

Over 400 Years of History

Chippokes Plantation is one of the oldest continuously farmed properties in the country. It was granted to William Powell, a militia officer and member of the first House of Burgesses in 1619. The property was originally used to cultivate tobacco, but like many early Tidewater region plantations it also included peach and apple orchards. By the early 1800s, the tobacco had been replaced with cotton, and the orchards supported a booming brandy-making industry.

Despite the fact the property had always been farmed, it wasn't until 1837 that Chippokes' owner would live onsite. Previous owners had opted to manage the plantation from a distance, while residing in the more stylish neighborhoods of Williamsburg, Richmond, or Petersburg. However, when 22-year-old Albert Carroll Jones of Isle of Wight County bought Chippokes in 1837, it became his home until his death 45 years later.

At First, Albert and his wife, Ann Baskerville Jones, took up residence in the River House, a small 4-room home used by previous owner Charles Osborne on visits to the plantation. The couple had doubled the size of the River House by the time daughter Mary Ann was born in 1846. In 1852, a now-widowed Albert began construction on the grand Italianate brick house that bears his name.

By 1900, the Jones Family had relocated to Kentucky, and left the plantation in the hands of capable young farm manager Henry Blount. When the last Jones heir went bankrupt in 1917, the property was sold at auction to Victor Stewart, a forester and lumber magnate from Ohio. Victor and his wife Evelyn, embarked on a decades-long effort to restore and improve the house and grounds, envisioning an idyllic yet historic park that would exist as their legacy. In 1968, the Stewarts gave Chippokes to the Commonwealth of Virginia, and it opened as a State Park in 1970.

History of Enslavement

It is important to say that for the entirety of the 248 years that enslavement was legal in the United States, enslaved people would have lived, worked, and died within the borders of Chippokes Plantation.

Very few historical documents mention the enslaved on the property, excluding a few tax and census records that we have been able to obtain. From those documents, we can learn the number of people in bondage, their names, their ages, and what the estimated worth of their life was.

The majority of what we do know comes from the Jones time period (1837-1865). During the final years of legal enslavement, Albert and his family owned a total of 40 people. Ranging in age from 6-86, these people would have worked the fields, kept the orchards and vineyards, cooked the food, cleaned and mended the clothes, distilled the alcohol, and much more.

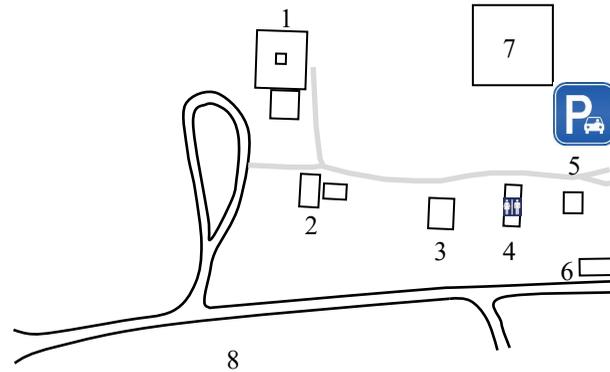
We do not know their personal stories, nor what became of their families, and we do not know where any of the enslaved of Chippokes have been buried.

If you have any information, or would like to assist park staff in learning more about those who were enslaved here, contact Chief Ranger Kevin Koons at the Farm and Forestry Museum. 757.294.3439
Kevin.koons@dcr.virginia.gov.

Jones-Stewart Mansion

Key:

1. Jones-Stewart Mansion
2. Historic Brick Kitchen
3. Packard Garage/Friends of Chippokes Gift Shop
4. Restrooms/ Gardener's Quarters
5. Gardener's Cottage
6. Carriage House
7. Paradise Gardens/Stewart Burial grounds
8. Quarter Lane Trail



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Virginia State Parks

Chippokes Plantation State Park

Jones-Stewart Mansion Grounds



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www.virginiastateparks.gov

Jones-Stewart Mansion

This beautiful example of Antebellum Italianate architecture is the crown jewel of the Chippokes property. Commissioned by Albert Carroll Jones in 1852, the mansion was constructed using locally sourced materials and slave labor. The house took a total of two years to complete, allowing Albert and his family to move in by 1854.

The Stewarts would purchase the property in 1918, and begin renovations on the house in 1925. By 1926 the house started to take shape as it currently looks, with more of a Greek revival flair. In 1955 the Stewarts added a 2 story hyphen, and a single story addition on the Brick Kitchen side of the house. This addition gave the house electricity and running water. Today the interior of the house is just as it was when Evelyn Stewart passed away in 1969.

The house is considered an “American 4x4” with the first and second floors having identical floor plans. The first floor consists of 2 parlors adjoined with a pocket door, as well as a family parlor/study, and a dining room. Separating the two sides of the house is a large hallway with 12’ ceilings and beautiful plasterwork. Upstairs there are 4 bedrooms and another long hallway. With the house’s North Western orientation, the house is set to capture the prevailing winds to allow for cooling in the summer. Guided tours are available most weekends or by request by calling 757.294.3435.



Brick Kitchen

The two door, and two story brick structure next to the Jones-Stewart Mansion is the kitchen and laundry for the main house. Constructed at the same time as the mansion, the brick kitchen would have served as the place where food was cooked, laundry was cleaned and mended, candles were made, and much more. When the Jones family had the structure built, there would have been a wall separating the kitchen (left side) and the laundry (right side). This wall was removed by the Stewarts in the 1950s to turn the kitchen into a guest house, with the rooms on the first floor becoming a living room and the apartments above as guest rooms. Initially, the upstairs apartments would have been utilized by the enslaved families of the cook and laundress.

Behind the kitchen there is a blue hyphen that attaches the historic side to a 1955 guest house addition built by the Stewarts. From previous photographs and descriptions of the area, there was a wooden structure of approximately the same size as the guest house that served as housing for the enslaved that worked within the house.

The kitchen is typically open the 3rd weekend of each month.



Paradise Gardens

Initially thought to have been an expansion of a boxwood parterre garden planted by the Jones family, recent research suggests that the garden was actually started by the Stewarts in the 1920s. Evelyn Stewart was an avid gardener and a member of the Garden Club of Virginia. Her love of gardening, and the beautiful landscape surrounding the mansion, led her to plant an English style formal garden to help accentuate the house and surrounding lawn. Upon completion of the initial form of the garden, Evelyn named it the Paradise Gardens. The word paradise has many different meanings, one of which is a Greek translation making the word mean park. It can also be seen as a haven for those who walk through it, which could be why she decided upon that name.

Evelyn first opened the garden to the public in 1932 during Virginia’s Historic Garden Week, and has been a feature of the celebration ever since. There are notes that suggest that Evelyn started to expand the garden to its current size of 6 acres at the end of 1941. It appears in ledgers that she began purchasing the crape myrtles following the attack of Pearl Harbor. Continuing the idea of a safe haven for guests, she began planting many flowering plants that would allow the garden to be in bloom any season. She opened the gardens to local visitors as a form of “Victory Garden” during World War II.

Evelyn and her husband Victor are both buried within their garden, and will forever rest in “Paradise.”

Packard Garage/ Friends of Chippokes Gift shop

This 1.5-story, 2-room building was built by the Stewarts in the latter part of the 1920s. Built in the Colonial Revival style that was popular at the time, it was erected as a two-car garage for the Packard cars that the Stewarts owned. A workshop was later added to the back of the garage, which now serves as the Friends of Chippokes Gift Shop. This volunteer based non-profit group is the only of such groups currently in the Virginia State Park system to have their own gift shop. Sales from the shop help to support park programming, restoration projects, and much more. Inside the garage, Victor Stewart’s 1941 Packard Clipper can be seen. This partially restored classic was found in a barn on the property after the State Park took control of the property in 1967.

Carriage House

Constructed in the 1930s by the Stewarts, it stands as the least altered structure from the 20th century. The building had always been used to house the Stewart’s collection of cars and antique carriages. Today, you can see some of the carriages collected by the Stewarts. Local folklore states that the gold and black carriage (c. 1830s) was found by the Stewarts in a ravine. If that is the case, this carriage may be one of the ones owned by Albert Carroll Jones.