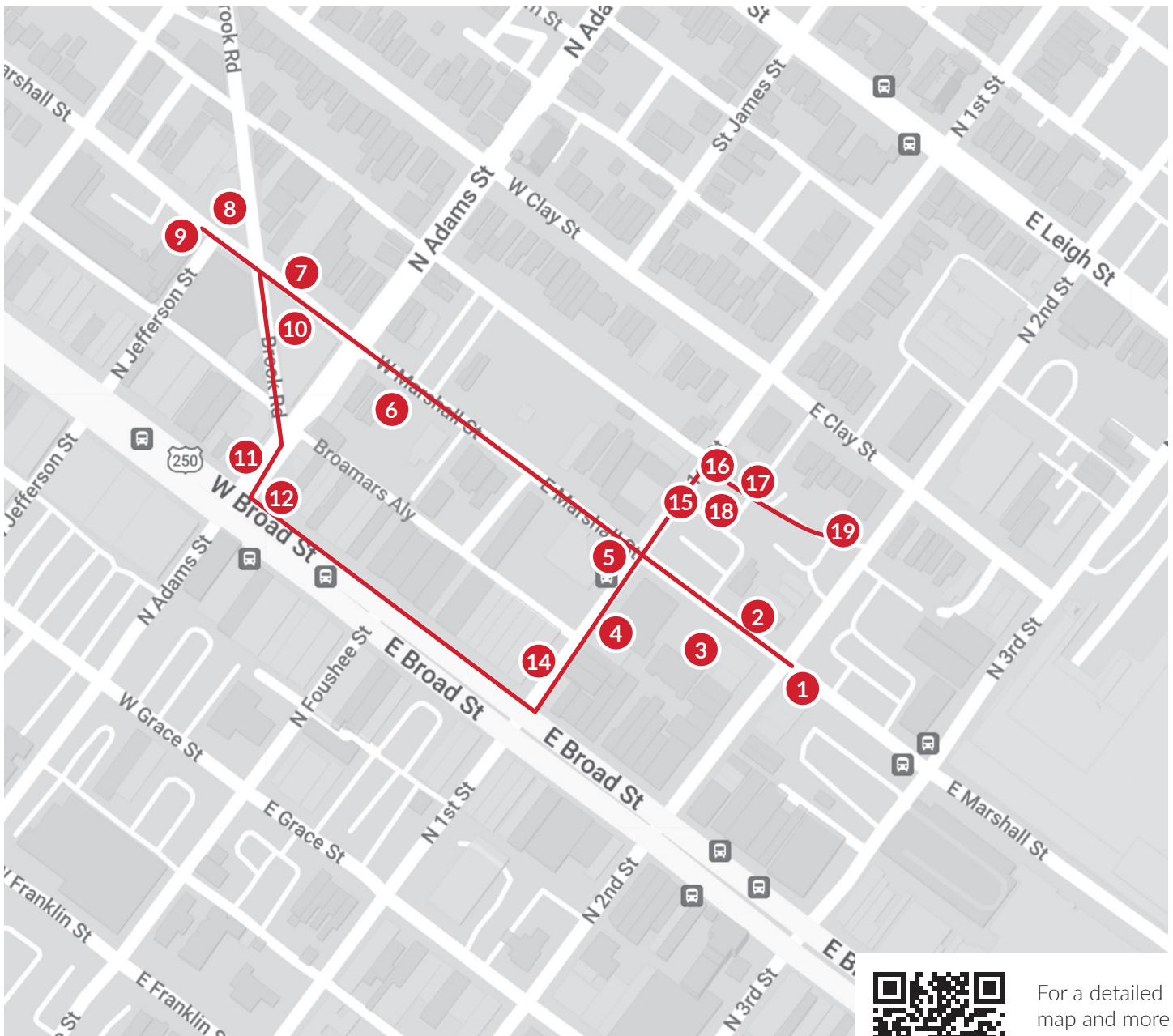


Welcome to Jackson Ward

Today, you'll explore Jackson Ward, focusing on its murals that reflect the neighborhood's rich history. Before the Civil War, it was home to a diverse mix of free Black residents, European immigrants, and white artisans. Afterward, it became the largest African American community in Richmond, known as The Harlem of the South and The Black Wall Street. The area thrived with banks, businesses, and social institutions but faced decline after the 1950s, when the construction of I-95 displaced residents and split the community. Despite these challenges, Jackson Ward is undergoing revitalization, spurred by VCU's expansion, historic preservation efforts, and new businesses. The neighborhood's rich legacy continues to shape its future.



For a detailed map and more guided tours, use this QR code.



Richmond Dairy Building, c. 1913,
Cook Collection, The Valentine

1 Bojangles Mural by Aniekan Udofia

Richmond became the “City of Murals” in 2012 when Shane Pomajambo, owner of the DC-based gallery Art Whino, chose the city for his mural project. Richmond’s Arts and Culture District, offering regulatory fee rebates and expedited permits, provided the ideal backdrop. Pomajambo’s Richmond Mural Project (RMP) set out to create 100 murals in five years.

One of the first murals, by artist Aniekan Udofia, honors Bojangles, the famous Richmond-born dancer and entertainer. Bojangles, born Luther Robinson in 1878, was a vaudeville star known for his films with Shirley Temple. Udofia worked closely with the building owner to capture Bojangles’ joyful spirit.

Udofia’s mural process involves developing a concept, sketching, scanning it into a computer, projecting it onto the wall, outlining it, and adding color to complete the piece.

2 Jamerica Restaurant Mural by Sir James Thornhill

This mural by Jackson Ward native Sir James Thornhill is one of several he created around the city, often inside and outside local businesses. Painted with oil, it honors global Black leaders, reflecting the owner’s Jamaican heritage. The mural features intertwined flags and iconic figures: reggae legend Bob Marley, Jamaican

military leader Queen Nanny, Marcus Garvey, Nelson Mandela, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (depicted in a nod to his Birmingham Jail letter), and Harriet Tubman. The links between the figures symbolize the interconnectedness of people worldwide and their shared fight for freedom and unity.

3 Bank Mural by Ramsey

The Richmond Mural Project (RMP) inspired local artists to create their own mural initiatives, such as the U.N.I.T.Y. Street Project, founded by Sir James Thornhill and Hamilton Glass. U.N.I.T.Y. stands for “Upholding, Networking, and Inspiring Together,” and its mission is to preserve Jackson Ward’s history through mural art. Glass believes these murals differ from typical ones by focusing on educating newcomers about the community’s past. The project asks: Should murals be more personal and meaningful to the community? The next mural you’ll see, painted by Keith Ramsey in 2016, is part of this effort to honor the neighborhood’s heritage. Ramsey, who grew up in Williamsburg and as a child of public school teachers, was encouraged to paint, create and problem solve throughout his childhood.

4 Jackson Ward Legacies Mural by Hamilton Glass

This U.N.I.T.Y. mural honors two influential figures from Jackson Ward: James Russell Stallings, Sr. and Neverett Alexander Eggleston Sr.

Stallings, raised by his great aunt during the Great Depression, dropped out of school at 13 and later served in the U.S. Air Force. Over his career, he managed a rent-a-car company while also acquiring historic properties in Jackson Ward, including the St. Luke Bank building and the Hippodrome. He believed preserving these buildings was key to saving African American history. Many of his properties have since been renovated by family.

Eggleston, born in Henrico County, was deeply influenced by the Harlem Renaissance while working in New York City. After returning to Richmond, he purchased Miller’s Hotel in 1935, renaming it the Eggleston Hotel. It became a hub for Richmond’s Black elite and a popular stop for African American celebrities, who were denied accommodations in white hotels.

This mural, created by Hamilton Glass, reflects his architectural background, using lines and geometric forms. Glass, a prolific artist based in Richmond, produces about 40 murals annually, contributing greatly to the city’s vibrant mural scene.

5 Premier Bank Sign

These U.N.I.T.Y. Project murals celebrate Jackson Ward’s financial and Premier’s history. Today’s Premier Bank has quite a pedigree, on November 2, 1903, the St. Luke Penny Savings Bank opened for business led by Maggie Walker, the nation’s first female bank CEO. St. Luke Penny Savings Bank encouraged the community to “turn their nickels

into dollars.” It would live on as the Consolidated Bank and Trust Company and become the oldest continuously operated Black-owned bank in the United States. (It was merged with Premier Bank in 2011 and its charter was discontinued.)

6 Elephant & Koala Mural by Lapandilla

This mural was painted in April 2012 as part of the Art Whino RMP by Alexis Diaz, an artist from Miami by way of Puerto Rico. In addition to his solo work, Alexis often works collectively with his friend and fellow artist Juan Fernandez, under the name “La Pandilla” (The Gang). Both artists are known for intricate line detail, splashes of vibrant color and the melding of fantastical animal imagery. Once bright blue, the color has faded over the years but if you get up close you can still see the detail in the line work.

7 Art 180 & Atlas

ART 180 creates and provides art-related programs for young people living in challenging circumstances, encouraging personal and community change through self-expression. This is the group’s home for Atlas, an art center for teens. While murals are the most visible presence of Art 180, the group offers programs ranging from hip hop song writing to documentary filmmaking.

8 Gallery 5

Gallery 5, opened in 2005, saved Steamer Company No. 5, Virginia’s oldest firehouse and Richmond’s oldest police station and jailhouse, built in 1883. Originally housing horse-drawn fire equipment and a police station, the building now serves as an award-winning visual and performing arts center. It hosts contemporary art exhibitions and participates in Richmond’s First Fridays, a monthly event when galleries, restaurants, and shops along Broad Street open their doors to the public, drawing local and regional audiences to the Arts District.

9 Richmond Dairy Company Building

Built in 1914, the Richmond Dairy Company building is a striking example of the creativity of Richmond architects Carneal & Johnston. Commissioned by the Richmond Dairy Company, which operated from 1890 until 1970, the building is best known for its towering 40-foot milk bottles. Over the years, it has served various purposes, including as rental apartments. In the 1980s, it became a squatter haven for people experiencing homelessness, VCU art students, and teens. It was here that the theatrical metal band GWAR was formed when lead singer Dave Brockie began creating space alien costumes with other artists. Today, GWARbar, opened by the band’s surviving members, honors the group’s legacy.

10 Emrick Chevrolet Mural by Hamilton Glass (on the left) & The Way Forward: Mending Walls Mural (on the right)

This building built in the mid-1920s was an Emrick Chevrolet dealership. It was renovated in 2005 into condos. Paying homage to the building’s past, artist Hamilton Glass created a mural with the look of a 1920s hood ornament.

Next to Glass’s mural is a Mending Walls project, founded by Glass in response to the protests following George Floyd’s death. The initiative brings together 28 artists of diverse backgrounds to create public art that fosters healing and promotes dialogue on Black Lives Matter and racial justice. This mural, created by Filipino-Spanish artist Humble and African American artist Nadd Harvin, is Nadd’s first mural. A painter who typically works on canvas, she stepped in after Humble’s original partner couldn’t participate. The piece highlights the activism and experiences of young people of color in the racial justice movement.

11 John Mitchell, Jr. Mural by Visibly Hidden

This 2018 mural by George Fernandez (Visibly Hidden) honors John Mitchell Jr., born into slavery in 1863. Mitchell became editor of the Richmond Planet at 21, using it to fight lynchings, segregation, and the rise of the KKK. He criticized the Lost Cause narrative, notably in an 1890 editorial on the Lee monument, saying it “forges heavier chains” for progress. Mitchell was also the founder of Mechanics Savings Bank, a City Council member for Jackson Ward in 1890, and ran for governor in 1921. His legacy remains central to Richmond’s history of civil rights advocacy.

12 Maggie Walker Statue

The 10-foot bronze statue was created by Maryland based sculptor, Antonio “Toby” Mendez. The statue shows Walker at 45-years-old standing tall surrounded by inscriptions tracing the life of the woman who early on helped her mother, a formerly enslaved woman, by delivering clothes as a laundress. She was educated at the Richmond Colored and Normal School, and then became a newspaper publisher, teacher, bank founder, businesswoman, civil rights leader, entrepreneur, and mother.

Her statue is facing Broad Street, where African American people weren’t always welcome. During segregation south of



Broad was for white people, north of Broad, for Black people. She stands at the gateway of her community, Jackson Ward. Maggie Walker's home is a National Historic site on Leigh Street.

13 Mending Walls Mural by Hamilton Glass & Matt Lively

The Mending Walls project hopes to bring healing through public art while adding something meaningful to the conversation of Black Lives Matter and racial justice. The fifth mural to be painted by this organization showcases the images of Hamilton, a Black artist and Lively, a white artist, as children and shared objects from their childhood. Today, these artists are both friends and frequent collaborators, yet this mural explores how shared life experiences can lead to distinct perspectives and divergent circumstances.

14 Girls for a Change Mural by Hamilton Glass & The Girls

Another U.N.I.T.Y. project by Hamilton Glass, he worked with Girls for a Change students from John Marshall High School. Girls for a Change is a Virginia-based organization whose mission is to empower and support girls of color to enact social change and to work for a brighter future for Black women. Glass and the girls met for 12 weeks to design their own mural. Girls for a Change members, Glass, and 60 volunteers from Virginia Credit Union gathered together to paint this mural in October of 2017.

15 Major Taylor Mural by Sir James Thornhill

This mural was commissioned for the UCI Road World Championship bike race that took place in Richmond in September 2015. It features Major Taylor, who was born November 26, 1878, in Indianapolis, Indiana. Cyclist Marshall Walter "Major" Taylor began



riding professionally when he was 18 years old. By 1898, Taylor had captured seven world records. After 14 years of grueling competition and fending off intense racism, he retired at age 32.

16 Alley Mural by Nils Westergard

Nils grew up in Northern VA and graduated from VCU. He is a prolific muralist with work all over the city, but is also in high demand overseas. Most of his murals start with a photo he has taken usually of one of his friends modeling an idea he has. Then he turns that photo into a mural. This mural is of Michael Millions, a local rapper.

17 Food Mural by Arts in the Alley

Painted in 2013, this group which is no longer together, aimed to revitalize inner-city and downtown neighborhoods by cleaning up alleys and streets (trash removal, weeding, and cleaning up graffiti) on a Friday and Saturday, and on Sunday the

alleys would be transformed into a brighter and better place through painting murals. Each event created between 5-15 murals, and at least one "Children's Mural". Many of the original Arts in the Alley murals from this event have been painted over.

18 Grand Piano Mural by Sir James Thornhill & M. Pittman

This was a commissioned piece of work by the owner of the building, Barkey's Record shop. The store has relocated to Broad St. but continues to sell spiritual material. The mural honors two Richmond Gospel greats. Marie Goodman Hunter was one of the first Black teachers at Fox Elementary School in the city. She was also a soprano singer and an actress. Larry Bland led The Volunteer Choir for 50 years. This gospel choir performed one of their last concerts at the 2018 Richmond Folk Festival. Started in 1968 at the Second Baptist Church, this choir was a trailblazer in gospel music presentation; Bland combined powerful renditions of traditional gospel songs with costuming and precision choreography to create a "show" choir.

19 Play Me a Tune Mural by Jacob Eveland

Painted as part of the 2016 Richmond Mural Project, the owner of this building requested that the mural reflect the history of Jackson Ward. Because of Richmond's rich musical history, Eveland decided to incorporate jazz and classical music themes into this project. Eveland drew inspiration from his grandfather, who collected phonographs, and from the James River, with the mural incorporating a heron as well as various musical instruments.

Explore Richmond Stories

Richmond's City history museum, the Valentine has been collecting, preserving and interpreting Richmond's 400-year history for over a century. Located in the heart of historic downtown, the Valentine is a place for residents and tourists to discover the diverse stories that tell the broader history of this important region.