OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

VLR- 9/17/97 NRHP- 2/10/98

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

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Name of Property		County and	State	
5. Classification				
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6. Function or Use				
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7. Description		Metadala		
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)		Materials (Enter categories from	instructions)	29
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		roofN/A	 	
		otherN/A		
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Suffolk, Virginia

Dumpling Island Archaeological Site

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering

Record #

Suffolk, Virginia Name of Property County and State 8. Statement of Significance Applicable National Register Criteria Areas of Significance (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property (Enter categories from instructions) for National Register listing.) Archaeology, Historic - Aboriginal A Property is associated with events that have made Archaeology, Prehistoric a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Exploration/Settlement our history. ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past. ☐ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and Period of Significance distinguishable entity whose components lack A.D. 1607-1624 (Virginia Company Period) individual distinction. A.D. 900-1607 (Late Woodland Period) Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. Criteria Considerations Significant Dates (Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.) A.D. 1609 Property is: A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes. Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) ☐ B removed from its original location. N/A C a birthplace or grave. **Cultural Affiliation** D a cemetery. Nansemond ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure. ☐ F a commemorative property. Architect/Builder ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance N/A within the past 50 years. Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) 9. Major Bibliographical References (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.) Previous documentation on file (NPS): Primary location of additional data: □ preliminary determination of individual listing (36) State Historic Preservation Office ☐ Other State agency CFR 67) has been requested previously listed in the National Register ☐ Federal agency ☐ Local government · previously determined eligible by the National □ University ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

Oumpling Island Archaeological Site	Suffolk, Virginia
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0. Geographical Data	
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	See continuation sheet
oundary Justification	
xplain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)	ж **
I. Form Prepared By	
ame/title E. Randolph Turner, III Archaeologist	/Director, Portsmouth Regional Office
ganization Virginia Department of Historic Reso	
reet & number 612 Court Street	telephone 757-396-6709
y or town Portsmouth	state Virginia zip code 23704
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ibmit the following items with the completed form:	
ontinuation Sheets	
a a a	te.
aps ·	
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the p	property's location.
A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having	ng large acreage or numerous resources.
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Representative black and white photographs of the p	roperty.
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properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget. Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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7. Description	
Summary Paragraph	
The Dumpling Island Archaeological Site River in the City of Suffolk, Virginia. Archaeological investigations historic periods.	is a Native American village on the Nansemond date the site to the Late Woodland through early
Background	a a
The Dumpling Island Archaeological Site	
recorded in 1983 as in the archaeologic	in an excellent state of preservation. The site was cal inventory files of the Virginia Department of staff of the VDHR have conducted two brief field
archaeological deposits. Small shovel tests doc artifacts one 1 1/2 ft. X 1 1/2 ft. test unit was ex- deposits and dark midden soil speckled with char- association with large ceramic sherds and well disturbance. While no subsurface features were for for their survival are excellent. The shell tempered the Late Woodland period (ca. A.D. 900 - 1607) a region (Virginia Company period, A.D. 1607 - 162.	defined both boundaries and integrity for the numented dense oyster shell and Native American cavated, documenting the presence of dense shell coal to a depth of 12 inches. Layering of shells in preserved animal bones indicate minimal prior and given the small size of the test unit, conditions ceramics recovered date occupation at the site to s well as the initial years of English contact in the 4). The primary period of occupation covers, based on the almost exclusive occurrence to earlier fabric impressed sherds (Turner and

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Opperman 1993:77). Historical documentation (se Indians inhabiting this area during the early historical indicate the site represents a major village.	ee significance section) shows the Nansemond period. Site size and artifact density
The second investigation in March 1995 verified the 1986. An additional test unit, measuring 3 ft. X 3 ft.,	
those observed in 1986, being approximately 12 induction dark midden soil which included animal bones and occupation the top four inches of the deposit here showed great size. The lower eight inches, however, were extreme earlier investigated unit in the confirmed the previously established date of occupations.	casional small pieces of charcoal. As expected, ter disturbance with less shell and smaller sherd ely well preserved and similar in all ways to the e Native American ceramics recovered here also
The sole structure on the island is a two-room cost contributing structure has not significantly impacte given its small size, above-ground foundation,	The state of the s

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Dumpling Island Archaeological Site Suffolk, Virginia

8. Statement of Significance

Summary Paragraph

The Dumpling Island Archaeological Site is significant in that it can address important historical and archaeological issues related to the evolution and structural organization of chiefdom societies as well as the establishment of early English settlements in North America and their effects on indigenous Native American societies. Dumpling Island meets the following two criteria established by the National Register of Historic Places:

Criterion A. The site is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history, namely

- * The site was the religious center and principal residence of the werowance or district chief of the Nansemonds, a group within the Powhatan chiefdom and one of the most powerful Native American groups along the James River at the time of the founding of Jamestown in 1607 by the English.
- * The site was the location in 1609 of one of the first examples of armed conflict between the English and Native Americans in coastal Virginia.
- * The site was captured by the English and briefly served in 1609 as one of the first English outposts beyond Jamestown before it was retaken through force by the Nansemonds.

Criterion D. The site has yielded, or is likely to yield, information, important in history, namely

- * The site contains well preserved archaeological deposits that can provide significant new information on Native American lifeways during the Late Woodland and protohistoric periods, including adaptive changes associated with the evolution of a chiefdom society.
- * The site, being the location of historically documented interactions between the English and Nansemond during the early years of the Jamestown settlement, is likely to contain significant new information on whether or not these initial interactions brought on significant changes in Native American lifeways.

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The site, being the location of a briefly occupied English outpost beyond the Jamestown settlement, is likely to contain significant new information on the intensity of that occupation and potentially on adaptations made by the English at this time in addressing the many stresses they were facing.

Background

The Nansemond Indians, at the time of the founding of Jamestown by the English in 1607, occupied territory on both sides of the Nansemond River in the present-day City of Suffolk, Virginia. With the exception of a single aborted attempt to occupy Dumpling Island, the Nansemonds' territory was not settled by Europeans during the initial years of contact (Virginia Company period, A.D. 1607 - 1624). With a population of 850 or more persons, the Nansemonds were one of the more powerful districts in the Powhatan chiefdom and among the last in the James River drainage to be dominated by the English.

Limited information concerning Native American settlements along the Nansemond River can be derived from the poorly documented exploration by the English of the Hampton Roads area during the Roanoke voyages of the late 16th century. Two unnamed villages are depicted on the John White map of 1585-1586 as situated on either side of a major body of water which may correspond with the Nansemond River (Lorant 1965; cf. Quinn 1985:107). Ralph Lane (1955:257) noted that several other Native American groups came to meet the English residing with the Chesapeakes (in modern-day Virginia Beach) during the winter of 1585-1586, including the "Mandoages, Tripanicks, and Opossians." David Quinn (1955:257,855-856) suggests that the Tripanicks may have been the Nansemonds. Also, Lane's (1955:259-260) description of a "certaine Kings countrey" whose "place of greatest strength is an Iland situate...in a Bay" generally is attributed to Kecoughtan (in modern-day Hampton), although it could instead reflect information concerning the core Nansemond settlements on and surrounding Dumpling Island in the Nansemond River (cf. McCartney 1985:155; Quinn 1955:260; Turner and Opperman 1997).

The quality of information concerning the Nansemonds improves during the early 17th century. Captain John Smith (1986a:81) provides a description of their territory in 1608 during its initial exploration, noting:

This [Nansemond] river is a musket shot broad, each side being should bayes, a narrow channel, but three fadom, his course for eighteene miles, almost directly South, and by West, where beginneth the first inhabitants; for a mile it turneth directly East, towards the West, a great bay and a white chaukie Iland [Dumpling Island],

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convenient for a fort: his next course South, where within a quarter of a mile, the river divideth in two, the neck a plaine high Corne field, the wester bought a high plaine likewise, the Northeast answerable in all respects: in these plaines are planted aboundance of houses and people. They may containe 1000. Acres of most excellent fertill ground....



The "white chaukie Iland" noted initially by Smith is later identified on his 1612 map of Virginia as "Sharpes Ile" along with four other Nansemond settlements.

A plan to subsequently "burne all in the Isle" following an ambush, however, was not carried out once sufficient ransom was paid to the English in return for their renewed friendship. Smith (1986a:79; cf. Smith 1986a:79-91,83, 1986b:242, 1986c:12-14,103,178-180,191,196,221) describes the Nansemonds in 1608 as a "proud warlike Nation" with relations varying from open hostility to more amiable interactions as circumstances fluctuated.

A year later, Dumpling Island was involved in the only attempt undertaken by the English to establish an outpost in the Nansemonds' territory. A lack of supplies available to the English in 1609 resulted in an attempt to distribute the colonists away from Jamestown Island to relieve pressure on the principal settlement there. One expedition, under the joint command of George Percy and John Martin was undertaken to Nansemond territory where they intended to trade for corn and settle. The strategic advantage of Dumpling Island was again recognized, and its acquisition through trade and negotiation was thwarted by the killing of the English messengers. A more aggressive strategy was then adopted by the English and is described by Percy (1922:262-263; cf. Smith 1986b:269-270 who also notes that the island was the residence of the Nansemonds' principal werowance, or chief):

So Capte: Martin did Apointe wth halfe of our men to take the Island perforce...beinge Landed and acquaynted wth their Trechery we Beate the Salvages outt of the Island burned their howses Ransaked their Temples Tooke downe the

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Dumpling Island Archaeological Site Suffolk, Virginia

Corpes of their deade kings from of their Toambes And caryed away their pearles Copper and braceletts, wherewth they doe decore their kings funeralles.

A subsequent passage documents further that it was at Dumpling Island where the destruction of the Nansemonds' houses and temples took place, not at the mainland settlements. The English immediately occupied Dumpling Island. Their settlement here, however, was short-lived with the Nansemonds quickly regaining the island and killing many of the English still there who were

...slayne with their mowthes stopped full of Breade beinge donn as it seemethe in Contempte and skorne thatt others mighte expecte the Lyke when they shold come to seeke for breade and reliefe amongste them (Percy 1922:265).

Ralph Hamor (1957:26-27) next notes for 1611 the exploration of the Nansemond River, followed by Sir Thomas Dale (Smith 1986c:240) in the same year "viewing the River of Nansamund, in despight of the Indians then our enemies" as the seat of his new town before ultimately deciding on "Arsahattock" (just south of modern-day Richmond). No further mention is made of the Nansemonds until the Powhatan/English War of 1622. Following the outbreak of hostilities in 1622, severe retaliation was taken against the Nansemonds along with other neighboring districts (Kingsbury 1935:9,222,251; McIlwaine 1979:151; Smith 1986c:314-315). Barring the first fatal incursion in 1609, however, no European settlement was attempted in Nansemond territory through the end of the Virginia Company period. As late as 1627, the Nansemonds are reported as holding English prisoners (McIlwaine 1979:483; cf. Smith 1986c:308-309 for an earlier 1622 account). English records then remain silent on Dumpling Island until the 1640s when it is mentioned in land patent records under its current name though with no evidence of actual settlement (Nugent 1983:155,174).

Dumpling Island continues today to present an imposing physical setting,

Its military

advantage as recognized by the English is obvious even to the casual observer. Were its 14 acres cleared of the forest there today, its extensive shell deposits would once again duplicate Smith's original description of it as a "white chaukie Iland." Similarly, its setting and location near the center of the Nansemond district makes it ideal to serve as the residence of the Nansemond's principal werowance, or chief, as well as the location of the Nansemonds' mortuary temples. This consolidation of power in a central figure and location is typical of chiefdom societies, such as the Powhatan chiefdom with which the Nansemonds were aligned.

Archaeologically, Dumpling Island has been shown to be in an excellent state of preservation. It accordingly, has high research potential to address questions related to Nansemond technology and

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authorizen and and political accoming the	

subsistence, social and political organization, and community organization during the Late Woodland and protohistoric periods. A comprehensive archaeological assessment of surviving Late Woodland and protohistoric Native American settlements in coastal Virginia identifies Dumpling Island as one of the very best preserved villages along the James River (Turner and Opperman 1997).

As an example of a district capital for the Powhatan chiefdom, archaeological investigations here also could enhance knowledge on the evolution of and structural organization within chiefdom societies. Chiefdoms represent a critical transition between egalitarian band/tribal societies and increasingly complex state societies. Characteristic of chiefdoms is the centralization of economic, socio-political, and religious authority into inherited positions of leadership. With Dumpling Island's clear association with the Nansemond's principal werowance and the known presence here of mortuary temples, the site provides a rare opportunity to address archaeological issues on the recognition of status and its physical manifestations within chiefdoms.

Finally, the Nansemonds were very much a society in transition, facing challenges not merely from neighboring Native American groups but also by the early 17th century from the English as well. Archaeological investigations at Dumpling Island should be able to provide us with a better understanding of these initial encounters and the effects, if any, they had on Native American lifeways.

It is unknown if traces of the brief English occupation at Dumpling Island remain. If there, they should prove to be remarkably significant in enlarging our understanding of those few English attempts to expand beyond the core settlement at Jamestown during its initial years and how they adapted to the many stresses facing them in coastal Virginia.

The Dumpling Island Archaeological Site, because of its direct association with early English exploration in North America and Native American/English interactions during the Virginia Company period (A.D. 1607 - 1624) as well as its excellent state of preservation, is considered to be of national significance. This evaluation is consistent with the contextual requirements for national significance established in the National Park Service's recently completed National Historic Landmark Theme Study entitled "Historic Contact: Early Relations Between Indians and Colonists in Northeastern North America, 1524 - 1783" (1992).

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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

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Dumpling Island Archaeological Site Suffolk, Virginia

Percy, George

1922 A Trewe Relacyon of the Precedeinges and Ocurrentes of Momente with have hapned in Virginia from the Tyme Sr Thomas Gates was shippwrackte uppon the Bermudes and 1609 until my depture out of the Country with was in ano Dni 1612. Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Geneological Magazine, vol. 3, pp. 259-282.

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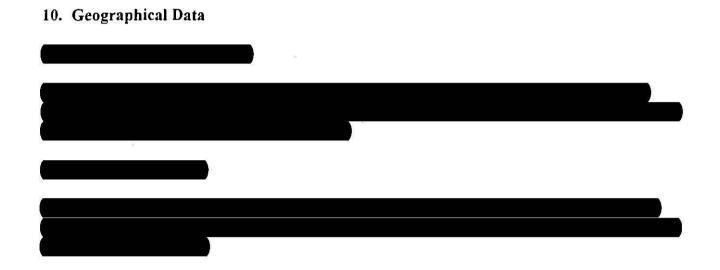
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Virginia Department of Transportation

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Richmond, Virginia 23219

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Dumpling Island Archaeological Site Suffolk, Virginia

List of Photographs

All photograhs are of:

DUMPLING ISLAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE City of Suffolk, Virginia VDHR File No: 44SK93

> Antony F. Opperman, photographer March 11, 1995

All negatives are stored at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources at 221 Governor Street, Richmond, Virginia

View of Dumpling Island
Photo 2 of 7

View of Dumpling Island
Photo 3 of 7

View of interior of Dumpling Island
Photo 4 of 7

View of 1995 Dumpling Island
Photo 5 of 7

View of 1995 Dumpling Island
Photo 6 of 7

View of finely decorated LateWoodland/protohistoric ceramic pipe found on surface at Dumpling Island

Photo 7 of 7