

AFRICAN AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY IN TEXAS: A Planning Document

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Preface and Acknowledgements

Before we begin our formal introduction to this document, we will share, in a somewhat informal manner, some background about why it exists.

Many of this document's readers are probably aware that in 1999, the Texas Historical Commission (THC) published guidelines concerning archaeology on late-19th and early-20th sites in Texas. One of the guidelines stated that most late 19th and early 20th century sites "do not warrant extensive excavations because the data recovered will not make a substantive contribution to our understanding of the human activities that occurred at these sites" (Denton 1999:13-14). Another statement was that "the distribution of mass-produced goods across the United States produced amazing artifact assemblage uniformity, and, therefore, the archaeological results rarely provide important new interpretive insights for the historical record" (Denton 1999:13-14).

As soon as this policy was published, several archaeologists who specialized in the archaeology of African America quickly realized that this policy could cause problems in terms of evaluating the significance of African American sites in Texas. First, several of the sites they were studying dated from *after* the civil war, and well into the Jim Crow period of the late 19th and early 20th century. This was a period of tremendous change, upheaval, progress, and struggle for African Americans, and these scholars *were* finding archaeological evidence of these processes and were making a "substantive contribution" to the understanding of what African American life was like during that time.

Second, some of these same sites were in urban contexts, where the archaeological remains did indeed consist of a great many mass-produced goods. However, as this policy was being written, the field of African Diaspora Archaeology was growing, and many specialists in this research area were learning new and important things about late 19th and early-20th century African American life from urban sites. Otherwise ubiquitous goods (bottles, for example) *did* sometimes have different meanings for African American citizens, and despite their apparent uniformity, they did provide "new interpretive insights".

Therefore, several of those involved in this work began to call the policy into question, and over a period of time, Jim Bruseth (then the Director of the Archaeology Division of the THC) invited some of the Texas archaeologists who worked primarily at African American sites to come to the THC to discuss possible changes.

This meeting took place in the summer of 2007. The archaeologists invited included Rachel Feit (a CRM archaeologist in Austin), Ken Brown (at the University of Houston) Fred McGhee (also a CRM archaeologist in Austin), and Carol McDavid (who directed an archaeology nonprofit in Houston as well as several community archaeology projects). Also present were several key players from the Texas Historical Commission (including the current director of the Archaeology Division, Pat Mercado-Allinger) as well as the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDot). After a very serious but productive 3-hour conversation about the issues, Bruseth asked Feit,

McGhee, Brown and McDavid to write a new historic context document, which would to serve as a “best practices” guide” for conducting African American archaeology in Texas.

At this meeting, it was decided that the Community Archaeology Research Institute, Inc., would organize the document and seek funding to make it happen. Accordingly, this group, under the direction of Carol McDavid and Robert Marcom, applied for and received a major grant from the Texas Preservation Trust Fund, as well as, later, matching funds from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Texas Historical Foundation, the Alice Kleberg Reynolds Foundation, and the Levi Jordan Plantation Historical Society. Therefore, all of these individuals and groups deserve our sincere thanks for making this project possible.

A number of other individuals also deserve thanks and recognition here: Jannie Scott (for her diligent and professional research in assembling the database in Appendix A, and for substantial assistance on the theory chapter), Maria Franklin (for introducing us to Ms. Scott and providing valuable input in several content areas), Doug Boyd (for suggestions which greatly improved portions of the draft document), Tim Pertulla, Roger Moore (for helping us chase down several critical examples of previous archaeological work done in Houston), Jorge Garcia-Herreros and Robert Marcom (for the many hours they spent reading drafts, as well as providing ongoing ideas and feedback), Ruth Marcom (for helping us to raise matching grant funds), all of our spouses and children, and, importantly, Pat Mercado-Allinger, Jeff Durst, Tiara Westcott Lisa Harvell, and the rest of the THC staff, past and present. They have answered many pesky questions over the past five years, spent countless hours reviewing and commenting on this document, and provided considerable ongoing guidance.

Our most unreserved and heartfelt thanks, however, goes to Jim Bruseth. Without his scholarly vision, his political judgment, and his profound commitment to a Texas archaeology that has meaning for *all* of its citizens, this writing of this document would never have begun. It certainly could not have been completed. Thank you, Jim.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

By Rachel Feit and Carol McDavid

Document background, purpose and need

As noted in our preface this project grew out of conversations, held in mid-2007 between several practitioners of African American archaeology in Texas, to discuss certain shortcomings in the practice of assessing and excavating African American sites in the context of legally mandated Cultural Resource Management (CRM) work¹. These conversations were preceded by a decade-long debate about significance determinations as well as research and excavation methods that were applied (or not applied) to African American sites. Participants in this conversation represented a wide variety of perspectives, and together arrived at a consensus about the need to establish a framework for “best practices” in several areas: theoretical and contextual approaches for evaluating site significance, community/descendant involvement, and methods for conducting work.

As awareness of archaeology and archaeological resources as “heritage resources” has grown over the years, so has interest in and funding for research, excavation, and both public and scientific interpretation of archaeological sites. However, not all types of archaeological resources have been given equal attention, even if they have significant data potential. African

¹ A few comments about language and spelling:

- We will use the terms “Indian”, “indigenous”, and “Native” interchangeably when referring to the indigenous people of the Americas, unless we can refer to a specific tribal group (Navajo, Cherokee, etc.).
- Likewise, we will use the terms “black”, “African American”, “white” and “European American” to refer to members of those groups. We realize that many may argue, with justification, for one name over another. However, all of these terms are accepted as interchangeable by various style guides, in the writings we have encountered, and in everyday conversation with clients and stakeholders. Therefore, we will make no attempt to advocate for one term or another.
- We will also use the term “African American” to refer to African Diaspora sites located in North America, noting here that the larger discourse about African Diaspora archaeology has worldwide scope.
- We use the term “CRM” to refer *broadly* to commercial archaeology that is mandated by various preservation laws and reviewed by State Historic Preservation Officers and their tribal equivalents, and “research” or “academic” archaeology to refer – again, broadly – to work that takes place outside of CRM. Chapter 2 discusses CRM and other forms of “public archaeology” in more detail.
- We will assume that even though “race” is a cultural construct, it also “real” in terms of everyday practice and understanding, and it is in the “everyday” sense that we use it here.
- We will spell archaeology with the “a” unless referring to organizations that use the “non-a” spelling.

American sites are often among those that receive less attention by archaeological practitioners in Texas and are under immediate threat for at least two reasons.

First, as sites – particularly Reconstruction and Jim Crow-era sites – have been evaluated for potential scientific and cultural significance, often researchers and regulators assume that mass produced artifacts at those sites have the same meaning as those found at Euro-American sites. After 1870, the mass production of inexpensive consumer goods resulted in the homogenization of material culture across ethnic groups. Consequently, African American sites can be very difficult to distinguish from European American sites – at least based on usual methodologies for evaluation, excavation, and analysis that have been applied so far in Texas. This has led to the widespread dismissal of many African American sites as “insignificant” with respect to National Register or State Archaeological Landmark criteria because in many cases the artifacts archaeologists find appear to be “typical”, and therefore have no exceptional research value. As David Palmer points out in a recent article in the African Diaspora Network Newsletter² (Palmer 2012), this problem is not, in fact, unique to Texas, but shared in the regulatory processes of many states. Systemic biases in the ‘typical’ interpretation and analysis of material culture tend to elide racial specificity from the material record making black sites more prone to dismissal during evaluations of significance. African Diaspora research nationwide, however, has demonstrated that different cultural groups can and do use material culture in idiosyncratic and often significant ways, and has shown that there are ways that archaeologists can identify and interpret these uses and meanings. For example, “everyday” objects such as bottles, kettles, vaseline jars, dice, milk bottle seals and other types of “familiar” objects sometimes have racialized and other special meanings which would have been evident to those who used and deposited them. These meanings can convey important information about what it was like to *be* an African American at different points in American history. Often, they ignite community memory and collective dialog about practices of the past. In addition, objects

² The African Diaspora Archaeology Network is an excellent resource for the most recent research (including conference papers) and a great deal of other material about African Diaspora archaeology. It was edited for many years by Christopher C. Fennell, and the archives for his tenure and earlier are located at <http://www.diaspora.uiuc.edu/>. It is now edited by Whitney Battle-Baptiste, Christopher Barton and Kelley Deetz, and new issues are located at <http://scholarworks.umass.edu/adan>.

can have multiple meanings, not just across different communities, but also within a single community.

Teasing out these “insider” and multivalent meanings is not self-evident or easy, but there are ways to do it if the research is purposeful and informed. Archaeology and the study of material culture of African Americans in Texas offers a promising avenue for understanding their day-to-day lives, and how people employed things and spaces to create and express meaning that was particular to their own cultural experience.

Second, many archaeological practitioners are unfamiliar with the current issues, theoretical frameworks, and methods used in African Diaspora archaeology worldwide – in some ways, they are working in a knowledge vacuum in terms of new perspectives, questions, and, to echo the above, methods. This is understandable – there have been many developments in this area of archaeology over the past two decades, and few graduates of university archaeology programs in Texas actually acquire expertise in African American archaeology. A sampling of the questions that are now being asked of these sites includes:

- What role did this site have in forming intra-community bonds of support? (as in the case of black church and community sites),
- How did this site reveal how people used spirituality to cope with oppression and racism? (as in the case of some slave/tenant quarter plantation sites as well as some urban sites),
- What does this site reveal about the choices made by people whose social position shifted from being “commodities” in a capitalist system to being “consumers and citizens”? (as revealed by some urban sites), and,
- What does this site reveal about the interaction of different racial/social groups in the past? (such as sites in West Texas, where African American soldiers and Indians came into contact, sometimes in surprising ways, or urban sites where different groups lived and worked together).

While some researchers have focused on the cultural connections that African Diaspora peoples have with Africa, the most recent work along these lines has abandoned a simplistic search for “Africanisms” to a more sophisticated exploration of how cultural beliefs changed

over time and as people participated in different social and political settings. This work has moved well beyond the idea of “creolization” to an examination of the ways that multiple cultural traditions were reinterpreted and recast to form new social networks, with agency and power flowing between all participants, expressed materially in various ways. Other researchers have focused on how the forces of racism, gentrification, and class aspiration were manifested in industrialized material culture, and consumer culture, particularly in urban settings. Still others have dealt with issues of gender. A review of these approaches will be provided in Chapter 2.

This project hopes to enrich the practice of African American archaeology in Texas by developing a much needed “historical context” document. This document will provide information about the data and cultural potential that these sites have, and will serve as a set of “best practices” guidelines for CRM to undertake better archaeological research at these sites. This will, in turn, help to better preserve these sites and assign them the cultural and historical value that they rightly deserve.

Underlying motivations: ideas, methods, and concepts

In this document, a number of ideas, concepts, and methods will be considered ideal “best practices” when doing archaeology on African American sites. Briefly, “best practices” should account for four primary elements: (1) understanding current theory and past research, (2) understanding historical context, (3) understanding contemporary context (e.g., descendant involvement), and (4) understanding some particular field methods that have been shown to help identify some of the subtle spatial and symbolic patterns that have emerged in African American archaeological contexts. Different chapters will elaborate upon specific strategies to account for these primary elements.

Although some of the strategies discussed here are not always feasible in CRM contexts, they are listed here as potential tools for incorporating the four-element ‘best practices’ approach listed above. Each professional will need to choose which strategies to apply on a case-by-case basis, and to think “outside the box” to deal with the challenges that are inherent in everyday commercial archaeology practice.

There are strategies which can deal with the challenges – from both the “practitioner” side and the “agency” side – so before closing, several will be discussed. There will also be a

number of “mini case studies” which discuss examples in which CRM archaeologists (and others) have embraced many of these practices, despite the inherent challenges. In these cases, individual archaeologists have felt that “pushing the envelope” was important and right. In other cases, public political will – often of stakeholder communities – was the prime mover. Either way, at least some of what is suggested *is* possible because it has been done (Chapter 4 and 5).

This document is driven by two primary motivations. The first is ethical: African American sites should be accorded the same level of respect (and when appropriate, reverence) that is commonly accorded to sites occupied either by “important white men” (whose material remains are traditionally valorized) or by indigenous peoples. In the latter case, although it is true that Indian sites have received generations of scholarly interest (and, it has to be said, scholarly exploitation), “legal” respect, in the form of some control over ancestral remains, came about largely because of NAGPRA and its various amendments in the early 1990s³. Our conclusion will explore the ethical dimensions of this question in more detail, especially with regard to disciplinary ethics statements.

The second is intellectual: this document will suggest ways that a robust, fully contextual African American archaeology can add more substantively to our knowledge of the *American* past. That is, conducting “best practices” on African American sites will result in better *archaeology*.

The emphasis here is not particularly radical or unusual in archaeology generally, especially in the sections of this narrative that address relationships with descendant groups. Many of these ideas come from wider disciplinary knowledge about archaeology conducted with, for, and about Indian groups, as well as archaeological experience in conducting other types of post-colonial indigenous practice (Australia, Canada, South Africa, etc.). They also come from the large literature about African American archaeology that has emerged since the late 1980’s, especially the community-based approaches that have developed at sites across the country. As one of our research team, Ken Brown, pointed out well over a decade ago (Brown 1997), the practices and assumptions that developed in pre-contact archaeological contexts can have significant implications for ethical practice on the historical archaeology sites of African America.

³ NAGPRA is the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, 1990 (see <http://www.usbr.gov/nagpra/> for the act, associated regulations, and amendments).

Even though the focus here is on African American archaeology, similar practices could be useful when studying (for example) interactions between Mexicans and Anglos in the borderlands, or sites involving Chinese immigrants and descendants on the west coast. This is *not* to say that there is a generalized set of practices that can apply, unreflexively and uncritically, to all non-European sites, but rather that *all* archaeologists can learn from the practices and approaches that have emerged in *different* post-colonial contexts over the last two decades. This historical context document is presented as a challenge to, and a framework for, archaeologists across the state to follow a more nuanced approach to evaluating cultural resources.

Organization of this document

After this introduction, *Chapter 2* provides a nationwide political and theoretical context for the project, for both “archaeology” and “public archaeology”. With respect to archaeological theory, there are four major themes that underpin contemporary thought about African American archaeology: culture continuity and change; domination and resistance; race, gender and class; and the racial politics of archaeology. The ways in which these themes have shaped the discipline will be discussed. This chapter emphasizes that the roots of African American archaeology lie in the archaeological exploration of slavery and its lasting effects on black American material culture up to the present. However, African American archaeology, as it is currently practiced, need not be confined to the slave period and its aftermath. Using the same theoretical and methodological frameworks outlined for ante and post-bellum sites in Chapter 2, places related to blacks who lived and operated outside the bonds of slavery could also be explored. This is particularly relevant for Texas’ Spanish Colonial and Mexican periods when race-based slavery was not widely practiced. The same chapter will then lay out the historical and theoretical underpinnings of the “sub-discipline” of public archaeology, and will describe why this subfield is foregrounded in this way.

Chapter 3 will then provide a literature review of African American history and archaeology, focusing primarily on Texas sites, which will be organized temporally and thematically. The types of potential sites discussed include, in addition to the more obvious locales pertaining to slavery and subsequent “Freedom Colonies”, cemeteries, military sites,

lynching sites, maritime sites, prison and labor camps, or even sporting arenas, among others. While it is true that most African American sites in Texas do pertain to the 1820s or later (corresponding to widespread settlement from the American south), Texas offers some unique avenues of research for scholars and archaeologists interested in the study of African America because of its Spanish Colonial heritage. African slavery was not widespread in Spanish Colonial Texas and there were a number of free blacks to have participated in the state's earliest colonization effort. Though its focus is on sites related to slavery and its aftermath, the Chapter 3 review highlights the range of historical themes and possible site types that have emerged through African Diaspora studies in Texas.

Other parts of this document discuss key African American sites elsewhere in the nation, but the second part of Chapter 3 focuses primarily on Texas, and it is supported by Appendix A, an Excel (but GIS-friendly) database of African American sites in Texas. This draws on the “grey” literature as well as traditionally published sources, some of which are not well known or documented in academic literature. This part of the document highlights the range of work that has been previously conducted in Texas, and offers ideas for further research. Some sources of this data included repositories such as the Texas State Library, the library at the Texas Historical Commission, and the Center for American History at the University of Texas. In some cases, original researchers were contacted to obtain copies of site reports and clarify understanding of previous work. Even with the limits of time and funding, this review provides an essential starting point for any researcher who is considering doing work on African American sites in Texas.

Chapter 4 provides practical guidelines for work that should be considered before, during, and after archaeological investigations of African American sites, particularly with respect to collaboration and descendant involvement. This chapter will provide guidelines for community collaboration as well as suggestions for activities that could or should be enacted before and during archaeological investigation, with the aim of providing both practical information and rationales for various sorts of community engagement. For example, the usefulness of different varieties of oral research will be examined, along with sources that are helpful in doing it, and case studies to illustrate how it can inform historical archaeological research. Other modes of collaborative practice will also be explored.

Chapter 5 narrows the focus somewhat, and describes in detail the work done at a major African American archaeological site in Texas, the Levi Jordan Plantation in Brazoria, Texas. This site, excavated by Kenneth L. Brown over many years, is one of the most important African American archaeology sites in the country. Brown's research, at Jordan and the three other sites he discusses more briefly, illustrates the application of some of the methodological, theoretical, and community-related concerns that the larger document discusses in more general ways. His chapter does not presume that his particular interpretations are the same as would be made by other archaeologists, nor does he assume that his methods are the *only* ones that can be fruitfully employed at African American sites. However, his chapter does demonstrate how significant material culture specificity and cultural meaning can be extracted from careful, thoughtful, and deeply contextualized study, even as it describes some methodological themes that are worthy of consideration.

Chapter 6 concludes the document, drawing together the key themes as well as a fuller discussion of the ethical considerations involved.

This document attempts to avoid a "one size fits all" approach to the archaeological study of African America and Afro-Texas archaeology. Rather, this as a public project to enhance and support African Diaspora Archaeology in Texas. As such, it supports the missions of regulatory agencies as well as those of other history-making and preservation groups both statewide and nationally. After the body of the document, several appendices are included to support the text:

- Appendix A is an extensive database of already-known African American sites in Texas. The electronic version of this document includes this database as an Excel file. Printed versions created in the future will include a CD. A description of the methodology for assembling this database, and a copy of the entry form used, is included.
- Appendix B is a copy of the "Freedom Colonies" database, created by Thad Sitton and Jim Conrad (Sitton and Conrad 2005), to be described more fully later in this document.
- Appendices C, D, E and F are graphic, illustrated depictions of the "Crossroads" deposits described in detail in Chapter 5.

Each of the pieces of this document can be used separately or together, as a starting point or a reference for conducting a better archaeology of black Texas.

Chapter 2

A Summary of African American Archaeology and the Public Archaeology of African America Histories and Theories

By Carol McDavid, Rachel Feit, and Jannie Scott

Introduction

As noted earlier, this chapter will attempt to show how Texas archaeology can be inserted more fully into the national, and global, dialogues about the African American experience in the New World. It is divided into two sections. The first provides a brief history of African American archaeology, including trends in archaeological theory that pertain to this type of research. The second does the same with respect to public archaeology, the practice of which is explored further in Chapter 4.

There are three reasons for foregrounding public archaeology within a discussion of archaeological theory. First, doing so emphasizes that public archaeology *is* archaeology, and thus a necessary consideration throughout the archaeological process. Second, some of the theoretical ideas important in (for lack of a better way to put it) “regular” archaeology are also important in public archaeology. Therefore, discussing these ideas will clarify some of these continuities. Third, African American archaeology, by definition, creates public contexts in which power and perception are inherently important, and always challenging. Thus an examination of these contexts, in historical and theoretical terms, needs to be “up front”.

African American Archaeology: Beginnings, Theoretical Themes, and Approaches⁴

The database attached (APPENDIX A) lists Texas African American sites which have been primarily recorded through CRM practice. Therefore, the reports for the sites listed are technical in nature, and often remain unpublished in professional journals or monographs. In consequence, they seldom reach a wider audience. This section will attempt to establish a

⁴ This section of Chapter 2 was initially drafted by our research assistant, Jannie Scott, a graduate student in the African Diaspora Program at the University of Texas, Austin. We are very grateful for the framework, ideas, and insights she provided.

somewhat broader disciplinary and theoretical context which can begin to inform CRM archaeology in Texas.

Although archaeological excavations of plantations occurred as early as the 1930s in the United States, these investigations primarily utilized archaeology as a means to reconstruct plantation layouts and architecture, and ignored how archaeology could contribute to the understanding of the lives and culture of enslaved African Americans (Singleton 1990:70-1). It was not until the late 1960s that the field of African American archaeology evolved as an academic and professional discipline. The Civil Rights and Black Power movements in the United States were major contributors to the formation of the discipline, in addition to the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Ferguson 1992:xxxvi; Franklin 2010:102; Singleton 1995:121). These movements and legislation legitimized the study of African American history and culture as relevant to the understanding of American history.

Direct participation of black organizations and preservation groups in some of the earliest archaeological excavations of black Americans were also a key factor in furthering the development of African American archaeology in the United States, as these groups and organizations took special interest in preserving the legacy of the black past (Singleton 1995:121:120-1). However, much of early African American archaeology focused on plantation studies (Singleton and Bograd 1995). Most of these studies concentrated on locales where the institution of slavery developed early (e.g., in colonial American and Caribbean history), but they did provide valuable insight into the origins of slavery in the New World, and the changes that occurred within the institution over time in the respective countries. More recently the field has expanded, to investigate not only the lives of those who emancipated themselves from the confines of slavery, but also include research on black households and communities established in the post-emancipation period (Barnes 2011; Fennell 2011; Leone, La Roche, and Barbiarz 2005), including “self-emancipated” maroon communities (Weik 2007).

Charles Orser (Orser 1998) has defined four major themes that dominate the archaeological study of African American culture: cultural continuity and cultural change; domination and resistance; theories of race, gender and class; and the racial politics of conducting African American archaeology. Although the treatment of these themes within this essay indicates a level of separateness, archeologists often weave two or more of these themes

within their research, especially if it takes place over a long period. The following discussion on these four themes, is meant as an overview and is not extensive or exhaustive (one could certainly identify many more themes within the field and cite many more texts).

A Word about Terminology

In this chapter, the terms “African American archaeology” and “African Diaspora archaeology” are used interchangeably. It could be argued, however, that these two terms denote distinct types of archaeological research. African Diaspora archaeology is arguably scholarship that is rooted in African Diaspora studies, and therefore concerns global contexts. African Diaspora archaeologists view their research as part of an ongoing political project that attacks anti-black racism, and furthermore situates their research into a broader framework of diaspora that includes the experiences of black people and black culture throughout the Atlantic world (Franklin 2010; Mullins 2008). Although, by definition, African American archaeology is part of this larger diaspora discourse (and is emphasized as such by many of its practitioners), in everyday practice it is often less concerned with global conversations and more focused on specifically African *American* cultural and historical contexts.

Cultural Continuity, Cultural Change

One line of archaeological inquiry has been an attempt to locate African-American identity in the material record. This mode of research has been largely informed by the fact that aspects of African cultural beliefs and practices survived in the New World, giving way to the creation of numerous forms of African American culture. Research that sought to identify the aspects of African culture that survived into the New World was, for the most part, informed by one of three theories of cultural survivals and change: Africanisms, creolization, or acculturation.

Early on, scholarly work about the African Diaspora focused on “Africanisms” (Herskovits 1941; Holloway 1990) and “African retentions” (Ascher and Fairbanks 1971) both of which refer to the idea that specific components of culture and cultural behavior, in the New World, can be traced directly to an African origin. This approach was somewhat controversial because it tended to essentialize complex cultural shifts in overly simplistic ways, and did not account for the way that cultural “traits” are transformed by (and transforming of) new contexts.

As Theresa Singleton put it: "...the primary purpose [of an archaeological search for 'Africanisms'] is to recover ethnic markers and not to examine the social complexities that affect why these markers emerge, persist, or change" (Singleton 1999:8).

Archaeological research into the African Diaspora had, by the late 1980s/early 1990s, begun to study more complex types of cultural transformations, such as creolization. Leland Ferguson provided one of the earliest examples with his book, *Uncommon Ground*, in which he applied a creolization framework to study the cultures of enslaved blacks in Virginia and South Carolina during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Ferguson argued that creolization allows one to identify the African cultural systems, or "African grammar" that informed the preference, use, and significance of European and European-derived objects within the African American plantation community (Ferguson 1992: xlii-xliii). Following the work of John Vlach (Vlach 1976), who looked at shotgun houses as an important form of African American vernacular architecture, Ferguson looked at numerous examples of slave cabins in South Carolina and how they departed from the more traditional frame or log cabin structures commonly found on plantations throughout the American South. He demonstrated how these structures derived from African vernacular architecture, and adapted and evolved because of new building techniques and materials borrowed from European colonists (Ferguson 1992:63-82). Ferguson, however, is perhaps most well known for his ongoing examination of colonoware pottery and the use of the "BaKongo Cosmogram" by enslaved people to alter material culture. His argument that distinct cross-shaped marks enslaved blacks made on the bottoms of bowls during the eighteenth century represent a "retention" of African spiritual belief systems has become a foundational aspect of many subsequent inquiries into black material culture expression.

During the same period, scholars also applied theories of acculturation to the study of African American identity in the material record. Acculturation can be broadly defined as the processes with which continued contact with groups from different cultural backgrounds produces cultural change (Herskovits 1937:259). Kenneth L. Brown and Doreen C. Cooper's early research of the slave and tenant communities at Levi Jordan Plantation in Texas applied acculturation to the study of the material assemblage of the black residents of the plantation. They argued that acculturation allows one to study both the continuity and evolution of enslaved

and tenant communities (Brown and Cooper 1990:8). That is, studying the processes of acculturation, as well as studying the processes of creolization (that is, how new identities are formed) in an African American context, allows researchers to access the meaning and significance of the material world largely informed by African cultural traditions.

The ideas behind creolization and acculturation theories recognize that all cultures are dynamic – allowing one to address how colonial contact often produced change in “traditional” cultural systems. While acculturation allows for one to ignore the dynamic nature of culture creolization, it also recognizes how quickly – and perhaps easily – a culture can be influenced and altered by other cultures. Creolization allows one to realize that in many plantation contexts, interactions between African, and European, and sometimes Native American cultures played a role in the creation of new African American cultures and identities. The archaeologist’s goal is then to uncover how European and Native American materials and forms were adopted into the cultures of African-Americans.

Finally, with respect to theoretical work exploring culture change and continuity, Christopher C. Fennell has, over the past decade, emerged as one of the most rigorous and subtle theoreticians working in African Diaspora archaeology today. His work has been particularly effective in moving ideas about creolization (and African “cosmograms”) towards more sophisticated and nuanced analyses (see Fennell 2000, 2003, 2007) His explorations into ethnogenesis (or as he prefers, ethnogenic bricolage) suggests new ways to account for the fluid, multi-layered, and hybridized lives of creolized peoples. Although he accepts, as a starting point, previous work done in creolization and acculturation, all of which enabled archaeologists to begin to understand both “old” and “new” cultures, he is more interested in exploring “what happened in between” these end points. Ethnogenic bricolage, as he called it, entails a creative process in which individuals raised in different cultures interact in new settings, often at the geographic crossroads of multiple diasporas” (Fennell 2007:9). Fennell is especially adept when operationalizing these theoretical ideas, and he moves back and forth between ethnographic, archaeological, and historical contexts with considerable dexterity. To some degree, Ken Brown’s work is sympathetic to this as well, in that he too is interested in understanding “the between” – but he approaches it rather differently, as will be seen later.

Domination and Resistance

Resistance typically refers to the power of a dominant class to require a subordinate class to do something – usually some sort of task – and the subordinate class member’s ability to resist this power, either by doing the task incompletely or not at all (Paynter and McGuire 1991:11). Examining how enslaved African-Americans actively and passively resisted the domineering control of their enslavers provides another theoretical framework to analyze and interpret the archaeological record of enslaved African-Americans. In the 1970s and 1980s Anthropologists such as Eric Hobshawm (Hobshawm 1983) and James Scott (Scott 1985) described the dynamics of power and resistance among peasant classes against “those who seek to extract labor food, taxes, rents and interest from them” (Scott 1985:xvi). In the plantation context, this outward, readily recognizable form of resistance is usually termed “everyday”, “conscious”, or “active” resistance. As Scott notes in his 1985 book *Weapons of the Weak* (also cited in (Paynter and McGuire 1991:12-13), everyday resistance:

...involves the ordinary weapons of relatively powerless groups: foot dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage...they require little or no coordination or planning; they often represent a form of individual self-help; and they typically avoid any direct symbolic confrontation with authority or with elite norms (Scott 1985:29).

Unconscious forms of resistance, on the other hand, are often conceived as the ways in which enslaved people chose to live their lives – or, more accurately, private lives – on the plantation. Enslaved people unknowingly resisted to slavery by simply “...build[ing] their own subculture, different in kind as well as material quality from their white owners...” (Ferguson 1991:28). This latter form of resistance was quite subtly articulated at a universal level through the practice theory of Pierre Bourdieu and Michel deCerteau, which explored the inherent tension between cultural production and consumption. These thinkers focused on how everyday acts and social practices can, in themselves, become a form of “poaching” upon dominant structures and institutions. The everyday tactics people use to undermine hegemonic social institutions – through consumer choice (Mullins 1999; Orser 1987), spirituality (Leone and Fry

1999, 2001) , or even cooking techniques – has been at the foundation of a great deal of the literature on African American material culture over the past two decades. The work that Kenneth L. Brown discusses in this volume also follows these lines.

Race, Class, Gender and Archaeology

In the 1990s, a number of scholars began to engage with theoretical frameworks that interrogated how race, class, and/or gender structured the material conditions of enslaved and free African-Americans, bringing the systems of oppression to the forefront of their analysis. Acknowledging race as a social construction and not a biological fact, these scholars, largely focusing on the United States, have examined how constructions of race in the United States have institutionalized blacks as the antithesis to whiteness – and have shown how this has happened through legislative and judicial means, economic systems, media outlets, and sanctioned extra-legal justice (and material culture). Notions of race also dictated the ways in which black people were able to achieve citizenship, integrate into the wider society, and access goods and resources. One particular body of work, drawn from legal theory, is critical race theory (CRT), which, as Epperson stated, “...acknowledges the fundamental role of the law in the construction of racial difference and the perpetuation of racial oppression in American society” (Epperson 2004:101). In this view, America’s legal system, coupled with popular media portrayals of African Americans, played a role in how black people in the United States shaped their lives, and thus should be considered when interpreting the material culture of enslaved and emancipated African Americans.

If critical race theory is defined more broadly (that is, not necessarily tied to writing in legal theory) Paul Mullins and Maria Franklin could be seen as working along similar lines. Both define race as socially constructed, historically contingent and dynamic on the one hand, but are careful, on the other, not to deny the material and symbolic potency that racism carries. That is, critical race theorists in general argue for anti-essentialism, but still focus on challenging structural racism as "real" (Franklin personal communication; see also (Franklin 1997, 1997, 2001; Franklin and McKee 2004).

In Mullins’ case, he has been able to examine how racism patterned black consumers’ participation and access to goods, arguing that American consumerism served two aims. First, it

excluded black participation in the market economy and, secondly, it advanced and supported racist depictions of African Americans, which in turn reinforced a belief that blacks were subservient to the white population and therefore not fit for recognition as citizens (Mullins 1999:4, 41-48). With this in mind, Mullins was able to demonstrate how the participation of African Americans in the economy as consumers, became a part of a larger political struggle for equal rights and recognition as U.S. citizens (Mullins 1999:25-28). McDavid has also drawn on CRT in her public archaeology work, which will be discussed below.

With respect to gender, researchers in African American archaeology, as in archaeology more generally, have been slow to incorporate gender analyses into their work (Conkey and Gero 1997; Conkey and Spector 1984). As Franklin has pointed out, the danger of ignoring how gender, as well as race, shaped African America ultimately homogenizes the experiences of black Americans (Franklin 2001:112). Several publications have begun to correct for this, however, and are beginning to integrate both gender and race analysis into the archaeology of African Americans (e.g., Galle and Young 2004). Moving the idea farther, other scholars have also begun incorporating black feminist thought into their work, producing scholarship that can now be recognized as black feminist archaeology (see Battle-Baptiste 2011; Franklin 2001; and Wilkie 2000, 2003). Black feminist archaeology provides a framework for a material, archaeological understanding of how black women and girls face *interlocking* systems of oppression, which include race, gender, sex, class, age, ethnicity, and sexual orientation (Franklin 2001:111). In the first book dedicated specifically to black feminist archaeology, Battle-Baptiste argues:

Black Feminist Archaeology is a method that centers the intersectionality of race, gender, and class into a larger discussion of archaeological approaches to interpreting the American past. This theory also considers the direct connection of the past with contemporary issues of racism and sexism that allow researchers to see how the past influences and shapes contemporary society and perhaps forces us all to be more sensitive to the larger implications of our research (Battle-Baptiste 2011:69-70).

Battle-Baptiste further demonstrates the applicability of black feminist thought with several case studies of pre - and post- emancipation sites (the Hermitage, Lucy Foster's Homesite, and the W.E.B. Du Bois Boyhood Homesite). She illustrates how a research project grounded in black feminist thought can enable the researcher to consider how gender, race, and class (and the multiple, shifting expressions of each) were mediated within specific households or communities. Similarly, in *Archaeology of Mothering*, Wilkie was able to demonstrate how mothering practices within certain African American households, during the late nineteenth through the early twentieth centuries, defied racialized gender constructions of womanhood, and were instead informed by distinctive African American cultural and political practices (Wilkie 2003:79-86). Recognizing the ways that white society crafted images of motherhood and thus excluded people of color, Wilkie attempted to understand how white constructions of womanhood and motherhood were often in opposition to these narratives.

Foregrounding Politics: Critical Theory

Although critical theory will be discussed more below in the discussion of public archaeology, this section addresses its use in "regular" archaeological practice. This is to some degree a false distinction, however, because critical theorists have *always* been concerned about the intersections between archaeology, publics, and politics (Leone, Potter, and Shackel 1987). Since the mid-1980s, at least, the discipline has become increasingly aware of the political ramifications of our work (Trigger 1984). The critical theorists have taken this project farther, in a focus to understand both the roots and ideologies of capitalism, as expressed in material culture (Handsman 1981; Handsman and Leone 1989; Leone, Potter, and Shackel 1987; Leone and Potter 1988; Pinsky and Wylie 1990; Shanks and Tilley 1987; Shanks 1992; Wylie 1985). The influence that the critical theorists have had on academic archaeology has been significant, although it has arguably had less impact within CRM. In general terms the critical theorists are interested in using material culture to unmask the embedded ideologies, or "taken for granted", that were held by people in the past. What did William Pace's garden say about his views of domination and power in Annapolis (Leone 1984; Leone, Harmon, and Neuwirth 2005)? What did print type say about capitalism and standardization in 18th and 19th century Maryland (Little

1992)? What did clocks have to say about working class responses to industrialization in 19th century Connecticut (Handsman and Leone 1989)? As Parker Potter put it:

Material culture has the capacity to guide behavior and shape society. A creamware plate in a 20th-century museum is as active recursively today as it was on an 18th-century table 200 years ago ... Just like the people whom archaeologists study, people today (including archaeologists) are subject to subtextual messages already embedded in the material culture of contemporary American society, or to ideological messages embedded by archaeological interpretation in that material culture (Potter 1992:127).

Critical theory approaches are not really about seeing archaeologists as the stewards of the past, or as preserving the past. Instead, they focus on how material cultures in the past created and embedded important ideologies, and on how these ideologies are re-created in the present, in various forms of public interpretation (Shanks 2012).

Public Archaeology: Beginnings, Theoretical Themes, and Approaches

This discussion of critical theory leads directly to a discussion of public archaeology. The historical trajectory of public archaeology over the past several decades will be discussed first, followed by a discussion of the theoretical developments.

The Birth of Public Archaeology; Definitions and Scope

One of the most important aspects of Africa Diaspora archaeology to have emerged over the last two decades is the awareness of how archaeological practice affects the very groups whose history it seeks to uncover. Because of this growing awareness, African American archaeology has increasingly sought public input and engagement in the project process, and African American archaeology has become inextricably linked to public archaeology in multiple ways (McDavid and Babson 1997).

What public archaeology “is”, however, has evolved through the years. Its origins are usually traced to various pieces of legislation in this century (the Antiquities Act of 1906,

Historic Sites Act of 1935, and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966). Over the course of U.S. history, many members of the public – indigenous, diasporic, and otherwise – have had a variety of intersections with archaeology (not all positive), and this document cannot begin to cover this history properly⁵. Therefore, this brief historical review will begin in the 1970’s, when the term “public archaeology” first emerged (in McGimsey 1972).

At that point, the term “public archaeology” referred to the growing field of Cultural Resource Management, or CRM, the roots of which were planted by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (building on the earlier legislation noted above) (Green & Doershuk 1998; Little 2012). The years after this act witnessed an explosion of CRM public archaeology projects, in which the word “public” referred to the rationale driving the work (public laws enacted with public support) and to the way that it was (and is) regulated and reviewed (by public agencies funded with public dollars). The rapid growth of CRM reflected a growing ethical recognition that there is cultural value in the past, for the present, and CRM was seen as a means to ensure that this value could be preserved and protected – or at least mitigated. It is important to note that the term “CRM” subsumes a wide array of practices and places (King, 2002:1), of which archaeology is only one.

Over time, two often-overlapping forms of CRM emerged. The first is archaeology conducted by private commercial firms, often referred to as “contract archaeology”. Even though this work is mandated by public law and reviewed by public agencies, and even though specific members of the public are often designated as “interested parties”, the process itself is still controlled by professional archaeologists (King 2009). By the 1980s, at least 80% of archaeology done worldwide was taking place as commercial CRM archaeology (Neumann & Sanford 2001:1) and by then CRM had “achieved de facto recognition as the principal form of archaeology in the United States” (Green & Doershuk 1998:124).

The second form of CRM refers to archaeology conducted *by* or at the behest of public agencies, often (though not always) on public land. Examples of such agencies include the National Parks Service, the Bureau of Land Management, Tribal Preservation Offices (TPOs)

⁵ A more comprehensive historical account would include the numerous WPA-era projects that employed members of the public, as well as ongoing and significant public curiosity about indigenous sites as far back as Thomas Jefferson’s well-known interest in the field.

and State Historic Preservation Offices such as the THC (SHPOs)⁶. These and similar agencies conduct a wide array of avocational archaeology programs and support archaeology projects in the non-profit sector (e.g. Marcom, Marcom, & McDavid, 2011). In these sorts of projects, the public-at-large sometimes has a very large role, at least with respect to site tours, outreach activities, and the like.

Changing Definitions: Into the 1980s and 1990s

By the mid-1980s, in addition to these two primary forms of CRM, two distinct threads of public archaeology practice had begun to emerge from the modes of practice identified above. One “thread” sprang out of the second form of CRM noted above, and was usually referred to as “archaeology education”. The other thread came primarily from the academy, and is referred to here as “critical public archaeology”. Both will be explored below, noting that *both* still operate. That is, the idea of “public archaeology as CRM” did not disappear (certainly not within CRM itself) but gradually the term “public archaeology” began to be defined as something separate, and expanded to include additional forms of practice.

Public Archaeology as Archaeology Education

By the 1980s the archaeological community, especially in the U.S. was becoming alarmed about how many archaeological sites were (despite legal protections) being destroyed because of widespread looting and “pot-hunting”. Although at that time it was perceived to be an especially big problem on indigenous (prehistoric) sites, as the field of historical archaeology grew, looting historic sites also became popular (battlefield sites were – and are – particularly endangered, because of the growing popularity of amateur metal detecting). Because of this concern, in the late 1980s, discipline-wide, focused efforts began to educate the non-archaeological public that saving archaeological sites was important – and that archaeological research was vital to this process (Friedman 2000). The archaeology education work that the THC does is part of that effort.

As endangered sites started to receive attention at the upper reaches of the discipline, the idea of archaeology education/outreach began to emerge as a *subfield* – and, because it directly

⁶ For a listing, see <http://www.achp.gov/programs.html>.

involved the public, it began (in some circles) to be referred to as “public archaeology” (although it was sometimes referred to as “archaeology education”). Archaeology education/outreach ideas were initiated at all levels of archaeology, and were seen as “a strategy to combat the rampant vandalism that was destroying the nation’s archaeological resources” (Friedman 2000:13).

Hence, even though the earlier definition of public archaeology (as CRM, especially commercial CRM) was still common, a new definition of public archaeology (as education/outreach) began to take hold. Not all archaeologists participated, by any means, but most supported the idea.

This approach to public archaeology began to be institutionalized through state agencies, and in the work of various archaeological societies, including the Society for American Archaeology (SAA) and the Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA), as early as the mid-1980s. Archaeological conferences began, slowly, to feature sessions on “public archaeology” as education/outreach. Public education committees and outreach initiatives were created by most professional archaeology societies, including SHA, and many rationales were written to promote the effort (see (McManamon 2000) for a useful review). “Public archaeology as education” case studies (from both prehistoric and historical archaeology) continued to appear in various edited volumes throughout the 1990s, and they still appear today (there are many; see many contributions to include (Derry and Malloy 2003; Jameson 1997) and (Smardz and Smith 2000).

The amount of “public archaeology as education” work was, and continues to be, immense. It has also evolved through the years in some important ways. For one thing, some archaeologists began to frame it as “public interpretation” instead of “public education”, and to seek guidance and ideas from the museum world instead of archaeology (or anthropology) alone. For another, some archaeologists began to understand that, to do educational work properly, they needed to collaborate with professional *educators*, not depend on their archaeological training to provide the necessary skills. Perhaps most important, the supportive link between archaeology education and “science” as the best or only way to understand the past began to dissipate, as more reflexive, interpretive archaeological methods became more common. In contemporary public practice, there is undoubtedly more of a willingness to embrace multiple perspectives (both archaeological and public) and to incorporate these perspectives in educational materials. This is true across the board.

It must be said, however, that regardless of its substantive and positive impact on the field (and its role in raising public support and thus saving archaeological sites) “public archaeology as education” also represents a form of public archaeology that is, clearly, *for archaeology’s needs*. It is not aimed at the needs of the “public at large” (although some particular publics obviously benefit from time to time). This is not a bad thing by any means, and it underpinned what became known as the “stewardship” ethos (Lynott and Wylie 1995). It is somewhat different, however, from a second thread of public archaeology that emerged during the same period – that is, also during the 1980s/early 1990s.

Critical public archaeology

This new thread came primarily from the academy, and it is referred to here as “critical public archaeology”. Critical theory itself was discussed above, and it is important to note that, for the critical theorists, the public use of archaeological research was, and is, an important component of the approach. This framework for public archaeology expanded through the 1990s, and, included, as noted above, the work done by Mark Leone, his students, and some colleagues (Wylie 1985; Handsman 1981; Handsman and Leone 1989; Leone, Potter, and Shackel 1987). As Leone and his students began to develop their ideas, they asked archaeologists to explain, to the public, *why* they interpreted an archaeological site in any given way, in addition to explaining the interpretation itself. The idea was to open discussions about embedded ideologies present in both past and present, and to build a deep understanding of contemporary local contexts as part of archaeological practice. Among other things, the critical theorists were concerned with power, transparency, and reflection – they wanted archaeologist to consider, very carefully, their own “taken-for-granted” and to ask their publics to do the same thing. The most widely published individual in this “movement”, other than Leone himself, was his student Parker Potter (Potter 1994). Even though Potter left the field years ago, many of Leone’s other students have, over time, come to wield considerable influence in public archaeology today (some are cited below in different case studies, but they include Paul Mullins, Paul Shackel, Barbara Little, and many others).

At the Jordan Plantation, a project to be discussed in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5, critical theory was useful in helping McDavid (1997) to realize how essential it was to

understand local contexts, especially with respect to the interests of different descendant groups – and, importantly, to understand them *before* beginning any public interpretation work. Parker Potter used critical theory insights to explore much the same thing in Annapolis (Potter 1994), as did Linda Derry in Alabama (Derry 1997) and Kevin Bartoy in Colonial Williamsburg (Bartoy 1999). Critical theory also helped McDavid, and by extension her collaborators, to reconsider their often stereotypic views of what “plantation interpretations” ought to look like – at the time, there was little black history in such interpretations, and plantation public tours, across the South, were very much of the “mint juleps and hoop skirts” variety (McDavid 1996). Therefore critical theory also asked them to internalize *and act upon* the idea that their understandings of the past were, in part, a function of how these understandings were presented (Tilley 1989:114).

The view here is that the more collaborative approaches common today, to be explored more fully in Chapter 4, would not have been possible without the “critical archaeology” work that Leone and his students did (and are doing). However, those who explored these “critical” approaches also benefitted greatly from the growing amount of work being done in archaeology education during the same period. That is, as archaeologists were teaching “publics” about archaeology, they were learning as well. This too set the stage for the more collaborative approaches in vogue now.

Other theoretical approaches were also helpful during the same period. One was critical race theory, also noted above with respect to archaeological theory. In public archaeology terms it refers to the need to “construct an African Diaspora archaeology that is simultaneously race-conscious and anti-essentialist” (Epperson 2004:105). That is, one’s public interactions and interpretations need to be explicit about race, while acknowledging that (at least in the USA) racism (both individual and structural) is still “real” (and, similarly, that “color blindness” is *not* a reality, for most people). Critical race theory also rejects “false empathy” – the mistake some people make when they believe they can discern the feelings, thoughts or opinions of another person (Delgado and Stefancic 2001). This caution against false empathy is important with regard to descendant groups, and CRT demands that archaeologists actively involve the lived experiences of people of color as we both do and publicly present archaeology (McDavid 2007).

Another theoretical approach in public archaeology was borrowed from feminist theory. Spenser-Wood’s (1995) inclusive feminist approach allows alternate versions of historical truth

to be presented alongside each other, and each are given equal importance – an idea that is echoed in the pragmatic approach, discussed below. The “both/and” approach to narrative advocated by Spenser-Wood diverges from most canonical narratives that privilege a single voice, and a single truth. At the Jordan Plantation, this both/and approach created the intellectual and interpretive space for both black and white communities to hold “real” power. This in turn prompted project collaborators to include language about “multiple truths” in the mission statement and published project goals of the non-profit they created to manage the plantation (McDavid 1997). The idea that “what was true for one person might not be for another” became the underlying ethos of this organization, which still exists as a “Friends” group of what is now the Levi Jordan Plantation State Historic Site.

Pragmatism and Public Archaeology

Another theoretical and philosophical body of work which has influenced public archaeology is American Pragmatism, used to varying degrees by Patrice L. Jeppson (Jeppson 2001, 2006, 2007); Carol McDavid (McDavid 2000, 2002); Dean Saitta (Saitta 2007, 2007); and Robert Preucel and Alex Bauer (Preucel and Bauer 2001; Preucel and Mrozowski 2010);. Pragmatism (not “practicalism”) refers to a body of writing that began in the late 1800s with John Dewey, William James, Jane Addams and Charles Sanders Peirce, and continued in this century with Richard Rorty, Cornel West, Nancy Fraser and others. Like critical theory (and critical race theory), it demands critical reflection, but tends to be more pluralist, open, and democratic. For example, critical theorists tend to talk a lot about “making” social agents aware of hidden coercion, “thereby freeing them from that coercion and putting them in a position to determine where their true interests lie” (Geuss 1981:55). The idea is that people can be “deluded” and “falsely conscious” (Geuss 1981:60) thus requiring “emancipation” and “enlightenment”.

The overall tone of critical theory writing implies that the academics are the ones to be doing the enlightening – which is obviously not a useful approach when dealing with the public. Pragmatism provides, instead, a framework in which the sort of enlightenment that critical theory called for can *emerge from* mutually empowered social interaction. In McDavid’s case in Brazoria, for example, this sort of interaction frequently took place while sitting around

someone's dining room table, working with people whose ancestors enslaved, and were enslaved by, each other.

Pragmatists also share a desire to keep talking, regardless of the difficulties and challenges. They do not believe that one truth is as good as another, but they do believe that humans *will* be able to discover which truths are more meaningful and useful as they look for them together. They also have an interest in social change, and common to all is the idea that the value of any work is best evaluated by looking at its results. What are the consequences of our work? Why does it matter? Those questions, as is evident by now, are at the crux of this document.

Through the 1990s to the present: Broadened definitions and collaborative trends

In terms of historical archaeology, perhaps the most important transformations in the 1990s (especially with respect to CRM practice, although the impact was felt across the discipline) came about because of the African Burial Ground Project (ABG), which took place in New York City in the early and mid-1990s (as will be discussed in more detail later). The public uproar over human remains found at this site, and the public debate about how to excavate and interpret them, continued into the decade and established new understandings of the words “descendant”, “community”, and “client” within archaeology. Despite the fact that NAGPRA did not apply, the *cultural* descendants of those buried at this site *were* successful in gaining control over how their ancestors' remains were excavated and interpreted. Even though there is still no NAGPRA for non-Indian lands, the ethos that drove NAGPRA (and emerged from it) is now commonplace in many archaeology projects across the United States. This is true despite the relatively limited range of NAGPRA itself.

As these changes have occurred in the U.S., similar shifts were occurring elsewhere, and a variety of post-colonial and global justice movements have played important roles in how archaeology and public archaeology are framed today. A major milestone in the global arena was the 1986 founding of the World Archaeology Congress, in part as a response to South African apartheid. Over the last two decades, there have been key developments within governmental, non-governmental, and scholarly arenas, all of which have been part of an ongoing global

process of re-imagining how archaeological work can, and should, intersect with public interests and needs.

Contemporary definitions

As this has occurred, the term “public archaeology” has expanded in meaning, and it is fair to say that now many archaeologists, worldwide, conceive of public archaeology very broadly, that is, encompassing *any* aspect of the public dimensions of doing archaeology. Our working definition of public archaeology is:

Public archaeology is any endeavor in which archaeologists interact with the public, *and* any research (practical or theoretical) that examines or analyses the public dimensions of doing archaeology⁷.

This definition includes any form of public interaction or, importantly, research about these interactions. Therefore, it can include, for all of the reasons they were noted above as being “public archaeology”, all forms of CRM archaeology. It can include archaeology education, critical public archaeology, and other research modes which involve the public – oral history and archaeological ethnography, for example, as will be described in Chapter 4. In short, if one is dealing with any intersection between archaeology as an “insider” professional practice, and public information, data, perceptions, uses, understandings, involvements, input, and agendas – one is doing public archaeology.

Our definition is similar in many ways to other recent ones, such as that used by the international journal *Public Archaeology* (which began publication in 2000). The masthead states that the journal provides:

...an arena for the growing debate surrounding archaeological and heritage issues as they relate to the wider world of politics, ethics, government, social questions, education, management, economics, and philosophy. Key issues covered include: the sale of unprovenanced and frequently looted antiquities; the relationship

⁷ Although this definition originally appeared in print in (McDavid 2009), but the ideas embedded in it have been commonly accepted for at least a decade, especially within global heritage/public archaeology discourses.

between emerging modern nationalism and the profession of archaeology; privatization of the profession; human rights and, in particular, the rights of indigenous populations with respect to their sites and material relics; representation of archaeology in the media; the law on portable finds or treasure troves; [the] archaeologist as an instrument of state power, or catalyst to local resistance to the state.

In this broad view, people who do public archaeology now may identify themselves in various ways (as archaeological ethnographers, or heritage professionals, or applied anthropologists, for example, as well as archaeologists) even though their work is often characterized simply as “public archaeology” in various volumes, including this one. Public archaeologists do both qualitative and quantitative research about the public perceptions of archaeology, how pasts are created and used, and the conflicts between academic and popular views of the past. They deal actively with the political, policy, social, and economic contexts in which archaeology is undertaken, the attitudes of disempowered and indigenous peoples towards archaeology, and the educational and public roles of the discipline.

Public archaeology, as it is defined now, is an arena in which past and present merge, as information about the past is used by contemporary people for contemporary agendas and needs. As such, this document is a public archaeology document.

Chapter 3:

Black Texas: A Historical Summary

By Rachel Feit

Historical Overview

Introduction and Early African Texas

Writing in 1997, David Williams claimed that an account of black Texans is one of the most undertold stories of Texas history. Black Texans were among the first explorers through Texas (Williams 1997). They served as presidial soldiers with the Spanish and fought among the Texians of the 1836 Revolution. Their labor was the backbone of Texas' nineteenth century agricultural economy, clearing virgin forests, cultivating millions of acres, and building homes and towns. Beyond slavery, blacks have been cowboys, soldiers, politicians, educators, ministers, and businessmen (and women). They have worked in Texas' oil fields, as longshoremen along the coast, and in the Piney Woods as lumberjacks. In spite of violence, social persecution and a system of institutional racism, blacks built communities, farms, schools, churches, businesses, hospitals, institutions and more in an effort to construct meaningful lives for themselves and their children. The influence of black storytelling, art, music, religion, cuisine, athletics, and more pervades much of modern American culture.

Yet, until very recently, black lives were ignored in the dominant narrative about Texas history. Through the recent work of Randolph Campbell, Barry Crouch, James Smallwood, Alwyn Barr, James Glasrud, David Williams and others (all of whom will be cited here), black Texans are finally being recognized. Indeed, as Glasrud and Smallwood argue (2007), there has been a flood of research on black Texas over the past two decades, not only because their influence on Texas history has been so great, but also due to the distinctiveness of the black community in the state. The particular confluence of Texas' role in race-based slavery, with its earlier Spanish colonial heritage, its place on the American frontier, its proximity to Mexico and other factors have created a unique black experience that is an integral part of Texas history in general.

This context will span black history in Texas from its earliest point (ca. 1520) to the mid-twentieth century. However, it will focus most specifically on the period after 1820, since that is

when an institutional race-based slavery was brought to Texas. The impact of this institution, both during its practice and in its aftermath, is the foundation for the ideas and theory behind African American archaeology as it is practiced throughout the country.

Black history in Texas reaches back to the period of exploration and while not numerous, blacks played a role in the early non-native peopling of Texas. The first recorded person of African descent to set foot in Texas was a north African named Estevanico (aka Estevan), the personal servant of Andres Dorrantes de Carranza, who was a member of the Panfilo de Navarez expedition which shipwrecked along the Texas coast in 1528. He was among those captured and enslaved by Indians for six years before escaping with Dorantes, Cabeza de Vaca, and Alonso Castillo Maldonado. The four ultimately made their way back to Mexico City, where subsequently, the Spanish Viceroy chose Estevanico to accompany Friar Marcos de Niza on another expedition to Texas in search of the seven cities of gold. On this trip, Estevanico was captured and killed by Indians after reaching the Zuni Pueblos of New Mexico (Campbell 1989). Men of north African descent also accompanied the Coronado and Teràn expeditions, as well as early French forays into Texas (Williams 1997).

In the ensuing years, most blacks who came to Texas arrived not as explorers, but as enslaved laborers. Even so, census records and other sources also document a number of free blacks among residents during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Many may have been soldiers. In San Antonio, for instance, there were 151 people listed in the census as being of mixed race or black in 1778, and some were probably with the military. After the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, the Spanish declared that any slave crossing the Sabine River would be considered free in Texas (Williams 1997). Williams (Williams 1997) posits that some blacks entered into Texas as escapees, settling in the dense fold of East Texas' piney woods, while others assimilated with Indian tribes. This was probably the case with William Goyens, who came to Texas in 1821 and settled in Nacogdoches, where he operated a blacksmith shop, bought and sold land and racehorses, and later operated a lumber mill. He served as a translator for Sam Houston during negotiations with the Cherokee Indians, and at the time of his death in 1856, he was a wealthy man. Additionally, some came as freedmen and women, having bought their own freedom, or having been freed by others. In the case of Silvia Webber, an enslaved black woman was actually freed after marrying a white man. In 1834, Silvia Hector (Webber) married John

Webber, one of Austin's Old 300 settlers, who had migrated to the Travis County area north of the Colorado River around 1830. He established a fort, known as Webber's Fort (now Webberville) on the Texas frontier (Jones et al. 2009), and fell in love with Silvia (enslaved by a neighbor), whom he purchased and freed along with the four children they had together. By 1850, racial persecution had forced them to move away from their home on the Colorado and migrate to the Rio Grande Valley. Whatever the means of their immigration to Texas, it has been estimated that there were probably several hundred free people of color living in Texas prior to 1836 (Williams 1997).

During the Spanish Colonial Period that lasted from roughly the end of the seventeenth century to 1821, slavery was legal, though it was not widespread (Campbell 1989), and certainly not as fundamental a part of the economy as it was after Anglo immigration began to take hold. The 1785 Texas census listed only 43 enslaved persons out of a total population 2,919. Those bondsmen and women lived in San Antonio, Nacogdoches and La Bahia; presumably most were African though a few may have been of other ethnicity. The race-based plantation economy that defined American slavery, and later came to dominate the black experience in Texas, had little to do with the forces governing early Spanish settlement. Moreover, slavery did not define the small black population in Texas at this time, as it later did under American rule, and it is likely that most of the individuals of African descent living in Texas at the time were free.

African slavery and the slave trade began to increase in importance during the early decades of the nineteenth century, as Anglo-American settlers drifted into Texas. Anglo settlers came from Arkansas, Louisiana, and other parts of the south, and brought enslaved people with them. The black population began to increase as result of these new migrations. Enslaved blacks were also brought into Texas through illegal maritime trading. Due to Texas' sparse population, privateers such as Louis d'Aury and Jean Lafitte established themselves at Galveston and elsewhere along the coast. D'Aury and Lafitte would capture Spanish slavers who entered the Gulf of Mexico and then smuggle them to the slave markets of New Orleans. Their enterprises became the foundation for a maritime slave trade that would become a significant element of the antebellum Texas economy (McGhee 2000).

Slavery became fundamentally linked to the arc of Texas history after 1820, when Moses Austin, a would-be impresario living in Missouri, made a contract with the Spanish government

to bring new families to Texas from America. Austin's agreement with Spain granted lands to colonists based on the size of their households, and size included those who were enslaved. Each landowner was to receive 50 acres per enslaved person, so the more there were in a household, the larger the land allotment (Campbell 1989).

Moses Austin never lived to see his agreement to fruition. He died in the beginning of 1821, and the colonizing mission fell to his son Stephen, who traveled to Mexico to convince the Spanish to honor him as heir to the contract. Not only did the Spanish government honor their contract with Moses Austin, but Stephen Austin was so successful in his negotiations that he convinced the Spanish Government to increase the land allotment to 80 acres per enslaved person. Not surprisingly, all of Austin's colonists were slaveholding families from the lower south, enticed to Texas by the promise of almost limitless lands and new opportunities for plantation building (Campbell 1989).

The first settlers to Texas began to arrive in late 1821 and 1822, just as revolutionaries in Mexico had finally succeeded in wresting their long-sought independence from Spain. However, issues with slavery bubbled up almost as soon as the new colonists and their households arrived. Despite Spain's acceptance of the practice of slavery, the provisional Mexican government opposed it ideologically, and believed that all colonists in their new republic should be free. Through vigilant maneuvering, Austin was able to convince the Mexican government to allow existing colonists to keep those they had enslaved. However, the new agreement stipulated that all children born to enslaved parents in Texas would be free, a technicality that was never honored by American colonists and which would later become a key issue in the Texas Revolution.

As the fragile republic of Mexico tumbled through government after government over the ensuing decade, the issue of slavery came up time and again. Each new government grudgingly ceded the issue of slavery to Texas in its own way. In effect, the general attitude of Mexico toward slavery was one of disapproval, and the future of slavery in Texas became increasingly uncertain by 1830.

Meanwhile, slaveholding families continued to pour into Texas, some legally and some illegally, through the vast pine forests of east Texas. Austin continued to recruit families from the south, and his correspondence reflects his awareness that restrictions placed on slavery would

severely hinder his colonization efforts in Texas. By 1825, enslaved people accounted for nearly 25% of the total population of Austin's colony and 19% in the Astascosito District just east of Austin's Colony (Campbell 1989). The fundamental tension between American slaveholding colonists and Mexico's ideological opposition to slavery ultimately sparked the clashes leading to the revolution. White scholars who study the Texas Revolution have generally not commented directly on the paramount role the slave trade played in the events of the Texas revolution. However, historians of the slave trade and black history believe slavery was a key issue, if not *the* key issue, for the Texas Revolution (Campbell 1989; McGhee 2000).

The Plantation Economy

The Texas Revolution secured the practice of slavery indefinitely for white Texans, and life for black Texans, even those who were free, became ever more precarious after 1836. Under the Republic of Texas, it was a crime for free blacks to reside in Texas without special permission from congress. After Texas joined the United States in 1846, similar American laws effectively prevented legal manumission in the state. Meanwhile, between 1836 and 1850 the enslaved population expanded more than tenfold, from around 5,000 in 1835 to more than 58,000 counted on the 1850 U.S. Census. In 1860, enslaved people accounted for more than 30% of the total population of Texas (Campbell 1989). While it is widely assumed that most blacks came to Texas with immigrating slave owners, more recently McGhee argued that the maritime slave trade also accounted for a significant portion of enslaved blacks in the state, despite a law prohibiting the direct importation from Africa (McGhee 2000). In this sense, the plantation economy and the maritime slave trade were both critical components of the Texas economy.

Slavery was most vital to counties in the eastern part of the state, whose rich agricultural bottomlands were conducive to large-scale agriculture, and whose expansive coastline facilitated the hushed importation of enslaved people. Geologic conditions were less suited to large scale farming west of the Balcones fault line and, not surprisingly, slavery never became a vital part of the economies of Texas' western counties. Likewise, slavery never really took hold south of the Nueces, in south Texas, in part due to Hispanic influence.

The plantation economy defined slavery in Texas from 1821 to 1865. The vast majority of blacks worked on farms with ten or more enslaved workers. Only 6 percent of all enslaved

blacks were property of non-farmers and fewer still lived in towns (Campbell 1989). Most worked from “can see to can’t” in the fields, raising stock, and performing general farm-related chores. Some worked at more specialized trades, such as blacksmithing, cooking, carpentry, cattle driving, or even managing farms. In some cases, they were allowed to hire out their labor to other employers, thus earning money for themselves, which they used to improve their own material conditions, or in some cases buy freedom for themselves and family members.

Much has been written about the material conditions of those who were enslaved, not just in Texas but throughout the country; therefore, it is not necessary to go into detail about slave life here. Randolph Campbell’s 1989 work *An Empire for Slavery: the Peculiar Institution in Texas* provides one of the most comprehensive treatments of plantation life in Texas (Campbell 1989). In it, Campbell argued that slavery in Texas was vital to the political, economic and social landscape, and that fundamentally Texas slavery reproduced the institutions of the southeastern states from which it emerged. His research broke sharply from previous research ((Ramsdell 1910; Curlee 1932; Barker 1902, 1924) etc.) that posited slavery was not as vital to Texas’ economy as in other southeastern states. Prior to Campbell, the dominant tone among historians of antebellum Texas was that slavery was somehow more benign in Texas than in other states. Campbell unapologetically demonstrated that treatment of enslaved people was neither worse nor better in Texas than elsewhere.

In Texas, as elsewhere, enslaved blacks lived in a highly regulated, highly restricted manner, fraught with insecurity, under constant threat of beatings, rape, and forced family break-ups. Universally, they lived in poor housing conditions and were forced to make do with poorer material resources than their white owners. Though by all accounts, food resources were abundant, the foods blacks ate were typically of lower quality than those of their white owners. Whether on large plantations or small farms, black living space was physically segregated from that of whites. Implicit to their forced bondage was the idea, perpetuated by slave owners, that blacks were “simple, credulous, impulsive – easily led and too easily bought” (Grady 1888). Underlying this view was a white supremacist ideology that, “Anglo-Saxon blood has dominated always and everywhere” (Grady 1888).

Some enslaved people, like John Sneed of Austin, were apparently treated well by paternalistic owners. His recollections were nostalgic about life on the Sneed plantation (WPA

1936-1938). Although the WPA narratives are problematic sources for reasons that are well-known, it is clear from reading them that there was some variety in what life was like from plantation to plantation. Many former bondsmen and women remained in their “Quarters” homes, even after emancipation (as will be clear in Chapter 5, as Brown discusses the Jordan Plantation), although the degree to which this was by choice or by circumstance varied. On the other hand, some slaves like Katie Darling were beaten repeatedly, and continually reminded that “blacks were meant to serve white folks” (Tyler and Murphy 1974). Some openly rebelled through violence or by running away, while others internalized their situation with a resigned fatalism.

“If every mother’s son of a black man throw ‘way his hoe and took up a gun to fight for his own freedom along with the Yankees, the war’d been over before it began. But we didn’t do it. We couldn’t help stick to our masters. We couldn’t no more shoot em than we could fly” (Haywood, quoted in Tyler and Murphy 1974).

Regardless of treatment, it is clear that enslaved people universally resented the legal restriction to their freedom. One of those previously enslaved by Sam Houston wrote “Human slavery was an awful thing....Twas the feeling about it you had that couldn’t do what you wanted to and not so much the work, as my own work didn’t amount to much, and the master and missus was sure good to me” (Hamilton, quoted in Campbell 1989:115).

At the outbreak of the Civil War there were almost 200,000 enslaved people in Texas. Though Texas overwhelmingly voted to secede with other southern states, and contributed its share of troops and supplies to the Southern war effort, its remote location on the US frontier allowed it to be relatively free from military invasion. As a result, slave trading and the enslaved population increased significantly during the Civil War years. Refugee planters from Louisiana, Arkansas and other parts of the south flooded into Texas with enslaved workers, some taking shelter from war-ravaged plantations, others hoping to make a new start in the almost limitless lands of Texas. Campbell does not estimate the number of enslaved people brought to Texas as refugees during the Civil War, though he provides tax and census roll data suggesting that at least 32,000 more bondsmen were counted in 1864 than in previous years, and offers an anecdotal claim that the real number may have been as high as 150,000 by 1865 (Campbell

1989). Most of the enslaved were aware of the war being fought throughout the country, even if they were not directly affected by it.

The Civil War ended when General Lee surrendered in April 1865, but the news did not reach Texas until after the Battle of Palmito Ranch, the last battle of the Civil War that took place on May 13, 1865. It was not until June 19th, when General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston with an occupation force, that a proclamation was given that all enslaved people were free.

Reconstruction

That blacks suffered untold hardships and indignities during enslavement is indisputable. However, after the Civil War these indignities and hardships took a different, and in some ways more insidious form. While in theory emancipation allowed blacks to be free to go where they wanted, make their own life choices, vote, and be guaranteed the rights affirmed by the constitution, reality was another matter.

Once emancipation took effect, white controlled governments across the south on state and local levels moved swiftly to enact “black codes”. These were intended not to restrict just freedom of movement, association, and employment, but also to engender a system of political and economic disenfranchisement based on racial segregation. Miscegenation laws made interracial marriages illegal, and vagrancy laws ensnared landless and newly homeless blacks in county jails, while contract labor laws forced blacks into employment on unfair terms. Texas was no exception. In 1866, Texas’ Eleventh Legislature enacted legislation that in effect reaffirmed the basic freedom and rights of blacks in Texas. Meanwhile, older statutes left in place prevented blacks from holding office, testifying against whites in a court of law, and marrying whites. Other legislation passed in 1866 included a law requiring blacks and whites to sit in separate rail cars. An education law prohibited distribution of funds to black schools, while a homestead law guaranteed 160 acres of public land for whites, but excluded blacks (Moneyhon n.d.; Sitton and Conrad 2005).

The threat of personal violence was another constant fear among freedmen and women. “Violence surrounded all aspects of a former slave’s life, from work to school, from politics to social relations” (Crouch 1992:65). Black children in Texas were attacked on their way to

school. Between 1865 and 1868, there were 1,500 documented acts of violence committed by whites against blacks (Glasrud and Smallwood 2007). In Hunt County, Robert Lee held a young boy whom he had kidnapped during the Civil War in bondage until 1866. Lee also refused to pay freedmen he had hired the contract amount for their labor, effectively forcing them into a continued slavery on his farm. His violence and reputation for brutality, not just toward blacks, but also toward white Unionists, touched off one of the bloodiest episodes of Reconstruction era Texas, in which perhaps hundreds were murdered (Smallwood, Crouch, and Peacock 2003). In fact, violence against both freedmen and white Republicans who supported the national Reconstruction effort in northeast Texas was so intense that even President Andrew Johnson took notice, and was prompted to comment that the war in Texas had never ended (Smallwood, Crouch and Peacock 2003).

Starting in 1866 a loose confederation of anti-Union groups began terrorizing Texas, (northeast Texas in particular), threatening freedmen and women who did not act sufficiently submissive to whites. These groups subsequently coalesced around the Ku Klux Klan, whose activities and threat tactics had spread from other southern states to Texas by about 1868 (Long 2011). Led by men like Robert Jackson Lee, Cullen Montgomery Baker, Bill Bickerstaff, Jack English and others, outlaw terrorist groups spurred a Southern resistance against the ideals of racial equality imposed under Reconstruction. They intimidated Republican sympathizers and leaders, robbed wagon trains, ambushed military patrols, and in many cases committed violence and murder. Baker's group attacked and murdered a Freedman's Bureau agent, among others (Crouch 1992). John English killed freedmen, flayed them, and nailed their skins to a tree (Smallwood, Crouch, and Peacock 2003). Other names well known to Texas history who were involved in Reconstruction era terror raids include John Wesley Hardin and William Longley.

Lynchings were one of the most common forms of intimidation used to maintain control over blacks. Between 1889 and 1918 there were nearly 350 recorded lynchings in Texas (Sorelle 2007) and hundreds more likely went unrecorded (Glasrud and Smallwood 2007). James Sorelle wrote about one particularly gruesome episode in Waco in 1916 in which an illiterate seventeen-year-old boy named Jesse Washington was lynched, burned, mutilated, and dragged behind a car for the unproven murder of a white woman. There were many such violent episodes, particularly

during the early years of Reconstruction in Texas, when whites sought any means they could to maintain control over a newly freed black population.

Physical violence was just one tactic whites used to disenfranchise freed blacks. Following emancipation, although blacks were guaranteed basic rights by law, in practice the choices they had were more constrained than ever. Felix Haywood of San Antonio explained it this way to a Works Progress Administration (WPA) agent in the 1930s:

“we know’d freedom was upon us, but we didn’t know what was to come with it. We thought we was goin’ to get right like the white folks. We thought we was goin to be richer than the white folks, ‘cause we was stronger and we know’d how to work and they didn’t have us to work for them anymore. But it didn’t turn out that way. We soon found out that freedom could make folks proud, but it didn’t make em rich” (Tyler and Murphy 1974).

James Brophy (Brophy 1976) has argued that Texas never developed a class of enslaved artisans, as was the case for other southern states. This may have had something to do with Texas’ own largely rural character, and the fact that, in spite of its centrality to the state’s economy, race-based slavery was a relatively short-lived system in Texas. Whatever the causes, following emancipation, employment for African Americans was largely restricted to the type of farm labor blacks performed under slavery. With few job opportunities outside of agriculture, and without any money to buy land to farm for themselves, many black families simply stayed on the land owned by their former masters. Katie Darling stayed on the farm in which she was previously enslaved for six years after slavery ended, leaving only after her brothers came from a neighboring farm to get her. Though she hated the landowner, she felt she had few other choices (Works Progress Administration (WPA) 1936-1938). At first, some blacks were coerced into working, by contract labor laws designed to ensure that they continued to work or be threatened with vagrancy and imprisonment. However, even before these were repealed in 1871, a system of sharecropping developed that ultimately became the dominant form of wage earning among blacks in rural Texas. Under the sharecropping system, a landowner would provide the tenant a house, furnishings, tools and all the seed and stock up front to farm on his land (or a portion of it). The farmer would then repay the landlord up to half of the cash value of the crop once it was harvested. Plantation owners benefitted from this system because it provided inexpensive labor

and chronic indebtedness that kept tenants tied to their land for lengthy periods (Sitton and Conrad 2005).

Ultimately, the sharecropping system reproduced the same imbalanced socio-economic relationships established during slavery, but with none of slavery's paternalism. Black sharecroppers worked the land for rich white planters, but without guarantees that even basic food, clothing, and shelter needs would be met. They lived in "board and batten houses, virtually wooden tents, gathered together on parts of plantations" (Sitton and Conrad 2005:138) in conditions closely resembling slavery. In fact, many who were formerly enslaved felt that postbellum life was harder than it was during slavery. In his WPA narrative, James Hayes of Fort Worth spoke nostalgically about slavery as a time of happiness and security. His remembrances were embedded within the extreme poverty and social insecurity he experienced after slavery. Another formerly enslaved man, William Hamilton, recalled the terror wrought by the Ku Klux Klan. At the time of his WPA interview he was living in a shack in Fort Worth on \$10 per month (Tyler and Murphy 1974).

Nonetheless, for many freed blacks sharecropping was still appealing. The promise of cash payments and profits could eventually be used to reduce the shares given over to the landlord, and even to buy their own farms. When asked why his parents and grandparents continued to sharecrop in Navarro County, despite continued poverty, Henry Jennings of Waco responded, "they wanted to be independent (Henry Jennings, Personal Communication 2012)." Regardless of the difficulty, many blacks did buy their own farms. Landownership among blacks steadily increased, starting in 1866, and reached a peak around 1900. In 1870 black landownership was only about 1.8%. In 1900 about 30% of African Americans owned homes or property. Blacks built a social and physical infrastructure for themselves that enabled communities to thrive, and for people to accumulate, gradually, some of the material and social conditions so sought after during the period of slavery.

Freedmen's Communities- Freedom Colonies and Urban Freedmen's Towns⁸

Landownership was a primary goal among newly freed blacks. As Maria Franklin has pointed out (Franklin 2011), landownership increased a family's chance for economic mobility and spared them from the informal system of bondage created by sharecropping and contract labor for whites. It also provided greater protection against white aggression (Sitton and Conrad 2005). Yet the challenges of landownership were manifold. As previously mentioned, blacks were excluded from the 1866 Homestead act that granted all white heads of households in Texas 160 acres. This put them at an immediate disadvantage with respect to material wealth. Saving money to purchase land through sharecropping or other means was a major challenge. Black wages – not just for farm work, but for all vocations – were universally lower than white wages (Brophy 1976). In cases where individuals and families did save enough to purchase land, sometimes whites would simply not sell to blacks. In other instances, land transactions took place through informal bond-for-contract deals that were cancelled before the final deed transfer could take place (Feit and Jones 2007).

In cases where black families did acquire land, often it was poor quality upland, or swampy bottomland prone to flooding – essentially, land that whites did not want. There were other cases, such as Antioch Colony in southern Travis County or Houston's Freedmen's Town, where whites would purchase land specifically to be sold to blacks. Though there were rare instances in which former slave owners did give freedmen land following Emancipation, more commonly they were able to obtain land simply by squatting on untouched wilderness that no one else wanted. When black families did succeed in acquiring land, it was common for small freedmen's communities to develop (Sitton and Conrad 2005).

In *Freedom Colonies: Independent Black Texans in the Era of Jim Crow*, Thad Sitton and James Conrad chronicle in rich detail the rural freedmen's communities in Texas. Freedmen's communities played a vital role in the support network for African Americans following emancipation. These communities typically developed around a single landowner, or a group of landowners, and were spatially separated and racially segregated from nearby white towns. The pattern of initial growth for freedmen's communities was remarkably uniform. "Almost always

⁸ The names used to refer to these communities varies across time and space, and the same communities are often referred to in different ways, e.g., Freedman's Town, Freedmen Town, Freedmens' Town, Freedmantown etc. (McDavid, Bruner and Marcom 2008).

there was a church, or churches, and school; almost always there was a gristmill and cane mill to produce a community's survival staples of corn meal and cane syrup; sometimes there was a steam powered cotton gin, often of the multiple use variety that also ground corn, and sawed lumber" (Sitton and Conrad 2005:19). Partly due to the restrictions imposed on them during Jim Crow and partly by choice, these communities were "fortresses without walls" – defensive settlements that served as refuges from the violence and discrimination which so severely limited their opportunities in the Jim Crow south.

The Center Point community in Camp County is one example of a rural freedom colony that flourished through vigilant nurturing and defense of key social institutions. Center Point started as a squatter community in the 1860s, and coalesced around a Baptist Church by 1873. By 1889, community members had organized an "Industrial Union" to assist other families in buying land. The union also organized a school, and successfully negotiated with white landowners over obtaining rights-of-way to build a road from Center Point to the county seat at Pittsburgh. Center Point's success attracted notice from the Rosenwald Foundation, which committed funds to improve the Center Point School. Money was also obtained from the Slater Foundation, the state General Education Fund, and the community's own residents to improve and maintain the school to a level that surpassed state standards. The school sponsored work-study programs to help defray tuition expenses and offered a variety of extra-curricular programs for sports, apprenticeship opportunities and Bible studies. Starting in 1912, the Center Point School hosted an annual Northeast Texas Negro Fair (Sitton and Conrad 2005).

Center Point is just one example of a vibrant black community during the Jim Crow Era. Sitton and Conrad list almost 200 such settlements throughout Texas. By their own admission, their research merely scratches the surface (Sitton & Conrad, personal communication with McDavid, 2011). While not all were as successful as Center Point, virtually all Freedmen's communities provided a bulwark against a pervasive system of inequality in Texas.

Residents of Center Point and other rural communities generally followed the prescriptions of national black leaders such as Booker T. Washington, whose lectures and speeches advocated non-confrontational self-reliance for African Americans. Washington advocated advancement through hard work, acquisition of property, and mutual self-help, rather than through political means. As a result, not just schools and churches, but mutual aid societies,

fraternal organizations, and various women's collectives were central foci for the black community during the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Sitton and Conrad 2005).

Freedmen's communities were not limited to rural Texas, however. They were also a vital part of the urban black experience. Following emancipation, many freedmen and women migrated to urban areas to escape the farm-based labor forced on them under slavery. From about 1880 to 1960, the black urban population rose steadily. In 1890 only about 16 percent of the black population in Texas lived in cities; by 1960 that number had increased to 75 percent (Barr 2004) resulting in one of the largest urbanized black populations in the south. In the city, people believed there to be greater educational opportunities, job opportunities and opportunities for financial independence. State and local ordinances aimed at separating the races fostered the need to develop a parallel society and economy, particularly in cities where Jim Crow laws were most visible. Dallas, Beaumont, Houston, Port Arthur and Galveston (cities with the largest black populations) all had identifiable Freedmen's settlements, relying on similar institutions – churches, schools, mutual aid societies – as those of their rural counterparts.

Houston's Freedmen's Town was the one of the largest in the state. Like rural Freedom Colonies, Freedmen's Town, situated in Houston's 4th Ward, began in 1866 when a white man, Garrett Hardcastle, subdivided 21 acres of undeveloped land south of Buffalo Bayou and sold the lots to newly freed blacks. A community developed around a core group of landowners who purchased property in the Hardcastle Addition. It was anchored by the Antioch Baptist Church, which was founded in 1866, and which relocated to land just south of the Hardcastle Addition in 1869. Fraternal Organizations such as the United Order of Odd Fellows and the Ancient Order of Pilgrims provided financial, social and cultural support to Houston's 4th Ward residents, while schools, businesses, and newspapers such as the *Houston Informer* provided education and services specifically for blacks (Beeth and Wintz 1992). The neighborhood was like a "small town within a small town," where "you had nosy neighbors....everybody knew your business (Beckman 2004)." Gladys House described life in Freedmen's Town when she was growing up during the mid-twentieth century: "West Dallas [Street] was just lined with different types of cafes, lounges. It was just a fun time for African Americans...we were self sustaining (House 2004)."

In Houston's Freedmen's Town, as in other Freedom Colonies and communities throughout the state, land ownership among blacks peaked at about 30% around the turn of the century, and then dropped in successive decades (Hall 1936; Feit and Jones 2007). As black property ownership decreased, tenancy increased and this contributed to the eventual erosion of the social cohesion of many freedmen's communities throughout the state.

Labor into the 20th Century

In his quantitative analysis of black life in Texas during the first half of the twentieth century, James Brophy concluded his chapter about non-farm workers on this discouraging note:

The apparent economic choice for the Negro in Texas was to live in poverty on the farm or to exist on a higher level of poverty in town. Most blacks opted in favor of town; it at least offered hope (Brophy 1976:127).

In 1900, nearly 70 percent of the state's black population still worked on farms, or in agricultural pursuits. This was quickly changing, however. As black communities began to develop, there was a growing need for blacksmiths, shopkeepers, butchers, teachers, ministers, doctors, and skilled tradespeople to support them. In rural East Texas blacks gained work in the lumber industry. According to Glasrud and Smallwood (Glasrud and Smallwood 2007), 42 percent of the state's lumber workers were black in 1890. The emerging oil industry was another area where many black males found work after 1900. The story of their participation in one of Texas' transformational industries has yet to be fully explored. A small percentage of black men worked as cowboys and drovers, and those who did generally faced less discrimination than other black workers (Barr 2004).

Black women worked at a disproportionately higher rate than was true for white women. Most of these working women resided in urban areas (though many of the women who worked on farms did not necessarily document their labor as 'work' to census takers). A study of one neighborhood in Houston found that in 1910 more than half of the women in a 10-block study area worked (Feit and Jones 2007). In Texas in general, a small minority of working women were employed in professional trades such as teaching, nursing and midwifery. However, the

vast majority (82 percent in 1920) of women worked in service oriented jobs – as domestics, laundresses, seamstresses and in restaurants. Black women accounted for more than 73 percent of all service workers in 1910 (Brophy 1976).

As Brophy (Brophy 1976) aptly demonstrated, the urban black experience had some fundamental differences from its rural counterpart. The main difference centered on labor. In places like Houston's Freedmen's Town, there was a greater demand for lawyers, doctors, printers, teachers, and other professional jobs, which still accounted for only a small percentage of the total jobs held by African Americans. Large cities, especially those with large black communities also presented greater opportunity for black business owners. Large cities generally had not just greater numbers, but also a greater diversity of black-owned businesses than the smaller towns. Sometimes people had several jobs or businesses at once: Ned Pullum, a prominent minister, also owned a brick yard, a pharmacy, and a shoe repair shop. Jack Yates, one of the most powerful black ministers in Houston, was a minister of the largest black church, and also bought and sold land regularly (Blacklock-Sloan 2012).

However, the jobs most commonly available to urban blacks were those at the lowest end of the economic pay scale. Beeth and Wintz (Beeth and Wintz 1992) estimate that 84 percent of Houston's blacks in 1880 worked in unskilled labor professions, while only 9.1 percent held skilled jobs. Unskilled laborers worked as teamsters, barbers, laborers, saloon keepers, restaurant workers, domestic workers, as well as factory workers. A number of urban black males along the coast became longshoremen, and black longshoremen were among the first group of black laborers to successfully organize a labor union.

Blacks also joined the military. In July of 1866 two Cavalry regiments – the Ninth and Tenth Cavalry – and four infantry regiments – the Thirty-eighth, Thirty-ninth, Fortieth, and Forty-first Infantries were created (Field and Bielakowski 2008). Due to under-enrollment and opposition, the Thirty-eighth and Forty-first Infantries were consolidated to form the Twenty-fourth Infantry, which was headquartered out of Fort McKavett, Texas. The Thirty-ninth and Fortieth were consolidated to form the Twenty-fifth Infantry and headquartered in New Orleans (Field and Bielakowski 2008), though many troops served in posts in west Texas such as Fort Bliss and Fort Davis. The Ninth Cavalry was assigned to patrol the Texas frontier, and their duties included "...establish[ing] and protect[ing] the mail and stage route from San Antonio to

El Paso...” (Field and Bielakowski 2008:42). However, their role in the taming of the frontier went far beyond that. The Buffalo Soldier regiments were instrumental in the Indian Wars of the 1870’s. Pursuing marauders into the remote mountains and canyonlands of west Texas and New Mexico, they were known to be some of the toughest fighters in the Army (King and Dunnivant 2007). In addition they “strung hundreds of miles of telegraph wire, and maintained roads in serviceable condition, while boasting one of the lowest alcoholism and desertion rates in the military” (Christian 2007). Most historians argue that black soldiers generally faced less discrimination and fewer personal threats than civilians did during the Reconstruction era, in part due to the geographically remote stations in which they served. In the military, they received regular pay, adequate food, clothing, shelter, and often received some education. The military offered greater geographic mobility to young black males, making it a very attractive option during the violent Reconstruction years.

By 1881, the Buffalo Soldier posts in Texas were dismantled and the Infantries and Cavalries were sent elsewhere. However, starting around 1899, the Twenty-fifth Infantry returned to Texas, with battalions stationed throughout the state. The headquarters and Second Battalion were stationed at Fort Bliss; the Third Battalion was stationed at Fort McIntosh, and the First Battalion at Fort Brown. By this time, local populations were growing, and racial prejudice among civilians was becoming more entrenched. Black soldiers, meanwhile, were accustomed to being treated with more equality and respect than many locals were willing to demonstrate, and believed (rightly so) they had a right to fairer treatment. This tension between black soldiers and white civilians played out in race riots throughout Texas. At Fort McIntosh in Rio Grande City in 1899, a shootout erupted when a black soldier was accused of rape (Nankivell 2001). In El Paso in 1900, black soldiers attempted to storm a jail in which a soldier had been falsely imprisoned on charges of drunkenness (Christian 2007). At Fort Brown in Brownsville, black soldiers were blamed for an attack on a white woman in 1906. A shooting spree erupted in the subsequent curfew, killing a bartender, and this too was blamed on members of the Twenty-Fifth. The incident resulted in the immediate discharge without honor of all black soldiers from Fort Brown (Christian 2007). In Camp Logan in 1917, members of the Twenty-Fourth Infantry rioted when they heard a rumor that a black soldier had been murdered by a

white police officer. All four incidents offer vivid snapshots of the racial tensions and prejudices of the early twentieth century.

From Jim Crow to Civil Rights

Racial segregation persisted well into the twentieth century. The 1896 Plessy vs. Ferguson case at the national level codified the legal separation of blacks and whites and created the Jim Crow era. As the twentieth century dawned, blacks had separate schools, churches, hospitals (or sections of hospitals), businesses, forms of transportation, etc. These parallel institutions strengthened through the 1930s and pervaded all aspects of social life. During the depression years, when the WPA created the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC), they set aside all black regiments. From around World War I to the 1940s, all-black baseball teams played in semi-professional leagues and many teams, such as Dallas' Black Giants, even had their own stadiums (Fink 2007). In 1920, Andrew "Rube" Foster, a pitcher from Texas, created the National Negro League, which continued into the 1950s, until baseball finally became integrated (Barr 2004).

By 1912, the National Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) opened a chapter in Houston and this national organization led the twentieth century struggle for civil rights. In Texas, several key events helped transform the role blacks played in society as a whole.

The 1936 Texas Centennial in Dallas gave blacks the opportunity to take stock of and show off their accomplishments. Black business leaders helped to sponsor a Hall of Negro Life in Fair Park (Lucko n.d.). The building housed displays about education (money for black schools was the highest among southern states), health, agriculture, engineering, business and industry and art. Meanwhile an adjoining amphitheater presented music and plays by black performers. An estimated 400,000 people, black and white, visited the hall (Lucko n.d.). More importantly, the Centennial exhibit helped jumpstart two major organizations: the Texas State Conference on Branches of the NAACP and the Negro Chamber of Commerce (Glasrud and Smallwood 2007). Both organizations were active in subsequent legal battles that helped tear down the walls of segregation.

In 1924, the NAACP supported a black doctor from El Paso named Lawrence Nixon in his suit against the state for requiring that primary elections be limited to white voters. Nixon

won rulings in 1927 and 1932, but Texas Democrats continued to hold the white primary. Finally, Lonnie Smith, a dentist from Houston, took the case to the Supreme Court, which ruled that the all white primary was unconstitutional. This case influenced other southern states with similar laws and eventually brought blacks greater equity in the political process. The Texas Council of Negro Organizations and the NAACP were also instrumental in the 1950 *Sweatt vs. Painter* ruling, in which Heman Sweatt successfully sued the University of Texas law school to desegregate the school (Barr 1996). This case foreshadowed the landmark Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education decision that resulted in nation-wide school desegregation. The Civil Rights Movement continued through the 1950s and 1960s, culminating in the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act that outlawed racial discrimination, and reaffirmed the rights of all citizens, regardless of race and color. These laws were signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson, a Texan.

What does African American Archaeology look like? Previous Archaeology in Texas; site types and themes for Future Study

The 1960s ended legal discrimination. However, institutional racism throughout the country lasted well beyond that time and is perhaps just as formative for the black experience. Continued institutional racism has not just affected the material conditions for blacks in Texas, it has also affected the way black Texans have been represented in history. Black history in Texas was largely ignored until the 1980s, resulting in a profound underrepresentation among the scholarly literature (Williams 1997). African American archaeology has been given even less attention (Feit 2008). Most African American archaeological sites in Texas have been investigated as part of Cultural Resource Management (CRM) compliance, and very often the investigators themselves are not specialists in African American history and archaeology. Consequently, race rarely forms the starting point for research, and even when it does, projects are often limited in scope by cost and time constraints (Feit 2008). The few notable projects that have occurred outside the compliance field include excavations at the Levi Jordan Plantation (Chapter 5), excavations of a Buffalo Soldier Campsite in the Guadalupe Mountains (King and Dunnivant 2007), ongoing work in Houston's Freedmen's Town (McDavid, Bruner, and

Marcom 2008), excavations at Lake Jackson Plantation (Few 1993, 1996), and work undertaken at the Richard Carter Plantation Site (Carlson 2007).

More recently, some CRM projects have endeavored to take a more integrative approach to African American archaeology. Several factors have contributed to changing paradigms. First, CRM practitioners have had to respond to pressure from black communities, who demand input into development projects that take place in their neighborhoods. Second, starting in the 1990s, the field of historical archaeology itself began to focus on how institutional racism influences research. A more self-reflexive approach was adopted that questioned researcher subject positions, and attempted to involve descendant communities in the research questions, excavation, and data analysis of black archaeological sites. Within this context, several notable CRM projects have occurred in Texas. One of the earliest African American archaeological projects to employ an interdisciplinary approach was the Rubin Hancock farmstead excavations of the 1980s. However, the results of this project were not published until 1999 (Blake and Meyers 1999). During the 1990s, the Dallas Freedmen's Cemetery Project was instrumental in redefining how an archaeology of black Texas was undertaken for CRM projects. Although initially the subject of much political controversy, eventually, project sponsors and archeologists sought involvement from the black descendant community, as well as gathered detailed oral histories and archival data. In the 1990s, excavation of Block 12 in Houston's Freedmen's Town undertook detailed research and analysis of remains associated with black households (some free) during the antebellum and Reconstruction eras (Taylor et al. 1998). The 2005 investigations of a 10-block area in Houston's Freedmen's Town also attempted to take an integrative research approach, drawing on oral narratives from Freedmen's Town residents, and taking a problem-oriented approach to issues related to African American archaeology (Feit and Jones 2007). Nonetheless, the scope of this project was constrained by cost and schedule issues. Finally, the recent (and still unpublished) Prewitt & Associates project at the late nineteenth century Ransom-Williams Site (41TV1051) in southern Travis County has become a model for archaeological research that integrates a holistic approach into the CRM process. Operated as a collaboration with professors and graduate students at the University of Texas at Austin, this project included extensive archival and oral history research, and unprecedented (within Texas

CRM) community engagement in the archaeological methodology. The oral history component of this project is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

The following themes and site types represent major categories of sites relating to African American archaeology that have been or could be recorded in Texas. However, it is likely that these groupings do not cover the full range of site types that could exist. For instance, this listing does not include the home sites of free blacks who lived in the Spanish Colonial, Republic of Texas and Early Statehood periods. Though it is likely that archaeological remains relating to some of these individuals could be identified and investigated, to date the only antebellum period free black household that has been examined in any detail is Block 12 in Houston (41HR787, Taylor et al. 1998). Other sites that do not fall neatly into the groupings below include canals, streets, or other infrastructure built by slave labor, shipwrecks, or lynching sites.

Themes and Site types to consider for future archaeological work

Plantations, Slave Markets and other Antebellum Sites (1821-1865)

The arc of nineteenth century history in Texas is inextricably tied to the institution of slavery (Campbell 1989; McGhee 2000). The Texas economy relied on slave labor to clear land, cultivate crops and raise livestock on a large scale throughout the eastern part of the state. Plantations and the slave trade were at the foundation of this economy from 1821 to 1865. At the Outbreak of the Civil War, there were nearly 200,000 enslaved people in Texas, representing almost 30 percent of the total population (Campbell 1989). Any archaeology of the black experience in Texas must, therefore, examine plantation sites to understand the material culture of slavery and the antebellum black experience. In 1860, there were more than 62 plantations in Texas with enslaved populations of 100 or more, and hundreds more plantations with fewer (Campbell 1989). Of these, 33 plantation sites actually have archaeological trinomials and only about half those have received any detailed archaeological attention. Other plantations, such as the Garrett Plantation in San Augustine County or the Freeman Plantation in Anderson County, have been identified with historical markers, or National Register of Historic Places designations, but have never been assigned archaeological trinomials. The Anson Jones Plantation, the Levi Jordan Plantation and the Lake Jackson Plantations are among those few

plantations that have been subject to rigorous excavations. The data gathered for this project suggests that most of the archaeological work on plantations occurred more than 20 years ago, and much of that work centered on excavation and interpretation of the main house, rather than the actual slave quarters.

Plantation sites account for nearly 10 percent of all African American-related archaeological sites recorded in Texas. Nonetheless, there is a dearth of current research on antebellum sites in Texas. Few investigations (Levi Jordan is a notable exception) have focused on actual slave quarters, and even fewer have applied a contemporary theoretical and methodological approach to investigations. Therefore, antebellum plantation sites not only represent a significant site type vis à vis African American archaeology, but also a surprisingly under-investigated site type.

One slave market is commemorated with a historical marker in Texas. The Corday Drug Store was built atop the former site of a slave market in Galveston. No slave markets in Texas have been excavated and it is not clear what sort of archaeological signature, if any, such sites would bear.

Farmsteads and Rural Freedmen's Communities (1865-ca. 1965)

Following the Civil War, freed blacks began acquiring land, and as noted earlier it was common for small communities to develop around a black landowner or group of landowners. As noted above, Freedmen's communities (both urban and rural) played a vital role in the support network for African Americans following emancipation. In rural areas, these communities were composed of multiple households, sometimes related by blood, marriage, or former plantation relationships, and were often built not far from former plantations. Industry centered around farming and agriculture. They almost universally contained a church or churches, and a school, and, as noted earlier, also included gristmills, cane mills, cotton gins, and saw mills – all of which can leave both architectural and archaeological footprints. Freedmen's communities provided emancipated blacks with a refuge from the violence and discrimination that so severely limited their opportunities in the Jim Crow south.

The Freedmen's settlements enumerated by Sitton and Conrad were located primarily in the eastern part of Texas (Appendix B), and there are likely many others that have not been

identified in other parts of the state. Our database lists 29 Freedmen's communities that have been commemorated with historical markers or as historical sites. Farmsteads associated with Freedmen's communities are among the most readily identifiable and therefore, commonly recorded archaeological site type in Texas. Collectively, rural black homesteads comprise about half of all recorded African American-related sites in Texas. Many individual sites have been excavated, as well as groups of sites related to Freedmen's communities. The Richland Chambers Project, conducted during the early 1980s prior to impoundment of the Richland Chambers Reservoir, documented and excavated several black farmsteads related to Freedmen's Communities in Navarro County (Jurney and Moir 1987). Rural black homesteads and settlements have also been documented in Fort Bend County by (Iruegas et al. 2007), Rusk County by (Dockall et al. 2010), Delta County by (Green, Peter, and Shepherd 1997), Harrison County by (Gadus and Freeman 1998), and Travis County by (Jones et al. 2009). In this last instance, a number of households and a school (41TV2306, 41TV2307, 41TV2309, and 41TV2310 and others) related to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century freedmen's community in Webberville were identified. Another site (41TV2261) evaluated during the same project represents the antebellum home of a white slaveholding landowner. The project surveyed and conducted initial research for more than 2,800 acres and concluded that much of the landscape represents an intact early twentieth century farming community composed of black and white residents. Areas such as these constitute ideal locales for research-oriented projects to investigate issues related to rural black Texas.

Urban homes and Freedmen's Towns (1865-ca. 1965)

As noted earlier, Houston's and Dallas' Freedmen's Towns are perhaps the best known historically. Both cities had vibrant black communities that were active politically, socially and economically. Black newspapers such as the *Houston Informer* and *Dallas Express* connected people both within and across communities. Black churches, hospitals and business organizations supported community needs and promoted social advancement. Abundant historical scholarship has focused on Houston's and Dallas' Freedmen's Towns (e.g. Beeth and Wintz 1992; Glasrud and Smallwood 2007; Maxwell 1997; Skipper 2008; Harol 1999) and this work too has helped to commemorate them, even as they were disappearing. As early as WW II,

many urban Freedmen's Towns had begun to lose social cohesion. Black property and business ownership declined dramatically after 1930 and poverty among Freedmen's Towns residents rose. Black families with means joined whites in the flight from the inner city, and many moved to newer neighborhoods and suburbs. The dismantling of legal segregation during the 1960s further undermined the integrity of older Freedmen's Towns, since there was no longer a need for all black businesses, schools, and hospitals. Nonetheless, urban Freedmen's Towns in Texas represent sites of considerable social memory for contemporary black Texans, and these places are often fraught with social contestation. This can make doing archaeology challenging, and engaging with the descendant community in these places is just as important to the work as the actual excavations, as will be explored more in Chapter 4.

Both Dallas and Houston's Freedmen's Towns have been subject to archaeological research, with varying degrees of success in balancing stakeholder issues. In Houston, the Allen Parkway Village Project (Foster and Nance 2002) investigated household remains from the Hardcastle Addition area, as well as excavated more than 400 African American graves from the site of a former cemetery that was covered by a housing project in the 1940s. A number of intact household features were identified. However, the residential aspects of the investigations received very little attention, and there was no collaboration with extant contemporary descendants (the resulting controversies were well-publicized in local media at the time (McDavid 2011) as well as analyzed later from academic viewpoints (O'Brien 2009). In 2005, the Gregory-Lincoln school redevelopment project investigated 10 residential and commercial blocks of the western portion of Houston's Freedmen's Town (Feit and Jones 2007) (Maas 2010). More recently, the Yates Community Archaeology Project (YCAP), in a collaboration between the Community Archaeology Research Institute, Inc., and the Rutherford B. H. Yates Museum, Inc., has investigated the home of Rutherford B. Yates (41HR980) (who owned one of Houston's first printing companies) as well as several other Houston Freedmen's Town sites (McDavid, Bruner, and Marcom 2008) Rutherford Yates was the son of Jack Yates, the legendary minister of Antioch Baptist Church, which is still standing in what is now downtown Houston. In Dallas, the 2000 Freedman's Cemetery project reported on research and archaeological investigations centering exhumation of more than 1,500 African American graves that were buried by construction of the Woodall Rodgers Expressway in the 1960s. This work

included extensive research about the community. The Roseland Homes project that investigated Site 41DL393 also examined residential aspects of Dallas' Freedmen's Community (Schulte-Scott, Prior, and Green 2005). Other individual urban black households have been investigated archaeologically in Austin and San Antonio (Feit et al. 2003; Seibel, Feit, and Dial 2000; Schexnayder and Moore 2010; Fox, Renner, and Hard 1997; Taylor et al. 1998). Outside Dallas, Houston, San Antonio and Austin, few other cities have seen investigations of urban black homes and communities.

Manufacturing, Industry and Business

In a survey of black businesses between 1900 and 1950, James Brophy remarked that “in an absolute sense, black capitalism in Texas and throughout the United States was much less developed than white capitalism” (Brophy 1976:149). He then qualified that statement with the observation that in 1900, blacks were only 35 years out of slavery. Indeed, successful business enterprises were habitually hindered by lack of capital, credit, and support from both within and without the black community. Blacks effectively started from scratch, building banks, groceries, insurance agencies, construction companies, and newspapers to support and sustain livable communities. In black communities with sizable populations, such as Houston and Dallas, business ownership regularly developed and flourished through the 1950s. In 1900, Texas had more black doctors than any state (though Texas fell behind by 1930 (Brophy 1976). In 1929, Texas ranked fourth in the country for number of black-owned businesses and first in total profits (Barr 2004; Hall 1936). Black-owned businesses outside the agriculture industry not only supplied households with products and services, they also opened many job opportunities for community members.

By far the greatest number of businesses were service related. The most common black businesses were grocers, barbers, and restaurant owners, followed by blacksmiths and wheelwrights. In Houston, a number of blacks, such as Richard Allen and Ned Pullum, owned businesses related to the construction industry (contracting masonry, painting, cabinet making, and brickmaking). Overall, professional trades such as education, finance, medicine, law, or ministry accounted for less than 10 percent of all black workers (Brophy 1976).

Black-owned manufacturing and industrial concerns were even less common. Nonetheless, blacks participated in these industries as laborers in large numbers. Blacks worked in the fishing, long shore, railroad, oil and lumber industries that became central to Texas' economy during the late nineteenth through early twentieth centuries. Therefore, sites related to black participation in manufacturing and business could include not just black businesses, but also lumber camps, oil field camps, and railroad camps among others.

There are only a handful of black businesses commemorated as historical sites in Texas; and only a few black-owned businesses in Texas that have been excavated archaeologically. Sites 41GU4-6, near Seguin, represent a series of pottery kilns associated with black potters and businessmen from the antebellum period through the early twentieth century. Collectively the three sites form a district that was listed in the National Register in 1975. Site 41GU5 was designated as a SAL in 2008. Some homes, such as the Yates House (41HR980) in Houston may have been used for business (in this case a printing company). Additionally, many black women who worked as seamstresses and laundresses did so from their homes, and in this sense, some domestic spaces should also be considered as potential economic realms as well. Archeologists who investigate these places may want to reframe their assumptions about economic vs. domestic space when examining black households and businesses. When evaluating domestic spaces it is important to recognize that there was not always clear separation between domestic and commercial space for African Americans.

Schools, hospitals and other institutions (1865-ca. 1965)

The education of black children formally started after emancipation. Schools were among the first institutions created in newly formed black communities. Schools were often located within a church, or on the property of an established church, allowing black education to be hidden from the watchful gaze of whites who disapproved (Sitton and Conrad 2005). While some African Americans were able to receive an education in bondage, it was not common for enslaved African Americans to have the ability to read or write.

Following emancipation, many schools were established by the Freedmen's Bureau, created by the War Department in 1865. As part of its duties, the Freedmen's Bureau helped black communities build educational facilities, locate teachers, and provide or locate supplies for

schools. Originally the bureau established schools in major urban cities first, before creating schools in rural areas; and required a tuition of \$1.50 per year (with tuition being lowered later in order to allow poorer black families the ability to afford to send their children to school) (Smallwood 1981).

During the early twentieth century, the Rosenwald fund provided another avenue in which black communities could provide their children with access to an education. The fund – originally a joint effort between Booker T. Washington and his Tuskegee Institute and Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck, and Company – provided aid to rural black communities to help fund school construction as well as homes for teachers (Hoffschwelle 2006). Communities who wanted to be eligible for the aid had to provide funds equal to or greater than the funds provided by the Rosenwald grant, though the funds could be matched through donation of labor, land, supplies, as well as money (Hoffschwelle 2006). In the brief twelve-year period of its operation in Texas, the Rosenwald Fund assisted in the building of four hundred and sixty four schools and thirty-one homes for teachers (Hoffschwelle 2006).

Our research has identified 58 African American schools in Texas that have been recognized with historical markers or as significant historic places. Only four of those sites have trinomials. Only one site (41RT209) has actually been tested archaeologically.

Hospitals and other institutions are another historically significant site type that could be interpreted archaeologically, though to date, none have been. During the Jim Crow era, black medical care was segregated, just as schools and other institutions were. In most small communities, medical care for African Americans took place in the home, or in separate wings of hospitals that served both black and white citizens. Larger communities such as Houston, however, had hospitals built for blacks only. The Union Hospital (1900-1926) in Houston's Freedmen's Town (Blacklock-Sloan 2012), Riverside General Hospital in Houston (ca. 1926), and the Bluitt Sanatorium in Dallas (ca. 1906) are examples of this site type. The last two are listed on the National Register, but the sites do not have archaeological trinomials, nor have they been investigated archaeologically. In fact, only three black hospitals occur in our sites database, even though many others are known. For example, all of the Texas' state hospitals had separate facilities for blacks during the early part of the twentieth century. In Kerrville, David Brown reported on a State Tuberculosis hospital for Negroes (Brown 1993) that was moved to East Texas

after 1949. The State Hospital for the Blind Deaf and Dumb had a separate facility for blacks that was located in Austin near US 183 on the north bank of the Colorado River. Similarly, there was a State Institute for Negro Orphans also located in Austin (45th and Bull Creek Road). Neither site has ever been designated with a historical marker or any other historical designation. State hospitals for whites, such as Austin's Blind, Deaf and Dumb campus located along S. Congress, or the State Lunatic Asylum on W. 38th Street in Austin) do bear historical markers or official National Register designations.

Churches and Cemeteries (1821-1950)

Churches and cemeteries account for by far the greatest number of not only historical sites, but also archaeological sites related to black Texas. This is partly due to the paramount position that religion and rituals surrounding afterlife played (and continues to play) in the lives of black Texans. Religion played a crucial role in African American life during slavery because it gave those enslaved "... a vocabulary with which to express their longings [to be free]" (Montgomery 2000). Enslaved African Americans were often allowed to attend church services, worship with their own congregations on the plantation, become ministers and, in some situations, build their own sanctuary on plantation grounds (Barr 1996; Smallwood 1981). The Jerusalem Memorial Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in San Augustine and the Avenue L Missionary Baptist Church in Galveston are two examples of churches founded by enslaved blacks during the antebellum period. Because church services, especially those conducted by black ministers, were often moderated by white plantation owners or by black or white overseers, it was not unusual for black ministers to hold clandestine church services at night, often in a nearby wooded area (Barr 1996; Sitton and Conrad 2005). Religion (Christianity) flourished within the black community during slavery because it provided access to freedom and equality that black Americans yearned for.

Following emancipation, it was not unusual for black churches to organize and worship without a building for many years, choosing instead to meet at the homes of church members or in brush arbors (Sitton and Conrad 2005). In some cases, a church would be built adjoining a burial ground or vice-versa. After emancipation the church often served as the central institution within the black community; acting not only as a place of worship but as a community center and

a schoolhouse. Thad Sitton and James H. Conrad (Sitton and Conrad 2005) note that eventually other recreational buildings, such as a lodge hall for fraternities, a picnic ground, baseball field, or a brush arbor, would develop near a church.

The most common denominations of black churches in Texas are Baptist and Methodist (African Methodist Episcopal or A.M.E.; Colored Methodist Episcopal or Christian Methodist Episcopal, both abbreviated C.M.E.). The reasons for this can be attributed to several factors:

- the antislavery stance that the two denominations held during the antebellum period (the AME church was founded in Philadelphia as a direct response to racism);
- there was no favoritism displayed between free and enslaved persons in either denomination;
- the ease with which traditional African religious practices could be adapted into the denominations;
- anyone who felt “called” by God could become a preacher (this was true with respect to Baptists in particular), and
- there were no strict rules in how to organize a church and run a congregation (Montgomery 2000; Sitton and Conrad 2005).

However, black Catholic churches, such as the Our Mother of Mercy Catholic Church in Fort Worth, are also represented in Texas.

There are 119 churches recorded with historical markers, or designated as National Register sites in Texas and only one has been subject to archaeological investigations (even in cases where they have archaeological trinomials). The one reported excavation to have taken place – at the St Paul United Methodist Church in Dallas – was part of a University of Texas archaeological field school) that became the subject of a recent dissertation (Skipper 2008, 2010). Findings from this project sparked some important dialog regarding community memory in the context of race and gentrification, but did not specifically address religious practices and material culture. Targeted archaeological investigations of church yards, however, could provide a great deal of historical data about the religious practices and the ways blacks used religious space not just to worship, but also to create community cohesion.

It is worthwhile to point out that while black churches in Texas tend to be among the sites most commemorated historically, only one has received any archaeological attention. For example, according to Pamela Tilley, an official AME historiographer, the Texas AME church is now compiling a list of “Centennial Churches”, that is, churches which are at least 100 years old (including several which date to the Civil War period). Many still use their original church structures, but there are also sites where the original structures have been replaced, and the original church sites (often located nearby) are archaeologically undisturbed. Many of these properties are still owned by the descendant church congregations, who are often the descendants of those who worshipped in the early mission churches. Therefore, in addition to the likelihood that they still have intact archaeological remains, they will also be likely to have long, documented histories and active descendant communities with whom to collaborate (Tilley, personal communication).

The opposite is true for black cemeteries, which account for more than 33 percent of all recorded black archaeological sites and are among the greatest number of African American-related sites actually excavated in Texas. The reasons for this are complicated and have little to do with the actual ratio of cemeteries to other types of sites. In terms of numerical representation, cemeteries are no more numerous than other sites. Yet many cemeteries *become* archaeological sites after physical indicators of them vanish. In some cases, the obliteration of cemeteries was done intentionally, by civil planners or developers who removed headstones, but did not move actual bodies, then built on top of the properties. This happened with Dallas’ Freedmen’s Cemetery (41DL316), Houston’s Allen Parkway Village (41HR886) and the black portion of the First Street Cemetery in Waco, over which highways and buildings were constructed during the 1940-1965 period, and then “rediscovered” during more recent redevelopment episodes. Instances of African American cemeteries being found under roadways, reservoirs, and other structures have occurred with disturbing regularity and underscore a structural disregard for what people of all races consider as sacred spaces.

There are other issues, however, that cause cemeteries to disappear (at least with respect to official records; local communities sometimes know where they are located). In many instances, the physical traces of cemeteries vanish because the original grave markers were made of wood or fieldstones. If descendants move away from the cemetery, then its memory can be

lost. This commonly occurs in poorer rural areas in which transient tenant farmers established small family or community cemeteries on property they did not own. This was the case recently, when an unmarked black cemetery (41NV716) that had been inundated by a reservoir was revealed when lake levels dropped due to drought (Feit and Trask 2013).

In either case, knowledge of a forgotten or abandoned cemetery location is only available through local community memory. The identification of such places requires a nuanced approach that incorporates not just physical survey investigations, but archival research, oral narratives, or community engagement as part of the evaluation.

There are more than ninety black cemeteries bearing archaeological trinomials. A great deal has been learned about health, consumer practice, mortality, and attitudes toward death and the afterlife through excavation of black cemeteries. However, unlike other site types discussed in this section, black cemeteries should not be considered as *de facto* archaeological sites worthy of excavation. Rather, they should also be treated as important historic places worthy of preservation and commemoration (and many already have – there are more than 500 cemeteries designated with historical markers or as historical sites in Texas). Black cemeteries, like other types of cemeteries, are places that tie generations of Texans together, and in many ways are consecrated spaces.

Military Sites (1860-ca. 1945)

During the Civil War, some enslaved blacks were put to work building prisoner of war camps for Union Soldiers. Camp Ford in Smith County, Fort Esperanza in Calhoun County and Camp Groce in Waller County are among the Confederate sites that were constructed with slave labor. Following emancipation, many blacks joined the military to serve as soldiers along the frontier. In Texas, black participation in the military was significant, particularly during the Indian Wars of the 1870s. Black soldiers received better pay and typically had better opportunities for social and geographic mobility than those who held other employment. As noted above, these soldiers became known as Buffalo Soldiers. Their duties included patrolling the frontier and protecting the mail route. In addition, they strung telegraph wire, and built and maintained roads (Christian 2007). Sites in which black troops were stationed included Fort Concho in San Angelo, Fort Clark in Brackettville, Fort Bliss in El Paso, Fort Davis in Fort

Davis, Fort McIntosh in Rio Grande City, Fort Brown in Brownsville, and later Camp Logan in Houston.

Buffalo Soldiers participated in a number of significant battles and skirmishes related to the Indian Wars. Many such locales bear archaeological trinomials, or are commemorated with historical markers or as National Register Sites. Fort Clark is among the sites where African American soldiers served that is listed on the National Register. At Fort Clark, Buffalo soldiers were made of mixed race blacks and Seminole Indians. In later years, the locales in which black soldiers served also became spaces of contention, with race-based riots occurring between black soldiers and civilian police. Significant riots occurred in El Paso, Rio Grande City, Brownsville and Houston in the years between 1899 and 1917.

There are a handful of archaeological sites pertaining to black participation in the military in Texas, and close to 20 of these sites have been commemorated with historical markers or National Register listings. Sites subject to some archaeological excavations include four residential camp sites at Fort Clark in Brackettville (Warren and Uecker 2002), Camp Elizabeth in Sterling County (41ST111, Brown, Zapata, and Moses 1998), and the Pine Springs Site (41CU44; Shafer 1970; King and Dunnivant 2007), in the Guadalupe Mountains. This last site was a short-term military outpost associated with the Apache Wars of the 1870s.

Another class of military site is related to the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), established as a civil branch of the military during the Depression to provide jobs for the thousands of unemployed youths in the United States. In Texas, the CCC was employed building parks, roads, bridges, reservoirs and other large scale public works projects- Groups of young men were stationed at the sites they were working on, and lived in military style camps. Special detachments of black CCC troops were stationed separately, or sometimes separated from their white peers within single military camps. Black CCC troops were stationed with whites, for instance at Mother Neff State Park in Coryell County initially, though racial hostilities forced commanding officers to move the black workers elsewhere. Black CCC troops also were assigned to build Abilene State Park and Fort Parker State Park. None of these areas have been examined archaeologically. Nonetheless, black CCC camps represent a potentially informative site type that could be profitably compared to white CCC camps, about which there is a growing body of archaeological data.

Fraternal Organizations (1865-ca. 1960)

In 1901, the Ex-Slave Aid Society of Marlin in Bell County published their by-laws and constitution. The society organized because members were “profoundly impressed with the need of a union bound by the strong ties of brotherhood and sisterhood, for the promotion of the welfare, social and fraternal, of the ex-slaves” (Ex-Slave Aid Society 1901:1). Marlin’s ex-slave society was one of hundreds of such organizations throughout Texas created to sustain and advance African Americans in a context of considerable hostility or neglect from white society. Fraternal organizations and mutual aid societies became significant foci for black communities. They provided community-based support for its members not just through social fellowship, but also by providing loans to businesses, insurance to individuals, and mortuary assistance. In Houston the United Order of Odd Fellows and the Ancient Order of Pilgrims (and their women’s auxiliaries) were particularly strong organizations among blacks, and both erected impressive buildings during the 1930s (Feit and Jones 2007). In Fort Worth the Negro Masons of Texas founded the Fraternal Bank and Trust Company, which ultimately became the most successful black-owned bank in Texas. Likewise, in Waco the Farmer’s Improvement Society, founded in 1910, established the Farmer’s Improvement Bank, which received deposits totaling \$62,000 during its first five months of existence (Brophy 1976). As Brophy points out, organizations such as these laid the foundation for the black middle class.

Our database contains three organization sites that have been commemorated with historical markers. These include the Ancient of Order of Pilgrim’s building, erected in Houston in 1926; the Blue Triangle Branch of the Young Women’s Christian Association (also in Houston), built in 1917; and the Prince Hall Mason Lodge (Livestone Lodge No. 152) built in 1903 in Grand Prairie, Dallas County. In many cases, fraternal organizations and aid societies did not have their own buildings, and instead based their activities out of churches or schools. No archaeological excavations that focus on sites relating to such organizations have taken place in Texas. In some cases these sites are strictly architectural, and therefore, there would be no reason for excavations. However, it is possible that some of the older fraternal organization buildings and locales could have associated archaeological remains. Investigations at these sites could be highly productive in terms of understanding not just how the fraternal organization model was

adapted for the black community, but also how the blacks literally created community through these institutions.

Sports/Parks/Entertainment (1865-ca. 1960)

During the Jim Crow eras, segregation pervaded all aspects of black life, including entertainment. Consequently, blacks organized their own sports teams, built their own parks, and listened to (or performed) music in all black venues.

In the larger cities, black baseball teams such as Dallas' Black Giants built their own sports parks. All-black recreational parks, organized to celebrate Juneteenth (the June 19th Anniversary of Emancipation in Texas), were also common in many cities. Houston's Independence Park is listed on the National Register. Emancipation Park in Huntsville and Booker T. Washington Park in Mexia are commemorated with historical markers. Austin's Rosedale Park was originally organized as an "emancipation park" though this park is not officially commemorated. In Dallas' Fair Park, the 1936 Centennial Exposition featured a *Hall of Negro Life*, which was subsequently demolished after the fair (Lucko n.d.).

In terms of music, black Texans in Dallas, Galveston, Houston and Beaumont, and in small towns, contributed to development of ragtime, blues, and jazz. Scott Joplin (1868-1917), born and raised in Texarkana, is among the most famous and influential Texas musicians. Well known Texas musicians also include Huddie "Leadbelly" Ledbetter (1888-1949) and Blind Lemon Jefferson (1893-1929). These and others started playing in rural dance halls and juke joints before moving on to cities such as Dallas, Houston, and Galveston, and ultimately moved to northern cities where they recorded their music. In Dallas, the Deep Ellum neighborhood (southeast of downtown) became an important center for blues music, whereas in Houston, bars such as Don Robey's Bronze Peacock Club promoted new musicians (Barr 2004). The birthplace of Scott Joplin in Texarkana, the grave of Blind Lemon Jefferson in Wortham, and the Victory Grill in Austin are among the places related to black music that are commemorated with historical markers or as National Register-listed sites. No parks or public entertainment places have been excavated by archeologists.

Prisons (1865-1950s)

Emancipation freed blacks from bondage to whites. However, it also subjected them to criminal laws and legal penalties for violation. Under slavery, slave-owners dispensed punishments to blacks according to their individual ideas of justice, without involving a formalized legal framework. This arbitrary justice system changed when blacks could no longer be considered property. Whites with a sense of entitlement and superiority over blacks immediately looked to the courts for punishment. Within a few months following emancipation, prisons became crowded with freedmen. In fact, by mid-1866 nearly half the prison population was black, despite the fact that blacks represented only 30 percent of the total population. By 1867, almost 55 percent of the Huntsville prison population was black.

The reasons for their disproportionate representation did not have to do with any predilection for criminal behavior. In months following the Civil War, the state moved quickly to pass the “black codes” that courts zealously used to entrap freedmen and women (Crouch 2007). For instance, the contract labor and vagrancy laws allowed authorities to imprison people for joblessness and homelessness, and was employed disproportionately against freedmen, many of whom had neither jobs nor homes following their release from slavery. Revisions to the penal code in 1866 allowed local authorities to arrest blacks for the smallest infractions. A survey of inmates in the state penitentiary in Huntsville revealed that 89 percent of blacks incarcerated there were serving penalties for theft-related crimes (mostly agricultural theft). In addition, white violence against blacks almost certainly provoked some freedmen to respond in kind (though generally violence perpetrated by blacks was uncommon during the Reconstruction era (Crouch 2007). Punishments were meted out liberally by the courts, and were usually severe. Most blacks in Huntsville in 1867 were serving sentences of three years or more (Crouch 2007). This pattern of bigoted incarceration continued through the Jim Crow era. For example, one of the tenant/sharecroppers at the Jordan Plantation, Julia Mack, was imprisoned at a Brazoria County prison farm for many years for stealing a bag of sugar (Research Notes, Kenneth L. Brown).

By 1871, the Texas prison system was nearly bankrupt and the legislature followed the lead of other southern states to allow leasing of prisoners to work in private industries in exchange for financial support. Most prisoners were put to work on railroads, in mines, or on sugar and cotton plantations formerly supported by slave labor. Many plantation workers were

housed on the plantations themselves and were subjected to brutal conditions. Prisoners were beaten, starved, and tortured.

Not surprisingly, convict leasing was profitable for both the state and the private companies, and it soon became integral to the Texas prison system. In this manner, the antebellum slave-based plantation system was effectively replicated through the prison system (Texas State Library and Archives 2011). Since by 1900 nearly 60 percent of the prison population was black, many prison farms resembled antebellum plantations, with nearly identical material conditions (though often with less food provided). The Imperial Sugar Company, for which the town of Sugar Land is named, originated from the first profitable convict lease agreement, and in Fort Bend County thousands of acres of sugar plantations were worked by prisoners. Observing how profitable the convict labor system could be, the state also began purchasing its own farms and plantations around the turn of the century. A number of former antebellum slave plantations ultimately found their way into the Texas Prison system. In 1885, the State purchased Harlem farm in Fort Bend County, which eventually become the Jester State Prison Farm. In 1908, it added the nearby Imperia Farm, which it purchased from the Imperial Sugar Company (which still owned more than 12,000 acres in Fort Bend County). By 1921, state-run prison farms encompassed more than 81,000 acres in Texas. Farms included the Goree Farm in Rusk County, the Darrington and Clemens Farms in Brazoria County, the Shaw Farm in Bowie County, and the Eastham Farm in Houston County, as well as several others in Fort Bend County (Lucko n.d.).

Agricultural prison units therefore represent sites of considerable relevance to the black experience in Texas, since these units were overwhelmingly made up of black prisoners. Moreover, as the state began selling off its agricultural prison lands after World War II, those areas that were once prison farms worked by black convicts, became black communities. Thus, understanding the prison system and potentially reframing it should be an important component to black history in Texas. Not surprisingly, few prisons are actually commemorated historically. The penitentiary in Huntsville bears a historical marker for a factory in which imprisoned blacks made textiles during the Civil War. This appears to be an exception, however. Similarly, there are very few recorded archaeological sites in Texas related to convict plantations, though 41FB175 in Fort Bend County may be related to the Harlem Farm. This site has never been

excavated. Identification and excavation of the camps and prison quarters associated with one of Texas' many convict plantations could offer a fascinating new perspective on the material culture and practices of black inmates of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Chapter 4

Collaboration and Inclusion in African Diaspora Archaeology

By Carol McDavid and Fred McGhee

Introduction

The previous chapter discussed some of the historical and theoretical underpinnings of “public archaeology”. In this chapter, the focus is on its *practice*. That is, it will review a variety of collaborative and consultative practices – e.g., forms of public archaeology – that can be included in a “collaboration toolkit” that archaeologists can use when conducting archaeological investigations of African American sites⁹. The primary focus will be collaboration with respect to the particular publics who have the most stake in the archaeological study of African America – the lineal descendants of the sites being studied, and African American descendant communities more generally (the reason for making a distinction between these two “types” of descendants will be discussed later).

Others have a stake in African American archaeology too – in particular, clients and archaeologists who self-identify as *other* than African American, who may not realize (thus not acknowledge) that archaeology as it is often practiced has a role in perpetuating instances of institutional racism and white privilege in society. Even though this is an important subtext underpinning this entire document, our specific goal here is to provide *practical* guidelines and models for archaeologists to draw upon, should they wish to collaborate with *multiple* publics more actively. Many already do – both agency and practicing archaeologists (and some clients) have indeed “pushed the envelope” beyond “business as usual” with respect to creating more inclusive projects. Here the hope is to provide practical and theoretical examples, frameworks, tools, ideas, options, and possibilities – any one of which may or may not work for any particular project or any particular archaeologist – regardless of the context of his or her practice.

⁹ Regarding language: for the most part we will use the terms collaboration, inclusion, engagement, and consultation more or less interchangeably, although there are important distinguishing features of each term that can emerge in different contexts, and will emerge from time to time in this narrative. Also note that the terms “consultation” and “stakeholders” both have legal meanings when used in certain contexts in the U.S., especially in indigenous archaeology practice. In this document, however, our usage is “everyday English”.

Consequently, the underlying principle for this discussion of “best practices” with regard to collaboration, engagement, inclusion and consultation will be one that was suggested a few years ago by Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh and T. J. Ferguson: the *collaborative continuum* (Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008). This means, simply, that collaboration and engagement can range from active resistance to archaeology and archaeologists (at one end), to situations where descendant groups have “real”¹⁰ input in the way a project is planned, executed, and publicly interpreted (at the other). Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson described the continuum using examples from their practice with indigenous groups:

Various projects or studies can be said to operate at different points along the spectrum. An example of the resistance model is the infamous Kennewick Man case, in which ancient Native American remains were disputed by a [wide group of individuals and agencies].... At the other end of the spectrum, an example of a project that was intensively collaborative involved Zuni Pueblo tribal members and archaeologists...working together to regain possession of...sacred community objects stolen and illicitly sold...*research is never locked in to one mode along the continuum* (Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008:10-11), emphasis added.

Therefore, any of the ideas, methods, and frameworks discussed here can be situated at any point along the continuum – *where* they are situated at any given point in time will be the result of a combination of factors: the archaeologist’s advocacy, the client’s willingness, the particular social and political context (and historical memories) surrounding the project.

The more limited forms of engagement that are typical in CRM practice – brochures, signage, and pre-planned site tours – are not covered here. These are not bad things – in fact they

¹⁰ Also with reference to language: we will occasionally use inverted commas or italics to problematize certain words: “real”, “fully”, “meaningful”, “engagement”, etc. This is because overly celebratory, non-critical and hyperbole-filled descriptions of collaborating, consulting, engaging, etc. have been (until perhaps the last decade) a dominant feature in most U.S.-based public archaeology writing. Using inverted commas will emphasize that these words are both problematic and contingent. It is true that more recent work overall tends to take a more overtly critical stance, and actively critiques publicly-engaged practice – as does much writing framed as “heritage”, which is where public archaeology writing tends to emerge outside the U.S., (particularly within discourses framed as “postcolonial”).

are good things, and probably not done as often as they should be. The assumption, however, is that the readers of this document know what they are and how to use them. It is true that *choosing* to use them is part of what is suggested, but the goal is to move readers somewhat farther along the continuum of what is possible.

Therefore, after this introduction, the next section will provide an overview of some important issues with regard to collaboration and inclusion as they emerge in archaeology (and public archaeology) today. This discussion will point the way towards the broader literature for those who wish to do more reading.

Then it will focus on one specific venue for collaborative public archaeology and engagement: descendant communities. The text will discuss what they are, how definitions of what they are evolving within the discipline, and will also provide some concrete ideas for locating them, at least with respect to African American descendant groups.

Finally, some specific modes of collaborative practice (keeping descendants and the “collaborative continuum” in mind) will be explored. These will range from various forms of oral research (framed as a form of public archaeology) as well as other forms of collaboration. It is important to note again that even though some of these models lend themselves to more “truly” collaborative and inclusive projects than others (especially with regard to shared power) – any model can be situated at any point on the collaborative continuum for any given project. In addition, multiple models can (and often are) used on the same project, and by the same researchers in different ways in different projects.

Focusing on Collaboration¹¹

The question of collaboration between archaeologists and non-professional associated communities has become an established discourse in public archaeology, including public archaeology practiced in CRM settings. Critical reviews of how archaeologists think about the past, heritage, communities, and stakeholders; how they practice engagement, collaboration, and

¹¹Portions of this text were included in the Organizer Statement for a workshop, “The Dynamics of Inclusion”, funded by the Wenner-Gren Foundation and held at the African Burial Ground Monument in New York City, September 2010 (Matthews and McDavid 2010). Participants included 12 archaeologists from a wide variety of global and disciplinary contexts, including African Diaspora archaeology. Papers from the workshop appeared in (Matthews, McDavid, and Jeppson 2011).

activism; and the ethical implications of these practices have broadened and deepened the significance of the “public” in archaeology¹².

This critique has peeled back assumptions about the inherent value of the past, and brought forward the complex relationships and results that form when archaeologists and other heritage professionals accept that their interests in material culture, history and the making of place are no more or less valid than nor even radically distinct from those in other communities. Emerging dialogues between professional, descendant, local, activist, political, and cultural “communities” have chipped away at both the idea of the archaeologist as sole expert, whose interpretations stand above others, and the authority of archaeology as an established and unified method for bringing the past to light. Nuanced dialogic projects now show that archaeology produces much more than material remains and historical and cultural interpretations, but also creates a dynamic social space where past and present are constructed, integrated, and negotiated. Archaeologists across the globe are now examining these broadly defined “public” archaeologies in light of context-specific interests about archaeology in specific times and places, and in pursuit of certain foreseeable ends.

These critiques and new practices, which to various degrees have attempted to empower stakeholder communities, have under-examined one important aspect of public archaeology. This is the question of *inclusion* in the collaborative process. In other words, *who is involved* should be considered at the beginning of a project to foster transparency and to allow stakeholder communities real opportunity for input. This particular *best practice* logically follows the recent wave of critique in public archaeology, which has exposed previously shadowed relations, such as those between archaeologists and governments, between archaeologists and local political and cultural authorities, and between archaeologists and the specific interests of descendants and localities. Archaeologists now have to grapple with the ways that *most archaeological relationships with communities are partial and therefore highly political*. As noted earlier with

¹²A partial list would include contributors to the journal *Public Archaeology* (since it began in 2000), and contributors to (Castaneda and Matthews 2008; Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008; Derry and Malloy 2003; Hamilakis and Duke 2007; Hollowell, McGill, and Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2008; Jameson 1997; Killion 2009; Mortensen and Hollowell 2009; McDavid and Babson 1997; Mihesuah 2000; Little and Shackel 2007; Marshall 2002; Merriman 2004; Meskell and Pels 2005; Scarre and Scarre 2006; Shackel and Chambers 2004). See also individual publications by (Barkan and Bush 2003; Carman 2005; Jeppson 2008 (1997); Leone et al. 1995; Little 2007; Matthews 2004, 2008; McDavid 1997; McGuire 2008; Meskell 2002; Sabloff 2008; Skeates 2007; Smith 2006; Smith and Waterton 2009; Watkins 2001; Weiss 2007).

regard to African American audiences, it is critical to understand how past and present relationships between differently empowered actors affect the way that archaeology is practiced, valued, and understood.

Not all archaeologists embrace these collaborative and inclusive approaches, even “in theory.” There is resistance among those who are uncomfortable with scenarios that allow non-scientific views of the past equal standing, and among those who find community engagement to be irrelevant to the primary archaeological research enterprise (this would include those who do not see public archaeology as “real” archaeology). Some will reject the idea that “community review” is just as critical as “peer review”. There is also resistance due to personal comfort – some archaeologists would prefer to focus their own time on “just archaeology”, and find the public engagement process to be very stressful. understandable, and this text suggests ways to deal with this form of resistance – one can, for example, hire consultants to do this type of work for any given project, just as one would hire osteologists or ceramics analysts. There is resistance from the other direction as well; some communities remain skeptical of the motives of “most” archaeologists, especially indigenous groups and descendant stakeholders who reference a long history of archaeological and other academic neglect and disrespect. The mini-case studies that follow will include examples from both the “resistance” and “mutual empowerment” ends of the collaborative continuum.

In short, it is the view here that meaningful and mutually empowered engagement with stakeholder publics is not something that archaeologists can choose or choose not to do, but something that is inherent to the practice of archaeology in 2012. Even when individual archaeologists prefer not to do it themselves, they can find ways to see that it is done.

Descendant Communities: A foundation for collaborative practice in African American archaeology

More than biology

In African Diaspora archaeology, and in other contexts, the more commonly accepted notion is that the term “descendant community” does not refer to biology so much as to a “self-defined group of people in the present that link themselves – socially, politically, and

economically – to a group of people in the past” (Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008:2). Put another way, a descendant community is a

...non-homogenous, self-identified group encompassing those who, regardless of background, identify with a particular past or locale through shared traditions, proximity, or collective memories. This is distinct from a narrower concept of ‘descendants’ as individuals with ancestral or familial links to the archaeological record’ (Hamilakis and Duke 2007:77)¹³.

This understanding did not come easily, however. Later there will be some examples (based on oral research data) about *why* this is true in African Diaspora contexts in particular, but here the discussion will describe one particular project that demonstrated the evolving definition of “descendant community” the most forcefully – the African Burial Ground project in New York City. This project is well known, but it is highlighted here because it represented a watershed project in terms of collaboration, consultation, and descendant community involvement.

New ways to define “descendant communities” and “clients”

Case Study: The African Burial Ground Project, New York City

In 1991, during excavation work for a Federal office building in lower Manhattan, workers found human remains about 20 feet directly under the proposed building’s footprint. Although the original contract archaeology firm, and therefore the client (the General Services Administration, or GSA) were aware that the site had once held a cemetery for enslaved and free Africans, their assumption was that any remaining graves would have disappeared long ago. This turned out not to be the case. Over the next two years, the remains of over 400 people were excavated, with the latest internment appearing to have been about 200 years ago. Now known as the African Burial Ground, or ABG, these graves were part of an original five-acre+ site where 10,000-20,000 people were buried. The site is therefore the largest and oldest African cemetery excavated in North America, with graves still present in an area which stretches more than five

¹³ See also (Saitta 2007) for discussion about this concept within American historical archaeology.

city blocks; it is thought that recovered remains represent the “earliest and largest bioarchaeological colonial population in the Americas” (LaRoche 2011:650).

After the initial discovery of the remains, African American descendant communities in New York wrested control of the project from the building planners and archaeologists and insisted on having *substantive* input into decisions about the research design, the researchers themselves, and the subsequent public interpretation of the site. As LaRoche put it:

Realization of the global importance and of the overwhelming spiritual, historical, anthropological, and scientific importance of the site ... led the African descendant community to take extraordinary measures to seize intellectual control of the project. It sought power and control, *not the afterthought of inclusion* (emphasis added) (LaRoche and Blakey 1997:100).

Descendant input was possible in this case, not only because African-descended peoples in New York were so vocal, but also because they were politically empowered, politically sophisticated and historically informed¹⁴. Other influences also had an impact. As noted by Michael Blakey, who directed the bioarchaeological study of the remains:

The descendant community demanded respect in handling the remains, a comprehensive scientific analysis of the site, timely reports on the findings, and general progress of the investigation. The community demanded authority in the decision to ultimately reinter the remains. The African American community was uniquely responsible for altering the course of the U.S. General Services Administration’s (GSA) plans for the excavation and use of the site and skeletal remains. Journalists brought the glaring attention of the media. Artists, religious leaders, and other concerned individuals formed committees and coalitions in

¹⁴See (LaRoche and Blakey 1997) for an in-depth description of the role that descendant communities had in outcomes for this project. For a useful overview of timelines and key players, see (The New York Preservation Archive Project 2010). For mass media pieces with good detail, see (Harrington 1993) and (Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture n.d.). For scholarly analysis and research reports see (Blakey 1998, 2004; LaRoche and Blakey 1997; LaRoche 2011; Mack and Blakey 2004; Perry 1997; Perry, Howson, and Bianco 2006).

order to take responsibility for the spiritual, physical, and intellectual aspects of the site. That same awareness and depth of feeling for the skeletal remains is still felt... (Blakey 1998:13-14).

The site is now a National Monument, with a large visitor center located on the first floor of the now-constructed building, adjacent to the site where the community and NPS reburied the remains under a large outdoor monumental sculpture. All of this was, as noted in a recent article by Cheryl LaRoche (LaRoche 2011), accomplished largely because of public involvement in the project. Although key changes in the research design (initiated at the insistence of descendants and described in detail in LaRoche and Blakey 1997) were a critically important outcome¹⁵, here the focus is on outcomes that dealt specifically with the evolving definitions of “descendants” and “clients” in CRM archaeology projects.

This project demonstrated, in a nationally publicized forum with discipline-wide impact, the key role that African American “descendant communities” could have in archaeological work. As importantly, it demonstrated that these communities should not be defined as only lineal descendants. African Americans in New York City, after much public debate and resistance, were finally recognized as the cultural, and thus legitimate, descendants of those who were buried at this site.

In addition, Blakey, LaRoche, Warren Perry and other members of their teams came to understand that they actually had *two types of clients*, as described below:

Our project has conceived of two types of clients, the descendant community most affected by our research (the *ethical* client) and the GSA that funds the

¹⁵ The changes in research design that descendants initiated were discussed in detail in the LaRoche article cited above and in other publications by Michael Blakey, Warren Perry, Mark Mack and other project leaders. Following is a brief summary from (Blakey 2004:104-105).

Public pressure in support of a more comprehensive research scope than usually afforded such projects resulted from the fact that research questions interested them and that they claimed some ownership of the project. Thus, research directions, an epistemological concern, were fostered by public involvement, an ethical concern. The queries produced by the engagement process were condensed to four major research topics:

1. The cultural background and origins of the population.
2. The cultural and biological transformations from African to African-American identities.
3. The quality of life brought about by enslavement in the Americas.
4. The modes of resistance to slavery.

research (the *business* client). While both clients have rights that should be protected, the ethical requirements of the field privilege the voices of descendants. Descendants have the right to refuse research entirely, and the researcher's obligation is to share what is known about the potential value of bioarchaeological studies. Our project received permission to present a draft research design to African Americans and others interested in the site. Our purpose was to elicit comment, criticism, new ideas, and questions that the descendant community was most interested in having answered. The result of this public vetting process is, we believe, a stronger research design with more interesting questions than would have likely come from researchers alone. A sense of community empowerment, in contrast to the pre-existing sense of desecration, was fostered by our collaboration. Permission to conduct research according to the resulting design was granted by both clients (Blakey 2004:103) (emphasis added).

Although this was not the only, or earliest, African American archaeology project to deal with descendants (in CRM or otherwise)¹⁶, these particular outcomes were hallmarks of the ABG project.

Locating Descendant Communities: some practical steps

What both archaeologists and agencies learned in New York City (and in countless other community-engaged projects in African Diaspora archaeology¹⁷) is that definitions of “descendant communities” are dependent on social context and cannot be pre-determined. Further, the steps involved in identifying them (and understanding how any particular archaeology project intersects with the needs, priorities and historical memories of any particular

¹⁶ For other CRM projects where African American descendants were involved (to varying degrees) see (Cressey 1980, 1987, 2008; Crist and Roberts 1996; Maynard 1992; McCarthy 1996, 2001; Roberts and McCarthy 1995) and (Levin 2011). For an excellent critical review of CRM work in African American archaeology generally see (Joseph 2004).

¹⁷ A very small sampling would include (Agbe-Davies 2010; Boyd, Franklin, and Myers 2011; Davidson 2004; Davidson and González-Tennant 2008; Derry 1997; Fennell, J.Martin, and Shackel 2010; Matthews 2004; Matthews and McDavid 2012; McDavid 1997; LaRoche and Blakey 1997) and (LaRoche 2005). Note that some of these sites are not in Texas. This volume is not meant to provide coverage for all African American sites that have been investigated, but, rather, a sampling suitable for future reading.

descendant community) will vary – just as they would vary if one were working in Aboriginal Australia, the American Southwest, Hawai’i, or highland Guatemala.

In order to take the first steps toward engagement, it is first necessary to do contextual research within the community itself, which is admittedly difficult, given the usual time constraints. Like the “collaborative continuum” described earlier, however, there are several methods available that can represent a “good-faith” start. This section will provide some practical steps to locate either the lineal descendants of a particular site, or the legitimate descendant communities in a particular area. Deciding what is “legitimate”, and determining the order in which these actions take place (if they take place) must be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Before listing these steps, however, one must first recognize the problematic nature of both “race” and “ethnicity”. It is outside the scope here to parse, in detail, the distinctions between the two, or to explore the many ways that “race” and “ethnicity” (however defined or enacted) can influence how any particular archaeology is interpreted (archaeologically or publicly). It is also outside our scope to teach archaeologists (or publics) how to overcome racial or ethnic bias. Even so, being explicit about race and ethnicity is necessary. Following are some of our “taken for granted”;

- “Race” is a cultural construct, so “racial identity” has varied meanings for different people.
- Racial, ethnic, and most other culturally defined categories are fluid and contingent.
- Structural racism is real, and exclusion based on race is still “real” in the lived experiences of many African Americans.
- In practical terms, most people have some idea of how they self-identify with regard to race (or any other category).

This document is, at its heart, about *inclusion*. Therefore, one cannot suggest “best practices” for doing research about African American life without, at least, mentioning “race”,

and acknowledging that it does have an effect on the research – although the effects vary by person and by context.

With that in mind, following are our suggestions for locating and beginning to work with African American communities – and for the most part, the ideas listed below will be most helpful to white researchers who do *not* have extensive experience working closely in and with black communities. The unfortunate reality is that *this probably applies to most archaeologists* (in Texas and elsewhere; see Franklin 1997), although working with *any* identity group poses challenges to anyone who is either inside or outside the group. Group identities (age, urban versus rural, gender, ethnicity, and others) can and do “trump” each other at any given time and in any given personal interaction (see Ransom Williams case study, below).

1. Prepare a short description of the project (in flyer or handout form).
 - a. You will not give this to everyone, but writing it will focus thought and help to prepare for the day-to-day interactions that will present themselves. It also can serve as a “calling card” (something to leave at stop-by visits or to pass out to groups).
 - b. The language should be user-friendly, non-scientific, and first person/active-voice style while still being formal enough to communicate respect. Include (if possible):
 - (i) A brief description of the proposed research,
 - (ii) The names, credentials, and contact information of investigators,
 - (iii) The names of clients and/or landowners,
 - (iv) A description of the reasons for contacting African American stakeholders. *This is your ethical statement of purpose.*
 - c. When describing “descendants” in this document, avoid a “lineal descendant only” focus, although a desire to locate lineal descendants can be mentioned. If there is already a list of target names from archival research (see below), mention them when you meet people, but *do not include them in the*

printed flyer. Some families (and for that matter, clients) may object to having their names included in a public document¹⁸.

2. Gather target names of lineal descendants from pertinent historical records. In the usual fashion, use census records, voting rolls, city directories, etc. to work forward and backward in time to locate current residents who may be lineal descendants. Having the help of a local historian will help a great deal (you may be able to identify such a person as part of your research). Note that most African American churches have someone who is identified as the “Church Historian”.
3. Identify leaders in the local African American community and ask them if they will meet with you so that you can share information about the project – these will be the first of your “context” interviews. When you meet, ask these individuals for introductions to other potentially important contacts. Places to start identifying these leaders include:
 - a. Church leaders (if none are known to you, look at church signs and cornerstones, which often have both current and historical names).
 - b. Members of local African American fraternities, sororities, and other service organizations (Brown, Parks, and Phillips 2005)¹⁹.
 - c. Local Chambers of Commerce: ask for introductions to key black business leaders, and look at advertisements in Chamber newsletters.
 - d. Local chapters of Lions, Rotary, Masonic and other lodges (including black lodges).
 - e. Local HBCU’s (Historically Black Colleges and Universities)
 - f. If you need additional publicity, consider sending press releases to local newspapers (both general circulation papers and black newspapers).

(i) General circulation papers in Texas

1. <http://www.yourhoustonnews.com/>

¹⁸ This did occur as Ken Brown was doing research in Brazoria. As a result the family which objected is not mentioned in any publications or public communications about the site.

¹⁹ See <http://learningtogive.org/papers/paper172.html> and <http://www.blackcollegesearch.com/articles/greek-life/black-fraternities-and-sororities.htm> for examples and histories. The National Pan-Hellenic Council is an umbrella group which includes many of the largest. Local contacts can also provide information on other groups. For example the “Willing Workers” of Sweeny, Texas was critically important to the work that McDavid conducted in Brazoria, Texas. As a small group, this group would *only* have been identified with local context research of the sort described here.

2. <http://www.community-news.com/>
3. <http://impactnews.com/>
4. <http://texaspress.com/>
5. <http://www.usnpl.com/txnews.php>
- (ii) Sources for Black newspapers
 1. http://www.writershelpdesk.com/africanamerican_newspapers.html
 2. http://www.blacknews.com/directory/black_african_american_newspapers.shtml
 3. <http://www.afamnews.com/websitepublisher/>

4. Feel free to set up group informational meetings, but be aware that these will probably not be the most effective way to locate or meet people, especially when a project is just starting.

a. Adopt the motto: *I will spend more time with people in their living rooms than in my conference rooms.*

(i) There are cultural (urban/rural/age etc.) differences that play into whether some people will come to public meetings, speak up in them if they do come, or wish to communicate by phone or email. Each context is different, so do not assume that what you regard as an “appropriate” form of outreach actually *is* appropriate – or effective.

b. There are exceptions to this (ask your local contacts for advice). For example:

(i) Try to locate a local black community center, if one exists. One rural example would be the Mims Community Center in Brazoria, Texas, which the black community owns and operates. The Shape Community Center in Houston is an example of an urban community center/gathering place. Often these types of centers will have programs for youth or elders – that is, they offer interesting possibilities for collaboration.

(ii) Consider asking for permission to make an announcement at church services. Alternatively, the pastor may prefer to make an announcement about who you are, and invite you to circulate after the service to introduce yourself. Again, each church, and each situation, will be different. Often you will be invited to attend post-service lunches or other events, which can provide good opportunities to meet people.

(iii) Ask your local contacts for other venues in which people gather (e.g., service groups, sororities and fraternities, barber and beauty shops, as noted above).

5. Seriously consider the important question: Should you choose an African American person to do your outreach?

a. The answer is – perhaps, but not necessarily. The attitude, personal style, knowledge and approach that any *particular* person has will often be more important than issues like ethnicity, gender, age, class, etc.

(i) Your research team should obviously be as diverse as possible, for this and other reasons. If you do have an African American person on your team, include them in this effort if they wish to participate and are suited for the work. However, do not assume that by virtue of being black they have automatic “entrée”, or that they have all the answers. Do not expect them to speak for other blacks.

(ii) Having a project *leader* do this outreach for you will communicate more respect for both people and process. That factor could easily outweigh whatever ethnicity, age, or gender the leader happens to be. If you are the project leader, but not comfortable with this type of work, make certain that whomever you do appoint is seen – by other team members, by the client, and by the public – as a critical, important member of the *leadership* team.

- b. Be “race conscious” but not essentialist. Own your own racial/ethnic identity and do not act as if you or anyone else is color-blind, but avoid the assumption that all African Americans (or European-Americans) have the same ideas about *anything* – archaeology, history, race relations, material culture, spirituality, and slavery included. *Every* context and every person is different.
 - c. *Whoever* makes “first contact” needs to be comfortable with themselves while discussing the issues surrounding race, Jim Crow, etc., as well as conversant with black history generally. Awkwardness about bringing up and discussing difficult topics will often translate as being aloof, with a “distanced” attitude.
 - d. Having people know *you*, who *you* are, and what *you* believe, will go farther than simply being a member of any particular group. Personal credibility is critically important, and you only build that with personal interaction.
6. Be frank about the limits of CRM archaeology with regard to shared power and “true” inclusion, and be open about explaining how commercial archaeology “works”. People will appreciate the candor and will be well aware of the realities of this type of politics.
- a. On the other hand, note the examples set by the African Burial Ground project and others described in this document. With creativity and persistence, both agencies and archaeologists can find ways to expand limits of CRM archaeology “business as usual” practices (Blakey 1997; LaRoche 2011).

Obviously, there are many challenges associated with involving descendant communities in CRM projects – assuming that researchers can convince their business clients that consulting and involving ethical clients (e.g., descendant communities, etc.) is a good idea at all levels. Even though consultation is a customary (and regulated) component of working with Section 106-regulated projects, consultation does not always reach the relevant or even appropriate stakeholder groups. Yet under Section 106, project proponents are required to consult with “Indian tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations, local governments, permit or license applicants, and members of the public.” In the case of African American historical and

archaeological sites, efforts should be made to specifically involve black communities. An excellent “best practice” document that was written for tribal contexts can be found at http://www.nps.gov/hps/tribal/download/Tribal_Consultation.pdf and includes many guidelines that can be applied to African American archaeology situations.

Some other issues not touched on here have to do with intellectual property issues (who owns collaboratively produced research products?), privacy issues (who decides whether descendants’ names should be included in public materials about a project?), nuts-and-bolts decisions about who to contact (how many family members in any particular descendant group need to be consulted about any given issue? Moreover, who has the right to approve decisions on behalf of any particular family?). Obviously, finding answers to these questions is never easy, and each situation is different.

Engaging Descendant Communities: Models for Collaborative Practice in African American Archaeology

The following section will first discuss several types of “oral research” – as noted earlier, it is an important form of “public archaeology”, as defined above. This narrative will explore the issues of race and racialized contexts as important considerations when doing oral research in African American descendant communities. At that point the focus will shift with several case studies.

Following the case studies, there will be explorations of *other* modes of collaborative “public archaeology” practice, all of which complement oral research and sometimes may include it, but are worthy of mention on their own.

Oral research in the historical archaeology of African America: Types of Research, Race and Memory, and Cases Studies

There is a large body of relatively recent literature in both CRM and academic archaeology about using oral history and oral narrative to assist in interpreting pre-contact sites²⁰. In this literature, the protocols for descendant involvement and accountability are usually very clear – a clarity that is one result of legislative mandates such as NAGPRA. For example, one

²⁰ A very limited sampling would include: (Bearss 1990; Crespi 1987; Scott 1986; Scott et al. 1989; Scott 1997); contributions to (Dongoske 1996), especially (Anyon et al. 2000) (which has excellent practical guidelines which could also apply to other groups); (Echo-Hawk 2000; Kelley and Williamson 1996; Leonardo 1987; McDonald et al. 1991; Roberts 2000; Whiteley 2002).

detailed example of this type of research, undertaken in a CRM (though not archaeological) context, was conducted by Alexa Roberts as an attempt to better understand the Sand Creek, Colorado Massacre of 1864 (Roberts 2000). In her article about this project, Roberts discussed in some detail the “Memorandum of Understandings” (MOUs) that were used to clarify agreements between Cheyenne and Arapaho groups and National Park Service (NPS) oral historians. The points covered in the MOUs included negotiated agreements about the protection of sensitive and sacred information, ownership of intellectual property, and the distribution and ownership of research documents.

These sorts of formal agreements are commonplace in archaeological and anthropological projects that deal with Indian groups. Unfortunately, the same degrees of clarity and accountability are not usually present in historical archaeology, either in general or when working with specific groups of descendants. This is not to say that historical archaeologists do not use oral research – there are countless examples, only a small percentage of which are cited here. Our point is that most (notably not all; see the examples below and Crist and Roberts 1996; Powell 1998; Roberts 1984) “everyday” CRM practice *tends* to regard oral research as an optional extra – or, it is not necessarily subject to the same protocols as those that exist when working with tribal groups. Here is where the role of the agency is important, especially with regard to what is included in scope of work documents.

In Texas, for example, oral history *is* given credence – as of 1999, the THC requires 2 of 3 lines of evidence to determine eligibility at the survey level, when an historic site is investigated, and they can be archaeological, archival, or oral (Denton 1999). Therefore, suggesting oral history as part of any project – at any phase – could be included in more proposals than it currently is. In the following narrative, there will be rationales that encourage and enable archaeologists to address those obstacles with respect to oral research, as well as examples that illustrate its benefits and challenges. To be clear: oral research is not necessary for every project, but should be *considered* for every project, especially when doing archaeology at sites occupied by less empowered groups.

First there will be a review of different modes of oral research, followed by a discussion of oral research as it applies to the racialized contexts in which most African American archaeology occurs, especially with regard to social memory. After this will be some concrete

examples that illustrate some of the challenges and potentials inherent in this research, and close with specific resources and literature which may be helpful.

Types of Oral Research

One of the roles of oral research is to balance biases in conventional archaeological and historical accounts. Therefore, it is also important to understand how different kinds of oral interactions operate. There are several modes of oral research to consider: oral “history” (with different styles and frameworks), oral “tradition”, oral “accounts”, ethnographic archaeology, and social memory (sometimes known as historical memory or memory studies). The last two forms of research are not always oral, but often are, so are mentioned here.

Oral history refers to the formal recording of personal memories of people who have experienced particular historical events or who lived in particular historical periods and places. It can also include first-hand remembrances from family stories told over generations, even though the stories themselves might be better characterized as “oral tradition”, as noted below. The primary criteria for “oral history” is that it is collected and recorded in a formal, systematic way – usually with interviews, although the interview style can vary, as noted below. In all interview styles, digital recording (both aural and video) is rapidly becoming the norm, and transcriptions for the recorded data are necessary (and must be accounted for in funding projections). Oral history transcriptions are subject to content analysis and textual criticism using the same standards that historians use when analyzing written documents, and which anthropologists use when analyzing traditional ethnographic data. Oral history transcripts become a part of the official record of the site and should either be attached as appendices to final reports, or made available to future researchers in some other way (for an excellent example of how to approach this, see (Boyd, Franklin, and Myers 2011:13). Often this does not occur, and in those cases the reports should indicate how to access them.

There are several well-regarded “how-to” publications listed below, and the Oral History Association has detailed methodological guidelines on its web site for the more traditional style of oral history interview (see the 2009 update at <http://www.oralhistory.org/do-oral-history/principles-and-practices/>).

Another style of oral history, the “*talk story*”, was pioneered in Hawai’i and lends itself particularly well to conducting oral histories in minority communities. In Hawai’i, Talk Story can occur spontaneously and almost anywhere. It is the manner in which family traditions, genealogies, political insights, thoughts, and feelings are conveyed. While the approach may appear at first to be informal, linguists and others have demonstrated that the approach contains specific rules and contextual cues (Takaki 1993, 1998) that make it far more than simply “chewing the fat”. An analogy could be Studs Terkel’s well-known interviewing approach which he once described as “engaging in conversation, having a cup of coffee” (Ritchie 2003:84). The point is simple: interview subjects are not simply sources of information, but human beings with complex life histories and stories that require a significant amount of emotional connection to elicit. Drawing on personal and shared cultural experiences as well as inquiry and analysis, interviewers create a discursive frame in which responses are both collaborative and consensual.

People who are skilled at this style of interview can often make interview subjects forget the presence of the recorder or video camera. They usually pay a great deal of attention to making interviewees feel comfortable, and on being as spontaneous as possible so that interview subjects do not feel as if they are being ‘interviewed’, but, rather, simply part of a conversation. There are still protocols (informed consent agreements that lay out intellectual property and co-ownership terms for example). Although this style of interview is not commonplace on the U.S. mainland, using it is one way to improve the quality of oral history interviews.

A mix of these interview styles (still falling loosely under the category of oral research), would characterize *archaeological ethnography*, a framework for archaeology practice which has become popular in recent years (Castaneda and Matthews 2008; Hamilakis and Anagnostopoulos 2009; Meskell 2005; Mortensen and Hollowell 2009). Although ethnography in general usually has more of a focus on contemporary contexts rather than historical ones, in practice the data it produces is often mixed. It can resemble the talk story method because it usually relies on unstructured, conversational interviews and other types of personal interactions instead of the more formal, pre-set questions, which are more common in traditional oral history. This type of research is discussed in more detail later, but noted it here because it, too, relies a great deal on person-to-person, often oral, interaction. Like the forms of oral history noted above, it too must include systematic ways of recording data in order to be useful.

Oral tradition is distinct from formally recorded oral history, although it emerges often during oral history interviews (Fixico 1997:103). It refers to cultural traditions that have been transmitted orally over time – often deep time, in the case of indigenous narratives. It does not rely on a written tradition to sustain itself, and can be gleaned from formal oral history interviews, literature, sayings, music, and “folk” tales (although it usually preferable to avoid the words “folklore”, and “myth”, because they are often used to trivialize community truths which are transmitted with oral tradition – as in “it’s just folklore, not historical fact”). Very strong oral traditions still exist in many African Diaspora cultures worldwide. Even in this country, the term “griot” is not unknown amongst those who study African and African pasts: it is the African term for a person who preserves the oral traditions and genealogies of the group.

Oral accounts are different from the types of oral information described above, because they have a different mode of production and are documented somewhat differently. Although oral histories and traditions are obviously also “accounts”, the term “account” is used here to describe the informal, anecdotal knowledge that researchers learn *as they communicate* with local residents, descendant communities and other groups. These often emerge naturally during on-site activities – during visits to the site by members of the public, for example. They are gathered in indirect, even ad hoc ways, and are often not physically recorded. Although they are often referred to, offhandedly, as “oral history” or “oral tradition” in archaeology writing, they are not usually formally cited, although the people who provide them are frequently referred to by name.

These are apart here to emphasize how they are mostly likely to work, in methodological terms. If a site is “open” to visitors, these types of interactions *do* occur, and can yield useful data. Therefore, open sites need to be, first, *allowed*. Archaeologists working in areas where there is a likelihood of knowledgeable passers-by should find ways to welcome visitors, to deal with them when they stop by, and to convince their clients that this is a good idea. These visits are not “just” PR (although they are that); they can be a legitimate part of the research process.

Even when oral information is transmitted informally, it still needs to be documented in systematic ways if it is to be a useful part of the archaeological research process. Note-taking and other forms of documentation should occur as soon as the interactions themselves occur. For example, they should at least be noted in field journals (guides for ethnographic fieldwork are

useful here). When the information is recorded in this way, it can provide helpful information about specific artifacts and artifact contexts (as will be seen in Chapter 5). It can also add to a more deeply contextual, nuanced, and robust understanding of any given descendant community (for example (Feit and Jones 2007) and (Boyd, Franklin, and Myers 2011)).

This leads us to a discussion of *social memory*, sometimes referred to as *historical memory* or *memory studies*. Instead of focusing on the individual narrator, or storyteller, scholars involved in memory studies ask somewhat broader questions. They focus on the cultural *processes* involved in remembering, the social meanings of shared memories, and contemporary social relationships between people and institutions.

Historical memory has an important role when exploring the connection between human memory and archaeological places. It offers useful insights into the ways that individuals, social groups, and communities shape their recollections to suit present needs. It also requires an anthropological focus on power. Oral histories do not occur in a political or cultural vacuum, and individual efforts to extract information from oral information without attention to context are problematic. This is especially true when dealing with issue of race and class, as will be seen in the examples below.

Often, social memory research examines the competing understandings about history that are expressed in schools, government ceremonies, landscape feature and monuments, art, literature, and journalistic accounts, in addition to professional historical scholarship (Shackel 2003:12). Research about African America often draws on memories expressed in the wide array of black cultural institutions –newspapers, radio stations, schools, universities, fraternal organizations, sororities, clubs, public housing projects, and self-help groups. European Americans may be aware of the existence of these institutions, but they often operate as a sort of “parallel universe”, with whites having little awareness of the important role they have in maintaining social memories in the black community. Later in this chapter there will be a discussion of the ways that this type of understanding can be achieved through various types of collaboration, but it is noted it here because the pursuit of this information can be defined as “memory studies” (see also (Carlson-Drexler 2008; Davidson and González-Tennant 2008; Desany 2008; Fennell 2008; Hayes 2008; Shackel 2008)).

The large theoretical and methodological literature in social memory includes work from several historical archaeologists. One who has been particularly prolific is Paul Shackel, who has produced an edited volume with several public memory essays (Shackel 2001), public memory studies (Shackel 2000, 2003), as well as archaeological studies which draw on oral history and oral tradition to interpret archaeological sites (Shackel 2010). The suggestion here is not that all archaeology projects should include social memory studies as part of the research design, but rather that studies such as Shackel's can, when conducted, offer a fuller contextual understanding of both past and present at any given archaeological site. The introductions in both the 2001 and 2003 volumes are especially useful.

For more on memory studies, see (Frisch 1989). For more on the relationship between oral history and public memory, as well as information on method, see (Hamilton and Shopes 2008) and (Yow 2005). For examples of collective memory, in addition to those noted above, see (Hunt 2010; Novick 2001). For an examination of historical memory with respect to power, see *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, by anthropologist Michel Rolph-Trouillot. Although his primary focus was on elite projects of historical production and exclusion, this book is useful in looking at how power operates in the making and recording of history (Trouillot 1995). He makes it clear how the past can be understood only in terms of looking at the present – and that “during the production of history, power operates in a way that silences subaltern groups” (Shackel 2003:12).

Race and Memory in Oral Research

As noted above, context is critical to extracting good information from either one-on-one oral history interviews or other types of oral research. This involves recognizing the relationship between the verbal content of the interactions and the broader historical memory of the community where the research takes place.

There are at least two processes that have a direct effect on this relationship. The first has to do with the roles that many whites have in producing narratives that reinforce conceptions of the past in which the contributions of non-whites (and non-elites) are ignored, marginalized, or stereotyped. Related to this are narratives that “forget” parts of the past that are uncomfortable and hurtful. The second concerns the decisions made by many blacks, in response to the

pressures of discrimination (during both enslavement and the Jim Crow period) to keep important internal community issues and information private.

The second process will be examined shortly, but examples of the former would include traditional narratives about the Texas Revolution that valorize traditional white, male heroes, countless positive stories of frontier settlement, “Gone to Texas” narratives of immigration, individualistic folktales of pulling oneself up by one’s bootstraps, cattle drives, oil prospecting, and the like. It would also include instances where some pasts are “forgotten” by some groups and not others. One of countless examples would be the case of Rosewood, Florida, in which the “almost all-white county has done everything it can to erase the memory of the burning and killing that occurred in 1923” (Shackel 2008:10); for a fuller account see (Davidson and González-Tennant 2008). African-American historical memory usually produces counter-narratives that challenge the dominant version of events (McGhee 2008, 2012). Europeans and non-Europeans have differing experiences, hence different histories and memories.

This is not at all surprising, but it is sometimes not taken into account as archaeologists attempt to incorporate oral narratives into their projects. As Donald Ritchie put it when describing Diane Manning’s *Hill Country Teacher: Oral Histories from the One-Room School and Beyond*:

“People remember what they think is important, not necessarily what the interviewer thinks is important. An oral historian studying Texas teachers who made the transition from the one-room schoolhouse to modern consolidated schools found that white teachers said almost nothing about racial segregation or the details of the integration process. Blacks, Hispanic Americans, and disabled students, remained largely “invisible” in their memories. African American teachers by contrast recalled the days of integration vividly because it affected their own lives so personally.” (Ritchie and Shopes 2003:32).

Another important point with regard to oral research of all sorts is that even if when it cannot be *factually* validated, it can still provide an “insider” glimpse of daily life that is unlikely to emerge elsewhere. As discussed at some length by Wilkie, oral research is most useful in understanding more fully the social processes that “shaped African American cultural, social,

political and race relations” (Wilkie 2000:xvii – xx). For example, Wilkie used oral histories from African American domestic servants to help her interpret the material remains of domestic servitude (Wilkie 2000:123). The sites Wilkie was studying were not the same as those mentioned in the oral histories, but the social and material lives of the interviewed domestic servants were directly relevant to the historical and archaeological contexts she was researching.

A similar example emerged in McDavid’s work in urban Freedmen’s Town, Houston. A life-long resident of Freedmen’s Town (“Joe”) once shared a childhood memory in which there were large barrels on the side of the road called “laughing barrels”, where the street cleaners would put horse manure from the horses on the streets. He said that if a black person walking down a street were to smile at a white person with his or her teeth showing, the white person then had a right to stick the black person’s face down into the barrel – hence the name. One day, as a boy, Joe was walking down the street with his aunt and he smiled at a white man and showed his teeth. His aunt then reprimanded him loudly and stuck his face down in the barrel herself – but not very far. When he protested, she said that if *she* had not done it, the white man would have stuck his head a lot farther in.

The factual challenge with this story is that the man who told it was only about 60 at the time, which would mean that he had been born in about 1948 – thus the event described would have taken place in the mid-1950s. By then, Houston’s car culture was solidly established, and horses were not a feature of urban city life. Therefore, it is extremely unlikely that Joe’s version of the story could have been *factually* true.

In order to begin to understand Joe’s oral account, McDavid researched other accounts of laughing barrels. Maya Angelou wrote about them on plantations ²¹, and Ralph Ellison did the same in his essay “An Extravagance of Laughter” ²², as part of his account of growing up in Oklahoma City in the segregated 1930s. These accounts had nothing to do with horses, but more importantly, they were about an earlier time in history. Therefore, Joe probably knew about laughing barrels, but it is doubtful that he could have experienced one first-hand.

²¹ <http://homeboyreportsii.blogspot.com/2008/01/laughing-barrel.html>

²² <http://www.clarku.edu/activelearning/departments/english/huang/huang.cfm> . “An Extravagance of laughter”.

Some memory scholars refer to this phenomenon – telling a story in the first person even though it was not experienced that way – as “received memory”, “belated memory”, “vicarious witnessing”, or “postmemory”²³. Oral historian Marianne Hirsch described it as follows:

Postmemory describes the relationship that the generation after those who witnessed cultural or collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before, experiences that they “remember” only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own right (106-107)....In forging a protective shield particular to the postgeneration, one could say that, paradoxically, [postmemories] actually reinforce the living connection between past and present, between the generation of witnesses and survivors and the generation after (125) (Hirsh 2008:106-7, 125).

The second process – decisions made within the black community to keep some things private – is explored in detail in *Freedom Colonies: Independent Black Texans in the Time of Jim Crow*, by Thad Sitton and Jim Conrad (Sitton and Conrad 2005). This important work was cited earlier, in Chapter 3, but bears highlighting again here. Using oral histories as their primary research method, Sitton and Conrad tell the story of the rural, self-sufficient communities known as “freedom colonies”, where African Americans created refuges from the violence and discrimination that so severely limited their opportunities in the Jim Crow south. The book includes a lengthy discussion of the reasons why these settlements do not often appear in mainstream historical scholarship (even though, in terms of numbers, migration to them “must have dwarfed the famous move north” (Sitton and Conrad 2005:3). These communities were, for the most part, dispersed, unplatted, and unincorporated, but they were unified by “church and school and residents’ collective belief that a community existed” (Sitton and Conrad 2005:2). People established these colonies as far away as possible from the structures of white authority, and thus they were poorly recorded in tax records, courthouse land records, and censuses. The

²³ See also (Frisch 1979).

residents of these settlements “watched what they said, carefully managed their interactions with whites, and stayed to themselves” (Sitton and Conrad 2005:4).

As the authors put it, “Only in the living memories of elderly community residents did the vein of information run deep” (Sitton and Conrad 2005:4). Using oral history (and written documents viewed through the lens of oral history data) Sitton and Conrad were able to write a narrative that had been previously ignored by mainstream historians. Even though archaeology was not on the authors’ agenda, their narrative suggests some ways in which the traces of these communities might be found:

These were unofficial places by their very nature, some so much so that the sheriff or census taker only rarely intruded on their affairs...Infrastructure was slight, and it might be scattered about at different locations in the dispersed community. Almost always there was a church, or churches, and a school; almost always there was a gristmill and a cane mill...sometimes there was a small steam-powered cotton gin...Certain patterns showed up in the names of these black communities. The common use of place-names from the Bible and the word “chapel” emphasized how many settlements began with the establishment of rural churches. The words “sand”, “creek”, “branch”, “slough”, and “bottom” were common components of place-names, suggesting locations on less-than-ideal soils in sand hills and flood-prone creek and river bottoms....the word “colony” commonly occurred in community place-names...(Sitton and Conrad 2005:18-19).

The book includes an inventory of almost 200 colonies, listed by county, and this list is included (with the authors’ permission) in the database included in this document (Appendix A). Sitton and Conrad made it clear, when giving us this permission, that their list is partial and incomplete. These places are still largely unknown in the larger historical community and do not appear as communities in historical records. Even when these communities do appear on maps, their names are often different from the names they are known by in the black community. An archaeologist doing typical Phase 1 research in the rural areas of Texas would be likely to learn

about these places only if he or she made a point of being in personal contact with the local African American community in their research area, and open to what they might learn from this sort of interaction.

To conclude, oral history cannot be used simply to “translate” artifacts. Like artifacts and documents, it needs to be interpreted as a product of a specific context, both complicated and enriched by an individual’s understanding of that context and filtered through his or her lens of memory. Used in this way, it can provide insights into material culture patterning and the everyday lives of people in the past. Other archaeologists who have explored the value of oral history, used alongside excavation, include (Brown 1973; Purser 1991; Schuyler 1975, 1978). Following are some specific examples.

Case Studies: Benefits and challenges of doing oral research in historical archaeology

Oral research approaches are not without challenges, and archaeologists must understand both their limits and potential. With regard to constraints, from a conventional standpoint they are notoriously difficult and unreliable in terms of extracting traditional “data” about property boundaries, names of historical actors, places where historical events took places, times that they occurred, and the like. Like historical documents, they are subjective, contingent, partial, ambiguous, often tensioned and contradictory. Like any other data, they must be interpreted – any oral research is “merely a record of how an individual in a given place and time chooses to remember and convey his or her understanding of the past” (Wilkie 2000: xvii). They are limited by sample size, which obviously becomes smaller as historical events are removed farther and farther from the present. They can be affected by the rapport that the individual interviewer and interviewee may (or may not) create, which is in turn affected by race, dialect, age, gender and class differences. Power, as noted earlier, is a major factor that affects potential rapport, and some questions in particular (about slavery, oppression, racism, spirituality, etc.) are usually more difficult.

With these constraints in mind, some archaeologists have proposed that the best use of oral research, for archaeological science, is to draw analogies (in much the same way that archaeologists use historical and ethnographic data to test theories against what is found in the ground). Chapter 5 will discuss several examples of this, but there are other benefits that make it

worthwhile to include oral research in African American archaeology projects. As illustrated below, oral research can “give voice to people and views that are not often heard”, and provide a “more nuanced, dynamic and rich account” of past life at an archaeological site— arguably more so than a “collection of physical attributes and measurable artefacts” (Riley and Harvey 2005:270-273). It can also be a powerful form of community engagement. Like collaboration, however, there can be no normative approach. Each site – each context – offers an entirely different set of opportunities, challenges, and potential strategies.

The following examples – a small sample from the entire range of possibilities – are offered as “mini case studies” to discuss both benefits and constraints of doing oral research in African American archaeology. They are presented in no particular order, and are not meant to provide how-tos for doing oral history (several are listed at the end of this section). Some are from Texas practice and others are from elsewhere. Each example illustrates a *specific* point about doing oral research in African American archaeology – although not all are from African American archaeology sites, and some of the larger projects could easily have been used to illustrate several different aspects of oral research. Some examples will be described in great detail, while others will be briefer and meant simply to provide ideas for additional study. For ease of reading each example is identified by the name of the researcher and/or the project, with appropriate citations.

Laurie A. Wilkie: Louisiana

Laurie Wilkie has drawn heavily on oral history to understand the fuller context of African American archaeological sites (Wilkie 2000), and her work illustrates an important benefit of doing oral history: it can help us to communicate our work in ways that help our clients (and other publics) see the value in what archaeologists do. Following is an excerpt from Laurie Wilkie’s 2000 book *Creating Freedom*, in which she skillfully merges archaeological, historical, and oral data to create an evocative narrative about one woman’s daily life:

Silvia Freeman lit the oil lamp at the foot of her bed. Although it was morning, the sun had not fully risen, and the wooden shutters that covered the glassless windows of her house allowed little light through their cracks. Soon she must

begin her daily routine of quickly preparing her family's breakfast...Silvia felt a loose floorboard beneath her foot as she rose from her bed...the girls were always losing pins and things through the slumping floorboards. It was so dark under the house that lost items were rarely found...The water in the wash basin was chilly, and Silvia felt herself awakening as she washed her face. She briefly admired her chamber set, a brilliant white basin and pitcher with bold blue flowers on it...She carefully bundled up her hair in the dark and adjusted the coin on the cord around her neck. Her own mother had given her the coin, marked with her birth year...it was supposed to bring good fortune to the wearer, but it also provided her with a tangible tie to her kin back in Virginia...(Wilkie 2000:1-2).

This quotation illustrates the way that oral history data writing can improve the power of archaeological writing as part of the reporting process (even though Wilkie's account offers plenty of tables, charts, drawings, artifact listings and formal analysis – that is, traditional archaeological reporting). Used together, oral accounts, artifacts, landscapes, documents and artifact contexts can help to create a more “humanized landscape that conveys meaning and personalized social experience” (Riley and Harvey 2005:282).

Gabriel Moshenska: United Kingdom

Within recent European practice, Gabriel Moshenska has done some interesting work that combines historical, archaeological, and historical memory research to “create and foster a public discourse of memory” (Moshenska 2007:91). His excavations focus on the archaeology of Blitz sites in East London, where he found that the act of excavating in a “public” way (being open to site visitors and offering impromptu tours) helped the excavations themselves to become “nexuses of memory, meeting places where personal narratives can be shared, challenged, and renegotiated”. His work is useful in both theorizing the issues involved and offering concrete methodological strategies, which included keeping a tie-clip microphone and release forms in his excavation field kit.

In part because of the recent nature of the deposit being excavated, to some degree Moshenska was able to use oral history to interpret specific artifacts and artifact contexts. What

was interesting, however, was that he did not simply stop at functional interpretations that might be expected. Instead, he used oral history insights to generate broader, testable ideas about artifact contexts. For example:

When I tried to move the discussion around to the houses being excavated, some of the interviewees used the presence of lead water pipes and bakelite electrical fittings to emphasise how much harder their lives had been compared to the people in these homes. Others, as I had hoped, spun stories around the objects such as the outside toilets, as well as the marbles and the army cap badges which appear to have been tradable playground commodities. The trading of shrapnel fragments from anti-aircraft shells for toys and other collectibles appears to have been very popular, and *I concluded that this was a mechanism for children to domesticate the material culture of warfare, integrating it into their established and comfortable schemes of trade and status.* (Moshenska 2007:95). (emphasis added).

The almost offhand inclusion of the small insight emphasized above is not the focus of Moshenska's entire article, which is mostly about the benefits of oral history with respect to public openness and inclusion. It does, however, offer one small example how oral research can enrich the "everyday" interpretation of historical archaeology sites, and push "the usual" functional analyses in more interesting directions.

Paul Mullins: Indianapolis, Indiana

Mullins work focuses on the archaeology of African American consumer and "popular" culture (Mullins 1999, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007) and he relies often on oral research – oral histories, historical memory, as well as more ad-hoc oral accounts. The following is an example of the latter, and relates an oral account provided, during a site visit, by an African American elder (Gilbert Taylor) during Mullins' excavations of a privy at Ransom Place. Ransom Place is an urban African American neighborhood in Indianapolis; pictures are available at <http://www.iupui.edu/~anthpm/ransom427.html>:

Archaeologists who study the recent past often find quite commonplace objects, but these goods often harbor unexpected insights into everyday social life. For instance...three foil wrappers...once graced milk bottles from Indianapolis' Polk Sanitary Dairy...Seals like these were designed primarily to keep domestic pets away from the contents left on customers' doorsteps...

By talking to older African Americans in Indianapolis, Mullins learned that these mundane foil seals had a very specific meaning to the black community of the 1950s. Once a year, a segregated park allowed blacks to enter by bringing in milk caps such as the ones found in the Ransom Place privy. Mullins concluded that finds such as these demonstrate how the “most commonplace commodities ...could be seen as having a ‘racial’ meaning that differed between White and Black consumers”. Mullins also explores this and other “mundane” examples (including one about straight pins) in several published articles, such as the following:

Milk caps and straight pins can tell us something about how race shaped citizen privileges and everyday life along the color line, and they do this very well because we typically ignore such objects and spaces. These objects can show the profound power that race has had on all citizens' rights....An archaeology of race should produce a public discussion about race, class, and cultural differences that might otherwise not happen (Mullins 2006:68).

This example is used here precisely because this fresh view of the African American past did not emerge during “formal” oral history research, but as part of a research design that was open to the information that oral data could provide (and also illustrates the benefit of maintaining an open site during excavations whenever possible).

The Levi Jordan Plantation (Brazoria County, Texas)

Cheryl Wright and Carol McDavid

Several oral history and ethnographic archaeology projects (some of which were characterized as simply “public archaeology” at the time) were conducted at the Jordan Plantation by graduate students working under the direction of Kenneth L. Brown²⁴. In Chapter 5, Brown mentions the role of oral accounts in his research, whereas this chapter will focus on the oral research itself, conducted by Cheryl Wright (Wright 1994) and Carol McDavid (McDavid 1997).

In order to obtain material for her thesis, *I heard it through the Grapevine: Oral Tradition in a Rural African American Community in Brazoria, Texas* (Wright 1994), Wright conducted in-depth taped interviews with 17 descendants of the African-American people who lived on the Jordan, Mims, and Stratton Plantations (located near each other in Brazoria County). Her goal was to explore the larger social and cultural context of African American life in this small corner of the county, and to get a sense of how people lived and survived both the slavery and post-slavery periods – as well as to learn about the material lives of those who lived on the plantation itself, if possible.

Wright discovered an extremely close, vibrant community in which there are strong connections between past and present. While masking names in the body of her thesis (for privacy), she was able to discuss some of the family names in her introduction, thus providing family linkages for the ongoing research project and the public interpretation work which continues today.

In addition, her data revealed specific information about the cultural practices surrounding healing, burials, kinship, and the like. This information helped Brown and his team to understand the continued resonance and probable time-depth of some of the specific cultural practices that had emerged from archaeology (the role of the healer, for example). (For segments of interview transcripts, see <http://www.webarchaeology.com/html/cheroral.htm>. The THC also has a copy of Wright’s entire thesis in the Jordan Plantation archives). She was also able to gather specific information about the area’s historic black churches, much of which was useful to

²⁴ Mary Lynne Gassaway Hill also conducted oral history project with the white female descendants of the Jordan family (Hill 1997).

Brown as he interpreted artifact contexts. Over subsequent years, he and others built on her initial insights about how the network of churches operated within the larger community (for example, her work made it clear *which* churches were most important, and to whom).

Wright's oral history research was also very successful as a *public* archaeology project, and was an important factor in gaining credibility for other members of the research team within the African American community. The best example of this occurred when Wright assembled a group meeting at the Jordan "main house". She was able to persuade several members of the African American descendant community – e.g., her respondents – to attend. McDavid and Brown recruited members of the white descendant community, as well as several students who had projects underway. In a roundtable fashion, participants were asked to express their hopes with regard to potential public interpretations of the site – whether there should be a museum, for example. The symbolic aspects of the occasion were not lost on anyone present, and were tremendously important in beginning the collaborations that McDavid developed later.

One of Wright's most important discoveries was that the identities of the "descendant community" of the Jordan Plantation were defined and nurtured by the places they *worshipped* – by their *church* communities – not by their connections to the physical place where their ancestors were enslaved. Because of this, outsider efforts to generate interest in the archaeology project by referring to someone as a member of the "Jordan Plantation Descendant Community" could *never* have any positive meaning to the descendants of those who were enslaved there. The roots of the church communities – which Wright identified in her interviews – were planted in the soil of self-reliance and freedom – not slavery. Wright's research made one particular and vitally important question clear: *why should anyone wish to celebrate a family connection to the place that their forebears were enslaved?*

It was not that descendants were unaware of the connection – most seem to know that their ancestors were enslaved at the "Jordan Place". In fact, "site" descendants have, overall, been happy to participate in community-wide history activities at the plantation, and to be recognized as members of the *larger* "African American descendant community. The key critical insight was that *site* descendency does not have to be the primary focus, in terms of outreach, recognition, or research.

Further, being unaware of how this dynamic existed in Brazoria could well have *undermined* our efforts to build credibility in the African American descendant community. Over the years, researchers as well as Jordan Plantation Historical Society members have often had to deflect requests from reporters along the lines of “I want to interview a *real* descendant”. They learned, fortunately in time, that this would likely be an unwelcome way to introduce people. However, they also noticed that descendant families who no longer live in the immediate area are more open to being connected to the site in lineal terms (one of these descendants currently serves on the Society Board and is happy to discuss his ancestor’s role as the “Elder”, or “Political Leader”). Again, context and an awareness of historical memory are key.

McDavid’s Jordan-based research followed Wright’s, and consisted of a master’s in anthropology from the University of Houston and a doctorate in archaeology from the University of Cambridge. In addition to building on Wright’s data, McDavid’s work also “fed” back and forth with Ken Brown’s ongoing research about the site, and continues to do so today.

The goal of her first project was to determine whether a public interpretation of the Jordan site, located *in the community*, was either feasible or desirable. The timing of this research is important: it took place from 1992 – 1996, and represented one of the first times (if not *the* first time) that descendants of enslavers and enslaved, from one plantation, came together in a mutually empowered setting to decide how to publicly interpret the histories of their ancestors. Although the African Burial Ground project in New York City was underway at the time, its full impact had yet to be made outside of CRM practice in New York City, and the context of its production was utterly different (although it was important in the other ways, as described earlier). Other important work was also taking place during this period as well (see (McDavid and Babson 1997) for examples, and (Leone, LaRoche, and Babiarz 2005) for comments about the evolving relationships between descendants, ethics, and archaeologists during this period).

McDavid examined data from her own oral interviews, ethnographic analysis, and participant observation. Her most critical findings, with regard to the question of public interpretation, had to do with power dynamics in Brazoria. They had direct impact on the way the project developed over the last two decades, and on the current public interpretations now being attempted by the Texas Historical Commission. The following is excerpted from (McDavid 2003:46-47).

...I began to conduct interviews, and quickly found that it was extremely difficult to arrange appointments with people in the African American community...I kept sensing a wariness...[until I realized] that interviews were not going to be a productive way of getting input from the African American community *until members of the that community were fully empowered to act on any suggestions they might make...we had gotten the whole order of things completely backwards*...until members of the African American community belonged to the inside, private power structure of the planning group...they would not volunteer anything but superficial and pleasant replies to many of my questions...[I needed to take] account of the subtle, mostly unstated ways in which marginalization, tokenization, and discrimination still continued to operate...[emphasis added].

One probable reason for this lack of interest was noted by Michael Blakey in a commentary on McDavid's project (also commenting on a similar project described by Linda Derry in the same volume; Derry 1997):

African Americans ignored or avoided those archaeological and preservation initiatives until they were afforded an adequate share of real decision-making influence. Other wise, they would simply serve the interests of white people, albeit their interest in African American history. Black people do not want to work for white people's purposes at the expense of their own empowerment, perhaps especially not when it comes to the study and interpretation of themselves. (Blakey 1997:143).

After this, there were no more interviews and no more attempts to "gather input" until disempowered people were (at least in this context) fully empowered. McDavid, Brown, and the European American descendants began a full-bore effort to recruit African American members to join the planning group²⁵. Importantly, all of these new members were selected *by* the black

²⁵ The group is the aforementioned Levi Jordan Plantation Historical Society (www.webarchaeology.com).

community, including several “site” descendants. The latter made it very clear that they expected the new recruits to represent their site ancestors’ interests as well as those of the larger descendant community. It is also interesting to note that the new members were selected along *church* community lines, which further validated Wright’s early insights.

The most important point for this document is that the original notion of “descendant involvement” in Brazoria, Texas was flawed, but *this was only understood as a result of doing oral research*. Without oral research, and an in-depth knowledge of local context, one cannot know what any descendant community might “be”, “want” or “know”.

Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead Project (RSWFP)

Doug Boyd (P.I., Prewitt and Associates), Maria Franklin (Oral Historian and Community Outreach Coordinator, UT-Austin), Terri Myers (Historian, Central Preservation, Inc.). The project was funded by the Texas Department of Transportation.

This project is exceptional for both “dirt” archaeological and historical reasons, but it is highlighted here because it also represents a recent, major CRM project in Texas that included oral history *and* community outreach in the client-funded research design. Because the final reports for this project are still being written, the researchers involved (Maria Franklin and Doug Boyd) reviewed the description below to insure that it is in sync with writing now underway.

In the summer of 2009, Prewitt and Associates archaeologists, under the direction of Doug Boyd as Principal Investigator, conducted extensive data recovery excavations at the Ransom Williams Farmstead (41TV1051) in southern Travis County for the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). The site, which will ultimately be impacted by the construction of State Highway 45, was occupied by an African American family – Ransom, his wife Sarah, and several children – from 1871 to about 1905. The archaeological features and material culture associated with their tenure on the land are quite impressive, and history of this place and the people who lived there was strengthened by extensive archival and oral history research. The latter was made possible because, in a preliminary 2008 report for TxDOT, Prewitt and Associates successfully argued for expanding the project to include community outreach, public education, and oral history, especially with local African Americans (Myers and Boyd 2008). Therefore this project is a prime example of the potential for CRM firms and state agencies to

contribute to the large and growing body of public and community-based archaeological research about the African Diaspora.

There are several levels of benefit that the project provided. The first level of benefit was to the *project* itself. The RSWFP oral history effort was largely driven by the overall research objective: to study and interpret African American lifeways in rural farming settlements from Reconstruction through Jim Crow, using an interdisciplinary approach (oral history, historical and archaeological research). The oral histories allowed researchers to extend the timeline of what was learned from specific investigations of the Williams family to encompass the stories of later black families who inherited their freedmen's legacy. They also served as a means, along with the archival research, to historically contextualize the site and interpret the data gathered at the site. For this project, the archival record, the oral history, and the archaeological remains are three separate lines of evidence, but they are intimately related and, when studied together, they allowed researchers to more fully interpret the past.

There was also benefit to the *discipline*. Even though CRM projects are usually bounded by the footprint of pending construction, RSWFP was able to extend the impact of their work past excavation boundaries – in effect, to blur the boundaries between CRM and academic practice, and show how CRM archaeology can truly be part of the more broadly defined “public archaeology” discourses described earlier. It showed clearly how even “footprint-delimited” CRM archaeology can add to a truly contextualized understanding of what life was like for African Americans in the past.

In addition, both the direct lineal *descendants* and the entire descendant community saw benefit. Researchers interviewed people who farmed in areas near the Williams site during Jim Crow, as well as others who were raised in urbanized Austin, or who lived in the country but whose families did not rely on agricultural work to make a living. These individuals will be able to share in the production of a final, very public “product”: a two-volume monograph, currently in progress, which will contain all of the oral histories representing the project. Therefore descendant community members and future scholars will be able to benefit from this project.

Last but not least, there was benefit for the *client*, which enjoyed very positive public relations (the project was featured in several different television and print outlets– even though the public education efforts are still in progress).

There are two specific insights from RSWFP oral research that are important to highlight here. The first has to do with the role of researcher subject identities, especially with regard to race and to the power relationships between researchers and descendants. As Franklin put it in an early draft of their report:

...even though two black women (myself and Nedra Lee) served as interviewers, we could not assume that a shared racial identity would have the effect of getting people to talk about a very sensitive and explosive topic. Moreover, as an academic in charge of the oral history project, I was the one who possessed the lion's share of power and control over the structure of the interview, the questions posed, and the interpretations. Interviewees, of course, could exercise their own power, and did so in the ways they chose to answer our questions. Even though we shared a black identity with almost all of the narrators, which may have helped to develop rapport, everyone was well aware that the interviews would eventually be publicly accessible. All of these factors influenced how and what interviewees revealed, and why.

This is an important point: one cannot assume that simply being a member of the same group (whether it be defined by ethnicity, gender, age, class, or other criteria) will make rapport, mutually empowered, and open communication “automatic”. Oral research is *always* complicated by human differences, but it can be enriched by them as well, if researchers are trained in the methods and underlying philosophies of oral research, and sensitive to the nuances of *each* communication situation. For another example of oral history which confronted the same issue, see Lee and Bruseth 2008).

The second level of benefit has to do with the definition of “descendant communities”, which was discussed more fully earlier. The main point here is that, when choosing potential interviewees for oral research in CRM projects, NAGPRA-defined notions of descendants as “lineal” descendants, *should not apply*. Limiting interviews to those who are direct “site”

descendants will result in an incomplete, narrow, and potentially irrelevant research product that is out of tune with respect to current disciplinary standards

That said, researchers *must* have a clear idea of the broader context of each specific research area in order to begin to approach potential interviewees. Baseline “context research” interviews usually need to take place before any oral history interviews can happen – and this baseline research needs to be included in the funded research design. It will not only reveal the best ways to indentify and locate potential descendants (as noted earlier) but will also help to determine the research questions appropriate for different groups of descendants. Therefore it will enable researchers to avoid “one-size-fits-all” approaches, and to structure interviews around different sets of interview questions which depend on who is being interviewed, and for what purpose.

Each situation and each local context will pose a different set of challenges. In addition to providing information, oral research can also function as a platform for community communication and mutual understanding. In our view, this goes far beyond “just” outreach, and helps to create a truly collaborative research process.

Doing oral research: sources and practical guides

- Miscellaneous Sources
 - Donald Ritchie’s *How to do Oral History: A Practical Guide* (Ritchie and Shopes 2003), is one of the best books on the subject, especially regarding the legal aspects (such as the need to address the nature, style, and content of the interview beforehand, in writing). The second edition cited here discusses digital recording and the Internet, although, as a 2003 publication, it is not completely up to date with regard to new technologies.
 - Perks and Thomson’s *Oral History Reader* (Perks and Thomson 2006); especially the second edition, because it includes information on new digital technologies.
 - The Texas Historical Commission has an excellent guide, available at <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/oralhistory/ohdefault.shtml> . It does not cover digital recording, but is very useful nonetheless.

- Studs Terkel's books are widely respected oral history documents, as are the films and videos of Terkel in action, such as the recent HBO documentary entitled "Studs Terkel: Listening to America". Our favorites are *Working: People talk about what they do all day and how they feel about what they do* (1997) and *Race: How Blacks and Whites think and feel about the American obsession* (2005). (Terkel 1997) and (Terkel 2005)
- Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation (<http://dornsife.usc.edu/vhi/>)
 - This is Steven Spielberg's massive effort to interview every living Holocaust survivor, no matter where they are located.
- Mike O'Krent's "Life Stories Alive" project. This is a commercial project, but O'Krent worked with Spielberg's Shoah project, and was so moved by the experience that he started his own oral history company (<http://www.lifestoriesalive.com>).
- University centers for oral history
 - The University of Hawai'i Center for Oral History, <http://www.oralhistory.hawaii.edu/> and <http://www.oralhistory.hawaii.edu/index.html>
 - The Oral History Office at the University of Connecticut, <http://www.oralhistory.uconn.edu/>
 - The Baylor University Center for Oral History, <http://www.baylor.edu/oralhistory/>
- Professional transcription services. Transcriptions are expensive. A professional transcriber will take about 3 hours to transcribe an hour of recorded time, and it is not unusual for a one-hour interview to cost \$150-\$200 to transcribe. Some services at universities provide the service at somewhat better rates, while professional services offer fast turnaround, excellent quality and good technical support. There are a number of excellent services across Texas.

Other Modes of Collaborative Practice

This section will describe, briefly, other modes of collaborative practice. Even though they are all situated in specific disciplinary discourses, all can also be seen as part of the “collaborative continuum” framework.

Archaeological Ethnography

Although the term archaeological ethnography has been used by archaeologists before for example (Watson 1979), in recent years the term has been used in somewhat different ways to describe the “merging of ethnographic and archaeological practices in order to explore the contemporary relevance and meaning of the material past for diverse publics, the politics of archaeological practice, and the claims and contestations involving past material traces and landscapes” (Hamilakis and Anagnostopoulos 2009:2). One of the first examples in this recent mode was (Meskell 2005). Examples of edited volumes with numerous other examples include (Castaneda and Matthews 2008; Hamilakis and Anagnostopoulos 2009; Mortensen and Hollowell 2009).

It is more than simply another style of practice, especially in the sense that it tends to be more theorized than other modes of public archaeology. It can and usually does include formal and informal interviews, participant observation, archival research, ethnographic site tours and engagements with visitors to an archaeological site, engagements with and between the archaeological teams (including workmen and workwomen); ethnographic and other participatory events in schools with the active involvement of schoolchildren; and even performative and “art installations in various media and sites which can also generate further ethnographic research (exhibitions, blogs, photo-essays, other performances”. It is often multi-sited and comparative, and usually both critical and reflexive. It is also regarded as part of a more global effort to decolonize archaeological practice, and to deconstruct traditional boundaries between community and scientific interests. It does not have to be performed by traditional ethnographers, and can be part of “everyday” archaeological practice, if the archaeologist wishes.

It is also profoundly collective and collaborative, in at least two respects. First, although it can be conducted by individuals (either anthropologists or archaeologists) it is just as often

conducted collaboratively by different members of a project team who themselves come from different disciplines. In an even more important sense, it is also collective in the sense that it involves the “expansion of the research team to include, in a truly collaborative manner, the groups and people whom researchers normally refer to as ‘informants’ or ‘interlocutors’” (Hamilakis and Anagnostopoulou 2009:82). People who characterize their work as archaeological ethnography usually prefer terms like participants, collaborators, or research partners – all of which prioritize the idea of non-hierarchical *sharing* as a *fundamental* part of their practice (note, however, that these terms are also preferred in other modes of practice; Pyburn discussed this in some detail (Pyburn 2009). It is worth noting that Pyburn characterizes her work as “participatory action research” (see below) although it was published in a special issue of *Public Archaeology* that focuses on archaeological ethnography²⁶. Categories often blur.

Although many archaeologists are not trained to do ethnography, their training (if it takes place in Americanist contexts) usually does include a familiarity with the process, and often archaeological ethnographers participate on archaeological teams and provide useful insights. This is, for example, what is now occurring on the Bernardo Plantation Archaeology Project in South Texas, where both an archaeological ethnographer and an avocational oral historian are working closely with principal investigators to understand local community contexts.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) (sometimes known as applied “advocacy” anthropology)

PAR is a form of “engaged” research where there is a willingness on the part of the researcher to subordinate him or herself to what was described earlier as the “ethical client,” not only to the “business client” (Mack and Blakey 2004). In its objective to be democratic and “fully collaborative”, it has much in common with the most recent archaeological ethnography (described earlier) as well as work framed as “advocacy anthropology” and some forms of “applied anthropology” (Chambers 1985; Ervin 2000; Van Esterik 1985).

²⁶ This highlights an interesting feature of much archaeological writing about collaboration and “publics”. Writing by the same authors often appear in publications that are “about” public archaeology, applied anthropology, archaeological ethnography, civic engagement, politics, ethics, collaboration...and more. Once one becomes familiar with the literature, one notices that the same researcher names (and even the same projects) are often framed within several different discourses. Therefore, the boundaries between the various modes of “engaged” practice frequently overlap.

PAR has a long heritage in social science, but is only beginning to be used in archaeology, where it “offers a defined, well-described but flexible methodology that obviates the worst mistakes well-meaning archaeologists make” (Pyburn 2009:168); namely, it provides archaeologists with methods of sharing meaningful power with local individuals and communities from the early stages of any research project.

Two things need to always be kept in mind about PAR: first, it is meant to be a collaborative process that goes beyond a research agenda, and, second, positive social change is an explicit goal. This means that researchers, in our case archaeologists, need to be comfortable with non-traditional approaches to the generation of scientific information. They must be comfortable with the idea that intellectual authority and power, including financial resources, should be shared and the information produced “owned” by the community as well as the researcher and his “business client.”

Put it another way, from (Wadsworth 1998):

...participatory action research is not just research which we hope will be followed by action! It is action which is researched, changed and re-researched, *within* the research process by participants. Nor is it simply an exotic variant of consultation. Instead, it aims to be active co-research...Nor can it be used by one group of people to get another group of people to do what is thought best for them... Instead it tries to be a genuinely democratic or non-coercive process whereby those to be helped determine the purposes and outcomes of their own inquiry....

Essentially, participatory action research is research which involves all relevant parties in actively examining together current action (which they experience as problematic) in order to change and improve it. In its more radical variants, PAR completely democratizes the research process:

“the community defines the problem and then analyzes and solves it. The people themselves own the information, analyze the results, and come to conclusions

from the research.... it is a process creating a greater awareness of community members own resources” (Ervin 2000:200).

When done correctly, PAR builds community capacity, fosters social networking, and balances research biases (The Field Museum 2006:8-9). The role of the researcher in these types of projects is essentially passive, limited to training community members and answering their questions.

PAR methodologies employ techniques of research partnership, research design generation, planning, execution, and data analysis that increase chances of producing “win-win” scenarios in which archaeologists fulfill ethical mandates to be accountable to communities while producing useful policy oriented research products that their business clients desire. PAR practitioners do not have to check their theoretical social science training at the door and can creatively apply anthropological perspectives to their practice. Not only good civics but also good science, this type of applied work, while difficult, offers tools for those unsatisfied with merely describing social problems and interested in actively working to solve them.

In practice this may mean using anthropological skills and knowledge to represent the needs and priorities of community members from the point of view of the community itself, utilizing language that the community understands. It can also mean finding ways for the community to “own” the research; to define the problem, to analyze it, and interpret it. Ideally, they solve it as well. When done with the full support of all players involved (including business clients) this democratization of research often produces better quality research results, fosters goodwill, and respects a community’s indigenous institutions and resources. While doing this type of work, it is important to bear in mind that the definition of “community” will vary in different contexts – it can mean “locals”, or members of a certain group or family, or other types of groups (such as the metal-detector community or avocational community) (Matthews and McDavid 2012). It can also mean the archaeological community – that is, the community for whom this volume is intended.

The goal is positive social change and community capacity building. Moving from analysis or critique to policy and empowerment can be challenging for some anthropologists and archaeologists because skills other than just scientific enquiry are required. Good CRM

archaeologists understand what it means to subordinate one's advanced education and training to others, and are accustomed to working in situations where the research topic or topics are selected by someone else. They are also accustomed to the stakes involved; the research being generated will become the basis for decision-making that in many cases entails significant consequences.

Within archaeology, researchers who have drawn specifically on PAR and applied anthropology approaches include Fred McGhee (McGhee 2000; McDavid and McGhee 2010), Anne Pyburn (Pyburn 2008) and Uzi Baram (Baram 2011). McGhee is especially concerned with policy questions and recognizes that his real world clients (and much of the non-archaeological public) are most interested in "the point," which is to say *outcomes*. This focus on results introduces difficult constraints, and makes it incumbent upon archaeologists to advocate strongly for the understanding that *process* and *conduct* matter at least as much as a fetishized focus on "goals." Effective advocacy on this point, however, requires policy knowledge and a realistic understanding of the political and fiscal constraints that characterize modern American governance, as well as a willingness to go beyond academic critique.

There is a related body of writing, mostly from sociology, that is also considered "action" research. This is the literature of community organizing, in particular the work of Randy Stoecker at the University of Toledo. Stoecker (Stoecker 1999) points out that there are three different ways that academics (of whatever discipline) usually engage with communities: "The *Initiator*", "The *Consultant*", and "The *Collaborator*". The Initiator is someone who comes up with a research or project idea and invites the community to participate – this is, I think, what happens with most public archaeology projects. In the Consultant scenario, the community commissions the research and the academic is accountable to it. Many archaeologists aim to also be Collaborators, in which the researcher and community start from very different places, but attempt to merge skills, with the researcher gaining more experience and understanding of the community, and the people more theoretical and technical knowledge. This last scenario is by far the most difficult.

With true collaborative research there would be equal participation in formulating research questions, analyzing results, presenting results, and so on. But the reality is that people have their own lives to lead, and collaborative research takes a huge amount of time for

everyone. Stoecker reminds us that while the archaeologists (or other researchers) may be willing to devote these chunks of time, this is because they see this as their “job”. The constituent communities may not have that luxury, or, even, desire, and may find it advantageous to have the “experts” to work for them or on their behalf – that is, in the “initiator” or “consultant” scenarios. It is often difficult to locate community participants who are willing to be true collaborators, *in terms of the research itself*. It may be that this is asking too much – after all, corporations and the wealthy are able to hire experts to do things for them (McDavid 2004).

Stoecker also points out that researchers need to problematize the whole notion of thinking of participatory projects as “research”. They are not. They are community organizing and/or activist projects, of which research is only one piece (Stoecker 1999). Thinking of participatory research like this can help archeologists and other researchers define their roles in terms of a larger context in which the work “matters” in a different way.

Participatory Geographic Information Systems (PGIS)²⁷

PGIS is a term that identifies the ways that researchers can extend “standard” GIS data collection and analysis to include substantive levels of input from local communities and other non-official sources – hence the term “participatory”. While GIS is well known in archaeology for the new ways it enables archaeologists to view and analyze traditional data, PGIS takes it farther (Lock 2003; Wheatley and Gillings 2002). It provides a cutting-edge methodology for creating community-engaged education and research programs, and for gathering, displaying and analyzing information about oral history, oral tradition, and social memory (Darley et al. 2011).

For example, Margaret Purser has been conducting a Participatory GIS” or PGIS, project in Fiji (Purser 2011). This project is sponsored by the Fiji National Trust as part of community “capacity building” workshops, in which professionals (including archaeologists) train participants how to do oral history, archaeological site-mapping, artifact identification and architectural recording. The workshops have all been held with a somewhat idealistic overall

²⁷ This is also referred to as PPGIS, or “Public Participation GIS”. The term PGIS emerged in geography, where it has a slightly different meaning than the one that is evolving in archaeology. In addition to the “usual” sense (inviting publics to contribute, comment on and derive meaning from information presented spatially), “public” in this sense also refers to activities which are cross-disciplinary and interdepartmental.

theme: that “everyone’s map of town is the right map” (Purser 2011:504). Material from these workshops was later incorporated into Purser’s broader landscape archaeology investigations.

PGIS databases can include virtually any text, image, or other media having to do with any particular archaeological place. “Place” can be defined on any scale that the user wishes – site, slave quarter, or excavation unit (although the root identifiers are UTM’s). Once the PGIS database is set up and populated (an involved, and thus expensive, project) users are able to “drill down” into a “virtual” on-screen graphic database to view, read, or “experience” whatever information is there. This information can include archaeological data, historical documents, oral research, maps, “folklore”, geological data, contemporary or historical writing (including fiction) and interviews. It can also include songs, films, and photographs, and art, as well as community recollections about place-names, the locations of important structures (such as slave quarters and village/workplace footprints).

Once it is part of a PGIS database, the material can then be deployed for any number of uses. One obviously includes analysis by scholars from all concerned disciplines (archaeologists, anthropologists, historians, oral historians, etc.). Others include displays, publications, and online venues such as web sites and DVDs. PGIS approaches thus enable local citizens, descendant communities and other stakeholders, to have their *individual* narratives considered, analyzed and presented alongside the scientific narratives created by archaeologists. PGIS expands traditional GIS approaches – it uses the same technology but applies it to a broader set of interests.

In short, the potential benefits of PGIS range from better scientific analysis to better ways for everyday citizens and stakeholders to benefit from the archaeological research conducted at any particular site. Importantly, because PGIS approaches are usually aimed at empowering the communities and individuals who are often ignored in traditional research, they may be particularly useful in the practice of African American archaeology. The database of African American sites included in this document is “GIS-ready”

Education Models: traditional and more recent

As noted earlier, efforts to “educate” publics about archaeology have been active for well over two decades. In addition to the sources noted earlier, an important and seminal volume was edited by George S. Smith and John E. Ehrenhard in 1991 which dealt with several important

topics: archaeology and the public, archaeology and the law, protecting archaeological sites through education, archaeological site destruction, and the future of protecting the past (Smith and Ehrenhard 1991 (2001); see also (McManamon 1991). Later, Ed Friedman, an early member of the SAA's "Public Education Committee" wrote a useful historical review of why archaeology education efforts first started (to stop looting on Indian sites) (Friedman 2000). More recently Alice Beck Kehoe, a leader in archaeology education during the early period, published a fascinating perspective on the "gendered" history of archaeology education (as she put it, "the pink collar level of archaeology"; (Kehoe 2011:543). In this article Kehoe described the early public archaeology efforts made by a variety of groups (the Society for American Archaeology as well as various state organizations and agencies) to meet a growing public interest in archaeology while communicating the "stewardship message". These efforts are still underway, and include countless "archaeology weeks" and volunteer field schools held all over the country. In many of these, "collaboration is now seen as the explicit methodological model" (Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008:1), citing, along with several others (Bruseth et al. 2000). Texas in particular is nationally known for its "Texas Archaeological Stewardship Network", which has employed numerous creative strategies for avocationalists (including metal detectorists) and professionals to work together (see <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/stewards/stwdefault.shtml> and (Potter 2006). Nationally, hundreds – perhaps thousands – of education "products" have been produced to provide archaeology education materials to teachers, students, and the general public (for example (Wheat-Stranahan 2007).

Late in the last century and early in the current one, edited volumes filled with case studies about public archaeology projects became popular (Derry 2003; Jameson 1997; Smardz and Smith 2000). Although some writers in the 1990's took other approaches to public archaeology, as discussed earlier [for example (Potter 1994) and the contributors to (McDavid and Babson 1997)], it is still fair to say that most archaeologists writing about their public work framed their public archaeology work as "archaeology education"²⁸. More recently, case studies about public archaeology have moved well beyond that framework, although it is still an important component of public archaeology writing [see examples of this and other modes of

²⁸ For more examples see the SAA website page "Educational Resources For Archaeologists", located at http://www.saa.org/publicftp/PUBLIC/resources/EdResources_Archaeologists.html).

practice in (Marshall 2002; Matthews, McDavid, and Jeppson 2011; Merriman 2004; Shackel and Chambers 2004; Skeates, McDavid, and Carman 2011; Sorensen and Carman 2009)].

Although it is clear that archaeology education in support of the stewardship ethic can convince some publics that archaeology is important, in our view it does not go far enough. The main problem (if one believes that it is desirable to collaborate with descendant groups in democratic, mutually empowered ways) is that this work has not been done for the needs of the public at all – it has been done for the needs of *archaeology*. As Kevin Bartoy put it recently:

In the past, the goals of public archaeology have largely been to benefit archaeology rather than the public...it is arguable that [focusing on the stewardship ethic can] also create a power relationship between archaeologists and the public in which archaeologists are producers of knowledge and the public are consumers of the same knowledge. Furthermore, they also presume that archaeology and archaeological knowledge are unquestioningly beneficial commodities...In the end, we do not empower the public through archaeology education, but instead, we empower ourselves through the public. As institutionalized by the SAA, public archaeology is a practice of self-interest (Bartoy 2011:556-557).

Recently, some archaeologists, although still using education as the primary framework for their public archaeology work, have begun to question stewardship as the best or only motive for participating in archaeology education – in other words, they are beginning to engage, theorize, analyze and critique rather than simply describe, celebrate and indoctrinate. Kevin Bartoy, for example, wrote about the potential usefulness of constructivist learning theory in museum archaeology education. Rather than just theorizing (although his overview of learning theory was useful, given that most archaeologists are not familiar with it) he shared “real-world” examples from his work at The Hermitage (Bartoy 2011:556-557). For Bartoy, “public archaeology has the power to teach important lessons that are an absolute necessity in a functioning democracy. The first and most important lesson that public archaeology can teach is critical thinking” (Bartoy 2011:557).

Jeppson has also focused on critical analysis, although aimed at a different target – the intersection of archaeology and the public K-12 school system in the United States. She has examined the many ways that larger societal “culture wars”, including right-wing, anti-multicultural movements, have eroded archaeological efforts to work with local school systems and social science educators to share the insights about the past that archaeology can offer.

Elaine Davis Franklin, also drawing on constructivist learning theory, has researched how children – especially of different ages – process certain kinds of information (Davis 2005). For example, ideas that are well-known to educators (such as how children understand time) are not always evident to archaeologists attempting to “do” public archaeology. More recently, she and Jeanne Moe have explored whether public archaeology can increase “archaeological literacy”, or put another way, help to create a public which is informed about archaeology.

...there has been an explosion in the number and types of programmes, materials, and initiatives that can be classified as public archaeology or archaeology education. One might conclude that this enthusiastic response has resulted in a better-informed, more archaeologically literate, public. Perhaps it has, but the truth is that we do not really know; there is a paucity of research regarding public knowledge of archaeology. Common misconceptions about even the most basic aspects of the discipline seem to doggedly persist in the popular media. This is particularly true in regard to information for children. Some of the most prominent online booksellers still include mummies, dinosaurs, and treasure in their classification of children’s books about archaeology...For those of us who work in archaeology education, such realizations cause us to feel that we are still, after two decades, groping in the dark. As Merriman (Merriman 2004:8) points out: ‘With such a weak knowledge of the attitudes, conceptions, and beliefs of the receivers of archaeological information, archaeologists have . . . been communicating blindly to an audience they do not understand.’ (Franklin and Moe 2011:567).

A final example of current educational models in public archaeology would be the recent work of Michael Nassaney [as well as the contributors to (Nassaney and Levine 2009)], who have drawn on “service learning” to frame public archaeology projects (Nassaney 2004, 2011). In service learning, students conduct community service activities related to archaeology projects, and then explicitly apply their experience to classroom training. It goes beyond volunteer work in that it does not end with the fieldwork. There is a three-part process: classroom preparation, the service activity, and “structured reflection” which ties the service activity back to specific learning goals. So for example a group of students in an archaeology field school can work with the children at a local elementary school to learn about the archaeology and history of their own neighborhood, or they can work with a group of school children as they do oral history with their grandparents (Derry 1997). As Nassaney described it:

The service-learning approach emphasizes the context of knowledge claims and aims to provide students with opportunities to learn by engaging with real-world settings while providing a community service. Archaeologists have a history of working with communities, but only recently has that work been framed as service...Examples drawn from various projects in the United States showcase how the CSL approach encourages students who practise archaeology to become civically engaged, capable of confronting real-world problems, and empowered to see themselves as catalysts for change (Nassaney 2011:415).

Service learning includes an important feature of the most recent archaeology education work – similar to Jeppson’s work, above. Archaeologists are no longer expected to be experts about education. Educators are. That is, the most recent work tends to focus more on building collaborations between professional archaeologists and professional educators, in which both forms of expertise are respected and used. The best of these projects are, therefore, well along the “collaborative continuum” described earlier.

Conclusion

All work along the “collaborative continuum” is difficult. It has to be seen as both tentative and contingent – that is, experiments will continue, they will be messy, mistakes – and criticisms -- will be made. The experiments also may not work. Even so – especially so – what matters, when considering the possibility of archaeology and descendant involvement, is not which specific strategies are used. What matters is *that* they are used, and how they are used.

The next chapter moves back to “dirt” archaeology: it will provide a detailed case study about the work that Kenneth L. Brown has done at the Levi Jordan Plantation, including a brief description of work undertaken at other sites.

Chapter 5:

Archaeological Methodology and the African American Past: A Comparative Study of Four Plantation Quarters Sites, 1780-1964

By Kenneth L. Brown

Introduction

The historical archaeological investigation of the Levi Jordan Plantation, located in Brazoria County, Texas began in March 1986 under my direction, and continued for thirteen field seasons over sixteen years. In 2002 ninety acres of the original Jordan Plantation lands, including the area of the original main house and the quarters for the enslaved (and, later, tenants/sharecroppers), was sold by four of Jordan's descendants to Houston Endowment, a large philanthropic foundation in Houston. The property was then transferred the State of Texas, to be managed by the Texas Parks and Wild Life Department (TPWD), until the management role was transferred to the Texas Historical Commission (THC). The THC is now developing the site as a State Historic Park.

Little did we know, in 1986, that the investigation of the Jordan Plantation Quarters Community would begin a major change in how archaeologists view the ways that peoples of African descent managed and developed their *own* beliefs and behaviors, within the oppressive systems of racially-based enslavement (and, later, emancipation) in the rural South. Over the past fifteen years, we have also conducted a comparative investigation of *additional* plantation sites. These sites were: the Frogmore Plantation Quarters (St. Helena Island, Beaufort County, South Carolina); the Richmond Hill Plantation Praise House (Bryan County, Georgia); and the Magnolia Plantation Quarters (Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana.), two of which will be discussed here. Even though each of these sites yielded "site specific" interpretations of beliefs and behaviors practiced by members of those communities, they also demonstrated that several patterns of belief and behavior were, apparently, identical to those interpreted from the Jordan Quarters. The research design employed during the vast majority of work at the Jordan Plantation was employed with only minor changes on the other three sites.

Therefore this chapter is not intended as a site report (for either the Jordan Plantation Quarters or the others) but to define the research design employed during the course of this twenty-six year long project, and to present something of the rationale behind its development and adaptation. The chapter will also discuss several of the interpretations that have resulted from the use of this design, including the identification of “ephemeral features” (internal rooms, whole structures, fence lines, and other aspects of the landscape and its alteration during and after occupation). We will also discuss what these sites reveal about the adaptation of “West African” beliefs and behaviors at these sites, specifically (but also, we suggest, across much of the African Diaspora). These beliefs include the importance of “cosmogram/crossroads”, the adaptation of Christianity and “West African” religious beliefs, and the definition of the spirit world and the role of the dead in the lives of the living.

Although this is not a theory-oriented narrative, we will briefly mention two of the theoretical approaches that underpin this work. This research is informed, broadly, by two closely related (and *not* mutually exclusive) approaches: “social archaeology” (Meskell and Preucel 2004; Taylor 1948) and “contextual archaeology” (Hodder 1991, 1987; Hodder and Hutson 2004). In terms of social archaeology, the idea is simply that human beings express themselves through the objects they “make and use, collect and discard, value or take for granted, and seek to be remembered by” (Meskell and Preucel 2004:3). That is, objects can tell us something about what humans valued and believed, at a certain point in time in the past.

Or, rather, objects *and their associated contexts* can do this, which brings us to what is usually referred to as “contextual archaeology”. Contexts can include environmental and technical contexts (sometimes from historical documents), cultural and behavioral contexts (also found in historical documents, but also drawn from ethnographic data, oral histories, and sometimes contemporary accounts), and “dirt” contexts (what we will refer to here as either archaeological contexts or artifact contexts). The methods used to collect and analyze these multiple contexts are critically important, as is the need for “tacking” back and forth (Wylie 2002: 161-167) between different contexts and types of data. The process is not deductive or inductive, but both at once.

In our case, then, we had to understand a variety of African and African American/Diasporic cultural and ethnographic contexts (and use them as “models”, or

ethnographic analogies). Likewise, we had to locate and understand, in detail, a variety of historical records about each site individually and about the plantation South in general. We also needed to engage in different sorts of active reciprocal communication with members of various descendants communities. Obviously, these types of contexts are frequently included in the historical archaeology methodology toolkit, and using them is nothing new (although the degree to which all of them are used varies, particularly with respect to descendants, as noted in the previous chapter). We assume, therefore, that our readers are familiar with using ethnographic, historical, and even sometimes descendant sources.

This document, however, will focus instead on the field and analytic methods used to recover “dirt”, or archaeological, contexts. What we hope to show here is what can be done *differently*, recognizing that, as noted above, in practice one goes back and forth between all contexts. Therefore even though interpretations included here rely heavily on our decades-long, deep immersion in *all* contexts (see (Brown and Cooper 1990; Brown 1994, 2001, 2004, 2008, 2011, 2013), expounding on all of them is outside the purpose of this chapter.

Our focus is on one thing: to demonstrate the important role that detailed, fine-grained, and closely examined “dirt” contexts can have in enabling us to say something about the “insider” functions and meanings of artifacts and artifact contexts from four different plantations. Used *together*, all of the contexts noted above can help us to understand what the African Diasporic people who lived on these plantations believed and valued, at particular points in time.

A key component of the research design that was ultimately employed at all four sites was our “taken for granted” that, even though Africans and African Americans were forced, for the most part, to utilize European American material items in the creation and development of their cultural patterns, it was very possible that they used these items in non-European ways. Indeed, as will be described below, the Jordan artifact deposit appeared to be the result, in large part, of the abandonment of many, if not practically all, of the personal possessions owned by the Quarters residents (Brown and Cooper 1990; Cooper 1989) – and these objects were largely of European manufacture (with some notable exceptions to be described here). Therefore, we had to eliminate as much of our European “cultural knowledge” as possible about the functions and meanings of the artifacts and artifact contexts that we were recovering.

To do this, we developed an excavation strategy geared to the recovery of fine-scale 3-dimensional provenience data within the footprint of each of the community dwellings we investigated. This strategy enabled us to see distribution patterns (artifact *contexts*) that would *not* have been apparent otherwise. We also developed laboratory and analysis strategies that did not require us to rely solely on researcher assumptions about artifact function. We believed that the use of a functional classification system, such as those defined by (South 1977) and (Sprague 1981), would make it almost impossible to interpret the function and/or meaning of artifacts for *Africans* and *African Americans* within the context of the sites they were historically-known to occupy (Brown and Cooper 1990; Brown 2008). We will expand on these strategies in more detail below, keeping the following methodological themes in mind:

1. That field methods should be flexible and adapted depending on what is found.
2. That European-based artifact category systems are sometimes inappropriate when attempting to interpret archaeological findings at African American sites (or, for that matter, sites occupied by other non-European cultural groups).
3. That “insider” meanings can often be teased out with field and analytic methods that provide very close control of artifact contexts and spatial relationships. That is, detailed, fine-grained artifact contexts can be just as informative as the artifacts themselves.

This body of research has confirmed my belief that the interpretation of the patterned beliefs and behaviors of Africans and African Americans in the New World can best be understood by using a research design that closely records and analyzes the *detailed archaeological contexts* of the artifacts recovered. Put another way, the archaeological examination of the peoples of African descent (or, for that matter, of any ethnic and/or racial group), requires a methodology that allows the group in question to be studied, as much as feasible, *from its own perspective*.

Can these methods be used in CRM practice?

Our answer would be “yes”, in more situations than one might assume at first glance. Admittedly, the research described here was not conducted as CRM, but as “academic”

archaeology, so we acknowledge that CRM practice has different parameters – especially with respect to the amount of time that can be spent on any project. Therefore, we expect that some readers will assume that the fine-grained methods we have employed are not feasible in CRM practice. We would suggest, however, that *when conducted by trained professionals* (not untrained field school students working for short bursts of time, as was our scenario) strategies similar to the ones we propose are more realistic than they might seem.

In addition, even though some might assume that these ideas would be most appropriately employed during CRM's mitigation phase (if employed at all) we believe that certain aspects can and should be employed during the initial location and assessment phases as well. Finally, as a direct result of the observation that Africans and African Americans redefined function and meaning of the material objects they used (and that artifact contexts, not just artifacts, helped us to define those meanings) we further suggest that the practice of discarding (so-called) “non-diagnostic” artifacts at the conclusion of a CRM project needs to be rethought carefully, or at least that increased attention must be given to laboratory analysis in the form of fine-scale artifact distribution studies, prior to discard. That is, we hope to demonstrate that even small ceramic sherds, bits of mirror, deposits of burnt shell, glass and metal fragments, and much more can indeed be “diagnostic” in some situations.

The following section will provide a detailed, time-sequenced narrative about the research design as it developed at the Jordan Plantation. This will include a more detailed description of what we mean by “crossroads” (with a number of examples from other Diaspora contexts), a discussion of the rationale for our field methods, and detailed observations about functional classification systems (and our suggested alternative).

After this, in less detail, we will describe how we applied this design and these methods to our investigations at the other three Quarters sites. These site-specific discussions will each include a description of “crossroads” interpretations at each site.

Next, we will discuss several more examples, from all of the sites, about the utility of our methods with respect to (1) identifying architectural features, (2) identifying craft specializations and (3) identifying other “ritual” deposits not directly interpreted as “crossroads”.

Finally, we will close with an overview comparison of all four plantation sites, including citations to some of the ethnographic models (e.g., contexts) that were employed.

The Jordan Plantation Quarters Site Investigation

Project Beginnings

The Levi Jordan Plantation project began in March 1986, with a limited surface survey in the area of the original “main house” of the plantation and some brick ruins located approximately 350 feet northwest of the house. This survey was conducted by myself along with two of the four owners of the property—all descendants of Levi and Sarah Jordan. This early study also included a brief investigation of the plantation’s historical record that was initially provided by Mrs. Dorothy Cotton, the executor of the estate. We should note that, at the time we began our excavations, the location of the plantation’s original slave quarters was unknown to any of the living Jordan descendants, and they were not identified on a sketch map made by an elderly Jordan descendant (“Aunt Eula”) who had played around the main house as a child (Figure 1).

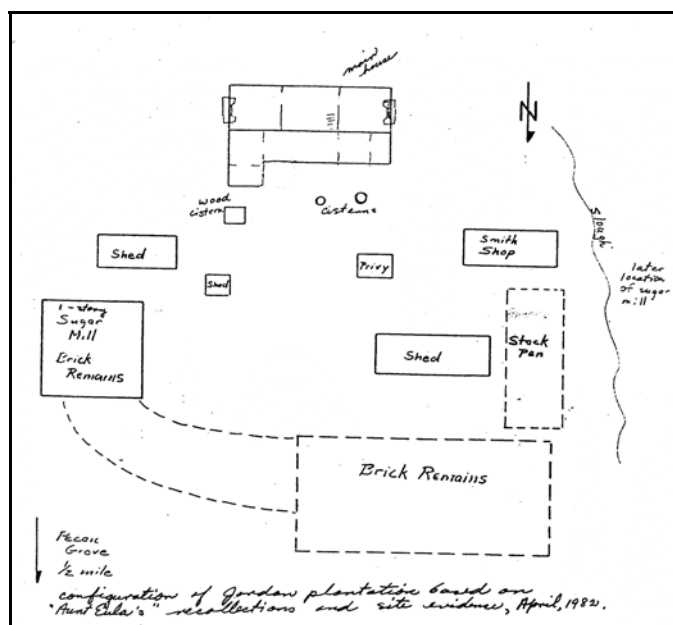


Figure 1: Aunt Eula’s sketch map of the area of the main house showing the outbuildings and features she remembered. (Note that north is to the bottom of the map.)

The initial research design was intended to do two things. First, the Jordan family wanted us to test the sketch map, and to locate and determine the function of any buildings and other historic features that might have existed on approximately ten acres, including the main house.

This map had been part of a National Register nomination package that had been turned down at the State level of review, and the family hoped that an archaeological investigation of the property might provide support for a re-application. Second, in more general terms, we wanted to compare rural plantation life in the mid-1800s to urban life in the same period in Houston.

As noted above, the sketch map recorded an enormous brick scatter to the north of the main house complex. Our pedestrian survey confirmed the presence of a rectangular scatter that measured approximately 100 by 320 feet. Small portions of what were later confirmed to be intact brick wall bases were noted in two locations within this surface scatter. While difficult to determine from the surface (due to grazing cattle, brush, and small trees, all of which limited both access and visibility), the orientation of this area appeared to be identical to that of the main house—approximately 40 degrees west of magnetic north. We also observed a large number of artifacts along with the brick fragments, including ceramic sherds, bottle glass fragments, a glass marble, buttons, and a large portion of a cast iron kettle. All of these artifacts suggested that the area might have been the location of residences for the enslaved population, which was known to have been present on the plantation, but completely left off the sketch map.

The evidence generated by our surface survey appeared to support a hypothesis that the Jordan brick scatter may have been the location for the slave quarters. In Abner Strobel's 1926 discussion of plantations within Brazoria County, he notes that the Jordan Plantation "was a sugar plantation, possessed a good brick sugar house and brick cabins for the slaves" (Strobel 1926:26). Therefore, despite the fact that the family's original map did not mention the quarters area at all, our initial excavation was directed at this "brick scatter" area, because it would assist in the overall goal of testing the map but could also inform our goal of learning more about 19th century rural life.

The first field season was spent excavating a series of 5ft. x 5ft units placed across the brick scatter, on a line that would bisect one of the three low mounds noted during the survey. The first units were placed to the south of the scatter, and the later units were placed in a line running south to north across the mound.

The excavations during the 1986 field season employed arbitrary levels that were no more than two-tenths of a foot in depth. However, when a horizontal soil change was noted during the removal of one of these arbitrary levels, we shifted to a combination of natural strata

and arbitrary levels. Although later on the depth of the arbitrary levels would be reduced to one-tenth of a foot (as will be described below) this method for defining vertical provenience was maintained throughout all of our subsequent excavation. That is, when differences in soil types were observed horizontally within individual arbitrary levels, each soil type was designated and collected separately, using feature designations. Again, with only slight modification, this practice was continued throughout the project.

By the end of the 1986 fieldwork season, several things were clear. First, the northern brick scatter appeared to have resulted from the decay/demolition of structures that seemed to have had a residential function. Second, preliminary analysis of the artifacts indicated that the temporal span of the occupation of these brick walled cabins²⁹ encompassed both the periods of enslavement and, later, freed wage laborers, tenants, and/or sharecroppers. This conclusion was based on the recovery of post-1865 artifacts from within the site's occupational debris beneath the brick rubble. Third, in several of the units, one particular depositional zone was identified that contained an incredibly rich and varied set of artifacts, as described below. Where it was observed, this zone contained literally thousands of artifacts in a deposit that was only between 0.15 to 0.3 feet thick. The zone was defined solely on the density of materials, as the soil matrix was visually (though not chemically, as we learned later) identical to that found below.

Thus, by the end of the first field season we believed that we had located the floor space of residential cabins, although the size, shape, and density of the cabins had not yet been fully determined. The stratigraphy of the site appeared to consist of at least three broadly defined human produced stratigraphic zones within the brick scatter:

- The upper zone consisted of the topsoil, brick rubble, and a number of post-1920s artifacts. This brick rubble appeared to result from the collapse of the brick walls.
- The second zone was immediately below the brick rubble and, in several locations, was incredibly rich, and included a number of artifacts that were whole or could be reconstructed. It included a wide range of "curatable" objects (Brown and Cooper 1990; Cooper 1989). Items such as cups,

²⁹ We began to call the structures "cabins" at this point, although we do not know whether this was a term that the residents themselves used.

plates, “silverware”, scissors, thimbles, bottles, tools, jewelry, eyeglasses, among others, appeared to have entered the archaeological deposits whole. Even though some were broken at the time they were recovered, in some cases they could be completely, or almost completely, reconstructed. In addition, spatial analysis (in both field and lab) demonstrated that many items were found in associational contexts that permitted us to begin to interpret their function. The density of artifacts, including a large number of complete objects, within this widely distributed and relatively thin depositional zone was far higher than was expected in a sheet midden deposit, while at the same time, it was too extensive and thin to have been a trash dump.

- Below this zone, the frequency of artifacts decreased markedly. This third zone contained relatively small and/or broken artifacts that appear to have been distributed in a random fashion. The third zone was hypothesized to be the “sub-floor” deposit that had built up beneath the wooden floor of each cabin during its occupation/use.

It is important to note that, other than the size, density, and nature of the artifacts recovered, the soil matrix for the second and third zones appeared to be both visually and texturally identical during excavation. Even though Robert D’Aigle (D’Aigle 1996) later demonstrated that the chemical composition of these zones varied slightly, no obvious visual distinctions existed between them, other than artifact size and density. As a result of this similarity in the soil matrix, and our observation that Zone 2 was not found beneath all of the cabins, we decided to maintain shallow arbitrary levels during all subsequent excavation to insure that the second zone, if present, could be identified during post-excavation analysis. It is important to emphasize that all of the zones were very shallow. If more standard 5-10cm levels had been used at this site, we would never have been able to identify the separate zones in any of the cabins.

By this point we had hypothesized that, for some reason, many of these artifacts had been “abandoned” when the inhabitants of the cabins moved out. Over the course of three field

seasons the nature of this deposit was tested and defined by Doreen Cooper, and has come to be known as the “abandonment zone” (Brown and Cooper 1990; Brown 1994, 2001; Cooper 1989). It was the discovery and definition of this zone that led directly to the major reorganization of the project’s questions, goals, and research design.

Ultimately, the artifacts and artifact contexts recovered from within this second zone demonstrated clearly that residents abandoned the cabins, possibly suddenly, leaving a vast majority of their possessions behind (Brown and Cooper 1990; Brown 1994, 2001, 2004, 2005; Cooper 1989). However, this abandonment episode was not mentioned in any of the known historical records, nor was it related to us by members of any of the descendant families (white or black)³⁰. Despite this, the abandonment interpretation continued to be supported, throughout the excavation and historical research, and no contradictory evidence has ever been offered against the sudden, probably forced, abandonment of the quarters by its African American residents. Even so, a few of the Jordan descendants continued to assert that their ancestors would not have forced the residents to leave, and some even believed that we had planted that evidence during our investigations (Crosland 1996). Fortunately, for our continued excavation, most of the other Jordan descendants supported our work, and we were allowed to continue.

The identification of this abandonment zone caused us to reconsider our original goals; consequently, we decided to focus more closely on the African and African American community of the Jordan Plantation. Although we continued, over the course of the investigation, to attempt to identify the outbuildings across the site, our primary efforts began to focus on the quarters area, because (1) there appeared to be essentially intact deposits and (2) it appeared that these deposits might contain significant information about the plantation’s African American resident community.

At this point, our interpretation of the abandonment zone prompted us to attempt to identify and make contact with descendants of those who lived within this African American community. Just as the sketch map had effectively erased the African and African American laborers from the plantation landscape, oral accounts from the European American descendants made no mention of where the Quarters community was located, or why the inhabitants would have left without taking many of their personal belongings with them. What had occurred that

³⁰ See McDavid’s discussion, in Chapter 4, of the oral history done at this site.

caused the abandonment of so many usable, personal items when members of the community moved out of the cabins? We felt that identifying the residents at the time the community was abandoned, and then attempting to locate and interview their living descendants might provide an answer to these questions. I began to recruit help to do this (see McDavid's account of Cheryl Wright's oral history research in Chapter 4), and we had these questions in mind as we continued to process artifacts and to plan for our second field season.

Continued Excavations and Methodological Changes

The greatest immediate change in the methods used in our second season was the size of provenience units, which was a direct result of our discovery of an abandonment zone. The removal of 5ft. x 5ft. units (twenty-five square feet) as one provenience unit, even with hand tools, was too destructive of artifact contexts and associations. In addition, the number and density of artifacts within the zone made piece plotting every artifact too time consuming to be practical, because literally hundreds of artifacts per square foot were recovered in these zones. We needed a methodology that would permit artifacts to be mapped prior to their removal from the site matrix, but also allow us to record as many detailed horizontal and vertical contexts and associations as possible. We believed that the only way to obtain a maximum amount of contextual information was to require excavation with hand tools in small horizontal units, but with wide-area exposure, and to use shallow levels. Used together, this would permit three-dimensional mapping during excavation.

Several options were developed, discussed, and, in most cases, discarded prior to the second field season of the project. For example, one option was to carry out the excavation employing the techniques suggested by Harris (Harris 1989) and generally referred to as the Harris Matrix. However, as demonstrated by (Cooper 1989), soil from the abandonment zone was not a discreet, definable soil depositional unit. In addition, as mentioned above, the landowner had certain requirements that precluded leaving large areas of soil "open" (for more information see Brown 2003, (2012)

Ultimately, we decided to divide each 5 x 5 foot into smaller "subunits" during excavation. That is, immediately prior to excavating completely through the brick rubble layer, each standard unit was divided into twenty-five one by one foot subunits (Figure 2).

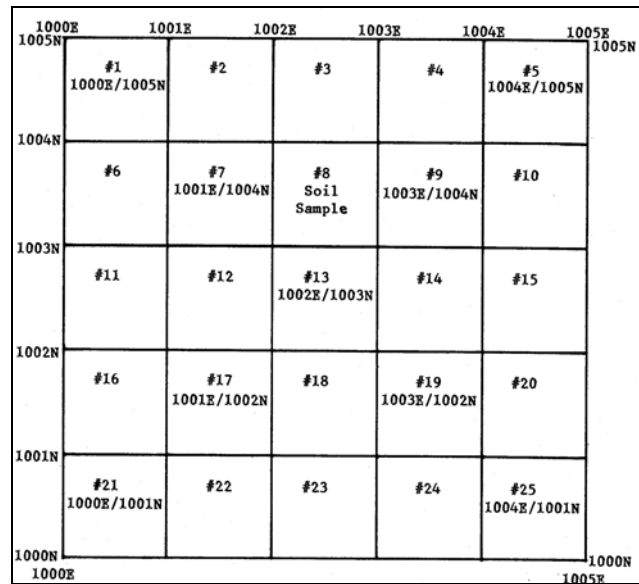


Figure #2: Diagram of a standard five by five foot excavation unit divided into twenty-five subunits. The standard soil sample subunit is #8.

This permitted us to record highly specific horizontal provenience information, while also allowing excavation to be conducted at a more rapid pace than plotting every individual artifact in such a dense distribution. Each “subunit” was designated by both a number signifying its location within the unit (from one to twenty-five beginning in the northwest corner of the unit) and a grid location based on its northwest corner. Thus, the number was set by a subunit’s location within the larger, standard unit, and these numbers were repeated within each standard unit.

The standard level depth became one-tenth of a foot once a standard unit was divided into subunits, unless, as noted earlier, the stratigraphy encountered with each subunit suggested otherwise. If a soil strata change became evident during the excavation of an arbitrary level, then the interface was cleaned across the subunit and the level was then terminated at that elevation. Excavation of the subunits would then continue with a new level assignment. This modified arbitrary level procedure was maintained throughout the excavation of both the second and third artifact-bearing zones. Horizontal soil changes were treated as features and excavated separately from the rest of the subunit(s) in which they were encountered. This technique permitted the discovery of soil features as soon as they were encountered during excavation. This ability has

proved critical in understanding features found below cabins at the Jordan Quarters as well as at the three other sites that were investigated later.

Two other methodological alterations were made at the time we shifted to the use of one by one foot provenience units. One was the complete removal of the soil and artifacts from one of the twenty-five sub-units in each level, which were then water screened through a finer mesh screen. Subunit #8 was arbitrarily selected for this purpose. We made this change in order to determine if any information was being lost as we were screening the rest of the soil through standard quarter-inch mesh hardware cloth. Analysis of these water screened provenience units demonstrated that the same artifact types (even seed beads, small bones, sequins, etc.) found in the small screen were also found in the larger ones, even though, as predicted, the smaller artifacts occurred in a slightly higher frequency in the water-screened samples. The second alteration was due to the fragile nature of some of the artifacts (and the extent of the zone *across* individual 5x5 units): we began to require that excavators must remain outside of each unit at all times. This requirement continued at all four sites.

One effect of the shift to small provenience units (coupled with the need to investigate some of the yard spaces of the plantation) was that it became increasingly clear that five by five foot units would not permit the broad horizontal coverage that was required to understand the spatial organization of the activities conducted within the site during the historic past, or to identify changes that occurred in that organization over time. Therefore, when a more systematic investigation of the main house yard area finally began, another element was added to the excavation methodology: the use of one by one foot “shovel test” units. These were generally placed on the site grid at intervals of five feet, and dug with a trowel (Barrera 1999). Unlike the standard excavation units, these shovel tests were dug in two or three 0.5 foot levels, and could be finished in one day (which was necessary due to the cattle).

In summary, this methodology permitted the recording of artifacts and associations from very tight contexts, which, when combined with ethnographic and oral data, resulted in highly specific contextual interpretations.

The Artifact Classification System

Approximately 600,000 artifacts were recovered during the fourteen field seasons of the Jordan investigation that took place between 1986 through 2002. These artifacts were accessioned under almost 19,000 provenience units. Each such provenience unit was then assigned a unique “lot number” during the fieldwork. Approximately 27,000 provenience units were actually excavated (nearly 9,000 provenience units produced no artifacts, and, therefore, were not assigned a lot number). We purposely avoided the use of a functional classification system, similar to those employed by many other historical archaeologists in their study of North American historic sites (Farnsworth 1992, 1993; South 1977; Sprague 1981). While we realized that this decision would make comparison with other studies difficult, the problem is that functionally based systems, as they are commonly used in the United States today, rely heavily on a central principle: that artifacts from the historic past of North America can be assigned function *by the archaeologist*. That is, they rely on each archaeologist’s *belief* about the function, which is in turn often based on readings of historic sources or knowledge collected during the archaeologist’s life. For example, Sprague has argued that:

In the system proposed here, each artifact is placed in a particular functional category and described in the context of that category...any classification, especially a functional one, imposes the culture of the researcher upon the body of data. However, in most 19th and 20th century sites, I have found this to be far less of a problem than utilizing a material based classification (Sprague 1981:252).

Sprague’s implicit assumption appears to be that he is the same, culturally and behaviorally, as the people whose material lives he is investigating – a problematic notion unless one assumes that people in the past were exactly the same as they are now. But if they are – why do archaeology at all? If archaeology is intended to be a study of *past* human behavior, then assigning function based on knowledge of the present cannot, by definition, find meaning and function in the past.

In fact, material items can simultaneously have multiple functions and meanings, and these would vary depending on *all* of the contexts noted in our introduction. Even Sprague

appears to assume the importance of context for the determination of function, noting that a horseshoe can be placed in the “domestic ritual”, “household pastimes”, and “agricultural and husbandry” classes (Sprague 1981:256-267). Presumably, the assignment of function is meant to depend on the archaeological context in which the horseshoe is found, but the idea is not explored further. Nor is context discussed as an analytical tool in itself.

Space does not permit the listing of many similar examples, also drawn from African American archaeology contexts, so the main point here is that pre-determined, culture-based functional classification systems can have the unintended effect of assigning artifact function based on the pre-determined categories in the *system*, instead of on the detailed archaeological context which surrounds any particular artifact. Even more important, because of the tendency to use them uncritically, they can prevent the discovery of *actual* patterns of belief and behavior, which might in turn permit new insights into questions of ethnicity, function, and meaning. Finally, functional systems do not account well for artifact re-use. Bottles, for example are often reused because of their ability to store and serve liquids of various types, and because, in some cases, they were rare items. The reuse of objects creates another major problem for functional classification systems, because reuse can go unrecognized when such systems are employed.

In short, when the interpretation of function, use, and meaning is based primarily on the archaeologist’s knowledge in the present, the result is nothing more than a restatement of that knowledge. People in the present – regardless of the subject positions they may hold with respect to ethnicity, gender, etc. – cannot necessarily assign function to artifacts used by people in the past. Context (not only historical, but spatial and ethnographic as well) is critical.

Therefore, a functional system based on European American 19th and early 20th century material culture would not be likely to permit identification of African American uses, or re-uses, of that same material culture. One of our earliest publications about the Jordan Quarters (Brown and Cooper 1990) set the tone for this position and, despite the changes in the nature of the project (in fact, probably because of those changes) we continue to believe that questions of function, use and meaning of artifacts must be derived from the archaeological context defined during the recovery of the artifacts, and not defined into the classification system (Brown 2008).

Thus, the accession catalogue system developed for the Jordan Plantation investigation is organized first by the material the artifact is made of (e.g., ceramics, glass, metal), then by some

attribute of that material (e.g., color of glass, type of metal), and finally by the name generally assigned to the object (e.g., button, needle, buckle). This eliminates classifying the artifacts according to “kitchen artifact group,” “architectural group,” or “clothing group”, as is generally the case with functional systems. We believe that the patterns being looked for in the artifacts (based on distribution and types) actually represent something of the behaviors and beliefs practiced by the individuals, rather than the distribution of overly broad previously decided upon categories that encompass a very wide variety of functions. Mapping the distribution of “personal group” artifacts across a site might yield information on areas of potential residence, but not necessarily on either the meaning or the function of any of the artifacts contained within the larger group.

For example, the distribution of “kitchen group” artifacts beneath the floor of the Jordan Quarters church (as we have now interpreted it) was heaviest in the area of the hearth, as might be expected. However, a closer analysis of the actual artifacts, when combined with the tight provenience control exercised during excavation, suggests that these artifacts were intentionally placed, for ritual or spiritual purposes, in an effort to tie three small features together in spatially important ways. In this case, a typical functional system might have interpreted the cabin as a residence, whereas our interpretation did not.

The alteration of our research questions, as noted above, now meant that our primary focus was on the African and African American community of the Jordan Plantation. With respect to artifact analysis, this meant that a majority of our effort has been to analyze the type and distribution of the materials recovered from individual cabins, rather than to focus on separate classes of artifacts as they existed across the site (such as “all” ceramics, glass, coins, buttons, and jewelry, etc.). The following cabin studies, however, do contain detailed analyses of all of the artifact types in each cabin:

- Cabin II-B-2 (Garcia-Herreros 1998);
- Cabin I-B-3 (Harris 1999);
- Cabin I-A-1 (Barnes 1999; Brown 2005)
- The main house yard (Barrera 1999); and
- The African American Cemetery (Bruner 1996).

The position here is that the detailed analysis of individual artifact types should indeed be done, but that this analysis should take place, first, within the *behavioral* contexts that were likely to make sense to the material lives of the people being studied. As one example of many: it was not assumed that the faunal distribution across the site would “mean” the same thing as what we found within every individual structure. This proved to be critically important with respect to the interpretation of one particular cabin, where archaeologists found a tremendous amount of carved shell, in context with shell “stock” and “debitage” apparently used for carving (Harris 1999), as well as other contextually important items. Therefore, when any particular researcher was looking at a particular cabin, he/she was required to look closely at *all* of the artifacts, and artifact contexts, in that cabin.

Summary of the Research Design and the Questions Asked

Throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s, as the extent and magnitude of the archaeological deposits began to be understood, it became clear that it would be possible to test an evolving set of questions related to the African American past. We began to examine the function and meaning of so-called “African retentions,” acculturation and/or creolization, and ethnicity (all issues that had begun to be raised by archaeologists beginning in the late 1970s; see [(Armstrong 1990; Brown 1994; Brown and Cooper 1990; Emerson 1988, 1994, 1999; Ferguson 1980, 1991, 1992, 1992, 1999; Handler and Lange 1978; Otto 1984; Wheaton, Friedlander, and Garrow 1983; Wheaton and Garrow 1985)]. Our particular focus was to identify and test models derived from West African, African American (especially the historically defined Gullah and Geechee cultures of the sea islands and adjacent piedmont of South Carolina and Georgia), and Afro-Caribbean ethnographies (Bascum 1941, 1952, 1991; Thompson 1983) related to the function, use, and meaning of artifacts, symbols, and artifact associations. Guiding this investigation was the belief that “...the discovery of ethnicity and African retentions will come from historical archaeologists systematically investigating artifact context without a priori definitions of artifact function and use” (Brown and Cooper 1990:18). The research began to look at cultural evolution and/or Creolization as these processes affected the lives of the Quarters residents. Questions related to ethnicity and retentions emerged over the course of the

investigation that examined medicinal practices, economic structure, political organization, and spirituality of members of the Quarters community (Barnes 1999; Barrera 1999; Brown 1994, 2001, 2004, 2005; Brown and Brown 1998; Bruner 1996; Garcia-Herreros 1998) and (Harris 1999)

While we appear to have succeeded in defining a number of symbols and artifact associations that appeared to have been African “retentions” and/or “adaptations” (Brown 1994, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2013), other important aspects of the lives of these people were not being as fully explored. Too much effort was being expended on identifying and testing “retentions” and not enough was being focused on what Singleton (1999:8) refers to as the “social complexities that affect why these ethnic markers emerge, persist, or change”. Hence, the second set of questions, formulated during the mid-1990s, represented an effort to confront the conditions of life, Singleton’s social complexities, that operated to help cause these retentions and adaptations.

This second set of questions was approached from two directions over the course of the investigation. The first was to investigate the differences in artifact types and artifact frequencies between extensively excavated cabins in order to identify “...the social order that was internally defined and sanctioned, and effectively controlled the lives of the members of the community” (Brown and Cooper 1990:12). This resulted in the extensive excavation and detailed artifact comparisons between seven of the twenty-six cabins that made up the Jordan Quarters community. We believed that the recovery of artifacts along with highly specific provenience information would permit us to investigate any specialized activities that might have been practiced *within* the cabins of the Quarters.

Detailed spatial and artifactual analysis suggests that two of these cabins (I-A-1 and II-A-1) were utilized for specialized “community” functions (praise house/church and quilting respectively) for a portion of their history of use. The remaining five cabins appear to have primarily served a residential function. However, all five of these cabins were also utilized for at least one specialized function, generally the production of a “craft” item. In each of these cases, the artifact types and artifact frequencies recovered were compared between the cabins, and tested against a number of ethnographic models.

Thus, with this approach the project moved away from the description of the artifact types present, along with their frequency and distribution, toward the investigation of questions

related to human agency and choice. The questions asked related to such issues as: the organization of space within cabins; the role of consumer choice in the patterned selection, production, and/or use of goods and services by members of the community; the development of specialized occupations (including economic, medicinal, and religious specializations); the development and operation of various statuses and roles related to maintenance and conduct of social and political control within the community; and the maintenance and function of Christianity as it was practiced and taught within the community.

The second direction was to test the effect of typically imposed labor regimes (gang and task) on Africans and African Americans operating under each regime – particularly with respect to the retention of “Africanisms.” Historians (Berlin and Morgan 1979; Morgan 1982, 1998) and archaeologists (Adams 1987; Reitz, Gibbs, and Rathbun 1985; Singleton 1995) had hypothesized that the type of labor system employed by a plantation owner had a, if not the, major impact on the African American culture that was practiced by the enslaved. The two primary systems employed across the South were the “gang” versus the “task” systems. The production requirements of the crop being raised dictated which of these systems would be employed (Morgan 1982, 1998), with the gang system being the most widespread and best known of the systems. Under the gang system, enslaved people labored in small groups (gangs) from sunup to sundown under close supervision. While cotton was generally grown employing this system, tobacco and sugar cane absolutely required the use of gangs (Morgan 1998). Because of the need for close supervision, the gang system required more expense, but gang efficiency and long hours combined had the effect of maximizing labor output under this system. Available historical evidence supports the view that Jordan utilized the gang labor system.

The task system, on the other hand, was based upon the assignment of a set amount of labor for each member of the enslaved labor force. Each laborer could then work independently and, at a pace they established (as long as a day’s task was completed). When their task was completed, the laborer’s time became their own. The task system had the effect of reducing the costs for supervision, while providing the enslaved with more opportunity for advancing their own interests. As Morgan pointed out, “Planting for ‘amusement, pleasure, and profit’ was a direct outgrowth of the opportunities presented by a task system” (Morgan 1998:187). The task

system was primarily isolated to the Gullah and Geechee areas of the Lowcountry of South Carolina and Georgia.

Within this overall hypothesis, the effect of the particular labor system employed was thought to have had a tremendous impact on the beliefs and behaviors of the enslaved. Under the gang system, with its long hours and close supervision, the retention of African beliefs and behaviors would be limited and relatively short lived. The task system, with its increased free time and decreased supervision, would have promoted the retention and adaptation of West African cultural traditions. Plantation owners in the Carolina Lowcountry developed the task system in part as a response to factors such as heat and humidity, swamps, and disease, as well as a response to the technology of wet rice agriculture practiced on the coastal lowlands of South Carolina and Georgia. The resulting isolation of Africans and African Americans from European Americans became an important element in the development of the Gullah and Geechee cultures, which continue, to this day, to be culturally distinct.

However, research into the abandonment zone deposit at the Jordan Plantation appeared to contradict the assertion that the gang labor system would rapidly eliminate African beliefs and behaviors from the culture of the enslaved. If sugar production required gangs of laborers operating with an almost “military precision” (Morgan 1998:190) in order to maximize income, and if labor on the Jordan Plantation was organized according to the gang system, then African inspired beliefs and behaviors should have been fairly rapidly lost by members of the community. The archaeological evidence appeared to suggest that this was not the case.

The final set of questions asked during the course of this investigation was related to the spirituality of the community’s inhabitants. This came to include questions about Christianity, Hoodoo, and Voodoo. These questions concerned their roles as social control mechanisms within the Quarters community; their incorporation into the lives of the residents; and the role(s) that ancestors played in the lives of the living. Before describing how we began to answer these questions, at Jordan and the other three sites, we need to describe a key cultural concept that informed all of these projects.

Crossroads: an important ethnographic/cultural context³¹

This refers to the idea that “crossroads” are culturally important, and that this importance can be symbolically expressed with material culture [for a similar discussion see (McDavid, Bruner, and Marcom 2008)]. The term “crossroads” refers simply to two crossed lines with an intersection in the middle of each (that is, not necessarily a Christian cross – although, as noted below, Christian crosses sometimes play into the interpretations).

The importance of this symbol, and this idea, is commonplace amongst students of African American culture, folklore, and history. Discussions about “crossroads” have appeared in narratives discussing quilt patterns (Tobin and Dobard 1999), African and African American altars (Thompson 1984, 1990, 1993), histories of American blues (McInnis 2000), and descriptions of popular culture events such as dance performance (Janas 1999) and hip hop (Octopus 2002). Examples from both sides of the Black Atlantic appear in data gathered by scholars in folklore, art history, architecture, anthropology, and religion.

In addition, archaeological and material culture research has revealed evidence of non-Christian “cross” symbolism within a number of different African Diasporic contexts. Archaeologists have found numerous spatially-arranged crossroads deposits, as well as carved crosses and crossed lines on archaeologically recovered objects (Fennell 2003; Fennell 2007; Ferguson 1992; Leone and Fry 1999; Samford 1999 and Young 1997). Likewise, specialists in material culture and folklore have encountered the symbol and its variants on structures and yard art (across the South in particular) (Gundaker 1998, 1998; Henderson 2002).

In many of these examples, artifacts and artifact contexts have been interpreted as adaptations of the “BaKongo³² Cosmogram”, an idea that arises directly from the African BaKongo religion. In others, the BaKongo tradition appears to have been creolized with certain other African religious traditions, in particular, Yoruba, which emphasizes the importance of cardinal directions. That is, the four “quadrants” of the “cross” appear to take on meanings that vary with context, time, and association with other symbols.

The importance of these symbols has even been expressed in contemporary ceremonial activities at “actual” crossroads. That is, street intersections have been used as ceremonial places

³¹ In addition to individual photographs and drawings provided here, Appendices A, B, C, and D provide graphical summaries of the crossroads deposits discussed in this chapter: the Jordan Praise House deposit (A), the Jordan Curer’s deposit (B), the Frogmore Curer’s deposit (C), and the Richmond Hill Praise House deposit (D).

³² Sometimes spelled “BiKongo”.

in several African Diaspora and Black Atlantic contexts. For example, Robert Farris Thompson described how street intersections were used ceremonially in the Congo, and in Cuba's African Diaspora community: "...the celebrants themselves used street intersections as a chain of found cosmograms..." (Thompson 1993:68). Closer to home, we heard firsthand accounts of Yoruba ceremonies being conducted in Houston intersections in order to protect or prepare for important events (M. Adamu, personal communication, 2003). Similarly, a local black activist group in Houston held a "crossroads ceremony" at the intersection of Andrews and Wilson on Juneteenth of 2007 (Figure 3). In this photograph, note the chalk oval drawn in the center of the street: an oval or circle is frequently used bound the crossed lines in some expressions of the "cosmogram" or "crossroads" idea. Even more recently, more firsthand accounts have described gospel music and prayer services being held in the brick street intersections in Freedmen's Town, either to mourn certain events (such as the destruction of certain historic structures), or to celebrate (Catherine Roberts and Lue Williams, personal communication 2010).



Figure 3 Celebration hosted by Black United Front, Freedmen's Town, Houston, Juneteenth, 2007. Photograph courtesy of Debra Blacklock-Sloan.

Our research, which has taken place alongside (and often before) much of the research cited above, has suggested that the symbolic connections do not necessarily spring *only* from the “BaKongo cosmogram,” but also from broader ideas about the importance of cardinal direction crosses, which are also found in other African religions traditions. That is, certain artifacts and artifact contexts represent a creative expression of not only the BaKongo view of the world, but also important ideas from other religions, including Yoruba (Figure 4).

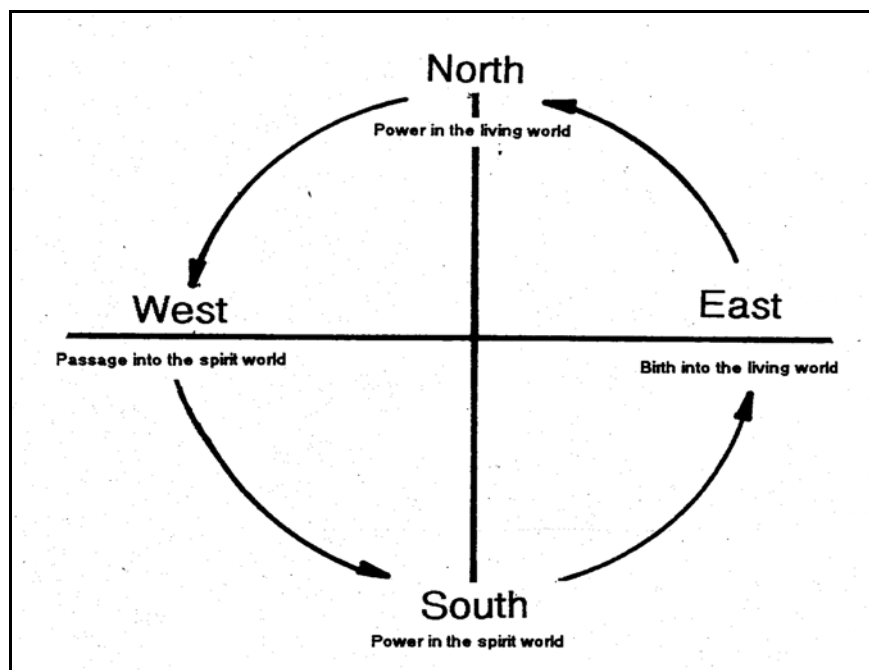


Figure #4 : A graphic depiction of the cosmogram idea

Therefore, some of the deposits described below contain elements of all of these traditions, used and re-used, changed and adapted, in different ways for different needs. This is why we now tend to use the term “crossroad deposits” instead of “cosmograms” – to express this somewhat broader set of cultural expressions. This is explored more, further below.

With respect to the Jordan site, these questions arose during the excavation and analyses of artifacts and artifact contexts recovered from, primarily, four of the cabins (I-A-1, I-A-2, II-B-1, and II-B-2) and the investigation of the African American cemetery associated with the community (Bruner 1996). Cabin I-A-1 functioned as a praise house/church and a school during a major portion of its history of use by the community (Barnes 1999; Brown and Brown 1998;

Brown 2001, 2003; 2006. Cabin I-A-2 appears to have functioned as a residential cabin for at least one person who acted as a religious elder for the community. Cabin II-B-1 is interpreted as the Curer's cabin [Brown, 1994 #202]. At least one of this cabin's residents worked to produce a number of complex glass and metal buttons, all of which appear to have incorporated at least one major symbolic element possibly related to the protection from, and/or manipulation of, ancestral spirits. Cabin II-B-2 has been primarily interpreted as the Munitions Maker's cabin (Garcia-Herreros 1998). Historical literature attests to the vital roles that Christianity, Hoodoo, and Voodoo played in the lives of African Americans throughout the South. The ethnographic and oral historical research conducted in conjunction with the project, therefore, also began to include the collection of information related to these aspects of life. We found "crossroads" deposits at all four sites and will describe each below, but will close this section with a description of one of those found at the Jordan site.

(Cabin II-B-1): The Conjurer/ Midwife's Cabin

This residence is best known as the location of so-called Conjurer's Kit, which was found in the southeastern corner of the cabin (Brown and Cooper 1990). The contents of this kit included a wide variety of artifacts known to be used in a number of different African and Western healing practices, found in close proximity to each other. They included (among other items) five cast iron kettle bases, chalk, at least one sealed tube made of brass bullet casings, patent medicine bottles, and a thermometer (Brown and Cooper 1990; see also Appendix C). We will return to this "kit" in a moment.

Immediately adjacent to this deposit (thus, potentially in the same provenience unit, if traditional excavation methods had been used) were several additional items found in even closer proximity to each other: water worn pebbles, mirror fragments, many square nails and spikes, several fake metal knife blades, a small doll, a concave metal disc, several ocean shells, and a number of blue glass beads.

Some years ago, I saw a figurine very similar to Figure 5 while viewing a Houston museum exhibition of art from the Rotterdam Museum (this was an art, not archaeological, exhibition). It was called a "Nkisi". Located in the "belly" of the carving, there was a small human figure, covered with a metal disk. Small polished pebbles were housed inside the "basket"

to the side of the Nkisi. Finally, it was covered in metal nails, spikes, “fake” knife blades, and the like.

Mirror fragments (said to represent the “flash” of water on the ocean; Thompson 1983) have been found in similar types of West African Nkisi (or, Mkisi, in the plural), and have been found archaeologically as well, in “cache” deposits (Leone and Fry 1999). Mkisi of various sorts were, and are, employed as an integral part of the curing ritual among West African groups, particularly the BaKongo peoples of West Africa.



Figure 5: “Nkisi”. Photo courtesy of author.

Based on our own observation of this and similar figurines (they are commonplace in stores and exhibits of African art), and our knowledge of Nkisi generally, we interpreted the artifacts found at Jordan as the remains of what had been, when deposited, a Nkisi figure. It

would not have looked exactly like the one pictured, obviously, but it had many of the same elements.

Within this cabin we found at least three other deposits which, when combined with the conjurer's kit, potentially form a crossroads deposit. The northern most of the three deposits was a set of seven silver coins. This set includes four quarters, two dimes, and a perforated half-dime. The coins had been deposited tightly wrapped together by cloth. Little of the cloth remained, but what was left appears to be coarsely woven cotton. The coins may have been ordered in a particular way within the cloth before being placed into a small hole, dug into the soil below the floor of the cabin. The set of coins was placed into the ground so that the coins were standing nearly vertically on their sides. They were oriented on a north-south axis. The perforated half-dime (most likely dated 1853) was on the outside facing south, then came three quarters (two dated 1853 and one dated 1858), then the two dimes (one dated 1853 and the other 1858), followed by the last quarter (dated 1858). Thus, only two years appear to have been represented among the dates of these seven coins.

On the west side of the cabin, we found another interesting type of deposit, which we have now interpreted as another type of ritual deposit (Figure 6). The artifacts of this feature were found in a small pit dug into the soil adjacent to the brick foundation and under what appears to have been the doorway into the cabin. This set of materials included a wide variety of artifacts, nearly all of which were made of cast iron. The primary focus of this feature was two cast iron kettles placed upright, one inside the other. A third, smaller kettle had been broken and the pieces of the walls had been placed on top of the other two kettles. The bottom of this kettle was found approximately five feet to the northeast.

Before the two kettles were placed one inside the other, the bottom kettle had ash placed into it. Thus, the ash lens was sealed by the upper kettle. The upper kettle contained a few objects of metal, ocean shells, glass, small bone fragments, and soil. Indeed, the kettle may have been filled simply by the accumulation of items falling through cracks in the floorboards. These kettles were wrapped around their circumference with a heavy chain.



Figure 6: Interior of “Curer’s” Cabin (“Amula” Deposit)

Two lines of artifacts radiated out from these kettles. Toward the east were Confederate military buttons, large bone fragments, unperforated cockleshells, more chain, and a complete bayonet. There were a number of large metal objects toward the southeast, along with two additional Confederate military buttons, a quartz crystal, and perforated cockleshells. The large metal objects included a hinge, several spikes, a bolt, and a fragment of a plow. We believe that this small assemblage formed, together, a Nkisi that aided in ritually securing the protection of the cabin, its occupants, and the activities conducted inside from harm that might be caused by powerful elements from the outside world. However, this set of artifacts may not solely symbolize this transition. They may also represent an *amula* to Ogun, a Yoruba deity, similar to those from Cuba described by Robert Farris Thompson, as follows: “major and minor versions of the same basic implements sometimes appear together...such objects are full of various expressions of ironwork...fusing token pieces of [Ogun’s] medium within...an iron cooking vessel, as if to prepare a mighty broth of iron” (Thompson 1983) (Figure 7).

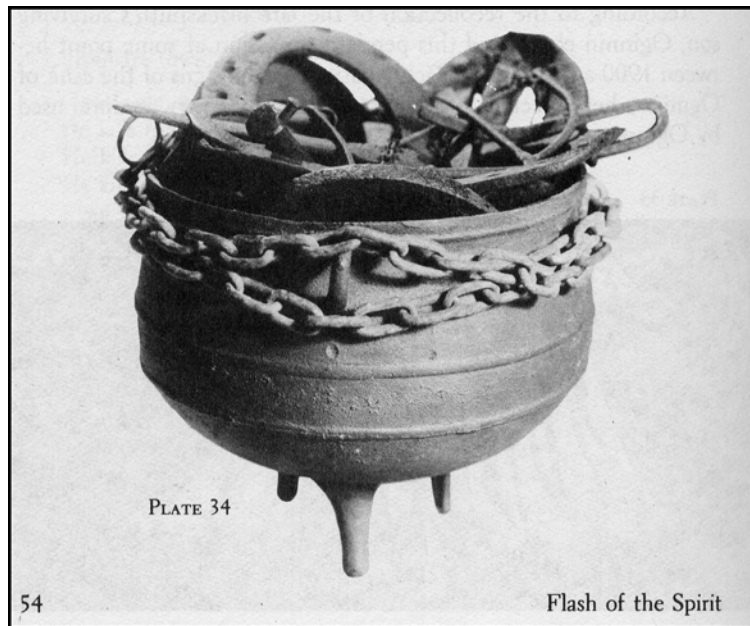


Figure 7: "Amula" (Thompson 1983:54-55)

Another deposit was discovered after the previous three, as a direct result of further archaeological testing to discover a possible meaning for the other three. That is, taken together, the previous three deposits could be interpreted as having represented the eastern, northern, and western points of a cosmogram, the BaKongo symbol for the cycle of life as well as an important curing symbol. The eastern point of the cosmogram is represented by the Conjurer's kit, which would be employed in helping to give and maintain life. The northern point on a cosmogram represents the height of one's power in this world, and maleness. The set of coins was located to the north. The western point on the cosmogram represents the point of passage from this world to the next the process of moving from life to death. The presence of the ash and the distribution of perforated and unperforated shells may support a symbolic view of this transition. Thus, we felt that one possible test of the cosmogram hypothesis would be the discovery of an artifact feature forming the southern point which, on the cosmogram, represents the height of one's power in the spirit world, and one's femaleness.

During the excavation of the living area of the cabin around the hearth, no such feature was encountered. However, excavation within the hearth area did produce a deposit of artifacts that we believe forms the southern point predicted by the cosmogram model. Based upon the

presence of a lens of soil and brick over this feature, this deposit was placed into the hearth sometime after completion of the fireplace. The feature itself consisted of a hole dug into the soil supporting the base of the hearth and chimney. Ash, burned ocean shell, and burned square nails and spikes were placed on the floor of this hole. The hole was then filled with soil and brick rubble and the hearth floor reconstructed. This represents the only feature placed into a hearth yet discovered within the Quarters area of the plantation. In light of the traditional female association for the southern point on the cosmogram, it is interesting that it was placed within the hearth of the cabin.

Placement within the hearth may have been the result of the shape of the cabin and the need to maintain cardinal directions while placing the points of the cosmogram. The importance of hearth and household will be noted later in yet another context, but each of these four features within this cabin support the interpretation of an African American behavioral and belief system—one that serves to control the outside world through the manipulation of the supernatural world. The full set of artifacts and contexts suggest that many of the basic ideas and rituals were of African origins.

Very importantly, however, they show an interesting mix of materials from at least two West African cultural groups – BaKongo *and* Yoruba. However, the patent medicine bottles and the thermometer, mentioned above, demonstrate some adaptation of non-African ideas as well. That is, all of these elements support the hypothesis that a healer of some sort – or conjurer/midwife – had sanctified the floor space of the cabin for its use within the ritual performance of curing, conjuring, and, possibly giving birth. In the truest sense of the word, these features, along with the artifacts present, represent an example of the creolization process in operation.

It is true, of course, that an experienced field archaeologist might have noticed some of these deposits and defined them as “features” in the field (and some of these were). However, *if* not identified in the field, typical field practice would have placed many of the spatially defined artifacts in the same provenience unit – that is, the same bag. Further, it is possible to imagine that a lab technician classifying artifacts by function may then have missed other meanings for these artifacts. Because there were literally hundreds of artifacts found in addition to these, some of the finer points concerning spatial associations between these and other artifacts were later

confirmed, as lab and field notes for the subunits were rigorously compared. As will be demonstrated below, some patterns of artifact distribution that were missed in the field only emerged through lab analysis, and we were able to see them as a direct result of using small provenience units during the field investigations.

Other Quarters Sites Included within the Comparative Study

The Frogmore Plantation Quarters Site and Investigation

The excavation methodology developed at Jordan was employed with only minor alterations during excavations at Frogmore Plantation in South Carolina that took place in the 1990s. In addition to learning about the layout of the Quarters area, one of the goals of the Frogmore investigation was to discover and excavate the Praise House that was believed to be in the Quarters area. This structure was alluded to by William Grayson, owner of Frogmore from the 1830s until 1852, in his epic poem *The Hireling and the Slave*, and by conversations I had with Queen Quet, the elected leader of the Gullah/Geechee Nation, who lived in the immediate area.

Because the Frogmore Plantation Quarters excavation lasted only three full field seasons, we know much less about it than the Jordan Quarters. Even so, a number of conclusions can be drawn from the results. The first has to do with the belief systems held by members of both communities. The second relates to the location of residences. Both conclusions illustrate the importance of employing a deeply contextualized methodological and analytical approach.

First, we were able to identify the footprints of individual cabins relating to two distinct periods of construction and organization. The first set of quarters, corresponding to the late eighteenth century, was composed of wattle and daub cabins supported by wooden posts. The second set of quarters, corresponding to the nineteenth century, was built on pier and beam foundations in a gridded block pattern. This first village was identified through regularly spaced post-holes corresponding generally to the location of cabins as they were depicted on a 1791 map of the plantation. However, no postholes were associated with cabins constructed and occupied within the “second” village in the Frogmore Quarters and the pier and beam foundations had left indistinct physical evidence on the ground. Instead, the second village was identified by analyzing artifact frequencies between the subunits of standard units. In a number of instances,

these areas of increased frequency formed narrow linear artifact features within identical soil types. When these linear high artifact frequency features were followed across adjacent excavation units, they appeared to form lines that ended at “shadows” (areas in which there were few or no artifacts present). These shadows tended to be either circular in shape (or square with rounded corners) and had a relatively uniform area (from 0.5 to 0.8 square feet). These linear features, with their associated “shadows”, have been interpreted as the remains of residences in the Frogmore Quarters. Therefore, we were able to locate the cabins of the second village, as well as the yard space between cabins, precisely because we used an excavation strategy that recovered fine-scale provenience information

The second important result of our methodology, relative to artifact and spatial patterning, was the identification of a set of “crossroads” deposits, similar to the one at Jordan Planation, beneath one of the later village cabins at Frogmore. The field methodology provided the evidence for both the size and orientation of that cabin, plus the association of four features under the footprint of the cabin. This occurred in the third field season of excavation at the Frogmore Quarters. No similar deposits were found in association with the other cabins excavated/tested at Frogmore.

- The eastern deposit at Frogmore consisted of a green glass bottle that had been “capped” with a large blue glass bead, the neck of a second green glass bottle, and a long piece of cast iron shaped like a sewing needle and approximately thirteen inches long. These objects had been placed into a shallow, rectangular pit immediately in front of the cabin’s hearth. The green glass bottle had a tiny copper bead along with very small fragments of glass, ceramics, and metal, all within a soil matrix that included a fairly high percentage of “magnetic soil” (grains of soil that could be picked up by a magnet). Due to the presence of magnetic soil, this bottle has been interpreted as a “conjure bottle” [for other examples see (Leone and Fry 1999; Ruppel et al. 2003); see also (Samford 1999)].
- The northern deposit consisted of a fully articulated calf that had been killed then buried in a pit that was approximately four feet deep. The calf had been shot in the face with a shotgun, as a number of pieces of lead shot were still lodged within its head. The calf had been placed into the hole with its head and legs facing toward the east. The calf appeared to have been tied down, as four long cast iron rods had been positioned with a rod on

either side of the shoulders and on either side of the lower abdomen. A portion of the base of a Colonoware vessel had been placed over the chest of the calf. Finally, a complete green glass bottle along with the base of a second green glass bottle had been placed in the fill over the head of the calf, and almost 3.5 feet above it, very near the top of the pit. All that was missing from the skeleton of the calf was the bones of the tail, and a study of the remaining bones failed to reveal any evidence of butchering. The calf appears to have been killed, its tail removed, and then buried after having been staked into the bottom of the pit.

- The western deposit consisted of a green glass bottle base placed into the top of a hole that had been dug to hold a fully articulated chicken. Like the calf, the chicken had been placed into the hole facing toward the east. Unlike the calf, the chicken was placed into the hole “standing” upright with its wings slightly spread open.
- Finally, the southern deposit consisted of a small deposit of ash, burned shell, and burned iron. Given the orientation of the cabin, these deposits had been placed near the center of each of the cabin’s walls.

Further, three whelk shells were found near three of the corners of the cabin. Even though a large number of whelk shells were recovered elsewhere during our investigation of the site, these particular shells were placed upright in the ground. In each case, the shells “opened” on the eastern side. Looking down on the shells from above, the impression was one of decreasing radius counter-clockwise “circles”. Similar shell features were not identified elsewhere on the site

Data from test excavation units on the southwestern side of the Frogmore Quarters suggested that we might have been getting close to the Praise House structure by the time we terminated our work at Frogmore. During the course of our excavation, we brought Queen Quet (and other members of her family) to the site, and they were able to provide important oral historical data. Comparing this data with other ethnographic sources, and with the archaeological data, we interpreted the Jordan *and* Frogmore Plantation deposits as follows:

- the eastern deposits consisted of elements of the curer’s tool kit,
- the northern deposits appear to have been related to wealth in this world,
- the western deposits relate to protection, and

- the southern deposits relate to the world of spirits and ancestors.

While the actual materials deposited differ between the two sites, we believe that the meanings of what was placed beneath each cardinal direction point are the same.

The Richmond Hill Praise House Site and Investigation

We also excavated a small area of the Richmond Hill Plantation. The sole focus of the excavation on Richmond Hill was the historically documented “Prayer’s House” or praise house.

The Richmond Hill Plantation had been the subject of an earlier CRM study conducted by Brockington and Associates, but for a variety of reasons, their focus had been only the Quarters area. Although we had an historic hand-drawn map and other historical documents that suggested the locations of the “Prayer House, Work House, and Gin” (Swiggart 1999), we ground-truthed these documents by excavating a series of 1 ft. by 1 ft. shovel test units dug in 0.1 ft. levels across the property, all the while closely examining the perspective of the drawing as compared to the contemporary landscape. Even today, with all of the original buildings and some of the old trees missing from the landscape, the area has maintained the orientation of the original plantation. Using the same field methods as those used at Frogmore with respect to standard unit sizes and level depths, he confirmed the location of the Praise House. In fact, the praise house, workhouse, and cotton gin locations on the drawing fit almost perfectly with the locations of the three structures interpreted from the shovel testing.

Like Jordan and Frogmore, we also identified four deposits in cardinal directions beneath the floor of the praise house structure. Like the other structures defined in this area of the plantation, the praise house had been oriented to parallel the course of the Ogeechee River located just to the north, and, therefore the four deposits placed beneath it had an angle of almost 45 degrees to the walls of the structure.

Even though the artifacts, features, and other aspects of the archaeological deposits in the area of this structure were different from those defined beneath the Jordan Plantation praise house, there were a striking number of similarities. One of the major similarities between the two hypothesized praise houses was the appearance, in both cases, of what appear to be “crossroads” deposits placed below what would have been raised wooden floors. The actual material items that comprised the crossroads deposits varied between the structures, as was the case with the

deposits below the floors of the conjurer's cabins; again, the ethnographic "connections" are detailed in longer reports. With that in mind, the deposits, listed below, appear to express the same set of meanings.

- The northern deposit consisted of a generally cross-shaped hole that had been filled with oyster shells.
- The western deposit was a human skull that had been placed into a shallow hole, with the face oriented toward the east. It is possible that this skull had actually been recovered from a Native American burial that was found eroding out of the bank of the Ogeechee River, although there was no obvious evidence to support where it came from.
- The southern deposit consisted of a two-dimensional relief sculpture made of a gray-white plaster and shaped very much like a Sankofa symbol. As with each of these deposits, the sculpture had been placed on the bottom of a shallow hole.
- Finally, the eastern deposit consisted of a number of fragments of flat glass, some with a mirror backing. This deposit was identified in the field as a direct result of the excavation technique, as it permitted the immediate discovery of the increase in the frequency of glass fragments within a small area of a single subunit.

We also noted a high incidence of green bottle glass, especially in the northern and western portions of the area below the floor. This represents a second important similarity with the Jordan praise house and with the ritual deposit at Frogmore. Although the presence of an elevated frequency of green bottles/sherds in close association with below-floor "crossroads" features could suggest the importance of wine, given the related artifact contexts and deposits at both plantations, we suspect that they were, instead, associated with ritual at both plantations.

The Magnolia Plantation Quarters Site

The Magnolia Plantation is one of the components of the Cane River Creole National Historical Park (NPS) located in Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana, and is the most recent addition to our long-range project. The excavation of Magnolia was intended to provide archaeological data from a second gang-based plantation (as noted above, the first was Jordan; Frogmore and Richmond Hill used the task labor system). Today eight of the original brick cabin structures

remain standing, and these were occupied from the early 1840s through the mid-1960s. To date six field seasons have been completed at the site, and a number of artifact analyses are still being conducted. However, the investigation has already provided a number of artifacts and artifact contexts that bear directly on the central questions of this chapter. As with Richmond Hill and Frogmore, we will not describe the detailed history of the site, or our complete excavation, unless directly related to the relevant points here. Also as before, a great deal of historical data were used to arrive at the point of excavation, as discussed included in our yearly preliminary reports to the NPS (Brown 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010).

Prior to our work, several previous investigations were conducted at Magnolia Plantation with varying results. The first of these focused solely on the cabins and was undertaken in 1991 by Coastal Environments, Inc. (CEI) in order to assess the area of the extant cabins prior to stabilizing and reconstructing the cabins (Hahn and Wells 1991). Using conventional shovel testing and 1x1 meter unit methods, these investigations concluded that the site had little integrity. Investigators believed that the areas directly associated with the cabins, including their floor space, had been heavily impacted by a devastating tornado and site reconstruction activities that occurred during 1939-40.

Later, during the late 1990s, personnel from the National Park Service's Southeast Archaeological Center undertook extensive and systematic testing of cabins 1, 2, and 3 at the Magnolia Plantation quarters (Keel 1999; Miller 2004). These test units were intended to assess the archaeological deposits within the park as a planning tool for both development and public interpretation. First, a 1996 investigation provided baseline data that included mapping the artifact frequencies across the site, locating many large subsurface features, and assessing the integrity of the site's archaeological deposits. Later, additional excavations were undertaken by Keel and NPS personnel between 1996 and 1999 (Miller 2004) as development of the park was begun.

Despite the earlier conclusions stated by CEI, Keel hypothesized that the archaeological deposits across the site, and particularly within the area of the quarters, had retained a high level of integrity over the course of more than 150 to 200 years of use and occupation (Keel 1999; Miller 2004). Further, Keel believed that a controlled investigation of the Quarters had the

potential to provide materials for display as part of their public interpretation of the site by the NPS. These NPS investigations formed the baseline for our work at Magnolia Plantation.

To date, our investigations have provided some intriguing data, especially with respect to ritual deposits similar to those found at Levi Jordan, Frogmore, and the Richland Hill Plantations. The previous investigations at the Magnolia Plantation removed partial floor and sub-floor surfaces of several cabins, and we posit that important micro-provenience data may have been lost through those efforts. As a result, we have not been able to demonstrate conclusively the same crossroads-patterned deposits because several areas had already been excavated prior to our work.

Nonetheless, two cabins, Cabin 4 and Cabin 1, each revealed three of the four ritual deposits aligned to the cardinal directions. Below the doorway to Cabin 4, for instance, we uncovered an almost complete chicken egg within a small hole dug into the original dirt floor. In addition, we also found a large quartz crystal. There was no other associated debris at this location and therefore, we surmised that these items were probably intentionally placed at this location along the eastern wall of the cabin. Along the southern end of the cabin we uncovered a small brass box (likely for a rosary), a crucifix, chicken egg shell, all set within a small plaster-line pit. The crucifix was found “face down” beneath the box and on top of the fragment of eggshell, with Christ’s head having been placed to the south. The western deposit had been placed in a rectangular hole that had been dug into the dirt floor in the exact center of the cabin. This hole was oriented with its corners aligned with the cardinal directions not with the cabin itself. Ethnographic data and oral history states that the Creole family who resided in the cabin during the early 1900s had a “home altar” along the north wall of this room. Thus, unlike the other three sites, one of the religious deposits could be, and was, placed above the floor and did not enter the archaeological deposits.

We also found what appear to be ritual deposits in the floor of Cabin 1. The eastern deposit consisted of a brass locket and small snail shell within a large, square hole in the floor. This hole was centered on the middle of the window on the eastern wall of the room. Both sides of the locket contained etched designs, at least one of which appears similar to a *gris-gris* symbol employed by Marie Laveau, meaning “to take control of one’s life” (Canizares 2001). A possible southern deposit consisted of a large number of green bottle glass fragments, one human

deciduous tooth, and a blue glass bead. Unfortunately, earlier NPS exhibition activities had caused them to remove approximately six inches of the cabin floor deposit, so we do not know what else might have been present before then. The western deposit was a large pit dug through the dirt floor and into the subsoil beneath the cabin. On the base of this feature, a carefully placed “diamond-shaped” alignment of four metal bars was placed with the corners oriented to the cardinal directions. In setting up the cabin for exhibition, the NPS had reconstructed the hearth along the northern wall, preventing us from closely investigating there.

Although the Magnolia Plantation does not offer a complete comparison to Levi Jordan and other plantations regarding cross-shaped ritual deposits, ritual deposits along one of more walls of two cabins were present. This in itself is significant because it further supports the key point we are trying to make here, which is that enslaved and post-emancipation blacks participated in a rich spiritual tradition that combined both Christian and non-Christian beliefs. Moreover, they expressed this spirituality through the manipulation of the material world. That is, they expressed themselves through the world of spaces, places, and objects that were part of their everyday lives.

Comparisons: The Interpretation of the Development of Beliefs and Behaviors across the Four Sites (see Appendices C, D, E and F).

As noted above, at least one set of “cardinal direction deposits” was identified at each of the four plantations. In the case of Jordan, at least two sets of these deposits were recovered. Investigations conducted by others have tentatively suggested similar “cosmogram” oriented ritual deposits, as well (Ruppel et al 2003). The true meanings of these deposits may never be fully understood. The Bakongo cosmogram model (Ferguson 1992, 1999; Ruppel et al. 2003) symbolizing the worldview of a number of related West African societies, appears to have provided the fundamental organizing principle behind the deposition of these features by members of the Jordan quarters community (Brown 1994, 2001). However, the two sets of deposits beneath the praise house/church at the Jordan quarters do not appear to neatly “fit” the BaKongo Cosmogram model, as it has become to be defined (Brown 1994; Ferguson 1991; Fennell 2003, 2007). That is, the artifacts placed in each of the cardinal directions do not appear to have inherent correlations to the passage through life (east) and death (west) and the power

relationships in each of those worlds (north for the world of the living and south for the world of dead). Rather, the artifacts used were adapted from the everyday world of the enslaved blacks who lived in the Jordan quarters. In fact, by comparing the ritual deposits from cabins at each of the four sites we looked at, we speculate that these may have meanings that extend well-beyond the *original* Bakongo “cosmogram model.” We believe that these ritual deposits were intended to reflect more than just path of life and death as suggested by the original Bakongo cosmogram; they also reflect the political and social worlds of African Americans.

The Curer’s crossroads deposits

Sets of crossroads features, believed to have been designed to sanctify the interior spaces of cabins utilized for curing/conjuring and probably childbirth, were identified at the Jordan and Frogmore Quarters (Table #1). Our interpretation is that these deposits have elements of the curer’s ritual kits on the east; power symbols of the world of the living on the north; protection devices on the west; and a representation of the spirit world on the south.

While the actual materials deposited at each site differ, they appear to have the same meanings to the different groups of residents who created them. For example, the eastern deposits at both sites consisted of elements of the curer’s ritual kits (bottles, glass, nails, and other bits of iron). However, while the western deposit at Frogmore consisted of a fully articulated chicken covered with a green glass bottle that had been placed upright into a hole and facing toward the east, at Jordan, it consisted of a series of cast-iron pots and pot fragments similar to the Yoruba *amula* (Brown 2001, 2011; Thompson 1993, 2007). In both cases, we interpret the western deposits as attempts to protect the space within the cabin, by capturing evil as it attempted to enter the cabin.

Within the BaKongo Cosmogram, the east represents one’s birth into the world of the living, and certainly, the curer’s kits could be employed during childbirth, although curing goes well beyond and continues throughout a person’s life. Meanwhile, in the traditional BaKongo cosmogram model, the west signifies the transition from the world of the living to the dead. However, in the case of the Jordan and Frogmore Plantation (and possibly Magnolia Plantation), we believe that the western deposits served to protect the room, those seeking aid, and the

practitioners within it, as that is the function of an *amula* (Thompson 1993) and chickens (MacDonald 1995) in a number of West African traditions.

NORTH		
Coin Deposit (Jordan)		
Articulated Calf Deposit (Frogmore)		
WEST		EAST
Amula/Iron Deposit (Jordan)		Conjurer's Kit Deposit (Jordan)
Articulated Chicken Deposit (Frogmore)		Conjure Bottle Deposit (Frogmore)
"Trash Dump" (Magnolia)		Etched Locket and Shell (Magnolia)
SOUTH		
Ash/Burned Shell/Burned Metal (Jordan)		
Ash/Burned Sand/Burned Metal (Frogmore)		
Ash/Deciduous Teeth/Bottle/Bead (Magnolia)		

Table #1: Cardinal direction deposits found beneath the floors of cabins interpreted as having been occupied and used by Curers.

The Church/Praise House crossroads deposits

Crossroads deposits were also identified beneath structures that were historically and/or archaeologically known to have served as churches/praise houses for the occupants of the Jordan, Richmond Hill, and, possibly the Magnolia Quarters (Table #2). These sets of features are interpreted as having deposits that signify birth into membership within the church/praise house on the east, the power of the community/congregation and its beliefs on the north (the world of the present), transition from life to death on the west, and the power of the community and/or its memory on the south (the world of the past).

Again, superficially, these deposits bear a relationship to the meaning of the cardinal directions of the BaKongo Cosmogram, but there are a number of significant differences. At Magnolia, for instance, the southern deposit representing community memory appears to have been conflated with traditional Catholic imagery and belief in the form of a buried crucifix. We believe that the Magnolia deposits date from sometime around 1900 through the 1930s, and appear to show some of the change made to the traditional beliefs held by Africans and African Americans across the South. Meanwhile at Jordan, the world of the present is signified through American coins, household object and a crystal. These distinctly American objects are things that shaped the material world of slavery and tenant farming for the residents of the Jordan quarters.

NORTH (Community's Power)	
Coin/Crystal/Household Deposit (Jordan)	
Shell Cross Deposit (Richmond Hill)	
WEST (Transition/Death)	EAST (Rebirth as an Adult)
Brick Altar/Iron Deposit (Jordan)	Brick/Knife Deposit (Jordan)
Human Skull/Iron Deposit (Richmond Hill)	Mirror Glass Deposit (Richmond Hill)
Rectangular Hole (Magnolia)	Egg/Crystal (Magnolia)
SOUTH (The Community's Past)	
Ash Deposit (Jordan)	
Plaster "Sankofa" Symbol Deposit (Richmond Hill)	
Buried Crucifix (Magnolia)	

Table #2: Cardinal direction/crossroads deposits found beneath the floors of the Praise Houses at Jordan and Richmond Hill and the smaller deposits found in cabin #4 at Magnolia.

The "Political" crossroads deposit (Jordan)

While not found at Richmond Hill or Magnolia, a second set of cardinal direction crossroads deposits was recovered beneath the floor space of the Jordan church (Table #3). Both sets of crossroads deposits beneath this floor shared the same western deposit, the so-called "brick altar." However, for the most part the second set of deposits generally *surrounded* those that appear to be related to the religious function of the space. In this case, the plaster "cross" that was located near the doorway into both the sanctuary of the church and the doorway between the sanctuary and the minister's residence may have been placed to remind members to speak only the truth (Thompson 1983). This crossroads was the only one of the seven deposits that was well protected during its placement, possibly suggesting its importance in the function of the structure.

The southern deposit of this set spans the sanctuary, through the minister's residence and into cabin I-A-2 to the south. An elaborately carved "flywhisk," a necklace made of glass beads (red, black, and green in color), the bone spurs from at least two chicken legs, and a number of other artifacts were recovered from the deposits beneath the cabin to the south. These artifacts, along with the connection to the praise house/church, and the ethnographic evidence related to the importance of elders in the training of the community's children, suggest that this cabin may have been the residence of one of the community's elders (Brown 2005).

<p>NORTH (An Altar to Ogun?) White over Red Feature Deposit</p>	
<p>WEST (Transition) Brick Altar/Iron Artifact Deposit</p>	<p>EAST (Consecration) Plaster “Cross” Deposit</p>
<p>SOUTH (The Strength of the Ancestors) Ash/Kettle base/Household Artifact Deposit</p>	

Table #3: The interpretations of the deposits forming the possible “political” cardinal direction/crossroads deposits found beneath the floor of the Jordan Community praise house.

The methodology and the crossroads deposits: a final note

We would like to address a final issue concerning this interpretation of the crossroads deposits – an issue raised some years ago by Weik (2008) and more recently by one of the co-editors of this document. Specifically, the issue is that we needed to demonstrate that the deposits forming the crossroads were placed at the same time, in order for them to have formed a functional set of deposits, as we have suggested.

One possible response to that concern is to point out that, for the seven individual sets of deposits we have defined on the four sites, the excavation methodology permitted us to state that the upper surfaces for each of the deposits within a set was never more than 0.03 feet (except for the southern Curer’s deposit that had been placed within the cabin’s hearth). Within the stratigraphic context of each cabin’s sub-floor (or floor in the case of Magnolia), the tops of the features varied by less than 0.03 feet. This was an observation made possible by the tight provenience control built into the methodology. Thus, from a purely stratigraphic perspective, the deposits appear to be rather closely contemporary. Short of a time machine this might be the closest archaeologists can come to an actual demonstration that features are contemporaneous.

However, this does not fully answer the critique, because even with tight provenience data, we cannot be certain whether what we interpret as ritual deposits were actually intentionally placed, or the result of everyday discard patterns. Certainly, some objects, such as a whole egg, a human skull, an articulated chicken, or an iron pot within a pot must have been intentionally placed within subfloors of these rooms. However, others, such as bottles, broken glass, or ash could well have been everyday domestic discard debris. What is needed is simply

more data from more sites to determine whether the crossroads deposits we identified are archaeological fabrications or real, intentionally placed offerings. The crossroads deposit patterns do not enjoy the same level of acceptance as other patterns do (such as posthole patterns) because, very frankly, we currently know of less than ten such sets of deposits. In fact, I originally utilized the term "cosmogram" to discuss these sets of deposits, until we began to observe patterns within the sets that varied depending on the behavioral context of the structure they were buried beneath. The patterns that we have described here demonstrate that the cosmogram is not, in fact, an accurate model for the deposits. This is why we now refer to them as "crossroads" deposits, because we believe that they express a variety of African religious traditions, not "just" BaKongo cosmograms.

To compare this to the "posthole" pattern that is now recognizable by any trained archaeologist – when postholes form a shape (say, at the base of a plowzone), it is now an archaeological "taken for granted" that they functioned together in the past to form some sort of structure. The patterns formed by these postholes tell us how humans built shelters, drying racks, or any number of things, at any given place, and they are seen as *patterns* precisely because they have been tested, time and time again. *Testing is critical to what we do as archaeologists.* Our interpretations and methodology are either useful or not, based on whether they take us *beyond* where we are now. The crossroads deposits described here, in part found as a consequence of the methodology and interpretations outlined here, have increased our ability to understand the role that peoples of African descent played in the origin and evolution of their own beliefs and behaviors.

Other Examples of the Utility of the Methodology

Thus far, this document has reported mostly on how a specific methodology facilitated the identification of "crossroads" deposits at several Southern plantations. However, the same methodology can permit, in addition to the discoveries discussed above:

- the discovery of architecture and architectural details, including the definition of the internal, perishable walls, and the presence/absence of wooden floors within cabins;
- the discovery of features associated with craft specializations ;

- the identification of periods of structural reuse and reconstruction.

The discovery of architecture and architectural details

At Jordan, as a direct result of the methodology employed, we were able to define both the orientation of the floorboards and (possibly of more importance) the location of the perishable internal walls, including the determination that a majority of the cabins had two rooms.

With respect to the floor joists: during excavation, literally hundreds of square nails (both complete and fragmentary), square spikes, and other construction hardware were recovered across the site. When the artifact data from Cabin I-A-1 (The Church) was analyzed, this aspect of its artifact assemblage stood out, because when the distribution of these objects was plotted out according to the 1ft. x1ft. units located across the cabin, we observed that they occurred in linear concentrations.(Figure 8). For ease of viewing, the distribution drawing below only shows the 5ft x 5ft unit lines, but the distribution contours are based on the subdivided 1ft. x 1 ft. units.

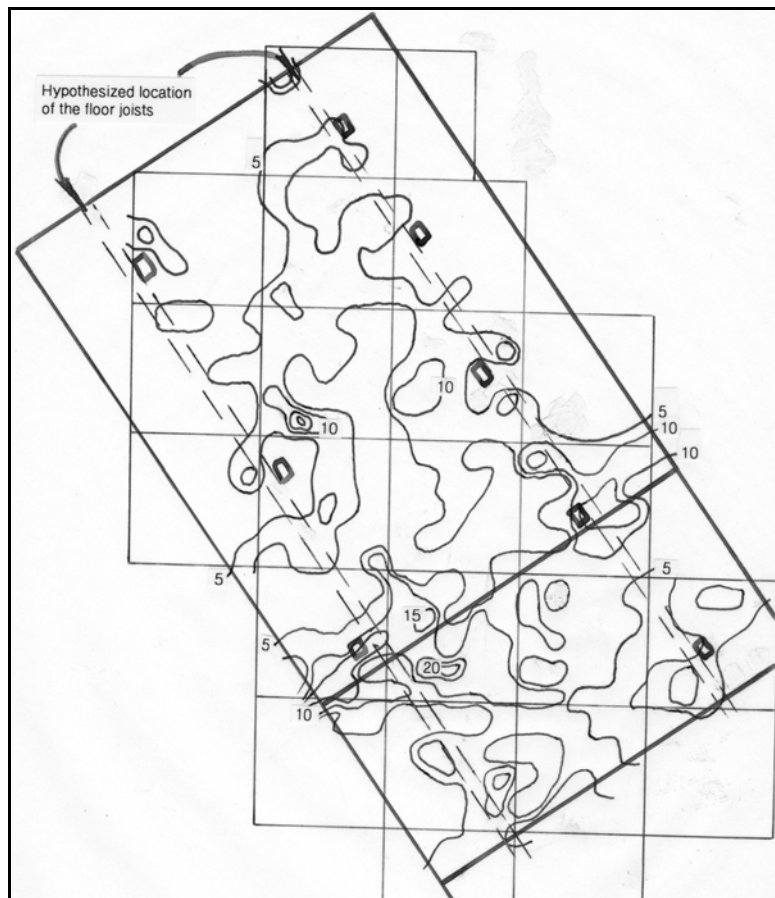


Figure 8: A drawing illustrating the distribution of square nails along with the seven posthole features identified during the excavation of cabin I-A-1a/b. The long dashed lines represent the hypothesized locations of the wooden floor joists. The heavy line represents the apparent division between the residence and the church. Note the apparent correlation between the increase in the frequency of square nails and the joists.

As indicated in Figure 8, the presence of two interior walls can be identified in the distribution of artifacts across the footprint of the two structures (interpreted, with other data, as the church and its associated residence). The location of these interior walls is based on an increased frequency of artifacts on either side of these interior walls, with the wall itself as “shadow” in between. Further, the artifacts tend to be very small and may have been the result of their having fallen through the floorboards or the gaps between the floorboards and the walls when the floors were swept.

Another architectural example comes from Frogmore. When excavations began, the historical record included a map of the plantation from a 1791 will. This depicted the location of the Frogmore Quarters as a set of eighteen cabins arranged in three parallel rows of six cabins. During our survey of the site, a number of heavy shell and tabby concentrations were identified that had a generally rectangular shape, ranging in size from approximately 5-6 feet by 3 feet. Because of their shape, orientation, and size, these features were hypothesized to represent the bases of fireplaces and chimneys for the cabins within the Quarters.

However, the 1791 map suggested a slightly different orientation for the cabins. With this issue in mind, the first excavation units were placed to investigate one of these apparent shell features. As can be observed in Figure 9, the actual size and orientation of the Curer’s Cabin at Frogmore was defined because of the linear artifact features that could be followed out from the rectangular shell and tabby feature.

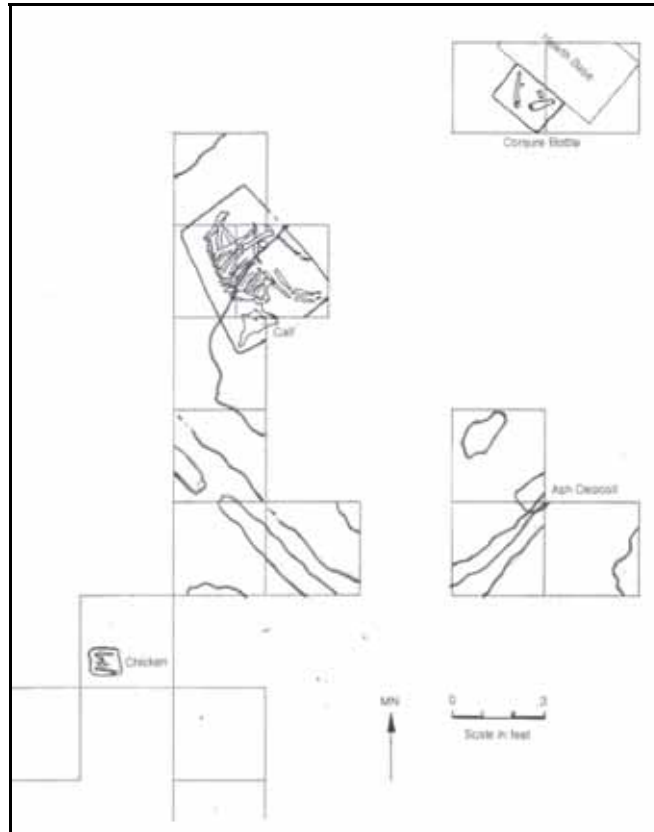


Figure 9: Drawing showing the four major features associated with the footprint of the Frogmore Curer's cabin. Portions of both the western and southern walls of the cabin were defined by the presence of linear features that consisted of narrow bands (less than 0.75 feet wide) that had unusually high artifact counts.

It should also be noted that these linear features were found over the top of at least one of the hypothesized ritual features associated with the cabin. If we had excavated in deeper levels, this distinction between the two would likely have been lost.

At the Magnolia Plantation quarters, which we excavated between 2006 and 2011, we were able to identify previously un-recorded details about the enslaved quarters. In 2006, when we began excavations into the footprint of one of the brick cabins within the Magnolia Quarters excavation, previous archaeological investigations conducted by Coastal Environments Inc. (Hahn and Wells 1991) and the National Park Service (Keel 1999; Miller 2004; Miri 1997) had both concluded that the cabins had always had *wooden* floors. However, several features of a thick, non-natural soil zone that we identified within the footprint of all three of the standing cabins (and the two ruins we investigated) support the hypothesis that until sometime after 1940, these cabins had had *dirt* floors. We should point out that researchers did come across a brief mention of dirt floors by people who had occupied or visited people living within the cabins

prior to 1940. This was not enough evidence to dispute the previous archaeological findings, however. As can be seen in Figure 10, the zone that was defined as a dirt floor in each cabin was a non-natural soil deposition that was banded in nature. This soil zone capped the builder's trench (dug to for the foundation of the brick walls) on the interior of the cabin, but not on the cabin's exterior. There were deep depressions associated with each of the doorways constructed within these cabins (as well as other evidence for the constant repair of these depressions). Furthermore, there was an almost complete lack of square nails within the archaeological deposits associated with the cabin's floors.



Figure 10: Photograph showing the thick dirt floor built up in Cabin #1 at Magnolia. Note the internal light colored lines that are evidence of repairs to the floor over its nearly 100 years of use.

Our methods differed from the previous excavations in critical ways. First, both previous projects had employed more standard excavation unit sizes (1 x 1 m and 5 x 5 ft.) and level depths (six inch levels). Second, both previous investigators had excavated adjacent to brick walls within several of the cabins. Neither was able to define the presence of dirt floors within any of these cabins they tested/excavated.

Thus, our methodology clearly contributed a great deal to the discovery of the dirt floors. Moreover, our context-sensitive approach to in situ artifact interpretation was able to discern potentially important ritual deposits (consisting of items such as whole chicken eggs, medicine bottles, and intentionally modified religious medals) within these floors, whereas previous

investigators (*see* Hahn and Wells 1991) had suggested that there was low potential for significant, intact archaeological resources (*see* Brown 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010).

Features associated with craft specializations

One of the critical issues confronting African American archaeology is to understand the ways in which class, race, and ethnicity affect how populations obtain and employ material culture. African Americans, constrained as they were by historical circumstance, often came to use and value objects differently from their white counterparts. A keen understanding of these forces enabled us to identify some critical patterns with regard to craft specialization and material re-use at the Jordan Plantation.

For instance, within the abandonment level defined from three adjacent units excavated in cabin I-B-3, a number of artifacts were recovered that have been interpreted as the “Carver’s Kit” (Harris 1999) (Figure 11). Included with this “kit” was an unfinished carved shell object: the cameo that has become the unofficial “symbol” for the Jordan Plantation (Figure 12).

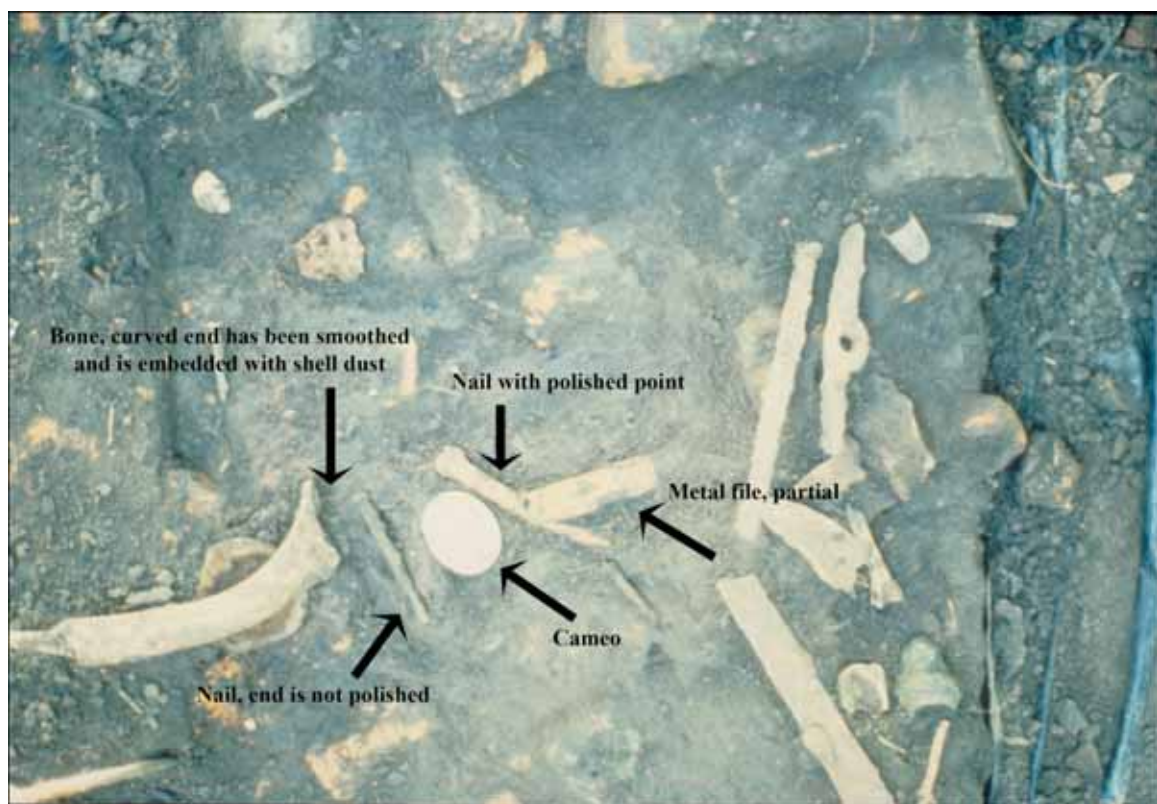


Figure 11: Artifacts in Carver’s cabin, in situ



Figure 12: Cameo

The tools recovered include a pocketknife, a small square nail that had been mounted into a shell handle, several small metal files, several pieces of bone, two chipped stone scrapers, and a stone graver. One of the pieces of bone recovered was the proximal end of a rib, likely that of a pig, that was found just to the north of the cameo. This rib fragment demonstrated signs of use in the production of shell objects, because the proximal end of the rib had been flattened and showed signs of its having been utilized to work shell. That is, the surface of the end of the bone was somewhat smoothed, and tiny bits of shell were imbedded into this bone. This tool appears to have been employed to smooth and/or shape shell objects.

A pocketknife and a thin bent piece of metal were located near the western side of the tool kit, and approximately two feet from the carved shell cameo. The knife and the metal may represent two more items in the tool kit employed here in the production of carved shell/bone objects. While bent and broken, the size and general shape of the strip of metal suggests that, with additional work, it could have been intended to hold the finished cameo. Certainly, that was our field impression, given its location (proximate to the cameo). More importantly the “Carver’s Kit” at the Jordan Plantation demonstrated how the black residents were manipulating and using

everyday objects, such as ordinary nails or pieces of metal, to create other objects, such as the cameo, that may have had sentimental, artistic or spiritual significance.

A second example from the Jordan Plantation also shows how one cabin revealed evidence of two different “craft” activities: Cabin II-B-1, or what we now refer to as the Curer-Midwife’s Cabin

Near the southern, perishable wall of the cabin, we found a very compact collection of objects that may have actually been hidden beneath the floorboards. This set of items included two round discs of glass (one white, one light blue), several brass cartridge cases for forty-five caliber bullets, a glass disc with a raised six pointed star placed on one surface, a couple of small metal files, and what felt like small concentrations of “colored glass dust” that could only have been identified with carefully controlled hand-excavated methods. These objects appeared to be the raw materials and tools required to manufacture the complex glass buttons with metal or ground glass designs placed on one surface that were recovered from several of the cabins within the Quarters. In Nancy Phaup’s master’s thesis, she noted that these had been set into the bases of cartridge cases fitted with loop shanks (Phaup 2001).

Obviously, that statement also suggests that the buttons were being both produced and (for at least some of them) used within the Jordan Quarters. While Phaup’s analysis of the designs on these buttons suggests that they are similar, if not identical, to designs found on Adinkra cloth created by several West African cultural groups, it should also be pointed out that these relatively simple designs also appear in a wide variety of other cultures and time periods. Indeed, it may well be the widespread distribution of these design elements, cross culturally, that helps make this tool kit and the resulting buttons so important. The wearers could at once display important symbols while they were disguised as little more than decoration by outsiders. Examples of these finished buttons were recovered from several of the cabins throughout the four blocks, suggesting their widespread importance for members of the community (Figure 13).



Figure 13: A sample of five of the buttons made within the Munitions Makers/Hunters cabin.

The hidden location for the tool kit and the unfinished products (the buttons), might suggest that they were not simply intended as “decorated buttons”, but rather that the elements placed on them were selected for a reason other than simple decoration. Their manufacture was hidden, but the finished product itself was not. As has been suggested by a number of folklorists, this might support the view that some non-verbal communication by enslaved people of African descent was hidden in plain view (Fry 1990; Tobin and Dobard 1999; Wahlman 2001). More importantly, however, it also suggests that the blacks who occupied the Jordan Plantation quarters purposefully altered and employed a wide variety of mundane objects to create new objects and new meanings that resonated with unique world view based in African and Euro-American traditions. Further, it is likely that the cabin that the material was actually associated with would have been missed with traditional methods, as they were found adjacent to the “wall shadow” dividing cabin II-B-1 from II-B-2.

Episode of structural reuse and reconstruction

The archaeological record of the Jordan Plantation also points to a shift in the function of the rooms of one cabin from a residence to church. Archaeological evidence indicates that the residents of each cabin prepared and cooked food in their own residential quarters. Not only did each cabin have a hearth, but food remains (bones, remains of cans), cooking equipment (cast

iron and enamelware), and food serving items (plates, dishes, cups) were also found in every cabin tested. We were able to document the removal of the hearth from the main room of one residential cabin (I-A-1) and this suggested a fundamental alteration of community focus.

The Gullah and Geechee of the Lowcountry of South Carolina and Georgia have built praise houses without hearths since the 1830s (Brown 2001; Creel 1988). This is possibly because their general architectural models, Christian churches, also lacked hearths within their main sanctuaries (Brown 2003, 2011). Praise houses were intended as simple, small structures built for the specific purpose of blending religion and social control within a single building (Creel 1988). The praise house was often built as the first house on the “street” (meaning within the quarters). However, in some cases, the early praise houses in the Gullah/Geechee area, as well as on smaller plantations across the South, were simply the residence of an important person within the enslaved community (Brown 2001; Creel 1988). Indeed, while a work of fiction, Harriet Beecher Stowe, in her book *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, describes a praise meeting that took place within the cabin occupied by Tom and his family, and Tom is presented as the enslaved community’s leader. Cabin I-A-1, the renovated Jordan Praise House, was the “first house on the street” (at least from one direction) and this appears to conform to ethno-historic accounts of other such structures.

Other evidence that suggests a change in function for Cabin I-A-1 during its renovation is that the size of the main room was increased. Further, a number of ritual deposits were placed below the floor of this enlarged main room. These ritual deposits are the only indications of a specialized function for the main room. These ritual deposits overlay earlier artifacts associated with the previous residential use of the cabin. While the density of domestic debris was generally low in the renovated main room of Cabin I-A-1, it remained relatively high in the rear portion of the cabin, which continued to be used residentially after the renovation (Brown 2005). This would tend to suggest that the function of the main room changed from a dwelling, while the back room continued to function as a residence.

Thus, the artifact evidence clearly supports the hypothesis that early in its history of use, the cabin had a residential function, although it could also have functioned as a location for praise meetings as well. At some point after it was put into service, the function appears to have

shifted to a use that does not include either residential (except within the “back room” where the hearth was relocated) or craft production activities. On the other hand, certain artifact types appear at a slightly higher frequency in this cabin than in others, including buttons, coins/metal tokens, jewelry items (especially beads), fragments of slate boards and slate pencils, and green glass sherds.

Even though the frequency of jewelry was very slightly lower here than for other cabins, one piece of jewelry is categorically different from others found, with respect to type, location within the cabin, and condition in the ground. This is the small brass cross with six inset red cut glass pieces on a chain. The cross was placed into a shallow depression located near the geographic center of the cabin (Figure 14 and APPENDIX F). When discovered, the cross was oriented with its “long axis” north to south, with the cross having been placed to the south of the chain. The chain’s clasp was closed at the time it was placed below the floorboards.

While an interesting piece of jewelry in its own right, the cross means little when considered by itself. However, it takes on much greater meaning when looked at within a context that includes a number of features and artifact associations located beneath the floor of the of cabin I-A-1, particularly the main room. These features and artifact clusters include two apparent plaster sculptures, a heavy, sharp knife placed below a cross made of bricks, a coin and “charm” deposit, the brick altar and associated artifacts, and the two ash deposits (one associated with the reconstructed hearth). Collectively these items make up a set of ritual deposits forming two crosses with points oriented toward the cardinal directions. These are the “crossroads” deposits discussed earlier in this chapter and what we believe to be intentional placement of artifacts that reflect African American spirituality.

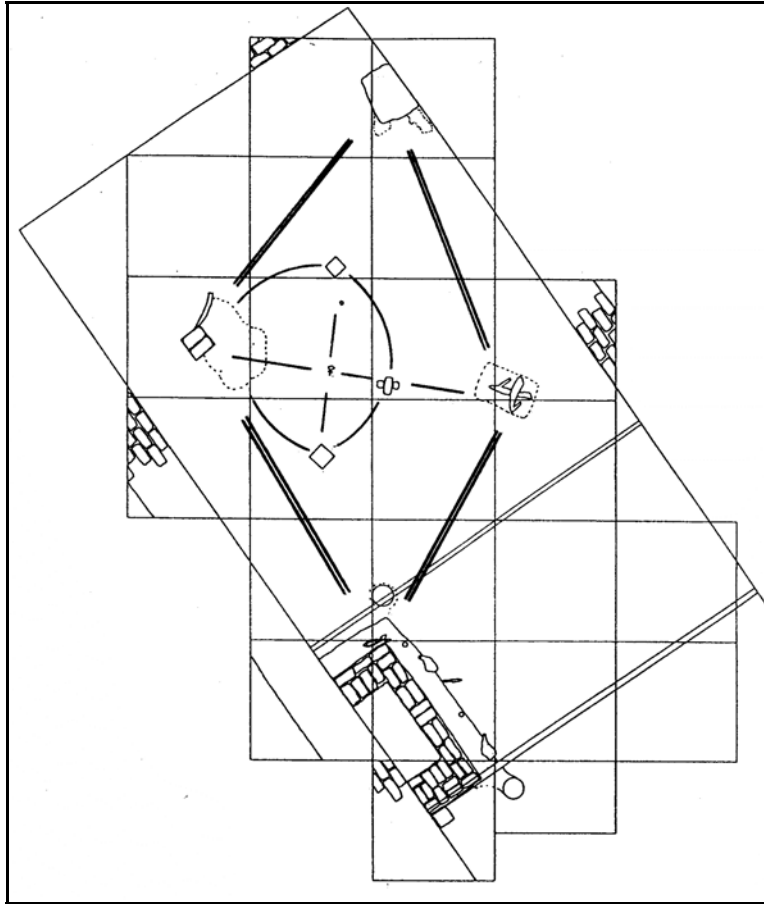


Figure 14: Drawing of the sets of “crossroads” deposits beneath the Cabin I-A-1 in the Jordan Quarters. For scale, the excavation units drawn in this figure measure 5 ft. by 5 ft.

While it is possible that these features and/or artifact deposits might have been defined under less tightly controlled excavation methodologies, the detailed observations concerning the deposition of the cross, as well as many of the other features and patterns, would not have been as clearly defined.

Thus, the recognition of the changes made in the function and size of cabin I-A-1 within the Jordan Quarters were made as a direct result of the use of a methodology that permitted the recovery of very tight provenience information (both horizontally and vertically). Certainly, the removal of the hearth that had been originally constructed within the cabin could have been noted employing more traditional excavation methods. The question, however, is would enough of the other features and artifact concentrations have been defined along with the hearth removal, thus permitting us to identify a church? Further, would traditional excavation methods have

permitted the discovery that the evidence for the use of the “cabin” as a residence was below that which defined its use as a church and a school?

Conclusions

To conclude, we found crossroads deposits at every plantation we investigated, all of which were occupied in different periods by people of African descent – some enslaved, some not (APPENDICES D, E, F, G). We believe that similar cardinal direction deposits would be found elsewhere, if methods similar to ours were used – that is, we do not believe that finding them was “luck”, or that the sorts of deposits described here are unique. As noted above, we also think that the cardinal direction deposits are all related to a creolized world view that integrated various African-based cultural belief systems, and that over time and space these beliefs merged and transformed (and were transformed by) Christian belief systems. The cultural beliefs and behaviors we identified at four sites could well have been practiced across the South, both during and after slavery. Therefore, we believe we have found archaeological support for the following statement by a prominent African American theologian in the AME Church, Cecil Wayne Cone: “Africans did not convert to Christianity – they converted Christianity to themselves” (Cone 1975).

In addition, we found clear evidence of African-based belief systems relating to healing, worship, and political behavior, as well as evidence of craft specialization and potentially important architectural detail.

We could not have identified any of these artifact patterns, or the small, ephemeral shifts in architecture, soil deposits, and in some cases “micro” artifacts (such as glass dust, ash, etc.) which made the patterns clear, without the use of the closely controlled field and analytic methods we described earlier. We would likely have recovered some of the patterns related to the function for the more “major” artifacts, but the shifts in patterns over time and space, thus the shifts in behavior and, more importantly, meaning over space and time, would not have been recognized for many patterns. This highly contextualized archaeological research, involving as it does tight provenience control along with the utilization of ethnographic and historical accounts in a testing fashion is critical in the development of archaeology as a discipline that is relevant to those whose money and time we spend.

Chapter 6:

Conclusion

Best Management Practices for African American Archaeology and What this has to do with Ethics

The goal of this project was to develop a historical, theoretical and practical framework for a better understanding, interpretation and evaluation of African American archaeological sites in Texas. The project has three major components which the authors hope can be used as stand-alone resources, or in tandem: a data component, a theoretical/historical component, and a methodological component. What follows is a discussion of each of these components, and some of the key aspects that readers can take away from this document. These key points form the core of the ‘best practices’ that offer a framework and a toolkit for undertaking better African American archaeology in Texas.

Archaeological and Historic Sites Database

The first component of this project is an extensive database of archaeological and historical sites in Texas. The database is presented in Appendix A of this document with specific projects and site types highlighted throughout the Chapter 3 discussion. The archaeological and historic sites database information was gathered largely by Jannie Scott, a graduate student at the University of Texas at Austin. She specifically gathered together, in one integrated spreadsheet, all the data she could query about African Americans in Texas from the Texas Historical Commission’s Historical and Archaeological Sites Atlases. These databases are extensive, covering all the *recorded* archaeological sites in Texas, as well as all sites, objects or places that are commemorated with historical markers, or are in the National Register of Historic Places. However, they are by no means comprehensive, since there are many sites that simply do not get recorded. To widen the scope, Scott and the research team also searched archives of the Texas Archaeological Research Laboratory and the Texas Historical Commission for reports and information relating to sites that may not have been recorded in any of the Atlases. Additional sites, not listed on the sites atlases, were added to the database only to the degree that any of the project participants were aware of them. The methods and the types of sites and places for which

information was gathered are more fully described at the beginning of Appendix A. Scott analyzed the collected data for her Master's Thesis (Scott 2012) revealing some important trends with respect to the state of African American archaeology in Texas.

First, a number of historical and archaeological places related to African Americans in Texas have already been documented. Of particular relevance to archaeology, there have been a number of important projects dealing with aspects of African American sites in Texas (Scott 2012). These projects and the reports that have been generated from them, whatever their deficiencies may be, should be considered key references for future work to build upon. It is incumbent on anyone who undertakes African American archaeology to familiarize themselves with this body of existing literature in the state. Additionally there are close to 800 places related to African Americans already commemorated on the National Register, as State Archaeological Landmarks, or with state of Texas historical markers. Some of these places are also archaeological sites; but most have never been investigated archaeologically. These places could offer fruitful avenues of research, or simply provide context for other archaeological sites. Appendix A lists all projects and sites which were mined from various archives during this research. The hope is that others will consult this database before, during and after embarking on an archaeological investigation involving African Americans in Texas.

Second, there are some notable fields of under-representation related to archaeological research on African American sites. For instance, there are no pre-1820 sites relating to free people of color, or Spanish colonial sites specifically related to Africans or people of African descent. Given that the black population in Texas was very low prior to 1820, it is possible that such sites simply do not exist. However, African Americans are represented in Spanish Colonial and Mexican era history, albeit lightly, and sites related to this time period could be fruitfully studied. The perspectives brought to bear on such research would naturally differ somewhat from those applied to sites of the American slave and post-bellum periods. Nonetheless, such sites could potentially offer important points of comparison and reference for later period black sites shaped by the institutions of slavery and racism. Churches, schools, and businesses are another understudied archaeological site type and should be considered potentially important loci for research. Finally, a review of the archaeological sites database indicates that research on plantation sites is somewhat dated at this point. Most research occurred during the 1980s and

1990s (Scott 2012). Many new perspectives and frameworks have been introduced into African American archaeology since that time and a fresh look at some of these sites could be very worthwhile.

Theoretical, Historical, and Thematic Context

The second component provides the theoretical, historical, and thematic context for conducting African American archaeology in Texas. Chapter 2 develops theoretical and political underpinnings for African American archaeology on a nationwide scale, and does the same for the public archaeology of African America. Briefly stated, for African Americans, slavery and the enduring legacy of racism are central to any real dialog about black history and social identity. Consequently, power, self-determination, and marginalization are core issues within the framework applied to African American studies in general, and this is no less the case for African American archaeology. Today's African American archaeology grew out of identity studies in other fields that seek to understand how social groups define themselves through various cultural practices including material culture choices (Meskell and Preucel 2004; Orser 2001, 2004, 2007).

As archaeologists have increasingly explored the ways in which people construct and express the social world through the objects around them, much of African American archaeology has focused on how *black ethnicity* is expressed through people's material cultural choices. This is not to say that archaeologists automatically look to certain types of artifacts to connote blackness, or as ethnic markers, though in some studies this has been the case, as Ken Brown noted in his chapter here. Rather, increasingly archaeologists have approached the topic of black identity by highlighting how African Americans ascribed different meanings to, and used material goods in different ways from whites or other ethnic groups. In other words, material goods represent modes of social practice that ultimately define ethnicity. As Ken Brown points out in Chapter 5, sometimes wine bottles and chicken bones are not just bottles and chicken bones, but part of important social behavior that helps define community and identity. Most importantly, the material culture of African American sites must be contextualized, not only physically, but also historically. This contextual approach should incorporate concepts of

race, class and identity and the “complex way in which these forces ascribe meaning to material culture (Feit 2008:1).

A very condensed historical context and a summary of major themes related to black history in Texas is presented in Chapter 3. The goal of this summary is to provide both historical and thematic framework for better evaluation of certain sites that *may* not be important to white Texas, but *are* important to black Texas. In the same way that the National Register of Historic Places outlines different thematic criteria that can form the basis for evaluations of significance, this context document has outlined ten categories of site types (that correlate directly to site types named in the database) that relate to important themes or aspects of black history in Texas. The second part of Chapter 3 discusses each category and how well historical and archaeological sites are represented within them. A different set of authors may have identified these groups differently, adding more individual types, or lumping them together in other ways. Ultimately, it makes no matter *how many* categories are defined. The important thing is that the authors have attempted to make the thematic categories sufficiently broad to encompass major aspects of black history and the types of places that may be significant *to black communities*.

Methodology and Approaches to Field Research

Finally, the third component to this document offers some practical and methodological guidance about how to conduct African American archaeology. This last component is laid out in Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 addresses community engagement through collaboration and descendant involvement; while Chapter 5 presents case studies in African American archaeology to demonstrate how a contextualized and integrative approach to archaeological investigations can contribute greatly to historical narratives about Afro-Texans.

A critical issue for African American archaeology, and African American studies in general, is descendant involvement. A review of the Texas literature on African American archaeological sites in Texas would show that almost all excavated sites were studied by white archaeologists. Although it is not necessary to be black to excavate an African American archaeological site (in fact, three of the authors of this document are white, the position here is that anyone who does excavate an African American site should make an effort to engage with

the descendant community in ways which attempt to share power and authority with them about “their” pasts. The reasons for this are practical and ethical. Virtually all historical archaeologists recognize that oral history enriches the archaeological narrative and this is doubly true for black history, which has historically been under-documented. So much African American history is not recorded in books or official documents, but kept in the community memory or community-based records. Talking to people is sometimes the only way to gain access to these community memories and records.

Further, it is an ethical responsibility to engage with the descendant community whose history is being excavated and interpreted. Most archaeological projects occur through CRM, which is designed to mitigate the impacts to, or the loss of important cultural resources. These resources are important to local communities as symbols of their heritage, and they are being compromised or destroyed through development that in some cases may radically alter the cohesion or social character of that community. For African Americans, there is a persistent perception that archaeologists are:

“paid to facilitate the ethnic cleansing of historically significant black neighborhoods.....The perception is that they often do this by looking at African American sites through a Eurocentric lens....cherry picking ‘facts’ that reinforce what clients want, and excluding ‘facts’ that would complicate the undertaking, usually making it more expensive. What is particularly disturbing to black citizens is that the money these consultants are paid is usually public money, which means that black taxpayers are in effect paying for the destruction of their own communities (McGhee 2008:98).

Put simply, any archaeology of African American sites must also understand and consider the various power dynamics in play, and any true mitigation of affected resources must make an attempt to engage the descendant community about their resources. A more inclusive archaeology would provide a *mechanism* for descendant views to be expressed from the beginning of a project, and a *mandate* to take those views seriously. This is as true at the survey level as it is at the data recovery level, as noted below.

Therefore, Chapter 4 describes a number of ways to be proactive and creative about sharing power³³ with descendant groups, even when the archaeology itself is a foregone conclusion. These include not just oral research, but other modes of collaborative practice such as 1) archaeological ethnography, 2) participatory action research (PAR), 3) participatory geographic information systems (PGIS), and 4) archaeology education models, old and new.

One example of the types of collaborative practice described here would be for the archaeologist and business client, working *with* the descendant community, to create a reporting structure (such as an Advisory Group or something similar). The archaeologist and business client could then ask this group to review the preliminary research design. If it is sufficient, fine. If it is not, serious consideration should be given to including the descendant community's research concerns into the research design.

It is important to realize that “asking for input” may not conflict at all with the research design that would have been written anyway – and it may enhance it in ways that might not have occurred to the archaeologist, business client, or even the agency. Our point is only that a good-faith effort should be made and that their questions should be taken seriously, from the beginning.

Archaeologists and their business clients could also give descendants the *right* to review all relevant reports *before* they are finalized, and to seriously consider including any input they might have. If the archaeologist or business client disagree with whatever the descendants have to say (again, there may be no disagreement at all) descendant input could still be included in the report as an “alternate” view. That is, this inclusion *would not need to change the content* of the professional report – it would only add to it by giving the descendants an “on the record” voice in the *formal* documentation. The ethical clients would also need to agree to provide their input by whatever timetable, and whatever format, that everyone agrees upon – ahead of time. Bear in mind that this input could be as simple (and helpful) as correcting names or clarifying information about the site's background history.

For another example, if the remains require special treatment (for example, if there are graves) an archaeologist could advocate that the descendant community should be the ones to make some of the decisions about what happens to them (as long as their preferences take the

³³ We realize that the word “power” may raise a red flag for some – but bear in mind the idea of the “collaborative continuum” that we propose here. Shared power can be seen as a “continuum” as well.

applicable laws into account). Perhaps they could be asked to choose the mortuary, or decide what re-internment ceremonies will take place, or decide what commemorative work is done after the project is over. Again, sharing power and asking for input has to be a good-faith effort on all sides, but if ethical clients are involved in the project from the beginning the chances of working out arrangements that are *mutually* positive are good.

The above description includes just a few of the ways archaeologists can engage with descendant communities in productive ways that encourage trust, partnership, and ultimately better stewardship of African American resources. These types of changes are not radical and do *not* involve giving all “control” to descendants or ethical clients. If all parties enter the process with an open mind, and seek (rather than avoid) descendant community input, this input can enhance the knowledge that is gained from doing the archaeology in the first place.

Chapter 5 outlines a case study for African American archaeology that, in adhering to the principals of participation and inclusion discussed here, has become a model for African American archaeology not just in Texas, but nationwide. Importantly, Chapter 5 describes not just how an understanding of context and descendant involvement have enhanced research, but also how a very precise methodological approach has contributed to greater data recovery on a significant African Diaspora site, the Levi Jordan Plantation in Brazoria County, spanning the antebellum through post-bellum periods (Brown 2013). The chapter, by Principal Investigator Kenneth L. Brown, also describes, more briefly, similar investigations at three other sites (all occupied at different time periods) which used similar methods. It closes by comparing what was learned at each site.

Even though it is impractical to suggest that any CRM archaeologist (and few academic archaeologists for that matter) would have the luxury to excavate a site in 3-centimeter levels and one-foot squares over the course of 17 years (even taking into account that professional excavators could use these fine-grained methods more efficiently than untrained graduate students, as Brown points out) there are some important points to highlight from the Levi Jordan Plantation work. Brown sums them up early in his chapter, and perhaps the most important point with respect to African Diaspora archaeology is that artifacts cannot always be taken at face value for what they are, but can have alternate uses and meanings that can only be understood through a deeply contextualized approach. This point cannot be overemphasized. The simple

functional classifications for artifacts standardized by South and Sprague (South 1977; Sprague 1981), omit the crucial contexts that are necessary to properly interpret archaeological materials from African Diaspora sites. Instead, understanding black social identity requires “thinking through the historically-specific context of the artifacts as more than mass-produced commodities or functional artifacts” to get at the multivalent significance of those material remains (Feit and Jones 2008). Chapter 5 demonstrates that this also requires detailed attention to archaeological context, because the ways in which African Americans used public and private space was often quite different from the ways in which white Americans structured their physical surroundings. Finally, the Levi-Jordan case study also underscores how important it is that archaeologists tailor their specific field methodologies and level of effort to appropriately, and responsibly, address each site’s unique data potential.

Contextualization is critical for investigations ranging from survey to data recovery. While the case study chapter in this document addresses methodological approaches for a testing or data recovery level project, many of the points made in both Chapters 4 and 5 are applicable at a survey level as well. How can anyone truly assess the significance of a site without first understanding the specific local and regional context to which it belongs? This is particularly important for CRM, since the initial assessment of significance typically determines whether a site merits further investigations or preservation. A former baseball stadium, for instance, may not be significant to white America, but it could be significant to a black community as the home of a winning Negro league team, and as a place of local gathering. A prison farm may seem like a place white Texans would want to forget, but the nearby black community may feel such a place is important to their history, because so many of their ancestors were disproportionately, and unjustly imprisoned in slave-like conditions in these places during the nineteenth century.

Moreover, understanding that many artifacts may have different meanings for African Americans than they do for white Americans is also important when assessing data potential for sites. Thus at the survey level, first investigators should establish who the site belongs to, and how this site fits into a larger regional framework. This is basic level research applicable to archaeological sites of all types, and the Texas SHPO usually requires that reports demonstrate a rudimentary historic framework through which to evaluate them. Moving beyond the standard archival research, Chapter 4 proposes some non-traditional tools for undertaking initial

background work that could be relevant for African American site evaluations at the survey level. Finally, once it is established that a site may relate to black Texas, investigators should apply the “good, hard look” to the features and artifacts present at the site and evaluate the data potential of these remains with an understanding that context often means more than the thing itself. In this way, sites that, at first glance, seem to have “pretty typical” material culture, may in fact have potential to offer truly new and important historical data.

Finally, to ethics

In a recent article, Cheryl LaRoche speaks powerfully to the points raised here:

Archaeology occupies an important place in historicizing the African-American experience – principally where little historical evidence survives. Sites reveal key, often seminal, yet generally unknown aspects of African-American history and culture. Archaeology is particularly useful where traditional historical methods relying on textual evidence are used to define a poorly documented or forgotten African-American past... (LaRoche 2011).

Archaeologists therefore, play crucial roles in the construction and dialog on black history, not just in Texas, but nationwide. As contributors to this evolving historical narrative it is incumbent that archaeologists maintain high standards of professionalism and expertise. This is what really counts – the ethical standards of our discipline that all archaeologists, presumably, “sign on for”. Both the society for Historical Archaeology and the Register of Professional Archaeologists have codes of ethics that archaeologists must “agree to” before becoming members of these organizations. The Society for Historical Archaeology’s code of ethics contains two principles that have particular relevance to the best practices outlined here: (emphasis below added)³⁴

³⁴ For all of the principles, see <http://www.sha.org/about/ethics.cfm> .

Principle 5

Members of the Society for Historical Archaeology have a duty in their professional activities to respect the dignity and human rights of others.

Principle 7

Members of the Society for Historical Archaeology encourage education about archaeology, strive to *engage citizens in the research process* and publicly disseminate the major findings of their research, to the extent compatible with resource protection and legal obligations.

The “Code of Conduct” for the Register of Professional Archaeologists is even more relevant because most CRM archaeologists join, and because the register was originally established with CRM practice in mind. The following items in the code apply to what is presented here (emphases below added):³⁵

1.1.c: An archaeologist shall: *Be sensitive to, and respect the legitimate concerns of, groups whose culture histories are the subjects of archaeological investigations.*

1.2.d An archaeologist shall not: *Undertake any research that affects the archaeological resource base for which she/he is not qualified.*

2.1.b: An archaeologist shall: *Stay informed and knowledgeable about developments in her/his field or fields of specialization.*

With respect to all these points, it is now understood, *across the discipline*, that African American archaeology is a legitimate area of specialization within historical archaeology. For two decades, those who are familiar with the field understand that being “qualified” requires special expertise and knowledge – knowledge analogous to what has previously been identified by the SHPO as necessary in order to study Native American sites in Texas [see for example (Kenmotsu and Perttula 1993) and (Mercado-Allinger, Kenmotsu, and Perttula 1996)].

³⁵ For the entire code see <http://www.rpanet.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=3> .

Unfortunately, the need for similar expertise in African American archaeology is not frequently recognized. In fact, the contrary is often the case. CRM archaeologists rarely seek academic preparation in African-American studies departments and very few faculty members in African-American studies departments have ever been enlisted by archaeologists for support on CRM projects. Is it the view that African-American history and culture are so deficient, so simple, that one need have no specialized training to conduct research in that culture area? (LaRoche and Blakey 1997:92).

This problem is not unique to Texas. For example, in 2004, Joe Joseph, an experienced CRM archaeologist in Georgia, with considerable expertise in African American archaeology, noted in a major review article in *Historical Archaeology* that (emphases added):

By and large ... CRM investigations of African American sites have been one-dimensional, emphasizing the American and neglecting the African. CRM analyses that focus on African American socioeconomic status as measured by Euromerican indices or that view cultural change using simplistic and outdated models of acculturation ... are meaningless at best and at worst, demeaning. *CRM archaeology must study African American sites within a cultural perspective and must take into each project a knowledge of African cultural behavior as a fundamental context for understanding.* While recognizing that the cultural legacy of Africa is both rich and diverse ... historical archaeologists working on African diaspora sites must bring an understanding of African peoples, histories, and cultures to their analysis and place less reliance on analytical techniques developed for Euromerican cultures (Joseph 2004).

What is being suggested is not a required set of pre-qualifications for the study of African American archaeology. It is beyond the mission of most SHPOs to define qualifications outside the Secretary of Interior Standards for professional archaeologists. And even if it were within their mission, most SHPOs do not have the resources to develop and enforce new sets of standards for different site types. Instead, archaeologists who undertake research on African American sites should recognize the *uniqueness* of these resources. It is incumbent on anyone

who does this work to educate themselves about historical context, theoretical framework, and methodological approaches that *could* (and oftentimes *should*) be applied to such sites. This document provides that framework, offering context for the historical developments, issues, theory, and methods one should use to conduct projects in this *particular* subject area. It is by no means a complete guide to all of the skills that are necessary; rather, it is a starting point. It is food for thought and provides pointers to a wide range of other sources that are available (as is evident in the extensive bibliography).

The reality is that “government” resources are limited (and with recent developments in Texas, even more so). The “push” for change can, and should, come from inside CRM itself. Adrian Praetzelis’ comments are instructive on this score:

“CRM archaeology will only be improved from the inside. Government is not going to supply the resources. Since ‘they’ are not going to do it, we the practitioners must... if we can do it so can you” (Praetzelis 2011: 326).

The Future

This document is *not* the end product of conversations about these issues that began in 2007. Rather, it is a starting point for an ongoing outreach program – a program in which each of the authors of this document will participate – along with others. Even though this long-term effort will be outside the scope of the funded work, it will happen on a volunteer basis as a matter of professional responsibility and personal commitment. This ongoing work has the following goals:

- To create a web version of this document for post on the THC, CTA and CARI web sites. The database in this version will be adjusted so that any member of the public may view it.
- To make presentations about this project to a variety of professional organizations. One presentation was made to the Society for Historical Archaeologists in January of 2012, as were similar presentations at the Council for Texas Archaeologists and the Texas Archaeological Society.

- To distribute electronic copies of this document to key individuals at Texas Agencies and professional organization, and to request permission to make presentations to them about these ideas.
- To distribute electronic copies of this document to individual archaeologists and non-profit organizations across the state, and to follow up with personal conversations, as a form of outreach.
- To create, as a part of the online version of this document, an annotated bibliography of all pertinent materials.

By taking the steps above, what began as a conversation in 2007 will continue, evolve, and transform over time until archaeological practice in Texas truly represents an archaeology that *all* Texans can support and celebrate.

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