

Petersburg National Battlefield VirtualCache Program

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Site 13: Appomattox Plantation

N 37°19'0.245"
W 77°16'38.513"



The Appomattox Plantation's history reaches from 1635 when Francis Eppes patents 1,700 acres along this shoreline to its sale by the family to the National Park Service in 1979. Its story, among other chapters, includes that of Native Americans, European colonists, the American Revolution, the institution of slavery, the plantation elite of the American South, the Civil War, and the era of Reconstruction.

The most powerful part of its history may be 1850s - 1860s. In 1859, Dr. Richard Eppes owns 130 slaves and 2,300 acres on a plantation that is on all three sides of the confluence of the James and Appomattox Rivers. He is one of the richest men in the state of Virginia and in the South. By the end of the summer of 1864, his family has left to escape the war, all but 5 of his slaves have escaped from the plantation, he's working as a doctor in the Confederate hospitals in Petersburg, and the Union army has taken over his home as its supply base. In early 1866, Eppes and his family are back in their house and facing a new world that includes the abolishment of slavery and living, for a time, under U.S. military rule.

Eppes is able to re-establish himself after the war but successive generations sell off most of the land holdings to maintain this ancestral home. Today the house is maintained to basically reflect its 19th century appearance.

Visit Instructions: There are three buildings of historical significance on the Appomattox Plantation, name them.