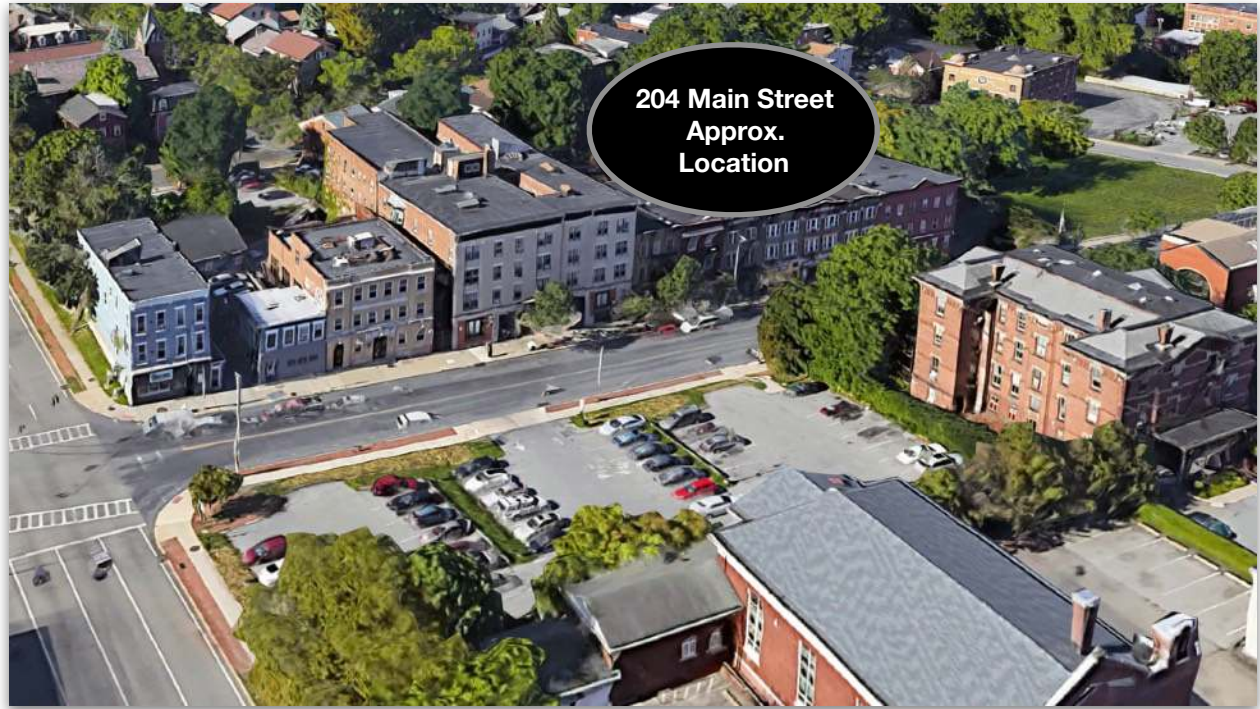


POUGHKEEPSIE

Burial Ground for Enslaved African Americans



Given the negligence in keeping records of the burial of persons of color historically, we rely on other than primary sources as in this situation.

An 1870 Poughkeepsie newspaper account quotes an older resident as saying, upon discovery of multiple coffins and human remains while digging at the equivalent of what is today 204 Main Street (between Washington & Vassar Street, south side), that this was a “Negro burial ground” created by a slave owner “near the vicinity” between 1800 and 1810.

**Contact Bill Jeffway
with ideas, comments, clarifications, this is an ongoing process.**

POUGHKEEPSIE

Burial Ground for Enslaved African Americans

October 24, 1870
Poughkeepsie Eagle News

1870 OCT 24
POUGHKEEPSIE

THE BONES OF THE DEPARTED.—The laborers engaged in digging the trench for sewer pipes on Main street, near Robson's Blacksmith shop, exposed three coffins to view on Friday last. The coffins themselves, were in a fair state of preservation. They were broken into, when nothing but bones were visible. As the workmen dug deeper, ends of coffins protruded but they were not molested. An old gentleman who boards at the Northern Hotel, states that sixty or seventy years ago a man who kept slaves in the vicinity, used the land thereabouts for a Negro burial ground, and that the bones exhumed were no doubt those of deceased colored persons. Mr. Mills, who has charge of the gang working there, says that if those bones and coffins had come to light in a New York Sewer the Coroners would have made a nice little sum out of them by this time, and wonders what the Poughkeepsie Coroner was about. He undoubtedly knows by this time that the Poughkeepsie Coroner does not belong to Tammany.

November 4, 1800
Poughkeepsie Journal

Messrs. Potter & Southwick,
The enumeration of the Inhabitants of the town of Poughkeepsie taken in 1790, was as follows:—

Families	371	
Free white Males		1190
Free white Females		1691
Free people of Colour		48
Slaves		199
Total		2529

The enumeration just taken is as follows—

Families	488	
Free white Males		1490
Free white Females		1425
Free people of Colour		14
Slaves		177
Total		3232

Increase 703 since the last enumeration.

Samuel A. Barker.

Beckman, Oct. 27, 1800.

Village of Poughkeepsie
Comparison of Census
of 1790 to 1800

Slaves:
199 to 177

Free People of Color:
48 to 14

1798 Map



Approximate Location on 1798 Map