READ THE SIGNS OF SUFFOLK'S HISTORY.

These 25 black and silver signs mark the locations of people, places and events shaping Suffolk's history. Virginia's Department of Historic Resources administers over 2,000 roadside markers. Have you seen them all?

Monitor Merrimac Memorial Bridge Tunnel

JAMES RIVER

Chuckatuck Creek

Nansemond River

17

17

Kings Highway

K-248 • • K0-1
Chuckatuck Village

K-250
Godwin ← Blvd.

125

626   664

K-257
K-255 K-258
K-256   K-271
Driver Village
K-270
K-310
K-254

337

264

K-249 •
Reid's Ferry

Z-243 •

UT-28 •
460

10
32

337

Nansemond Parkway ←

Z-235 •
460 58 13

K-261

17

64

58 BYPASS

58 BYPASS

K-259 •
K-252 •
K-251 •

Visitor Center
321 North Main Street
Constance Road →

North Main Street

K-253

UC-1 •
K0-2 •

QB-1 •

Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge

Jericho Canal Road

58   U-127 •

SUFFOLK

East Washington Street

58 BYPASS

13

White Marsh Road →

642

UC-2 •
UC-3 •

Downtown Historic District

Holland Village

13   32

604

Washington Canal Road

Refuge Headquarters
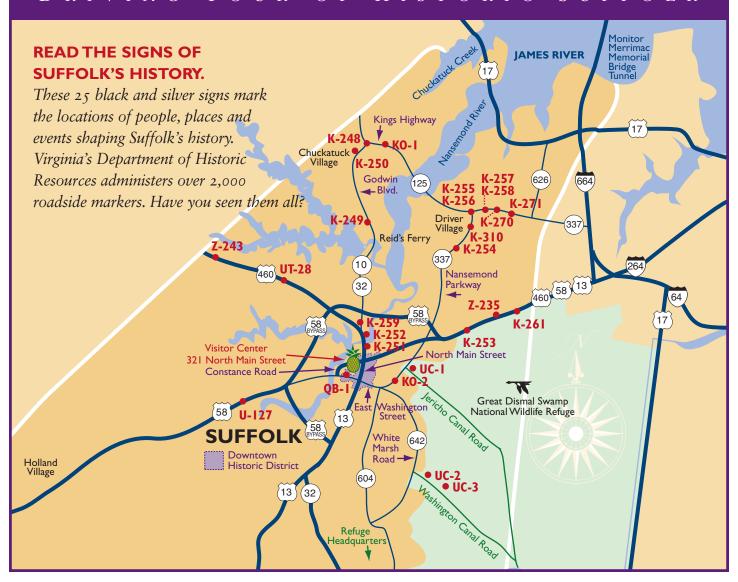
K-248 CHUCKATUCK
Route 10, Chuckatuck Village, 9.2 miles northwest of downtown Suffolk (Godwin Boulevard).

A colonial church was located at this site. In July 1781, a British cavalryman named Tarleton was at Chuckatuck. On May 3, 1863, a skirmish took place between Union and Confederate forces as Lieutenant General James Longstreet withdrew from the siege of Suffolk.

K-249 DUMPLING ISLAND
Route 10, 6 miles northwest of downtown Suffolk (Godwin Boulevard).

The ceremonial heart of the Nansemond Indian district stood a mile east on Dumpling Island in the Nansemond River. In 1608, Captain John Smith led colonists upriver to obtain corn from the Nansemonds, who attacked but were defeated and forced to feed them. The next summer, anticipating what was later called the "starving time," Smith transferred Captain John Martin and 60 of the Jamestown colonists to the island. After his advance party disappeared, Martin attacked the Nansemonds, looted and burned their houses and temple, despoiled their dead, and seized their corn. The Indians soon counterattacked, driving the colonists back to Jamestown.

K-250 NANSEMOND INDIAN VILLAGES
Route 10, Northwest of downtown Suffolk (Godwin Boulevard).

The principal villages of the Nansemond Indians stood just east of this site on the Nansemond River. The Nansemonds fought frequently with the English colonists who arrived in 1607. The Indians resisted the newcomers' attempts to occupy their villages and seize their corn. Two major periods of hostility occurred in 1609 and again after Opechancanough's coordinated assault on the English settlements on March 22, 1622 that began the Powhatan-English War of 1622-1632. Sir George Yeardley retaliated for the assault by burning the Nansemond villages and destroying their cornfields. The surviving Nansemonds scattered, their power broken.

K-251 EARLY HISTORY OF SUFFOLK
Route 13/32, 1.5 miles northwest of downtown Suffolk (North Main Street and Constance Road).

A community developed here in the 1720s around John Constant's wharf, dwelling and tobacco warehouse. The Virginia House of Burgesses chartered the town of Suffolk in 1742. It was incorporated as a town in 1808 and as a city in 1910; in 1974 it

merged with Nansemond County. American troops occupied Suffolk during the Revolutionary War and a British force burned it on May 13, 1779. The Marquis de Lafayette visited the town in February 1825 during his American tour. Union forces held Suffolk for most of the Civil War. The town suffered disastrous fires in 1837, 1885, and 1888 but was quickly rebuilt each time.

K-252 SIEGE OF SUFFOLK
Route 460, .5 mile west of the old city limits.
The town was occupied by Union Troops from May 1862 until the end of the Civil War. Confederate forces under Lieutenant General James Longstreet unsuccessfully besieged Suffolk from April 11 to May 3, 1863 when they withdrew across the James River on General Robert E. Lee's orders.

K-253 THE GREAT DISMAL SWAMP
Route 460/58/13.
William Byrd II visited the swamp, just to the south, in 1728 while he was surveying the boundary line between Virginia and North Carolina. Byrd, and later George Washington, advocated the construction of a canal through the swamp. Washington and his partners purchased some 50,000 acres, began to log them, and built a ditch to transport the timber. The Dismal Swamp Canal Company, formed in 1787 to connect the Chesapeake Bay with the Albemarle Sound, began construction in 1805. In 1974, the U.S. Congress created the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge to protect the swamp's fragile ecosystem.

K-254 REVOLUTIONARY CAMP
Route 337, 6.2 miles northeast of downtown Suffolk (Nansemond Parkway).
On May 10, 1779, during the Revolutionary War, a British expeditionary force commanded by General Edwards disembarked in Portsmouth to capture the major Tidewater Virginia towns. About 200 Nansemond County militia under Colonel Willis Riddick immediately assembled in Suffolk and marched toward Portsmouth. The soldiers camped here in a field in front of Captain James Murdaugh's house on the night of May 11, while several officers slept in nearby dwellings. A British advance party surprised two captains at Hargrove's Tavern a mile east, killing one. The militia retreated to Suffolk and later dispersed as the enemy approached. The British burned Suffolk on May 13.

K-255 YEATES SCHOOL
Route 337, Nansemond Parkway at Driver Village.
Before 1731, John Yeates established two free schools in this neighborhood, one on each side of Bennett's Creek. In his will dated September 18, 1731, he left his property for the use of these schools. They continued until 1861 and were sold in 1866 under an act of the legislature.

K-256 SLEEPY HOLE FERRY
Route 337, Nansemond Parkway at Driver Village.
Three miles east of this site, Benedict Arnold crossed the river on January 16, 1781, returning from his Richmond raid. In July 1781, General Lord Cornwallis crossed this location on his way to Portsmouth.

K-257 BENNETT'S HOME
Route 337, Nansemond Parkway at Driver Village.
On this stream, Bennett's Creek, stood the home of Richard Bennett. He was one of the commissioners to "reduce" Virginia after the victory of Parliament in the civil war in England, 1651, and the first governor under the Cromwellian domination, 1652-1655.

K-258 GLEBE CHURCH
Route 337, Nansemond Parkway at Driver Village.
Built in 1738. In 1775, the parish minister, Parson Agnew, was driven from the church for preaching loyalty to the king. The building was repaired in 1854.

K-259 SIEGE OF SUFFOLK
Route 10, 1.5 miles northwest of downtown Suffolk (Godwin Boulevard).
Across the road from this location ran the main line of Confederate works built by Lieutenant General James Longstreet, who besieged Suffolk in April 1863. He abandoned the siege and rejoined General Robert E. Lee at Fredericksburg.

K-261 PIG POINT BATTERY
Route 460, .5 mile west of Suffolk line (west Route 58).
In June 1861, Union Major General Benjamin F. Butler, in order to clear a route for the capture of Suffolk, sought to neutralize the Confederate battery at Pig Point three miles north on the James River at the mouth of the Nansemond River. At 9 a.m. on June 5, the steamer *USS Harriet Lane* shelled the battery. The Portsmouth Rifles, manning the guns there, returned fire and struck the vessel twice. One shot hit a tub of musket balls; the flying balls wounded six men. No Confederates were injured in the engagement, which ended after 20 minutes when the *Harriet Lane* withdrew.

K-270 HARGROVE'S TAVERN
Nansemond Parkway at Driver Village, .8 mile east of Driver Village.
On May 10, 1779, during the Revolutionary War, a British expeditionary force commanded by General Edward Matthews disembarked in Portsmouth to capture the major Tidewater Virginia towns. About 200 Nansemond County militia under Colonel Willis Riddick immediately assembled in Suffolk and marched toward Portsmouth. While the main body camped about a mile west on the night of May 11, Captain King and Captain Davis came here to Hargrove's Tavern. After a British advance party surprised them and killed Davis, King hastened to warn the Virginia camp. The militia retreated to Suffolk and later dispersed as the enemy approached. The British burned Suffolk on May 13.

K-271 FLORENCE GRADED SCHOOL
4540 Nansemond Parkway.

Built in 1920, this school was named for Florence Bowser, a noted educator who taught here and was instrumental in having the school constructed. Part of the funding to build the school was from the Julius Rosenwald Fund, which had been created to finance elementary schools for rural southern African Americans. Elements of the original brick frame building survive in the present brick structure.

K-310 JAMES BOWSER, REVOLUTIONARY SOLDIER
Routes 629 and 337 (Nansemond Parkway).

James Bowser, a free African American born in Nansemond County about 1763, was one of many black Virginians who served in the army or navy of the United States during the Revolutionary War. He enlisted in the 1st Virginia Regiment of the Continental Line under Colonel William Davies on January 1, 1782 in Shenandoah County for the duration of the war. After the war ended in 1783, he returned to Nansemond County, where he lived nearby, married, and reared a large family of freeborn citizens. For his service to his country, Bowser's heirs were granted a bounty land warrant in 1834.

KO-1 ST. JOHN'S CHURCH
Route 125, 1 mile east of Chuckatuck Village (Kings Highway).

Founded in about 1643, St. John's was formerly known as Chuckatuck Church. The present building, the third on or near the site, was built in 1755 and is the second oldest church building in Nansemond County. It was renamed St. John's Church in 1828.

KO-2 NANSEMOND COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE
East Washington Street near Fifth Street.

The Nansemond Collegiate Institute was founded in 1890 as the Nansemond Industrial Institute by Rev. William W. Gaines to provide local African-American children with an education because free public schools were closed to them. Eventually, the institute offered elementary, secondary and normal school course of instruction. In 1927, a public school for African-American students was opened. Competition for students and a series of disastrous fires in 1939 forced the institute to close.

QB-1 FIRST SUFFOLK CHURCH
Western Avenue, 200 feet west of Church Street.

At this site stood the Colonial Suffolk Church, a large cross-shaped brick building erected in 1753 as the second parish church of Upper Parish, Nansemond County, and the first house of worship in the town of Suffolk. It survived the burning of Suffolk by the British in 1779 but fell to ruin and was torn down by 1802.

UT-28 CIVIL WAR CAVALRY SKIRMISH
Routes 460 and 604 (Providence Road), 4.6 miles northwest of Suffolk.

Federal forces occupied Suffolk on May 12, 1862 and built earthworks around the town. Brigadier General John J. Peck took command in October. Cavalry vedettes, or mounted pickets, were posted some distance outside the fortifications to warn of Confederate attacks. During the winter of 1862-1863, small detachments of Federal and Confederate troops harassed each other west of Suffolk. Near here, about 4 p.m. on December 28, 1862, Confederate cavalry attacked Union vedettes at Providence Church and drove them back toward Suffolk. Federal reserves repulsed that attack and forced the Confederates west several miles to their main body of cavalry.

U-127 FIRST RURITAN CLUB
Route 58, at Holland Village, 9 miles from downtown Suffolk.

The first Ruritan Club was founded at this site on May 21, 1928. Ruritan is an organization of rural leaders who strive to make the community a better place to live through service, fellowship and goodwill.

Z-235 AND Z-243 NANSEMOND COUNTY
Area 423 square miles.

Formed in 1637 from new Norfolk County, it was first called Upper Norfolk County, but in 1642 it was renamed Nansemond for a local Indian tribe. The Dismal Swamp is partly in this county.

UC-1 UNION CAMP HISTORIC MARKER JERICHO DITCH
Jericho Canal Road.

Jericho Ditch, nine miles long, was dug by slave labor in the early 1800s to enable the Dismal Swamp Land Company to remove the timber, drain lowland and provide access to Lake Drummond.

UC-2 UNION CAMP HISTORIC MARKER WASHINGTON DITCH
Washington Canal Road.

Surveyed by George Washington in 1763, a cart road was built first along this 4-1/2-mile ditch and the canal dug along side by slave labor for transportation. Gresham Nimmo, under the personal direction of George Washington, did the surveying and kept the notes.

UC-3 UNION CAMP HISTORIC MARKER DISMAL TOWN
Washington Canal Road.

Washington and company used this spot as their Dismal Swamp headquarters. The town was built prior to the Nimmo survey of 1763 on Riddick 402-acre patent.