

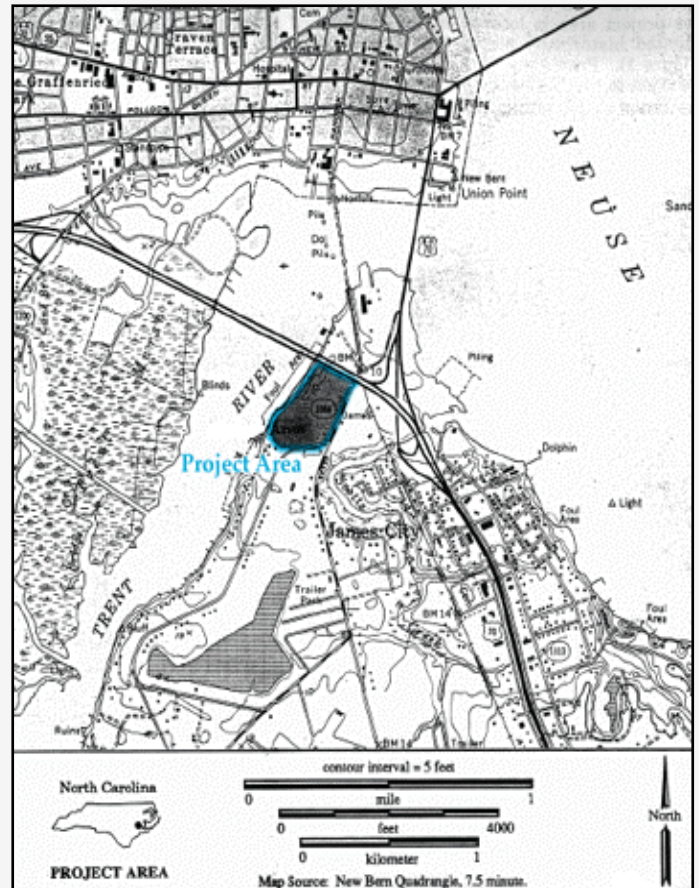
# James City Historic Archaeological Site, James City, North Carolina

When Union troops began their occupation of New Bern, North Carolina, in 1862, hundreds, and later thousands, of slaves left the plantations in the surrounding territory to seek freedom in the city. As more and more refugees reached Union lines, it became apparent that some plan or organization was needed to employ, house, and care for them.

James City was established to temporarily house these freed slaves under the auspices of the Freedman's Bureau. Despite their lack of clear title to the land, the inhabitants of James City were left alone to treat the property as their own through the 1880s, when a new owner of the property began to assert his rights. This began a series of legal actions, boycotts, and eventually the intervention of the militia to enforce the landowner's rights.

A compromise was finally reached between the occupants of the land, who were to pay rent, and its legal owner. As many inhabitants moved out or did not pay their rent, occupancy reverted to the owner, who intended to use the land for commercial development. By the third and fourth decades of the twentieth century, many of the town's inhabitants had moved to other locations. By the mid-twentieth century, most of the original settlement at James City had been abandoned.

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