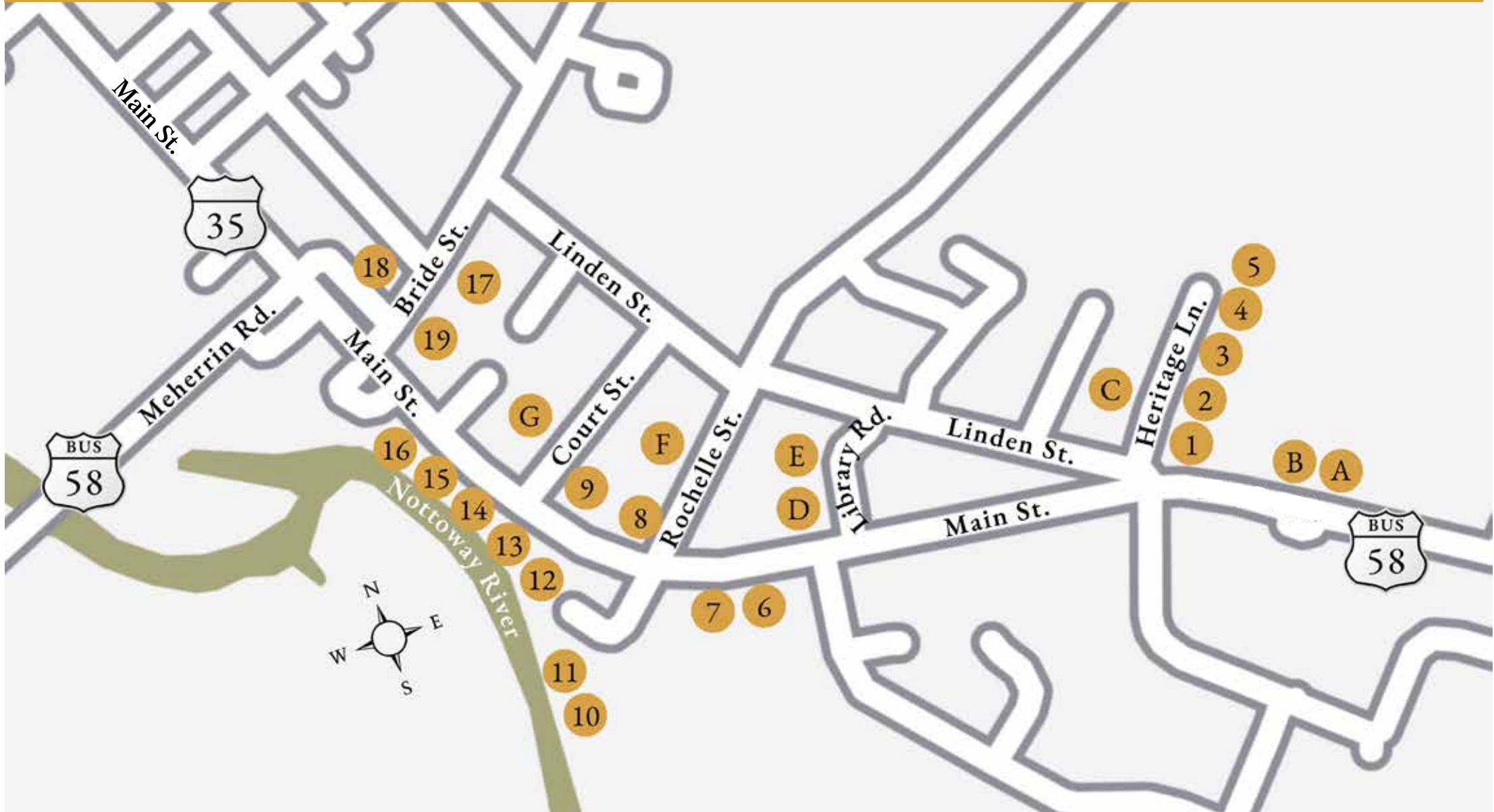
### The Discovery of Nat Turner



The next day Turner's command was defeated by militia and landowners at Dr. Simon Blunt's home in Belmont and the Newitt Harris House. Virginia and North Carolina militias enacted harsh revenge in the revolts aftermath until US soldiers from Fort Monroe, as well as sailors and Marines from Gosport Navy Yard, arrived. Militiamen killed approximately 45 African Americans. Nat Turner was not captured until October 30, 1831. He was taken to Jerusalem for trial, where he and more than 30 of his followers were found guilty and either executed or transported to the Deep South. Twenty-two were found not guilty.

# COURTLAND, SOUTHAMPTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

Founded as Jerusalem, 1791 • Re-incorporated as the Town of Courtland, 1888



Rebecca Vaughan House



Horrid Massacre in Virginia

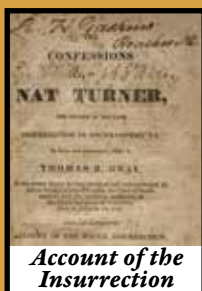


Arrival of the Militia

- 1 **1831 Southampton Insurrection:** How did Nat Turner's Rebellion happen?
- 2 **Rebecca Vaughan House:** This 1795 Federal-style house is where the last killings of enslavers occurred during the insurrection.
- 3 **Establishment of Slavery:** How did slavery become institutionalized within the British colonies during the colonial era?
- 4 **Conditions of the Enslaved:** Slave revolts were often caused by poor living and work conditions, inhumane treatment, and the breakup of enslaved families.
- 5 **Slave Revolts:** Other slave revolts occurred in American history before the Civil War, such as Gabriel's Rebellion and the Stono Rebellion.
- 6 **St. Luke's Church:** On August 22, 1831, the Southampton Militia mustered here before seeking to crush the insurrection.
- 7 **Seven Gables:** Lawyer Thomas Ruffin Gray lived here. He transcribed and later published Nat Turner's confessions.
- 8 **Rochelle-Prince House:** This is the home of Clerk of the Court James Rochelle. He documented the trials of Nat Turner and his followers.
- 9 **Vaughan's Tavern:** One of three Courtland taverns in 1831, militia units stayed here during the insurrection and its aftermath.
- 10 **John "Fed" Brown, Fugitive Bondsman:** Born three miles down the Nottoway River, Brown was sold into the Deep South. He escaped via The Underground Railroad and wrote a book about his life.
- 11 **Cypress Bridge:** One of two bridges crossing the Nottoway River to reach Courtland (Jerusalem). Militia units blocked Turner's attempt to reach the town.
- 12 **Southampton County, 1830:** Understanding what this area was like before the Civil War gives context to what prompted the efforts of four local men of African descent to end slavery and achieve freedom.
- 13 **Southampton County Courthouse:** This 1834 structure replaced the original courthouse where Nat Turner was tried.
- 14 **Southampton County Jail:** That building no longer stands, but in 1831, Turner and his followers were imprisoned at this site before their trials.
- 15 **Dred Scott:** Scott was born in Southampton County, ca. 1799. His legal quest for freedom resulted in the 1857 Dred Scott Decision.
- 16 **Anthony Gardiner:** Gardiner and his family emigrated to Liberia, West Africa, with support from the American Colonization Society.
- 17 **The Hanging Tree:** Nat Turner and many of his followers were executed here.
- 18 **Burial Place of the Condemned:** The remains of Nat Turner were buried here.
- 19 **Aftermath:** Nat Turner's Rebellion is considered a key factor leading to the American Civil War.



Governor John Floyd



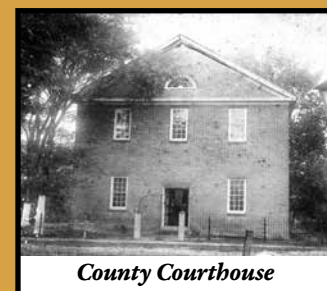
Account of the Insurrection



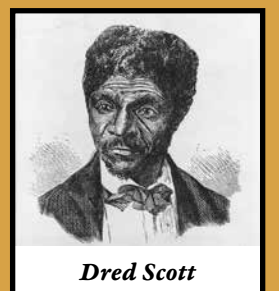
Rochelle-Prince House



County Jail



County Courthouse



Dred Scott