

OPERATION BOOTSTRAP

Proposed Downtown Petersburg, Virginia Revitalization Program

Project Description

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Preface

Economic revitalization must begin with bringing more people into the city. For many years it has been believed that could be accomplished through a river front development, but to my knowledge there has never been any formal plan explaining how it was to accomplish that goal. *Operation Bootstrap* introduces a far more viable alternative.

I'm going to use a term that may make some people flinch, but that may be because they do not understand it. A "theme park" is an attraction based on one or more specific or central themes that are conveyed through buildings, landscaping and other resources. Although the terms are often interchanged, "theme parks" should not be confused with "amusement parks," which offer thrill rides. King's Dominion and Busch Gardens are amusement parks. Jamestown and Colonial Williamsburg are outstanding examples of historic theme parks, even though their staffs would strongly object to the use of the term. Sorry folks. That's what they are by the very definition of the term.

This economic revitalization plan calls for utilizing existing land and other resources to create a complex of historic theme parks collectively referred to as "The Petersburg Parks." Unlike Jamestown and Colonial Williamsburg, the goal of these parks is to provide visitors with things to DO, rather than VIEW, through the use of activities and entertainment. There is nothing like them anywhere in the world. They will be a first.

A critical mass is essential to attracting large numbers of visitors. This is a case of the "bigger the better." Such necessity demands that this be a large project, one comparable in size to the first Disneyland, but nowhere near as expensive.

All business ventures should strive to maximize potential while minimizing risk. This plan calls for a phased step by step approach that meets that standard. It calls for low capital investment and a largely pay-as-you-go development. This plan meets that standard. This phased approach inspired the title, *Operation Bootstrap*.

Earlier drafts of this plan described the parks, identified a great many factors that must be considered, set forth a detailed development plan, and examined economics in detail. Combining so much information in one report made it confusing. This led to the decision to break into parts. This work is now limited to providing a detailed description of the completed complex, prefaced by essential information. The other material will be covered in later reports when the need arises.

This plan is supported by other documents, which are herein incorporated. They include *The Antebellum Trains of Petersburg, Virginia* (history book), *The Antebellum Trains of Petersburg, Virginia* (poster and poster book), and *Petersburg Parks Site Plan*

This is a community project and all of this information should be easily available to anyone who wants it. To accommodate this, everything may be downloaded from Petersburg-Parks.com.

Introduction

Background

Two hundred years ago, Petersburg, Virginia was one of the most dynamic cities in America. It maintained that role for over 150 years, but then in the mid-1950s our nation began to change. Americans had suffered through the Great Depression and World War II. They were then enjoying a booming economy and great prosperity, and went on a spending spree. The baby boom resulted in a great many kids. The low cost of automobiles made the two-car family possible. Mother was no longer confined to the home. Families wanted to get out of crowded cities and have more space around them. They flocked to the suburbs.

The nature of retailing drastically changed. Family-owned grocery stores, drug stores and clothing stores were replaced by chain stores. These were almost always located in suburban shopping centers or malls. Cities all over the country suffered from “suburban flight.” Petersburg was especially hard hit. Many of its most important stores moved to the suburbs. The continual decline of retail traffic resulted in many long-standing businesses simply closing their doors. By the end of the 1960s, the Petersburg retail community was a shell of its former self.

The opening of Southpark Mall in 1990 had an enormously negative impact on Petersburg. Mayor Florence Farley said that it was “nailing the city’s coffin shut.” She was right. More businesses relocated. The long-popular Walnut Mall closed due to lack of customer traffic.

The easy availability of foreign goods had a great impact on American industry. Factories all over the country were closing. Petersburg lost several of its major employers.

The revitalization efforts of 1988-93 temporarily reversed that trend, and Old Towne was the one bright spot in the city as it was beginning to prosper. Then the disastrous F4 tornado of August 6, 1993 destroyed everything. There have since been many repairs and improvements but they have done little for the economy. No major economic improvement is in sight.

The City of Petersburg has long recognized that downtown revitalization must begin in Old Town because its historic resources have the potential of attracting large numbers of visitors. As its resources are consumed, demand for additional ones will result in the critical mass expanding up the Sycamore Street hill to Washington Street and beyond.

Existing Assets

Petersburg is far from being the only city to suffer from the post-war economic decline. It was happening all over the country.

The city of Long Beach, California took a real beating. Although a major port, its primary industry was ship building. As more and more ships were being built overseas, the industry all but collapsed. People moved out of the city. The demand for real estate fell drastically and prices plummeted. The business districts suffered the same plight as Petersburg.

The City of Long Beach decided that something needed to be done. It took stock of its resources and found that its biggest and best asset was its harbor. It searched for a way to better utilize it. Finally, it came up with an idea and took the unprecedented action of buying one of the world’s biggest “white elephants,” the ocean liner *RMS Queen Mary*. The City of Long Beach paid millions of dollars for it, spent millions more moving it to Long Beach, and then spent tens of millions converting it into a major tourist attraction. It took time and money, but it did have the desired effect. Today, Long Beach is one of the most prosperous cities in the nation.

Like Long Beach, the City of Petersburg must review its assets and find the best way to develop them. It has a great many historic resources and has tried to promote them, but city attractions have done little to accomplish that goal. The city has focused on its Civil War heritage, which was deemed to be its prime historic asset. Unfortunately, its battlefield competes with dozens of others, and visitors to the battlefield rarely visit downtown.

The city has long awaited the dredging of the Appomattox River in hopes that subsequent riverfront development will attract a large number of visitors. Anticipating such a project, the city has purchased almost all of the land along the river. It has waited for over a quarter century for the dredging to take place, but it still hasn't been done. This is because of a lack of federal appropriations. In view of the current state of the economy, it is doubtful that such funding will be forthcoming in the near future.

Even if it were, using the river for boating-oriented activities is not viable for a great many reasons. I think the term "riverfront development" should be used in a broader sense, to describe any major development that takes place near or next to the Appomattox River.

The City of Petersburg has long worked toward laying the groundwork for such a development. Using tax maps and satellite photographs, I estimate that the city owns around 36 acres of land along River Street, stretching from the Peter Jones Trading Post to the Interstate 95 bridge.

The City Council recently approved the purchase of the Roper Lumber Company site. It was the last piece of land essential for large-scale development. When added to other land that the city previously purchased, the city now owns the bulk of Pocahontas Island.

The island appears to contain roughly 100 acres. About 15 acres are occupied by single family homes. Several large city-owned lots appear on the tax maps, but a lot of the land is not identified by property lines or tax numbers. This includes an enormous track that runs across the north side of the island, bounded on the north by the Appomattox River, and the forested sections on the east side of the island. It is probably owned by the city. Taking it into account, the city appears to own 85 acres.

Thus, there is a total of 121 acres available for development. To have that much land in the middle of a city is truly amazing. It has taken the city over a quarter century to assemble it and the city deserves a great deal of credit for having the foresight to do so.

Petersburg also owns historic buildings that are located on this land, including Southside Station, the magnificent Norfolk and Western Union Station, the Electric Building (the terminal for the Richmond and Petersburg Street Railroad), and Farmers' Market.

The city has greatly improved the Old Towne infrastructure by installing brick sidewalks, restoring cobblestone streets, erected historic street signs, providing sidewalk planters, laying sewer lines, installing a lighted parking lot on River Street, and landscaping.

These assets have an incredible location. They are immediately adjacent to Interstate 95, the most-heavily traveled north-south corridor on the east coast. The Petersburg Parks can be seen from the interstate and that will result in many spontaneous visits by travelers. The parks are also very close to the intersecting Interstate 85, which services the southwest.

On January 10, 2011, the Petersburg *Progress Index* reported that the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Norfolk Southern Railway Company had signed an agreement that will connect passenger rail service from Petersburg to Norfolk. Eighty-seven million dollars will finance the upgrade of tracks to permit their use by passenger trains. The new tracks will connect with the CSX tracks at Petersburg to extend rail service to Richmond, Washington, D.C. and Boston. The line will also go south to Jacksonville, Florida. It is expected to become operational in 2013. The article also said that Petersburg is part of the Southeast High-Speed Rail Corridor, which is one of five such corridors around the country.

Direct access to Petersburg and its Parks from the entire East Coast will be invaluable. No other attraction anywhere has such easy access by both road and rail.

The high speed trains of Europe and Japan routinely run at 150 miles an hour and we will certainly not want such trains running through the Petersburg Parks because of the safety hazard. Nature provided the solution. The CSX tracks cross the Norfolk Southern tracks less than a mile west of Southside Station. They cross over them by way of a bridge resulting in CSX track being over 60 feet above the Norfolk Southern tracks. Railroads strive to minimize grades and try to stay within no more than a 30 foot rise per mile. Because of this, the new Norfolk Southern track will branch off the main line south of Petersburg, cross the city and tie with the CSX tracks near the Pepsi Cola bottling plant on Washington Street.

The new trains will be operated by Amtrak. The station will be on Washington Street or in Ettrick. This provides the Petersburg Parks with the best of both worlds - easy access from the entire East Coast train corridor and no high speed trains running through the park.

The city's greatest asset is its long, rich and diverse history. It begins with the Native Americans who lived along the Appomattox River for thousands of years. The city's roots were planted in 1646 with the establishment Fort Henry. Petersburg became a major trade and transportation center. It was captured by the British during the Revolutionary War. It was the home of the largest Free Black community in the nation a half century before the Emancipation Proclamation. It one of the first cities to use railroads and its rail history is unequaled by any other place in the world. The famous Battle of Petersburg was fought over them and lasted for ten months - the longest battle in American history. Petersburg was the first city in the world to charter a modern transportation system, the streetcar, and there is more.

This unique inventory of assets is truly amazing. To my knowledge, no other city in the United States can come even remotely close to matching them. Petersburg needs to follow the example set by the City of Long Beach. It needs to find a way to utilize these assets to its benefit.

Real estate developers strive to find the "highest and best use" for land. This economic development plan to designed to do just that. The best thing about it is that it is not dependent on events outside of its control, such as river dredging. Development can begin now.

Development Concept

Disneyland was long the most successful attraction of all time, but was eventually exceeded in popularity by the much larger multi-park Disney World in Florida. Walt Disney used to tell the story about his and his wife longing for a clean, cheerful, entertaining place to take their two daughters. They wanted a place that would not only be fun, but would provide a unique environment that provided an escape from the humdrum routine of everyday life. His vision of a family-oriented attraction evolved into Disneyland. It initially combined five fictional theme parks - Adventure Land, Frontier Land, Fantasy Land, Tomorrow Land and Main Street, USA - with unique amusement park-type rides.

Disney did a great many things right. He recognized the need for family entertainment and escape and the need for critical mass. The more attractions that are offered, the greater the drawing power. He didn't build one theme park - he built five of them. More have since been added.

Disneyland proved that people want to do more than just look at things. They want to do things, participate in new experiences and simply enjoy themselves. The operative word here is DO, not VIEW. This is the great shortcoming of Colonial Williamsburg. Enormous amounts of money have been invested in it, but there is nothing for people to do, except walk vast distances to simply look at reconstructed historic buildings. Boring. Boring! Boring!!!

Petersburg needs to follow Walt's example. The city has a long, rich and varied history and many aspects of it can provide the basis for a historic theme park. Several should be combined to create a large, multi-faceted entertainment complex that can appeal to many markets. This revitalization plan collectively refers to them as the "Petersburg Parks."

There are 121 acres of land available for development. The Jamestown historic area contains a scant 22 acres. The original Disneyland in Anaheim, California contains only 160 acres, which is much smaller than the amusement parks of today. In spite of its small size, it entertained almost 16 million visitors in 2010.

Disney started out with bare ground. Petersburg is fortunate in that it has a great many existing historic buildings and other resources that are in place and paid-for. They can be developed.

The recently constructed Martin Luther King Bridge has a large new ramp leading directly to Pocahontas Island. A large city-owned lot previously purchased from the Norfolk Southern Railroad provides an enormous amount of space for parking. Visitors can exit Interstate 95 onto Washington Street, go east two blocks, turn right on the recently widened four-lane Adams Street and the bridge is only six blocks away. They can be in the theme park complex within minutes. Best of all, it permits easy access without disrupting normal city traffic.

Product Concept

Prior to committing to any new product, management must first clearly identify its concept and the market for it. What is it? Who will buy it? This is where we must begin, as those identifications drive everything else. Is there a market for a complex of historic theme parks?

In the early 1990s, the Disney Corporation wanted to build an American history theme park near Haymarket, Virginia. Wikipedia states that “Disney’s America” was the pet project of Disney’s CEO Michael Eisner. It was to include a Native American village; a Civil War fort; Crossroads USA, an American city of the mid 1800s; and Enterprise, a mock factory. Of course, everything was to have been connected by the famous Disneyland steam trains.

The project was strongly supported by outgoing Governor Douglas Wilder and incoming Governor George Allen. They followed the example of Orlando, Florida in encouraging the construction of Disney World. These included unique rights, such as letting Disney have its own police department. Virginia was going to build a four-lane divided highway to the park.

The project was met with howls of protest from die-hard purist historians. They strongly objected to the location as it was near a sacred Civil War battlefield. They accused Disney of wanting to “Mickey Mouse” our nation’s history. Rather than get into a confrontational situation, Disney abandoned the project, absorbing an enormous loss as it had already purchased the land and designed the park.

The important thing is that extremely sharp businessmen run the Disney Corporation. Certainly they conducted extensive feasibility studies prior to committing to such a large project. It is not important for us know the details of those studies, the significant thing is that they led the company to conclude that project was viable. If they believed that, then why shouldn’t we? Surprisingly, Disney’s America was to contain many of the things that I recommended in the *Downtown Revitalization Plan* that I submitted to the Petersburg City Council in spring 1993.

The Big Picture

First and foremost, the Petersburg Parks should not be amusement parks filled with thrill rides, flashing neon lights and loud rock music. They are historic theme parks. Certainly they must provide a great many fun things to do and enjoy, but the parks must also maintain dignity and charm, and everything should be historically accurate and appropriate.

A primary function of these parks is to provide an escape from the pressures of modern everyday life. The basic historic nature of the parks precludes modern technology. The goal should be a return to the quieter days of yesteryear. We need to create such an environment. Our attractions should be down-to-earth, folksy and present the simple joys of life. That is escape. The Petersburg Parks will not rely on high technology, but rather on personal interaction between people.

Walt Disney was so determined to maintain the integrity of his theme park’s “magic” that most of it is underground, hidden from public view. Food is carried to restaurants and merchandise to stores through a labyrinth of tunnels, which also provides the means to remove trash and garbage. The tunnels house the electrical, plumbing and communications systems and extensive storage facilities. Tunnels are not a viable option, so the Petersburg Parks will have to bring in supplies and remove trash at night when the park is closed to the public.

The historic atmosphere must be maintained. Automobiles, motor bikes and modern bicycles should be prohibited. So should cell phones. They disrupt too many things, can annoy guests and distract visitors from enjoying the things at hand.

When completed, the Petersburg Parks will be entertaining a great many people. Security and safety must always be primary concerns.

Product Overview

One of the most important factors in the success of any entertainment complex is the critical mass - the number, nature and size of its attractions. The Petersburg Parks should follow Disney's example and provide a great many things to see and do. This is a case of "the bigger the better."

This is a big undertaking and it will take years to get everything into operation. This can be done in an orderly, risk-free, economical way.

The following presents a brief overview of the Petersburg Parks once complete. All are described in far greater detail later in this report.

Petersburg Railroads

The Petersburg Parks complex covers 121 acres. They cover 25 blocks (5 high and 5 wide) and there must be a viable means to quickly transport visitors between theme parks. Disneyland accomplishes this through the Disney Railroad. The Petersburg Parks will follow that example.

Petersburg's greatest accomplishment was being the nation's premier railroad pioneer. The Petersburg Parks provide the opportunity to put many wonderful trains back into operation. No other city in the entire world has such a rich railroad heritage and such extensive historic resources. This provides the opportunity for the railroads to become a world class attraction.

The railroads also provide many other opportunities and they will become a major profit center. Since they are used throughout the complex, they are not treated as a theme park, but rather as an independent yet integrated attraction.

Theme Parks

Petersburg has such a long and diverse history that it is like a multi-faceted diamond. Looking at it from different angles and under different light reveals many facets. However some subjects stand out. They should be represented by the theme parks summarized below.

Each of these should be a historically accurate recreation, but it must be emphasized that these are not static exhibits, but rather environments. They should provide appropriate activities and entertainment for visitors to enjoy. The emphasis must always be on DO, not VIEW.

Petersburg Railroad Park. Operational requirements make the railroad an integral part of the entire complex. The city has three historic train stations. Although they have never been identified as such, they already constitute a theme park. They just have to be properly utilized. Union Station will become the Petersburg Parks train depot. Southside Station will house museums and provide support facilities. The existing critical mass will be expanded, as explained later.

Early America. Primary attractions are the Appomattox Indian Village, Fort Henry and the Abraham Wood Trading post.

Pocahontas Heritage Park. Most of the Petersburg Parks will be located on Pocahontas Island which bears the distinction of having been the largest settlement of Free Blacks in the nation a half century before the Emancipation Proclamation. This theme park will honor their independence, ambition and achievements. Attractions will include a farm with animals, homes and craft shops.

Battle for Petersburg. The ten-month battle for Petersburg was the longest in U.S. history. The main physical feature of the park will be opposing Confederate and Union lines showing the vast differences in resources. They will contain many exciting things for visitors to do and enjoy.

Peter's Point Nature Park. The north side of Pocahontas Island contains a very large "wilderness area" bounded on the north by the Appomattox River diversion channel. Surprisingly, this wonderful resource has never been recognized. It will be used for nature-oriented attractions including a wildlife rehabilitation center, Virginia wildlife zoo, and botanical gardens. The river flows at a reasonable pace and its clean water can be utilized in several ways. This park will provide a large playground for young children and a campground for scout troops and others.

Appomattox Locomotive Works. Ironmonger Uriah Wells established the Petersburg Iron Works in 1830 and started off by making horse-drawn wagons, plows and machinery for local mills. When the railroads started up, he built their passenger and freight cars. He later built locomotives. His factory of the 1850s will be recreated to represent Petersburg's industrial history. Of course, this ties in with the rail heritage. In addition to being a major attraction in its own right, such a facility is essential to the maintaining of the Petersburg Railroads. It can also be used to build needed passenger and freight cars.

City of Industry. The Antebellum South was so predominately agricultural that was often looked upon as being one vast plantation. Petersburg was a notable exception. The thriving trade in commodities resulted in a great many early factories.

Museums & Exhibits

The Petersburg Parks will emphasize DO and not VIEW, but many visitors will have academic interests so there must be museums and exhibits. Southside Station will house them. The first will be the Petersburg Railroad Museum. There should also be a Black Heritage Museum. The National Park Service wants to use this building as a Central Virginia Civil War Museum and that should be pursued. There are other museum possibilities which are explored later in this report.

Main Street Petersburg

This is the Petersburg Parks version of Disneyland's Main Street, USA. It will extend three blocks and each block will be used to represent a different period of the city's history. "Early Petersburg" will cover the 1750 to 1815 period. Virtually all of these buildings were destroyed by the great fire of July 1815. After the fire, over 600 new buildings were constructed and they evolved over the years. This will be "Antebellum Petersburg" of 1816 to 1860, the period of our railroads. The third block will represent the period from the "Gay 90s" to the "Roaring 20s," which I call the "Party Period."

This is a multi-use facility. The first floors will be used to house retail stores and various attractions. The upper floors can be used for apartments and hotel rooms.

Evolution of Transportation

Petersburg developed because of two things - trade and transportation. The surrounding hinterland provided the agricultural commodities, especially tobacco, grain, corn, lumber, and cotton. The city's many commission merchants exported them to northern cities, England and Europe. They also imported many goods needed by local homes and businesses. That required transportation and the city has seen every form of it.

Together these many wonderful resources constitute an incredible transportation museum, but unlike a museum, they are not static exhibits. All will be fully operational and used throughout the park complex.

Sister Parks

The Norfolk Southern Railroad tracks run through the Petersburg Parks complex where they earlier serviced Union Station. The Petersburg Railroad trains can be used to transport visitors to Battleship Park, which is only three miles to the west. Less than a half-mile to the east, Norfolk Southern has a rail yard, which that company can easily develop into a modern railroad exhibit. These would be “sister parks,” independently owned and operated. They provide additional destinations for the trains and increase the critical mass.

Expanded Railroad Usage

The trains will be the most visual and dramatic element in the Petersburg Parks complex. The parks own transportation needs will result in a fleet of them. A by-product is that the Petersburg Railroad becomes a real railroad, one capable of going anywhere in North America. This opens up the opportunities for excursions, traveling railroad exhibits, and other things.

Retail Operations

Throughout the complex there will be stores, souvenir shops and places for visitors to eat.

Summary

The Petersburg Parks will contain everything called for in Disney’s America plus much more. The Disney’s America plan was not copied, as the content for the Petersburg Parks is based on the city’s history and heritage.

The new Petersburg Railroad will be the catalyst that pulls the city’s historic resources together.

Market Identification

We've defined the product, but who will buy it?

The Petersburg Railroad will probably be the primary attraction as its unique nature will have the greatest drawing power of all the theme parks. It will almost certainly be the primary money maker. Americans love contraptions and gadgets, as evidenced by the many that are constantly offered on television. An old-time steam train is the ultimate contraption. It huffs and puffs, chugs and choos. Its gadgets include "bells and whistles." It puts on quite a show. The Petersburg Railroad will eventually have a fleet of historic trains. There is nothing like them in the entire world.

Virginia is a major tourism destination. Jamestown and Colonial Williamsburg are the state's two largest historic attractions. Jamestown is a reconstruction of the fort built in 1607, and Colonial Williamsburg presents the late 1600s. The Petersburg Parks will have a far larger and more diverse critical mass: Appomattox Indian village, Fort Henry, Peter's Point Nature Park, the Black heritage of Pocahontas Village, the City of Industry, the Civil War fortifications, the wonderful architectural treasures of Main Street, the incredible railroads, and a presentation of the history of transportation. They will not be just to VIEW. The emphasis will be on DO.

The Petersburg Parks will be designed to appeal to local families seeking an entertaining, day trip destination. There is so much to do that kids will not tire of them.

The tour bus industry would find that providing customers with the first-hand experiences that they could enjoy at the Petersburg Theme Parks would provide a great departure from simply looking at old buildings. It's the difference between being a spectator and being a participant.

The parks present many aspects of American history, but also provide wonderful presentations of nature (plant and animal), technology, architecture and transportation. This will almost surely result in the Petersburg Theme Parks becoming the state's most popular educational field trip destination. They may even pull in field trips from schools located outside of Virginia.

The Battle for Petersburg was the longest in American history, and this unique attraction will certainly appeal to the hoards of Civil War enthusiasts. They may visit other battlefields, but they will almost certainly visit Petersburg too.

Petersburg's railroads are a microcosm of early American railroad history. This provides the opportunity to attract a second huge specialty market: railroad fans. There are millions of them. This is well proven by there being over 50 railroad magazines and more than 4,500 hobby shops that feature model trains. There are now more than 100 heritage railroads scattered across the county. None are in Virginia. Less than a dozen actually operate historic trains, and these are from the 1890-1920 period. There are no operating antebellum trains anywhere.

Seasonal Fluctuations

All attractions have high and low seasons. Virginia's King's Dominion and Busch Gardens essentially operate only three months a year, but try to extend the summer season through limited weekend use in the spring and fall. The income is so great during their three month season that they can afford to be closed for the rest of the year. The same holds true with Virginia Beach.

Prior to moving to Southside, Virginia, my wife and I lived in Fullerton, California, only 20 minutes away from Disneyland. Our two sons were then two and four. We made the mistake of taking them there in the summer. There were block-long lines for all the major rides. Waiting times ran 30 to 45 minutes. This led to us taking the kids in the off-season when it was comparatively quiet. It was such a delightful destination that we took them at least a half-dozen times a year.

Although it uses themes, Disneyland is essentially an amusement park as it offers high-tech rides. The seasonal traffic variation is not caused by weather, as southern California has mild winters. It is the result of the market, which is primarily families. The summer months are the only times in which the kids are not in school.

Petersburg is fortunate in that it is located in a climate zone greatly influenced by the warm Gulf Stream waters moving northward along the coast from the Caribbean. This results in mild winters. The Petersburg Parks are not dependent on amusement park summer traffic. They are designed to serve multiple markets.

Just as my wife and I often took the kids to Disneyland during the off-season, local families can visit the Petersburg Parks year-round. The Petersburg Parks are close by, and the prices will be very affordable. There could be season passes, one for the fall and another for the spring. Even though admission is discounted, visitors still eat and shop.

The Petersburg Parks will become the state's leading educational field trip destination. This will keep it busy in October and November and especially in the spring. School trips are usually scheduled months in advance. One or two days a week should be set aside for them. During those days, the exhibits can be more fully staffed.

Tourism is an enormous market. It draws people into Jamestown and Colonial Williamsburg year round.

The Petersburg Parks have two large built-in specialty markets: Civil War buffs and train fans. Many of these people are retired and travel during the off-season months when attractions are more easily accessible. The same holds true for people who take tour bus trips. The Petersburg Main Street shopping complex and restaurants will be visited year round.

All of this justifies year-round operation. This can work very much to our benefit when King's Dominion and Busch Gardens are closed. The Petersburg Parks will be the only large entertainment attraction in the Commonwealth that will be open year-round. That essentially gives it a monopoly nine months a year.

Comparables

Comparables is a real estate appraisal term referring to properties with characteristics that are similar to a subject property whose value is being sought. In a broader sense, it can refer to comparing any related things, be they activities, businesses or products.

The Petersburg Parks are unique in that there is nothing similar to them anywhere. The only other historic theme park comparable in size is Colonial Williamsburg, but it is a static display of historic buildings. It has nowhere near the historic diversity nor does it offer entertainment and activities.

The only businesses that comes even remotely close are Virginia's two amusement parks. I've extensively researched them on the Internet. My findings are set forth below.

Busch Gardens

Over 100 years ago, the Anheuser-Busch company opened a hospitality house near its brewery for customers to sample their products. This was the first Busch Gardens. They became so popular that the company added rides and attractions. They were so successful that the company built two very large free-standing Busch Gardens amusement parks: ones in Tampa, Florida in 1959 and one Williamsburg, Virginia in 1979. They were apparently very profitable as the brewer went into the theme park/amusement park business in a big way. It purchased Sea World, Cypress Gardens and seven other parks which were consolidated under SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment.

In 2008, the Brazilian-Belgian brewing company InBev purchased Anheuser-Busch for \$52 billion and created a new company named Anheuser-Busch InBev. It became the world's largest brewer. On October 7, 2009 it was announced that InBev had sold all eleven Busch Entertainment properties to the Blackstone Group for \$2.7 billion. The Blackstone Group L.P. (NYSE: BX) is an American-based alternative asset management and financial services company that specializes in private equity, real estate, and credit and marketable alternative investment strategies. Its website does not provide any detailed financial information on any of the assets that it manages. The \$2.7 billion price divided by 11 parks results in an average price of almost a quarter billion per park (\$245,454,545).

King's Dominion

King's Dominion opened in 1975 and has changed hands several times. It is currently owned by Cedar Fair Entertainment Company, who purchased Paramount Parks from CBS Corporation in 2006. It offers over 60 rides, shows and attractions, including 15 roller coasters and a 20-acre water park.

Cedar Fair is one of the largest regional amusement park operators in the world. It owns 11 amusement parks, six outdoor water parks, one indoor water park and five hotels. Its 2010 annual report contains a brief description of each park. It suggests that King's Dominion is one of its largest. It does not provide any financial information on individual parks but does state that they entertained over 22 million guests in 2010.

In 2010, the company had net revenues of slightly less than \$1 billion (\$977,592,000). \$568,900,000 came from admissions, \$337,300,00 from food and merchandise and 71,500,000 (2%) for accommodations and other income. Its operating expenses were \$632,000,000.

It is significant that admissions account for around 60% of the income. Meals and merchandise account for the other 40%. Since the average King's Dominion admission price is around \$60, then visitors spend another \$40 on the food and merchandise. Average sales per visitor is \$100.

Income averages out to \$81,466,000 per park. The 22 million guests divided by 11 parks equals two million per park. Overall, revenues averaged out to \$44 per guest. The average is certainly pulled down by the water parks. These figures are surely low for King's Dominion because its admission price is far more than the average price, plus guests buy food and souvenirs.

Yahoo reports that Cedar Fair roller coasters cost about \$20 million each, but that some have cost up to \$50 million.

Guesstimated Comparable Economics

The publicly released information on Busch Gardens and King's Dominion reveals little more than amusement parks are big business. Blackstone paid an average of a quarter billion dollars for the parks it purchased. King's Dominion;s 15 roller coasters cost over \$300 million, plus it has 45 other attractions. This suggest a probable cost of \$750 million. .

To justify the enormous capital investment both parks have to be attracting several million visitors per year. Three million visitors represents \$300 million in income.

Petersburg Parks

Busch Gardens and King's Dominion are not comparable attractions to the Petersburg Parks. Both specialize in thrill rides for the young. In fact, the Cedar Fair Annual Report states that its customers are under 24 years old. They serve a single market, and operations are largely limited to the summer months. By comparison, the Petersburg Parks are designed for multiple markets. Surely the bulk of the admissions will come in the summer season, but Civil War buffs, railroad fans, school field trips, tour buses and tourists will visit year-round.

They will also be other profit centers. Main Street can generate income from renting stores, apartments and hotel rooms. The railroad provides other income possibilities.

An enormous difference is the cost. The Petersburg Parks, exclusive of Main Street, should not cost more than \$20 million, the cost of one King's Dominion roller coaster.

Financial Viability

It is highly doubtful that the Petersburg Parks will attract as many visitors as King's Dominion and Busch Gardens, which is probably in the area of 3 million visitors per year. My guess is that once complete and fully operational, the year round market will attract at least one million guests.

Busch Gardens and King's Dominion charge around \$60 per admission. One of our goals is to attract people into Petersburg, so we want to keep the prices lows. The low cost permits that. A very low average admission price of \$20 will result in \$20 million in admission sales. King's Dominion guests spent \$40 on food and merchandise, but assume that Petersburg Parks guests only spend half as much. That's another \$20 million a year.

At that level, annual operating expenses should run around \$5 million, most of it payroll. The cost of the food and merchandise will run about 40% of the selling price resulting in another \$8 million in expenses. Debt service (including both principal and interest) will be around 11%. If the entire \$20 million cost is financed, then annual payments will be \$2.2 million.

This results in \$40 million in income and \$12.2 million in expenses. Such an extraordinary return is made possible by the city already owning all of the land and many historic buildings, the existing infrastructure (such as the new entrance into the city), the low cost of the attractions, and the year-round operating season.

Plus the Petersburg Parks will have income from real estate rentals and possibly expanded railroad operations, which are not included in the above.

An even greater benefit will the result of so many people coming into the city. Downtown Petersburg can become prosperous again. This plan will also create a great many jobs and result in substantial increases in the value of real estate. Tax revenues will soar.

The best thing about all of this as it cost nothing - at least in term of out-of-pocket expense, as the above anticipates 100% financing.

Property Acquisition

In accordance with standard accounting procedures, profit is the difference between income and operating expenses. These figures do not take into account the capital investment. The very fact that the city methodically accumulated the required land and other resources is what makes the project so financially attractive. For that the city deserves a very big “well done.”

Real Property

The city recently agreed to pay \$2.5 million for the Roper Lumber Yard. It contains around 25 acres of land, resulting in a value of \$100,000 per acre. The city owns 121 acres. Although it paid much lower prices for the bulk of this land, the Roper purchase can be used as a comparable to value the city land at \$12.1 million. Adding very inflated prices for the historic buildings brings the city’s cost basis up to, say, \$15 million.

The primary factor that influences the value of real estate is what can be done with it. In 1975 Pocahontas island residents secured renewed residential zoning to protect the neighborhood from industrial development. The Roper Lumber complex was grandfathered, as it was existing. This zoning precludes future industrial use. Pocahontas Island is also a historic district so at present the land can only be used for residential development and for historic resources.

The Petersburg Parks represent the highest and best use for this land. In view of the profit potential, then if it were sold as a historic theme park site, then the purchase price should reflect at least a four time markup, resulting in a \$60 million price.

Adding that price to the development cost drastically changes the economics.

Intellectual Property

Federal law recognizes that the author of a creative work is the owner of that work. Today, the Petersburg Theme Parks exists in the form of this revitalization plan. It is, in effect, a script. Just like any playwright or screenwriter, I would like to see it performed. Such performance requires my permission. I also developed the site plan. Details will almost surely be changed, but the railroad will almost surely have to utilize the basic plan.

The Petersburg Railroad cannot be properly promoted without making extensive use of my original research, set forth in my history book, *The Antebellum Railroads of Petersburg, Virginia*, which is a supplement to this plan. Both constitute intellectual property, and I am their sole owner.

I am willing to convey the necessary rights to the Petersburg Parks in consideration of fair compensation for my work.

Other Financial Factors

The Park Development Plan does not include anything dealing with Main Street Petersburg - neither cost of constructing it, nor income or expenses. That is because the size and nature of this resource requires independent development and management. It should be handled as a separate project.

No allowance is made for parking buildings simply because I have no idea of what they cost. However the cost should be divided by the number of visitors and admissions prices adjusted to cover the increased cost.

Neither of these have any direct impact on the economics set forth above.

The Petersburg Park Complex

The following section describes the many components within the complex. When reading it, you should constantly ask yourself :

“Is this a place that I would like to visit?”

“Is this a place that I would like to take my children or grandchildren?”

“Would I take out-of-town guests to visit it?”

“How will the people I know answer those questions?”

The answers to these questions determines the viability of the project

Community & Public Relations

This is more than a business venture; it's a way to revitalize a declining economy. Strong community support can help ensure its success.

The *Pride of Baltimore* was an authentic reproduction of a 19th-century Baltimore clipper topsail schooner commissioned by the citizens of Baltimore, Maryland. It was lost at sea with four of its 12-man crew on May 14, 1986. The city responded to this great loss by constructing the *Pride of Baltimore II*, a replica vessel of more modern design. It now sails the world as a Goodwill Ambassador from Baltimore and the State of Maryland. It was not constructed in some obscure shipyard, but rather in a large public park in the middle of downtown Baltimore. Thousands of people went by it every day to check on its progress. The newspapers carried constant progress reports. This resulted in the people of Baltimore taking mental possession of the new ship. It was their ship, and they took pride in it. To the extent possible, the construction of the Petersburg Parks should be done the same way.

Petersburg's railroad heritage extends far beyond the city. The city was the destination; the actual operation was the railroads. The Petersburg Railroad merged with the Richmond and Petersburg Railroad in 1898. Several mergers took place over the years, but both are now part of CSX Transportation. The president of CSX should be invited to the grand opening of the Petersburg Railroad and invited to drive its first train, pulled by a replica of its first locomotive, the *Liverpool*. Park expansion will require additional locomotives. When the Richmond and Petersburg locomotive *Black Diamond* comes on line, the president of CSX should be invited back because it is also part of his railroad.

The Norfolk Southern began as our City Point Railroad, and its 4-2-0 Norris class *Pocahontas* was its first locomotive. This line got into financial trouble and was taken over by the City of Petersburg to keep it in operation. It purchased a magnificent 1852 Baldwin 4-4-0. The city sold the railroad and its three locomotives to the Southside Railroad in 1854. In 1858, the Norfolk and Petersburg joined them. It was the first to use the Norfolk name. The Petersburg Railroad will reconstruct its flagship locomotive *Number 1*. When each of these three locomotives becomes operational, the president of Norfolk Southern should certainly be invited to cut the ribbon and drive the first train.

Site Plan

This document is supplemented with a conceptual site plan prepared from satellite photographs. Graphic elements show the approximate size and location of theme parks and many components. This must be replaced by a highly detailed plan prepared on Computer Aided Design (CAD) program.

Development Plan

The development plan calls for the Petersburg Parks to be built in three phases. I have prepared a report setting forth this information in great detail, but it is not yet complete. The following provides a brief overview.

Phase I - This has one goal and that is to get the first railroad into operation at the lowest possible cost. It will use the inner loop shown on the site plan. Allowing time for loading and unloading passengers, the trip should take about fifteen minutes. It also calls for a snack bar, more public bathrooms, and exhibits. No theme parks will be built. First year attendance is estimated at 90,000.

Phase II - This puts stripped down versions of four theme parks into operation. To support them, the main track will be installed. Three stations will be required. Trip time will be at least 30 minutes. Three trains will be required. The anticipated annual number of visitors is estimated at 300,000.

Phase III - This completes the theme parks. It should attract 1,000,000 visitors per year.

Seasonal Fluctuation

Planning must be various levels of attendance. Everything should be designed to accommodate maximum attendance. It can then be modified to accommodate lesser demands.

A million visitors a year is somewhat abstract. Toward getting a better idea of the impact that they will have on the City of Petersburg and the Petersburg Parks. I find that it helps to assign values to concepts as it makes them easier to understand.

Consider seasonal fluctuation. My guess is that the bulk of the visitors will come in the summer months when the kids are out of school. The winter months will be the slowest. The balance will be divided equally between the fall and spring.

Below, I have assigned a percentage of the total number of annual visitors to each season. It is followed by the number of visitors for that season. The last column provides the weekly average for each season simply by dividing the number of guests by 12. This results in a 48 week year, but for our purposes it is sufficient (A 52 week year is used for the total)

	Percentage	Guests	Weekly Average
Summer (June, July & August)	65%	650,000	54,167
Fall (September, October & November)	15%	150,000	12,000
Winter (December, January & February)	5%	50,000	4,167
Spring (March, April & May)	15%	150,000	12,000
Total (52 weeks)	100%	1,000,000	19,230

Parking



Phase I results in relatively modest traffic and the existing parking lot on River Street should prove sufficient

Phase II jumps the number of visitors by 350%. That's way too many cars for the River Street lot and using it would result in huge traffic jams and risks to pedestrians. It should be closed. The space will be needed for railroad sidings.

The photo at left shows the land purchased from Norfolk Southern. It is to become the main parking lot. Note that the ramp from the Martin Luther King Bridge is at the bottom. It will be the main access into the park complex.

Tax records show that this lot contains 7.86 acres. Abandoned tracks run down the west side. The tax maps do not show the tree covered area to the west of the tracks. It is apparently owned by the city. It runs for 1,500 feet and appears to have a depth of 50 to 100 feet. An average depth of 75 feet results in another 2.6 acres. The result is a total of 10.5 acres.

Present plans call for some of this land at the north end of this lot to be incorporated into the Peter's Point Theme Park. The space at the bottom between Joseph Jenkins Roberts Street and the ramp is isolated and useless for parking.

Standard 8 foot wide by 18 foot deep parking spaces and 24 foot wide driveways between rows will yield 108.9 parking spaces per acre which we will round off to 100. There will probably be 7 acres available for parking. It will provide 700 parking spaces. That should be sufficient for Phase II.

This parking lot will be temporary, so development and costs should be held to a minimum. The lot has a gently rolling hill, so it will have to be graded. The existing tracks will have to be moved west 50 to 75 feet to provide more space for parking. The lot should be covered with brown gravel and parking aisles can be marked with railroad ties. There must be some lighting.

Parking lots should be designed for the heaviest demand. Phase III should result in a million visitors per year. The summer season will be the busiest with over 54,000 visitors per week. It is likely that 60% of them will come on weekends. That's 30% a day on Saturday and Sunday, or 16,000 visitors for each of those two days.

An average of 4 guests per car results in 4,000 cars a day. Most visitors will stay for the bulk of the day. There is no more land available, so we'll have to follow the example of the recent Richmond Airport expansion and go up. That means multi-story parking buildings.

Most visitors will arrive between 11 AM and 2 PM. It is not unreasonable to assume they will enter at the rate of 600 cars an hour, which is ten per minute. Toward keeping traffic moving, there will be at many as 20 ticket sellers working the cars along the ramp. Another half dozen will be needed to direct the cars to the parking spaces.

Traffic

The Petersburg Parks are fortunate in that they are easily accessed by Interstate 95 and the recently widened Adams Street. The city needs to find ways to move this traffic as quickly as possible. The bottleneck will be the entrance into the park, which has already been addressed.

Although there will be a clearly defined route to the parks, some visitors will ignore them and continue downtown. Provision must be made for this.

Pocahontas Island and its Residents

The Petersburg Parks must always be sensitive to the fact that people are living on Pocahontas Island. The parks runs around the village and care must be taken to prevent park activities from intruding into their privacy. This can be accomplished through landscaping and other visual barriers.

During the busy summer season, special arrangements must be made to ensure that Pocahontas Island residents can quickly get back and forth from their homes. This can be accomplished by permitting them to use Third Street, which would otherwise be closed to the public. This avoids the bridge ramp. There could be a parking lot type gate and residents simply swipe a card to open it.

The original Disneyland was quickly surrounded by cheap motels and bars. We don't want such things in the middle of our parks so current residential zoning should not be changed nor waived.

Although the park must be designed to protect their privacy, some residents may not like the impact of the parks. The Petersburg Parks should have a standing policy of purchasing the property of any home owner who wants to move. To compensate them for their inconvenience, the price should be twice the tax value. These isolated lots will be of no immediate value to the Petersburg Parks, so this is simply a matter of honoring responsibilities. Over a period of time, such lots will probably accumulate and may possibly be used for future attractions.

Lake Petersburg



The construction of the Appomattox River Diversion Channel resulted in the abandonment of the original river bed, which runs parallel to River Street on its north side. It runs from Union Station about 70 percent of the way to the Interstate 95 bridge. There it becomes so filled with sediment that it is covered with vegetation. This condition continues for almost a mile before the diversion channel turns back into the original river bed. The water is so stagnant that it is essentially a swamp. This is the most prominent physical feature of the complex, so it must be developed into a scenic lake.

A coffer dam must be erected near the Interstate 95 bridge, as it will be needed to provide support for the railroad tracks. The swamp can then be drained. It would not take long for a bulldozer to clean the bottom. The removed material can be used to build up the dam, making it permanent. If at all possible, this future lake should be enlarged. The excess dirt can be used to create the Civil War fortifications and even used to create a long thin hill between the north edge of the Roper Lumber Company and the village of Pocahontas to provide it with privacy.

This would create Lake Petersburg. It can be put into place quickly and inexpensively and eliminates the problem of having to wait for the federal government to allocate money for dredging.

A means needs to be found to permit fresh water to flow in and out. It can certainly be brought in from the diversion channel. Getting permission to tap into the Appomattox River for fresh water can be time consuming. The issue can be bypassed by installing a well. Rain water can also be diverted from nearby Brick House Run and Lieutenant Run as they now function as storm drains. A strong rain would really flush out the lake. There are many environmentally sound ways to control the algae that now cover the river bed. They are used with lakes, ponds and canals all over the state. There are also mechanical devices that can provide needed circulation.

The existing river bed is totally surrounded by city owned land. If tapping into the Appomattox River can be avoided, then it may not be necessary to obtain any permits beyond that needed for a private lake. This needs to be investigated.

The shores of Lake Petersburg should be attractively landscaped. Trees should certainly be added to the north shore to hide the Roper Lumber Company complex.

Many Canadian geese have forgotten how to migrate and have established permanent residence in Virginia. Several flocks live in the artificial lakes around Southpark Mall. Many others live in the James River. Efforts should be taken to develop Lake Petersburg into a wildlife preserve. Geese and ducks should be introduced. If brought in as chicks, they will make it their permanent home. It certainly should be stocked with fish.

Lake Petersburg should be used for activities. When the bulldozer cleans the bottom, it can establish the depth of the lake. It should be kept to only three or four feet deep. There would be little danger of drowning as people could walk to shore.

The Petersburg Railroads

Introduction

Petersburg's incredible railroad history has long been neglected because so little was known about it. That is no longer the case. To support this plan, I have written an extensive history of them, *The Antebellum Railroads of Petersburg, Virginia*. It is the first book to ever address this important subject. The subject is summarized in a poster by the same name. A PDF poster book version is available at www.petersburg-parks.com to make it easy to read on computer screens.

The sheer size of the Petersburg Parks demands a means to transport visitors from one park to another. Petersburg has a built-in solution - its historic railroads. They will almost surely become the biggest attraction due to their uniqueness, dramatic nature and high-drawing appeal. They can also become a major profit center, independent of the parks. They must be the first component to be placed into operation, as their tracks are the skeleton of the entire complex. Everything else hangs on them.

Tweetsie Railroad was one of the nation's first theme parks. It is located between Boone and Blowing Rock, North Carolina. Visitors ride a 1917 locomotive that travels down three miles of track, built by the railroad. It opened in 1957 and was immediately successful. Management continuously added to the critical mass, and it is now one of the Tar Heel State's most popular attractions.

Petersburg has far more to offer. The city owes its existence and its development to trade and transportation. It has an incredibly rich railroad history.

The Petersburg Railroad was chartered in 1830 and became operational two years later. It was the third operational railroad in the United States, and it was the first railroad in the south to run scheduled trains. It was Virginia's first modern (non-horse-drawn) railroad and the first in North Carolina, resulting in it being the nation's first interstate railroad.

It was quickly joined by the City Point Railroad and the Richmond and Petersburg Railroad. In 1838, Petersburg was the only three-line railroad hub in the United States. These first railroads were soon joined by the Southside Railroad and the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad. In 1858, the city had an unbelievable FIVE RAILROADS, more than other city.

The American Civil War began in 1861. Union forces continually tried to capture Richmond, the capital of the Confederate State of America. The hundred miles between it and Washington, D.C., the capital of the United States, saw numerous battles over the next three years, but all of the Union advances were severely repulsed. General Ulysses S. Grant took command. After a couple of incredibly bloody frontal attacks that accomplished nothing, he changed the strategy and decided to starve Richmond into submission by capturing Petersburg's railroads, which fed it.

The American Civil War was the first to see the extensive use of railroads. The U.S. Military Railroad was established to support the war effort. Grant expanded it to include over 100 locomotives and over 1,000 passenger and freight cars. It was the largest railroad in the world. A quarter of it was assigned to the Petersburg front.

The Battle for Petersburg began with the invasion of City Point. It was a massive effort. In effect, it was the "Normandy Invasion" of the Civil War. The Union Army captured the City Point Railroad depot and greatly expanded it. City Point became the busiest port in the world as hundreds of ships constantly unloaded supplies for the 100,000 troops that soon surrounded Petersburg.

The U.S. Military Railroad added 22 miles of track that ran around its lines to supply the soldiers with ammunition and food, and their horses with fodder. It continually ran 25 locomotives that pulled over 200 freight cars. That's more than one locomotive per mile of track. It was a busy line.

The Petersburg's railroads became the most expensive in history in terms of human lives lost, as over 10,000 men were killed trying to capture and defend them. Once Petersburg fell, the Confederacy fell with it.

There are a few operating historic railroads of the late 1800s and early 1900s, but they have only one train. There are no operating antebellum trains anywhere in the United States. The transportation demands of the Petersburg Parks will result in the intensive need for trains. The Petersburg railroads will have a fleet of them.

Petersburg has long appreciated that it has three historic railroad stations, all within a one block area: (1) Southside Station is the only surviving antebellum train station in the south; (2) The Electric Building, which was the terminal for the Richmond and Petersburg Street Railroad; and (3) Norfolk and Western's magnificent Union Station, which was recently renovated. By the very definition of the term, they already constitute a theme park, but haven't been recognized as such.

This plan expands the city's railroad heritage by reconstructing the Appomattox Locomotive Works on its original site, a few hundred feet west of Southside Station. It will be the only facility of its kind in the world. This will be a major attraction in its own right, but it will also be fully functional.

All railroads have extensive shops to maintain their trains. Those of the antebellum period also constructed the freight cars, passenger cars and tenders. Some constructed locomotives. In addition to keeping the Petersburg Railroad trains operating, this facility can also build the needed rolling stock. In short, this is not a static exhibit, but a living factory in accordance with DO not VIEW.

The locomotives will eventually require a roundhouse, complete with a turntable to rotate the engines, as that is what makes a roundhouse. Small stations will be needed at every theme park. Crossing signals may also be needed. There should be a water tower and other trackside accessories common to early railroads. In planning these, it helps to think of the Petersburg Parks as a life size model train layout.

No other city in the entire world has such a rich railroad heritage and such extensive historic resources. Once completed, the Petersburg Railroad can easily become a world class attraction, one that brings in visitors from as far away as Europe and Asia.

Railroad Safety

Safety has been a major concern of railroads since their beginning and it is today. It must always be the primary consideration of the Petersburg Railroad.

The early railroads ran through farms. Cows seemed to have a propensity for eating the grass that grew between railroad ties. The whistle was added to shoo them off. City residents objected to the shrill sound so bells were introduced. These are still effective. As city populations increased, crossing gates were added.

The most effective way to avoid accidents is to separate the tracks from the people. Visitors enter Disneyland through large tunnels. The Main Street Train Station is above them. The tracks run around the outside perimeter of the park complex, isolated from visitor areas. The Petersburg Railroad must do the same thing. The biggest danger spot is immediately around Union Station. There will be a lot of visitors and it will be the main depot. Decorative wrought iron fences should be erected on both sides of the track and there should be clearly defined crossings with warning lights and gates.

The isolation of their tracks permits Disney trains to run at 25 to 30 miles per hour. Antebellum passenger trains rarely exceeded 12 miles an hour. This was not due to the power of the locomotive, but rather the poor condition of the tracks. These locomotives did not have brakes on the drive wheels. The engineer slowed the train down by reducing the amount of steam to the engine. The weight of the train did the rest. To make an emergency stop, the engineer reversed the engine. Our engines must have modern brakes. Between the low speeds and brakes, they should be able to stop in a short distance.

Cows grazing on the tracks were such a big problem that the first cowcatcher was introduced in 1833, but they were not widely used until the mid 1840s. All of Petersburg's antebellum locomotives had them except for the early *Liverpool* and *Pocahontas*.

As an additional safety measure, the Petersburg Railroads should develop a "soft" cowcatcher. It could have a spring wire frame and be covered with soft rubber or some other material. If a kid runs in front of the train and there is no time to stop, the "kidcatcher" would catch the child or push him or her out of the way without injury. These should be designed so that they are only a few inches above the track, making it impossible for anything to go under the train. Although not historically accurate, they should also be installed on the earlier locomotives.

Depot



Petersburg has two historic train stations. The Southside Station is much larger. It has three sections. The center one is two stories high. The first floor was the train station and the offices were upstairs. It was flanked by freight stations. The west bays are intact, but the east bays are not. Everything above floor level was destroyed by the 1993 tornado.

I do not have blueprints for this building, so I do not know the exact dimensions. I paced off the last west bay and found it was 21 paces deep and 13 paces wide. A pace is 30 inches, so each bay measures approximately 52 x 32 feet, which yields 1,664 square feet. The seven bays contain around 11,648 square feet. This station provides an abundance of space that can be used for support functions.



Its location makes it unsuitable for servicing trains. Behind it a triangular lot that does not provide enough turning room for large locomotives and the use of this station will require crossing

Norfolk and Southern tracks run parallel to Southside Station..Petersburg Railroad trains would have to cross them to reach the station and cross them again to return to the rest of the park complex. This can result in problems and should be avoided.

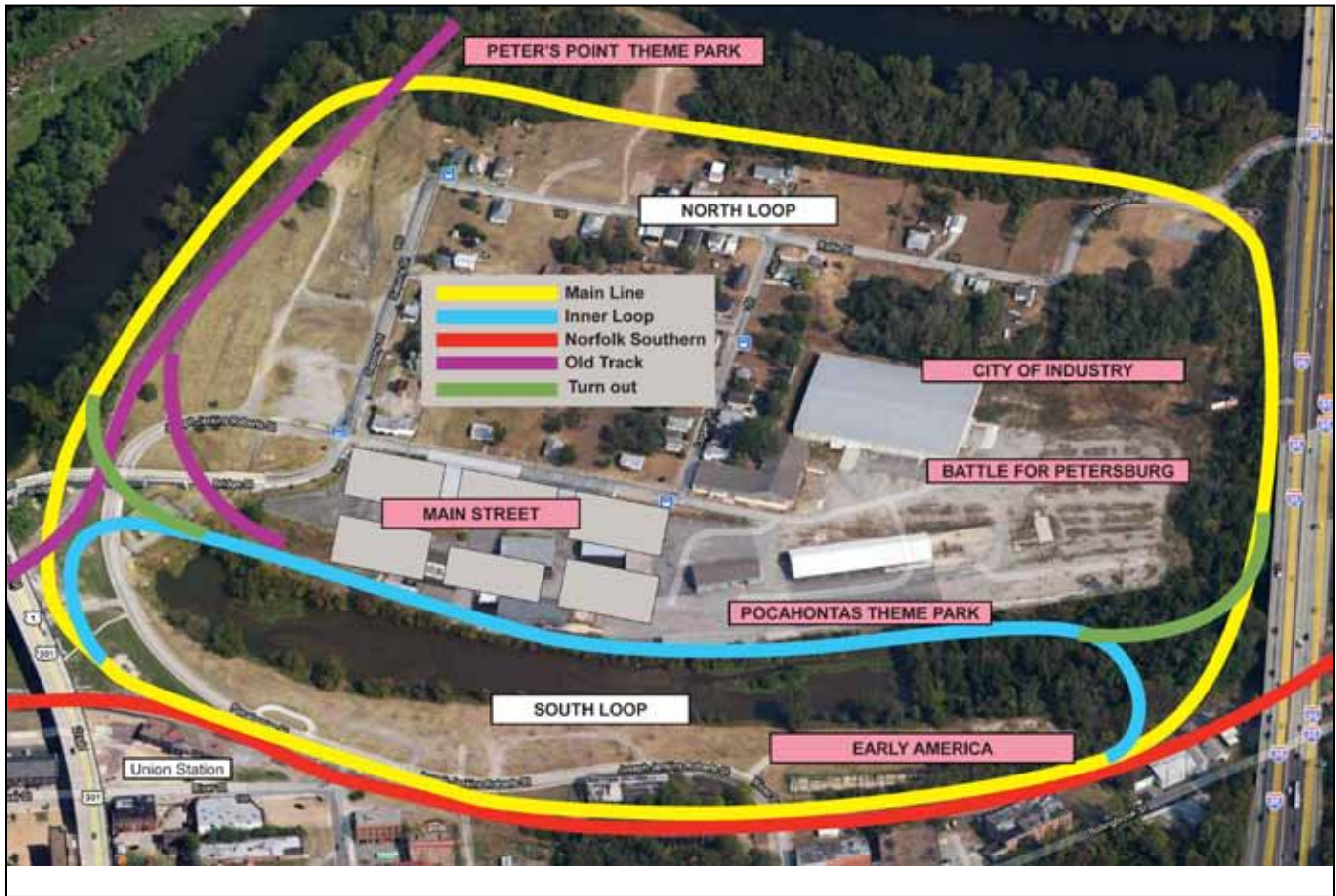


The magnificent Norfolk and Western Union Station must be the operating depot. There is plenty of space for a very wide turn. The Petersburg Railroad tracks will be immediately north of the Norfolk Southern tracks, so there is no need to cross them. This eliminates a big safety hazard.

The only drawback is the lack of space for essential support services, such as snack bar, and the park's museums and exhibits. The only practical solution is to reconstruct the east bays of Southside Station to house them. This results in the support functions being only a short distance away.

Even if functionality were not an issue, the mostly destroyed east bays are a visual blight on the entire park complex. It creates a negative image and that situation should be rectified.

Tracks



The Norfolk Southern tracks run about 50 yards behind Southside Station then turn southeast to service Union Station. They continue east and leave the Petersburg Parks complex. They are shown in red at the very bottom of the above picture.

Union Station will be main depot for the Petersburg Railroads. Toward providing maximum safety, all trains will run in only one direction. It should be counterclockwise. This is so when they leave Union Station they will first enter the scenic Early America park on the south bank of Lake Petersburg. This direction also results in presenting the theme parks in chronological order.

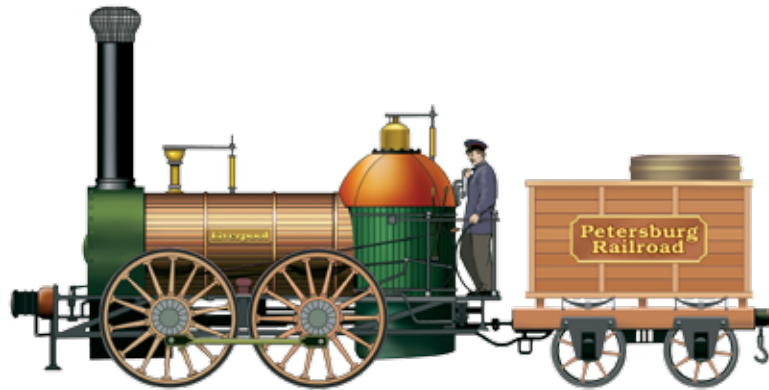
The main line will be divided into two sections by the cross track (shown in blue). It runs along the north shore of Lake Petersburg. The addition of turn outs (shown in green) result in two loops, the larger north loop and the smaller south loop. Each can be used independently.

Phase I has only one goal - to get the first train in operation. Toward minimizing the initial cost only the inner loop will be constructed. It consists of the cross track and the south stretch of the main track. There is now on the site almost 4,000 feet of existing track (shown in purple). It is long enough to cover around two-thirds of this loop.

This track probably dates to the early 1900s and may have suffered some deterioration over the years, but the steel of that time was so far superior to that of the 1850s, that it still had many times strength required by our light-weight trains. Best of all, the track and ties are already paid for.

Phase II calls for at least four theme parks to open. This is when the railroads become absolutely essential as they must transport visitors from one site to another. The rest of the main line will be constructed. Three stations will be required and all can be serviced from the main line. Since it is not needed, the cross track will be temporarily closed. It will be used in the future.

Locomotives



Liverpool

The Petersburg Railroad was the city's first railroad and it will be the first to become operational. The locomotive will be a replica of the *Liverpool*, built by the Edward Bury Company in 1830-1831. The original mechanical drawings of this little locomotive have been located. Antebellum locomotives used very simple technology and are easy to reconstruct. This subject is discussed at length in the development plan, but one issue needs to be immediately addressed.

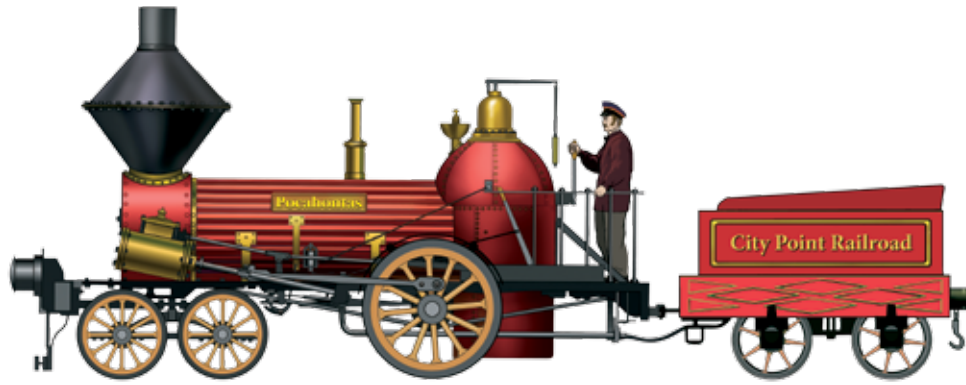
The primary technology issue is the motive power for the locomotive. Steam engines required extensive maintenance. They were fuel-hungry little beasts. The *Liverpool* required refueling stations every ten miles, where it took on 700 gallons of water and a cord of wood. This huffing and puffing little engine was a fire-breathing dragon. It spewed out a constant shower of sparks and burning cinders that damaged passengers' clothes, set fire to freight car cargo and started roadside infernos. An exact historic reconstruction goes way beyond asking for trouble, it guarantees it!

Although a few purists would like the locomotive to be an exact duplicate of the original, the vast majority of future passengers are seeking entertainment. The goal should be to have a train that appears original but provides the safety, comfort and entertainment value expected by visitors. The locomotive can and should be made of hand-hammered wrought-iron. No one can see inside the large boiler, so it is not necessary for it to contain the high-maintenance fire tubes used on the real steam locomotive.

The large boiler interior provides an abundance of space to house just about any power source. Smoke and sound effects can be easily added. The Disneyland Railroad built its first two locomotives itself, then added historic ones. All were recently converted from steam to biodiesel. The Disney theme parks recycle their cooking oil to fuel them. If this technology and fuel is easily available, then this should be explored. If not, then a fossil fuel diesel should be used. There are also modern, compact steam engines loaded with safety features. Even if our locomotive used a diesel engine, it will surely require a lot of water to produce the needed steam. This becomes very important with later engines as it severely reduces their range.

The turning radius of the locomotives must be adjusted. Railroad engineers strive for the widest possible curves because it reduces wear to the wheels and helps avoid derailments. The Petersburg Railroad locomotives should be designed to turn in tight circles because they consume less space.

Antebellum locomotives did not have any brakes on their drive wheels. They were slowed down by reducing the amount of steam. If a sudden stop was required, the engine was reversed causing the drive wheels to run backwards. When parked in stations, a cranked brake was used to lock the wheels on the tender. A diesel engine cannot be reversed. Our locomotives must have brakes. The required safety features have already been discussed.



Pocahontas



City of Petersburg

Next should be a replica 1837 2-4-0 Norris class locomotive identical to that purchased by the City Point Railroad and named *Pocahontas*. This was also the first locomotive used by the ancestral line of the Norfolk Southern.

It should be followed by a reproduction of the 1852 Baldwin locomotive purchased by the City of Petersburg. The state-of-the-art *City of Petersburg* was the same 4-4-0 American design as *The General*, the famous locomotive of The Great Locomotive Chase of 1862, but there are distinct differences.

Together these first three locomotives summarize early American locomotive development as they represent the three main types: the 0-4-0 Stephenson Class / Bury design of 1828 / 1831, the 2-4-0 Jervis Class of 1837 and the classic 4-4-0 American Class introduced in 1838. This will be a big draw for the early railroad fans and a great educational tool for school field trips.

These locomotives can also provide great promotional value. The first two are small, light-weight and can be transported on a tractor-trailer truck. They can be used as a traveling exhibit, one that can be displayed at the state fair, local fairs and many railroading events. Some people will certainly want to see more, and this will result in them putting Petersburg on their "places to go" list.

As the Petersburg Parks expand, their drawing power increases and there will be more and more visitors. In order to provide the needed transportation, the Petersburg Railroad must be continually expanded. Federal tax laws encourage such expansion. Excessive profits will surely result in severe tax consequences. They can be greatly reduced by reinvesting profits into machinery. Such purchases earn depreciation deductions and investment tax credits. The resulting tax savings substantially reduces the real cost. In my opinion, it is better to reinvest the money in expanding the Petersburg economy rather than give it to the federal government.

Phase I calls for a train ride. The *Liverpool* normally pulled passenger trains at 12 miles an hour and it will traverse the inner loop which is around three-fourths of a mile in length. There are no stops other than Union Station. Travel time is eight minutes. Taking into account the time required to load and unload passengers will result in four trips an hour. This little 1831 engine will pull one tandem design passenger car containing benches that will seat 36 guests. It should also pull a freight car, so that it looks like a train.

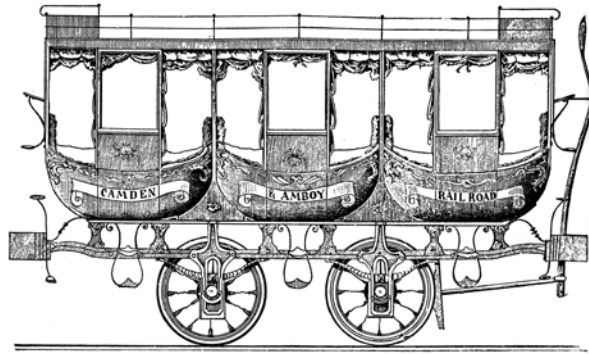
Phase II will use the main line. It is about a mile and a quarter in length. In addition to Union Station, there will be three stops. Each trip will take at least a half-hour. Guests will not want to wait that long, so there must be a total of three trains.

Once the parks are completed and drawing 16,000 a day on busy summer weekends, a minimum of five trains will be needed. They will need to pull at least four passenger cars each. Other activities will require additional trains.

Rolling Stock



Stage Coach Design

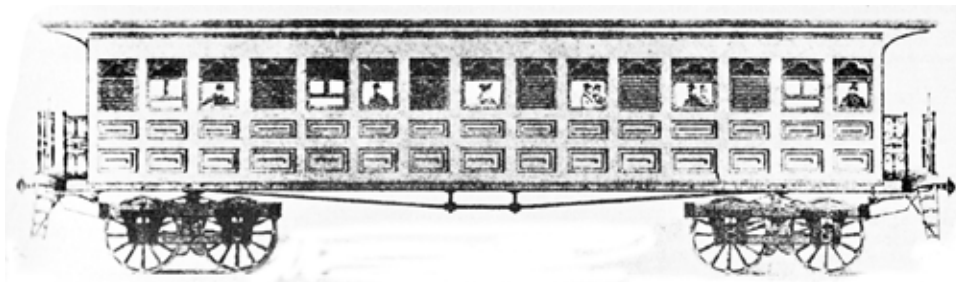


Tandem Design

The Petersburg Railroad first used the stagecoach type car and then the tandem design, which had three coaches mounted on a single frame. By 1838, 8-wheel tandem designs were common, and by 1840, the square-sided cars that were used for the next 50 years came into widespread use. Unlike the earlier designs that had compartments with seats facing one another, all seats faced forward. These also had windows instead of side curtains. At least one of each model should be exhibited. The Petersburg Railroad was one of the first to offer sleeping cars. One or more of may come in handy. It also had baggage cars and a dedicated mail car.

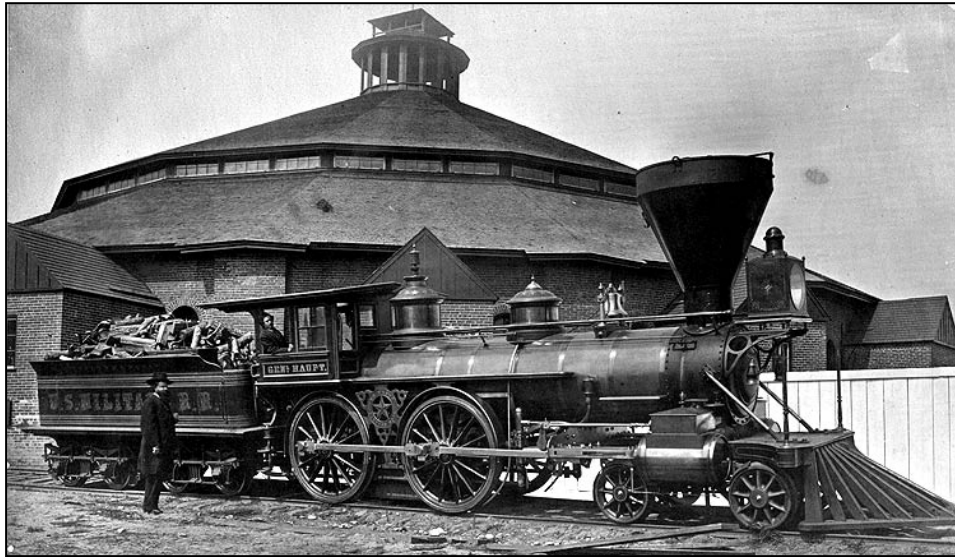
The Petersburg Railroad started out with the stagecoach design. These cars had limited seating capacity, so it switched over to the tandem design, which carried 36 passengers. The *Liverpool* and the *Pocahontas* pulled such cars. They will pull both the four and eight wheel versions. *City of Petersburg* and other later locomotives pulled the later square sided cars, but passenger car represented a big investment and tandem cars remained in use for many years.

All of the Petersburg Railroad trains should also pull a baggage car and or two freight cars, as cars are what makes a train.



Square Side Design

Roundhouse



Alexandria, Virginia roundhouse of the U.S. Military Railroad, circa 1863

As the locomotive fleet expands, a roundhouse will be needed to store and service them. Of course, it will have a turntable as that is what results in a roundhouse. The original Petersburg Railroad station, freight depot and shops burned to the ground in 1835, no doubt the result of sparks or embers emitted from one of the fire-breathing dragon locomotives. In addition to the needed functionality, it will become a major attraction in its own right.

The roundhouse should certainly be made of brick and other fire-resistant materials. I don't have the locomotive dimensions, but would guess that, complete with tender, they will fit on a 50-foot turntable. This is a very low priority project, but provision should be made for it in the master plan.

Railroad Adventures

The Tweetsie Railroad runs three miles. To provide entertainment, it bills itself as a "Wild West Adventure." The train is attacked by renegade cowboys, Indians and train robbers. How the wild west found its way into the mountains of western North Carolina is beyond me.

The Disneyland Railroad runs through a long tunnel that goes through a backstage service area. It contains a Grand Canyon diorama. It is the largest diorama in the world and includes stuffed animals in lifelike poses.

There are only a couple of minutes between stops and the short time makes it difficult for the Petersburg Railroad trains to do anything other than provide transportation. At some point in the future, a diorama could be added. If so, then it would have to cover a subject that cannot be presented in more exciting ways.

A wild west show would be grossly inappropriate, as this would violate the Petersburg Parks commitment to historic integrity. Fortunately history provides some great opportunities. The Petersburg Railroads were constantly under attack by Union soldiers during the Civil War and there may be ways to utilize that.

The Great Locomotive Chase was one of the famous railroad events in American history. It occurred April 12, 1862, in northern Georgia during the American Civil War. A passenger train pulled by the locomotive *General* stopped at Big Shanty to refuel and to permit passengers to eat and relieve themselves. James J. Andrews, a civilian scout and part-time spy had recruited 22 Union Army volunteers. They commandeered the train. They took it northwards toward Chattanooga, Tennessee, doing as much damage as possible to the vital Western & Atlantic Railroad.



The *General* is preserved at the Southern Museum of Civil War and Locomotive History in Kennesaw, Georgia, and it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The train's conductor, William Allen Fuller, and two other men, chased the stolen train, first on foot, then by handcar. This was made possible by the steep grade that the train had to climb. Fuller spotted the locomotive *Yonah* at Etowah. He abandoned the handcar, jumped aboard it and chased the raiders north all the way to Kingston. The engine was almost out of fuel, so Fuller switched to the locomotive *William R. Smith*. Two miles south of Adairsville, the tracks had been broken by the raiders so Fuller again had to continue his pursuit on foot. He then spotted the southbound locomotive *Texas* at Adairsville. It was headed the wrong direction and there was no place to turn, but he took it anyway.

Running backwards, the tender-first *Texas* continued the chase. The two trains sped through northern Georgia. The *General* ran out of fuel just a few miles from Chattanooga, so Andrews and his men abandoned it and scattered. All were later caught. The very first Medals of Honor were given to some of these men by Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton.



The chase inspired a Buster Keaton silent film comedy and the 1956 Walt Disney film, *The Great Locomotive Chase*, starring Fess (Davy Crockett) Parker as Andrews.

Signature Attraction

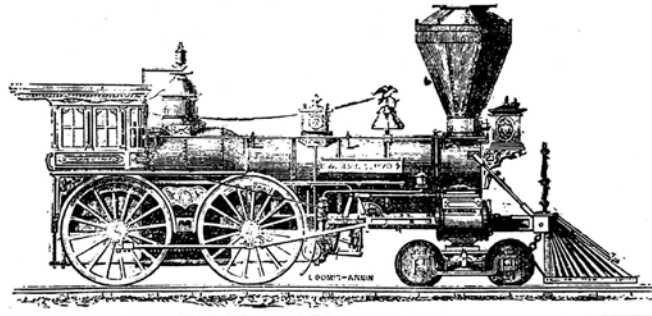
This well-documented event provides a wonderful opportunity for unique and appropriate entertainment. The *City of Petersburg* was a 4-4-0 similar to the *General*. When a second American design locomotive joins the fleet, then the Petersburg Parks can reenact this exciting chase.

These shows will be performed several times a day. The south loop will be closed and the two trains will run around the north loop. All available employees will provide additional safety by acting as track guards. The cross track is bounded on the south by Lake Petersburg and the trains can be easily seen by visitors on the south shore.

This should be a well-planned production which must be well rehearsed. The two trains will run faster than normal, maybe 20 miles an hour. Soldiers on the two trains should be shooting at one another. The *Texas* should be very close behind the *General* and it there should be one or two occasions when it appears that the following train will run into the other. This can be a really exciting event and nothing like it has ever been staged before. Everyone will enjoy it. It will thrill the Civil War buffs and railroad fans. It can become the Petersburg Parks signature attraction. Again, it is DO, not VIEW.

Appomattox Locomotive Company

WELLS LOCOMOTIVE & CAR WORKS,



PETERSBURG VIRGINIA

Ironmonger Uriah Wells moved from Pennsylvania to Petersburg, where he established the Petersburg Iron Works around 1830. It was located on the northeast corner of Old and Market Streets, just across Market Street from the Peter Jones Trading Post. The business made plows for the local farmers, machines for the various mills and rolling stock for the railroads. The business grew rapidly, and Wells purchased the two adjacent Old Street lots.

Wells began building locomotives in 1850. He reportedly built about 20, of which 17 have so far been documented. Wells died in 1864 and attempts were made to keep the business going, but the severe limitations imposed on the South by the Reconstruction made that impossible.

The 1885 Sanborn insurance map shows the area formerly occupied by Wells between Old and River Street being vacant of buildings, probably the result of a recent fire. Wells' original buildings were gone, but the Sanborn Map also shows that the locomotive works, which were behind the Old Street buildings on the other side of River Street, were still intact. This is only a couple of hundred feet west of Southside Station.

The Sanborn map also shows the Appomattox Iron Works, which was then located on the north side of Old Street almost next door. It was owned by Armstrong and Steere, two more Pennsylvania Yankees who had moved to the area in 1850. When the war broke out, they were drafted into the Confederate Army, deserted and made their way back to Pennsylvania. After the war, they returned to Petersburg and set up a general merchandise store. Later they became junk dealers who purchased lead and iron recovered from the battlefields that surrounded the city. In 1876, they purchased the defunct AIW, established a year earlier, and began to convert "swords into plowshares."

The Petersburg Iron Works / Appomattox Locomotive Works had apparently been abandoned. Armstrong and Steer were extremely frugal men and apparently purchased much of their machinery from the Petersburg Iron Works, perhaps at an auction, as some of the AIW machinery dates back to the 1830s and 1840s. These machines are extremely rare.

In the wake of the tornado, Lena Witt purchased the AIW and renovated the four federal buildings facing Old Street. She converted the upstairs into apartments. The first floor houses the Cameron Foundations and two stores. Almost all of the original antique machinery is still on the site. Lena has told me that she wants to get rid of it and has even considered selling it as scrap metal. This would be a great loss to the city. It should be obtained as soon as possible.

The Appomattox Iron Works should be reincarnated as the Appomattox Locomotive Works. This is fitting as the machinery goes back to its original home.

This complex will require a machine shop, foundry, pattern-making shop, blacksmith shop and assembly buildings. The sheer extent of these resources results in it being a theme park in its own right. This will not be a static attraction, but rather it will be a working factory.

Wells started out building passenger and freight cars for the Petersburg Railroads and our trains will require a lot of them. Once the first couple are made, then we will have the plans, knowledge and experience to build them ourselves. The technology of antebellum railroads was fairly simple and many railroads built their own locomotives. Perhaps we can too. The cost savings can be so great that this attraction may even pay for itself.

The historic nature of the Petersburg Parks will result in the need for a great many things made of metal. They will range from parts for crossing guards to fire place cranes, so this facility will be very busy during the construction phase.

The foundry and other shops can also be used to create a proprietary product line of brass railroad bells and whistles to sell to visitors. It can also make andirons and other cast iron products.

Exhibits & Museums

The Southside Station will be the Petersburg Parks primary exhibit and museum center as it is centrally located and contains a great deal of space. The east bays must be rebuilt to house them, as the existing west bays are simply too far away from the depot, which is the railroad park epicenter.

Museums appeal to older people. Younger ones were raised in a fast-moving world of advanced technology and prefer more exciting activities. Toward maintaining traffic flow, museums have been steadily moving from static to interactive exhibits. The Science Museum of Virginia in nearby Richmond is an excellent example of this trend.

Southside Station is large enough to house a number of exhibits and museums. Some of the possibilities are explored below.

Petersburg Railroads Museum

The Petersburg Railroads should strive to expand and improve its exhibits, but such efforts should be secondary to creating activities and attractions that help to enhance the customer's entertainment experience. The primary goal of the entire Petersburg Parks complex should be DO, not VIEW.

National Park Service

I understand that the National Park wants to use Southside Station for a central Virginia Civil War Museum. I am not privy to the details, but would assume that its plans included purchasing the building, restoring it to its original condition, then filling it with exhibits and artifacts. That can be very expensive. I also understand that the project has not been implemented because of the need to obtain federal appropriations. Like the river dredging, this is another situation where the current economy may not result in such funding at any time in the near future. This situation can be overcome.

The Petersburg Parks must restore the building. It can then lease space to the Park Service. All it has to do is move in. It can probably accomplish that within its existing budget. Even more important is that its facility would not be free-standing, but would be part of a much greater complex, giving it far greater drawing power. The Siege of Petersburg was fought over the city's railroads, so it provides an excellent tie-in. These bonuses may result in quick actions by the Park Service.

Southside Station is huge, and I cannot conceive of the Park Service museum requiring more than one or two bays. They should be located in the existing west wing, which will be ready for occupancy. The museum should be located adjacent to the Petersburg Railroad exhibits, and they should be internally connected.

U. S. Military Railroad Museum



City Point Depot

Local historians from the National Park Service have extensively researched this historic railroad. The information and artifacts they have accumulated can be put to good use.

This enormous effort has never been recognized. If the U.S. Military Railroad existed today, its logistics function would surely result in it being placed under the command of the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps, headquartered at nearby Fort Lee. Certainly major exhibit space should be devoted to this subject, not only because it is appropriate, but because it can attract Fort Lee traffic. Fort Lee is the home of the U.S. Army Quartermaster Museum, and it may want to host such an exhibit. If not, its curators may want to participate in setting one up and may possibly loan artifacts that can be displayed.

Norfolk and Southern Railroad

The Norfolk Southern Railroad began as Petersburg's City Point Railroad, which began operations in 1838. The Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad was the first to use the Norfolk name. Its ancestral lines used both our depots and operated the historic locomotives which will be reconstructed and put back into operations. The Petersburg railroad heritage and the Norfolk Southern railroad heritage are so interwoven that they are impossible to separate.

Norfolk Southern has a railroad museum, but the company's website provides little information on it. A visitor posted to VirtualTourist.com, "This small but interesting museum about trains in general, and Norfolk Southern Railway in particular, offers a lot in a small space. It is visually interesting with many displays of train logos, equipment, vintage train schedules, tickets and such, but it also contains several displays which highlight some of the company's history and substantial artifacts: sections of Civil War-era track, vintage hand tools and diagrams to teach hand signals to railroad trainees. My favorite displays were of the vintage paper memorabilia type. But, especially attractive to small children and some adults, too, is a locomotive simulator." He wrote that he was its only visitor. This small museum is apparently not displaying any trains, but that may be due to the lack of a viable place to display them.

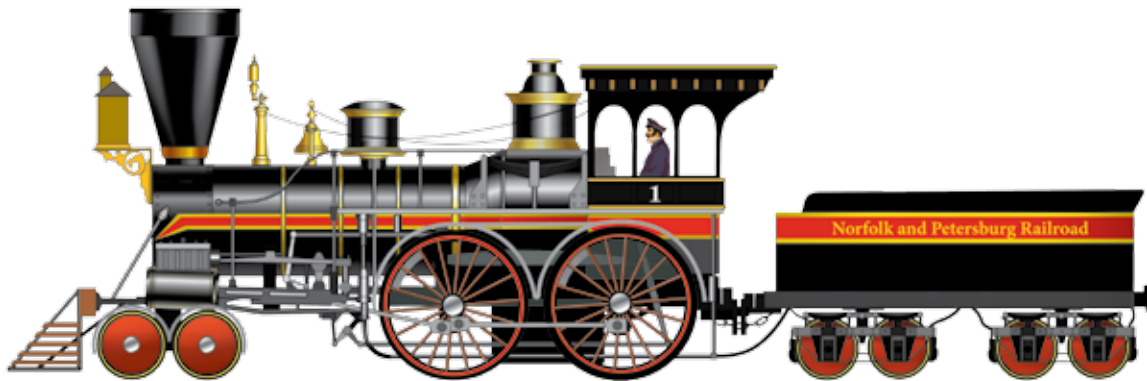
The Norfolk Southern is certainly capable of doing far more, but it may have been discouraged from doing so by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (B&O). The B&O Museum is the largest railroad museum in the world. It is located in the old Mount Clare Station in Baltimore, Maryland. It has the largest collection of 19th Century trains in the world. They are housed in the adjacent roundhouse. The Chesapeake and Ohio Railway took financial control of the B&O in 1963. Subsequent mergers resulted in it now being part of the CSX Transportation. In 1990, CSX deeded the B&O museum, property and collection to the newly formed, non-profit museum organization. The museum outlived its parent railroad. In 1999, it became affiliated with the Smithsonian Institution.

Unlike the B&O, the Petersburg Railroads are not static displays. Its wonderful antebellum trains will be chugging down the tracks once again. This provides Norfolk Southern with the opportunity to ring its own bells and blow its own whistles, thus promoting its 175 years of reliable service to its customers. Certainly the Norfolk & Western Union Station should host a major exhibit. In fact, the Southside Station provides an abundance of room for a Norfolk Southern Museum.



Norfolk Southern has a rail yard only 1,200 feet west of the Petersburg Parks. It consists of six sidings, each about a half-mile long. Generally only one or two dozen cars are stored on it. The site is also used to transfer gravel from rail cars to trucks. There is a great deal of unused track.

Norfolk Southern was the last of the major railroads to abandon steam locomotives. It must have some locomotives and outdated rolling stock tucked around here and there doing nothing but gathering rust. The sidings could be used to display them without disrupting operations to the rest of the yard. This would permit them to be recycled into something useful. A second siding could provide parking for the tourist train, thus keeping the main track clear for regular traffic.



Norfolk & Petersburg Number 1

The Petersburg Railroad would run a train to it from the main park. Of course, it would depart from the magnificent Norfolk & Western station and the train would be pulled by Norfolk and Petersburg *Number 1*. B&O can't top that! This would be an off-site "sister park," which can also be accessed directly from the adjacent route 36.

The cost to Norfolk Southern would be negligible as it already owns everything. All it would have to do is move the locomotives and rolling stock and give them a fresh coat of paint. Locomotives and rolling stock are made of heavy steel that is difficult to damage. It would not be necessary to have anyone on-site. In others words, it could simply be a static display.

The only required site improvement is a turnaround so that the train can return to its station.

Battersea Plantation



Battersea is an important Colonial plantation house that was constructed near the banks of the Appomattox River in 1768 for John Banister, first mayor of Petersburg, a Revolutionary delegate, congressman and framer of the Articles of Confederation. The City of Petersburg sold it to the Battersea Foundation in 2010. It is now restoring the plantation.

This beautiful plantation is far more centrally located and accessible than the half dozen or so plantation tourist attractions located on the James River. Yet it is three miles from Old Town and thus physically isolated from the Petersburg Parks. This problem can be easily overcome. The Norfolk Southern tracks run through the Petersburg Parks and continue west through forests to the rear property line of Battersea. All that is needed to provide train service is a switch and a turnaround loop which can run around the plantation.

Of course it must have attractions. The vast amount of space available provides room for many things. Obviously Battersea should build on its plantation heritage. Certainly there should be an abundance of animals - sheep, goats and fowl. Virginia's most popular sport was horse racing. There is plenty of room at Battersea for a track. It could actually host local non-professional races.

Tobacco was the most important crop and its growing and processing can be shown. Wheat and corn were major crops. I've taken out-of-town visitors to Williamsburg in the fall and they always delight in seeing cotton on the stalk. Flax was introduced at an early date and its fibers are used to make linen. Hemp was also cultivated. It's long, durable and soft fibers were used to make rope. Hemp comes from plants of the Cannabis genus. They are used to make a great many products, but are most famous for the marijuana they produce.

There is nothing happier than a small child wandering through a strawberry field picking and eating the red delicacies, so there should be a large strawberry field. There could be watermelons in the summer and pumpkins in the fall. There should also be an orchard of fruit trees. They should be there for visitors to pick and take home.

The Petersburg Parks benefit from this because it provides another destination for its trains and thus another source of income. The Petersburg Parks should enter into an agreement with the Battersea Foundation that provides for one ticket to cover both the transportation and the attraction. It would define how income was to be divided.

Petersburg Railroads Theme Park

In one sense the Petersburg Railroads are an operation as its engines will be constantly chugging down the tracks. The supporting buildings result in a theme park. Best of all, they are actually running a fleet of historic trains. There is nothing like this anywhere in the world and there can never be any competition as no other city has such a rich railroad heritage and existing historic resources.

Expanded Railroad Capabilities

The transportation needs of the Petersburg Parks will require trains. They also provide exhibit, educational, promotional and drawing power. As a secondary consequence, the Petersburg Railroads become an actual railroad, one that is physically capable of doing many things.

The Petersburg Parks will use standard gauge track (4 feet, 8.5 inches between the rails). All modern day trains in Europe, the United States, Canada, Mexico and many other countries, use this same standard gauge. This makes it possible for Petersburg Railroad trains to go anywhere in North America from Petersburg to Bangor Maine to Miami Beach, Florida to Nome, Alaska to Panama City, Panama. That's quite a capability.

The limiting factor is the range of the locomotives. The Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad was the last of Petersburg's antebellum lines. It opened in 1858 and had the most modern steam locomotives available. They required stations every ten miles to replenish their water and wood. (1,200 gallons of water and two cords of wood). Such stations are no longer available. This is where the motive power becomes so important. A diesel engine (either biofuel or fossil fuel), tucked inside a steam engine boiler, can store more than enough fuel to permit very long non-stop trips.

Circus trains have been in use since 1872. Privately owned, they freely use the tracks of many different railroads. The big railroads are "common carriers" (open to the public), so the fact that circus trains exist and run on many railroads suggests that federal regulations provide for the third party use of tracks. Railroads routinely move each other's freight cars all over the country.

The tracks of the Norfolk Southern run through the Petersburg Parks. I do not recall ever seeing a train on this track, but have heard the whistle many times late at night. My guess is the track is now used only at night when the railroad hauls coal down out of the mountains. There does not appear to be any current traffic conflict during daylight hours, and all it takes is a pair of switches to connect the two railroads.

Using common carrier track carries responsibilities. I assume that the engineer would have to be certified and/or licensed. The locomotive would have to meet safety standards. The train will certainly have to comply with rail traffic control and all other federal regulations. The Petersburg Railroad would have to pay the host railroad for the use of its track. However, fees are based on weight, and the antebellum railroads were very light. The early engines weighed less than a loaded cargo container, so such costs should be low. All of these things are proper and reasonable, and with proper preparation, all of the conditions can be met.

Although the Petersburg Railroad may have the legal right to use the tracks of other railroads, subject to federal regulations and payment of track rental, it must recognize that there is a very big difference between operating a theme park train around a mile loop and running a real train many miles over common carrier tracks. The Petersburg Theme Parks should explore the possibility of entering into an agreement with Norfolk Southern whereby Petersburg Railroad furnishes the trains and Norfolk Southern operates them. In short, turn the job over to the pros and let them do what they do best.

Norfolk Southern should have no problem providing engineers. I would think that most of their professionals would welcome the opportunity of running a historic train. There would be no shortage of volunteers. I would think that the railroad executives would be proud to participate in this celebration of their company's heritage and will have fun doing it. Such an agreement should be a prerequisite to the two short off-site trips previously suggested - to the Norfolk Southern rail yard and Battersea Plantation.

Putting it to use

I am a strong believer in constantly striving to increase potential while minimizing risk. That is accomplished through market testing. Test something on a small scale. If it is a total disaster, you haven't lost much. If it works, then expand the test. If results are mixed, then try to figure out how to improve things, then test again. Repeat the process until you get it right. That is the approach that I recommend on the things that follow.

City Point Railroad

An "excursion" differs from a "ride" in that it is longer. Railroad clubs sometimes sponsor them, and they are usually day trips. I would use the term to describe any off-site trip. Thus the trips to Battersea and Norfolk Southern rail yard would be excursions.

At some point, the Petersburg Railroad should test the marketability of longer excursions on a small scale. A trip from Old Town to Hopewell fits that requirement. This is the original City Point Railroad line, and it's only a nine-mile trip. This is the birthplace of the Norfolk Southern, and the locomotive should certainly be the Norris 4-2-0 *Pocahontas*, which was the first to make the run in 1837.

The Norfolk Southern line branches just east of the Petersburg Parks. One line turns south and goes to Norfolk. The other goes to City Point, where it terminates as a huge rail loop centered around Industrial Street. It is the home of several large factories, and there are a number of sidings. Most interesting is that a Norfolk Southern spur line runs out to a dock, where coal is dumped into ships. This wonderfully demonstrates the capabilities of today's railroads. This can be seen from the loop.

Immediately north of the loop is a large open natural area on the James River, which can be developed into still another attraction at some point in the future.

There should be a one-time market test. If the successful, then the number of runs can be expanded. It can become an ongoing attraction. As with all off-site operations, the train should be run by Norfolk Southern.

Longer Excursions

Longer excursions should be market tested. When the early *Liverpool* and *Pocahontas* pulled passenger trains, they rarely exceeded 12 miles an hour due to the weakness of the track. Their passenger cars were open. This is not only acceptable, but welcome because it contributes to the entertainment experience. These locomotives can also be used to pull short rides, such as those on-site, and the Battersea Branch, Norfolk Southern Rail Yard, and the 9-mile City Point trips.

Norfolk Southern has great tracks, and they will soon be improved, so the speed limitation will no longer apply. *Pocahontas* can easily chug its way to City Point at 25 miles an hour. The later engines like *City of Petersburg*, *Buckingham*, *Black Diamond* and Norfolk and Petersburg's *Number 1* could easily pull a dozen passenger cars at 50 miles an hour. This makes longer excursions possible.

A train traveling at 50 miles a hour would have wind-blown passengers, but the solution is built in. The later locomotives pulled the box-shaped passenger cars, which started to become common around 1840. They had windows, and such cars would be essential for longer excursions. The above locomotives are all from the 1850s, so that is what they would have pulled.

Using such a train, the Petersburg Railroad could advertise a one-time day trip. It should be to a destination too far away to permit easily driving to it for a day trip, and it should offer an attraction at the other end. Luray Caverns fits those requirement. The train ride provides a way for families to enjoy two experiences: the train ride and the caverns. Norfolk and Southern tracks do not go all the way to Luray Caverns, but pass within a few miles of it. A short bus trip will fill the gap. This should be set up so that one fare covers everything.

The train would leave Petersburg at 9 AM. Customers would arrive at Luray by noon. The train would return to Petersburg after everyone had the chance to see the Caverns. Vestibules are covered platforms that connect railroad cars. They had not yet come into use, so there is no safe way for passengers to go from one car to another while the train is moving. This precludes a dining car, so some provision must be made for lunch.

I think that this excursion to central Virginia residents because it would be far easier than driving three or more hours each way. If this excursion is successful, more can be made.

The distance from Richmond to Baltimore is 146 miles, which is comparable to the 150 miles to Luray. Amtrak train fares vary by time of day but range from \$61 to \$82 each way, which is \$122 to \$164 round trip. Our train would initially pull two passenger cars carrying 80 people. Low-priced \$125 tickets would result in \$10,000 income for the trip. Out of that there would be the cost of Luray which is \$1,250 (group rate is \$15.50), the bus at an estimated \$300 and the cost to run the train. Even at these low prices, one excursion could net \$7,500. There could be one on Saturday and one on Sunday, which is \$15,000 for the weekend.

Experience will result in being able to determine the market for such excursions and the excursion schedule should be adjusted accordingly. More passenger cars may be needed. Perhaps there will only be enough customers to justify one or two weekend runs. Maybe the train can run every day.

Excursions can be flipped over. Rather than being the departing terminal, Petersburg could be the destination, and the excursion would leave from Norfolk, which would also serve the giant Newport News, Warwick, Hampton Rhodes and Virginia Beach area. .

Of course, the locomotive would have to be Norfolk and Petersburg's *Number 1*. It would be traveling the same route that it did in 1858. It would arrive at the former Norfolk and Western Union Station. Such an excursion ties together all these related historic resources.

Number 1 was the most powerful of all the antebellum locomotives. An 1862 newspaper article reported it pulling 50 heavy freight cars, loaded with cannons and munitions. This engine had huge 66-inch drive wheels designed for high speed. With the long stretches of straight track and superior roadbed and rails, this could be a high-speed run. The 60-mile route can easily be covered in an hour. Train rides work both way. A bus in Norfolk could take people to Virginia Beach in the summer.

If this works well, it could become a daily summer event. *Number 1* would be stationed in Norfolk, make the run to Petersburg at 9 am, spend the day servicing the local Norfolk Southern rail yard, then return to Norfolk. It would be a busy train.

The linking of Norfolk Southern tracks to those of CSX opens up other excursion possibilities. These include excursions to Broad Street Station in Richmond, now home of the Virginia Science Museum, the recently renovated Union Station mall in downtown Washington, D.C., and, of course, the famous B&O Railroad Museum in Baltimore.

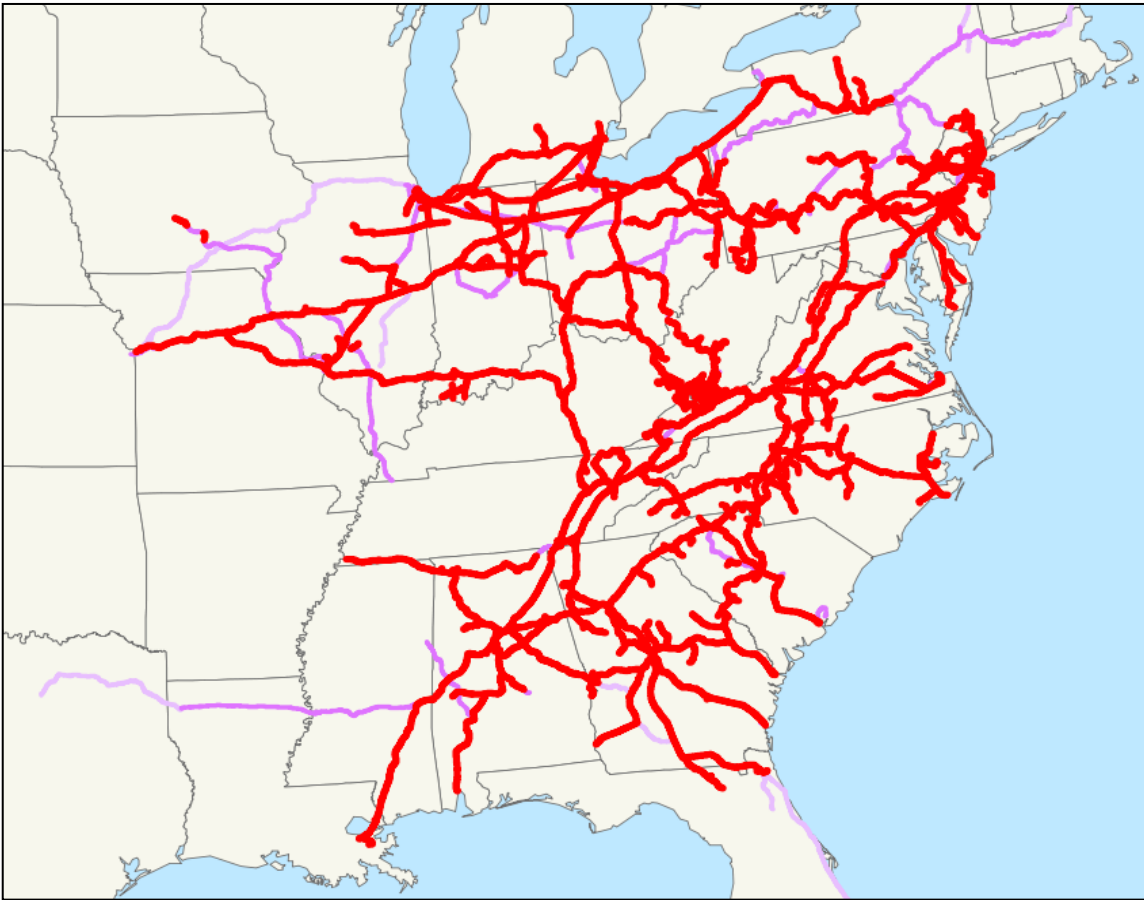
Traveling Exhibits

The common railroad heritage of the Petersburg railroad and the Norfolk Southern Railroad can and should be celebrated. When *Pocahontas*, *City of Petersburg* and Norfolk and Petersburg's *Number 1* are available, they could be sent to the Norfolk Southern home in Norfolk. They should pull freight cars containing exhibits on the City of Petersburg and the Norfolk Southern. A sleeper car can house the crew.

This is a prototype, traveling, multi-train exhibit that would be open to the public. This will help to build goodwill and result in a lot of publicity. It is also a market test. Admission would be charged, and financial consequences can help to determine the drawing power of a traveling historic railroad exhibit.

If this is successful, the effort can be expanded. The Norfolk Southern railroad connects over 100 cities and towns. Exhibit train caravans could be run during the winter season when Petersburg traffic is at its low point. This puts them to use when they are not doing anything else. The traveling exhibit could visit many southern cities, which are enjoying the height of their tourist season. When the customers aren't coming to us, we'll go to them.

The Norfolk Southern has a wonderful railroad exhibit car that should certainly be incorporated into the attraction. The Petersburg Railroads should increase its exhibits. A flat car can carry an omnibus. The Peter's Point Nature Center (not yet discussed) will have many animals, permitting a mobile zoo of Virginia wildlife.



Norfolk Southern Railroad System

Exhibit destinations should be fairly close together, about 50 to 100 miles, permitting the trains to move from one place to another in an hour or two each morning. Since these are long days, the exhibits would be open from noon until 9 pm to permit families to visit after dinner.

Circus trains did extremely well in small towns because their arrival was a major event. The same may hold true for our exhibit trains.

The local Tri-City area is probably a good, typical, mid-size designation. According to the Census Bureau, the population is 457,572. It does not list how many kids are in schools, but 117,478 of the population is under age 18. The area would be scheduled for a one- or two-day exhibit. Longer stays would be scheduled for major population areas, such as Raleigh, Atlanta, Savannah, Charleston, etc.

At least 60 days prior to the trip, local schools should be sent sales materials on our educational field trip program, as they need such lead time to schedule them. Two or three days prior to the exhibit date, ads should be placed in local newspapers.

The Tri-City area should easily result in an absolute minimum of 500 student admissions at \$8 and 500 adult admissions at \$12. Even at these extremely low figures, that's \$10,000 a day. There are 180 exhibit days resulting in \$1,800,000. Operating expenses are minimal. In short, this could be a very profitable operation.

It will not be physically possible for one train to service 100 cities and towns, in 180 days especially since many of them will require a week or more to service. This can result in having two or more routes that are worked on alternate years. More time between trips would result in higher admissions than annual trips.

This is, in effect, an old time circus train, but it is not carrying the circus. It is the circus.

Train Rentals

The locomotives and rolling stock can also become income-producing assets as they can be rented to motion picture companies for production. The movie business spends a lot of money. Last year 450 feature films were produced with an average cost of \$45,000,000. The Virginia Film Commission goes to great lengths to attract productions to the state. It does a good job and many are made in Virginia. Most are set in a historic period.

Film directors and production designers are always looking for ways to make films more visually interesting and exciting. Most directors wouldn't hesitate to move a scene from a drawing room to a historic railroad if it was available, appropriate and within the allotted budget. A historic train consisting of a locomotive and several cars should rent for \$20,000 to \$30,000 a day, depending on the train.

There may be cases where a movie is being filmed nearby, and the scene is such that it can be shot on Petersburg Railroad tracks, perhaps on the Battersea branch. In that case, there would be a one-day rental, but that will be the exception.

Each of the stars receive many millions of dollars for a movie, which is often filmed in four or five weeks. Figure the cost per day. It is far more cost-effective for the train to be taken to the production than it is to move the production to the train. It will almost surely take at least one day each way to move the train to and from location. It will need to be dressed. That can be anything from simply changing the name written on it to a complete repainting. Standard rental contracts require the film company to restore it to the condition received, so that's a least another day. Production scheduling centers around the availability of the stars and that can result in one or two weeks between scenes that require the train. Such rentals can easily exceed \$100,000.

With its fleet, the Petersburg Railroad will have a monopoly on early American trains. The American designs like the *City of Petersburg* remained virtually unchanged through the 1890s, so our trains cover the 1832 to 1890 period. The rental business can be a major source of income. The best thing about it is that everything is already paid for, so such rental income is essentially "free money."

Hollywood uses the *West Coast Theatrical Directory* extensively. It tells where to find virtually anything needed. A comparable directory is published in New York and Montreal, the other two major North American film production centers. There are many others, such as the one published by the Virginia Film Commission. Ads for the locomotives and rolling stock should be advertised in these guides. It is a very small investment that can reap rich returns.

Summary

The large size of the Petersburg Parks demands inter-park transportation, and the city's rich railroad heritage provides the perfect solution. Covering this basic need is going to require trains. The above suggests ways that they can also be used to increase the return on the investment. None of these things are necessary, but since the trains are already in place, testing other ways to utilize them involves little risk. If they work out, then the resulting income is "icing on the cake."

Early America

The city owns all of the land on both sides of River Street between the Martin Luther King Bridge and the Interstate 95 bridge. It was used earlier for railroad freight yards. The tracks were taken up, and the land is vacant. The creation of Lake Petersburg makes it the perfect place for the Early America theme park. The existing street should be removed to provide more space. This park would begin at Lieutenant Run and extend west about 125 yards. This is a historically appropriate addition and a valid one.

Appomattox Indian Village



Roanoke Island Indian Village by John White, circa 1587

The first attraction would be a recreated Indian village to honor the Appomattox Indians from whom the river takes its name. The Virginia Indians did not live in the portable tepees of the plains Indians, but rather in small houses made of branches and thatch.

Jamestown was not the first English colony in the New World. The Roanoke Colony was founded on the outer banks of what is now North Carolina in 1585, but it disappeared without a trace, resulting in it becoming known as “The Lost Colony.” English artist John White made many drawings of the Native Americans and their way of life. They show everything from their homes to their dress. They are the definitive visual reference. Helen C. Roundtree’s *Pocahontas’s People: The Powhatan Indians of Virginia* provides great details on how they lived. This is an area that requires expert help.

The Indian Village should not just be something to VIEW. That’s Jamestown. Like all of our attractions, there must be things for families to DO. There could be Indian canoes for rent that let Dad take Mom and the kids for a ride. The shallow water minimizes risk.

There could be an archery concession in which “braves” teach kids how to use authentic looking bows and arrows. Other braves could show kids how to net fish in the lake and make projectile points (arrow and spear heads) by flaking rocks. “Squaws” could adorn the face of young kids with “war paint.” There could be Indian war dance lessons or perhaps even a show performed a couple of times a day in which audience members are invited to participate.

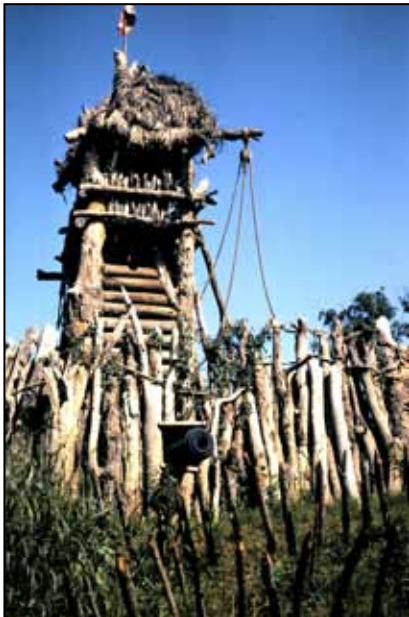
The Native Americans ate many oysters, and piles of their shells have helped archaeologists find the location of ancient villages. There could be an activity where kids learn to skip the shells across the water to hit a specific target or exceed a certain range. Prizes would be offered. It’s a simple activity, but few kids of today have ever enjoyed it.

The Indians cooked shad fish by attaching it to a plank propped up with a stick in front of an open fire. Shad has a lot of bones, so we don’t want to serve it to kids, but this can be done with other foods. There should be food available for the kids to cook over the fire. Some people may object to deer being killed to provide authentic venison, so maybe we can make some historic concessions by permitting marshmallows and hot dogs. Many of today’s children have never had the opportunity to cook them over an open fire.

From an academic standpoint, we are introducing children to a culture that is new to them. The activities are folksy, family-oriented, historically appropriate, and there is nothing “Mickey Mouse” about them. They are meaningful, hands-on learning experiences.

The Appomattox Indian Village should be physically and visually separated from the next attraction by a grove of trees, giving it an isolated, wilderness appearance.

Fort Henry



The next attraction would be a reconstructed Fort Henry, honoring the birthplace of Petersburg. There are no records of what it looked like, but the extensively researched and carefully reconstructed palisades at Jamestown may provide a role model.

Above are pictures of two wooden forts gleaned from the Internet. No location is cited. Fort Henry was garrisoned by only 12 men and was temporary. It was probably very primitive, like the one shown at the left, rather than the more substantial and permanent one shown at the right.

Once again, the emphasis must be on DO, not VIEW. The focus must be on entertainment activities. Kids should be given the opportunity to fire the small cannons of the day. They will, of course, fire a blank, but the little gun will make a big boom and throw out a lot of smoke. Water fountains can be set in the shallow lake. They will “explode” a second or so after the gun is fired, simulating a hit. There should be a number of them, so that the shots can be aimed. This can result in the canoes being showered with water from the near misses. This will result in a great many squeals of delight.

The colonists shouldn't be outdone by the Indians, so they could have a rifle range in which simulated muskets would be used. Each would have to be hand-loaded from the barrel end, and the shell should be safe.

There needs to be interplay between the Indians and the early colonists. There certainly was during the period. In an extremely well-planned and coordinated 1622 attack, the various tribes of the Powhatan Confederacy killed a quarter of Virginia's 1,200 colonists. Another big attack occurred in 1646. It was what prompted the establishment of Fort Henry. Mock attacks on the fort justify the use of the cannon and muskets and provides a great entertainment experience. The kids should participate, either as Indians or Colonists.

Abraham Wood's Trading Post

Fort Henry was a trading post, and proprietor Abraham Wood wanted furs that he could export to England, especially beaver as it was used in making hats. Killing animals for such use is frowned upon today, so this should be avoided. Instead, the trading post should have a store that offers a great many Native American products. Several tribes have traditionally produced an abundance of them. Today, many are made in Mexico, and some come from the Orient. At least a dozen companies offer such products, and they usually exhibit at the trade shows previously mentioned.

Colonial women should be cooking over open fires, and they should be selling their wares. This becomes another concession. Kids can help carry Indian corn (kernels were in different colors, light and dark) from the Indian Village to the Trading Post, and return with appropriate trade goods, such as English-made tomahawks. (Yes, they did that.) Of course, these would be for sale. Every kid will want one. They must be safe toys.

Nine Pins

Nine pins was a very popular game during the colonial era. Nine wooden pins were set on a grassy lawn, and folks would roll a ball at them in an attempt to knock them down. In the 1770s, the Virginia colonists became increasingly defiant and began challenging authority. The English governor responded by prohibiting free assembly (That's why our *Bill of Rights* guarantees it). Among the many stifling laws was one that outlawed Nine Pins.

The creative colonists of Virginia's Carolina County responded by adding a tenth pin as a way to avoid the new law. They named their new game after the county seat Bowling Green. We need to set up a bowling green. This would provide a delightful, historically accurate family activity.

Pocahontas Village Theme Park

In the wake of the Declaration of Independence, a spirit of Jefferson idealism swept across Virginia. Accepting the principal that “all men are created equal,” many people freed their slaves. Slaves were a form of property, and the early Petersburg Deed Books are filled with Deeds of Emancipation.

Petersburg was largely populated by immigrants from Scotland, France and the northern states. An 1801 visitor wrote, “there is scarcely anyone in the city that was born there.” These people had far more racial tolerance than people in other southern cities. The city became a mecca for Free Blacks, as it provided them with opportunities not available elsewhere. Many settled in the village of Pocahontas. It became the largest such settlement in the nation.

The goal of this theme park is to show the role of Free Blacks in the Petersburg society a half-century before the Emancipation Proclamation.

This park differs from the others in that Pocahontas Village continues today. It occupies the island that the Petersburg Parks will be using, and the Pocahontas Village Theme Park is conveying the heritage of its residents. Because of this, all development must be very sensitive to the desires and opinions of the community. Accordingly, this theme park should begin with a community meeting in which ideas can be freely exchanged. There are local historians intimately familiar with the Pocahontas heritage, and they should be certainly be consulted and their advice respected.

I have come up with some ideas that I think would be suitable for the Pocahontas Village Heritage Park, but these needs to be reviewed by community residents, as they may very have their own.

About Pocahontas & the Village



1870 chromolithograph of Pocahontas saving John Smith

Indian princess Pocahontas became an American legend by saving the life of colonist John Smith. She has been associated with Petersburg for over 250 years. Who was she? How did that happen?

When the first English settled Jamestown in 1607, a chief named Powhatan had previously united the 30 or so early Virginia Native American tribes into a confederacy. A few years after his daughter saved John Smith, she married colonist John Rolfe, who had introduced saleable tobacco to the colony - providing it with its first and most valuable cash crop.

In 1616, Pocahontas and Rolfe traveled to England in 1616 with their baby son, Thomas Rolfe, where the young woman was widely received as visiting royalty. As they were preparing to return to Virginia, Pocahontas became ill and died. The site of her grave is unknown, but her memory is honored in Gravesend with a life-size bronze statue at St. George's Church.

Her only child, Thomas Rolfe, remained in England. He returned to Virginia as an adult and married there. His only child, Jane, married Colonel Robert Bolling in 1675. The Bolling family is a very big part of the Petersburg story. Among other things, it built the Centre Hill Mansion.

Petersburg had grown considerably in the century following the erection of Fort Henry, and space for new homes was needed. Surveyors laid out land on the north side of the Appomattox River in 1749, in preparation for it to become the village of Wittontown. John Bolling served on the committee that formed it, but somehow during the process the name was changed to Pocahontas, almost surely because Bolling wanted to honor his ancestor.



For many years a hollowed out rock stood on the island, and it was claimed that it was Pocahontas' wash basin. It is now on display at the city's Poplar Lawn Park. There is no evidence that Pocahontas ever visited this area, much less used the wash basin, but it is an interesting legend. However, the Indian name was not without merit because archaeological evidence shows that Native Americans lived on the site over 7,500 years ago.

It would appear that local residents wanted to remain on the south side of the river, and there was little demand for the lots on Pocahontas. This resulted in low prices. The Jefferson idealism that swept Virginia in the late 1700s resulted in many people freeing their slaves. Many of these Free Blacks saved up their money and purchased land in Pocahontas. By the time of the 1810 census, it was the largest community of Free Blacks in the country.

John Bolling established a tobacco warehouse on the Appomattox River across from the village in 1750. Four buildings have occupied the site. The most recent is the Farmers' Market (sometimes called City Market) of today. This octagonal building was built in 1878.

I have not yet researched it, but suspect that one of his descendants was instrumental in establishing the City Point Railroad. I base this on its Petersburg terminal was most likely on the Farmers' Market site and its two locomotives were named *Powhatan* and *Pocahontas*, almost surely at the insistence of another Bolling.

In 1902, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dug the Appomattox River Diversion Channel around the north end of the village, resulting in it becoming an island.

The City Point Railroad is the oldest in the Norfolk Southern line. In the mid-1940s, its predecessor, the Norfolk and Western established high-speed passenger service back and forth between Norfolk and Cincinnati, Ohio. The streamlined J Class locomotives were its most famous. They were named *Powhatan Arrow* and *Pocahontas Arrow*. These names are forever linked with Petersburg and its rail heritage. One of these famous locomotives, *Number 611*, is now on display at the Virginia Transportation Museum in Roanoke.

The Name

The Pocahontas name is historically accurate but suggests a Native American culture and attraction. The theme park depicts an entirely different one, and should have a more appropriate name. "Freedom Village" has been suggested. Other ideas are welcome.

Unnamed Farm



Disney's America was to include a real farm. This is a great idea as it provides city-bred children the opportunity of becoming familiar with country living. The Petersburg Parks should certainly contain one. Of course, there will be lots of animals for them to play with. Pocahontas Village is an excellent location for one as it dramatically shows the rights of Free Blacks to own land and how they handled the responsibilities that came with it.

These people had little money and lived modestly. The early farmhouse shown above had the typical design of the period - a front door flanked by windows. The low-lying land and the hot summers would have made a raised porch essential. These homes almost always had a "kitchen garden" that provided food for the family's own consumption. There should one or two cows and perhaps a horse. Of course, the yard would have been filled with squawking chickens. There could even be pony rides. There should be an appropriate food concession.



Southern Cornfield in Nashville, Tennessee. 1861
by Thomas Waterman Wood (1823-1903)

As it may be some time before Battersea comes on line, this would be ideal place for a strawberry, watermelon and pumpkin patch.

Enterprise

The Free Blacks of Petersburg worked in many capacities. They were blacksmiths, harness and saddle makers. Pocahontas men owned and operated all of the bateaus that carried goods down river to City Point. These men probably built the bateaus so a construction shop would be appropriate.

The Society for the Colonization of Free People of Color of America was founded in 1816, to support the “return” of free African-Americans to what was considered greater freedom in Africa. The Petersburg branch was established by William M. Atkinson of the Tabb Street Presbyterian Church and was among the first in the state. It sent Petersburg blacks to Liberia in 1824 on the *Cyrus* and in 1829 on the *Harriot*. These emigrants included William Colson, Nelson Elebeck and Joseph J. Roberts. All three men became merchants. They exporting cainwood, palm oil, ivory and gold dust from Liberia and imported goods from New York, Philadelphia and Petersburg. Roberts and Colson were partners and both later returned to Petersburg on buying trips.



Colonial cabinet making shop

Roberts became the first president of Liberia. Roberts was a cabinet maker, and he should be honored by a reconstruction of his shop.

This area can provide the opportunity to show other home based businesses. Spinning yarn and thread was a big one. A building could be dedicated to the them and children taught the skill. Brooms could be manufactured.

Uncle Remus

Black freedom was limited. Blacks did not have the right to vote, but neither did women. Freedom certainly did not guarantee rights as blacks could forfeit their freedom under a number of repressive laws. Nor did it result in social equality. The Free Black had to survive in a white dominated society in which there were many potential enemies.

This situation was accurately depicted by author Joel Chandler Harris (1845-1908) in his famous Uncle Remus stories. They were based on tales that he heard slaves tell while working as an apprentice on a Georgia plantation during his teens.

The fictional Uncle Remus was a wise, elderly and kind old slave man who thrilled children with his tales of trickster hero Br'er Rabbit, who had to constantly defend himself against the powerful Br'er Fox and Br'er Bear. These stories were allegories. Slave and Free Black parents used them to teach their children how they, the weak and defenseless, must use their wits to survive in a world dominated by powerful forces. Br'er Rabbit was one smart bunny, who almost always made a fool of his powerful enemies. Big and dumb Br'er Bear hated to be outwitted and constantly screamed, "I's goona knock his head clean off."



Disney's Uncle Remus with "bluebird on my shoulder."

Several of the Uncle Remus stories were used to create *Song of the South*, a 1946 feature film produced by Walt Disney. Live actors provide a sentimental frame story. As Uncle Remus begins to spin his tale, it becomes an animated cartoon. The hit song from the film was *Zip-a-Dee-Do-Dah*, which won the 1947 Academy Award for Best Song and is frequently used as part of Disney's montage themes.

The film has never been released in its entirety on home video in the United States because Disney executives believed it could be construed as racist. It certainly portrays an ideal slave world. The initial release of video tapes coincided with the turbulent Civil Rights era, so that may have been true at that time. There have since been vast cultural changes, and racism is not the burning issue that it was 40 years ago. These stories are part of American Black heritage and need to be told, but need to be presented within the proper context.

There would be an Uncle Remus' house. Uncle Remus would be a live actor. Quilts would be spread under the shade of large trees to provide seating for the visiting children. A handsome young African-American actor in contemporary dress would come out of the house and tell the story of Uncle Remus and the allegorical nature of the stories. While doing this, he would put on an old dark-colored jacket and hat, then glue on a large white beard, becoming Uncle Remus. In the Chandler dialect, he would then tell a story. The animated animals used by Disney can be replaced by an old-time puppet show.

This ties in with the antebellum period of our railroads and Petersburg's unique Black heritage. If tastefully presented, it can be both entertaining and enlightening.

Gospel Music

This is one of the great cultural legacies of the early African-Americans. It led to jazz, rhythm and blues and the rock and roll of the 20th century. A means needs to be found to present it.

The Underground Railroad

Petersburg may have had another railroad, but its secretive nature precluded there being any evidence of its existence. The Underground Railroad was an informal network of secret routes and safe houses used by 19th-century Black slaves in the United States to escape to free states and Canada with the aid of abolitionists and allies who were sympathetic to their cause. One estimate suggests that by 1850, 100,000 slaves had escaped via the "Railroad."

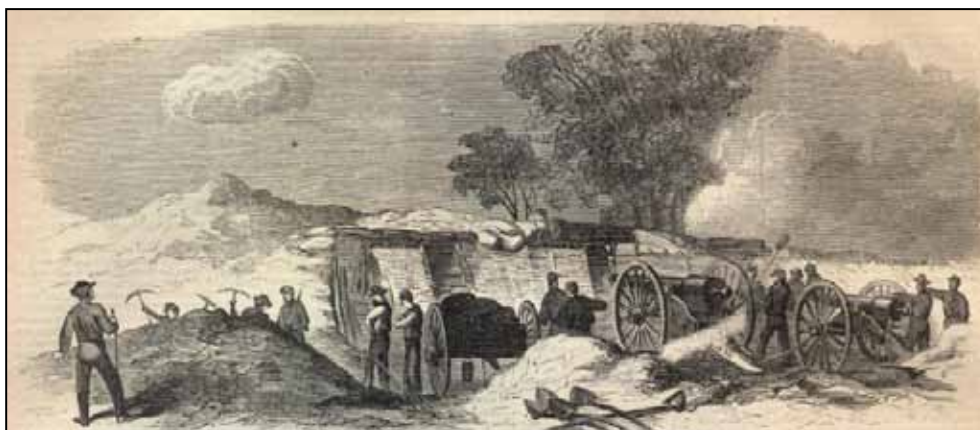
Maps show extensive routes that begin north of the Virginia-Ohio border, but nothing within Virginia. Those routes were secret. Petersburg became such a mecca for Free Blacks that Pocahontas almost surely played a role in this great liberation endeavor.

The problem becomes how to show it. Perhaps part way through an Uncle Remus story, one or two escaped slaves are seen running through the adjacent woods. Uncle Remus could interrupt his story for a minute or two and explain what is happening.

Battle for Petersburg

Petersburg's primary claim to fame is the ten-month battle that raged over the control of its five railroads. The city's railroad heritage and its Civil War heritage are interwoven.

The National Park Service wants to use Southside Station as a central Virginia Civil War Museum. Its historians are extremely knowledgeable and should be consulted in connection with anything dealing with this theme park.



Petersburg Earthworks, 1864

This should certainly show life behind the Confederate lines because that's Petersburg's heritage. Unfortunately the Yankees had all the really neat stuff. This can be resolved by showing both the Confederate and Union lines. This provides a lot of production value and can contrast the vast difference in resources. Conflict is the essence of drama and having two opposing sides opens up a wealth of entertainment possibilities.

Mock Battles

The Petersburg Parks certainly do not want to get into hiring two armies. Each of the lines should have interpreters and a supply tent where kids can purchase hats and toy muskets. Let the kids shoot at one another. Both sides can have cannons. They will fire blanks, but the motion picture industry had many safe ways to provide the illusion of an explosion that can kick up dirt in the "no man's land" between the lines. Special effects experts can kick up enough smoke and dust to simulate the explosion at the Battle of the Crater, but the extensive set-up may not make it practical.

The biggest entertainment event will be the Great Locomotive Chase described earlier.



Grant's goal was to destroy Petersburg's railroads. When lines were captured, the tracks were destroyed. It may be possible to obtain light track, such as that used during the Civil War and have an attraction where guests can bend it around trees, making it unusable. Of course, the track can later be straightened at the locomotive works for reuse. Once again, it is DO, not VIEW.

Fireworks & Sound Effects

The opposing lines can shoot at each other, resulting in a nightly fireworks display during the summer months. Sound effects can play day and night. Ones of distant cannons can contribute to the atmosphere. There should also be bugle calls.

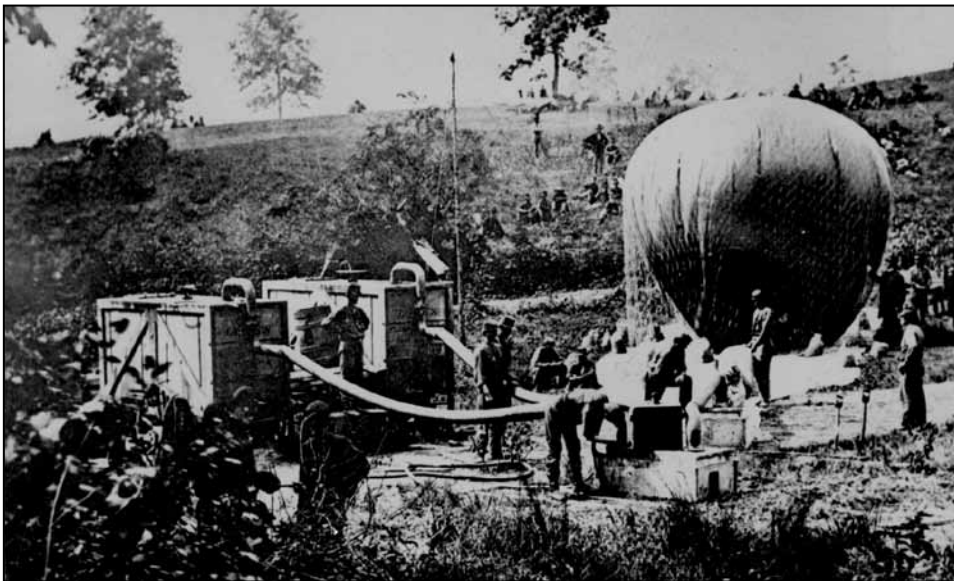
U.S. Military Railroad

The U.S. Military Railroad was established to provide supplies to the Union army. Although it was not one of Petersburg's antebellum railroads, it was a very major part of Petersburg's rail history. It justifies another train. As no current use is now planned, it would simply be parked on a siding behind the Union lines. President Lincoln visited City Point and stayed in his Presidential car, which was attached to one of the line's locomotives. That subject can be explored.



The battle for Petersburg saw the use of railroad guns. The huge *Dictator* mortar is probably the most famous. A replica can fire foot-wide shells that explode in flight, raining down a shower of colorful, biodegradable confetti.

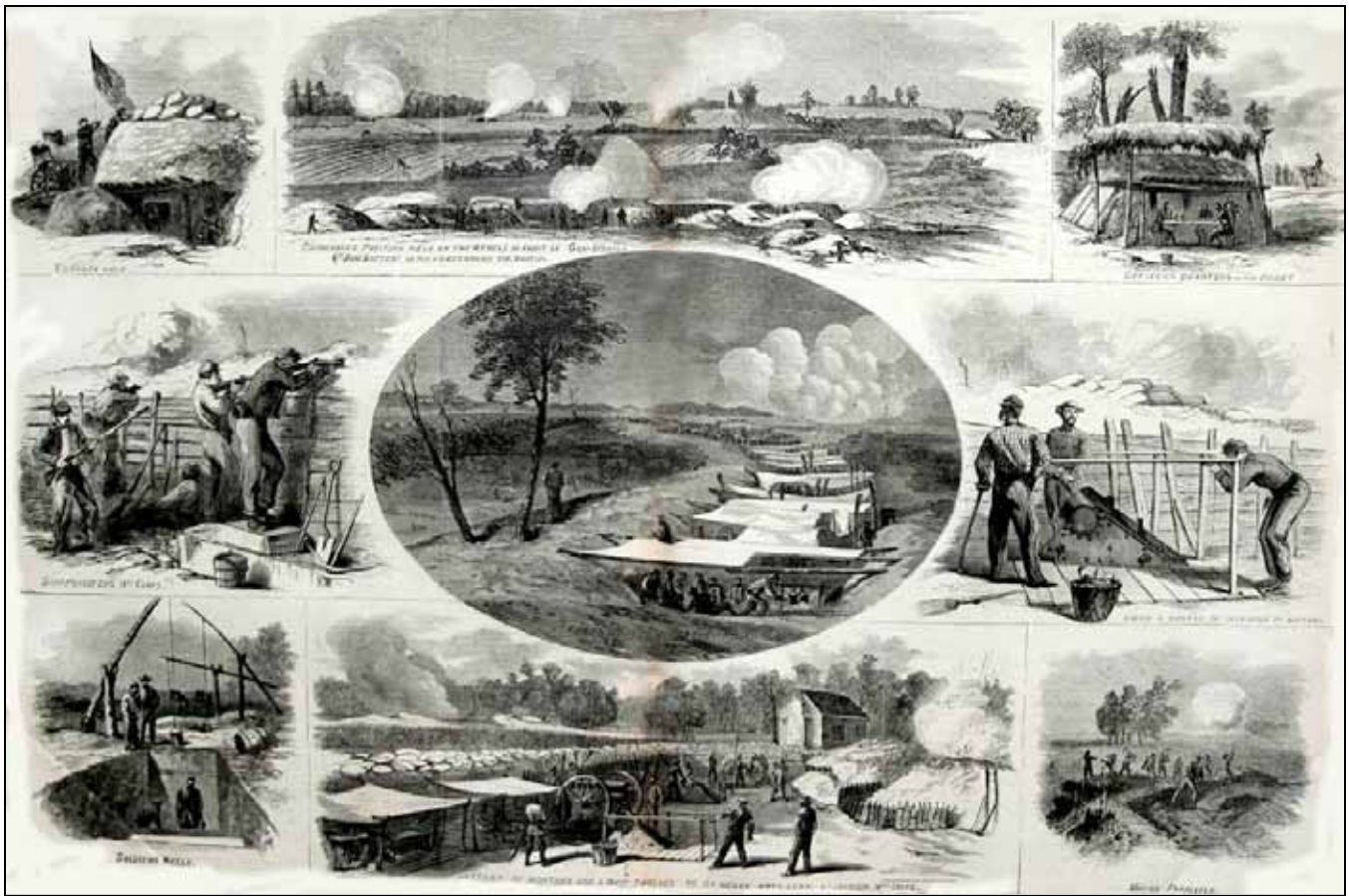
Observation Balloons



Both the Union and Confederate armies used balloons for reconnaissance during the American Civil War, marking the first time that balloons were used in the United States for reconnaissance. The most famous was a Confederates one, a patchwork affair of many colors put together from donated silk dresses. The only gas for inflation was in Richmond, and the balloon was filled there, then attached to a locomotive that towed it down to the York River.

The park needs such a balloon. The baskets they carried were small and could only hold a few people, so it would largely be for show. A Union balloon could be used to direct the fire of the *Dictator*.

It may be possible to provide a few rides to park visitors. It could be fun to let them compete for them. For example, the ride could be the prize for getting a very high score at the rifle range. Some visitors will spend the day trying to obtain such a score.



Petersburg Trenches 1854. Engraving from Harper's Weekly

Camp Ground



Union tent hospital at City Point

The logistics of the U.S. Army were overwhelming. There are photographs showing oceans of tents to house the many soldiers. Tents are an easy and very inexpensive way to fill up a lot of space. Ours will not only be decorative, but will also be functional.

Families will be able to rent an 8 by 8 foot wall tent for say \$40 a night, plus \$20 per person for cot, bedroll, two meals and nightly entertainment. They would obtain the cot and bedrolls from the supply tent, which would also function as ticket office and store. It would cost a family of four \$120.00. We may start off with 20 tents, which results in \$2,400 a night in sales. More tents can be added as needed.

Both dinner and breakfast would be prepared over open fires, and served on tin plates, army style. This provides visitors with the opportunity to live just like a soldier of the day.

Campfire Entertainment

Best of all would be the nightly entertainment. There are many stories of Confederate and Union soldiers talking to one another across the lines at night and even meeting to share an evening meal. Several college actors, dressed as soldiers from both sides would tell war stories. They would also lead in the singing of camp songs. Printed copies of the lyrics would be passed out to visitors. The singing could be supported by a harmonica, a guitar or an accordion.

Some of our nation's most famous musical classics came from this period. At the top of the list is the *Battle Hymn of the Republic* (especially its refrain *Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!*) and *Dixie Land*. The great favorite was *Tenting on the Old Campground*, which is what our visitors are doing. Other famous songs include *Marching Through Georgia* and *Bonnie Blue Flag*. This was the era of one of our nation's most famous composers, Stephen Foster. His *Camptown Races*, *Old Folks at Home* (also known as *Swanee River*), *My Old Kentucky Home* and *Jeanie With the Light Brown Hair* were camp ground favorites.

During the show a few rockets will fly from one of the lines to the other. The show will conclude with a distant but mournful bugle rendition of Taps. One of the soldiers will add a few words about the many men who died in the war. It will be followed by the main fireworks display.

Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Paul Green wrote *The Lost Colony* in 1937 to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the birth of Virginia Dare. She was the first person of English descent born in the New World. The play presents a conjecture of the fate of Roanoke Colony. It has played at Waterside Theater at Fort Raleigh National Historic Site on Roanoke Island nearly continuously since, with the only interruption being during World War II. It has been running for seventy years.

If our production is well written, produced and performed, it can become one of the theme parks' most popular and profitable attractions.

Modern Mess

For those not familiar with the term, a mess is the place where military personnel eat. Soldiers eat at a mess hall, but when in the field, the food service facility is simply referred to as the mess.

Nearby Fort Less is the home of the U.S. Army's cooking schools. It would be nice to establish a system where its modern mobile kitchens can be brought to this theme park to serve lunch.

It would provide great training for the soldiers. Fort Lee would furnish them and the mobile kitchen. The Petersburg Parks would provide the food, so there would be no out-of-pocket cost to the army. There would be a reasonable charge for the meal, and profits would be split. To avoid bureaucratic hassles, this can probably be accomplished by the Petersburg Parks donating the funds to whatever cause the army specifies.

I think that many of the young soldiers would enjoy being able to show off their new skills and capabilities to the public. I doubt if there would be an any shortage of volunteers. The soldiers will almost surely be visited by their girlfriends or wives.

If the army is agreeable to it, then this should be tested. If the results are good, then more can be scheduled. I suspect that this will become vary popular with local families, especially those at Fort Lee.

Peter's Point Nature Park



Petersburg downtown "wilderness"
Note the old railroad bridge piers in the diversion channel.

Peter Jones was the son-in-law of Abraham Wood, who established Fort Henry. Upon Wood's death, he continued to operate the trading post. The first one was almost surely made of wood, but was replaced by the stone building that survives today. The first trading post was on or next to a point of land that stuck out into the Appomattox River. This resulting in the trading post being called Peter's Point. It evolved into the town of Petersburg.

The Appomattox River Diversion channel begins a couple of hundred feet north of the later stone Peter Jones Trading Post. It goes in a north-east direction then abruptly turns to the south-west creating somewhat of a point, so Peter's Point is a fitting name for this area.

The south-east leg runs for a third of a mile then goes under the Interstate 95 bridge. The city's water treatment plant is on the other side of the bridge. Both shores of the diversion channel are covered with trees. Those on the Pocahontas shore extend south about 200 feet. This results in a wonderful wilderness right in the middle of the city. This land should be used as nature park.

Wildlife Preserve



Every spring, local wildlife shelters are swamped with orphaned animals, especially birds and squirrels. Many people volunteer to raise them, but they should be released into the wild when they mature. Since they had no parents to teach them, most require time to learn how to survive. We could provide them with a natural rehabilitation center where they are assured of safety and meals until they learn to live on their own. Many will remain in the area as it is their home.

Squirrels make great pets as babies, but become wild as they grow older. When released into the wild, they do not fear humans and will eat out of your hand. Kids would love feeding them and, of course, we will have animal food concessions.

Our Virginia Wildlife Preserve would provide them with an enclosed natural habitat. It could include deer, raccoons and opossums. Raccoons are smart, inquisitive animals that continually entertain with their antics. Special care must be taken with them because of the rabies threat.

Every year, the Virginia Department of Wildlife acquires animals that are so severely damaged that they can never be released into the wild. We could provide them with a protected home. Some really fantastic birds become available. There have been so many damaged owls that a special refuge was set up for them.



The James River is one of the largest bald eagle preserves in the country, and hopefully we can be of service to one or more that needs a home. These magnificent birds are the symbol of our nation and deserve a large aviary.

Chipmunks are active, playful and entertaining little critters, and a large population could be easily maintained in a controlled natural area.



Years ago, beavers almost became extinct in Virginia. The Virginia Wildlife Department imported new ones. With no trappers left to harvest them, the population exploded. Nearby Swift Creek has a major problem with them because they forage trees from people's back yards. In spite of this, we should strive to set up a beaver population in this area. Kids would be thrilled to watch them build their dams. Of course, they might become a problem if they destroy too many trees.



There could be eventually be a reptile house and an arthropod display. Arthropods are animals with external skeletons. They include crustaceans and insects.

Adopt-a-Pet Center

There are a great many homeless dogs and cats in the Tri-city area. Each year hundreds, if not thousands, are put "to sleep." As long as we have an animal center, we may as well try to get maximum use out of it. The Petersburg Parks would work with local animal shelters and other organizations to find home for these future pets. This can save animals and will be good for community relations.

Many of our visitors will no doubt want one, and the animals should be given away free to good homes, in accordance with the rules of the contributing agency, which usually include getting the animals their shots and have them neutered. There are ways that the new owner can have this done for free.

Botanical Gardens of Virginia

This area provides an excellent environment for a botanical garden. At least a single species of each of our wonderful trees should be added. These include the weeping willow, Osage orange, silver leaf maple, sycamore, walnut and the many oaks. There should be a garden of Virginia wildflowers.

It will certainly provide scenic variety, but can become a field trip designation in its own right as class assignments often include collecting and identifying leaves.

Campground

This is the only area where we have trees and adjacent treeless areas and it can be used for campgrounds. Unlike the Battle for Petersburg tent complex where customers rent tents, this is a “bring your own” facility. The Petersburg Parks can easily become a destination for various scout groups, and this provides them with an inexpensive way to spend the night. They can hike to it from the parking lot or, if they have heavy gear such as big tents, the train can transport them.

Peter’s Playground

Disney resurrected one of the attractions planned for Disney’s America. It is now the Pocahontas Indian Village in the Frontier Land at Disneyland Paris. It is a big playground for younger children. It contains a swings bridge and slides. Everything is supported by steel dressed as real trees. We can have a lot of fun just designing and building this. This could be located anywhere in the complex.

Peter Jones Trading Post



Peter Jones Trading Post

This is a wilderness area and visitors are certainly going to need supplies. This store should carry food for visitors’ consumption and for them to feed the animals. It should also carry camping supplies and fishing gear. It should have a snack bar.

The remains of the original stone Peter Jones Trading Post have recently been repaired and enhanced and it is an actual historic structure and its integrity should be maintained. However a reconstruction of it could be built at Peter’s Point. It needs a store anyway. Why not return Peter Jones’s Trading Post to Peter’s Point?

Country Inn

The Country Inn will be a large restaurant that looks like a farmhouse. It will be independent of the theme parks in that no park admission is required to visit it. It will be located at the west end of Peter's Point adjacent to the large parking lot, making it convenient to local residents.

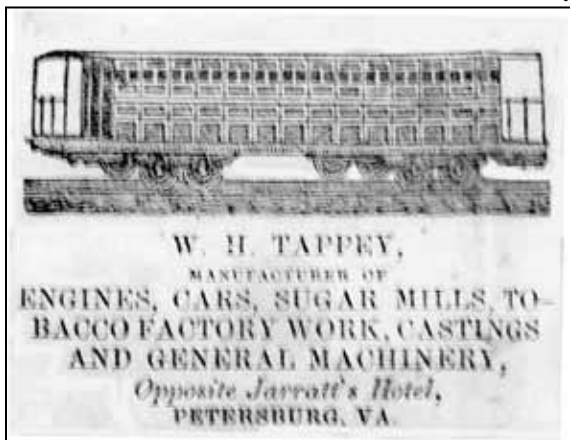
All theme parks need a mix of food, ranging from quick and convenient to fine dining. The concept for this restaurant was inspired by the Lancaster County, Pennsylvania "Dutch Country" facilities that serve authentic country-style food made from recipes that have been in families for hundreds of years. It is served buffet-style, and tourists wait in line to get in. If the product is properly developed, this facility will become a major year-round profit center.

Peter's Point Harbor

Yes Petersburg, you are getting a riverfront development, but it may not be the one you envisioned. Petersburg is far too off the beaten path to attract boaters, and the Appomattox River may never be dredged - so instead of fretting over the someday let's work with what we have now.

The Appomattox River Diversion Channel is about 200 feet wide. It has a good flow of clean water. There is an existing landing and a road to it. This is an ideal place for canoe rentals as visitors can paddle them west to dam and see the original stone Indian fish traps that have survived for over 500 years. They can go east to the James River at Hopewell. Row boats and the necessary gear can be rented to aspiring fishermen.

City of Industry



1858 Tappey ad

Petersburg was one of the few industrial centers in the antebellum South. Newspapers and other records provide abundant evidence of mills, bakehouses, rope walks, tanneries, coach makers, saddle and harness makers, coppersmiths, blacksmith, wheelwright, soap and candle makers, furniture makers and even shipyards.

In 1838 Petersburg had five flourishing cotton factories, an iron foundry, several flour mills, and several tobacco factories. Five years later, the town had eight cotton factories, three flour mills, a paper mill, and a woolen factory.

The Uriah Wells Iron Works has already been discussed, but William Tappey also constructed railroad passenger cars. Seward Luggage had a huge factory.

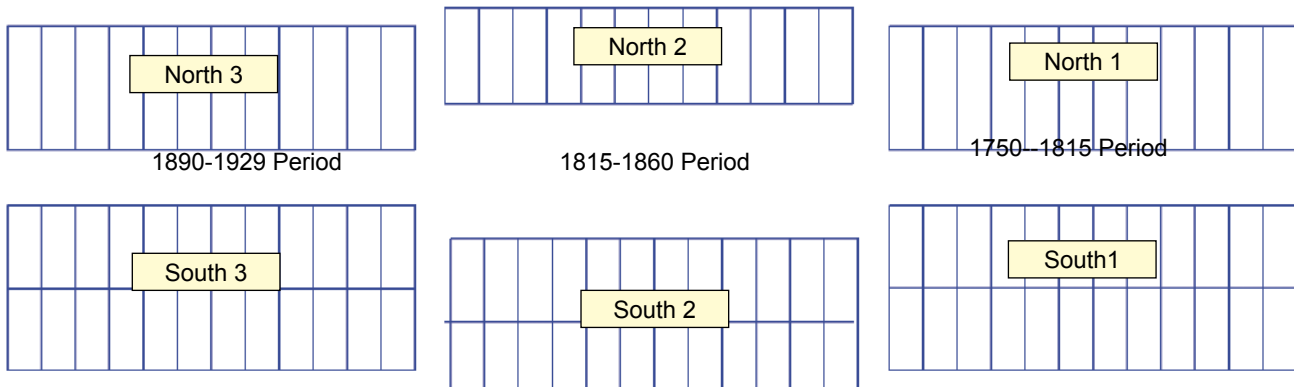
Petersburg's industrial heritage provides a wealth of material for another theme park that can be added at some later date.

Main Street Petersburg

As customer traffic increases, the Petersburg Parks will need interior space for new attractions and room for retail stores. One of the primary goals of this venture is to establish an environment for entrepreneurs. The parks must provide them with rental space.

Main Street Petersburg will be the retail complex. It will operate independently of the parks in that no park admission is required to visit. In this respect it is like a shopping mall open to the general public. There is only one viable location for it - on the west end of the former Roper Lumber Yard, as this places it directly across the street from the parking lot, making it easily accessible.

Physical Specifications



Main Street will have period facades to represent historic buildings so they must be used to establish the general dimensions. Those of Old Towne are remarkably consistent in size. The 23- to 25-foot width was determined by the size of the original lot and the structural load capacity of the cross beams. The 42-foot depth was the result of the strength of the floor joists (which ran the length of the building) and the distance that natural window light could illuminate the interior. When property owners needed a larger facility, they constructed two such buildings side by side, resulting in a “double building.” They shared a common center double wall to reduce the construction cost. These are seen throughout Old Town. We need only be concerned about the building width because that determines the width of the new historic facades.

The size of Petersburg city blocks varies and is sometimes difficult to determine due to intersecting alleys, but overall they average out to around 14 lots wide. A typical 14-lot block would be 350 feet. The complex should contain three blocks. This results in an overall length greater than the amount of land allocated for it, so our blocks will be 12 lots wide.

The buildings in the center block should have a slightly shorter depth than the others as this permits them to be set back, providing space for a central town square that can be used for various functions. It also provide a visual break, so that everything will not appear to be the same. The three blocks need to be intersected by cross streets as that is what makes them blocks. Streets are normally 50 feet wide to accommodate vehicles. Ours will be only be used by pedestrians, so they need only be 25 feet wide. This conserves space better used for stores. (City alleys are 10 feet wide.)

There are three blocks, and each has buildings on both sides of the street. This results in six sections. In spite of the historic 25-foot wide façades, each section should be constructed as a single building. The first section will be an exception, as it will contain a mix of one-, two- and three-story buildings. Each of the six buildings/sections will have central utilities and an elevator to provide convenient access to the upper floors.

Each building/section should be as open on the inside as possible. Different tenants will have different space requirements, and this provides great flexibility in the positioning of interior partitions.

The three blocks on the south side of the street back up to Lake Petersburg, making them highly visible. Façades need to be installed on the lake side, too. This permits these sections to be internally divided so that there can be back-to-back stores, one facing the lake and the other facing Main Street. This will require that the south side sections have greater depth than the north side sections.

Design Concept

Petersburg's Main Street is not a conventional shopping center. It is an integral part of a theme park complex. Like Disney's Main Street USA, it needs to be a theme park, too.

Each of the three blocks can be used to represent a different period of Petersburg's history. The first is easy to identify. In the summer of 1815, the Great Fire destroyed almost the entire city. Richmond newspapers reported the blaze could be seen from there. Only a dozen buildings survived. A few still remain. The first block should show the "Early Petersburg" - that destroyed by the fire. This block will show buildings constructed between 1750 and 1815.

An 1850s newspaper article states that in the wake of the fire, over 600 new buildings were constructed. Almost all were the three-and-a-half story brick "federal" buildings. It is tempting to want to use this section to represent the Civil War siege of Petersburg, but the despair of those days does not provide good entertainment. It would be far better to show Antebellum Petersburg, the period before the war from 1815 to 1860. That is when the city was fresh and new. It is the period of our railroads.

The third period would be what I call the "Party Period" as it would start with the "Gay 90s" and end with the "Roaring 20s."

The blocks should run east to west in chronological order. That is required due to the size. Although the two outside blocks are the same size, both are larger than the center block. Early Petersburg will contain one- and two-story buildings resulting in it having less interior space than the Party Period block. The difference may be substantial. The Party Period block will contain the most square footage, so it should be closest to the parking lot.

Today, Petersburg has an outstanding architectural heritage and a great variety of buildings. It has also lost a great many of its architectural treasures, so this provides the opportunity to reconstruct them, or, more properly, their façades.

This can be a very significant attraction in its own right. It provides the opportunity to show the evolution of downtown American architecture. Like the railroads, there is nothing like this in the world. The goal should be to build a main street that will be a must-visit destination to attract both architectural students and practicing professionals.

Petersburg is blessed in that there are several outstanding historic architects in the area.

Early Petersburg 1750-1815

This was a period of great architectural change. The early buildings were one- and two-story wood frame structures. The close of this period saw the introduction of the three-and-a-half-story brick buildings. Several of them survived the Great Fire of 1815. They include John Read's Row at 102-104 Old Street and the much older building next door at 106-108 Old Street, still in a shambles from the tornado. Two of these buildings are on West Bank Street: John Peniston's at 27-29 W. Bank Street and John Baird's next door at 23-25. The latter has been extensively modified over the years. It is now the Plaza Hotel.

Following the overall chronology, the earliest buildings would be shown to the east and others added by date as the block continues west.

Early Petersburg should certainly include the Golden Ball Tavern, Getty's silversmith shop and the famous French Betsey's ordinary. Petersburg's initial trade importance came as a result of it housing a half-dozen major tobacco warehouses. John Bolling's was the most famous. Perhaps one of these can be reconstructed.

Years ago I compiled a chain of title for almost all of the buildings on Old Street and researched the property owners to find out what they did. City tax records will give the value for the surviving buildings. The famous Golden Ball Tavern was demolished in the 1940s, but there are photographs of it. There may be photos of others. The tax values establish a frame of reference. If other double buildings have almost the same value, then they were also federal style. Values will tend to be similar for one- and two-story buildings. Many of the insurance policies of the day contained a great deal of information about the structures. Some even included sketches of the exterior. There are also sketches and watercolors from the period. All of this information provides a good start toward reconstruction.

Antebellum Petersburg 1815-1860

For all practical purposes, Petersburg was completely rebuilt following the great fire. The devastation has a big impact. Timber wood frame buildings were a thing of the past. All the new ones were constructed of comparatively fireproof brick.

Changing needs resulted in constant changes to the buildings. The Petersburg Railroad resulted in businesses and homes being relocated. The federal buildings of Old Towne were converted to tenements, the front door was moved from the rear to the front. This provided street access to the upper stories. Another big change took place during the 1830s. Better and stronger glass resulted in larger windows. The James Knox building at 25 Old Street has original window openings and windows with small panes. The other half of the double building at 23 Old Street has a larger window with bigger panes, reflecting an 1830s renovation. This can also be seen across the street at John Read's Row at 102-104 Old Street.

"Party Period Petersburg" Gay 1890s to the Roaring 1920s

Pollock's *1878 Industrial Guide to Petersburg, Virginia*, available at the main library, contains many engravings of contemporary buildings. One of the most spectacular was the Iron Front. This was a federal building and the iron front had probably been added only a few years earlier. There are many other distinctive buildings, such as the Masonic Temple and Mechanics Association Building.

The 1870s and 1880 saw the addition of tin decorative work around windows. Outstanding examples of its still remains on the buildings at 27-29 and 101 West Bank Street. During this time, large multi-pane Victorian storefronts were installed. These are well represented by the Thomas Gary Building at 22-24 Old Street.

One of the most magnificent buildings in the city was located on the south-west corner of Sycamore and Bank Street. It collapsed during renovation in the 1970s. The lot now contains a small park. It was a federal period building, but its ornate gingerbread was no doubt added at a later date.

General Usage

These buildings can house many things. They must contain activities, things to DO. There could be a theater offering live entertainment that could double as a dance hall. An old-time arcade could be a lot of fun, so long as it is period, any period other than modern. P.T. Barnum became famous for his museum of curiosities. Maybe we could have one.

A primary function of this facility is to provide retail space, but the stores must be unique. Instead of a McDonald's, I would rather see an 1890s ice cream parlor that offers old-time floats and malts, as well as unique sandwiches. Food can be an experience, too.

Community Center

The Tri-City area lacks a community center to host meetings and parties. The French Betsey Orleans House filled that need for a couple of years. A large town square was surrounded by individual dining rooms. The could be used independently or combined to accommodate any size party. Main Street should provide such a facility.

There is nothing for the teens to do on weekends. Main Street should include such facilities. Thursday in Old Towne has proven to be very popular with adults. These should be a large place where dances can be hosted for the kids on weekends. The Town Square can fill that need in the summer months. There should be an interior space to host it in the winter months.

Interior Structure

The basic plan of having one large interior space to provide maximum flexibility in tailoring the amount of space to the tenant is valid, but space is three-dimensional. There is no rule that says that the interior must be divided into a given number of floors. One of the larger structures may follow the example of many modern malls and be two stories tall. There could be a central atrium, and escalators can provide access to second-floor balcony stores. There could even be a three-story tall “grand hall.”

Upper Floor Space

The federal buildings appear to be three stories tall, but have a very high gabled roof. The abundance of attic space provides room for a fourth floor, even in the original buildings, which were only 42 feet deep. The new buildings will be much deeper, and this space should be used. For all practical purposes, they are four-story buildings. Each of the six buildings will have an elevator.

This space can be used for apartments and hotel rooms. In planning, upper floor space consideration must be given to the distance from the parking lot. Apartment tenants will not be willing to walk three blocks so the block closest to the parking lot should be largely devoted to apartments. The more distant blocks can be used for hotel rooms and commercial space. (King’s Dominion provides dormitories for 435 seasonal workers.)

The completed parks will employ many seasonal workers for the busy summer season. Most will probably be college students. Upper floor space needs to be aside for dormitories to house them.

All leases for upper floor space should contain a provision permitting the emergency takeover of the premises in the event of a flood or threat of a flood. This provides a place for first floor tenants to move their merchandise.

Phased Construction

Main Street will be the most expensive component in the complex by far. It will probably cost more than everything else put together. The extensive research will also result in it being the most time consuming to design. There will almost surely not be an immediate demand for 72 stores. These factors require a phased construction.

Each phase would construct a block or one side of the block. In an ideal world, the stores would be rented prior to the commencement of construction. This would make it possible to obtain outside financing if necessary.

Early Petersburg 1780-1815 should be constructed first. It has the smallest buildings and will be the least expensive to construct. It also provides a means to test the demand for hotel rooms and apartments before finalizing the floor plans for the larger buildings to follow.

Evolution of Transportation

Evolution of Transportation is not a theme park in that it is not linked to a specific site. Rather it is a theme that runs throughout the Petersburg Parks

Railroads were the beginning of modern transportation. The Petersburg Railroad theme park presents the antebellum period and will contain horses, buggies and omnibuses. Petersburg was a major transportation center and many means were used.

The Appomattox River

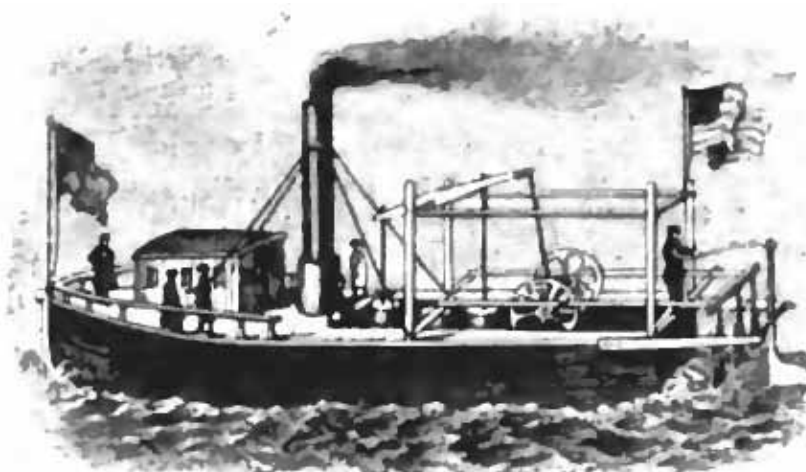
Petersburg became a trading center because of its location. There were no roads in the early colonial days, but the colony had four great river which were used to transport goods. Ship could only as far as the falls and this resulted in the “Fall Line” cities. George and Alexandria on the Potomac, Fredericksburg on the Rappahannock, Richmond on the James and Petersburg on the Appomattox.



Bateau at James River Festival

The Appomattox River was too narrow and shallow for sailing ships so goods were carried between Petersburg and the deep water port at City Point (now part of Hopewell) on shallow draft boats called bateaus. By 1800, all were owned and operated by the Free Blacks of Pocahontas. A couple can be put back into operation. They can be used to take visitors up to see the fish dam.

Robert Fulton was an American engineer and inventor who is widely credited with developing the first commercially successful steamboat. He became interested in steamboats in 1777 when he visited William Henry of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, who had earlier learned about James Watt’s steam engine on a visit to England. In 1807, he built the *North River Steamboat* (later known as the *Clermont*), which carried passengers between New York City and Albany, New York. The *Clermont* was able to make the 300 mile trip in 32 hours. It would be great to reconstruct it, but she was 130 feet long, far to big for our little river.



Fitch steamboat of 1790

There is a more viable alternative. John Fitch was an inventor, clockmaker, and silversmith who, in 1787, built the first recorded steam-powered boat in the United States. Fitch knew of James Watt's steam engines, but couldn't obtain one because Britain would not allow the export of the new technology to its former colony. Therefore, Fitch designed and built his own. The first successful trial run of his steamboat "Perseverance" was made on the Delaware River on August 22, 1787, in the presence of delegates from the Constitutional Convention. It was propelled by a bank of oars on either side of the boat. During the next few years, Fitch and Voigt worked to develop better designs, and in June 1790 launched a 60-foot boat powered by a steam engine driving several stern mounted oars. These oars paddled in a manner similar to the motion of a swimming duck's feet. With this boat he carried up to thirty paying passengers on numerous round-trip voyages between Philadelphia and Burlington, New Jersey during the summer of 1790. Estimates of miles traveled that summer range from 1,300 to 3,000 miles, and Fitch claimed that the boat often went for 500 miles without mechanical problems.

The very shallow draft of this boat and the rear paddle propulsion system should permit it to operate on the Appomattox River. However a couple short sections may have to be dredged.



Appomattox Small Boat Harbor

Above is a satellite photograph of the Appomattox Small Boat Harbor. It is located about a half mile down river from the Temple Avenue Bridge and a little over a mile from the Petersburg Parks. The largest of the boats appears to be around 25 feet long. It probably draws at least two feet of water. This is important because it proves that the river is of adequate depth to support small boating activities from there to City Point.

This facility shows the economic potential of a downtown Petersburg riverfront project.

Horse Power

North Carolina is unique among the original colonies as the barrier island deprived it of ports. Abraham Wood, the founder of Fort Henry, led or financed many expeditions into the unexplored west. One of them discovered the Roanoke River. As central North Carolina became settled, Petersburg was its major trading partner. Halifax Street was named after its destination of Halifax, North Carolina.

In 1830, this road was lined with companies that ran caravans of drays. Sometimes called Conestoga wagons, they were huge affairs pulled by six horses. Sometimes caravans would contain a dozen or more wagons. They brought in the bulky agricultural commodities from the hinterland and comparative small and lightweight manufactured goods the other way.



Conestoga wagon

The opening of the Petersburg Railroad in 1832 had an enormous impact on Petersburg. Prior to that, Old Street was the business center as goods were transported by boat down the Appomattox River. The street was lined with three-and-a-half-story, federal-style buildings. Business owners operated out of the first floor and lived upstairs. Access to the home was from the rear of the building.

The business center shifted to Washington Street and the south end of Sycamore Street to be near the railroad. The city prospered. The buildings on Old Street were converted to tenements. Families built new homes on High Street and south of Washington Street. Homes were now distant from the place of business, so owners used horses and carriages to go back and forth to work.

The antebellum railroads were built to bring commerce into the city. Merchants, hotel owners and teamsters would not permit the railroads to link their tracks as they wanted the city to be the destination and not a way station. This had a major impact on street transportation. The drays were used to transport freight between terminals. Both the Petersburg Railroad and the Richmond and Petersburg owned and operated omnibuses. These were early horse-drawn vehicles, the predecessor of the modern motor bus. They were primarily used to transfer passengers from one terminal to the other.

There were horses all over Petersburg. There were many stables to house them. The Petersburg Theme Parks needs a stable and horses. A representative one is included in the Petersburg Railroad theme park as horses were an integral part of the railroad transportation system.



Omnibuses and carriages can be used to transport visitors to the Siege Museum and the Centre Hill Mansion, thus bringing them into the critical mass. Such rides are not only appropriate, but provide another source of income. Provision must be made for “pooper scoopers”

Stables

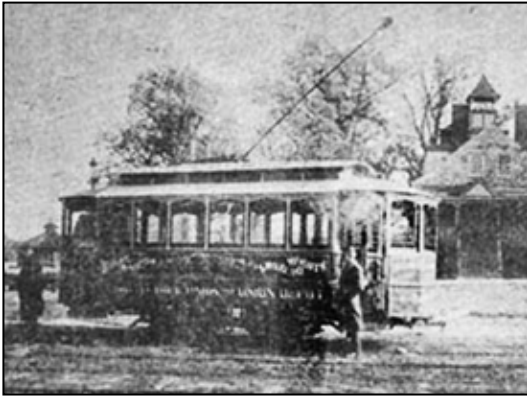
There is a large triangular shaped lot immediately north of Southside Station that is isolated from the River Street critical mass. It is just the right size for a large stable. Horses certainly add to the historic atmosphere. Since horses will be there, the stables should certainly have horses for rent. It would be easy to run a bridal path around the Petersburg Parks complex.

The Friends of the Lower Appomattox River are developing a 22-mile series of walking and water trails from Lake Chesdin to Hopewell. It is now complete from the Campbell Bridge leading to Ettrick and Battersea Plantation. The bridge is about two-thirds of a mile from the original Peter Jones Trading Post immediately adjacent to our Petersburg Railroad theme park. An existing gravel road runs between it and the bridge, which can easily be incorporated into the trail.

Horses will permit visitors to take advantage of this wonderful resource. This is an activity that local families can enjoy year around.

The Petersburg Electric Railroad

Street cars, also known as trams and trolley cars, largely replaced the horse and buggy and were the primary means of intercity transportation for a half-century before they were made obsolete by the automobile. The early ones were very small. Powered by electricity, they had a pantograph on their roof. This was a giant spring that held a power pickup connections against an overhead wire. The first power poles were put up to hold those wires. One was set on each side of the street and a cable run between them. The electrical lines for the streetcar were hung from that cable and ran down the center of the street. These poles later provided the means to distribute electricity to homes and businesses.



Petersburg was the first city in the entire world to charter a modern rapid transit system. Richmond businessmen liked the idea so much that they jumped on it. They quickly raised the money, contacted Thomas Edison who introduced them to Frank Julian Sprague. Although the technology had not yet been developed, he agreed to build the system. In 1888, Richmond was the first city in the entire world to have a modern (non-horse drawn) interurban transportation system.

1888 Richmond Streetcar

The Petersburg Electric Railroad became operational two years later. It was followed by the Richmond and Petersburg Electric Railroad. All three companies produced their own electricity. They later merged and began selling their excess power to businesses and consumers so that they could install Edison's new electric lights. This company became Virginia Electric and Power, now Dominion Power.

Main Street is the length of Southpark Mall. That's a lot of walking. An early trolley can provide visitors with transportation from the parking lot down to the beginning of the most eastern block. As this is the colonial era block, we can't historically justify running a trolley into it.

A second streetcar line can connect Main Street with the Electric Building, which is located midpoint between the two train stations. It was the Petersburg terminal of the Richmond and Petersburg Electric Railroad. It was built along with the Appomattox River Bridge in 1926.

The Electric Building will be difficult to utilize because of its design and configuration. Because of the bridge height, the first floor is about 40 feet above grade level. There is plenty of room inside to insert two floors into the deep foundation. I believe this building has a 40 foot x 100 foot footprint, so such a four-story configuration would yield 16,000 feet a floor. The ground level could be used for a street railroad museum.

The top floor provides a great panoramic view of the city. It would make a great restaurant dining room. Due to lack of space, the bathrooms and kitchen would have to be on other floors.

There is another possibility. The building was originally connected to the earlier Appomattox River Bridge by a concrete ramp that was about twenty feet wide. The streetcar tracks ran onto the ramp. A new ramp can be added to the back side of the building. This would permit use of the original first-floor terminal. Street cars could turn in an extremely tight radius and there appears to be enough space for it to get onto Second Street. It would immediately turn right on Bollingbrook Street, then left on Sycamore retracing its original route up the Sycamore Street hill.

Bicycles

The 1890s saw the bicycle craze sweep the nation. Every small town had a bicycle shop. The three greatest American pioneer aviators, the Wright Brothers and Glen Curtis, started out building them. We should certainly have period style bikes for rent in the Party Block of Main Street. There it is again. DO not VIEW.



Automobiles

Automobiles became relatively common by 1815. The 1920s saw some of the showiest ever made. A great many cars from the period are owned by Virginia residents. A few can be rented and placed on the site.



In the section on Parking, I noted that the southern part of the land purchased from Norfolk Southern was isolated by Joseph Jenkins Roberts Street and the Bridge Street ramp. The small size and location make it difficult to utilize. But is the ideal size and location for an early gasoline station, 1815 to 1825, right at the end of Main Street, where it should be. It would provide a place to display the cars and the station can become a gathering point for historic car clubs.

Critters

Antebellum Petersburg was a country town, and we are striving for realism. Almost every family kept chickens and many had cows. Chickens, geese, ducks and turkeys should roam the complex. The Confederate soldiers can even have a pet goat.

Young children will be delighted by them. Chicken feed should be available. There should also be dogs and cats. All of this contributes to the atmosphere and avoids the sterile, lifeless look of Jamestown and Colonial Williamsburg.

Toward encouraging a large wild bird population, there should be an abundance of bird feed throughout the complex.

Hotels

The original Disneyland was quickly surrounded by hotels and motels, which, if company-owned, would have provided a great deal of additional revenue. The attraction was enormously successful and far exceeded all projections. It was extremely profitable and Disney began thinking on a much grander scale. He died in 1966, but he had set the wheels in motion.

The Disney Corporation purchased 30,000 acres of land 21 miles southwest of Orlando, Florida. The sunshine state is our nation's primary winter vacation destination, which provides a strong, year-round market.

Disney World's first attraction was the Magic Kingdom theme park, which opened in 1971. It is a much larger version of the original Disneyland. It was joined in 1982 by Epcot, in 1989 by Disney's Hollywood Studio and in 1998 by Disney's Animal Kingdom. The sheer enormity of the critical mass resulted in the complex evolving from a day-trip designation (as is Disneyland) into a vacation destination. It became a resort. Visitors stayed for days and even weeks. The Disney Corporation owns 23 hotels on the site. Eight others are owned by other companies. They provide a great deal of additional income

Closer to home, both King's Dominion and Busch Gardens are amusement parks. They are day-trip summer attractions. King's Dominion has a Best Western hotel on-site. The Busch Gardens Website does not show any hotels within the park. Various booking services show 20 nearby, but they also serve nearby Williamsburg and Jamestown.

The Petersburg Theme Parks do not have the large, year-round visitor potential of Disney World, nor are they strictly limited to the summer season as are Virginia's two amusement parks. Because of the multi-market drawing capability, the seasonal impact will be more in line with that of Jamestown and Colonial Williamsburg.

The new East Coast passenger trains will bring people in from out of town. They will need a place to stay overnight.

Petersburg is not now a hotel destination. There are motels on all four corners of the Interstate 95 and Washington Street intersection. Two have gone out of business and are vacant. The other two are struggling to make ends meet. Why? There is no reason for people to come to Petersburg. The Petersburg Parks will drastically change that.

Main Street should have a hotel façade. The best place for it would be in the center block leading into the own square. The entrance should lead into a very fancy and ornate Victorian lobby. An old time wire-cage elevator and a grand staircase should lead upstairs.

The phased construction principle can also be applied to each of the buildings. In this case, I would initially install only 10 to 20 hotel rooms on the second floor. These should be designed so that they could later be used as efficiency apartments if the hotel doesn't work out. Some could be designed as suites that could also serve as one bedroom apartments. The initial demand will determine how the other space will be used. Since the center block will be the second one constructed, this information will prove invaluable in designing the third block, which has the largest amount of floor space.

The abundance of upper floor space on Main Street may very well cover all of the parks's hotel needs. Unlike a dedicated, free-standing hotel, room can added as needed. Building in the ability to convert them into apartments is a big plus.

Disney World hotels charge \$160 to \$400 a night for a single room with two beds. The Petersburg Parks should charge less. This is still quite a bit higher than the rates of the local hotels so the influx of new visitors will certainly benefit them too.

City of Petersburg

The many newspaper articles over the years discussing the future riverfront project have never mentioned a development plan. The questions, “What is the product?” and “Who will buy it?” have never been answered. These articles have suggested that the purpose of such a project would be to bring visitors into the city for the benefit of local merchants. This plan brings many people into the city, thus accomplishing that goal. Although the city is not a theme park, it is an integral part of the critical mass. The River Street area will be very busy as guests visit Southside Station, the museums, and Union Station. Old Street will be only a few feet away and many park visitors will visit it too.

This plan also provides the city with a major source of income.

City-owned Buildings

Farmers’ Market should once again be utilized as a restaurant. Use should be found for the outdoor market area. Hopefully as customer traffic increases, it can return to its original function, providing local farmers with an outlet for their goods. If not, it could be used for concessions.

The Electric Building is the tall, skinny one immediately adjacent to the Martin Luther King Bridge, previously discussed under the Electric Railroad.

Old Street Buildings

Spillover from the parks will result in Old Street being covered with visitors. The space between Old and River Streets is only a half-block deep. The buildings on the north side of Old Street stretch all the way back to River Street. Southside Station is on the other side of the street, about 100 feet away.

The Old Towne Antique Mall, later the French Betsey Orleans House and now the Moulin Rouge has a River Street entrance. Tom Craig converted the old Covington Feed Store into a restaurant that had a back deck for dining. The backs of other buildings can be easily opened up.

The modern building that housed Ferguson Plumbing was leveled by the tornado. This results in a big hole on Old Street. A new three-and-a-half story federal building should be constructed on the site.

Deeper Penetration

The challenge will be to get visitors deeper into the city. It must be remembered that their cars are in the parking lot and they will be on foot. Even if they did have their cars, there is no available parking. Omnibuses and horse-drawn buggies can take them to the Siege Museum and the Centre Hill Mansion. An old time bus could also operate of the period service station, but these capabilities are limited.

Deeper penetration will require a more extensive effort. There needs to be an easy and efficient way to transport visitors up the Sycamore Street hill to Washington Street, a distance of only four blocks. If this can be accomplished then the downtown area can once more be prospering.

This will require some form of transportation. Building on the Petersburg’s Park’s History of Transportation theme, it should be provided by something unique and colorful, thus becoming another attraction in its own right.

The easiest and least expensive way to accomplish this will probably be trolley buses. These are small buses made to resemble streets cars. They are manufactured and are used in a number of cities. A more exciting and historically appropriate way would be to put a streetcar line back into operation.

In either case, the Electric Building would be the ideal Old Towne terminal due to both its location and its history. The first floor was the streetcar terminal. It had to be the same height as the Appomattox River Bridge which was built at the same time in 1926. The deep foundation provides room for two stories. One of them should be used as a streetcar museum. The top floor is covered with windows and provides a breath-taking view of the city. It should be used to house a restaurant.

Another unique transportation option would be cable cars, such as those used in San Francisco. They have the advantage of not requiring overhead wires.

Balancing Resources

Main Street Petersburg needs to be treated as a separate project, as previously discussed. It will contain the equivalent of 72 stores of 2,500 square feet each and 435 apartments and/or hotel rooms. That is a lot of space and will need to be phased in over a period of time.

Another consideration is the impact that it will have on the Petersburg retail community. We want the heavy Petersburg Parks visitor traffic to overflow into the city to help the business community. However the parks will eventually need the things that Main Street is to provide. These two consideration must be balanced.

Adding More Land

The biggest problem with viable well-managed attractions is that they continually bring in more and more visitors. This is why successful parks continually add new attractions. Kings Dominion started with 15 and now has 60. The number of Disneyland attractions has tripled. Disney World started with Magic Kingdom and has since added three more theme park complexes.

This expansion provide more places for visitors to go and thus spread out the crowd. The Petersburg Parks will surely grow and attractions can be added. There is only so much land and long term planning must take that into account. Fortunately additional land appears to be available.



Parcel 1 - Old Norfolk Southern tracks run up the west side of Pocahontas Island. They end at Petersburg Point, where they earlier crossed the Appomattox River on a bridge. The piers are still standing and can be seen the upper left corner of the above photo. They are marked with an arrow. The land on the north side of the diversion channel, which is in Colonial Heights, is undeveloped. There is a wide swath of grass running across, which is probably an old railroad right of way. This land is probably owned by Norfolk Southern. It would be very simple to build a new bridge on the existing piers, thus bringing this land into the complex.

Parcel 2 - This land is between the city sewage plant and route 36. Tax maps show that it is owned by the City of Petersburg. This could later be used as a wilderness park. The direct access from route 36 and the immediately proximity to Petersburg Parks would make it a good site for a future hotel.

Parcel 3 - The Norfolk Southern rail yard (parcel 005010802) is listed at 1381 Washington Street. It contains 25 acres and its tax value is \$379,600. Norfolk Southern also owns the 29.72 acres of forest directly north of it. Its tax value is \$36,400. (tax id 01329001)

The City of Petersburg already owns Parcel 2. It should obtain the other two parcels.

What Next?

Riverfront Development

The pursuit of the riverfront development dream has been extremely beneficial. The city did all the right things. Today, it has 121 acres of prime land sitting in an absolutely fantastic location, one making it highly accessible to automobiles, tour buses and the new high-speed trains that will soon be coming on line. Within this tract, there are several wonderful historic buildings. The city has significantly enhanced everything through constantly making improvements to the infrastructure.

For that, it deserves a very big “WELL DONE.”

Packaging

The first step in any large project is property acquisition. In the case of a motion picture, it is buying the underlying literary property (the story). In real estate, it is obtaining the land through purchase or option.

The next step is packaging. Film producers must provide for the writing of the screen play, contract with stars and key creative people and arrange for production, the actual making of the movie. The real estate developer has the plans drawn up and gets bids on construction.

The City of Petersburg owns the real property. Land is valued by what can be done with it. This Revitalization Plan sets forth the highest and best use.

Federal law recognizes that the author of a creative work is the owner of that work. Today, the Petersburg Parks exist in the form of this plan. It is, in effect, a script. Just like any playwright or screenwriter, I would like to see it performed. Such performance requires my permission. I also developed the site design plan. Details will almost surely be changed, but the railroad will almost surely have to utilize the basic plan. The Petersburg Railroad cannot be properly promoted without making extensive use of my original research, set forth in my history book, *The Antebellum Railroads of Petersburg, Virginia*, which is a supplement to this plan. Both constitute intellectual property, and I am their sole owner.

I am willing to convey the necessary rights to the Petersburg Parks in consideration of fair compensation for my work.

This intellectual property, when added to the real property, results in a great package. For all practical purposes, it is Disney's America plus a whole lot more. Every detail of Petersburg Parks is historically appropriate. Even the most purist historian can not accuse anything of being “Mickey Mouse.” Wouldn't it be extraordinary if Petersburg accomplished a goal that was beyond the grasp of the powerful and wealthy Disney Company? Such success is what attracts industry.

Best of all, the Petersburg Parks can become the goose that lays the golden eggs.

Now that we have the package, the question becomes, “What do we do with it?”

Precedents

The *Minutes of the Common Council of the Town of Petersburg, 1805-1835*, page 387, August 26, 1829, state, “This meeting having been convened for the purpose of taking into consideration the subject of establishing a railroad from this town to the Roanoke River. Be it resolved that the mayor of the town is to be authorized to request the President of the United States to permit an Engineer in the service of the United States to examine the route for a proposed railroad from Petersburg to some point on the Roanoke River and to estimate its probable cost.” The resolution was approved.

The City Point Railroad had a difficult time competing with the Richmond and Petersburg Railroad and got into financial trouble. Recognizing its importance, the City of Petersburg acquired it in 1847 and renamed it the Appomattox Railroad. The city sold it to the Southside Railroad in 1854.

Current Situation

In 1829, Petersburg saw the value of a railroad and took the initiative. It got the ball rolling, but the actual railroad was chartered, privately owned and largely financed by local businessmen. Toward encouraging internal development, Virginia law required the state to purchase the last 40 percent of the stock once the first 60 percent had been sold. The City of Petersburg helped to meet that requirement by purchasing some of the stock. In other words, the city confined its efforts to leadership.

The situation today is totally different. The city has gone far beyond providing leadership and has actually purchased all of the land and buildings necessary for the project. This is the equivalent of the 1829 Common Council purchasing the right of way from the city to the Roanoke River. That's a really big difference.

The City Point Railroad situation establishes that the City of Petersburg then had the legal right to own a railroad. I know nothing of this arrangement other than that cited above. The acquisition may have resulted from the railroad defaulting on loans either made by the city or guaranteed by the city. In such case, there was no out-of-pocket expense. The fact that the city established the Appomattox Railroad suggests that it confined its role to ownership and left the operation of the railroad to the experts.

The city currently has a great bundle of assets, but the flip side of the coin, is that it does not now have the personnel, knowledge and experience to construct and manage such a big project.

Options

There are many things that be done with the package and the various options all come down to one question - who gets the golden eggs?

The first option is to sell the package. To my way of thinking it would be stupid to sell the goose and let someone else get all the eggs.

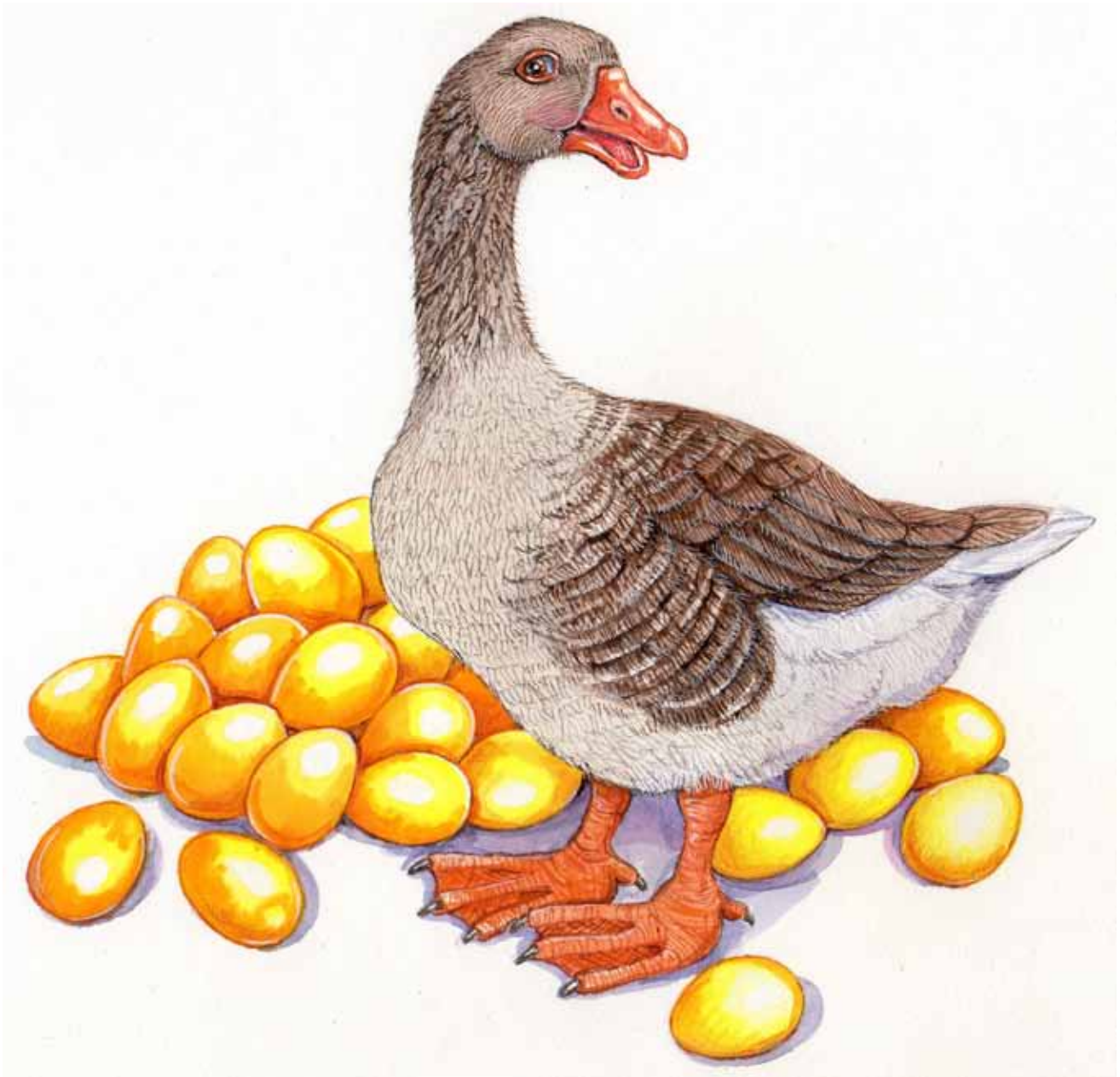
Development could be accomplished through a joint venture where the City of Petersburg contributes the package and the other party provides financing, construction and management.

Another possibility is for the city to establish and own an independent organization to do everything, same as it did with the Appomattox Railroad. It must have the freedom to act in accordance with preestablished policies.

I have been intimately associated with Petersburg for over a quarter century and appreciate that the city contains many smart, talented and resourceful people. I have no doubt that if the city decides to embark on this venture, it will find a way to do it.

I will close this revitalization plan with the prediction made by the mysterious voice to Iowa farmer Kevin Costner, as he walked through his cornfields in the movie *Field of Dreams*:

“If you build it, they will come.”



The Petersburg Parks can be the goose that lays the golden eggs.

Tear out this page and paste it on your wall.