



## Dan River Paddle with Dan RiverKeepers

✓ RSVP opens  
Jun 5, 10:00 AM

📅 **Sunday, June 12, 2022**  
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM EDT ? >

📍 **Dan River Company**  
1110 Flinchum Rd, Danbury, NC >

Teach Truth  
Days of Action  
June 11 and 12,  
2022

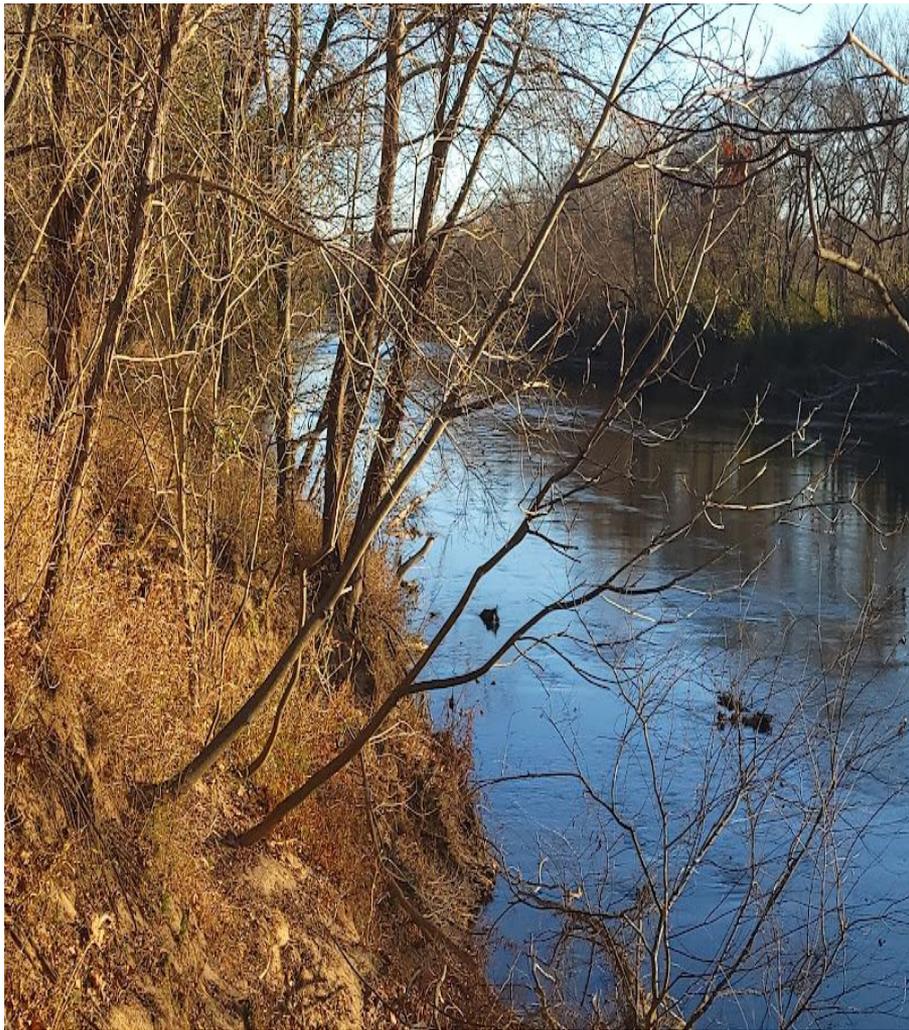
#TeachTruth



Good  
Stewards of  
Rockingham



OutDoor  
Afro



## *Dan River*

**The Dan River flows 214 miles in the states of North Carolina and Virginia. It rises in Patrick County, Virginia, and crosses the state border into Stokes County, North Carolina. It then flows into Rockingham County. It flows back into Virginia through Pittsylvania County before reentering North Carolina near the border between Caswell County and Rockingham County. It flows into northern Caswell County and then into southern Virginia (briefly Pittsylvania County, then into Halifax County) and finally into Kerr Reservoir on the Roanoke River.**

**William Byrd II first recorded the river's name in 1728 during an expedition to survey the Virginia border. However, Byrd did not explain the reason for the name.**

# Land of the Saura

## Upper Sauratown - Stokes County

Early Sauratown Phase (A.D. 1450 - 1620); “Hairston Site”

Late Sauratown Phase (A.D. 1670 - 1710)

*Descendants of the ‘Dan River People’ (A.D. ~1000 - 1450)*

The Saura successfully coexisted with their environment along the Dan River for hundreds, possibly thousands of years before colonization reached the region. The Upper Sauratown site is located in Stokes County along the Dan River only a few miles from where we stand to begin our June 12th river trip.

Remnants and artifacts are scattered throughout this region, with fishing weirs still visible today along the Dan. As disease, additional war, and class/racism was introduced by colonial settlers, a culture and beneficial way of life was nearly destroyed. Many historical articles portray only the ‘victors’ side of this important indigenous history. However, most of the following information is taken from historical, oral accounts learned from descended Saura.

## *Land of the Saura*

Upper Sauratown was first professionally excavated starting in 1972 and continued until 1981. Intricate pottery, jewelry, beads, and traded goods were found. Traded goods from colonizers likely significantly contributed to the rampant spread of disease through Native tribes like the Saura. The Saura buried their deceased inside the palisades of camp until the very last years of their known existence (~1700's), signaling they may have made the connection- but far too late.



Clay Pots from Upper Saratown

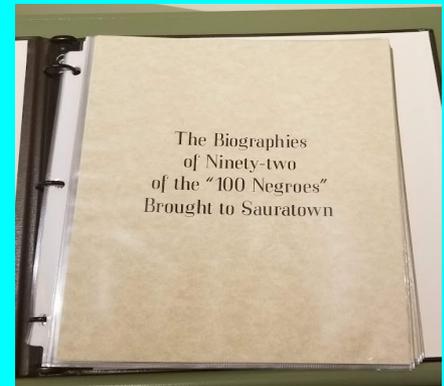
**‘The downside of the increased flow of goods during the Late Saratown phase is an increase in European diseases; according to Ward and Davis (1991), “...many of the excavated villages appear more like cemeteries than habitation sites.”’**

## *Land of the Saura*

Descendants of the Saura are still here! Many known relatives exist in Walnut Cove NC, the Saponi Tribe in Virginia, and The Occaneechi Band of the Saponi in Alamance County NC.

Local descendants tell a different story than what is read or available online. Both Upper and Lower Sauratown are known as 'Sorrow Town' through oral accounts. Black and Indeginous peoples were taken as prisoners/slaves, forced to bear children, and treated horrifically in their captivity. Little care or distinguishment was given to either Black or Indeginous peoples by colonizers, and both were treated the same.

As time passed, Black and Indeginous people were forced into separate schools, if any, long before Jim Crow. A great amount of more-recent history can be seen and heard at the Walnut Cove Colored School, who don their walls with many photographs that catalogue their former staff and students. Many of those students were of Saura heritage.



# Sauratown-Examination of the Sauratown slaves

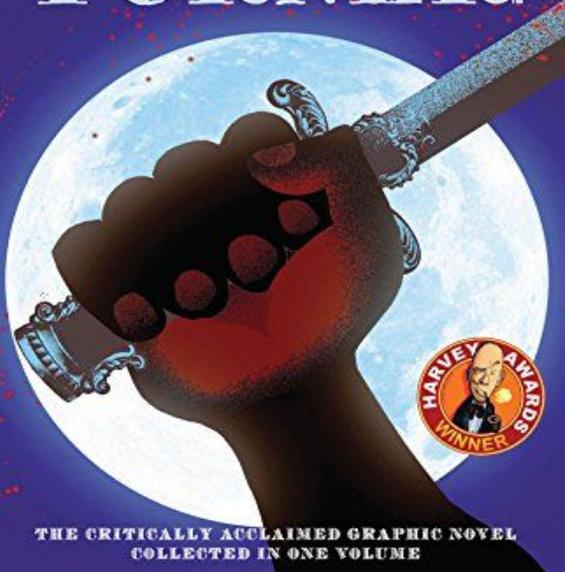
In 1773 the first of 100 enslaved Africans began being brought from Antigua in the Leeward Islands through the Virginia ports to a 26,000 acres plantations in North Carolina originally bought owned by William Byrd II which he called the "Land of Eden." The new owner was an Antigua sugar plantation owner named Francis Farley. He was shifting his investment from Caribbean Sugar manufacturing to mainland tobacco culture. Information found at the Archives of Virginia at Richmond has made it possible to follow these enslaved people, by name, for almost 30 years, mainly at this tobacco plantation on the Dan River in NC.

# The 1812 HENRY COUNTY SLAVE REVOLT

Believing that a second war with the British was about to provide another opportunity for revolt, a group of enslaved people in Henry County, Virginia, immediately across the border from the 26,000-acre Farley plantation at the Sauratown and led by an enslaved person named Tom, developed a plan. The group intended to murder, in various methods, the most prominent enslavers in the county, including the largest enslaver in the South at the time. They solicited a Conjuror named Goomer, from Rockingham County, NC, as a spiritual cover, protector, and source of poisons to be used in some of the murders. The link seems to be the native medical practices still present among the Sauratown enslaved people who had been brought from Antigua. Although the uprising was discovered with only a single murder and capital punishment of the participants, it is considered by current scholarship to have been a precursor of the Nat Turner Revolt of 1831. To the Sauratown Project, this story reflects native spirit practices, hierarchy within the community, the breadth of the direct influence of the Sauratown enslaved people, and their peripheral impact.

# Resources

KYLE BAKER  
**NAT  
TURNER.**



# BLACKS IN BONDAGE



Edited by Robert S. Starobin

# *The Hairstons*



*An  
American Family  
in Black and White*

HENRY WIENCEK

# Bateauxmen of the Dan



## *Bateaumen of the Dan*

Trade ruled the Dan River for many years in form of Bateaus, or large wooden boats used to transport goods, people, and even livestock.

Much fortune and work were spent to make the Dan River more navigable for these boats in order to reach goods, including lumber, in Stokes County NC.

The peak of the race up the Dan River ended in Stokes County NC just above the location of 'Upper Sauratown', where travel proved too difficult or even impossible for these vessels.

Bateau captains were allegedly comprised of both enslaved and freed Black men. The skill and pure strength that these captains and their crews needed to navigate such a river, upstream nonetheless, is nothing short of incredible. Upstream navigation was completed not by paddling, but by 'sticking' or 'poling'- which means using wooden poles or branches to push the vessel upstream against swift waters. The crew could consist upwards of a dozen men along with a payload of a dozen more cattle and bagged goods.

**(To give some perspective, paddling upstream can be an impossible task in the Dan River, even with common-day kayaks and paddles; with just one person. The strength and skill of bateaumen can never be overemphasized. This was a Herculean task.)**



**A group of people in Eden is circulating a petition to either remove or modify a mural that shows black men rowing batteaux down a river.-2019**

# Petitioners seek changes in mural of bateau traffic

By Jonnelle Davis Staff Writer Aug 20, 2008 Updated Jan 25, 2015

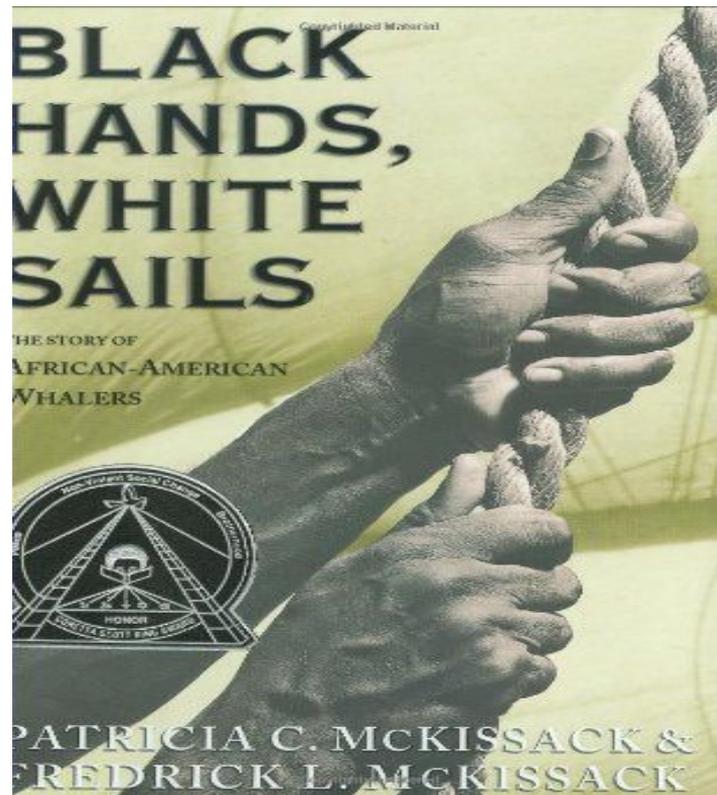
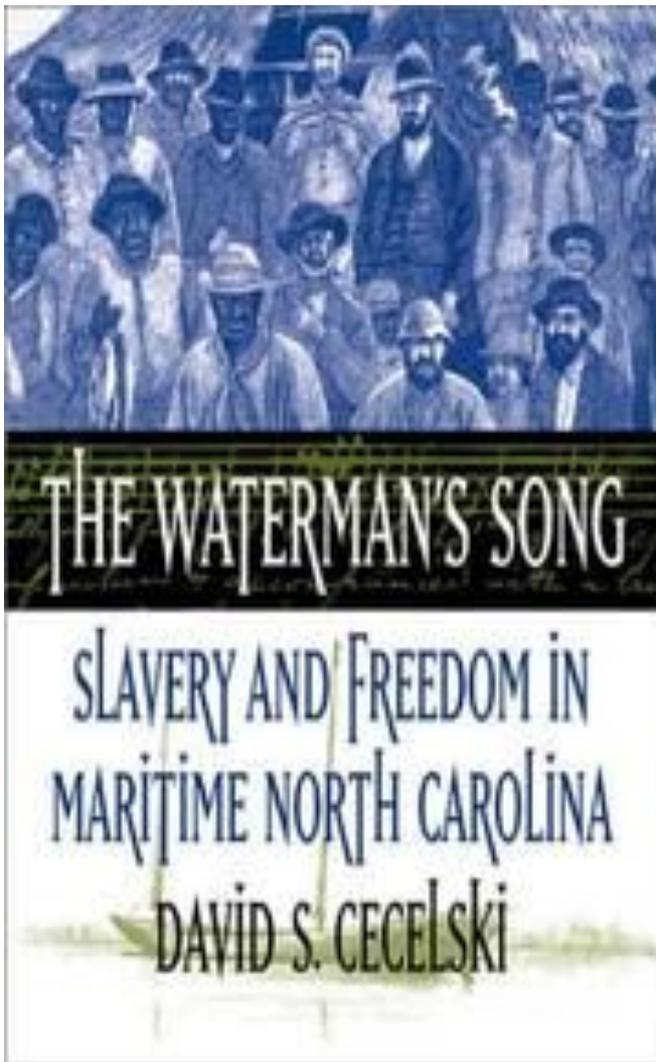
What happens when one gets the historical facts and understanding wrong?

**What the truth reveals-**JOURNAL ARTICLE *The Shores of Freedom: The Maritime Underground Railroad in North Carolina, 1800-1861* by David S. Cecelski *The North Carolina Historical Review* Vol. 71, No. 2 (APRIL 1994), pp. 174-206 (33 pages) Published By: North Carolina Office of Archives and History

Those lucky enough to evade detection sought sanctuary in a variety of safe havens—Native American communities, marshy lowlands like the Great Dismal Swamp along the Virginia/North Carolina coastal border, and, eventually, Canada and the free states of the American North. By the nineteenth century, the North was a particularly attractive destination for acculturated, American-born slaves. Networks of free blacks and sympathetic whites often helped ferry slaves to freedom via the so-called Underground Railroad, a chain of safe houses that stretched from the American South to free states in the North. Men continued to be predominant among runaways, although women, and even entire families were increasingly likely to test their chances in the flight for freedom.



# Resources



# Dan River Steam Station

The Dan River Steam Station is a power plant owned by Duke Energy in Eden, North Carolina. The plant comprises three natural gas-fueled combustion turbines, which began operation in 1968, and two natural gas-fueled combined cycle turbines are planned for the near future. A coal-fired electrical power plant at the site ceased operation in 2012.

The Dan River Steam Station began construction in 1949 and was finished the following year.

The station was the object of a [1971 United States Supreme Court Case, Griggs v. Duke Power Company](#) in which 14 African-Americans employed at Duke Power Company were required them to possess a high school diploma and/or pass a standardized general intelligence test to obtain certain positions at the station, neither of which was found to have a bearing on the employee's ability to perform the sought positions. At that time, the education requirements disproportionately harmed African-Americans, and white employees only filled the well-paying positions. The Court found that the education requirements would only be legal under Title VII if they were reasonably related to the job. Therefore, because the education requirements were not reasonably related to the jobs, they were improper.

prohibited discrimination  
The plaintiffs were Willie Griggs, James Tucker, Herman Martin, William Purcell, Clarence Jackson, Robert Jumper, Lewis Hairston, Jr., Willie Boyd, Junior Blackstock, John Hatchett, Clarence Purcell, Eddie Galloway, and Eddie Broadnax. All of the plaintiffs were employed and classified as laborers or semiskilled laborers at Duke's Dan River Steam Station, a steam-generating facility in Eden, Rockingham County, North Carolina.<sup>29</sup> The Dan River facility converted the energy in coal into electric energy that Duke Power sold to its customers. The process of converting coal into electric energy involves receiving large quantities of coal brought to the facility from mines, the weighing of coal shipments, and the sampling, unloading, and distributing of the coal to storage bunkers. The coal is fed from the bunkers through pulverizing mills into boilers. From the boilers, the energy from the coal is turned into heat energy by burning, and this heat energy forms steam. The steam is sent to turbine generators, where the heat energy is turned into mechanical energy, and

