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Touching plantation memories : tourists and docents at the museum

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TOUCHING PLANTATION MEMORIES: TOURISTS AND DOCENTS
AT THE MUSEUM

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Geography and Anthropology

by

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August 2014

To AJ, Onyx, Kim, Mom and Dad

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ABSTRACT

Plantations are one of the long-standing symbols of the U.S. South. Today, almost four hundred former plantation sites are museums. Over the last fifteen years a sustained, critical consideration of how slavery is remembered at these sites has developed in the academic literature. Geographers have argued that remembering slavery at these sites is geographic not only because most of these sites are in the South, but also because the public spatializes memory in certain ways at these historic places. To date, much of the memory literature about plantation museums focuses on the roles of these museums and their staff in remembering, forgetting, minimizing, and misrepresenting plantation slavery. While tourists have not been ignored, less information has been developed about how they participate in remembering the past at historic sites associated with the plantation and slavery. Through their presence, written and spoken comments and questions, and other actions tourists influence the social process of remembering plantation slavery. To understand some of the ways that tourists shape how slavery is connected to the memory of a place, I analyzed postcards and participated in house tours with other tourists. I learned that while there are often efforts on the part of local stakeholders to frame a site's connection to slavery in certain ways, visitors often transform these associations. In some cases, the associations between a place and slavery are shaped, in other cases, tourists participate in marginalizing the memory of enslaved people. Whether by postcard, things said or even the things within a plantation museum that they touch, tourists try to connect themselves to the past. The connections that visitors make are part of the process of remembering the past. Understanding tourists better is an important step towards a fuller remembering of slavery at historic sites like plantation house museums.

CHAPTER ONE: TOURISTS' ROLES IN REMEMBERING THE PAST

Since my first tour of a plantation house museum in February 2007, I have been interested in how our society uses these sites to remember slavery and how we use these memories of the past to create group identities. My master's thesis work focused on some of the roles owners, managers and tour guides shared in remembering and forgetting slavery within plantation museums. With this dissertation research project, I am focusing on some of the roles that tourists have in remembering slavery and the past at these sites.

This interest comes from observing how visitors' actions and questions influenced what docents said and did on tours that I took during the time that I was doing my thesis research. I noticed one example of this whenever I was a part of a tour with Black tourists. At sites like Historic Latta Plantation in Huntersville, North Carolina, I noticed that docents changed the tour slightly if a Black tourist was a part of the group. When I toured Latta Plantation in February 2007 with my wife Kim, who is Black, the docent used the word "slave" or one of its variations (slavery, enslaved, enslavement, etc.) almost two dozen times. The next time I toured the house, there were no Black people in the tour group and the word "slave" was used eighteen times. The third time, I toured the Latta, I did so while in Charlotte for the Association for the Study of African American Life and History conference, and I took a colleague with me who was Black and more was said about slavery. The words "Slavery" and "slave" were used a total of twenty-two times by the docent. Shortly after that time, I toured the house again by myself, once again in a tour group without Black tourists. The docent on that tour said less about slavery – slave or slavery were mentioned a dozen times – though the amount of

information about slavery at the site was still more than most tourists get on plantation house tours elsewhere in North Carolina (Modlin 2008: 274).

As I reread their work while writing my thesis, I recognized that Jennifer Eichstedt and Stephen Small made similar observations, stating early in their book,

For instance, the ways in which we are understood to occupy certain racialized gendered, class-based, and national and regional identities influenced how we were treated and, quite likely what each of us was believed to be interested in. For instance, the fact that Professor Small is a Black man with an English accent appears to have affected how docents interacted with him. At times, white docents appeared quite nervous upon finding a Black man on their tour; sometimes the fact that he spoke with an accent seemed to ameliorate their anxiety. There were tours at sites where docents used the word *slave* when speaking to Professor Eichstedt, who is a white woman from the northwestern United States, but when docents at the same site spoke with Professor Small, they used the word *worker* to reference those who clearly had been enslaved (Eichstedt and Small 2002: 19-20)

My experience over the last few years indicates that some White tourists experience similar discomfort when slavery is remembered on tours. The sideways glances and noticeably tenser posture of these tourists indicate just how uncomfortable some White tourists still are when being in a setting where slavery is discussed, particularly if Black tourists are present.

This change, which was important, was not the only adjustment I saw on tours that could be attributed to tourists. The questions tourists asked, the comments they made, and the things they gazed at and touched often influenced the docent's words and actions. While I focus on the roles of tourists in remembering the past at plantation house museums, I do so while acknowledging that this process is an active one with multiple participants. Yet, I feel that with a few notable exceptions (For example: Jackson 2012; Buzinde and Santos 2009; Butler, Carter, Dwyer 2008), the roles of tourists have not deeply incorporated in the consideration of remembering slavery at many of these sites.

The goal of this work is to consider how visitors to plantation sites, particularly plantation house museums impact the process of memory at these memory sites. The rest of this chapter will focus on what a plantation house museum is and how many plantation house museums exist in the continental United States as well as an overview of the research questions, methods and research sites of this dissertation.

What Is a Plantation House Museum?

One of my main goals for this dissertation was to do a badly-needed census of plantation house museums. In the past, some researchers, including myself, have focused on multiple sites in limited study areas. Some of us listed the plantations in the area we studied (Eichstedt and Small 2002; Modlin 2008). Based on Jennifer Eichstedt's and Stephen Small's research in Georgia, Louisiana and Virginia, and my previous work in North Carolina, there are hundreds of plantation house museums. However, I could not find previous research that stated how many plantation house museums existed.

Wikipedia and other websites list some plantation sites for some states such as Louisiana and South Carolina (List of Plantations in Louisiana 2013; List of Plantations in South Carolina 2012). Yet, many of the plantations listed on these websites are not museums and in many cases the plantation referenced no longer existed.

There are 375 plantation house museums operating in the central and eastern United States. These museum sites vary from large, well-known, well-developed sites like Oak Alley Plantation to small sites owned by local historic societies or individuals in dozens of places. The variation in location, size and complexity of these plantation house museums reflects spatial and temporal differences among plantations in the past, as noted in chapter two. Yet, it must be noted that plantations as museums are quite different than

the plantation of the past. While both are business enterprises – even those run by non-profit organizations – the extractive-agricultural focus has now shifted to a memory-entertainment focus.

In many ways, plantation house museums escape easy definition. Among other things, each of these sites vary based on the present size of the property, the buildings, and items included as parts of the museum, the number of days it is opened, the size of the pool of volunteers and paid staff members who work at the museum, the quantity of tourists who visit annually and the locations from where these tourists come. Additionally, the owners and managers of each plantation house museum purposefully distinguished their museum from that of others to justify the site's existence.

To a degree, the range of these museums reflects the range of what plantations were historically. Plantation house museums are not evenly distributed across the Southern landscape, just as plantations were not evenly distributed across the South. Add into this the varied nature of what a museum is as well as the role of tourism in defining these places and what initially seems like a straightforward connection of a house to a past plantation, which is now open for touring becomes a problem. The two sections of this chapter focus on two topics specifically: defining for this research project what a plantation house museum is and noting where these sites are located.

To locate potential plantation museums, I conducted hundreds of web searches, visited state Welcome Centers, collected and reviewed historic house brochures, state tourism guides and commercial map books of most Southern states. For each plantation, I considered a series of questions. These questions included:

1. What was the site prior to the end of the Civil War in 1865? Did a plantation exist there prior to the end of the Civil War? If not, is it comprised of elements – such as relocated house(s) and structures or collections of artifacts – that reflect a plantation during a period prior to 1865?
2. Was the site once rural, even if it is an urban setting now?
3. Was the site once primarily an agricultural enterprise?
4. If a rural agricultural site, was (were) one or two crop(s) grown as primary crop(s) for sale on national or foreign markets?
5. Was enslaved labor used at the site?
6. Would the agricultural site's past owner(s) have been considered prosperous by his or her peers?
7. If it was always part of an urban setting, was it a place where plantation business might routinely have been done or that was deeply connected to a planter-class family such as a planter-class family's urban townhouse?
8. Is the site called a plantation by name or in its marketing material?
9. Is the site available for touring either on a regularly scheduled basis or by appointment?
10. Based on the marketing material, would tourists see the site as connected to prosperous and important people alive prior to 1865?
11. When accessible by tourists, are employees or volunteers available to assist with interpretation of the historic site?
12. Based on the marketing material, would tourists see the site as connected to enslaved labor?

While a site did not have to answer all of these questions in a certain way to be included in the list, I did follow certain rules.

For a place to be considered a plantation house museum for this research, it needed to be available for tourists to visit through either regularly scheduled hours or by appointment. The site must have some sort of personnel on site during the times opened for tourists to visit. Plantation house museums do not require the presence of docents or tour guides to exist, but someone – a volunteer, employee, owner or operator – connected to the site needs to be present for there to be interaction with tourists to potentially assist in interpreting the site. In this, I needed to draw a distinction between a roadside plantation-related ruin with a state historic marker, which forwards a seemingly one-directional narrative¹ about place instead of an ongoing conversation between tourists and other actors. Because of this I diverge slightly from Jennifer Eichstedt and Stephen Small (2002). In their list of sites, they include a few sites that were not visibly managed such as the Tabby Sugar Works of John Houston McIntosh near St. Marys, Georgia, and the Ruins of Retreat Plantation Hospital on St. Simon Island (Eichstedt and Small 2002: 271). These sites are important. Slavery should be considered there, but the historic sites were not museums in the sense that I am using here.

Among those locations which are museums, if the site's operator identified it as a plantation that was in existence prior to 1865, it was included, whether or not it might meet another predetermined plantation metric such as formerly being of a certain size, having a certain quantity of slaves or being a monoculture agricultural enterprise. Using the word "plantation" in the name for a site in existence prior to 1865 strongly

¹ I say "seemingly one-directional narrative" because, as Derek Alderman (2013) points out in a recent *Southeastern Geographer* article, the messages on most state roadside markers develop from a negotiation between actors interested in commemorating the site.

encourages tourists to see the site as a former antebellum plantation where enslaved people might have once worked.

Horticultural sites at historic plantations presented a classification issue. I include sites that are principally plantation ruins, if there were some sort of management onsite such as Historic Rural Hill Plantation & Scottish Heritage Center, near Charlotte, North Carolina. Without docents or other museum staff to interact with tourists, the process of memory moves more-or-less in one direction from the site toward tourists with few opportunities for there to be an interaction where tourists could contribute to the shaping of how the past and slavery are remembered at the site. I excluded sites that were primarily gardens such as Orton Plantation Gardens near Wilmington, North Carolina and Afton Villa Gardens and Ruins near St. Francisville, Louisiana, for much the same reason. In addition to this, while garden sites could be places where tourists have an opportunity to consider slavery, the marketing material for these places made it clear that the plantation houses were private and off-limits for tourists and the landscapes was designed to stress horticulture.

I excluded city, county and state history museums if they did not include a distinct area that was directly related to plantation life. A good example of a museum that I include because of this is the Hezekiah Alexander Homesite at Charlotte History Museum. The Hezekiah Alexander Homesite has a regularly-scheduled, docent-led tour through the historic house, gardens and kitchen. Meanwhile, the Historic Halifax Museum's main building was excluded even though it had a couple of displays that considered slavery, because the information was presented as a very small part of an area's history that included multiple periods. Yet, I do include two houses and an

archeological site located in close proximity which are considered part of Historic Halifax as separate museums in the census. Docents led tours through each of these at certain times each day.

Museums sites with multiple historic houses each with its own separate tour were considered separate plantation house museums if tourists could choose to tour one of the houses and not the other. Sites like Hope Plantation near Windsor, North Carolina, where tourists could choose to tour either the Hope Mansion or the King-Bazemore House or both, were considered multiple museums based on the number of plantation house museums at the site. Thus, I consider Historic Hope Plantation with the Hope Mansion and the King-Bazemore House as two museums. However, I excluded amusement-park-like enterprises such as Old Salem in North Carolina and Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia because the management entities of these locations discourage tourists from viewing each house as a separate museum. Indeed, access to an individual house at these places requires buying a ticket for the entire site. Both of these places consider slavery within their borders, but the experience of touring individual museums within these places is quite different from a plantation house museum like Destrehan Plantation, near New Orleans, Louisiana or Latta House.

Indeed, it was the urban sites that I found to be most challenging. Some planter-class families resided in multiple houses often varying residence by time of the year. Planters in rural South Louisiana often owned townhouses in New Orleans where they spent part of the year – through Mardi Gras and Ash Wednesday – away from the plantation house, while South Carolina planter-class families relocated to the mountains during the summers. For example, Connemara, near Flat Rock, North Carolina served as

one such residence for South Carolina planters before it was the property of Carl Sandburg (National Parks Service 2005). Plantation business did not cease during the times when planters left. Planters handled plantation business from their distant locations and even carried some enslaved individuals with them to their refuges from the plantation proper. Thus, I have included historic house museums that were never physically in the center of rural farms because these residences were part of the larger plantation enterprise and often share the same characteristics of rural plantation house museums such as focusing on a few planter-class family members instead of the larger community of residents that were onsite. Other urban sites were simpler to determine once one recognized that the landscape had urbanized over the last century and a half. Destrehan Plantation near New Orleans, Louisiana and the Joel Lane House in Raleigh, North Carolina are examples of once rural plantations that are part of urban landscapes today.

Finally, I excluded most bed-and-breakfast businesses from the list of plantation house museums. The exceptions where I included them were if the business stated somewhere publicly, such as on the Internet or in promotional literature like brochures that tourists could tour the site without staying at the bed-and-breakfast. Often, access to bed-and-breakfasts houses is exclusively limited to tourists as overnight guests instead of as museum visitors.

As the name plantation house indicates, the planter's house is usually central to the definition of these museums. Yet, the present existence alone of a house is not necessary to be included in the census. Indeed, I call these sites plantation house museums to acknowledge the practice of favoring a residence associated with a planter over recognizing these places were agricultural enterprises, usually operated with

enslaved laborers. The list of plantation house museums in Appendix 1 approaches completeness and serves as one of the goals of this project: to figure out how many of these museums exist across the U.S. South and connected areas. To reduce some awkwardness with the phrase “plantation house museum,” I will use the terms “plantation museum” and “museums”, in current contexts to mean the same thing throughout the rest of this dissertation.

As noted above, there are 375 plantation houses museums included in this survey of sites. These museums are located in the area from Central New Jersey to Central Texas. Eighteen states and the District of Columbia have at least one plantation house museum (See Table 1). Plantation museums tend to be located relatively near other plantation museums (See Figure 1). Looking at their locations on separate state maps can obscure this adjacency, particularly in the Lower Mississippi River Valley and in coastal Georgia and South Carolina. Even in states with many plantation museums, such as North Carolina and Virginia, there are regional concentrations within the state. Despite sharing a common space, plantation house museums are different business enterprises than the antebellum plantations that once existed at the same site. While on the surface, this seems obvious, when we research these sites from a distance, as memory spaces, few plantation house museums encourages visitors to remember this. Through the processes of historic interpretation – audible, visual and haptic reflections of historic pasts in spaces of historic houses that existed over 150 years ago, led by a docent that might be dressed in period clothing, surrounded by antiques – visitors at plantation house museums are told to ignore the present moment and to immerse, transport or some other way, leave the present for the imagined past. However, no matter how accurate our reflections on the

Table 1. Number of plantation house museums by state as of July 1, 2013.

State	Number of Plantation Museums
Alabama	21
Arkansas	2
Delaware	2
Florida	5
Georgia	29
Kentucky	19
Louisiana	42
Maryland	14
Missouri	2
Mississippi	22
North Carolina	73
New Jersey	1
Oklahoma	1
South Carolina	40
Tennessee	18
Texas	11
Virginia	69
West Virginia	2
Washington, D.C.	2
Total	375

past are in these spaces, it is always incomplete; we are never transferred to the antebellum plantation as we never actually leave the present.

Part of the difference relates to the commodities being sold. Cotton, rice, indigo, sugar, tobacco and other crops might have allowed the planter class to live affluent lives, but cash crops, enslaved workers and improved land proved to be the source of wealth for the planter. Today, the primary commodities are memory and heritage. While more people visited these sites aware of the enslaved-connected, agricultural past, the main commodity being sold at plantation house museums is the memory of a planter-class past.

At most sites, the planter's past is represented as more memorable, even more American than other pasts, particularly those pasts associated with once-enslaved people.

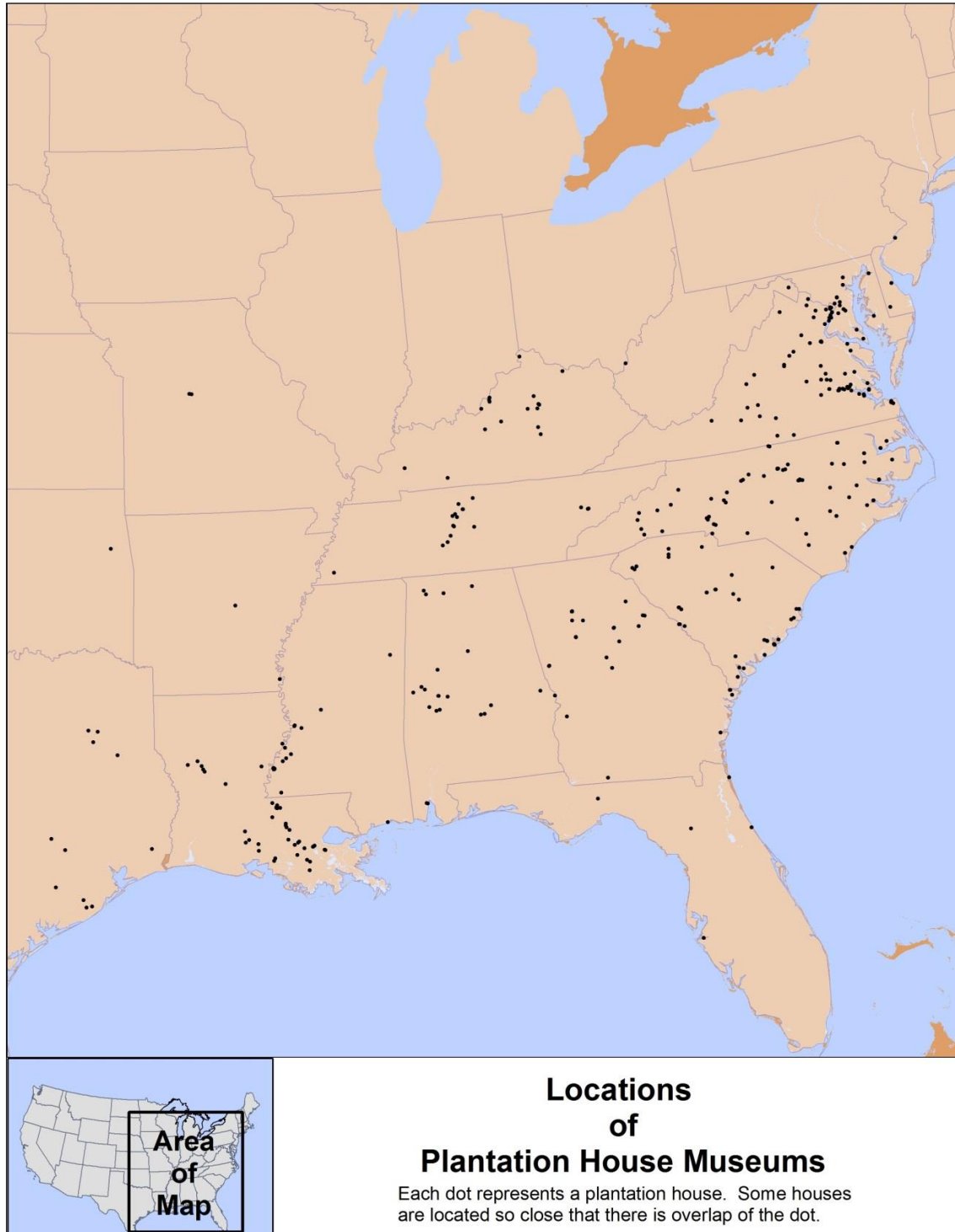


Figure 1. Locations of plantation house museums in the continental United States.

Intentionally or not, as tourists, we purchase the experience of heritage-making, buying a ticket to participate in a memory-making, identity-forming experience. Yet, even at plantation house museum sites, which represent the past quite accurately, the difference in type of business between then and now – agricultural enterprise versus history museum – is significant enough that we should question whether the plantation as museum can ever truly approach the accuracy that we demand of a historic site.²

Methods and Research Sites

I used participant observation as my main method. In some places in this dissertation, my observations are intensely reflective – I am the tourist being discussed. Being reflexive, my observations start with myself. What am I saying, doing and thinking? I constantly asked myself, “How typical of a tourist am I?” As much as possible, in the earlier stages particularly, I tried to be in the moment. I was never the expert on the site when I toured the plantation museum. Like most other tourists, I learned a lot about the site and its history with each docent-led tour that I joined. On each trip through the museum, I learned a lot. Indeed, the criticism that I level against docents and tourists later in this dissertation are not against what they know, but on what we remember while touring these settings. I often felt like the one on the tour who knew the least – to the point that I spent months focusing on the steps taken during the Antebellum Period to growing the key cash crops. Among the things that I would like to

² There are many resources that provide useful information on the contributions of Black people – enslaved and free – as laborers and knowledge and skill contributors to the plantation and other agricultural enterprises in the U.S. South as well as the New World as a whole. For information on the contributions of Blacks to rice cultivations see Carney 1993; 2001; 2001a; Carney and Rosomoff 2009; Morgan 1982; Wood 1974. For useful tobacco resources see Morgan 1998; Kulikoff 1986. For useful cotton resources see Aiken 1998. For an example that compares non-cotton regions of the South see Pargas 2010. For cattle ranching see Jordan 1993; Sluyter 2009; 2012. For African American contributions to Southern foodways see Hilliard 1969, 1969a. While this list is hardly exhaustive, it stands as a great starting point.

have heard more about at many plantation museums were how the main crop was grown and other initial steps taken onsite to process these products for distant markets.

As a tourist, my first tour for each site could only be taken once, so I started to shift my focus toward how tourists became involved in a tour. First, I focused on learning the basic tour through the site. While each tour is unique, docents in most museums start in the same spot and work the tour through the site in largely the same pattern. In Chapter Four, I outline the tour route through Destrehan Plantation and discuss its importance as a tour to encourage tourists to empathize with members of the planter's family.

As I started to understand the route of the tour, I turned my attention to the things tourists said. This was a little trickier methodologically as I noticed that docents and some tourists become distracted and at times uncomfortable when I tried to take notes while being a part of the tour. Eichstedt and Small (2002: 19) remarked that on some tours they stood out because they took notes during the tour. At the two main sites where I did most of my observations, Destrehan Plantation and Hope Plantation, I had other issues that limited my note taking while joining tour groups. First, docents at Hope Plantation were aware of my past research, which was critical of the ways slavery was represented at North Carolinian plantation museums. Additionally, tour guides at both museums expressed concern that I was reviewing their job performance on the tour. At Hope Plantation, a couple of the docents asked me if I thought that they did a good job after their tours. Docents at both of these plantation house museums do research beyond their on-the-job training. They are experts about the people and themes on which their plantation focuses and often read books that deal with the periods and regions of which

Hope and Destrehan are a part. They are very good at their jobs and want the tourists that they guide through the museum to have an enjoyable and educational experience. My pen and paper made them uncomfortable so I used smaller notebooks and tried to linger to the back of the group so that I could write down short phrases as notes. As I turned toward the last focus of my research – touch – I stopped using my notebook and took pictures of items that tourists touched – though not necessarily while they were touching these things.

In addition to participant observation, I conducted two types of interviews. The first, short semi-structured group entrance and exit interviews did not work well. While I was able to get some demographic information before tours, I had great difficulty getting tourists to give me even a few minutes after tours for the exit interviews. During a pilot study at Hope, I was able to complete this process ten times over two weeks, but traffic was much more uneven the following year during the summer of 2011 at Hope Plantation, and I was unable to complete any sets of entrance and exit interviews with tourists in a week and therefore I changed my method to joining tourists during the tour and focusing on what tourists said and did on tours instead.

The second types of interviews were informal, unstructured interviews with docents at Destrehan Plantation and Hope Plantation. The interviews were much more conversational with a focus on helping the tour guides to become more comfortable with me. However, such conversations were insightful in that the docents often discussed things that frequently happened with tourists while touring. I intentionally refrained from writing things down from these interviews despite my strong urge to do so, because doing so would have been creating data that might be used directly in this dissertation and

would violate my intent while having these discussions – to put the docents at ease with me. However, these discussions did encourage me to think about the things that tourists touch in house museums despite the usual prohibitions against touch in these sites. For this, I would like to acknowledge each of the docents that spent a few minutes talking to me about plantation tours for their influence upon my work here.

While there are almost four hundred plantation house museums in the continental U.S., I focused my efforts on only a few sites, in particular, the two sites noted above – Destrehan Plantation and Hope Plantation. Yet, I did meaningful research at other sites and used house tours available only during Spring and Fall Pilgrimages in Natchez to do additional observations of what tourists touch in historic sites. I include a schedule of places visited in Appendix 2 to indicate the sites visited, how often and the focus of my research during the visit.

The Layout of this Dissertation

As stated above, the focus on this dissertation is on how tourists influence how slavery and the plantation are connected when remembering Southern history. As I am taking the article as chapter approach allowed by Louisiana State University, each chapter is intended to be a stand-alone article and indeed, two of the chapters – Chapters Two and Four – have been published as articles in modified form and a third chapter – Chapter Three – has been accepted as a book chapter for publication during the fall of 2014. While the literature related to plantation house museums is growing, much of it references back to a relatively small body of literature as a starting point. After the publication of this dissertation, I intend to modify the remaining three body chapters into

articles or book chapters. Each of these chapters has been modified slightly to create a more unified dissertation with less repetition.

In Chapter Two, I note some of the significant research on plantation house museums and draw out a few of the areas where historical geographers have contributed to what we know and some areas to which we should consider contributing. In addition to documenting the spatialized ways museum staff and tourists remember slavery at these sites we should note how this is changing. Like other researchers studying this topic, I intend for my work to be interventionist, but I also think we should acknowledge positive changes and creative ways of addressing this topic that has often been ignored. Within this chapter, I attempt to do this.

Chapter Three steps away from the plantation-proper and considers memory work through postcards that displayed other plantation infrastructure. This chapter fits in this dissertation because it demonstrates two key things – tourists’ roles in remembering the past as plantation historic sites and also that this involvement on the part of tourists is not just recent. Around the turn of the twentieth century and onward – well past 1950 – tourists visited dozens of sites that were once sites of slavery. Local stores sold postcards for many of these sites. Some tourists wrote simple expressions on these postcards connecting themselves to these sites, stating that they visited the site or that a friend should visit. However, other tourists participated in a more-critical consideration of the place represented. In this chapter, I consider the memory work going on at some of these sites by focusing on a conversation through postcards about slavery connected to a market building in St. Augustine. Documented on the back of postcards, this memory work involved people, including international postcard manufacturers, local place-

promoters, tourists/senders and even the card recipients, some of whom were spatially quite removed from the immediate area.

Chapter Four considers how tours through plantation house museums are emotional journeys that favor remembering and identifying with planter-class individuals and distract from remembering and identifying with past enslaved plantation residents. Much of the work done by geographers examining the Southern Plantation focused on representation, though a few geographers, particularly Steve Hoelscher (2006; 2003; 2003a) considered performance. There is still much that needs to be considered about the representation of slavery at plantation house museums and the performance aspects of remembering the past. However, we have yet to deeply engage the role of emotions and the sense of touch in considering how we relate to and remember the plantation past.

Chapter Five discusses how tourists and docents participate in a conversation while touring plantation house museums. The chapter considers some ways that tourists influence the tour while considering the responses docents make to these questions and comments. In chapter five, I focus on types of dialogue and how these types of dialogue shape tour discussions and memory on future tours.

Chapters Six and Seven consider how touch made slavery and how we remember it. Chapter Six was the single hardest chapter for me to write. It went through a variety of forms over a twenty-four month period until it reached the present form, published here. I argue that more than any other sense, touch made slavery. The possibilities of touch, the various types of touch and the potentials of losing the prospect to touch loved ones shaped the enslaved person's world in ways unlike free people. This chapter goes beyond exploring punishment as the only factor in making slavery and ponders how

agricultural work, rough bedding, housing, clothing, shoes and food made the felt experience of slavery. Most difficult for me, was considering how removing touch served to make some of the most traumatic moments for enslaved people. Permanently losing the ability to hold loved ones was a powerful threat used to control some enslaved individuals. For some enslaved individuals, the real basis of power that masters had over them rested in this power to deprive the enslaved individual of the touch of loved ones permanently. In other cases, the brutal effects of Capitalism are called out through the felt experiences of brutal work routines, uncomfortable clothing, poor housing and even slave sales that divided families.

All of this would seem to imply that touch is a relatively problem-free way for plantation house museums to remember slavery. Touchable items from the past allow most tourists a clearer way to “see” the past. However, Chapter Seven shows that touch and haptic potential can mislead in the present-day plantation house museum. Some of these challenges might be easier to resolve than others.

Chapter Eight, concludes by reflecting on some of the key thoughts presented in the proceeding chapters. First, we should look at some of the research done about plantation house museums and some of the responses to that research by museum staff today.

CHAPTER TWO: REMEMBERING SLAVERY AS AN ACTIVE AND CREATIVE SPATIAL PROCESS³

In March 2008, the University of Virginia hosted a three-day art exhibition symposium entitled “Landscape of Slavery: The Plantation in American Art.” A number of scholars presented quality work in the fields of history, African American studies, landscape architecture, English, and religious history. Sadly missing on the program were geographers. The absence of geographers, especially historical geographers, is disturbing since repeated references to space, place, landscape and the uniqueness of the “geography of slavery” were relevant and present in the talks. I am not trying to argue here that geography is the exclusive domain of geographers because geography is ‘what geographers do’⁴ (Whitaker 1941: 46), any more than history and social memory are the exclusive domain of historians. Yet, I began wondering at the conference what unique perspectives can geographers bring to the table in a discussion of slavery in the U.S. South and how it is remembered.

The New World plantation is deeply connected to slavery. For example, in 1860, fifty-three percent of the enslaved population in the U.S. South lived on plantations, a proportion that had grown from approximately forty-five percent since the American Revolution (Menard 1988: 578-82). The antebellum plantation was a business enterprise profiting from the extraction of labor of enslaved individuals compelled to wrestle product from the land. Depending on time, geography, and social factors expressed at various scales, tobacco, indigo, rice, sugar, cotton, peanuts and other crops served as the

³ This chapter previously appeared as Modlin, Jr. E. Arnold, Representing Slavery at Plantation-House Museums in the U.S. South: A Dynamic Spatial Process. *Historical Geography* 39: 147-173. It is reprinted by permission of K. Maria D. Lane, editor of *Historical Geography*. A copy of the reprint permission letter is in Appendix 4.

⁴ This statement is attributed to A. E. Parkins.

primary cash crops at different plantations. While each antebellum plantation was unique due to its location, number of acres farmed, crop(s) raised, slave labor system used, support buildings and draft animals present, and temperament of the master-planter, all plantations needed labor – usually coerced and enslaved – to operate (Menard 1988; Morgan 1982; Roland 1988; Berlin 1998 Vlach 1993). Today, simplified versions of hundreds of former plantations serve as museums. Most of these museums declare their historical uniqueness and importance by emphasizing the planter-class individuals who formerly owned these sites (Eichstedt and Small, 2002; Modlin, 2008).

Remembering plantation-based slavery in the U.S. South is a multi-scaled, dynamic spatial process. The way slavery is represented at many plantation house museums in the Southeastern U.S. is influenced by the actions of museum staff and tourists, as well as government policy and academic interaction. This chapter considers this dynamic spatial process and calls for greater interaction in this process by geographers. Within the South, recalling slavery is spatial at multiple scales including the region itself, the state level, the local sub-region, and the individual site. Each is considered in turn below.

For the region as a whole, the planter-class legacy takes primacy over the legacy of the enslaved. In their seminal study, sociologists Jennifer Eichstedt and Stephen Small (2002) note that slavery is marginalized, even ignored at many Southern plantation museums. While these types of museum strategies, discussed in more detail below, are apparent at the local level of the specific plantation-house museum, collectively the representational acts committed at these individual sites lead to a regional forgetting of

the substantial role of slavery and enslaved people in not just the plantation economy, but also in the making of the South as a whole.

At the state level, Eichstedt and Small (2002: 6-7) observed that each of the states seem to have statewide tropes to represent the planter-class. In Virginia, “the birthplace of democracy” is repeated as a theme across the sites (Eichstedt and Small 2002: 6). In Georgia, many sites connect with the movie *Gone with the Wind* through ideas of grandeur and hospitality (Compare Rahier and Hawkins 1998). Additionally, the U.S. Civil War is frequently mentioned. In Louisiana, they find “wealth, grandeur, hospitality and the tragedy of the Civil War” to be the main motif (Eichstedt and Small 2002: 6). Accurate or not, the main issue with these tropes is how their use is stressed at the cost of a discussion of slavery.

Before considering how sites influence each other within regions of the South, a reflection on the individual site is needed. Eichstedt and Small find a variety of strategies are used on docent-led tours to separate slavery from the plantation at individual museums, including symbolic annihilation, trivialization, and segregation. Plantation-house museums that symbolically annihilate slavery ignore it (Eichstedt and Small 2002: 10, 105-146). Sites that trivialize slavery minimize its impact upon enslaved individuals, including impacts upon African Americans since the end of slavery, and distort the role planters played in the institution of slavery (Eichstedt and Small 2002: 10, 147-169). The managers of sites using the strategy of segregation separate the representation of slavery to locations that are not part of the main museum tour, such as the remains or recreation of slave quarters (Eichstedt and Small 2002: 10, 170-202). These three representational approaches contrast with relative incorporation, the strategy where slavery is a

meaningful part of the information presented to tourists (Eichstedt and Small 2002: 10, 206-232).

Mythic representations of slavery, the enslaved, and the planter-enslaver are used in each of the aforementioned strategies, including relative incorporation (Modlin 2008). The very nature of a docent-led tour prevents tour guides from considering, in depth, every aspect of the history of a site. During a short period of time, around an hour, the tour guide leads the group through a site, which is usually little more than the planter's former residence. During a tour, docents actively manipulate the way themes like slavery are represented through the information they share and the way this information is framed (Buzinde 2007). Docents that read and research well beyond a museum's official script may highlight things not considered by other tour guides. Indeed, some docents choose to focus quite intensely on slavery. The recently retired Kitty Wilson-Evans, a former slave interpreter at Historic Brattonsville in McConnells, South Carolina, is one such example of a docent whose very powerful representations of slavery has brought some tourists to tears (Bates 2005; Berry 2005).

The docent is not the only factor that determines whether slavery is considered on a particular plantation-house tour. The individual, group or organization that owns and manages a museum property often dictates its focus. Geographer David L. Butler notes a correlation between the type of organization that owns a plantation-house museum and whether slavery is mentioned in the marketing brochure (Butler 2001). Privately-owned sites are less likely to consider slavery than sites owned by the federal or state government (Compare Alderman and Modlin 2008).

Material culture displays at a plantation-house museum and the context in which it is set influence how visitors see the past. The presence or absence of material directly connected to slavery and enslaved people is important because of the material-centrism of museums. Structures that formerly housed enslaved families and reconstructed counterparts serve as crucial points for the discussion of slavery at sites where these structures are present and part of the tour. The information about the material culture at most plantation-house museums focus on ownership. Even when the items in the house were not owned by the featured historical proprietors, tourists are reminded that the items are ‘like’ the things owned by the former planter. At some sites, such as Hope Plantation in Windsor, North Carolina, it is known that many slaves formerly lived and worked there, but the location of the homes they lived in are unknown. Such gaps in the knowledge about the community frequently serve as excuses not to talk about slavery in meaningful ways (Handler and Gable 1997: 87). However, administrators and museum staff at some plantation-house museums are using creative ways to get around this representational issue. Museum curators at some sites recognize that where artifact displays are annotated with text, these objects need to connect to people of the past, including the enslaved, in ways beyond mere ownership, to include construction, use, experience and emotion. This way of opening up of conversation about slavery opens up avenues to connect slavery inside of the house, a location from where many museums have banished the enslaved. Some sites, like the previously mentioned Hope Plantation and Destrehan Plantation near New Orleans, Louisiana use art to express aspects of slavery.

Docents and official script alone do not shape slavery at plantation-museums. Tourists also influence what is discussed on tours and how these themes of current separation or relative incorporation unfold. Beyond just mentioning other plantation-house museums that they have visited, individual tourists can influence discussions of slavery through the questions and comments they make while touring (See for example Butler, Carter and Dwyer 2008). These earnest inquiries, which are often initiated by visitors who wish to hear more about slavery, can be a diagnostic of what is missing within official scripts. Where these exchanges about slavery occur can reshape the entire tour. Questions and comments about slavery by tourists early on a tour encourage docents to weave details about the enslaved population throughout the rest of the tour.

Concomitantly, these museums influence each other at a small scale, regional level. Not only do docents tend to tour nearby plantation-house museums, but they often receive tourists who visit a number of these sites in an area. Where there are a number of plantation-house museums in an area, tour guides and visitors often start the tour with conversations about other nearby house museums. Even when this does not happen, visitors draw comparisons between tourism sites, occasionally asking for verification of details heard at previously visited plantation-house museums. Thus, changes at one place socially impact neighboring sites. Conversations with museum staff at San Francisco Plantation and Oak Alley Plantation and in Louisiana and Rosedown Plantation and Hope Plantation in North Carolina indicate that Laura Plantation near Vacherie, LA, Somerset Plantation near Creswell, NC and Latta Plantation near Charlotte, NC have influenced plantation-house museums near their locations. This is one area where geographers can add to the already ongoing and cross-disciplinary discussions on slavery, memory, and

the U.S. South. Methods are needed that will allow geographers to more fully consider the interconnected interactions taking place across multiple plantation-house museums and how plantation-house museums that are more socially responsible when representing slavery influence neighboring sites.

Historical geographers have much to offer when it comes to improving the representation of slavery at plantation-house museums. Factors such as museum ownership, the presentation of material culture and visitor interaction, at both individual and multiple sites, need additional geographic inquiry because they get at the concepts of sense of place, landscape, and spatiality. Beyond what these museums can offer in additional insights for geography and academia, plantation-house museums proffer chances for critical engagement. By working with management and staff at plantation-house museums, historical geographers can help formulate approaches that present the plantation as a lived space, not only for the wealthy planter class family, but also the enslaved people whose lives animated, not just the big house, but the plantation itself. While each site has different needs, many plantation-house museums need representational help when it comes to slavery and the people involved in it – both the enslaved people who struggled under that institution and the planters as enslavers (Jackson 2012). One technique would be to observe tours and then share with museum staff ways to further engage tour groups in conversation in ways that do not marginalize or segregate representations of slavery. Another technique could be to develop and sponsor workshops that connect staff from multiple plantation-house museums to share across site boundaries how slavery is represented. These workshops can act as network devices to speak to the uniqueness and needs of each museum and develop approaches

that allow museums to contribute to regional discussions about slavery. By acknowledging the temporal and spatial dynamics of memory, we will recognize creative ways to engage with others – our academic peers, museum staff and visitors – while remembering slavery. These interactions will be messy, at times uncomfortable, but well worth the effort.

The photographs⁵ presented in this are a result of five years (2007 to 2012) of touring and studying plantation museums across the South, especially in North Carolina and Louisiana. My work approaches these sites from the perspective of not simply observing what is said – or often, not said – about slavery, but with the intention of making a critical intervention in that process of remembering the enslaved in more complete and socially equitable ways. This intervention is leading me to work with managers of various plantation sites, learning about how they see the historical interpretation process while also providing them insights from the field of historical geography about the politics of memory and place-making. While bearing in mind the ways that historical geographers can further engage with plantation-house museums, I would like to ask you to consider the problems and possibilities involved in representing and discussing slavery at these sites as reflected in the following photographs and their captions.

Often the existence of a plantation house is justified through the supposed importance of the past owner. A strong case is made for the importance of the past planter-class residents who owned a site while the enslaved community who lived and worked at the plantation, and might have outnumbered the members of the planter-class family, is marginalized usually through a discourse of ownership. Historic markers

⁵ All photographs were taken by the author, unless otherwise stated.

stressing ‘great people’ are frequently located on highways near these sites. Figure 2 is a photograph of the historic roadside marker in front of the mansion of Liberty Hall plantation in Kenansville, NC. Built in the early nineteenth century, the name “Liberty Hall” might have been named to commemorate a period of freedom from British rule, yet the enslaved individuals whom Kenan claimed ownership over could only find the name “Liberty Hall” to be ironic.

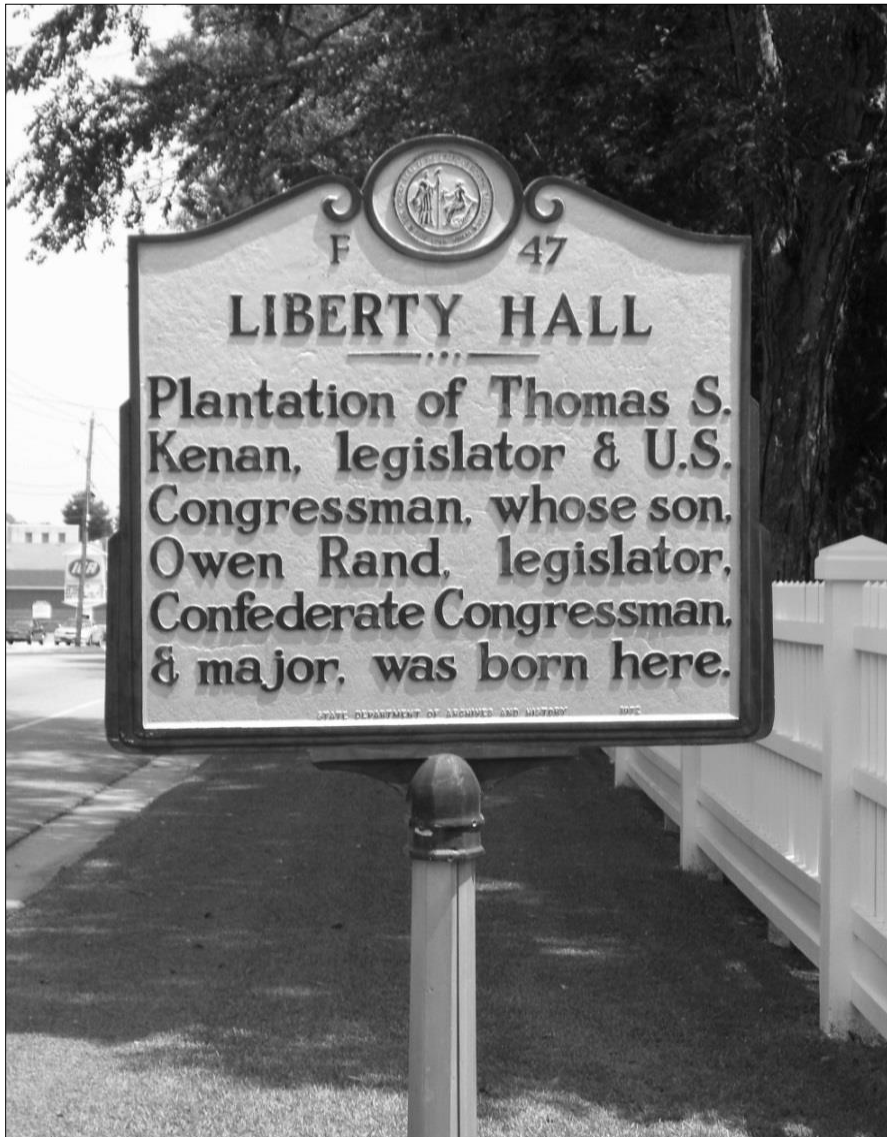


Figure 2. Historic roadside marker in front of the mansion of Liberty Hall plantation in Kenansville, North Carolina.

The discourse of ownership may start even before entering the plantation ‘big house’, where the enslaved craftspeople who built the house are rarely acknowledged when the docent tells the tour group the basic details of the house starting with the planter who arranged for the house to be built. Figure 3 is a photograph of Liberty Hall, the Kenansville, North Carolina plantation house formerly owned by Thomas Kenan after whom Kenansville was named. Tended yards surround a crisply painted mansion with well-maintained fences located in a small town; the landscape gives no indication to tourists that this was once the center of a slave-fueled agricultural enterprise.

Homes of the formerly enslaved are less likely to exist because of the social position enslaved individuals had historically and continue to have in social memory.



Figure 3. Liberty Hall, the plantation house formerly owned by Thomas Kenan, after whom the town of Kenansville, North Carolina was named.

This devaluing continues at many plantations. The difference in value placed on planter's homes versus slave homes is exemplified at Rural Hill, near Huntersville, NC. The ruins of the plantation house formerly occupied by Major John Davidson, a Revolutionary War hero, are roped off as shown in Figure 4. Figure 5 shows the space attributed as the site of a former slave cabin now encroached upon by the forest. A post with the number "3" marks the location (Figure 5, inset). Visitors need a copy of the visitor guide for Rural Hill to understand that this site marked by the number "3," was once where a slave cabin stood. Davidson owned 29 slaves according to information on display in the museum.

At some museums, real and replica slave cabins located on the premises are not a part of the tour. This is the case at San Francisco Plantation near Garyville, LA. The



Figure 4. Ruins of Rural Hill, a plantation house located near Huntersville, North Carolina, and formerly occupied by Major John Davidson, a Revolutionary War hero.



Figure 5. Marker indicating location of former slave cabin, Rural Hill Plantation.

management and staff of San Francisco Plantation described the mansion as “the most opulent plantation on River Road”. The slave cabin in Figure 6, which was relocated from another area plantation is open for visitors to enter, but is not part of the house tour. This indicates that the management of the site recognizes that some visitors might be interested in the cabin, yet they fail to make the cabin a meaningful part of the tour. This segregates slavery from the house tour. By segregating the slave cabin in this way plantation sites communicate to visitors that the plantation house is more important. This spatial and social segregation from the plantation house indicates to tourists that lives of the enslaved were simple and self-evident – possibly even boring – when compared to the planter’s house, which needs an expert to be interpreted.



Figure 6. Slave cabin at San Francisco Plantation near Garyville, Louisiana.

Even though most plantation-house museums still spotlight a ‘great person,’ docents seek ways to make connections between the planter family members who lived in a plantation mansion and the tourists who visit it today. Thus certain themes are repeated at various plantations. The most frequent of these themes relates to the bed. Many of these sites have rope-supported mattresses that were filled with economical, locally available material such as Spanish moss or feathers from harvested fowl. Periodically, the rope that the mattress rested upon needed tightening. Additionally, the fill material for the mattress needed to be cleaned before inserting in the mattress. Docents frequently share the adage, “Sleep tight. Don’t let the bedbugs bite,” originated because of these

beds. The bed with the wooden key used to tighten the ropes is from the Sally-Billy House, a plantation house relocated from Scotland Neck, NC to Halifax, NC (Figure 7). Drawing a contrast to this, docents from the Sally-Billy House point out the less-comfortable, wooden slat bed in the corner and inform tourists that it was slept on by an unnamed enslaved woman who stayed in the same room as the children she was charged with watching (Figure 8).

Highlighted almost as frequently as the origination story of the “sleep tight” adage, are pieces of furniture that contain chamber pots. Anecdotal observations indicate that the fancier a piece of furniture that holds a chamber pot is, the more likely it is that the docent will discuss it. I will limit myself to sharing only one of these with you in Figure 9. This piece of furniture – holding a chamber pot with a royal seal of England at



Figure 7. Rope bed at Sally-Billy House, a plantation house relocated from Scotland-Neck to Halifax, North Carolina.



Figure 8. Wooden slat bed used by enslaved woman, Sally-Billy House.



Figure 9. Chamber pot, San Francisco Plantation.

the bottom of it – is in one of the bedrooms at San Francisco Plantation. Discussions of chamber pot concealing furniture, in addition to serving as moments of humor, serve as reminders that planter class individuals are like the visitors touring their former homes. Pointing out hidden toilets humanizes planters; they excreted too, and they felt a need to conceal the apparatuses associated with certain bodily functions. While I am not advocating for the appearance of humor related to the bodily functions of enslaved individuals, chamber pot furniture stories serve to connect the planter class with the tourists in yet one more way, not done with enslaved plantation workers.

A third theme considered at some plantation-house museums relates to bathing. Docents at different plantation-house museums give different lengths for the time between baths for the members of the planter-class family. Tubs, much like the marble one at Destrehan Plantation near New Orleans, LA, (Figure 10) are often the material foundation used to tell one of the origination stories for the adage, “Don’t throw the baby out with the bath water”. Docents will relate that the planter would bathe first, followed by the planter’s wife and then the children, from the oldest to the youngest. Because of the difficulty of filling and emptying the tub, the water was supposedly left in the tub between bathers, getting dirtier with each bather until the water was quiet opaque by the time the final bather, the baby of the planter-class family, was washed.

Using bathing as a connection between the planter and tourists, Figure 11 shows a unique showering apparatus at San Francisco Plantation. On tour, docents and tourists spend a couple of minutes talking about how the shower works. A hand pump – hidden behind the pipe on the left side of the appliance is operated by an enslaved “servant” to draw the water up a pipe to a reservoir at the top. To release the water, the standing



Figure 10. Marble bathtub, Destrehan Plantation.



Figure 11. Showering apparatus, San Francisco Plantation.

bather pulls the handle – visible between the two pipes on the left. This gadget implies not only the ingenuity of the planter, but also that planter and his family went to greater lengths to maintain their hygiene than enslaved people.

It is commonly held by docents – and this is an area where more research is necessary – that most tourists come to see the grand architecture and furnishings owned by the planter-class family. On tour, docents for most houses point out the handful of possessions once owned by the former plantation owner featured on the tour, and often tell tourists at the beginning of a tour that many of the items they will see are similar to the items once owned by the former planter. Curators for many plantation-house museums are aware of what possessions the planter had because of the inventory created at their death as part of settling the deceased's estate. Yet, a discourse of ownership is only one simplistic way to view the material culture of the plantation. Items like furniture were often created by enslaved craftsmen. Considering the creation, deletion, and transformation of plantation, objects and landscapes open up new ways to discuss slaves and their lives. At Destrehan Plantation (Figure 12), docents supplement the discourse of ownership by pointing out that the desk in Figure 13 – one of the items owned by a former plantation owner, Jean Noel Destrehan – was built by a local bonded craftsman.

The incompleteness of material culture that is connected to the slave community, via the popularly used theme of ownership, has not gone unnoticed or unchallenged by the staff at some sites. One way that Destrehan Plantation attempts to deal with this issue is by placing a mannequin representing Marguerite, an enslaved woman who cooked and



Figure 12. Planter's house at Destrehan Plantation.

laundered for the Destrehans in the early nineteenth century, inside of the plantation house (Figure 14).

Interestingly, visitors on tour see the mannequin of Marguerite before the mannequin representing Jean Noel, pictured in Figure 13. Another strategy that Destrehan Plantation uses is displaying artwork that portrays themes related to slavery. This photograph shows some of the work of artist Lorraine Gendron exhibited at Destrehan that represents the 1811 slave revolt, which resulted in the deaths of scores of enslaved individuals (Thompson 1992; Rasmussen 2011) (Figure 15). These strategies, though not perfect, demonstrate creative ways to look beyond ownership when considering slavery.

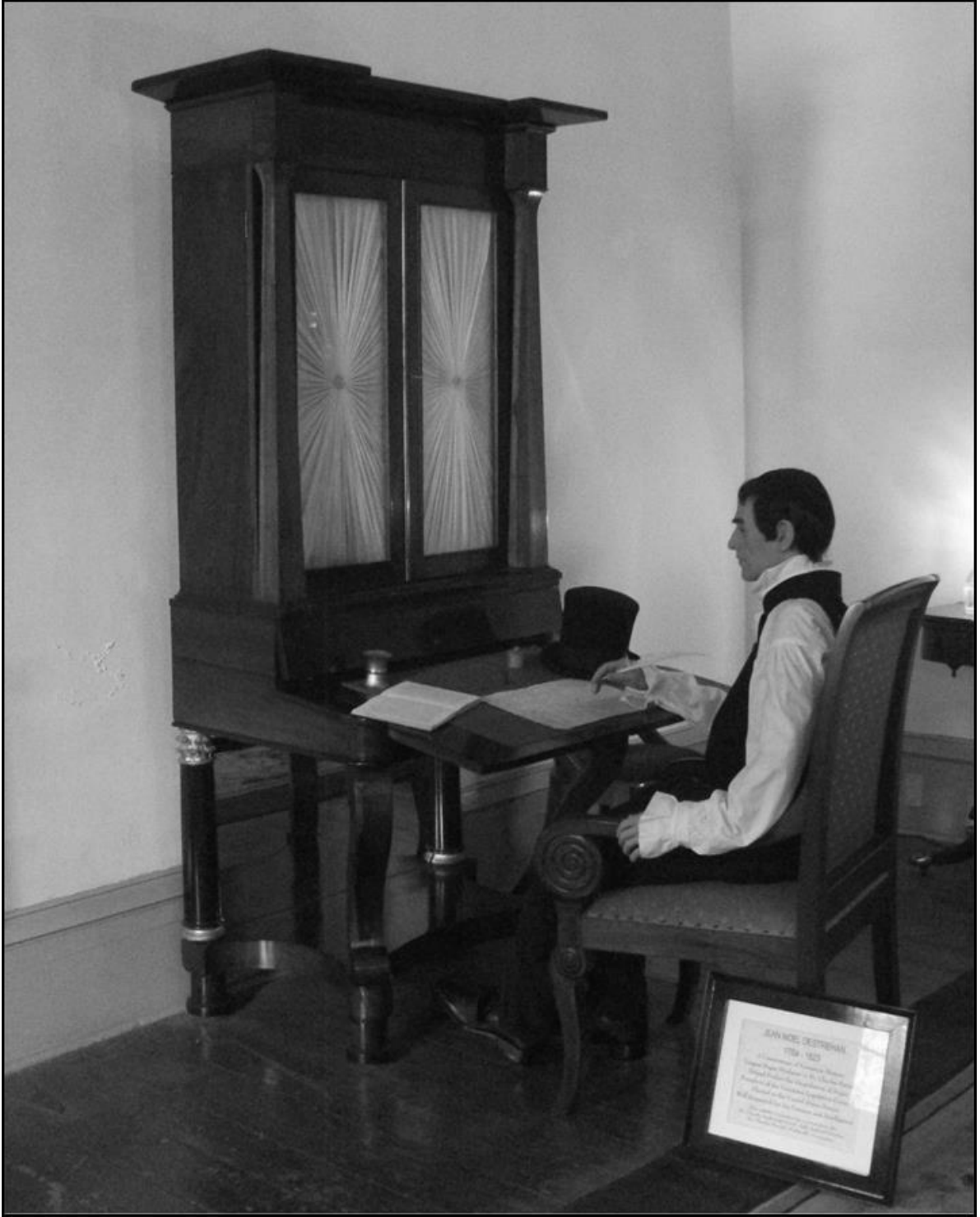


Figure 13. Desk owned by Jean Noel Destrehan of Destrehan Plantation. The desk was built by a local enslaved craftsman.



Figure 14. Exhibit at Destrehan Plantation with mannequin representing Marguerite, an enslaved woman who cooked and laundered for the Destrehan family.



Figure 15. Representation of the 1811 slave revolt by Lorraine Gendron exhibited at Destrehan Plantation.

Like a few other sites, Hope Plantation, the incongruously-named former home of North Carolina Governor David Stone, undertook a multi-year project revising the way that slavery is represented at the site. Without slave quarters or items formerly owned by individuals of the enslaved community, the administrators and staff at Hope Plantation saw the need to go beyond the theme of ownership. One of the first steps museum management took was identifying this trough as an item used by enslaved plantation workers (Figure 16). The trough was carved out of a large tree by enslaved workers and then used by members of the enslaved community to pickle meat for preservation for later use on the plantation. Below the text that explains that, the museum lists, by name,

the enslaved individuals that lived and worked at both of Governor Stone's plantations – Hope and Rosedale – when he died (Figure 17).

Through new displays and an additional interpretive room added to the house tour, site management and staff attempted to highlight the multi-racial history of Hope



Figure 16. Trough used by members of the Hope Plantation slave community to pickle meat for preservation and later use.

Plantation and the surrounding area. One way this was done was by commissioning paintings by local artists, which are displayed in the visitor center where tourists buy tickets for house tours. The first in the series of paintings, entitled, “The Halifax Road” by artist Tracey Bell of Windsor, NC (Figure 18), connects slavery at Hope Plantation spatially with the region and nation with a caption which says in part, “Slaves seeking

freedom also followed this inland path to the Underground Railroad.” Of the nine commissioned paintings with captions, seven present information about the local African-American and Native American communities.

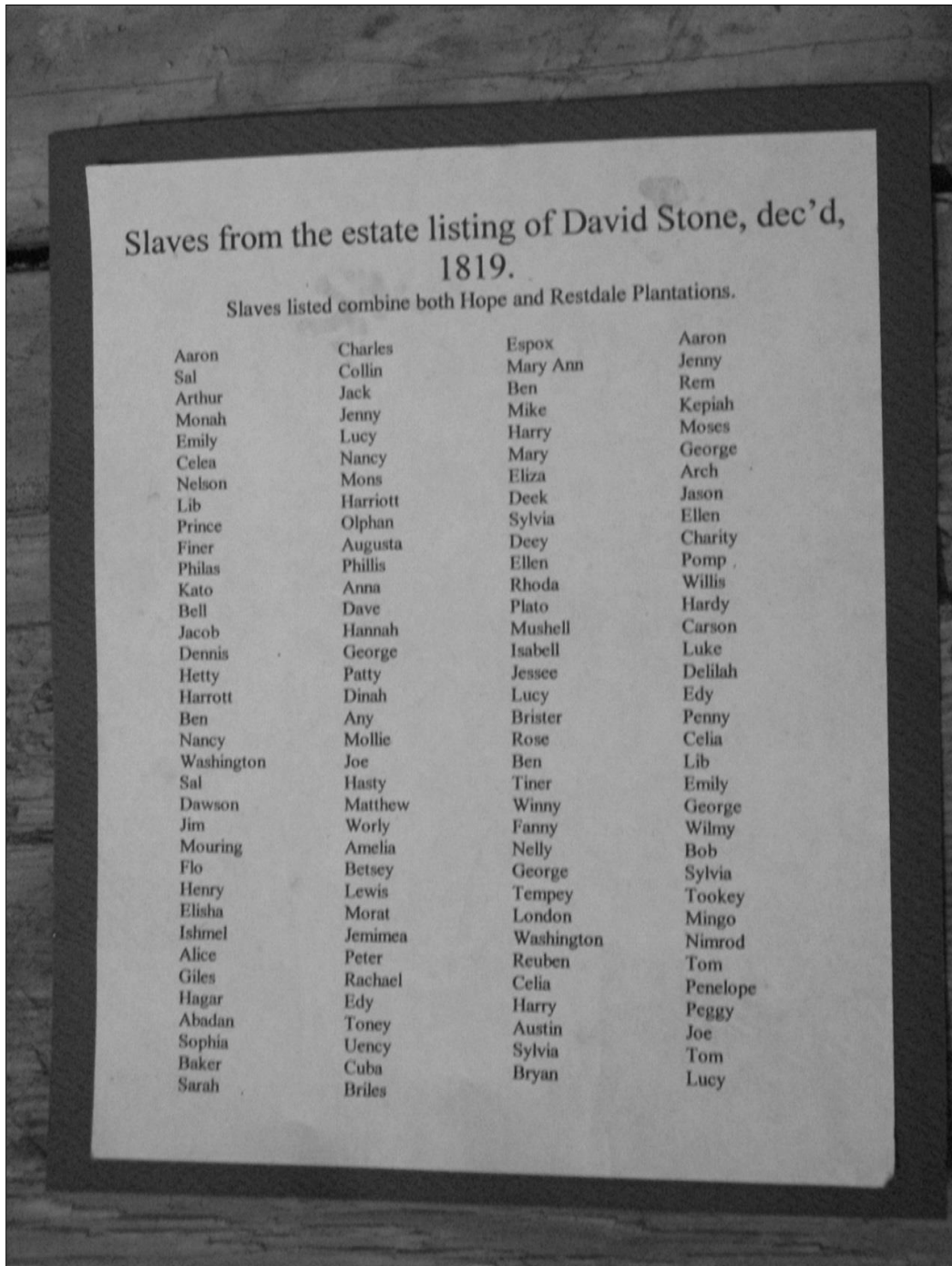


Figure 17. Names of enslaved individuals on Home and Rosedale Plantations, taken from the early nineteenth-century estate listing of David Stone.



Figure 18. “The Halifax Road,” painting by Tracey Bell on display at Hope Plantation.

In addition to displaying paintings in the visitor center (Figure 19), signs have been erected around the property that display these works of art and repeat the caption (Figure 20). Pictured in both of these images is artist’s David Brown’s painting entitled, “The Mansion.” At both locations visitors see variations of the following caption, “Stone supervised the building of his English Manor House on a southern plantation. On all plantations, slave carpenters and similar craftsmen were an important and valued resource. Most were literate, and as their skills improved they were often hired out for top wages. Negotiations between owner and craftsman sometimes left the enslaved worker with as much as 60% of his wages. These artisans were the most likely to be able to purchase their freedom.”

In addition to the new exhibits, a room has been converted to represent the appearance of the interior of a slave cabin (Figure 21). The room is small and located in



Figure 19. Display featuring painting, Hope Plantation's visitor's center.



Figure 20. Sign on grounds of Hope Plantation.



Figure 21. Exhibit at Hope Plantation representing the interior of a slave cabin.

the basement, and by this description, one could get the wrong idea that this was a way to continue the marginalization of slavery. However, it is a part of the house tour, and the small basement space with a low ceiling is uncomfortable. The meager, rough furnishings are easily contrasted with the much nicer furnishings upstairs that tourists see earlier on the house tour.

The recreated slave pass in Figure 22 was set out as part of the Christmas holiday arrangements done at Hope Plantation. This is an imaginative way of working slavery into the decorations. Integrating the representation of slavery with the holidays would seem – to this author at least – a difficult process. Yet, Hope Plantation’s staff recognizes that many of its visitors come to see the way the site is decorated for

Christmas. The presence of a slave pass reminds visitors that the planter still exerted control over enslaved individuals through the holiday season. The slave pass, like the commissioned artwork at Hope Plantation and Destrehan Plantation, indicates that museum staff members at some places want to present a more complete, more nuanced representation of slavery. While we as historical geographers have quite a bit to contribute to this ever-changing spatial process, we should not forget that we will learn from others who are creatively engaging slavery also.

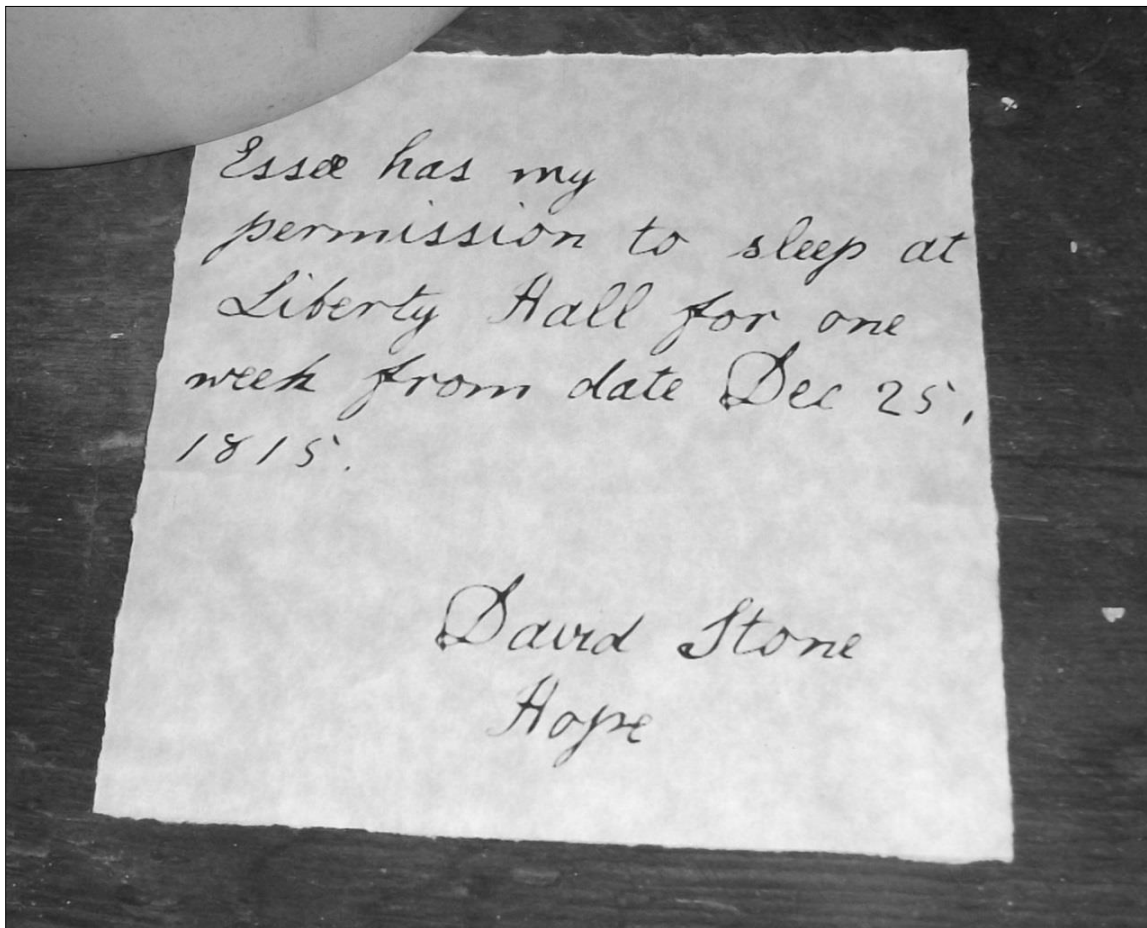


Figure 22. Recreated slave pass, Hope Plantation.

CHAPTER THREE: 'I WISH YOU WERE HERE': WRITING ONESELF INTO THE PLANTATION PAST

More than facts about a distant time, social memory is a set of practices that both reinforce and challenge what people think they know about the past and the ways it acts to frame how they understand the present (Middleton and Edwards 1990). These social memory practices connect the intangible – memory – to the material world. Historic items, buildings, and landscapes – such as plantations and the antiques they contain – serve as touchstones that identify not only that there was a distinguishable past, but what that past means to a social group. Places like plantation sites become not just a former business and abode, but also a space for collective identity construction, a place where individuals bind themselves to others both past, present, and future. As a “site of memory” for many Americans (Nora 1989), the plantation serves as a Southern place where one focuses on a planter class family and considers the struggles that they had to build a house and develop a plantation on land that had not previously serve as an agricultural enterprise. As a site of memory for many African Americans, the plantation serves as the site where a crime was committed against ancestors and where group identity was formed for individuals from many places in Africa and the Caribbean. Many of the significant sites of memory that once served as part of the infrastructure of slavery – plantation houses, slave cabins, slave sales sites, holding areas for enslaved people, and even landscapes associated with fleeing slavery came to be used as tourist attractions. When place marketers use historic sites as attractions to draw tourists from elsewhere, they open those places up for a larger set of actors to participate in remembering place-specific pasts. Understanding how people who are not from an area, but who have visited

it are involved in remembering a place and its past can be tricky, especially if it is a relatively small heritage site.

Postcards are one way that researchers can examine how some past visitors to an area comprehended it. Boosters from a number of places historically associated with plantation slavery used those places as part of larger plans to promote these places for tourism. As part of marketing for their place, place entrepreneurs created and distributed postcards showing these places. The postcards picturing these sites of slavery served as mementos for those visitors who stop at a site and as marketing material telling others that they should visit. In the decades after the turn of the twentieth century, supporters for at least thirty sites, most in the United States, commissioned postcards showing either former slaves or places associated with slavery.

While archives have preserved postcards for decades, many of them were unused and lacking sender text. Even if thousands of postcards picturing a particular site were produced, written upon and mailed, until fairly recently finding those postcards could be difficult and expensive. The Internet has made this simpler in two ways. First, archivists are digitizing many collections that were once only accessible physically (See for example Maryland Digital Cultural Heritage 2011). Second, the Internet provides a space where websites that are not primarily archives, can serve an archive-like purpose. The study in this chapter uses the website eBay as a unique type of archive.

Using postcards as research data is not new. When using postcards in research, most researchers focus on images, titles and captions (Albers 1998; Geary 1998; Webb 1998; Arreola 2004; 2006; 2010; 2013; Arreola and Burkhart 2010; Goldstein 2012). Yet, some researchers acknowledged that postcards are more than one-directional pieces

of communication simply produced by manufacturers for place promoters, sold to tourists and mailed to family and friends (Willoughby 1992; Winiwarter 2001 DeLyser 2003; 2005). Largely, researchers have chosen not to include sender writing. Therefore, while the postcard is the result of a movement toward simpler postal communication (Staff 1966), research considering the writings of postcard senders have been overshadowed by the elements created by manufacturers and place promoters. The postcards themselves serve as context for their senders' imaginings about a place.

In this chapter, I will consider how a variety of contributors used postcards to remember slavery at specific sites. First, I will outline the history of the postcard and how it comes to serve as a social memory device. Then I will consider how other researchers used postcards in social memory and heritage research. After that I will outline a method for finding postcards and consider how to analyze them. I will explain a method to contextualize the things that senders wrote on picture postcards seeing these remarks as part of a larger conversation about a place that occurs on postcards with images of that place. Through this I will consider the seven types of representations of slavery that appear on postcards and discuss how tourists visiting sites in the U.S. South participated in remembering slavery through postcards using the example of St. Augustine slave market postcards to demonstrate how this unfolds over decades.

A Brief History of the Postcard and How Some Researchers Study Them

While rooted in early nineteenth-century correspondence and earlier forms of art, the U.S. picture postcard developed as part of the response to postage reform in Great Britain around 1840 (Hill 1837; Hill and Hill 1880; Staff 1966). In the United States, the postcard was first used as an advertising device. The initial postcard's U.S. production

and use was as a souvenir item for the 1873 Inter-State Industrial Exposition in Chicago, Illinois. That particular postcard showed the main building in which the exposition was held (Maryland 2011). Many of the early postcards used for business purposes did not contain images other than that of Thomas Jefferson as part of the preprinted stamp.

Early in the twentieth century, postcards and automobile travel formed a feedback loop. Just as the automobile becomes more standardized for production, the use of the postcard reaches its zenith with billions of postcards being sent in the first decades of the twentieth century (Gifford 2011: 6-7; Rogan 2005: 1, 20). Looking for places to which to drive and see, some early motorists turned to postcards for ideas (Gross 2005). In his article analyzing the connections between automobiles, postcards and tourism, Andrew Gross observed that once tourists got to their destination, they often purchased additional postcards (Gross 2005). Some of these postcards served as then-future reminders that they indeed, did get there, while others were sent home with messages informing those elsewhere that they made it, as proven by the postmark. Gross examined four early U.S. auto travel narratives published prior to 1921. He argues that the postcard and the automobile formed a dividing line between modernization and “the authentic location”, which was uniquely local and rooted in the past. He saw the postcard and the car as at once propelling tourists to a place and through that place. Gross noted that often tourists were disappointed in the lack of authenticity because of the commodification of the site through the developing automobile culture and moved on, only to purchase “another car or more postcards or to take another trip” (Gross 2005:79; Compare Kopyoff 1986). This reveals a role of “consumerism” in remembering the past while making it economically relevant in the present. While memory work should not be reduced completely to an

economic explanation, this should not be overlooked, particularly since postcards were sold as both tools to remember a place visited and tools to advertise a place to visit.

Even if we see the quest for authenticity as oversimplification of tourists' motivation, as I do, we must acknowledge the correlation between increased automobile travel and increased postcard consumption. Once initiated, the two potentially link tourists in a way that both looks backwards to the last trip taken, while looking forward to the next auto-touring event. In this linkage, tourists use postcards as reminders of where one has been and where one wants to go. It further links to the growth of cheaper personal photography where proof of visiting a place seems to move beyond cancelled postage to photographs of the place with the tourists in them (Garrod, 2009).

Changes over time in printing technology, postal laws and international events, as well as the development of a tourism-centric postcard industry led to modifications in postcards in the United States (Woody 1998). These variations allow us to group postcards categorically into seven eras (See Table 2), with postcards from one era sharing certain characteristics with other postcards from that era (Woody 1998: 21). Each of these eras or periods connected to a major change in postal law, printing capabilities and even as a response to the start of World War I. For example, since the United States Postal Service held a monopoly on issuing "postcards" until 1898, other postcards, not produced through the post office were prohibited. World War I shaped the postcard manufacturing industry and by extension the postcard itself. By 1915, Germany no longer produced postcards for the U.S. Thus, postcards with "Printed in Germany" can be reliably dated as pre-1915 (See Figure 23).

Occasionally, sales of a particular postcard run were slow. This would result in postcards of one era lingering in stores after the arrival of postcards from the next era,

Table 2. Postcard Periods. For examples, please see APPENDIX 3.

Date	Postcard Period
Prior to 1898	Pioneer Era
May 19, 1899 to December 31, 1901	Private Mailing Card (PMC) Period
December 25, 1901 to February 28, 1907 ⁶	Undivided Back Period
March 1, 1907 to December 31, 1915	Divided Back Period – messages first allowed on the address side of the postcard
1916 to 1930	White Border Period (on the image side)
1931 to 1945 (as late as 1960)	Linen-style Period ⁷
~1946 to present	Modern Chrome-style Period

something that is noticeable for postcards manufactured when the eras were short. This accounts for postcards with postmarks dated after the era in which they were printed, which was most conspicuous in the first decade of the twentieth century when postcards were changing most rapidly. When there is an issue of dating, it can often be overcome by noting the date of the cancellation postmark or if the sender dated their message.

⁶ Although Harold Woody (1998) says “28 January 1907”, I correct this to “February 28, 1907” to reflect Woody’s own date of 1 March 1907 as the start of the Divided Back Period. This corrected date also agrees with the dates used by Arreola (2006).

⁷ Woody defines the end of this period as 1945. Others put the start of this period as late as 1960 (Werther and Mott 2002), yet I do have chrome-style postcards from prior to 1960. Thus we find a slow changeover from linen-style to chrome-style postcards between 1945 and 1960.

Views of the Past, Views from the Past: Postcard Research

Postcards and the memories to which they are connected are social productions. Five groups of memory participants emerge as we study postcards. These groups are

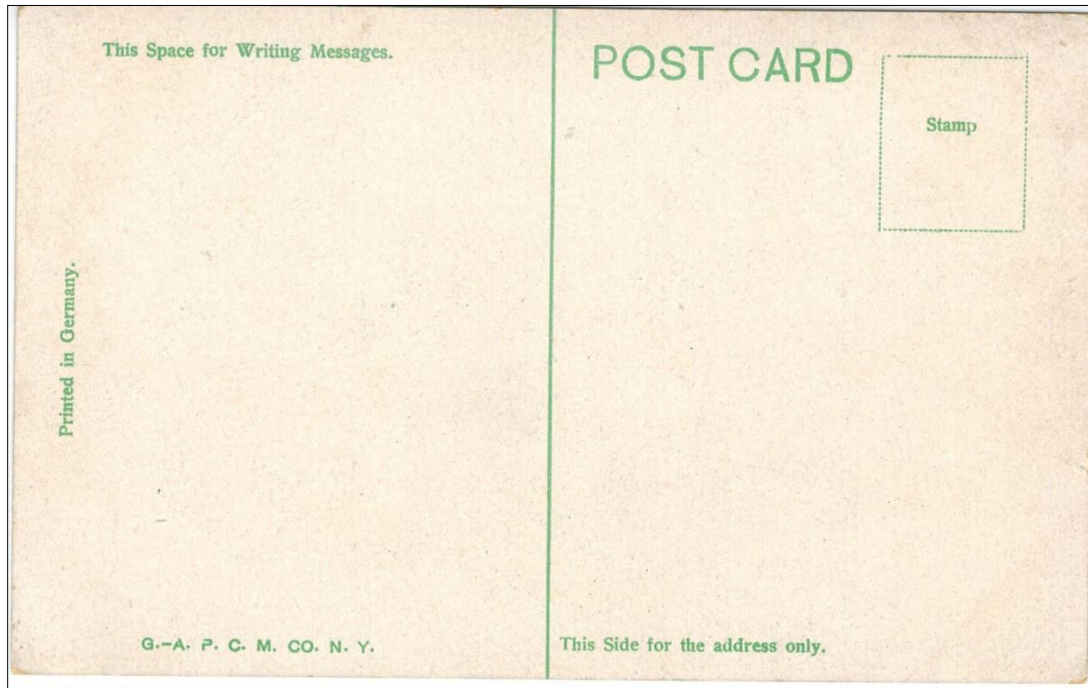


Figure 23. Verso of pre-1915, Divided Back Period postcard “Printed in Germany”⁸

1) postcard manufacturers, 2) place promoters,⁹ who over time came to have a role in choosing which images would come to represent a particular place, 3) postcard senders, who were often tourists visiting an area for a relatively short period of time, 4) postcard recipients, and 5) postcard and stamp collectors (Compare Winiwarter 2001). Through various choices, each group contributed to how postcards and the people and places which they represent were remembered and valued.

⁸ All images are from the author’s collections unless otherwise indicated. Copyrights for images of postcards pictured in this dissertation have expired or were not registered when registration for copyright protection was required.

⁹ This group included area businesses and organizations that ordered a particular postcard. These businesses often were listed as producers of a postcard and acted much as producers of a film who financially facilitate its production

It is important to remember that while each of these groups is identifiable, they are not internally homogeneous. Some postcard manufacturers sent photographers into the field to capture images, while others relied on images provided by clients, including place advocates from an area. Through image selection and submission, place promoters strongly shaped the discussion of what was locally-important and how to frame it. Even if from the same area, different place marketers used different people, buildings, and landscapes to represent it. Some advocates framed the place being promoted in ways other local stakeholders found disagreeable. Further, those responsible for the creation and distribution of a postcard might have an idea of how visiting tourists would understand a scene, but they could never be completely prepared for the full range of meaning that tourists read into a place, effectively losing control over the meaning of the represented site. Similarly, a tourist sending a postcard can never completely predict how a recipient will interpret that postcard upon receiving it, although the sender would have an idea because they knew the recipient enough to even send that piece of mail (Winiwater 2001: 452). Through this, postcards became sites of conversation with members from each group communicating with members of other groups.

Geographer Daniel Arreola (2006: 115) posits, “Because postcards by convention exhibit the local, they can be an excellent source of historic views about place.” Postcard images have helped researchers understand and visualize past landscapes (Staff 1966: 8; Elliott 2003). They have also help researchers understand how people see themselves and others. An important segment of this work considers how White Europeans, North Americans, Australia and New Zealanders viewed non-Whites, particularly those whom they dominated through colonial enterprises (For a few examples see Frazier 1980;

Albers 1998; Geary 1998; Webb 1998; Arreola 2006). These researchers and others note that from the beginning of their production, postcards framed people not identified as White in very specific ways both within the United States, and internationally (Mellinger 1994; Albers 1998; Geary 1998; Arreola 2004). Many of these postcards represented extremely racist, Eurocentric worldviews often drawn out through warped images of their “other”. In this, postcards like other visually-centered communication mediums naturalizes a tight relationship between being marked as racially White and citizenship – a way of saying that White equals the fullest expression of citizenship without spelling it out through letters (Bonnett 1999; Carter, Sorrensen, and Elbow 2013).

Wayne Martin Mellinger’s (1994) work found that many African-American themed postcards, while Southern because of the places named on them, showed little in the landscape to indicate where in the U. S. South the photograph on the postcard was taken. This allowed for a variety of place-specific titles and captions to be typeset and printed on a set of stock images with some pictures standing in for numerous places in the U.S. South (Mellinger 1994). The people shown represent whole categories of racialized, imagined people. Postcards with Black children eating watermelon, older African American women wearing aprons, and elderly African American men sitting, portrayed Black people as silly, docile and accepting of the racial hierarchal order pervasive across the U.S. and finely developed in much of the South (Mellinger 1994). To add impact to the supposed humor that many of these postcards attempted to convey, they often included captions in pseudo-vernacular dialect where the viewer of the postcard needs to

sound out the phrase to understand the message on the postcard (Mellinger 1994; Compare Wells 2011).¹⁰

The images on the postcards reinforce notions that many tourists already held (Millinger 1994; Arreola 2006). Thus a picture of a Black woman standing in the door of a cabin reinforced similar ideas of domesticity. Correspondingly, images on postcards of Black adults sitting outside of deteriorating cabins implies a resignation to poverty, which encourages financially better-off tourists and recipients to view the individual pictured as responsible for their lot in life (Mellinger 1994: 767-71). Often these persons were shown from a distance that strips them of their individuality. This allows, even encourages, viewers to see the person pictured as a representative of an entire group. Indeed, it was because Whites from anywhere in the U.S. reacted similarly to these symbols that gave them power. Some White tourists from Northern states might have judged Southern Whites for how they treated Blacks – even framing slavery as a Southern sin – but they often still essentialized Black people by defining them as what they were not – making Blacks a racialized other.

In contrast, to Millinger's observation about Black Americana postcards in general, postcards that featured sites of slavery represented unique places across the South that tourists could identify. For such places, specificity mattered. For example, images of the St. Augustine Slave Market represents a specific, racialized site recognizable to tourists who visited downtown St. Augustine, Florida. It is a space where transactions related to race-based slavery historically occurred. Putting images of the

¹⁰ Admittedly, with one exception, I have intentionally avoided purchasing these postcards because I find them extremely offensive. The one postcard that I own which could fall into this category is a common postcard displaying an older African American gentleman sitting outside of a cabin with the title "Old Plantation Cabin. Down South – 2". Interestingly, Wayne Martin Mellinger (1994) displays an image of this postcard on page 770 of his article "Toward a Critical Analysis of Tourism Representations".

slave market on postcards and treating it as a curiosity is provocative because of how unstable the meaning and associated group identity connecting the slave market to St. Augustine is. At the very least, White folks were never at risk of being sold in this place – a risk that Black individuals faced (Wilson 2007). However, even White people have a range of views of this place. It is here that a potential issue with much of the research on postcards and social memory becomes apparent: by focus on the creators and distributors of postcards, researchers treat postcard senders and recipients as sharing the same specific attitudes about the subjects pictured as those who made and distributed a particular postcard.

With billions of picture postcards purchased and mailed in the first decades of the twentieth century alone (Allen and Molina 1992: 106), we will never know every viewpoint expressed about the places that postcards represent, but we can get an idea of the variety of ways that senders thought about these places. Some senders wrote very little, while others wrote detailed paragraphs to the family, friends and associates to whom they send the postcards. Many postcard despatchers did not comment on the visual theme of place-specific postcards, others shared their viewpoints with their family, friends and associates – in some cases they even linking themselves to the sites on postcards.

Verena Winiwarter (2001: 452) encouraged her readers to remember, “You go and buy and send [postcards] home, and you choose them according to your anticipation of your recipients’ value system.” In most cases, when postcards were sent, they were sent to friends and family – people whose values senders knew. Thus, tourists who sent postcards and recipients who received them participated in a much larger conversation

about a place that went far beyond the image, title, caption and even the brief text scribed by the sender.

Methods for Finding and Collecting Slave-Site Postcards

The analysis of postcards requires a particular set of methods for systematically collecting these items and analyzing visual and textual elements to interpret their meaning. Through visual discourse, certain ideas about the past are constructed, reconstructed and communicated (Burns 2004; Carter, Sorrensen, and Elbow 2013). Rooted in images, visual discourse is not without textual references. The images on postcards are framed by title and captions as well as the things written by senders.

Since I am looking for some of the roots of tourists' involvement in remembering plantation-based slavery prior to the opening of many plantation houses as museums as a reaction to the Civil Rights Era, I turned to postcards to see how sites of slavery were represented on postcards created between 1900 and 1970, particularly in the United States South. During that period, printers produced postcards with pictures of at least thirty sites historically associated with slavery. Marketers for a number of locations worldwide used these visual mementos for tourism promotion. Tourists purchased and mailed multiple versions of postcards of the slave auction block in Fredericksburg, Virginia and the slave cabins at Hermitage Plantation, formerly in Savannah, Georgia. However, tourism promoters for St. Augustine were the most active in using a site of slavery for place promotion. The former slave market structure in St. Augustine has served as the visual theme of over two dozen different postcards designs.

Because of the large number and variety of postcards related to the topic of slavery available on its website, I chose eBay as the primary source for slave place

postcards (DeLyser Sheehan and Curtis 2004). At any given time between 2010 and 2014, people listed between 150 and 300 slavery-related postcards for sale on eBay.com. Approximately fifty percent of these postcards displayed the St. Augustine slave market site. Sellers provide pictures of the front and back of many postcards for sale on eBay's website which helped me to find postcards that served as data for this study. As these cards did not sell quickly, many postcards were posted for sale for multiple consecutive months. My winning bids for the postcards used in this research ranged from less than one dollar to as much as twenty dollars. Most postcards cost me between six and ten dollars each.

To locate postcards, I conducted repeated searches of auction listings. Initially, I used the terms "slave," "slavery," "enslaved," and "slave market" to locate postcards. Even when limited to the postcard section of eBay, the search term "slave" returned hundreds of results connected to slavery in the United State prior to Emancipation, as well as dozens of other postcards, including those with images of nude women from European colonies – images that themselves indicated a particular White, heterosexual, male-dominant exotic and erotic view of these places and the people who lived there (McIntosh 1998; Sigel 2000; Balce 2006). As I became more aware of places with slave sites, I started to use specific locations as part of the search terms. It is necessary to start with some of these broader terms because occasionally a postcard is mislabeled, as was the case of a St. Augustine slave market postcard that was listed as a St. Petersburg, Florida postcard. The search term "Augustine market" turned up the most newly-listed postcard for the St. Augustine slave market building when I re-ran searches every three to five days. I collected postcards over a three year period, but I had found and acquired

examples of most of the unique production runs – many with sender texts – within a few weeks. Less than half of the St. Augustine slave market postcards on eBay had sender text. Though not required for research purposes, I opted to purchase postcards for this study to avoid issues of permissions with using scanned images others created. Even though I use postcards that I now own for academic research, I worry about copyright issues with some of the more-recently produced postcards. Therefore, I choose to refrain from using images of recent postcards.¹¹

Through this collection method, I collected eighty postcards that represented places as slave sites in their pictures, titles and/or captions. Thirty-five of these showed the slave market in St. Augustine. Eight represented the former slave cabins at Hermitage Plantation in Savannah. Five pictured the front of the “Old Slave Market” on Chalmers Street in Charleston, South Carolina, while four showed the “Old Slave Block” in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Other postcards included images of formerly enslaved people by sales sites, or buildings and landscapes historically associated with slavery. Altogether twenty-nine specific places from the United States, Jamaica, Bonaire, the U.S. Virgin Islands, modern-day Ghana and modern-day Tanzania are represented in these postcards.

Visual Themes of Slavery Postcards

Categorically, seven visual themes are present in these postcards: 1) images of slaves at places from which they were once sold, 2) slave sales sites such as slave markets and slave auction blocks, 3) slave holding sites, 4) slave quarters, 5) slave-created landscapes, 6) sites associated with fleeing slavery, and 7) the ruins of slave sites.

¹¹ See previous footnote about postcard copyright for the postcards in this dissertation.

Each of these categories reveals the framing of slavery in certain socially-negotiated ways. Indeed, some images connect with multiple themes.

Images of slaves by slave-sales sites: The images on these postcards come with a caption that explains that the individual pictured was once sold at that spot. In one set of postcards, Albert Crutchfield is shown near the Fredericksburg auction block and the caption informs the viewer that he was sold on that very stone in 1859 when he was about 15 years old. Similarly, one of the Louisiana postcards showed an unnamed black woman standing on the auction block at the St. Louis Hotel in New Orleans; the caption informs us that she was sold for \$1500.00 (Figure 24). Like the slave quarter postcards considered below, the presence of certain stereotyped African Americans is purposeful and will be considered later in this chapter.

Slave Sales Sites: By far, the most pictured aspect of slave infrastructure in these postcards are slave markets and slave auction blocks. Postcards with images of slave markets in St. Augustine, Florida and Charleston, South Carolina as well as the slave auction stone in downtown Fredericksburg are very easy to find because of how many of them were produced. In the few images of the Fredericksburg, Virginia auction block, an outdoor site, literally a stone sticking up out of the concrete at the corner of two streets, the stone looks out of place with period automobiles in the view behind it. In most of these cases, slave sales sites are framed as relics of the past.

Slave holding sites on postcards: Three postcards fit in to this category: These differ from slave selling sites in that the enslaved were often held at the site too. Each of these postcards contains images of especially traumatic sites: the slave market in Christiansburg where enslaved individuals were also kept prior to being sold for

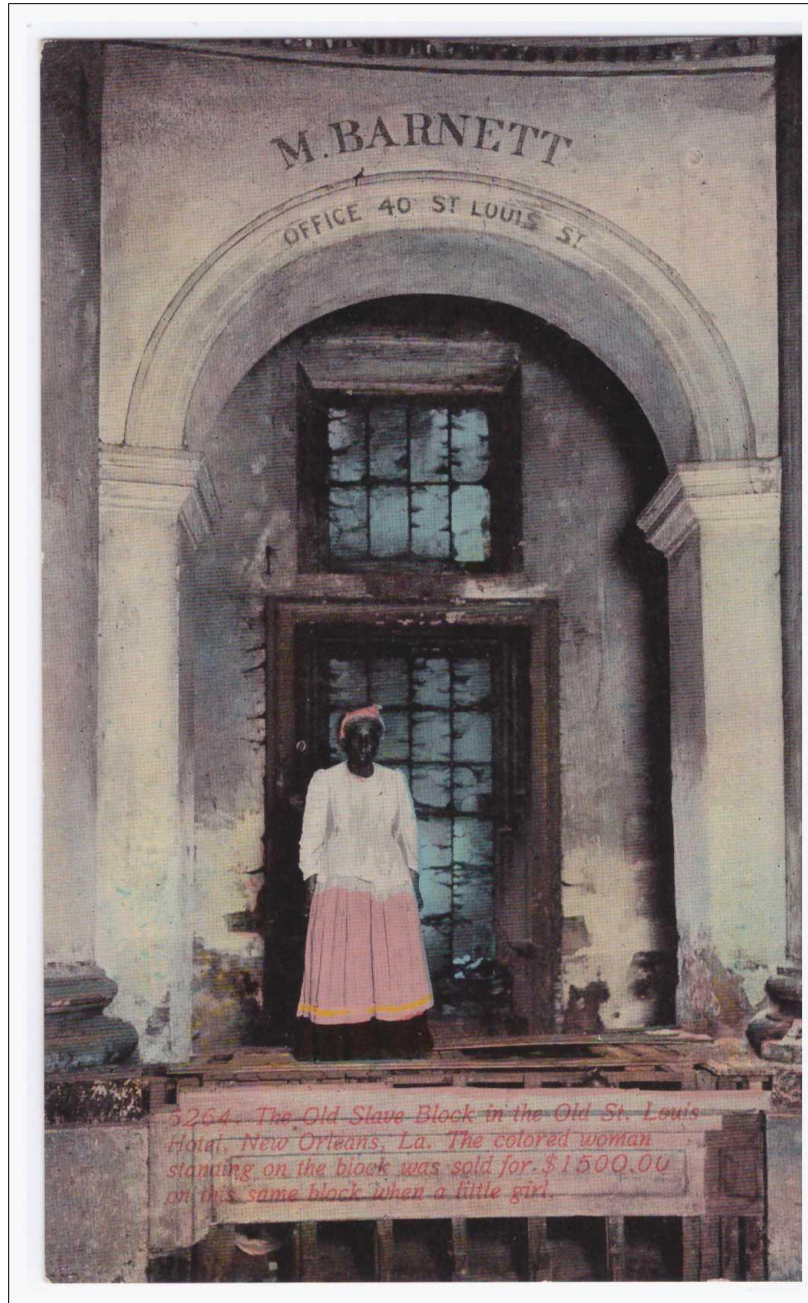


Figure 24. Postcard showing a formerly enslaved woman who was once sold on the auction block on which she is standing.

Transatlantic trafficking, the First National Bank building of Huntsville, Alabama, where the postcard says the enslaved were held as collateral for unpaid debts of planters and the “Old Slave House” of Junction, Illinois. The “Old Slave House” was also known as the Crenshaw House, after a former owner who was repeatedly indicted for his role in the

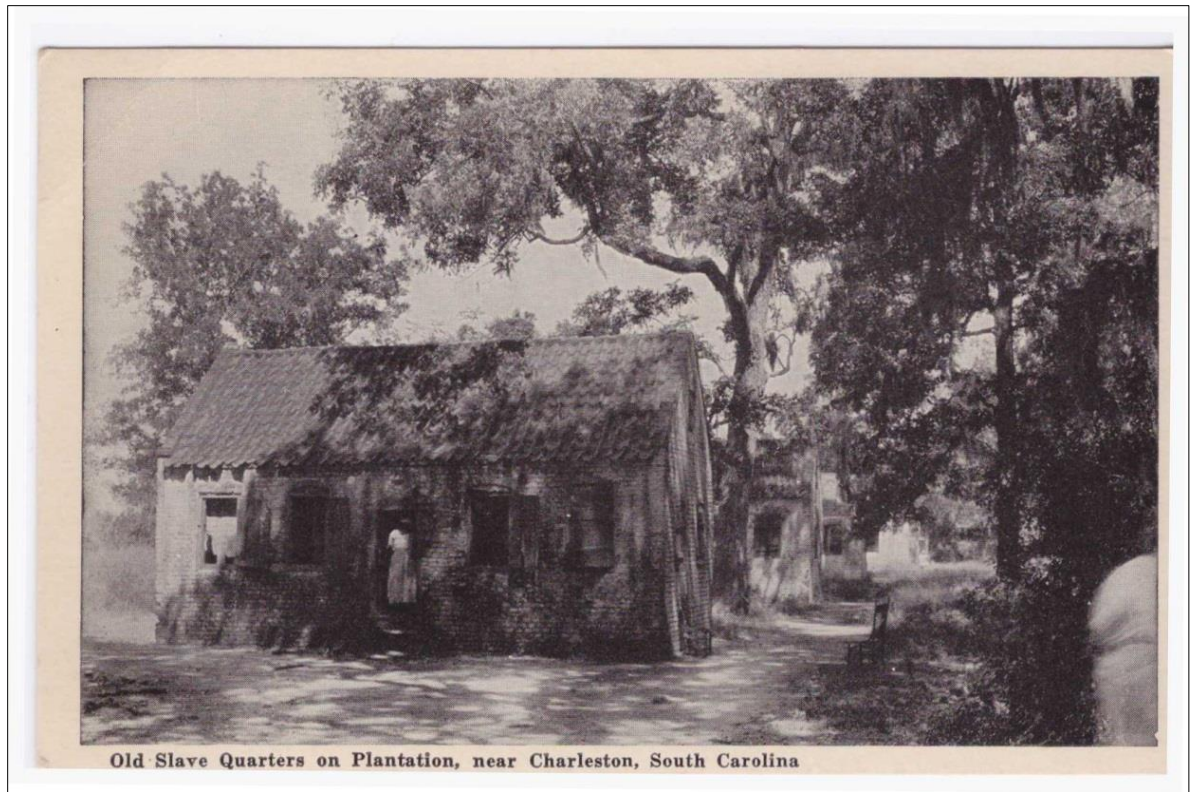
“Reverse Underground Railroad”, where free and escaped slaves were held after being kidnapped. In certain cases, some of the recently-enslaved and re-enslaved women were raped in a room that the postcard simply refers to as “the breeding room.” Paradoxically, there is also a “Lincoln Room” in the same house where Abraham Lincoln might have stayed when he was in the area for a set of political debates in 1840 (Musgrave 1996).

Slave sales sites seem to be the most difficult to come to terms with, particularly for local place promoters who usually wanted to socially frame these sites as removed from the present moment at that locale, which I will demonstrate below in the discussion of the St. Augustine slave market. Yet, other postcards of slavery-related sites could be problematic too.

Slave quarters: Postcards with images of slave quarters present information that is difficult to be nostalgic about. While reminding the viewer that the buildings have a lengthy life, even a deep history, they also remind one that this past really was not that far away for those who lived in those houses. While the viewer might be tempted to long for the simpler past, the women in the doorways and the children in the yard, still dealt – on a daily basis – with an ugly legacy that was hardly simpler or past (Figure 25).

Postcards with images of still occupied slave quarters are discursively complex. As I will discuss shortly, the use of certain stereotypical blacks is intended to send a message, but still seeing them as natural. Yet, the images did not encourage either local or visiting Whites to really ponder the racist system that kept many Southern blacks locked in the social order (Compare Arreola 2006; Geary 1998; Rydell, 1998: 58-60).

Slave-created landscapes: A postcard with a black and white image of two endless-seeming lines of pine trees with moss has a caption “Pine Alley – Planted by



Old Slave Quarters on Plantation, near Charleston, South Carolina

Figure 25. Woman standing in the door of a former slave cabin.

slave 100 years ago, St. Martinville, La.” is both awesome and depressing (Figure 26). Meanwhile, the postcard of “Island Grove Tourist Court” with its subtitle in italics, “*The Islands Made by Slaves*” at once acknowledges the immense contributions of the enslaved in shaping the island, while also containing the information that could be the undoing of escapism for a tourist. Mailed at least fifty years after the end of slavery, the tourist who sent it marked on the front of the postcard the room where (s)he stayed, effectively telling the recipient that years after the end of legal slavery, (s)he still benefited from the labor of enslaved people (Figures 27 and 28).

Site associated with fleeing slavery: While only one postcard in the collection overtly deals with this – a canceled postcard from 1909 with an image of “the Old Stone House” in Clinton, Iowa – it is significant because of its connection with resistance to



Figure 26. "Pine Alley - Planted By Slaves 100 Years Ago. St. Martinville, La." Postcard

slavery. Indeed, as postcards in other places attempt to frame slavery as temporally distant or try to reframe sites associated with slavery into other things, the caption of “This house was a place of refuge for fugitive slaves during slavery days” is quite remarkable. The sender’s comment on the back (“Laura: - Theses two speak for themselves. We are having cool weather just now”) connect the sender and the recipient to the site, while confusing this researcher. Are the two things the house and the carriage? Is the sender imagining the carriage as taking African Americans escaping from slavery? The remarks that the sender felt Laura would understand reveals that a conversation between postcard maker, place promoter, and the sender also includes the recipient(s) who received it. Judging by the infrequency of appearing on postcard sales sites and auction sites like eBay, only a few postcards representing these sites appeared on postcards in the first half of the twentieth century.

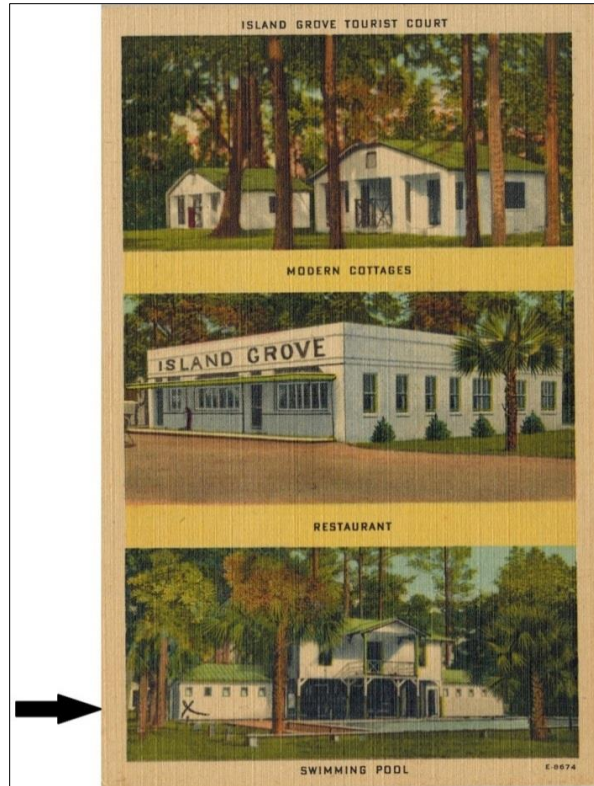


Figure 27. Front of “Island Grove Tourist Court” postcard. Arrow points at mark made by sender.

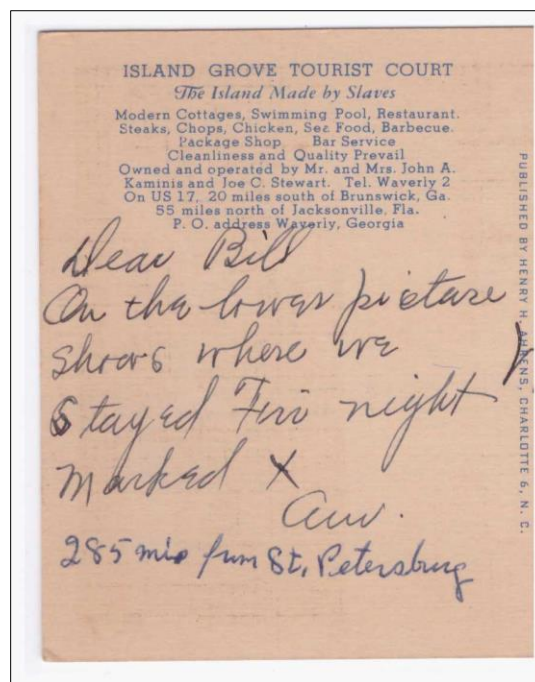


Figure 28: Verso of “Island Grove Tourist Court” postcard. Subtitled “The Island Made By Slaves”.

Ruins of slavery sites: Three postcards in the collection fit in this category – one with the image of the ruins of a slave hospital on St Simon’s Island, Georgia, a second site for the ruined “nail factory” at Monticello and another showing a sugar mill in Jamaica with a caption that mentions the ruins in the background are “of [the] Slave Era.” Visually, postcards of slavery-site ruins mark slavery as a distant past, the remains of which are still present, but only as a reminder of a bygone era. Vines cover large parts of each ruins implying an unrecoverable past that is slipping away from memory altogether, a forgetting of the lives of those who built, worked and died there.

Case Study: St. Augustine Slave Market Postcards

To draw out how a larger conversation occurred on slave site postcards, I will use the thirty-five postcards of the St. Augustine slave market to consider the methods from this point forward. The slave market of St. Augustine is one of dozens of historic sites in a city that heavily relies on its history as a way to draw tourists. Often described as “the nation’s oldest city in continuous settlement,” St. Augustine was founded in 1565 by Spanish colonists. Enslaved Africans were among the initial settlers, and thus Blacks have been a part of the city since its initial settlement (Williams 1949; Dunkle 1958). By the Antebellum Period, almost half of the population was Black. The area’s small tourism industry developed rapidly starting in the 1880s, and some African Americans worked in tourism-related industries, though often in positions that had limited contact with tourists (Colburn 1985). It is possible that some local White residents limited the overtly-violent-nature of white supremacy towards African Americans partly for fear of damaging the tourism industry (Compare Colburn 1985). However, such self-regulation

on the part of local White racists had its limits and largely ended by the 1960s (Herbers 1965).

Of the thirty-five St. Augustine slave market postcards in this study, sixteen were mailed – twelve from St. Augustine, three from nearby Jacksonville, Florida and one from Baltimore, Maryland. Two were evidently hand-delivered or placed inside of an envelope and mailed. Of these eighteen with sender text, six say something about the slave market and two allude to it. Three of these specifically identify the building as the place where “they used to sell” people. Postmarks indicate that these postcards were sent to people in the Mid-Atlantic and Northern states – New York, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Maine, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia. Only two were mailed to addresses in the South – Vero Beach, Florida and Opelika, Alabama.

When discussing visual analysis of photographs, Gabriela Christmann (2008: 3) stated, “It is not enough to analyze the composition of photographs, their content and design. Rather, their context of production and publication, including their horizon of historical events, and the way of reception, respectively ... must be considered.” This is true of the images on postcards too. An analysis of postcard images should include consideration beyond the frame of the picture. To understand how postcards connect to social memory, one must analyze the visual content of the postcard. Is the image a photograph or a colored painting based on a photograph? Are people in the picture? What are they doing? Who and what are in the image? Who and what are not? Are there similar, even near-exact, images on different postcards? What changes are made? To keep the content analysis consistent, the same interrogation should be done for each postcard image.

Additionally, visual content should be considered in light of the postcard's textual framing. Postcard images and texts succinctly get at the way that their creators frame people, places and landscapes. How does the text encourage certain perspectives? What captions and titles are on the postcard? What is included and excluded in the brief statement of each caption? What does a caption creator want readers to notice? Do titles and captions change over time, particularly for postcards with nearly identical images?

To illustrate a way of doing this, please compare Figure 29, Figure 30, Figure 31, and Figure 32. Figure 29 shows a picture that was very common prior to 1907 shown on a number of different postcards. Around 1907, postcards with this image start to become less common. The point of view of most newly-produced postcards changes from this birds-eye view of the plaza with the slave market and surrounding area to a ground-level view with the slave market taking up most of the image (Figure 30). This change,



Figure 29. Birdseye view of St. Augustine plaza and slave market



Figure 30. Front of postcard mailed in January 1909. Published by M. Mark of Jacksonville, Florida.



Figure 31. Front of postcard mailed in April 1936.

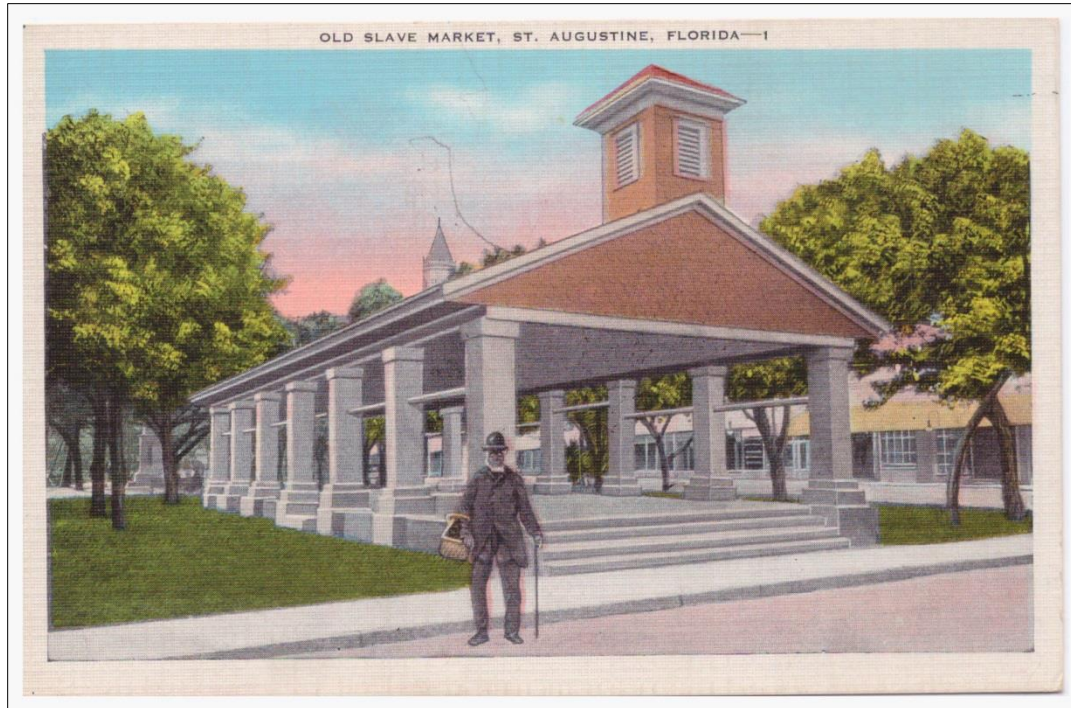


Figure 32. Unused postcard from the 1940s.

evidently done by agents for postcard manufacturers, is accompanied by title changes from “The Plaza, St Augustine, FLA.”, and “Plaza and Slave Market, St Augustine, FLA.” to “Slave Market, St Augustine, FLA.” Such changes in viewpoint and title indicate an acknowledgment of the value of the slave market as a heritage site by focusing on it. Promoters from St. Augustine and nearby Jacksonville start producing or commissioning many of the newer postcards, and these postcards have titles such as “Old Slave Market, St Augustine, FLA” as seen in Figures 30, 31, and 32. While acknowledging the historic value of the slave market, this demonstrates an effort to exert some control of its historical framing by one set of stakeholders. By calling it “Old,” they emphasize a temporal distant between the then, now, and significant historic themes that these promoters want to use in the place’s marketing. Although they did not mind

using slavery, historically, to promote the site, these regional tourism promoters did not want slavery to define who they were in the present.

Even when working from the same original picture as was done with Figures 30, 31, and 32, changes are observable. In Figure 30, the older Black man has a cane and is carrying a basket. There is a bicycle in front of the slave market structure. This postcard does not state a relationship between the man and the slave market building, but other postcards with the same image, say that the man was once sold in this market. The cross on the church in the background faces the street which runs beside the slave market and not the postcard viewer. In Figure 31, the bicycle is not present in this picture and the cross on the church in the background has been rotated so that it faces the postcard viewer. The man's cloths are different colors from the earlier picture – light blue pants and coat, instead of the brown pants and dark blue coat of the first image. This postcard was common in the 1920s and 1930s. The postcard pictured in Figure 32, sold starting in the late 1930s, is less detail as a whole than the two previous images. The cross on the church in the background is missing, the number of steps leading up to the slave market is different, and the locations of trees changed. Most noticeable among the changes is how the African American man is stylistically different – more cartoonish with less detailed than the previous two images. With each of these revisions he becomes more obscured across the decades.

While the role of postcard manufacturers and place promoters influenced every mass-produced postcard of a site, sender connections were more individual. Textual analysis should be expanded to include sender comments as these are important data too. Interrogating sender texts, researchers should ask: do senders make statements about the

picture? Do they connect themselves or the recipients to the site? If so, how? Often, senders do not specifically say something about the image. The lack of comment by many senders indicates that if they did disagree with the sentiment of the post card, their opposition was not great enough to compel them to write about it.

When tourists acknowledge the slave market, they do so in certain ways. In some cases, the slave market was used as a locational device such as when one sender wrote, “We will sit in the Plaza back of the Slave Market for rest of day.” Another wrote, in part, “At this Market is where they used to sell the slaves. It is only 196 miles north of here. We will stop there for a day agoing back” (Figure 33). Other than acknowledging the slave market, these comments do not indicate that the visitor valued the site in a certain way other than it was known well enough to serve as a landmark.

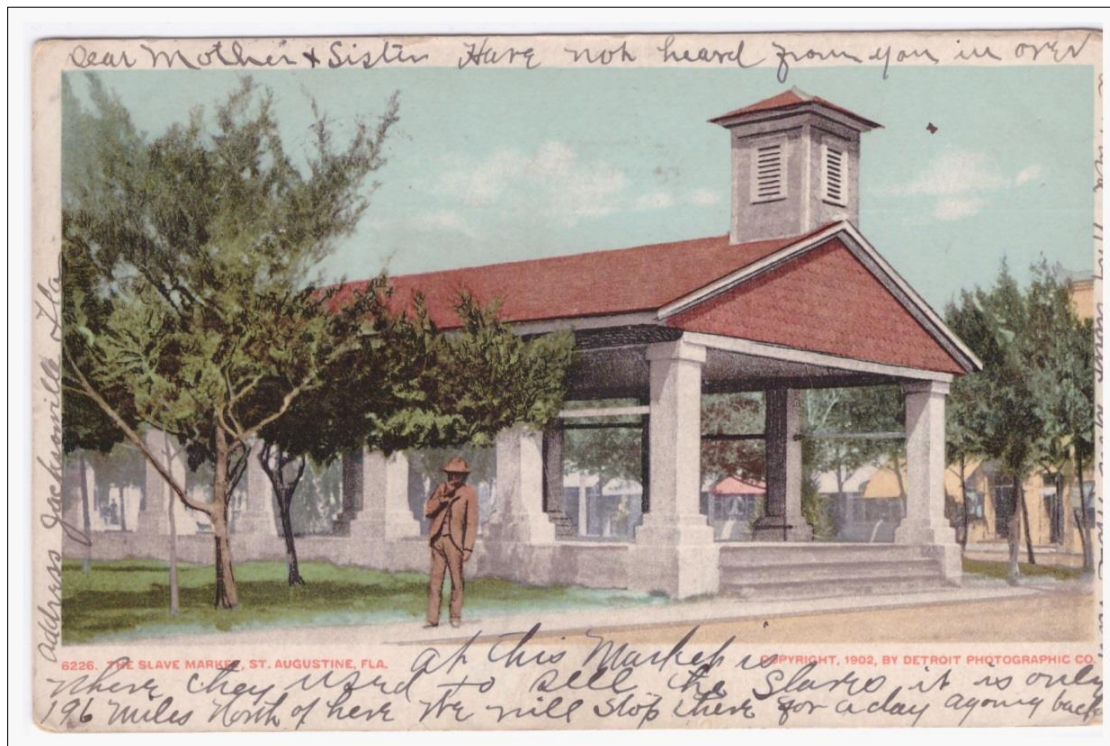


Figure 33. Front of postcard mailed in April 1907. The sender mentioned, “At this Market is where they used to sell the slaves”.

Other sender remarks communicate a value judgment about the slave market. One writer simply said, “This is very interesting.” Others, as noted above, pointed out that people were once sold there with three senders specifically saying, “They used to sell” slaves, or in one case, using a derogatory term for African Americans. It is significant that these senders use the pronoun “they” as it indicts Augustinians because of their connection to slavery. Writing to family in Maine, one author pronounced the structure, “A relic of barbarism.” Collectively, this “others” White Augustinians as different from visitors from the U.S. North at the same time that some White Augustinians used exotic representations of African Americans to promote the city. The three postcards with sender texts that connect the site with the sale of slaves and the one that call the site “a relic of barbarism” were postmarked in the first decade of the twentieth century – the time that the angle of the point of view shifts from birds-eye to ground level. This led to an interesting situation where just as regional promoters try to place a temporal distance between the site and slavery by calling it “old” and spatially relocate the viewer in front of the slave market at ground-level visually, the instability of their control over the meaning of the site is revealed. Place promoters in northeastern Florida resisted being too connected to the history of the site.

What some promoters might have viewed with pride – this site still exists (though largely with the changed purpose to a place where people socialize) – becomes a place that regional place promoters needed to redefine repeatedly once slavery was meaningfully reconnected with the site and potentially spilled over into defining local Augustinian residents collectively.

Changes in captions indicate one of the ways that these regional place promoters tried to control the slave market's meaning. During the first decade of the twentieth century, when the postcard in Figure 29 was produced, the caption, placed on the front said, "Old Slave Market, Where slaves were formerly sold at auction, Erected 1840, St. Augustine, Fla." When the popular postcard in Figure 30 was being sold in the 1920s and 1930s, the caption print on the verso read, "The old slave market in the east end of the Plaza is an interesting landmark of antebellum days. Built in 1840 for a public market. Called 'slave market' by an enterprising photographer to make his picture sell."¹² This caption implied that slaves were never sold in the slave market.

As indicated by additional archival work, a discussion of whether or not the market is really a slave market continued off of the postcard and even onto the Internet down to this day (Public Market Clippings File 2013; Pope 2001; Dobson 2009; Nolan 2009; Smith 2009; Goldstein 2012). Evidently, as a result of this back and forth in the late 1930s and into the 1940s, Duval News Company of nearby Jacksonville who implied through the above quoted caption that slaves had not been sold at the market site, later changed the caption to read, "The old slave market in the east end of Plaza is an interesting landmark of antebellum days. Built in 1840, it was used as a public market in which slaves were occasionally sold" (Figure 33).

After World War II, a popular postcard of the site produced by the Florida Souvenir Company of St. Augustine reveals a further reworking of the site's representation (Figure 34). While still positioned at ground level, the viewer of this

¹² Holly Goldstein concludes that William James Harris is the creator of the caption and that he is describing himself as the "enterprising photographer" who used the term "slave market" to make his photographs sell. This seems to credit Harris with coining "slave market" for the structure, but other locals seem to be using that term to describe the site in 1880s and prior (See Goldstein, 2012 footnote 20).

postcard is pulled further away from the slave market. In this wider view, the cathedral, and half of the plaza as well as the whole slave market are shown – now featuring the front and right side of the market along with parts of two streets, a horse-drawn carriage and over a dozen mid-century parked cars. The front title is “Cathedral Place, Plaza and Public Market, St. Augustine, Fla.” The caption on the verso reads. “At the foot of the Bridge of Lions, on the left you see the Old Public Market, with the Plaza as its



Figure 34. Front of postcard mailed in April 1946.

background and the famous Catholic Church, Ponce de Leon Hotel and the Exchange Back building on the right.” Slavery is erased in the caption and title of the postcard – disconnected from the slave market, even though it is still shown.

By the late 1950s, Duval News Company postcards still focusing on the market itself, was calling the building “a replica of one burned in 1887” in captions. Thus, as St.

Augustine approaches the height of the midcentury Civil Rights Era, the association of slavery and Black people is largely removed from the site both visually and textually on postcards. Of note, the fire that the Duval News Company alluded to did not completely destroy the structure as evidenced by a drawing of the building in *Harpers Weekly* in an 1888 article about the fire (Figure 35). Yet, by framing the site as a replica of an earlier slave market – effectively branding the current structure as inauthentic – somehow makes this okay. The place promoter allows tourists to think that the city’s residents are not trying to forget the ugly past, while divorcing participation in the slave trade from then-current residents and their ancestors – a form of remembering the past, while decoupling it from the present.

Erasing Slavery

The postcards of sites associated with slave infrastructure reveal a number of things. Historical geographers and other researchers have already considered how such images can give us an idea of physical changes in landscapes over times (Allen and Molina, 1992; Arreola and Burkhart 2010). More recently, geographers have considered how postcards indicate cultural views of the places, people and things they portray (Arreola 2006; Hoelscher 1998; DeLyser 2005; Waitt and Head 2002). Postcards can even help us understand how these views changed overtime. As part of the effort to promote their place as interesting and unique, a number of places in the United States used such sites in place promotion. Further, the memory of slavery at these sites was carried on as part of an active, dynamic conversation instead of a static representation.

The discussion of slavery at these sites changed over time. At different times, locals thought differently, and even valued differently, the places represented and their

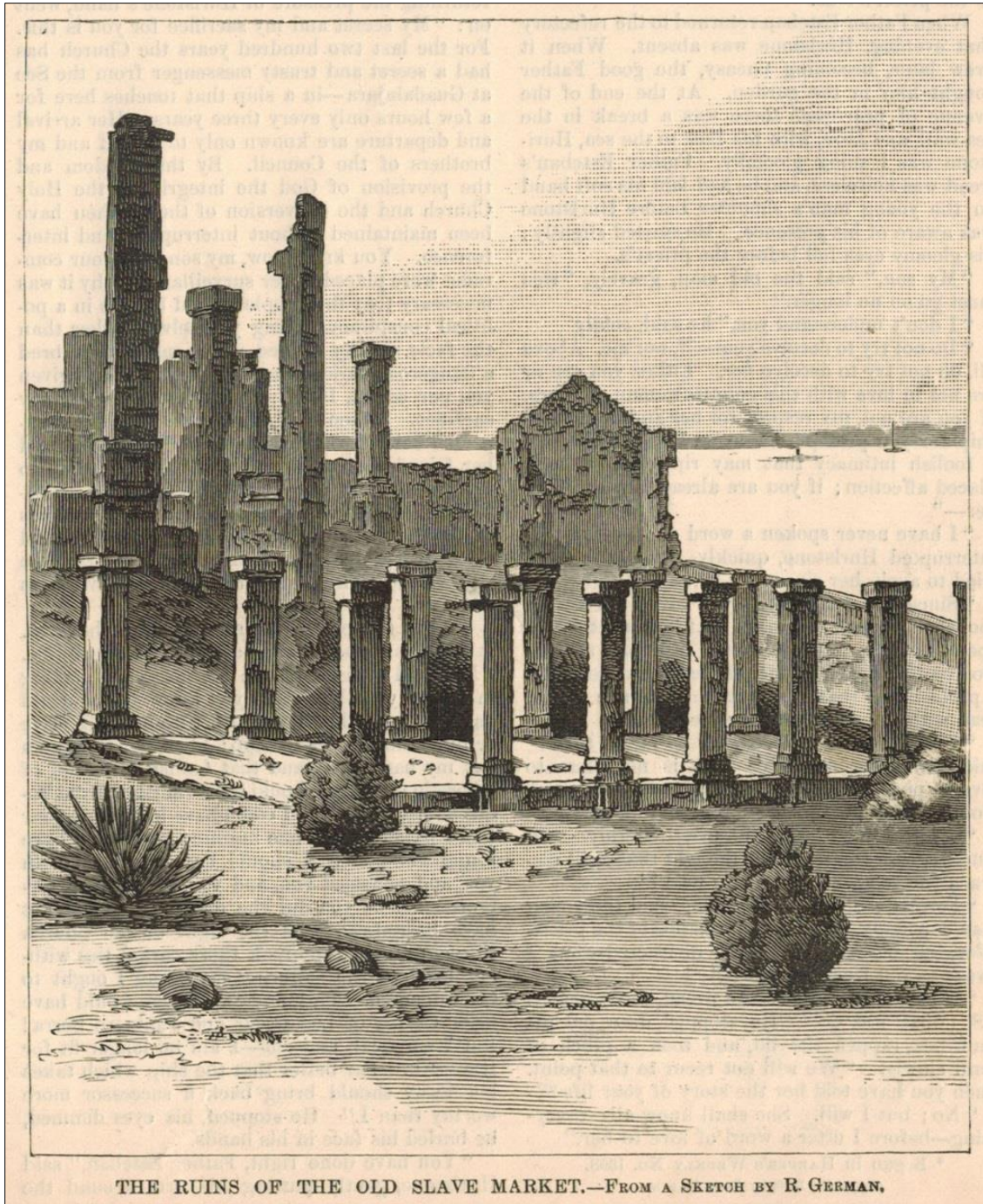


Figure 35. 1888 clipping from *Harper's Weekly* of the Slave Market structure after the fire of 1887 (Slave market is in the middle of image).

historic meaning. In St. Augustine, a site of slavery proved useful as a marketing asset among other sites around the city. Yet, place promoters found the meaning of certain

spots such as the slave market as slippery. In St. Augustine, they grew more cautious about how they encouraged the slave market to be framed, changing text and visual frame in order to better control the meaning that senders and recipients might associate with a slavery site. The postcards indicate that some local African Americans also participated in the framing and promotion of these sites. Some African Americans posed for the images – though we cannot be sure that all who did, did so willingly. While research on the part of the image creator might well have led to the information that a particular individual was once enslaved and auctioned off at a particular place, some Blacks might have actively used it as an opportunity to reclaim the space as partially theirs, bringing a human reality to the site and asserting control over their story.

This memory work was carried out not only at a particular site or even about a particular site, but might very well have united multiple sites in discussion and meaning. Indeed, while the sites pictured in these postcards were unique in their immediate area, many of these places were close enough, particularly in parts of the South, that tourists could drive from one site to another while traveling for leisure (Figure 36). That this did occur is indicated by one postcard sender who sent a postcard of the slave cabins at the Hermitage near Savannah, Georgia stating that they would next be in St. Augustine, Florida (Figure 37).

We can also see an evolution of how slavery was represented at these sites, with slavery being further marginalized and erased deeper into the twentieth century as postcard producers sought to redefine specific sites. Additional research is needed, but indications are that reactionary, racialized space-claiming was happening on the part of Whites in St. Augustine, but also at certain historic sites that were being turned into

plantation house museums. As a market, the St. Augustine slave market site might well have been an interracial site. Through its association with the sale of enslaved



Figure 36. Map showing some of the locations that produced slavery-related postcards. Map by author.

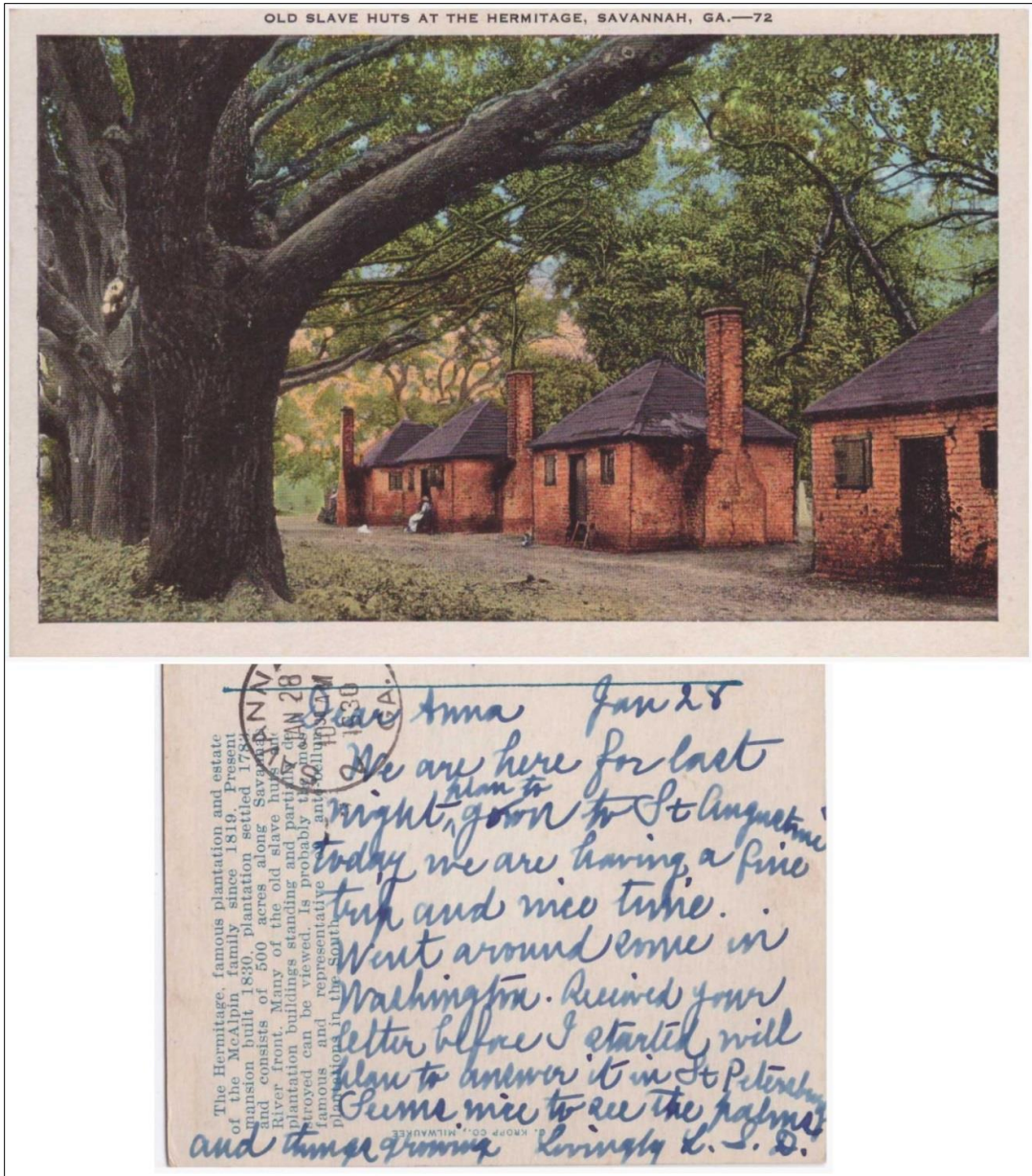


Figure 37. Front and portion of verso with sender's text. The tourist who sent this said, in part, "We are here for last night. Plan to go on to St Augustine."

individuals, it was at least partially associated with Black bodies, but by the 1960s the slave market site was physically claimed by White locals and tourists. In 1964 when civil rights activists fought for desegregation to open up beaches and other areas to non-Whites, the slave market was one of the sites they marched around (DeRoche 2003: 22,

23). It served as a center for white supremacists to stage rallies and attack activists. Vivid accounts of those moments describe these counter-activists as running out of the slave market structure and violently attacking the marchers as they passed (Colburn 1985).

It is in the 1960s and 1970s that a number of plantation houses become the focus of local historic societies across the South. With the impending loss of public spaces, plantation houses and other historic buildings seemed to provide a respite from integration for some Whites. While most White Southerners benefited from segregation, violently working to maintain it was not an effort in which they all actively participated. Yet, the plantation house provided an outlet of effort to hang onto a disappearing order for some whites that were having difficulty accepting the changes associated with desegregation. These individuals took pride in thinking about how they were preserving “our” history, while creating a new segregated space. It is toward these spaces, the plantation house museum itself, that most of the rest of this dissertation focuses.

Finally, methodologically-critically analyzing postcards in the above-considered way encourages us to remember that even the richest research about a place using written and visual communication, is never complete, and thus we should always consider the possibilities of overlooked voices. While this research highlights the overlooked roles of senders and recipients, it does not consider the roles African Americans had in making meaning of these places. For example, did the older Black men who were pictured in some of the Slave Market postcards willingly participate in creating the images used? Were they unwilling participants or not? Did they see this as opportunities, even small ones to reclaim a space and make its meaning?

CHAPTER FOUR: THE ROLE OF AFFECTIVE INEQUALITY IN MARGINALIZING SLAVES AT PLANTATION MUSEUMS^{13 14}

Historic house museums play an important role in the heritage tourism experience (West 1999). While visiting these museums, tourists hear about events and people of the past, and are actively encouraged to place themselves there historically – to identify with and form emotional connections with individuals from the past. While many history museums appear to consider the past in objective ways, a tour through any historical site is a selective, political process which makes certain people, places, and perspectives appear legitimate and important while rendering others invisible (Buzinde 2007; Eichstedt and Small 2002). While tourists do not necessarily accept everything that museum docents say without questioning as considered in the next chapter, the stories shared by many tour guides or docents are extraordinarily important to the politics of retelling the past in selective and emotionally evocative ways.

Traditional studies tend to view tour guides in monolithic and categorical terms, emphasizing the extent to which they serve as mere mediators of the tourist experience. More recent studies focus on the agency and cultural politics of tour guides, how they participate in the social construction of destinations, and actively shape the meanings that tourists read and interpret from historic sites (Dahles 2002; MacDonald 2006). In developing this theme further, I focus on how guides operate as ‘creators’ of historical

¹³ This chapter previously appeared as E. Arnold Modlin, Jr, Derek H. Alderman and Glenn W. Gentry. Tour Guides as Creators of Empathy: the Role of Affective Inequality in Marginalizing the Enslaved at Plantation House Museums. *Tourism Studies: An International Journal*. 2011. 11(1): 3-19. It is reprinted by permission of Dr. Jayne Whiffin, Publishing Editor, SAGE Publications Ltd. Reprint permission from *Tourism Studies: An International Journal* is in Appendix 4.

¹⁴ This chapter is a modified reprint of “Tour Guides as Creators of Empathy: The Role of Affective Inequality in Marginalizing the Enslaved at Plantation House Museums” I was lead co-author of this article. In addition to modifying the article to reflect the formatting style of this dissertation, I have modified the chapter 1) to reflect my role as the one who did the field work of following docents with tour groups at Destrehan Plantation and 2) to emphasize more directly the roles of tourists in the process considered. Derek and Glenn’s primary focus is a detailed consideration of docents in the section subtitled, “Creating empathy, creating inequality: The politics of tour guiding.”

empathy. The concept of historical empathy recognizes that a full understanding of the past requires people to cognitively adopt a perspective different from their own and to establish an emotional connection with historical actors from different eras and walks of life. In the words of Barton and Levstik (2004: 207–8), historical empathy “invites us to care with and about people in the past, to be concerned with what happened to them and how they experienced their lives”.

Plantation house museums in the Southern United States are places where the political and emotional stakes of tour guiding are particularly high, especially in terms of the depiction of the history of slavery. A growing number of scholars have addressed the controversies that surround the portrayal of the enslaved at historic sites and museums (Alderman 2010; 2013; Butler 2001; Buzinde 2007; Buzinde and Santos 2008; 2009; Handler and Gable 1997; Hanna 2008; Jackson 2012; Modlin 2008). Tourism plantations across the South often ignore or marginalize the story of slavery while valorizing the accomplishments and possessions of the planter class, thus carrying out a “symbolic annihilation” of the history and identity of enslaved Africans and African-Americans (Eichstedt and Small 2002: 105). While symbolic annihilation is carried out through many channels, tour guides play an especially influential role. Traditionally, tours at most plantation house museums present vivid, detailed accounts of the lives of members of planter families while reducing enslaved people – whose presence made the master’s lifestyle possible – to stock characters who receive less attention than the furniture and china owned by the master. These representational inequalities, “not only annihilate the histories of marginalized groups from the official heritage narrative but also foster

feelings of disinheritance and exasperate historical and contemporary issues of racism” (Buzinde and Santos 2008: 484).

The disinheritance of Africans and African-Americans from Southern plantation history has not gone unchallenged, however. Not all tourists acquiesce to this traditionally dominant reading of the plantation. Some tourists fall into what Buzinde and Santos (2009) call an “oppositional interpretive community” that views the plantation much more in terms of racial politics. Some African-Americans actively seek to reclaim their plantation heritage (Redford 1988; Jackson 2012), producing counter-narratives that bring the slave struggle front and center within the re-telling of the Old South (Hoelscher 2003; 2003a; 2006). Some site managers and docents have responded by incorporating slavery into their representations of the past (Butler, Carter and Dwyer 2008; Litvin and Brewer 2008). Professionals, academics and activists have contributed their research to document and challenge the marginalization of the enslaved at historic sites (Moore 2008; Loewen 2000). It is out of this intellectual and political context that I write this paper.

Previous analyses of the representation of slavery in plantation tourism tended to document the number of times that the enslaved are mentioned (or not) on docent-led tours and marketing materials (Alderman and Modlin 2008; Butler 2001; Eichstedt and Small 2002; Modlin 2008). My many onsite observations of plantation house museum tours between 2007 and 2013 convince me that increasing the number of references to slave life on tours is an important *first* step in developing a more socially responsible discourse at plantation sites. However, even some of the most conscientious docents fail to move the dialogue beyond making factual descriptions of enslavement or simply

referencing the aggregate number of slaves owned by a particular planter/master, thus perpetuating an inventory discourse that continues to view enslaved people as mere property rather than human beings. These factual mentions of slavery certainly represent an improvement over traditional representations of plantation life, but do not necessarily help tourists empathize or identify with the slaves.

The lack of historical empathy created for the enslaved individuals lies in contrast to the way in which many guides work to make the lives of members of the planter family come alive for tourists, offering dramatic accounts of the family's losses, pains, power, and wealth. At some sites, docents might ask tourists to imagine briefly some aspect of slavery, but such emotive adventures are often short detours from what remains a "white-centric" representation of the plantation (Eichstedt and Small 2002: 4). The uneven way in which tourists are encouraged to invest emotionally in the planter versus the slave is what I call "affective inequality." As creators of historical empathy, tour guides play a major role in not only reaffirming but also potentially challenging this affective inequality. Indeed, geographers have found instances of some guides creating highly emotional moments for tourists to learn about enslavement (Alderman and Campbell 2008). Bringing about broader change requires understanding, more fully, the role that empathetic engagement between guide and tourists plays in shaping representations of slavery at plantation house museums.

In this chapter, I define tours of plantation house museums as emotive journeys and focus on the empathy-producing capacity of tour guides. My purpose is to engage the concept of affective inequality, how it contributes to the marginalization of the history of slavery and enslaved people, and how it becomes reproduced within the practices of

docents at Southern plantation house museums. In exploring the representational practices of tour guides, it is important to pay attention not only to how they tell emotionally evocative stories about certain people from the past, but also how they arrange or configure these historical narratives within the historical spaces of the plantation. The practice of retelling the past happens in and through places and landscapes, and space represents an important medium for storytelling rather than simply a backdrop for history (Azaryahu and Foote 2008). As I illustrate through a retracing of docent-led tours at Destrehan Plantation in Louisiana, guides create affective spatial-historical storylines by anchoring certain narrative themes in particular spaces and through the sequential ordering of spaces and stories within the tour. First, I present a background discussion of the political agency of tour guides and the role of emotion and affect at historical museum sites.

Creating Empathy, Creating Inequality: The Politics of Tour Guiding

Much research has been written on the function and role of tour guides. Some of this research addresses tour guide practices in terms of competence, quality assurance, training, and the optimization of service and product delivery (Black and Weiler 2005; Curtin 2010; Huang and Wang 2007; Mason and Christie 2003). While these aspects are important, my interest is on the larger social and cultural dimensions of the docent–tourist relationship and how bodily and verbal performances of guides work to transform an unassuming site of history into a socially important historical site (Fine and Speer 1985).

Ap and Wong (2001: 551) describe tour guides as the ‘essential interface’ between tourists and destinations. Dahles (2002: 783) agrees, saying ‘tour guiding constitutes a strategic factor in the representation of a destination area’. Tourists certainly can form their own independent impressions of destinations (Banyai 2010), but guides

exert great influence on tourists' interpretations and experiences of place (Baum, Hearn and Devine 2007). Tour guides act as "gatekeepers of the destination, not only to provide interesting information and an enjoyable experience but also a physical and cultural familiarity with destinations. They can recommend to tourists what to see, control what is supposed to be seen, and what the destination does not want them to see" (Nelson 2003: 114). To categorize the role of guides in tourism, Cohen (1985) establishes a tour-guide typology of pathfinders and mentors. The pathfinder guide "provides privileged access to an otherwise non-public territory" and the mentor guide is more active in the mediation and "cultural brokerage" of the tourism experience (Cohen 1985: 10).

Ap and Wong (2001: 557) find this split between pathfinding and mentoring lacking. To them, tour guiding is "more complex than the usually accepted and straightforward roles of being 'information giver', 'environmental interpreter', or 'cultural broker', as described by the literature". The pathfinder-mentor dichotomy is also questionable in light of the post-modern tourist experience, in which tour guides are expected "to bring something extra, something that the visitors cannot get through any other media" (McGrath 2003: 16). With this typological rethinking, research is expanding to look at additional roles fulfilled by tour guides. Cohen, Ifergan and Cohen (2002) explore the tour guide as an ethical and moral leader, or *Madrich*, in religious pilgrimages. Reed (2002) emphasizes the importance of storytelling as an essential skill for tour guides, for they are able to present the "personality" of both place and subject through the use of narratives. Salazar (2005: 642) focuses on guides as agents of "glocalization" and "the way they (re)present and actively (re)construct local culture for a diversified global audience".

Dahles (2002) argues that the traditional conceptualization of tour guides as cultural mediators does not capture the extent to which they function as political actors. By examining government control of place images presented by tour guides in Indonesia, where “decisions regarding the ‘true’ story or the ‘most appropriate’ interpretation are subject to relations of power and dependence”, she highlights how guides work to maintain cultural images supported by an authoritarian state and hence assist in the nationalistic scripting of place and history (Dahles 2002: 797). While Dahles’ work is important in pushing us to realize the larger politics of tour guiding, it emphasizes only the standardization and governmental control of guides as they engage in historical representation, and therefore fails to fully acknowledge their agency. In fact, training and certification do not ensure consistency, especially when the tour narrative falls outside of the certification process as it often does at plantation house museums. As Hanna et al. (2004) indicate, docents improvise as they recite a previously established tourist narrative, drawing from their own background and experiences. In these instances, guides function as “creative storytellers” who sometimes question and challenge popular discourses about people, places, and the past (Salazar 2006: 833). As Salazar (2006: 848) observes, tour guide narratives “are not closed or rigid systems, but rather open systems that are always put at risk by what happens in actual encounters [with tourists]”.

MacDonald (2006) does not support abandoning the mediator metaphor, but recognizes how the encoding of meaning through tour guiding is a negotiated and contested process. According to her, tour guides do exercise agency, positioning themselves in relation to the official narrative, the organization or industry for which they work, and the wider social and political context of tourism. This agency includes both

how they deal with the “social dynamics of the tour group” and also the “materiality of the [tourism] site”, controlling the “place and space of the tour itself” and actively managing the meanings that tourists read and interpret from sites (MacDonald 2006: 119–24). Hanna et al. (2004: 476) argue that tour guides are crucial in constructing historical narratives and directing “the tourists’ collective gaze at particular buildings and memorials”. Guides are also important in directing the collective gaze of tourists toward particular people from the past, thus shaping who – and not just what – is commemorated. Docents are active participants in a “reputational politics” in which the meaning and legacy of historical figures – rather than being fixed historical facts – are open to social control (Alderman 2002).

Bruner (2005) contends that tour guides are influential stakeholders in struggles to define and enact the historical and cultural meaning of people and places, even to the point that they may subvert the assertions of professional historians and compete with other stakeholders over historical narration. Handler and Gable (1997) consider the struggles of guides to incorporate the history of African-Americans into tours of colonial Williamsburg. They saw a tension between African-American docents and white docents, who, unlike their black counterparts, tend to avoid talking about the topic of miscegenation and the sexual exploitation of slaves by masters. This reluctance to discuss occurred even though there is no dispute among historians that such sexual relations happened among planter and slave and the public appeared to yearn to hear about these relations, according to Handler and Gable.

Remembering the past can be a highly politicized and racialized process (Hoelscher 2003; Regis 2001) in which docents are active participants. Through the

representational and performative activities of guides, museums and other heritage tourism sites work to remind the public that certain pasts should be remembered and by extension, certain pasts should be forgotten. Underlying the tensions between docents in Williamsburg was a conflict over facts, with white guides arguing that there is not enough archival documentation to discuss sensitive topics, such as miscegenation (Handler and Gable 1997: 84-93). This echoes what I have heard at many plantations when docents tell me that they would be willing to include more information about slavery during tours, if they only knew more about the lives of the slaves at that site. However, I also observed during field research that a lack of documentation does not keep guides on tour from engaging in historical conjecture about details of the planter-class family.

It is misguided to think of museums as simply sites designed to disseminate information and tour guiding as merely a recitation of facts. Katriel (1993: 70) characterizes heritage museums as “arenas for ideological assertion”. As performers of these ideologies, tour guides make claims to narrative and cultural authority over the past and its interpretation. Museums assert certain ways of thinking and knowing the past and reinforce particular community identities through ordering knowledge in ways that naturalize particular worldviews. Focusing merely on the presentation of knowledge by the museum misses how it naturalizes these worldviews (Anderson and Smith 2001). While docents certainly bring legitimacy to certain interpretations of history by choosing to narrate certain things and not others, they also exercise agency through the manner and style in which they talk about, perform, and represent the past. As Iles (2008) suggests, tourists, particularly those who visit places with highly charged memories of suffering,

want more than to sightsee. They desire “to identify and empathize” and it is the job of tour guides to “capture their clients’ emotional engagement with the area” in addition to providing them with “comprehensive accounts of the history” (Iles 2008: 151).

Remembering the past at historic museums is often an emotive, even affective, process because museums are spaces of emotion as well as information (Tyson 2008). Docents shape people’s moods and feelings about the past, directing tourists in deciding what and who from the past should receive emotional investment, which directly shapes how tourists think about and value certain historical events, people, and places. Issues of emotion are most obvious when museums and their guides engage with controversial subjects.

What should concern us are not only emotions at the historic site, but also the actions called for, and resulting from, the emotional journey through the site. Associated with emotion, I follow the understanding of affect proposed by geographer Nigel Thrift (2004: 60), who maintains that affect is more than emotion, without being separated from emotion, that is, “emotion in motion both literally and figuratively”. Affect could be considered as emotion packaged with action – actuated, and potential. I do not attempt to cleave emotion apart from its resulting actions, as such a division can unnecessarily distance a call for an emotive reaction and the expression of that reaction, and thus potentially open up a space for an oversimplification of the emotion-laden responses a person might have (Thrift 2004). For example, a sad story told by a docent might immediately elicit tears, but changing the listener’s mood for the day is also an affective response, as is changing – or possibly changing – the way the audience feels about the person of whom the tale is expressed.

In thinking about the power of stories told on tours to elicit feelings and affect, it is worth considering how the agency of tour guides lies in their ability to create historical empathy among tourists. While historical empathy is a concept identified with the pedagogical literature, the application to tourism appears appropriate given the stated educational mission of museums and other historic sites. A lively debate exists among history educators about the exact definition and nature of historical empathy (Brooks 2009). The term is defined, on one hand, in terms of people developing an historical understanding by taking on the perspectives of people from the past through a close non-emotional, non-sympathetic engagement with historical evidence (for example, Foster 1999). The emphasis here is on empathy merely as a cognitive act. On the other hand, other scholars argue for a conception of historical empathy that also includes an affective component, not mutually exclusive from the cognitive reconstruction of historical perspectives and experiences (Barton and Levstik 2004; Endacott 2010).

The development of historical empathy by docents can be done unevenly and potentially unfairly, hence the use of the term “affective inequality”. My interest in unevenly developed historical empathy focuses on the representational environment that tour guides create and how this environment, beyond what it may say about the past on a factual level, favors the affective portrayal of certain individuals and communities from the past over others. Guides at Southern plantation house museums tend to celebrate the planter lifestyle in emotionally evocative ways that aggrandize the reputation of the master over other people and themes. The presence of such affective inequality has the dangerous potential to reaffirm the marginality of those who were enslaved – reducing slaves to a lifeless historical detail of the plantation if they are mentioned at all. To

challenge this affective inequality in the representation of the enslaved persons requires understanding how such inequality is constructed and normalized within and through the geography of specific plantation sites. Space constitutes and shapes the meaning and politics of public memory (Dwyer and Alderman 2008). There is growing recognition of the emotional intersections between people and places, both within and outside the study of tourism (Davidson Smith and Bondi 2005). The rest of this chapter presents a case study that advances the understanding of how tour guides use the stories and spaces of the plantation to emotionally engage visitors in socially uneven ways.

A Tour through Destrehan: Ordering Space to Compel Historic Empathy

Destrehan Plantation is a former indigo and sugar plantation 25 miles west of downtown New Orleans, Louisiana, in St Charles Parish along the Mississippi River Road (Highway 48), a scenic route with several prominent 18th and 19th century antebellum plantations that host visitors. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Destrehan Plantation was established in 1787 and once covered 6000 acres. Private ownership of Destrehan ended in 1910 when it was bought by a series of industrial owners. In 1971, the River Road Historical Society, a not-for-profit organization, received the main plantation house as a donation (Cizek, Lawrence and Sexton 2008). At the time of writing this chapter, Destrehan was accessible to tourists daily for US\$18 per adult visitor.

Based on my fieldwork at more than 100 plantations across the South, Destrehan arguably presents more information about slavery than other plantation house museums (Modlin 2008). Indeed, site managers recently collaborated with the New Orleans African American Museum and Tulane University to commemorate the 1811 River Road

Slave Revolt. Although Destrehan's docents mention the enslaved more than guides at many museums I have toured, the primary focus remains the planter-class family who owned the site, the affective dimensions of their lives, and their connection to local, regional, and national history. Enslaved persons, while certainly a subject on the tour, tend to be dealt with through a mere recounting of facts.

For four years starting in 2008, I toured Destrehan Plantation on fifteen different occasions, accompanying tour groups that averaged six to ten people, although one group did number as many as 30 tourists. The tour groups I accompanied were overwhelmingly comprised of white tourists with women slightly outnumbering men. Most tourists arrived with others, usually family members. Each tour was approximately 50 minutes long and my observations are a summary of tours led by eight different docents – approximately half of the 15 guides who worked there over the study period. Tour guides at Destrehan Plantation do not appear to utilize a standard script, but they do receive ongoing training and many supplement tours with their own independent research. Guides presented tour narratives in their own words while maintaining a continuity of key points and themes collectively across tours, which suggest that there is an interpretive and performative fluidity in tours that could be used to portray the enslaved in more emotionally evocative terms. Yet, I did not find significant evidence of this at Destrehan.

On each tour, I conducted a non-intrusive form of participant observation in which I allowed my emotive gaze to be directed by the docent. Similar to Eichstedt and Small (2002), I did not ask questions about slavery, but sought to experience the tour as it would normally be presented. In terms of understanding how guides at Destrehan reproduce affective inequality and identification with the planter over the enslaved person, it is

important to understand that docents engage in evocative story telling. But stories alone do not necessarily create historical empathy among tourists. Tour guides ground their stories in the emotive meaning of certain rooms and certain artifacts found in those rooms. This material culture reminds visitors of the veracity of the docent's claims, thus becoming a tool in the politics of historical interpretation (Alderman and Campbell 2008).

The rooms within which Destrehan's docents tell these stories are more than simply background settings. Rooms, furnishings, and artifacts, by virtue of how they are represented, become characters in the story and serve important ideological functions on the tour. Effectively, antiques become implied witnesses of the events discussed because their existence and age implies that they were there and the details of the story are as said. Within some of these interpretive spaces tourists hear why the site and its past planter-class resident(s) are still important. In other spaces, visitors, particularly white, middle-class tourists, receive cues that they have things in common with the planter and his family. Some spaces within the plantation house, such as bedrooms, become especially poignant as docents provide tales of loneliness, uncertainty, and joy felt over courtship or childbirth, and experiences of loss through the death of loved ones, particularly spouses and children. These stops on the tour arguably compel tourists to empathize with planter-class family members by drawing upon tourists' own feelings, fears, and experiences.

In understanding more fully the affective practices of docents at Destrehan, it is important to recognize that tour stop locations and spatial order shape the interpretive and empathetic arc of docent narratives. A spatial narrative develops in which each storied room and artifact builds upon previous ones, building up to a crescendo of empathy for a

past resident and then refocusing the attention of tourists back to larger themes beyond the house before ending the tour. In light of the importance of these spatial narratives, I feel it is important to reconstruct the historical and spatial chronology of the tour itself.

Destrehan Plantation's docent-led tours start in the gift shop with a seven-minute video on the history of the plantation and the people who lived there. This video focuses on the planter-class family who lived in the Big House. After the video, a docent leads the tour group to the house and through it in a series of 18 interpretative stops.

The first three stops on the tour of Destrehan Plantation are exterior stops, which I categorize as "public" because of the visibility or accessibility of these places to antebellum visitors of the plantation. At the first stop, guides point out the live oaks at the site, including one named after Azby, the grandson of Jean Noel Destrehan, the featured owner of the plantation. The second stop, by the rear corner of the main house, is in front of two single-story, two-room slave cabins, relocated to the site from another plantation. The tour does not include the cabin interiors, although docents encourage tourists to return and examine the cabins after the tour. By failing to enter the slave cabins, we experience a sorely missed opportunity for docents to help tourists to empathize and connect with the lives of the enslaved.

A room in one cabin is an interpretive room reflecting what the interior of a slave cabin might have looked like. Until 2012, the other room in the same cabin displayed an artist's rendition of the 1811 River Road Slave Revolt.¹⁵ While the tour group is in front of the cabins, guides discuss Destrehan's plantation store, where slaves purchased their clothing and other items, in the words of some docents, "at little or no profit to Mr.

¹⁵ This display has since been relocated to an expanded exhibit on the 1811 River Road Slave Revolt in another building on the site.

Destrehan, because of his generosity”. At the third stop, the opposite rear corner of the house, docents point out the washhouse and the re-created kitchen. The guides inform tourists that antebellum kitchens were located away from the main house because of extreme heat, smells, and the frequency of kitchen fires, which risked burning down the house. Although slaves labored by operating the kitchen, the risks of cooking is largely represented in relation to the planter’s family and even these risks do not consider confrontation in the form of deliberate fires as a potential form of slave resistance.

Next, visitors enter the first of three rooms at Destrehan, which I define as verifying spaces. These spaces build symbolic capital for docents by verifying the importance or accuracy of stories shared about the property and the planter through the presentation of unique, even extraordinary, artifacts. In the fourth stop – the first of three verifying spaces – called the Jefferson Room, tourists see copies of treaties, portraits, and maps on the walls, which together with the tour guides’ dialogue, connect Jean Noel Destrehan to Louisianan, US, and international history (Figure 38). The focal point of the room is the 1804 Jefferson Document with its signatures of President Jefferson and then-Secretary of State James Madison. The Jefferson document is in a special, protective case. The document announced the appointment of Destrehan and three other prominent Louisianan men to handle matters related to the transition of Louisiana into the US.

The next three stops (five, six and seven) are in semi-private spaces – where certain people were allowed access under particular circumstances. For antebellum visitors, a degree of intimacy with the family was implied by access into these spaces. Occasional connections between family members and larger historical themes are made in these spaces, but they actually serve as places to shift emotive attention toward the

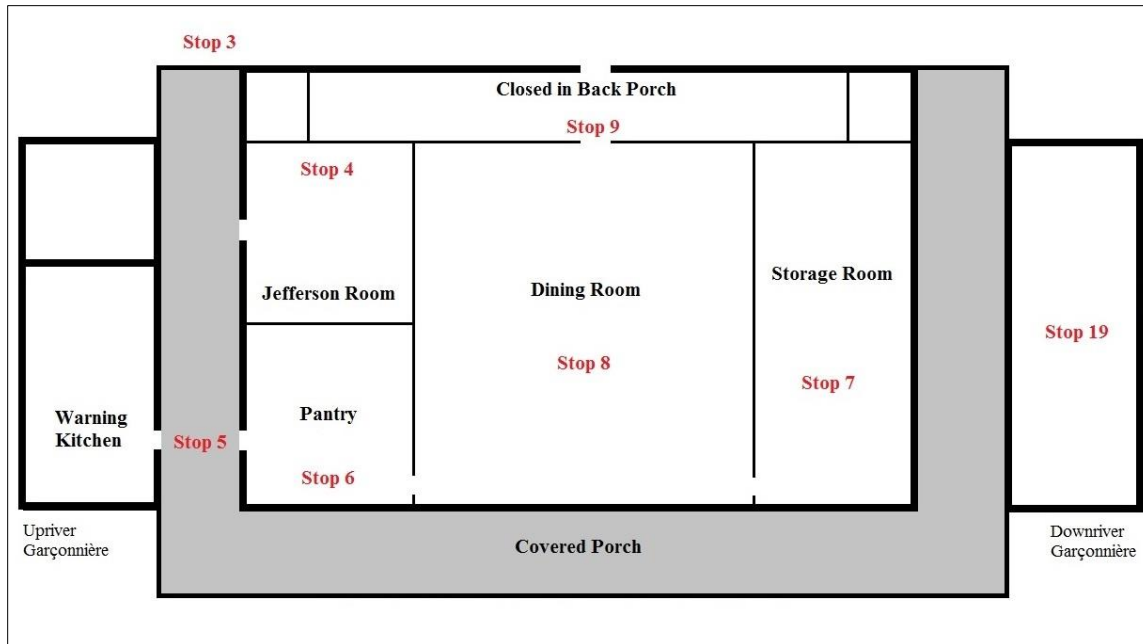


Figure 38. Line drawing by author of the lower floor of Destrehan Plantation

planter and individuals in his family who lived in the house and to help tourists identify with these people. Docents discuss architecture and possessions, particularly furniture, making the material culture of the house the focus of these spaces. The first of these, the fifth stop, the warming kitchen, located on the bottom floor of the upriver garçonnière, was used for preparing food that did not need to be cooked. Tour guides usually contrast this area with the main kitchen in the back yard.

Stop six is the pantry inside the main house. Here tourists see a mannequin representing an enslaved Creole named Marguerite. Each tour guide explains that Creole meant born in the New World from parents who were born in Europe or Africa. Two docents who each led one of my tours briefly suggested that Marguerite's husband was sold, thus separating the couple. A few guides say that some of her children lived through the Civil War and thus were freed. After this momentary connection to larger

themes of Creolization and slavery, guides often quickly shifted to talking about a plate warmer and a tea safe in the room, thus missing another opportunity for tourists to learn more about the enslaved individuals who lived and worked at Destrehan Plantation and invest emotionally in their lives. The plate warmer was used to warm up plates with food from the exterior kitchen before being served in the dining room. Museum staff often compared this item to today's microwave ovens. Dried blocks of tea – a luxury in the colonial and antebellum periods – are used to discuss how the packaging of tea has changed compared with what is found in tourists' kitchens. Docents use items like these to encourage tourists to make connections or comparisons with the planter-class family who owned these items. Through this discussion, tourists are subtly told that the planter class is similar to them – at least in some ways. Sadly, the story of Marguerite never really moves her representation beyond that of a mannequin. She has a place in the plantation, but not in the same animated and humanized ways as some of the members of the Destrehan family.

The seventh stop, the storage room, is not made by all tour guides. Docents who stop here explain the architectural features of the room, which kept goods cool. Three of the guides who led the tours that I was on reflected upon slavery in Southern Louisiana, stressing factors that made it unique compared with other parts of the US, particularly during the early 19th century. Having this moment to reflect on slavery is important, but is more of an intellectual reflection on the institution of slavery rather than an emotive reflection on slave life at Destrehan. Yet, it is commendable of tour guides who make these efforts to bring any meaningful discussion into the house.

Stops eight and nine – the dining room and the formal entry – are public spaces because docents interpret these spaces as places where formal guests were welcomed. In the dining room, tour guides tell tourists that the main meal of the day for the planter’s family and guests started about 2:00 pm and often lasted for two hours. Visitors handling business at Destrehan were invited to eat at the table. The guides explained that multiple tablecloths were used, which indicated the wealth of the owner and how many courses were being served. The final course, dessert, was eaten on the uncovered table to indicate the meal’s conclusion. Children were fed separately in the pantry. Women and teenage girls could not leave the table until the entire meal ended, though men could get up between courses. At the ninth stop, tourists learn about the renovation of the house in the 1830s, which enclosed the back porch, added two lavish interior staircases, and evidently inadvertently disrupted the flow of air through the main (second) floor of the house. In both of these spaces, tourists are explicitly directed by the tour guide to imagine themselves as antebellum visitors to Destrehan. Most docents use second-person reference, saying such things as, “If you visited, this would be the door you would come in”, while pointing to the door at the ninth stop. The issue with this empathy-producing exercise is that African-American visitors would not have entered the house at this location in the 1800s and docents never ask tour groups to imagine their access to this place in the house if they had been slaves or whether they would enter through this door, even if part of their job involved being in the house.

The second verifying space, the tenth stop (Figure 39), is an upstairs room with unfinished walls so tourists see what the house looks like under the plaster. Docents note indentions from the thumbs of enslaved workers who put mud filling between the posts in

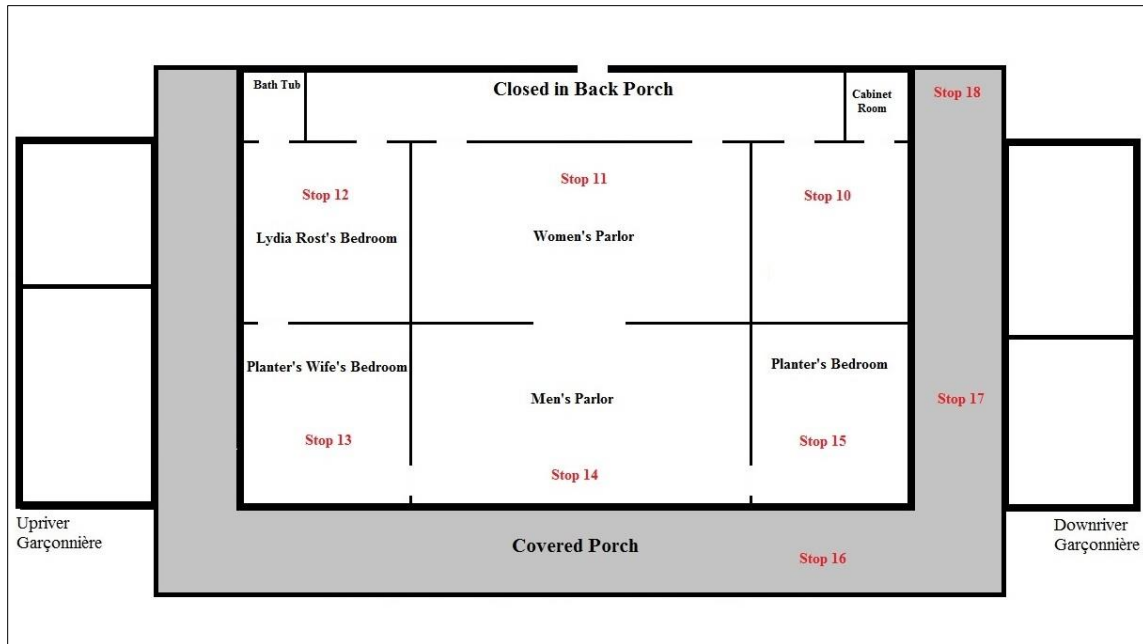


Figure 39. Line drawing by author of the main (second) floor of Destrehan Plantation

the walls – called bousillage-entre-poteaux (Edwards & de Verton, 2004: 32). A clear plastic-covered opening in the ceiling reveals carpentry details in the attic. Docents do acknowledge slaves through pointing out their labor, but this recognition is not the kind of engaged discussion that would help tourists identify in affective ways with those bondsmen who labored there. Rather, this room is used to reaffirm to tourists that those who historically lived in Louisiana were uniquely American – applying American ingenuity in a uniquely Louisianan way, the emphasis being on the architect rather than the laborer. Thus, it reinforces the remarks of the docents about the uniqueness of the Creole Destrehans, as well as the uniqueness of the expression of institutions, including slavery, at Destrehan Plantation. Off this room is a cabinet room, interpreted as a temporary office for the Freedman’s Bureau, of which little is usually said. This

represents a lost opportunity to connect visitors affectively to what freedom would have meant to the enslaved.

The women's parlor, the eleventh stop, is a semi-private space. Docents used semi-private rooms nearest the bedrooms to mention details about the family, using these spaces to transition toward private areas of the house. In this parlor, tourists see Eliza Destrehan's portrait on the wall. She outlived three husbands. Some guides note that in the portrait on the wall, Eliza wears three wedding bands to reflect her love for each of her deceased husbands. In this room, tourists are also shown a "courting" candlestick holder with an unlit candle. Tour guides point this candlestick holder out and inform the group that the father decided whom the daughter married. When men called to visit the daughter, the father lit the candle and adjusted the height of the candle in the holder to indicate how long a suitor could stay. The suitor was expected to leave once the candle reached the top of the candleholder's metal wire. Docents explain that the more candle above the wire when the candle was lit, the more favored the suitor was to the young woman's father.

The room for the twelfth stop is the first room on the tour that I categorize as private space. Viewing the bedroom as a private, intimate, often gendered, space emerged among the middle class, out of Victorian sensibilities (Gan 2009) – something that I did not know until doing research. In these spaces, guests hear tales of childbirth, sickness, loneliness and death as well as allusions to conjugal activity. In private spaces, docents encourage intimacy with the planter-class family. In my experience, tour guides rarely say anything about the enslaved in these spaces even though it is likely that slaves were in and out of these rooms serving the planter family. Stop twelve is the bedroom of Lydia

Rost, daughter of Louise and Pierre Rost and granddaughter of Jean Noel Destrehan. Framing Lydia as a daughter and granddaughter is an important detail for the parents and grandparents taking the tour. A portrait of 14-year-old Lydia is on the wall above the fireplace while her bed with a canopy and a mosquito net is in one corner. After discussing the bed, docents inform tourists that Lydia died three years after the painting was completed, which usually evokes an emotional response from visitors. For example, the first time I took the tour, I stepped to the back of the tour group because I became so teary-eyed seeing the empty bed, by the portrait and thinking of my daughter, Onyx, my son David and how difficult it must have been for Lydia's parents, Louise and Pierre. In 1853, Lydia and thousands of others died in the worst yellow fever outbreak to hit the area. Docents tell tourists that after Lydia's death, her father, Pierre, would not allow the priest to return to attend to her younger brother, Henri's spiritual needs. Evidently, the parents worried that seeing the priest would scare Henri as he was ill with yellow fever too. Henri died two weeks after his sister. In each of my fifteen tours through the house, this room was difficult for me, and as I looked around, I saw that many of the other tourists struggled too. After allowing some somber moments, docents turn their attention to a 1200-pound marble tub in a second cabinet off of Lydia's room, illustrating how artifacts are used to relieve as well as build up emotional drama on the tour.

Stop thirteen is interpreted as the planter's wife's bedroom. This room together with Lydia's bedroom served as the area for young children to sleep near their mother. According to docents, the planter (who slept in the room that is the fifteenth stop) made appointments to visit his wife's room for conjugal purposes. Guides mention that the bed in the wife's room was constructed by a local, free African-American furniture maker

though none of the tour guides mentioned his name. However, docent narratives quickly turn to involved explanations of how making the bed was done first thing in the morning because women were viewed as lazy if they returned to the bed later in the day, unless they were very sick.

The fourteenth stop is the men's parlor, a semi-private space. This room is also a site where docents mention black workmanship but in a rather limited, factual way. Guides point to a desk built by a slave at Destrehan and note that the desk was built by an enslaved man who they never named on the tours that I took. Most of the docent's empathy-producing narrative in this room revolves around the social function of parlors. After formal dinners, men and women moved to their respective parlors – spaces divided by pocket doors that, once retracted, turn the two rooms into one. Once opened, this larger room is, at least theoretically, open to both men and women, though the only example given of this occurring are the aforementioned visits by prospective sons-in-law who visited the daughter in the women's parlor while under the watchful eyes of the father sitting in the men's parlor. Many visitors relate to the struggles of dating under prying eyes of parents. Thus the parlor narrative becomes an empathy-producing moment on the tour.

Stop fifteen is in the planter's bedroom, a private space. In this room, docents share the story of Azby Destrehan. His father, Nicholas, was afraid Azby would contract yellow fever in Louisiana and die so he sent Azby to school out of state, forbidding him from returning to Louisiana until he was 21 years old. Sadly, Azby died from smallpox in Europe while his wife was pregnant with their only child, a daughter. The interpretative value of this room and other private spaces cannot be underplayed in terms of creating a

powerfully evocative image of the planter and his family. The degree to which docents cover so many intimate details about the living spaces of the master stands in stark contrast to the lack of attention to the details of life for those who lived in the slave cabins received earlier in the tour.

The final three stops are public spaces, visible to antebellum visitors. These stops, all on the upper porch, are outside the planter's bedroom (sixteen), downriver garçonnière (seventeen) and overlooking the backyard (eighteen). Docents use these exterior areas, in their spatial narrative, to move the visitor away from the detailed, compelling personal histories of the planter family and discuss the larger context of Destrehan, acknowledging the many buildings no longer present on the plantation, the importance of the Mississippi River as an antebellum transportation route, and reminding visitors of the demonstrations going on that day behind the main house. A rotating set of free demonstrations, including hearth cooking, African medicinal plants, and bousillage-entre-poteaux, are held six days a week. These demonstrations potentially help tourists identify with slaves by examining aspects of enslaved life and labor, but participation in them is up to the visitors after the tour and not docent-initiated. Additionally, for groups that are visiting as part of a bus adventure, these demonstrations might be missed because the tour bus driver often pressures tourists to get back on the bus quickly to go to the next part of their adventure. In effect, these demonstrations – like the slave cabins – are not part of the spatial narratives created by guides, which works to reproduce an affective inequality at Destrehan while also tending to segregate the discussion of slavery from the main house.

Conclusion

Many plantation house museums fail to acknowledge that historically, the Southern plantation was an economic enterprise with the control and exploitation of slaves at its heart. Nevertheless, a growing number of plantation museums, including Destrehan Plantation, recognize their responsibility to discuss slavery. As stated in the first chapter, my discussions with docents at Destrehan indicate that some have done research about slavery beyond their initial training and they genuinely wish to give accurate, factual information on their tours. In doing so, these guides take an important step toward coming to terms with and publicly remembering the enslaved.

However, tours through plantation house museums are more than mere factual adventures; these journeys are emotional, indeed, affective. The process of remembering means coming to terms with more than facts. Inequality can exist on tours even at sites that are very committed to more fully mentioning and addressing the historical facts of slavery. This inequality is not just about whether docents talk about the planter-class people more than the enslaved people, but also the unevenness in how tourists are encouraged to connect with individuals of these historical groups emotionally. The stakes of this inequality are high. Tourists are encouraged by guides to empathize with planter's family members who lived in the 'Big House', which communicates clear ideas about whose lives really mattered at plantations. The planter and his family made up only a small part of the population that lived on the plantation. While their lives might have been difficult, the focus placed on the extreme moments of their lives further marginalizes the everyday lived moments of enslaved individuals. In the end, the constant, poignant struggles of slaves are lost. Forgotten is the tremendous daily burden

of living under a violent system, weighted down with thoughts that subjection to this coercive system was an inheritance parents passed to their children. Stories such as Louise and Pierre Rost's loss of their children to yellow fever are presented absent of stories of the same loss by some enslaved parents living on the same plantation. Some of these parents experienced equally difficult-to-imagine deaths of their children too – and we can be assured that many slave children were among the thousands of Louisianans who died from yellow fever in the 19th century. Forgotten too are the thousands of “social deaths” of slavery (Patterson 1985). The exercise of power by slaveholders over enslaved individuals, such as selling someone and forcing them to live elsewhere, effectively killed – socially – the enslaved. Just the possibility of such a separation made each potentially joyful birth of a baby an ambivalent moment for slave parents. Despite the very real dangers ever-present for any newborn, this potentiality had no equal among planter-class families.

Moving beyond a focus on mere fact when we consider slavery opens up new possibilities for these museums. In concluding their article, Buzinde and Santos (2009: 456) mention that researchers of plantation house museums should consider how these sites can potentially present “healing and holistic messages”. This requires representing the plantation house as more than just a site of ownership, which tends to be white-centric. The plantation was also a lived space from which enslaved women, children and men drew identity and life even if they did not own it. Such a perspective necessitates a fuller, more empathetic presentation of the stories and spaces associated with bondspeople of the slave community. The importance of space cannot be overlooked since the narrative meanings attached to places and the order in which they are toured

shape the tourist experience and the ability to create affective connections with people from the past.

As we consider how to combat the affective inequality taking place at Southern plantation house museums, future work might focus on historic sites with tour guides that have been successful in helping tourists identify and empathize with the enslaved. Studying the representational strategies and spatial–historical narratives that these guides employ could be instructive for site managers and docents at other plantations. A noteworthy example of such a guide is Kitty Wilson-Evans, a former slave interpreter and storyteller at Historic Brattonsville in McConnells, South Carolina. She retired in 2010 after 16 years of service, much of it as a volunteer. Wilson-Evans was widely acknowledged for her powerful portrayals of the struggles and contributions of the enslaved through her re-enactment of an 18th century slave named Kessie, to the point of bringing some visitors to tears (Bates 2005; Barry 2005). Creating such highly charged emotions is not simply about creating better entertainment for tourists, but taking them to an affective place where the struggles of slaves can be more fully realized and understood. As Ira Berlin (2004) argues, remembering slavery in emotive ways is necessary to achieving social justice not only for African-Americans in the past, but also in the present.

The performative activities at Brattonsville should also prompt us to consider another aspect of the affective impact of plantation tours – the issue of gender. Finding women docents leading plantation tours is rather common, although finding an African-American female docent such as Wilson-Evans is unusual, which undoubtedly contributes to the emotive gravity she brings to the story of the enslaved. As Taft (2010)

finds, the representation of race and gender at plantation museums can take on complex forms that give voice to certain men while marginalizing women in addition to African-Americans. Gender is an important variable in shaping how docents present information about the plantation and the tactics they use to create affective empathy. Of the seven docents who guided my tours of Destrehan, all were white, and all were female except one. I saw clear evidence of a gendering of certain rooms of the plantation in terms of what stories and artifacts docents used to help visitors identify with the planter family. The identity of tourists is perhaps also a key factor in shaping the historic portrayals communicated to them by guides. As Eichstedt and Small (2002: 20) observe in their major study of Southern plantation house museums, tour guides generally work from an assumption that white female visitors would be interested in decorative arts produced by white women, while white male visitors would be interested in the maps and firearms used by the planter. The gendered and racialized assumptions, which perhaps reflect the proclivities of the guide as much as they do the visitor, represent a significant barrier to telling a more emotionally compelling story about slavery and the enslaved. In reality, some white tourists have shown interest “in the slave experience as compared to hearing about other, more established plantation narratives” (Butler, Carter and Dwyer 2008: 296). Nevertheless, future work on the affective dimensions of Southern plantation house museum tours needs to take on the task of measuring visitor responses and emotive bonds, thus providing more specific empirical evidence about the degree and nature of historical empathy created by docents.

CHAPTER FIVE: VOICING THE PAST AS TOURISTS

As a social memory process, remembering the past in plantation house museums involves both museum staff members and the touring public. Over the latter couple of decades, the role of museums and museum staff members has received extensive attention often centering on aspects of shortcomings of their representations of slavery. The focus on museum staff in this process is appropriate due to the authority they often have over shaping and maintaining how we, as a nation, remember our past. However, researchers' foci on docents risk implying a totalizing power that docents do not have over the memory process in the space of the house. Tourists lack detail consideration. Effectively, works like my own (Modlin 2008; Alderman and Modlin 2008) place the complete burden of unbiasedly remembering the past upon the shoulders of docents, while treating tourists as unquestioning, passive recipients in the process – a group who the tour happens to and memory happens upon. Recognizing the ways tourists shape how slavery is remembered opens up the possibility of understanding how we remember slavery in the past and connect ourselves to it, but it also helps expose potential ways to develop more complete, fairer, representational and embodied practices for remembering slavery. This chapter serves as a turning point in this dissertation – towards a consideration of how tourists actively remember slavery in plantation museums, by first considering the audible roles tourists have in remembering slavery in plantation museums.

Touring a museum is a choice and many tourists who choose to tour these sites do so in very active and engaging ways. Even quiet tourists listen to the things said by others and read signs with information that they connect to what they already know and believe about history. Indeed, many tourists arrive at a museum with views of history

that they actively carry onto the tour. The things that they see and hear might challenge and encourage them to adjust these viewpoints or reaffirm the ideas they already have. Often, they do not adopt new views or keep old ones quietly. Tourists talk while taking tours and talk even more about what they remembered or learned afterwards. While touring a museum, they ask questions and make comments. Part of what they bring into the museum includes certain ways of seeing the past and understanding how it should be represented. When they hear things that they agree with, they may make expressions that not only indicate agreement but can also serve as further evidence for understanding the past in the way presented. For example, when some people hear a tour guide say that a certain item was used in a particular way, they may make comments – out loud – that their parents or grandparents used the device in just the way described. When a visitor disagrees or does not understand a specific point that a docent expresses about the past, a member of the group may present an alternative statement about the past or ask a question that prompts for a different explanation. Alternately, that statement or question might just indicate a desire for more information so as to better understand the details just presented. Thus, tourists do not just accept the things docents say like dry sponges absorbing information, but test or fix the ideas that they do not understand. If they remember these things, it could be in part due to the degree of struggle with the information.

In this chapter, I will consider some of the ways which tourists' verbal expressions influence how the past is remembered by tour groups at plantation house museums. First, I will consider some of the key points in the published literature about verbal expression within plantation museums. Then I will consider four categorical types

of tourists' verbal expressions during the tours and some of the possible changes to the tour that such expressions can have. Finally, I will compare the verbal expressions tourists make with the things they tell researchers afterwards.

Verbal Communication and Plantation House Museums

At present, a sizeable portion of the literature about plantation museum tours relates to aspects of the auditory experience. Most of this research emphasizes the things said by museum staff, giving substantially less attention to the role of tourists. Part of the reason for this is due to the nature of how we concentrate on representation when critiquing these museum sites. Published research considering representation and particularly the incomplete ways that slavery is represented – including my published research – risks treating tourists as silent, passive actors and the material culture as little more than prompts for discussion. We have stressed the role of the words of docents because of the power they have over the framing of the past and because of the egregiousness of the shortcomings of the representations of slavery made by docents at some sites.

Therefore stress on verbal expressions by museum staff is important. Jennifer Eichstedt's and Stephen Small's book *Representations of Slavery: Race and Ideology in Southern Plantation Museums*, inspired a number of researchers to consider the ways that slavery is ignored and misrepresented through the things said and not said by docents while talking about the past in historic spaces. Eichstedt and Small (2002) considered multiple ways that slavery was misrepresented, minimized, segregated and even annihilated at plantation house museum sites. They considered the use of signage and the areas of these sites that were and were not part of tours. Yet, much of what they

discussed related to the things docents said and did not say about slavery. The categorical ways that Eichstedt and Small used were largely defined through vocal expressions by docents. For example, Eichstedt and Small (2002: 108) define “symbolic annihilation” as the practice of mentioning slavery three or fewer times. Other categories of strategies that Eichstedt and Small noted, such as trivialization and deflection, are also based on the things said by docents while leading tours.

As noted above, among the aspects of the stewardship of the past that staff and volunteers at historic sites accept by working at these sites includes the responsibility to be accurately inclusive when representing our past. Close attention to what these individuals said was important a decade ago, and still is critical today if we ever hope to have more inclusive representations of the past in plantation house museums. Though plantations were intimately connected with slavery, staff members at too many plantation house museums still frequently represent colonial and antebellum plantations with little or no real information about the enslaved people who lived and worked there in both marketing materials (Butler 2001; 2002; Alderman and Modlin 2008) and through docent-led tours (Modlin 2008). Docents at plantation museums across the South are still very likely to present deficient and even inaccurate information about the enslaved people who provided plantation labor. While there are some indications of improvement, many plantation house museums have a long way to go and such continued focus on museum staff narratives has an ongoing place in research at plantation house museums because it is a part of a reinforced loop of racial representations of the South (Alderman and Modlin 2013).

However, we risk overlooking the multiple roles that tourists have in remembering the past at these sites too by concentrating so intently on museum staff members' roles. Our consideration of docents runs the potential of implying that tourists are a group of people that tours happen to or upon. As noted in the last chapter, the material seen in the house and the things said by docents during tours often do direct tourists' memories. For some tourists, the things said and the expressions made by docents serve as conversational cues – visual and audible reminders of certain aspects of the past that tourists often connect to themselves. Often tourists, while touring these sites, draw comparisons with what they see in the museum with items passed down through their own families, linking themselves to the planter-class family who once owned the plantation that they tour. Additionally, the words said about historic items and the memories they initiate serve as touchstones for some individuals to transport themselves back to an imagined past where life was simpler – something connected to touch that I will consider in greater detail in chapter seven. It would be easy to conclude that this is the reason that most tourists visit such places – creating imagined worlds where the daydreamer becomes a fancifully-dressed visitor sitting on the porch with one's family and friends sipping mint juleps delivered by happy servants. While not buying into such flat stereotypes, to date, few researchers have participated in a sustained discussion in the published literature of the role of tourists in remembering trauma at tourism plantation sites.

However, I do not want to imply that research about plantation house museums ignores the tourists. To the contrary, quite a bit of the literature reveals an interest in what tourists remember from docent-led tours of plantation house museums and even

how they feel about the things that they heard. Much of the research that does consider tourists in remembering the past is based on interviews and surveys conducted just after the end of plantation house museum tours (Butler, Carter and Dwyer 2008; Buzinde and Santos 2009; Alderman and Bowling 2013). Such interviews provide important information about what tourists think about slavery and how it should be represented during house tours.

Exit surveys and exit interviews are the most common ways to collect data on tourists' connections to memory processes at plantation house museums. In April 2002, over thirteen days, David Butler and students from the University of Southern Mississippi surveyed 1366 tourists after they toured Laura Plantation (Butler 2002). Christine Buzinde and Carla Santos' (2009) work was based on twenty-seven onsite exit interviews. More recently, Ruth Bowling and Derek Alderman's work was based on exit interviews and exit surveys conducted by geographers and students at four River Road sites in October 2012 and March 2013.¹⁶ Each of these research projects proved to be very productive, providing insight into the reactions and memories tourists have of plantation house tours and remind us that tourists are not a monolithic group (Butler, Carter, Dwyer 2008; Buzinde and Santos 2009).

Through interviews of tourists at Hampton Plantation in McClellanville, South Carolina, Christine Buzinde and Carla Santos (2009) noted that tourists are active participants who decode the plantation, making meaning of what they heard and saw themselves. Buzinde and Santos observed broadly two interpretive communities. One

¹⁶ David Butler spearheaded this research project. In addition to David Butler, Derek Alderman, Perry Carter, Amy Potter, Steve Hanna and I, graduate students from the University of Southern Mississippi, East Carolina University, the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, and undergraduate students from Norfolk State University and Louisiana State University helped to conduct exit surveys and exit interviews.

community largely accepted the “dominant hegemonic position” that the house was important because it was historic and that there was an altruistic relationship between enslavers and enslaved (Buzinde and Santos 2009: 447). In their research, tourists who took an oppositional stance connected the plantation to racial issues and saw the site as a place where slavery should be considered “a lesson for humanity” (Buzinde and Santos 2009: 450-3).

In a 2013 talk at the Southeastern Division of the Association of American Geographers in Roanoke, Virginia, Ruth Bowling and Derek Alderman noted that there are multiple “oppositional interpretive communities” touring plantation house museums. Drawing on Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 exit interviews at four plantation house museums along the River Road in Louisiana, Bowling and Alderman noted four distinct interpretive communities: 1) the community whose members do not want to hear about slavery, 2) the community whose members do not feel strongly about a deeper slave narrative at the plantation, 3) the community whose members want to hear more about slavery, and 4) the community whose members not only want to hear more about slavery at the plantation, but also want to discuss race on the tour. Buzinde and Santos (2009) and Bowling and Alderman (2013) demonstrate the potential tourists have to reshape plantation tours as these interpretive communities, particularly the oppositional interpretive communities, vocalize their views of the plantation house museum tour. As these tourists share their views publicly, the managers of these houses pay attention.

Managers and docents also pay attention to what is said by tourists on tours. My observations and informal interviews with docents at sites over the years indicated that docents pay close attention to the things that tourists say. Part of this is so they can

respond, as they seem appropriate, to the comments and questions of tourists, but they also often pay close attention as a way to critique their own work. If a docent gets a number of questions about something, they may reflect on whether that subject needs to be considered in greater detail on future tours or whether they are being clear enough with the things that they are already saying. Managers on the other hand, tend to be interested in what tourists say for reasons as diverse as indications that a docent might need more training to the need to make changes in marketing matters, as the things that tourists say onsite indicate the likelihood that tourists might say positive or negative things to potential tourists in the future. Indeed, access for some of the recent research using exit interviews and exit surveys is partially possible because plantation house owners and managers at many sites want to know what tourists say after touring their sites. This is particularly true of the recent River Road plantation museum research that David Butler led in October 2012 and March 2013.

Such exit surveys and exit interviews reveal insight to things said on tours, but interviewers are getting the events of the tour in selectively remembered ways. What researchers get from tourists is a remembered version of what happen. All memories are selective and therefore incomplete. Tourists memories are not lesser, but they might not include details about aspects of the tour that help researchers understand how various members of the groups participate together to remember the past. Partly this is due to the fact that tourists forget certain things that were said or done by themselves or others. Even if they remember something, the individual being interviewed might not think to mention it. The best way to see what tourists are saying and doing on tours of plantation houses is to join them on such tours (Compare Bowen 2008).

Methodologically, this was not as simple as I initially thought it might be. First, I deliberately chose not to record docent-led tours. Besides the potential ethical issues of recording people without their knowledge, even in a seemingly public place such as a museum, many sites have stated policy against recording video or taking pictures within the plantation house museum. In most places, such prohibitions would be extended to audio recording. However, the method that I preferred also presented issues. With the permission of the plantation houses at Destrehan Plantation and Hope Plantation, I joined tours and took notes. Two issues came up with this method. First, I am a slow writer and consequently I risked missing much of the tour because I was looking down to write notes. Second, even while trying not to be too overt with my note taking, some tourists spent as much time observing me as I was observing them. Each glance at me with my pen and notepad from a tourist made me wonder if I was changing the experience of touring the house for the tourists. Occasionally, a tourist would ask what I was doing, to which I would simply reply, "I am taking notes about the house tour." Such questions cued me to the possibility that my note taking might be changing the tour. So, I started leaving my notepad in my pocket more often and focusing on certain things about the tour. I would still write down occasional, quick notes if I was at the back of the tour group as we moved out of a room. I wrote more detailed notes after each tour. The first thing about tourists that I concentrated on was the vocal expressions that they made. Over a few weeks it became apparent that most of the things that came out of tourists' mouths could be categorized in four ways.

The Four Categories of Tourists' Questions and Comments

The questions and comments that tourists make as they tour a plantation house museum are important at two social levels. First, these utterances indicate to the docent leading a tour how the tour is going and the information for which tourists are looking. Docents will often adjust what they typically say based on tourists comments and questions. These vocal expressions can indicate everything from beliefs about the past that tourists bring into the house to simple misunderstandings about artifacts in the house. Secondly, the questions and comments tourists make could indicate attempts to challenge and even to remake memory within these spaces.

While docents lead tour groups through the museum, directing tourists' attention toward certain items and connected themes, they rarely control the story completely. Tourists' questions, comments and actions affect how a tour unfolds on a docent-led plantation house museum (Salazar 2006). The questions, comments and actions of tourists indicate to docents the interests and concerns of the tourists as well as how effectively the docent's narrative connects with the tourists. Indeed, while most docents try to maintain a degree of control over the narrative of the tour, few docents want to lead a silent group through the house (Compare Dahles 2002; MacDonald 2006). Commonly, docents will ask if there are any questions at certain points through tours, most notably right before leaving a room in the house or other distinct areas such as outdoor spaces at those plantation house museums that include spaces on the tour outside of the house.

Focusing on questions and comments by tourists, it becomes clear that not all tourists' verbal expressions are equal in intent. Questions and vocal remarks by tourists fall in to four categories: 1) genuine inquiries for new knowledge, 2) expressions which

indicate that a tourist considers herself or himself as an expert on a subject, 3) requests for reaffirmations of previous knowledge, and 4) vocal indications of astonishment.

While there are some areas of overlap of these categories, most questions and comments from tourists tend to fall more distinctly into one category or another.

Tourists' questions that express genuine inquiry for new knowledge seek information in a way which does not indicate a docent-testing agenda behind the question being asked. Questions like "How long did it take to build the Hope mansion?", "How many slaves did Jean Noel Destrehan own?" and "When did restoration of the house begin?" fall into this category because tourists asking these questions expect direct answers that satisfy a passing inquisitive moment. While these questions might not be asked with the intention of testing the docent's knowledge or to push the docent to talk more about a particular theme, these questions indicate to the tour guide interests in certain topics. Hence, these questions often lead to subtle changes in the tour.

For example, a tourist may ask, "Did the planter's wife sew?" The docent usually responded affirmatively to the question and gave an example such as highlighting and discussing other things that are similar to what the planter's wife might have sewed – i.e. a quilt on a bed or other handcrafted items. Indeed, many docents will react by spending more time on handmade crafts throughout the rest of the tour – pointing out things such as the "sampler" on a bedroom wall sewed by one of the young daughters. These explanations include specific details such as noting that the sampler's creator sewed a deliberate mistake to indicate humility. Though the tourist asking the question did not necessarily mean to change the tour, their question changed, at least in a minor way, parts of the tour because of the docent's responses.

Some questions and statements from tourists have another purpose. Some tourists make statements that show that they know a lot about certain subjects related to the plantation past or objects in the plantation house. While few tourists who use this category of expression do so with the intent of “showing up” the docent, certain statements and questions serve as a notice that a tourist is very knowledgeable about a certain topic. For example, on one tour I followed at Hope in July 2009, a white, middle-aged, male tourist made a comment on the size of the wood beams used to support the first floor. Once the group entered the area setup to demonstrate some antique woodworking tools, the same gentleman revealed that he was a carpenter and that he enjoyed using antique tools very similar to those on display. The docent leading the tour spent additional time at that stop of the tour discussing the volunteer who set up the display with the group in general, and specifically, the tourist who was a carpenter. Additionally, the docent gave the tour group details of the volunteer’s work that could be seen elsewhere. What makes this different from the previous example was how the tourist set himself out as an expert – he told the group that he was a carpenter. While this incident happened near the end of the tour and there were no more openings to use what she had learned about the tourist to make individual connection with the museum, the docent encouraged the tourist who was a carpenter to say a few things about antique tools.

At times connected to the two previous categories, but still unique is the third category of expression by tourists – requests for reaffirmations of previous knowledge. Many tourists who tour Hope or Destrehan toured other plantation museums and history sites previous to their then-present visit. Some of these tourists seemed to be testing their

own memory and knowledge as indicated by the questions they ask and statements they make. Questions that begin with “Is it true...” or “Didn’t...” or that end with the word “right” expressed inquisitively, fall into this category. For example, the question “Didn’t guests stay for a long time?” occasionally asked in rooms at Hope Plantation interpreted as a guest bedroom on the second floor indicates that the tourist asking the question visited another site where that was said (Figure 40). While the visitor might be trying to say that they are familiar with the theme, they also are seeking reassurance that they remembered information heard elsewhere correctly. After addressing tourists’ questions, docents react to these questions in two ways. First, across the rest of the tour they will make other connections with similar sites, which reassure tourists that the docent is an authority on these matters. Secondly, docents will usually stress details that make their plantation museum unique. When tourists indicate that they have toured other similar sites, some docents at Hope Plantation show a unique ladder that folds into a pole and ask the group, “Have you seen this anywhere else?” (See Figures 41 and 42).

The final category of expression on tour – vocal indications of astonishment – includes the comments that reflect astonishment such as “Oh!”, “Wow!”, “Really?” At Hope Plantation, a few tourists expressed surprise through the use of these expressions when they learned that Hannah Stone, the planter’s wife, gave birth to eleven children, ten of whom were daughters. Expressions of astonishment usually encourage the docent to expound on the topic. After hearing tourists express surprise about the number of children Hannah gave birth to and that one was a son, a couple of the docents at Hope Plantation go on to translate how many years of her life, Hannah was pregnant. Other docents go so far as to say that “this would have caused Hannah to have been bedridden



Figure 40. Bed in a room interpreted as a guest bedroom at Hope Plantation.



Figure 41. Pole ladder opened and leaning against bookshelf. Hope Plantation.



Figure 42. Pole ladder closed and leaning against bookshelf. Hope Plantation.

during a large part of her adult life.” Most docents at Hope Plantation go on to explain that because of how young some of the daughters were when they died and because many of her live births were spread out, only a few children would have been in the girls’ bedroom at a given time.

Vocally Working Out Memory

As noted above, docents listen to and carefully observe the tourists in their tour groups. Tourists’ questions and comments give the docent clues about what to mention, what to discuss in greater detail, and even what to ignore. At many sites, especially when a tour group is small, the tour is a discussion through the house and not a single narrative. Docents lead the discussion through the house. In many cases, one or more tourists contribute to the process of remembering the past in these historic sites. Occasionally, a tourist might take such an outsized role by talking that others – the docent or fellow tourists – might actually feel upset at how much that person says during the tour.¹⁷

More democratic on some tours, more restrictive on others, the social practices of participating in the vocalization of memory during a tour can be messy. The working out of memory in this way creates unique and ephemeral moments of memory, that though they have a potential to endure, often do not, because they satisfy momentary needs and do not stand out as memorable much later. Indeed, the actions of other members of a group, including the docent, might well expedite the memory’s journey to forgotten. Yet, each of these ephemeral moments have the potential to be more meaningful, and indeed reveal additional potential influence by tourists. The possibility of these interactions is partially why many plantation house museums do not have fixed scripts – and why some

¹⁷ For example, during my M.A. research, I found myself getting upset at a tourist over how much he questioned a docent about clocks in a house museum at Tryon Place in 2007.

of those that do have scripts also have awkward moments on the tour when tourists ask questions for which the docent does not have a scripted answer.

Tourists Contribute to the Memory of Slavery While on the Plantation Tour

Once I recognized the power tourists have on the tour, the question for research naturally became, “Do tourists have a meaningful contribution to the memory of slavery, while they are on the plantation house tour?” I found the answer to this question to be complicated and partially disappointing.

Before fully recognizing how tourists’ questions influenced the tours at plantation house museums like Hope and Destrehan, I performed a pilot study at Hope Plantation interviewing a few groups of tourists both before and after taking the tour of the Hope mansion and asking them questions about what they expected to hear on the tour, what they remember from the tour narrative, and what they wished that they had heard more about. About a third of tourists that I interviewed at Hope Plantation in 2009 expressed in the exit interviews that they wanted to hear more about the enslaved. Later, I recognized that it was necessary to repeatedly go through the tour with different groups of tourists and see if they were asking about slavery, because I had not observed many tourists asking about slavery during my previous research. Indeed, in previous field work where I toured multiple sites, in 2007, only a few tour groups – less than 10 percent – had someone who asked a question about slavery or the enslaved during the docent-led tour. This percentage seems to have grown slightly in recent years – at least as indicated by my fieldwork. Yet, largely, tourists also forget the enslaved in these places. While tourists could ask about enslaved workers or even, in some cases, make outright statements about slavery, they do not. At least some of tourists do not ask because they are distracted by

other things. One of these powerful distractions is the actual emotional journey that they are taking through the “Big House”, which was considered in the previous chapter. Even the ability to touch material culture can distract, which I will consider in chapter seven. Yet, I also have to admit that I do not think that the quantitative data exists at this time to indicate subtle changes over the last few years. Anecdotally, it seemed that on only a few more tours that I was a part of for this research project did someone asked about slavery, as compared to 2007 and 2008, but this could be because this was my focus with this research project. This is one of the areas I think needs additional research.

However, those tourists who do ask questions are influencing how slavery is represented at some sites. Because of this, some plantation museums have taken steps in recent years that may encourage tourists to ask about enslaved workers at the plantation and make comments about slavery. Recent changes at Hope Plantation, Destrehan Plantation and Oak Alley are influencing how slavery is remembered at those sites. Each of these sites now includes more information on slavery in their tours than they did a few years ago. Hope now includes a space inside of the mansion that represents what a slave quarter might have looked like as indicated in chapter two (Figure 21). Additionally, the curator Gregory Tyler strongly encourages tour guides at Hope Plantation to discuss the spatial nature of slavery within the mansion. Responding to changes Ms. Tyler has made, some docents discuss how slaves would have used the service stairs to move through the house noting that the mansion had locks on exterior doors as well as interior doors that could be used to seal off the portions of the house that the slaves had the least access to if there were a slave revolt. These changes in the docent-led tour seem to allow tourists to feel more comfortable with asking questions about the enslaved.

Changes with Destrehan Plantation's docent-led tour occurred after I finished the main portion of my research there. These changes, which I noticed on a couple of tours that I took in 2011 and 2012, were significant too. Working with the New Orleans African American History Museum and Tulane University (Bacon-Blood 2011), Destrehan docents now present information about the 1811 River Road Slave Revolt, an uprising participated in by some of the enslaved people at Destrehan Plantation (Rasmussen 2012). Curators added much more information about the 1811 slave revolt in one of the buildings located behind the kitchen. While docents still present the extra information about the slave revolt in qualitatively different ways than they do information about the planter class family (See Chapter Four), the newly added talking points about the slave revolt serve to maintain the topic of slavery in the conversation a little longer, encouraging tourists to ask questions and discuss slavery more than they might otherwise have.

More recently, management at Oak Alley built slave quarters on the museum's property. The six cabins will have a separate tour one day a week on the weekend (See Figure 43). While it is unsatisfactory that these recreated slave cabins are segregated from the main plantation house tour, their existence between the mansion and the gift shop is noticeable for tourists. Maybe this material reminder of slavery and the enslaved people who once lived and worked at Oak Alley will prompt tourists to ask questions on the tour of the plantation house, but only additional research will reveal if this is so.

Words Matter

Inside and outside of the plantation house museum, visitors contribute significantly to the process of remembering in history museums like tourism plantation



Figure 43. One of the recently built recreated slave cabins at Oak Alley Plantation.

houses. We need to consider plantation house museums as more than just representational sites with docents presenting a version of the past that is accepted by a rarely-questioning, homogenous body of tourists. These sites are conversation sites where both docents and tourists shape the tour. The work of remembering as a group, literally working out collective memory, is a social process. Each tour through the same plantation house museum unfolds differently yielding a unique, even ephemeral memory of the plantation and those who lived and worked there historically. While some tourists might visit the plantation house for escapist intent, to imagine an existence in the past, most tourists seem to only do this momentarily, if at all. Statements by tourists indicate the connections visitors make with the people and material culture of the house, or the

surprise they may feel upon hearing certain facts. Yet, the connections seem to go beyond escaping to the past and often reflect a strong desire by many participants not only to get history right, but to understand it (Mason and Christie 2003; MacDonald 2006). At times, the questions tourists ask acknowledge difficult and traumatic pasts. Tourists complicate the memory narrative, making it a discussion by asking questions and making comments. Some expressions indicate astonishment at what is said by the docent. Some questions are motivated by a desire to learn more. Some questions are asked to reaffirm previously held notions. A few questions are intended to indicate that the inquirer is knowledgeable in that area. Indeed, the utterances of tourists influence the development of the narrative of the docent (Salazar 2006).

By focusing on the use of representation on the part of docents and museum staff while remembering and forgetting certain groups such as slaves, we can easily lose sight of how tourists influence what is remembered at historic sites like plantation house museums and how they contribute to the development of these memories (Compare Nelson 2003). Tourists do not silently follow an all-knowing docent through the house. Tourists interpret the house, actively decoding the meaning of what they see and hear and placing it in the context of their own world view and what they “know” about the past. Indirectly, they influence future tours through their comments to docents, other staff, friends and family.

Finally, we also need to be careful about potential discrepancies between what tourists say they want to hear about on plantation house museum tours in interviews after such tours and what tourists ask about while on those same tours. While I am not suggesting that they do not want to hear about slavery during exit interviews and surveys,

often they do not ask about it while on tours. While additional research is needed to more thoroughly understand why more tourists do not ask about slavery, slave life and even individual enslaved people, understanding that they do want more information indicates future possibilities when it comes to the discussion of slavery on docent-led tours. When tourists say that the plantation house museum's employees should present more information about slavery and enslaved individuals that worked on a plantation, they indicate an ignored social space for activism. As we continue to cajole plantation house museum employees and volunteers to talk more about this topic, we should also develop ways to stimulate tourists to ask about slavery while on tour. Doing this effectively requires that we better understand the nonrepresentational ways that we engage in memory through emotion at these historic sites (Compare Carolan 2008).

In the next two chapters I will consider some of the ways touch connected to plantation slavery and some of the issues and potentials of touch in remembering slavery in plantation museums today.

CHAPTER SIX: MAKING SLAVERY THROUGH TOUCH

Historically, the plantation was a sensuous place. Though visual aspects of the past seem to take priority over other sensory aspects when we consider memory, we understand that human existence was polysensual for those who lived then, just as it is for us today. In addition to seeing, they heard, tasted, smelled and felt too. Sensory experiences affected each individual of the plantation, framing how they experienced the plantation and how it was shaped by them.

Indeed, stimuli from each sense influenced an individual to attend to other sensory inputs. A smell might indicate taste or frame touch or sight. What one sees might reframe a taste or the meaning of a smell, while what is touched can clarify what we see (Ernst and Banks 2002; Heller, 1989; Heller, Calcaterra and Brown 1999; Verry 1998; Klatzky, Lederman and Matula, 1993; Locher 1982; Loomis, Klatzky and Lederman 1991; Newell et al. 2001; Misceo, Hershberger and Mancini 1999; Lederman 1983; Jones et al. 2005). Thus, the plantation was not just an ocular-centric landscape; it was a sensescape, where vision, hearing, taste, smell and touch contributed to a person's full experience of the world around them. Indeed, if we read Revolutionary War veteran and early-nineteenth century traveler through the South, Kenneth Beeson's observations of indigo plantations thinking about the senses of smell and touch, the passage carries a different weight than simply focusing on vision:

An indigo plantation was an insalubrious place. The stench of the work vats, where the indigo plants were putrefied, was so offensive and deleterious, that the "work" was usually located at least one-quarter of a mile away from human dwellings. The odor from the rotting weeds drew flies and other insects by the thousands, greatly increasing the chances of the spread of diseases. Animals and poultry on an indigo plantation likewise suffered, and it was all but impossible to keep livestock on, or near, the indigo manufacturing site (Beeson 1964: 215).

Smelling the odor of the rotting plant matter and feeling the flies was more than a visual experience. Even reading about it today makes the skin crawl – a haptic experience connecting social memory and imagination with physical responses. Yet, this was the work environment which some enslaved individuals dealt with on a daily basis for months each year.

While each sense can connect us to the past – think about how the taste or smell of a particular food might bring back memories of our childhood – this chapter and the next will consider some of the ways touch can connect memory to slavery. This chapter will consider how the plantation was a touchy place for slaves, while the next chapter will consider what possible connections could be made between touch and memory in plantation museums.

Violence and Touch in Making Slavery

Active and potential touch made and maintained slave societies. In his memoir, Charles Ball (1860: 299) observed, “It is a mistake to suppose that the southern planters could ever retain their property, or live amongst their slaves, if those slaves were not kept in terror of the punishment that would follow acts of violence and disorder.” While slavery was enforced through a pervasive set of practices that included visual, audible and haptic routines, forceful touch was one of the main ways that slavery was maintained in most Western slave societies. Winthrop Jordan (1993: 94) noted, “Pain became the badge of power and powerlessness, and pain generates its own memories and clear space for some private inner domination.” Forceful touch included a broad range of actions directed at the slaves. While slavery existed because of touch, not all forceful touch was alike. Slapping and striking, as well as spectacular violence such as public whipping,

maiming, mutilation and murder (including sanctioned executions) were forms of forceful, violent touch, which differed not just because of the ferocity of the violence, but also because of the public or private context in which it was carried out. While the condemnatory nature of forceful touch always carried with it the will and worldview of the master class, not all forceful touch was brutal. This distinction between brutal force and other forceful touches, which were framed through the lens of paternalism like the then-acceptable forms of familial touch such as spanking or slapping across the face, might seem small, but the distinction highlights the multiple ways that touch was used to reinforce social order in the U.S. South. While the end result was the haptically-rooted impression of the master's will upon the slaves' body and mind, these two types of touch were coercive in different ways as we shall consider.

At every level, slaveholders and their agents reserved the right to use violence to enforce their will upon the enslaved. Such violent touch could even be achieved by proxy. Collectively, planters knew that even if they were vastly outnumbered by the slaves, they could rely upon the state to wield violence to reestablish order if there was a major slave uprising. David Brion Davis' (2006: 122) observation, "Slavery has always depended, ultimately, on physical power, and Caribbean planters, no matter how small their numbers, could always summon armed troops who had no compunctions about mass slaughter," applies equally well to planters in the U.S. South. This section considers how enslavers used violence to maintain power over the enslaved population.

At a smaller scale, in interpersonal interactions with slaves, masters used kinetic and potential touch to carry out their will. Some masters were quick to use violent touch, while others used 'gentler' means to coerce bondsmen and bondswomen to do their work.

The slave narratives derived from Works Progress Administration (WPA) oral history interviews with former slaves in the Depression years include many accounts of both physically violent masters and “kind” masters who rarely used touch to accomplish their will. However, the whip came up frequently – often as a visual sign of haptic potential. Dave Lawson (1941:46) remembered his father’s words about his former master, Drew Norwood, that “everything on dat plantation, animal an' man was skeered of dat whip— dat whip dat never lef' Marse Drew's wris” demonstrates this use of a whip as a visual symbol of a haptic experience.

Often the ocular aspects of brutal violence directed at the slaves – the whip striking a slave’s back, the blood and scars that followed – still serve as a form of shorthand for remembering all of the potential terror and horror of slavery. While such focus on touch was meant to serve as ocular cues to onlookers, it was also a tactile cue for the enslaved, which stayed with many of them long after the visible signs of such violent touch faded. Distant and perceived as objective, visualizations of violence potentially miss touch’s tactile-based power. Andy Anderson a former slave interviewed in Texas recalled a whipping that he had received decades earlier,

For de first couple of hours de pain am awful. I’s never forgot it. Den I’s stood so much pain I not feel so much and when dey takes me loose, I’s jus’ ’bout half dead. I lays in de bunk two days, gittin’ over dat whippin’, gitting over it in de body but not de heart. No, suh, I has dat in de heart till dis day (Anderson 1941: 15).¹⁸

Mr. Anderson does not indicate whether he still had physical scars from such a brutal beating, which I imagine that he did. However, the haptic-sensed experience and emotional damage of that whipping stayed with him decades later as he talked to the

¹⁸ I feel somewhat uncomfortable with quoting Mr. Anderson this way. The interviewer and transcriber(s) (unnamed) chose to type and preserve Mr. Anderson in this form of typed dialect, and I feel re-editing it into a Standard English would further marginalize Ms. Anderson’s words.

interviewer about it. While it might be easy to think this was something that cruel master did, it must be acknowledged that even the “kindest” master reserved the right to violently touch a slave. Otherwise, social systems built on slavery risked dissolution. However, such violence was more than visual and auditory for many onlookers as I shall consider shortly.

Brutal as some planters were, many others recognized that violent touch had its limits. There was always the possibility of violent touch being directed at the planter, not only under circumstances where the enslaved might have thought that they could “get away with it”, but also if enslaved individuals concluded that their situation was hopeless and that violent reaction was the only way their lot could improve.

Often when researchers examine violence against the enslaved by the master class they do so through a lens – taking a visual stance in our examination of such violent acts against the enslaved. With the rest of this chapter, I am asking us to go beyond vision and reflect on the haptic and tactilely felt experience of slavery.

Painful Spectacle

Spectacular violence – violence that is meant to be seen and impress due to its dramatic nature – had its place in maintaining slavery. Enslavers usually responded to major slave uprisings in the New World with horrific executions, though such a major display of resistance on the part of individuals in the enslaved community was hardly needed as justification for the use of spectacular violence. While revenge for the loss that enslavers suffered might have served as part of the motivation for violent response, the key motive for spectacular violence was to remind the enslaved community that the enslaving classes were willing to go to extreme means to maintain the social order of the

slave society. Charles Ball recounted “the terrible spectacles” of seeing two slaves – Lacy and Frank – hung and another slave – Billy – receive 500 lashes for not immediately reporting a murder. Ball and thousands of other slaves were forced to witness the event (Ball 1860: 289-299).

Yet, if we focus too closely on the visual nature of spectacular violence, we risk minimizing the haptic implications of such acts. While it was likely meant to be shameful to be the person being punished in front of others, spectacular violence was also meant, literally, to be felt by the individual being stricken *and* empathetically by those whose who shared a common lot in life.

Indeed, where enslavers could not systematically touch the whole enslaved community, physically touching each tacit supporter, the use of spectacular violence served as a haptic experience for each observer. Knowingly or unknowingly, violent punishers used the individual observer’s capacity for empathy to touch the entire enslaved community when carrying out spectacular violence in front of other enslaved individuals. This touching which inflicted pain upon observers who could identify with the enslaved being beaten was much more than figurative. Some neuroscientists who have researched the connection between empathy and pain noted that while “[t]he personal and vicarious experiences [of the person observing another person in pain] differ physiologically”, a ““mirror neuron/circuit”” that processes the sensational experience is a way that the experience of the observer resembles that of the observed person” actually experiencing the direct stimuli of pain. (Goubert et al. 2005: 286; Gallese, Keysers and Rizzolatti 2004; Iacoboni 2009; Banissy and Ward 2007; Bufalari et al. 2009; Bernhardt and Singer 2012; Decety and Ickes 2011; Englis et al 2002; Craig, 1968).

Agents of the slaveholders did not beat, hang, burn, brand, cut, and even break on the wheel, slaves in front of other slaves to trigger altruistic feelings of empathy in those who were forced to watch. No, these agents of the slaveholder did these things to reinforce slavery using the self-preservation aspects of empathy literally, encouraging every observer to place themselves, empathetically in the position of the person being tortured, imagining how it would feel to be them at that moment or to recognize the possibility that they could be next. Both Charles Ball and Frederick Douglas noted how violence affected them. Ball, speaking of the beating of Billy and execution of Lacy and Frank (mentioned earlier) reminisced,

It was in the month of April that I witnessed the painful spectacle of two fellow-creatures being launched into the abyss of eternity, and a third, being tortured beyond the sufferings of mere death, not for his crimes, but as a terror to others; and this, not to deter others from the commission of crimes, but to stimulate them to a more active and devoted performance of their duties to their owners (Ball 1860: 299)

Frederick Douglas (1845: 6) recalling the first time he heard the vicious beating of his Aunt Hester, noted, “I was so terrified and horror-stricken at the sight, that I hid myself in a closet, and dared not venture out till long after the bloody transaction was over. I expected it would be my turn next.” Frederick Douglas demonstrates that not only did observing slaves fear the possibility of such violence being directed toward them, but initial recognition of their enslaved state was often associated with observing such violence, saying,

Mr. Plummer [the overseer hired by his master] was a miserable drunkard, a profane swearer, and a savage monster. He always went armed with a cowskin and a heavy cudgel.... He would at times seem to take great pleasure in whipping a slave. I have often been awakened at the dawn of day by the most heart-rending shrieks of an own aunt of mine, whom he used to tie up to a joist, and whip upon her naked back till she was literally covered with blood. No words, no tears, no prayers, from his gory victim, seemed to move his iron heart from its bloody

purpose. The louder she screamed, the harder he whipped; and where the blood ran fastest, there he whipped longest. He would whip her to make her scream, and whip her to make her hush; and not until overcome by fatigue, would he cease to swing the blood-clotted cowskin. I remember the first time I ever witnessed this horrible exhibition. I was quite a child, but I well remember it. I never shall forget it whilst I remember any thing. It was the first of a long series of such outrages, of which I was doomed to be a witness and a participant. It struck me with awful force. It was the blood-stained gate, the entrance to the hell of slavery, through which I was about to pass. It was a most terrible spectacle. I wish I could commit to paper the feelings with which I beheld it (Douglas 1849: 5-6).

Indeed, the power of these situations is still felt today, quite possibly experienced by you as you read this edited, but still graphic, passage. The enduring power of these explanations of violence still largely defines how we imagine slavery.

The powerful connection between empathy and inflicted pain hinges on the audience identifying with the person being hurt. Thus if some audience members did not see slaves as humans, like themselves, they potentially experienced the moments when a slave was being injured quite differently from slaves who were forced to watch or hear such torture. These persons who did not identify enslaved people as human would, more-than-likely not have empathized with them as they were being tortured, thus they would likely have experienced little empathic pain. Indeed, some research on the subject of the brains neural activity indicates that the empathy neural pathways do not react to pain when the observer does not identify with the person perceived to be experiencing pain (Lawrence et al 2006; Schaefer et al 2012).

However, I should temper this with two points. First, each person who participated in inflicting another human was in the middle of a web of physical, emotional and social circumstances. The acts and knowledge of beating someone else – the bodily movement and associated sensory feedback together with the recognition that you are the one doing this to another person in the context of others who you might

identify with more than the one you are hurting – makes broad generalizations about a brutalizer impossible. Second, since identity is not dichotomous, surely many of the audience members who were not slaves, experienced degrees of empathetic pain due to being there and thus being a part of it.

Yet, the felt existence of slavery was made by more than just spectacular violence or painful touch itself. Focusing only on violent acts upon the enslaved empathetically transfers us into the slave's life and risks diminishing slaves and their experience. In a way, it risks devaluing the experiences of the slaves to only the pain that we can imagine, effectively exoticizing and othering them as only tortured souls knowing only loss and pain. Saidiya V. Hartman came to a similar conclusion explaining,

However, what I am trying to suggest is that if the scene of beating readily lends itself to an identification with the enslaved, it does so at the risk of fixing and naturalizing this condition of pained embodiment and ... increases the difficulty of beholding black suffering since the endeavor to bring pain close exploits the spectacle of the body in pain and oddly confirms the spectral character of suffering and the inability to witness the captive's pain. If, on the one hand, pain extends humanity to the dispossessed and the ability to sustain suffering leads to transcendence, on the other, the spectral and spectacular character of this suffering, or, in other words, the shocking and ghastly presence of pain, effaces and restricts black sentience (Hartman 1999: 20).

Focusing on the role of painful touch in making the enslaved and slavery itself risks supporting the very stereotypes that I wish to undermine. The stereotypes of the fearful, superstitious slave who doesn't understand the system that they were subjugated under and the simplistically-faithful slave continue to exist if we focus only on the role of painful touch in making slavery. Such imagined slaves would have only known the world as they experienced it, failing to fully exist in the world which surrounded them.

However, Hartman pulls even well-meaning, but flat essentializing on the part of those who wished to abolish slavery and argued against it based on negative experience – they

hurt and bleed too – into the light as another way to potentially lessen the very people they were trying to help.

Thus, painful punishment is only part of the ways that touch made slavery. In the following sections I will consider other ways touch made slavery.

Cultivation and Touch: “Our work was hard, from sunup to sundown”¹⁹

The sense of touch was integral to the process of cultivation of any crop. Each step in the process of cultivation – clearing land, plowing fields, making rows, planting seeds, transplanting seedlings, thinning, repeatedly weeding and worming, harvesting, and processing any crop – involved touch. While aspects of raising and initially processing most crops required significant skills, agricultural slaves have often been portrayed as unskilled labor, literally bodies to work the fields. However, the so-called “unskilled laborers” who provided the bulk of the labor for plantation crops, developed complex though often-overlooked haptic skills. For example, cotton, a cash crop that used vast amounts of labor during certain seasons, required a skilled touch during many of the most important moments of cultivation. Each cash crop had an annual haptic routine. While I will focus on cotton, other crops such as indigo, rice, tobacco, sugar hemp, and peanuts touched and were touched by enslaved people.

With possible exceptions of the very young, the disabled and the very elderly, every part of the enslaved community directly touched some part of the process of cultivating cotton. Clearing previously cultivated fields started with women and children knocking the remains of the cotton plant down through physically touching the stalks by pushing them over, so that men, and some women, could plow the fields turning the

¹⁹ Mr. James V. Deane of Baltimore MD spoke these words during his September 20, 1937 WPA interview (Deane 1941: 7).

vegetative matter under (Libby 2004: 41; Swearingen 1935: 201). The dead cotton plants did not succumb to the earth as simply as their dead-looking nature indicated. Instead of being brittle and breaking apart easily, these plants might lay over. Additionally, heavy rains could pack the earth. For these reasons, enslaved humans and beasts needed to plow the field multiple times to break up the old plants and the earth itself to be malleable for forming rows (Libby 2004: 41).

Though some antebellum planters used mechanical means for planting cotton seeds, on many plantations this task was done manually by enslaved workers, usually women (Lyman and Sypher 1868: 22-3; Compare Swearingen 1935:2001-2). According to David Libby, in frontier Mississippi, enslaved women used their dresses to scatter the seeds. Forming a cup in the dress to hold the seeds, women with a twist of the body, scattered the cotton seeds across the furrow (Libby, 2004: 41). This movement required balance and precision based on touch. If the dress was held too high, too few seeds would fall, too low and too many seeds would drop. If the movement was too exuberant the seeds would spread too far falling off the top of the row and be wasted. This was not the only way to manually sow cotton seeds. In areas without deep, rich bottomland, enslaved women and occasionally boys followed a light plow through the field with an apron filled with seed. They distributed the seed by “dash[ing] handfuls [of cotton seed] into the furrow with a quick downward jerk or fling of the right hand, the left meanwhile holding apron” (Lyman and Sypher 1868: 22). If the movement was too exaggerated the seeds would spread too far, being wasted.

The right touch was important when hoeing weeds and grass. Hoeing one’s way across a field required pacing the use of one’s energy. Lifting and dropping the hoe,

scraping the weeds and grass from the sides of the ridges for hours could be monotonous, even painful, and required haptic sensitivity. This task was not made easier by masters who purchased heavy hoes because they felt that slaves were rough on light hoes, breaking them up (Smith 2006: 23). Within a few weeks, cotton plants which had grown a few inches high required thinning so that one to two feet separated cotton plants, depending on the conditions and quality of the location. Further, careless use of a hoe to weed or thin, could damage young cotton plants, so the worker had to direct the hoe to the correct spot, a skill that required coordination between the eye and the hand. Between the heat and monotony broken by a few momentary distractions, such hand-eye coordination could become more difficult as the day wore on and the enslaved worker became more exhausted.

Next, as the cotton plants grew taller, enslaved workers moulded the crop. Moulding – the plowing of the rows to kill grass and weeds once the cotton plant was tall enough – required a directed touch. Navigating the animal pulling the plow and the moulding board required care as some cotton plants, particularly weaker ones could be lost due to damage during this process with the moulding board getting too close to a plant and damaging it (Lyman and Sypher 1868: 23-5, 31; Libby 2004: 42).

Harvesting could be painful. The enslaved workers inserted their fingers into the opened boll and pulled the cotton – lint and seed – out. Dried organic material called locks divided the sections of the boll. The locks could be sharp once dried and cut the fingertips. Thus the enslaved worker had to balance the demands of a driver in the field pushing them to go faster, with the repeated potential of cutting their fingers. While

fingers would callous over time from repeated cutting by the dried locks, skilled workers would also develop expertise to reduce such pain.

Touch and harvesting was about more than just the fingers. The enslaved had to make multiple trips through the cotton field – as many as six visits to the same plant across the harvesting period – to collect the cotton. Under a watchful eye of a master or his agent, the slave had to be cautious of how they handled a steadily-filling bag of cotton. Although rows were spaced further apart than they usually are today, careless movement in the field could damage plants beside or behind the worker with the bag potentially pushing against and damaging other cotton plants as a worker focused on the plant in front of her or him. Thus, enslaved field hands had to be sensitive to touch in the cotton field, noticing the pressures against their body or collection bag as they moved through the field.

Cultivation of other plants involved different tactile and haptic experiences. For example, worming tobacco plants involved a distinct felt experience. Workers would search the plant, carefully lifting leaves to look for the green tobacco worms. When they found a worm, the worker would pull it off of the plant, toss it on the ground and step on it. The haptic nature of stepping on the worm showed the skill of the worker. Too light of a touch would not kill the worm, too forceful a touch, was a waste of energy and could damage parts of the cotton plant. Yet, enough pressure had to be exerted on the foot to feel the “pop” of the worm’s body explode, indicating its death. While we must be cautious about displacing our present socially-influenced tactile-moral beliefs upon the enslaved of the past, one wonders what the enslaved thought of the experience. On those long, monotonous days of worming, did they think about the experience? Did they find

the experience disgusting and, if so, on what grounds, or was it just part of the haptic experience of the plantation? Did they fear worms, as some do, or could they care less? Did they measure a day by the number of “pops” they felt underfoot?

It is in these moments when we think of the comparative experience of the enslaved that we sense a transformation of the plantation. What the planter class saw at a distance as they watched slaves work in fields, and occasionally recorded in writing, mainly with a mindset focused on planters’ economic benefit, the enslaved felt with entirely different perspectives. This did not mean that the enslaved were oblivious to the way that economics could influence their lives. Sickly enslaved family members and friends, workers who had greater difficulty developing certain haptic skills, and particularly bad or good years for cultivating the cash crop on a particular plantation could influence the felt experience of the enslaved with stress or fear creating and compounding the haptic experience in the field through physiological expressions. The enslaved individual felt the worries they carried into the field – potentially wondering what the situation could mean to them. What would a bad harvest mean for their family? Might such a year lead to losing the ability to touch dear family members as a master felt the economic need or urge to sell some enslaved individuals because of their own financial situation? Others might worry if their parents, siblings, spouses, children, cousins, and others would be able to keep a satisfactory – in the eyes of masters and their agents - pace? These worries and others, while emotional in nature, could express themselves through physiological outlets – a nervous stomach, headaches and sleepless nights, which would affect one’s performance the next day, among other things.

The next section will focus on a few common situations experienced connected to touch by enslaved individuals to better explain how the plantation was a lived experience.

Touch and the Enslaved Individuals: Home on the Plantation

First and foremost a business, the plantation was felt in certain ways by the slaves because of the financial decisions of the planter. Economic decisions made by the planter, his family and agents, as well as laws created by various governmental bodies to protect slaveholder interests, had particular tactile consequences for enslaved individuals. Whether trying to save money on the cost of operating a plantation while maximizing its profit or trying to maintain control over enslaved individuals whose labor made and operated the plantation, the planter's decisions were felt throughout the lives of the enslaved daily.

Planters made deliberate choices about how much money would be spent on various aspects of the lives of the enslaved community under their control. These choices even included on which individual members resources would be spent and who would not receive such material care. Such decisions affected the tactile and haptic experiences of each slave. Often, the limited financial resources that planters spent on slaves were spent in ways designed to maximize the labor a planter could extract from the enslaved workers bodies. Thus, the relative neglect and lower value placed on those enslaved individuals who were not seen as participating in economic activities that most benefited the planter.

At almost every moment of the day, the enslaved plantation worker received haptic reminders that (s)he was a slave. This did not mean that every slaveholder exercised their power over the bondspeople in a uniformly cruel way. The plantation was

a business, and planters made financially-based decisions in attempts to become and remain profitable enterprises. Despite the quandaries some individual slaveholders might have had with whether enslaved humans deserved to be treated similar to themselves or not, many planters participated in economic practices that maintained a level of physical discomfort for slaves, often with the implications that such practices were good for business. Some of these areas of practice which I will briefly consider relate to slave housing, the clothing and shoes provided for slaves, the bedding on which they slept, and the provision of food that they ate.

One of the ways that planters spent money on the enslaved community was by providing specific housing for the slaves. Across the South, slave housing could be quite diverse. Those who owned a few slaves, including some small plantations, might not provide separate structures for the enslaved. On other plantations one might find very crude slave quarters, while a few planters provided better quality slave quarters. For example, near Durham, NC, at Stagville Plantation, Paul Cameroon had specially built slave quarters in the 1850s. Cameroon commissioned the construction of a number of two-story, four-room, slave quarters with raised floors and brick chimneys designed to house four enslaved families each (See Figure 44). When docents discuss these buildings on tour, they tell tourists that the structures were intentionally built to give his slaves healthier living quarters. Stating that the purpose of such structures was to promote better health among the enslaved, tourists might miss that such better health also benefited Mr. Cameroon himself. Such structures probably helped slaves remain healthier in the winter because the quarters were less drafty and could be easier to clean and care for on a daily basis by the people who lived in them. However, healthier,



Figure 44. Outside of one of the slave quarters at Stagville plantation.

longer-living workers benefited Cameroon financially because it increased the work that could be extracted from them (Historic Stagville Foundation 2013). Yet, this level of concern for the living condition of the enslaved, as reflected in the slave quarters provided for them – even if based on self-interest – was hardly universal. Rena Raines, a former North Carolina slave interviewed in August 1937, described the living conditions of many slaves when she said,

De clothes wuz homemade. De houses wuz made out of logs an had stick an dirt chimleys to ‘em. De sleepin’ places wuz bunks fer de grown niggers an de chillum slept on de floor on pallets. A pallet wuz made by speadin’ a quilt made of towbaggin’ or rags on de floor, dat’s where de chillum slept in our neighborhood before the surrender (Raines 1941: 194-195).²⁰

Despite the efforts of the residents, the housing was often drafty, the bedding for adults was usually hard and limited and children frequently had to sleep in bedding directly on the floor. Even, in cases where the enslaved community lived in better quarters, their living spaces never matched those spaces occupied by the planter’s family.

Financial circumstances encouraged most planters to focus on providing for the needs of the enslaved workers who made the planters’ wealth. Those in the enslaved community who were most vulnerable often received the least, even if they were most in need, precisely because they had the lowest economic value to the planter. Children, the elderly and the disabled individuals benefited the planter economically the least. In return, planters often limited the material provisions reaching these individuals. A few slaveholders went so far as to free older slaves so that they would not have to provide for them once they were too old to be of benefit to the enslaver, but laws restricting

²⁰ As noted in a previous footnote in this chapter, I feel somewhat uncomfortable with quoting Ms. Raines this way. The interviewer, T. Pat Matthews and the editor, G.I. Andrews chose to type and preserve Ms. Raines’ expressions in this form of typed dialect, yet I feel re-editing it again into a Standard English would further marginalize Ms. Raines’ words.

manumissions and charging hefty fees seems to have limited such “freeing” to informal arrangements enacted on the part of individuals of the master class (Close 1997:51-3 89; Johnson 1997: 430-2). Yet, the freeing of elderly slaves for this purpose was going on well before the Antebellum Period and was common enough in Western slaveholding societies that Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra has Don Quixote condemn such an act during one of his more lucid moments. Condemning the ill care some disabled veterans received, Quixote lectures,

neither are they to be used as some men do their negro slaves, who, when they are old and past service, are turned naked out of doors, under pretense of freedom, to be made greater slaves to cold and hunger – a slavery from which nothing but death can set the wretches free (de Cervantes 1847: 259-60).

In this passage, Cervantes asks his reader to give haptic empathy; for it is the “cold and hunger” – sensuously haptic experiences – that we are asked to imagine for not just disabled veterans, but also for devalued elderly former slaves of African ancestry.

In the Antebellum South, the clothing and shoes provided to the slaves served as tactile reminders of their enslaved condition too. These tactile reminders were two-fold in that the clothing and shoes often started out feeling rough and uncomfortable and probably became more deficient as they wore out. Speaking of her experience as a slave, Ms. Patsy Mitchner (1941: 120) commented, “Our clothes wuz bad an’ our sleeping places wuz jest bunks. Our shoes had wooden bottoms on ‘em.”

Viewed through purely profit-centric lenses, it only seemed sensible to limit the amount of money spent on clothing the enslaved and to many planters this meant rationing the disbursement of clothing and shoes. Jane Lassiter, who was a child on a plantation with fifty other enslaved people in central North Carolina in the 1850s, noted

that on the plantation on which she grew up, the slaves received one pair of footwear on Christmas and when they wore out, the slave had to go barefoot until the next pair was received on the following Christmas (Lassiter 1941: 39). Rationing varied by planter and location with some slaves receiving shoes more often, while others did not receive them at any point in the year. Other narratives supported Ms. Lassiter's account. For example, Ms. Raines (1941: 194) quoted above, articulated that on the plantation at which she grew up, adults received shoes once a year while enslaved children did not get any shoes. Planters who did not provide shoes for those who were not field hands, such as children, acted in a way that indicated that they saw such an investment as a waste of money.

Saving such costs had tactile consequences for the enslaved. Planters who waited until Christmas to distribute clothes to the enslaved caused them to endure cold spells in late fall and early winter with threadbare clothing that was practically a year old. Further, from some masters' perspective, clothing and shoes provided were meant to protect one from the elements, thus did not need to be comfortable or even properly sized. Indeed, to most planters, comfort was, at best, secondary to financial factors when considering the living conditions of the enslaved on their plantations. While the power-laden situations in which former slaves were interviewed under in the WPA project seemed frequently to encourage former slaves to express slavery in more positive terms, comments about having poor clothing, feeling hunger, sleeping in uncomfortable beds and constantly feeling exhausted were made repeatedly (See for example Lassiter 1941:39-41; Jones 1941: 31-2; Poole 1941:194-5)

Planters often expected slaves to partially provide for their own physical needs through gardening, fishing and even hunting, but the time for these activities was limited

to the periods outside of productive plantation times of the day and week. These undertakings were usually limited to Saturday afternoon, Sunday after church, late in the evening or possibly during the hottest part of the day during the summer for those in the deepest parts of the South (Wood 1995: 20). While some might see allowing enslaved persons to participate in these activities as a kindness enabling them to diversify and fortify their diets, or possibly to sell their excess harvest for income, the primary purpose for allowing slaves to garden, fish and hunt was to help keep the cost of business of the plantation down for the planter.

The Absence of Touch in Reinforcing Slavery

Just as the touch regimes of plantation life and painful violence made slavery, so did losing touch. As a means of controlling the enslaved and directing them to do the will of the master, slaveholders also enforced the structure of the slave society by withholding touch. This frequently occurred through selling enslaved persons away from their loved ones. The prospect of being sold away some distance carried with it the uncertainty of a harsher existence. It carried with it the likelihood that one would never see their loved ones again and never live in the conditions and social reality to which one had been accustomed. While slaves in all slaveholding societies were held in a socially-defined, deathlike state (Patterson 1985), each time a slave was sold away from a plantation, a social death occurred – the loss of an individual in the community and the loss of the community to the individual sold. This sale, this social death had a haptic reality too. Cultivation of crops and even violence might well have served as the routine of life for the enslaved individual, but the prospect of being sold away from family also served to maintain order on the plantation. Paradoxically, in the areas where the working

experiences of slavery seemed to become milder such as in the Upper South as the land became exhausted, the prospect of being separated by sale increased. Scholars estimate that of the over 700,000 interstate slave sales “twenty-five percent involved the destruction of a first marriage and fifty percent destroyed a nuclear family” (Johnson 1999: 19). Many of these enslaved migrants ended the move without family. Even when such moves were not so distant, the separation was traumatic with tales of the separation of enslaved mothers from their children serving as powerful ammunition for abolitionists to demonstrate the inhumanity of the slave trade.

Countless mothers held their children for the last time in the slave market and at private sales. Such a sale deprived the enslaved of the touch of loved ones. Even when describing such separations in audible and visual terms, former slaves often acknowledged touch too. For example, Joe Higginson remembered,

Why down at Boonville, woman and a baby was put up to be sold, and de buyer he want de woman, but he don't want de baby, so they separated 'em, and was gettin' ready to put 'em on de boat for Noo Orleans, and ship 'em down de river, and de woman she ran back to kiss de baby goodbye, and de tradar picked up a whip and cracked it and shouts, 'A bellerin' cow will soon forget its calf'. She was sold down de river and nevar saw de baby again. Now dat was sad (Higginson 1941: 176).

While we can only assume that the ‘crack’ of the whip was felt, we cannot overlook that it was a haptic experience that was behind the trader’s actions. The woman had gone back simply to kiss the baby goodbye. Yet, it is the future absence of touch that drives this situation. This unnamed mother knew that very likely she would never hold her baby again. She risked violent touch to tenderly touch, “to kiss” her baby, holding off the absence of this little one’s touch for at least another second. Indeed, the cries of mothers losing their children in such sales were a common motif in remembering slavery and

abolitionist literature. While such accounts were often told in powerfully visual terms from observers of the breaking up of such families, touch was ever-present.

We feel for the enslaved parents and grandparents losing their children as we read these accounts. Charles Ball's last memory of his mother was of her weeping bitterly as he was held by her and finally "snatched" away. Ball tells us,

When sold I was naked, never having had on clothes in my life, but my new master gave me a child's frock, belonging to one of his own children. After he had purchased me, he dressed me in this garment, took me before him on his horse, and started home; but my poor mother, *when she saw me leaving her for the last time, ran after me, took me down from the horse, clasped me in her arms, and wept loudly and bitterly over me.* My master seemed to pity her, and endeavored to soothe her distress by telling her that he would be a good master to me, and that I should not want anything. She then, *still holding me in her arms,* walked along the road beside the horse as he moved slowly, and earnestly and imploringly besought my master to buy her and the rest of her children, and not permit them to be carried away by the negro buyers; but whilst thus entreating him to save her and her family, the slave-driver, who had first bought her, came running in pursuit of her with a raw-hide in his hand. When he overtook us, he told her he was her master now, and ordered her to give that little negro to its owner, and come back with him.

My mother then turned to him and cried, "Oh, master, do not take me from my child!" Without making any reply, he gave her two or three heavy blows on the shoulders with his raw-hide, *snatched me from her arms,* handed me to my master, and seizing her by one arm, dragged her back towards the place of sale. My master then quickened the pace of his horse; and as we advanced, the cries of my poor parent became more and more indistinct— at length they died away in the distance, and I never again heard the voice of my poor mother. (Ball, 1860: 10, Italics added).

Mr. Ball's difficult-to-read account includes language that draws out both the role of touch and the role of the absence of touch in making slavery. Sold separately from his mother and siblings, Charles Ball's mother recognized that short of young Charles' new master purchasing her and her other children, she would never hold him again. She "took" and "clasped" him – acts of touching – as she cried and pleaded her case "still holding [him] in her arms". Finally, as the slave trader who had purchased her "snatched" Charles "from her arms", that last touch ended and the experience of slavery

for both Charles and his mother from that moment forward included the absence of touch. Though he focuses on the audible change – “I never again heard the voice of my poor mother” – he also never touched her again either.

Remember the story of her mother being sold away from her grandparents, Ms. Vaughn’s of Little Rock, Arkansas recounted to a WPA worker,

The Hickmans had my mother ever since she was four years old. My grandfather was allowed to go a certain distance with her when she was sold away from him. *He walked and carried her in his arms.* Mama said that when he had gone as far as they would let him go, he put her in the wagon and turned his head away. She wondered why he didn’t look at her; but later she understood that he hated so bad to ‘part from her and couldn’t do nothing to prevent it that he couldn’t bear to look at her. (Vaughn 1941: 9, Italics added).

Ms. Vaughn’s grandfather could have walked beside the wagon and while the reader, like her mother reflects on the visual – why he did not look at her – we could miss that “he carried her in his arms”, carrying her, holding her – touching her – for the last time.

While a number of researchers consider the Western shift towards vision over other senses (Smith 2008), this focus on visual aspects could very well be a device to control one’s own emotions as they recount these traumatic events. Such losses of loved ones were visual, but they were also haptic.

Such losses affected male slaves too. Vaughn’s grandfather was not atypical. While Charles Ball’s mother and siblings were sold to masters outside of Maryland, where Charles was born, he was evidently sold to a master in the area nearby. His father was still able to occasionally visit him, the only of his father’s children still in the area. Ball (1860: 12) recalled, “My father never recovered from the effects of the shock, which this sudden and overwhelming ruin of his family gave him.... After this time I never

heard him laugh heartily, or sing a song. He became gloomy and morose in his temper, to all but me;”

The Problem of Touch and Empathy with Historic Plantations

Just as touch made the slave-run plantation, empathy could unmake it. Indeed, abolitionists tried to use empathy to do just that. The motifs of children being torn from mothers’ arms and slaves beaten with hundreds of lashes, while true, were repeated because they encouraged readers to imaginatively put themselves in those positions. In one of his letters to his brother, Abolitionist John Rankin imagined what it would feel like if he and his family were enslaved. He urged his brother to do the same, explaining,

When I look upon slavery as a distant thing, and inflicted upon an indifferent race of beings, it seems to wear a tolerable aspect; but when I bring it near, inspect it closely, and find that it is inflicted on men and women who possess the same nature and feelings with myself, my sensibility is immediately roused — but when I, who sustain the relations of husband and father, see a husband and father whipped severely in the presence of his wife and children, and that perhaps merely to gratify the caprice of an ill-natured master, my feelings become indignant; and when I see the mother most cruelly scourged in the presence of her husband and children, my feelings grow intolerable — my soul sickens at the sight, and my indignation almost prompts me to unlawful deeds of vengeance. (Rankin 1836: 51)

While some of the wording of Rankin’s passage reflect the formality of mid-nineteenth century letter writing, his words reveal concerns as he struggles to empathize with slaves who were violently treated. First, the empathy he outlines means making the enslaved subjects of violence like him. Not only does he not call them slaves – a potentially uplifting act, as the person is no longer completely defined by a state of enslavement – but he changes them into versions of himself. The argument put forth is that male slaves do not deserve to be enslaved because they are like him and female slaves are collapsed into wives and mothers. Part of what John Rankin seemed to be struggling with is how to

understand and deal with brutality aggregated on a grand scale – how does one understand all of the violence and its consequences to everyone it affects? Yet, he does this by transforming people instead of calling out the institution and the acts used to maintain it. Persons who suffered under the yoke of slavery needed to be transformed from “an indifferent race of beings” to husbands and fathers, wives and mothers. His process of bringing slavery near does not necessarily make him see enslaved individuals as himself enslaved. He thus redefines the injustice of slavery itself into an evil because of what it makes him want to do – “unlawful deeds of vengeance”.

Saidiya Hartman (1997:18-20) sees this as an obliteration of the enslaved by the empathizer who inserts the self into the experience, displacing the actual enslaved individual, effectively indicating that there is no value in the experiences of black enslaved individuals unless white bodies can be imagined as having similar painful experiences. Dr. Hartman (1997: 19) asks appropriately probing questions,

By making the suffering of others his own, has Rankin ameliorated indifference or only confirmed the difficulty of understanding the suffering of the enslaved? Can the white witness of the spectacle of suffering affirm the materiality of black sentience only by feeling for himself? Does this not only exacerbate the idea that black sentience is inconceivable and unimaginable but, in the very ease of possessing the abased and enslaved body, ultimately elide an understanding and acknowledgement of the slave’s pain?

Hartman points out that Blacks are effectively removed during the empathy process that Rankin undertakes – he takes the place of the male bondsmen and his wife and children substitute for female and child slaves.

Both Mr. John Rankin and his audience, Mr. Thomas Rankin, were evidently White and Rankin was struggling with understanding and arguing against slavery. While Rankin’s letters show that he is struggling with identifying with enslaved Blacks, his argument still effectively remains, “They are like us as demonstrated by what they feel.”

The argument is weakened by his self-centeredness and self-righteousness, but slavery is still condemned because of touch. Rankin is advancing the outlawing of slavery because of a commonly-shared haptical identity, an idea that was not shared by many White Americans at the time, with slavery advocates actually arguing that slave skin was tougher and less sensitive to pain (Smith 2006:23, 2007: 109-10).

The bigger problem that comes out of empathizing through touch and challenging slavery based on a set of physically felt experiences develops if we leave the argument against slavery there. Slavery was made in part by touch as I have argued, but it was always about so much more than that. Challenging it through empathy was only one strand of the abolitionist argument and should be *one* of the aspects of slavery that we remember.

Yet, empathy also seems to be at least part of what made some masters relatively “better” than others. Accounts of masters who would not break up slave families or who would not beat their slaves, come up frequently enough in WPA oral histories to make one wonder whether at least a few masters empathized *to a degree* with the enslaved individuals over whom they claimed ownership. For example, Emma Chapman recalled,

Rev. Montgomery Curry was a Baptist preacher and had no overseer, except Lucy Linier and her husband, Emma's grandparents, who kept a supervision over the slaves about 40 in number. There was no whipping allowed on the Curry plantation, and after the death of Reverend Curry, Mrs. Ann Curry (his widow) ran the plantation under the same system. The patrollers had no jurisdiction over the Curry slaves, they were given permits by the Currys to go and come, and Emma said if one of those patrollers whipped one of "ole Miss's slaves, she would have sure sued them (Chapman 1941: 2).

However, that they would continue to own individuals instead of freeing them demonstrates the incompleteness of this empathy. Direct contact with the enslaved community seemed to even generate something like empathy among some who

participated in the slave trade itself. One slave trader told Harriett Jacobs' brother, William, after participating in a scheme to get him away from a spiteful master, "This trading in niggers is a bad business for a fellow that's got any heart." (Jacobs 1861: 163) This trader's empathy was ultimately self-directed and incomplete. He was neither working to end the slave trade nor did he plan to stop profiting from it – he still planned to make a similar trading journey South the following year. Nevertheless, William's narrative demonstrated that even in the structure of slavery, empathy opened small cracks that abolitionists were willing to work on to end the exploitation trade.

Hartman's criticism of how abolitionists used empathy for the painful experiences of slavery can also partially reflect upon the plantation house museum today. For even where slavery is represented in more detail, such details usually reflect upon pain and loss. Yet, each enslaved individual's life was more than pain and absences or what was not. Every moment of life for each enslaved person was a moment in which that enslaved person felt, not only emotionally but also through the sense of touch, the world around them. The sun on their skin, the touch of a loved one, the agricultural tools in their hands were felt through the sense of touch, which created and maintained an intimacy that, while supplemented by the other senses was less distant than the other senses, save taste. That such sensuous experiences were experienced even under the control of others at once highlights the humanness of enslaved individuals and the immorality of owning another person.

Concluding Thoughts

Slavery was maintained through touch and yet our focus on the central role of violent physical touch in enforcing the plantation's social order might encourage us to

overlook the other ways that the plantation, and slavery, were made through touch. While displays of spectacular violence served as visual reinforcement of the power structure of the plantation, touch – kinetic and potential – was the true, ever-present basis of power for the master-enslaver (Smith 2008). This is understandable if we only consider examples of punishment from the spectacular to the routine. However, touch was important on the plantation in other ways. Each life is haptically experienced in so many ways. Agricultural practices such as planting, weeding and harvesting were haptic. Differences in social statuses from planter to enslaved individual were reinforced through tactile and haptic cues. Past touching in the field, enslaved people felt the weather – the cold on the skin during an early winter morning or the heat of the mid-summer’s sun. Beyond the field, enslaved people felt the touch of others, from loved ones to those who touch for their selfish ends. At home they touched and were touched through familial acts of endearment such as holding a lover or a child. In the masters’ house, they touched what was defined as “not theirs”, and were touched to indicate disapproval, status, lust and power. Even the food they ate was textured and thus felt as well as tasted. Differences in station both between and within the free and enslaved segments of the community were often felt as part of the fully-embodied experience.

Despite the growing discussion within geography and history about embodiment, touch is still an under-theorized sense. Touch risks being a concept we discuss but fail to flesh out thoroughly and thoughtfully. This need for development becomes very apparent when we consider how little research there is on the social meaning of physical touch when compared to visual studies. A number of scholars who consider the meaning of touch in historic contexts point out that this imbalance can be attributed to centuries, even

millennia, of statements on the primacy of vision over the other senses by Western scholars going back to at least the time of Aristotle and reinforced through Renaissance thinkers such as Kant and Descartes (Golding 2010: 225; Heller-Roazen 2009; Smith 2007: 100, 108; Howe 2003: xii, 22, 45; Smith, 2006: 11-2).

Effectively, we lack a structured well-developed language for theoretically considering the role of touch. This dearth of a common language becomes acutely apparent if we start looking for edges to the research on touch. In our research, do we stop at touch as an exterior interaction or do we include the bodily interior? If we include the bodily interior and what is felt internally by nerve endings, where do we stop? Extreme sensory excitement of vision, smell, sound or taste as well as emotional excitement can often be felt physically. We do not need to think hard to start to wonder where does research on touch, become research on other senses or even research on emotion. A flash of light, a loud “bang” or extremely spicy food can cause pain that goes well beyond the momentary visual, auditory or gustatory stimuli. Emotionally and physiologically, the excitement of seeing a loved one can be felt in the belly and chest. While the biological sciences and chemistry have an ongoing consideration of the science of touch, especially as it relates to what is going on electro-biochemically, geography and history largely leave touch “unspoken” and “unhistoricized” (Classen 2012). Effectively, we still struggle for a more-complete, common framework for considering touch research.

The connections about touch that I make in this chapter and the next broadly break into two main themes: touch and the plantation past, and touch, social memory and the plantation house museum today. Reflecting this, I considered the connections to the

former in this chapter where I drew out how the plantation was felt individually, particularly by the enslaved. With the next chapter, it should become clear that this is necessary if we are to understand the implications of the plantation house museum as a felt memoryscape today.

CHAPTER SEVEN: REMEMBERING SLAVERY THROUGH TOUCH

Today, most tourists first enter the Hope Mansion in Windsor, North Carolina through a low door that connects to a basement room. Once their eyes adjust to the low level of light in the room, tourists recognize that this interpretive room does not reflect the lifestyle of a wealthy planter. The furniture is rough. The ceiling is low – six and a half feet at most – with large exposed wooden beams supporting the floor above. Tourists look up at the ceiling and then something occurs on many of the tours through this mansion – a tourist, usually male, reaches up and touches one of the large beams of wood that support the floor above. Often, the person who touches the wooden beam makes a comment “It must have been a big tree that that came from,” or “Trees don’t grow that size anymore.” At the latest, in that moment – the instant when a hand reaches up – the sensory experience of Hope Plantation changes markedly for many tourists. What was, up until that moment, primarily a visual and audible experience became a notably haptic experience too.

Even with only one person touching the ceiling, the haptic-awareness of some of the members of the group change especially if they say something about the wood. Conversationally, these statements and the working out of memory that they indicate produced uneven changes. Occasionally, the conversation ended there with a few tourists nodding their heads. At other times the tourists and docent would discuss the meaning of the size of the beam for a couple of minutes with other tourists touching the low beams. These touches reinforced myths about the past. While it is true that most of the wood used today in recently-built houses did not come from century-old trees, touching the beam becomes a mnemonic to remember the past in certain naturalized ways. While touching the beam, thinking of the age and size of the tree it came from, most tourists

reflected on the common meta-myth of North America as uninhabited, “virgin forests” with newly arrived Europeans taming an environment they imagined to be uninhabited, or inadequately exploited by indigenous people. In this way, touch, like sight, and sound, can serve to reduce the past to familiar tales that tourists already believe.

These touches and the many similar ones like them at the hundreds of plantation house museums across the U.S. South are important. Through one more sense – touch – tourists confirm and challenge what they hear, see and ‘know’ about the plantation (Compare Jansson-Byod 2011). The immediate haptic experience supports detached vision and its complement, the auditory narrative about a distant, past time. Through a set of processes called sensory interaction, touch transforms the experience of hearing about history and seeing the planter-class family’s now-antique possessions into the embodied experience of connecting tourists to individuals of planter-class families, for through touch one can connect with and even be among the historic figures that once were there in that space.

Beyond discussions over issues of preservation and security (Pye 2007: 16), touch is problematic in other ways to those researching social touch at historic sites. For example, furniture, dishes and other antique things in a museum may be off-limits for tourists to touch, but museum employees do not stop tourists from walking on floors, feeling doorframes or otherwise touching the plantation house itself as they move from room to room. This leads to situations as described above, where tourists touch a wood beam that is part of the house, but struggle, because of crowding, not to accidentally touch the slave-cabin-inspired furnishings in the same room. Thus, we contextualize

touchable items differently, embodying the experience of some things while struggling to keep other things at a distance.

Within the plantation house museum, like any museum, touch is complicated in a number of ways. Though less so than just twenty years ago, museum staff usually strongly discourage touching the historic artifacts and other material culture. Tactile and haptic interactions with objects in an historic museum are largely seen as transgressive. “Fragile. Please, Do Not Touch” signs remind visitors that while the viewable is also touchable, the importance of the objects mandate care and preservation for future observers. Indeed, it is through depriving touch that museum curators impress the value and importance of the artifacts and what they represent (Hetherington 2002; Candlin 2007). Yet, the prohibition against touching artifacts of the past in museums is a more recent development and is not complete, as more and more museums are allowing tourists to touch some items (Candlin 2007: 90).

Touch adds to representation. Though touch is more than embodiment, at historic sites, touch raises issues of embodying our connections to the past. Like much of the research on embodied experience, the researcher faces issues of rigorous research, extrapolation beyond the individual, and how to represent that which is in many ways more than representable (Lorimer 2005; Patterson and Dodge 2012, Wood and Latham 2011). Each of us experiences each plantation tour differently, in part, because we bring different experiences and contexts with us to the tour. How we touch a particular thing might be based on gender expectations, familiarity with similar items, whether we view it as sacred or profane as well as many other socially-learned factors. Thus, while understanding, in tentative ways, how others might cognize the plantation through a tour

and afterwards, researchers considering touch must also recognize that the understandings we draw from this research is potentially incomplete.

Before exploring the haptic experience of the plantation, I will first consider the contributions of other researchers who have considered touch and memory at museums.

Theorizing the Connections between Touch and Memory

Introducing their research on using haptic technology to teach about ancient Rome, Sylvester Arnab et al. (2010) noted, “Learning ancient history is fundamentally dependent upon intangible narratives often accompanied by illustrations and historical facts.” While artifacts associated with more recent historical periods such as the Early American Period or the Antebellum Period tend to be more available than those we identify as “ancient,” the same statement is largely true – most of what we learned about history, we did so through information, which we received through auditory or visual means. Today, the broad definition of the museum includes more than collecting artifacts with the intent to present them to be read in a particular set of ways by a more or less passive public. Through funding, visitor comments and other means, government, philanthropists and visitors reveal that they expect opportunities of active engagement for museum visitors (Wehner and Sears 2010:143; Pye 2007: 13-4; Kratz and Karp 2006: 1).

Surprisingly, while there is much work on the pasts of historic sites and how these histories are presented, a relatively small amount of the published research deeply considers the relationship between touch at historic sites and social memory (Barthel 1996; Maggelssen 2007; Wood and Latham 2011). Even during a brief period in the 1970s and earlier 1980s, when some radical researchers promoted touch at historic-site museums, critical consideration of its value was overshadowed by discussions of the

comparative value of first-person or third-person narratives at historic house sites, including historic house museums (For examples see Deetz 1971; Wrenn 1971; Wallace 1981).

A significant portion of the recent literature on touch and experience focuses on themes of accessibility and pedagogy (Wood and Latham 2011). Touch research on accessibility often considers the rights of access for certain populations, such as the visually impaired, the elderly and children, particularly those with special ability situations (For a few examples, see Goldring 2010; Candlin 2003; 2004; Hetherington 2002), while research on pedagogy of touch in museums often examines how to make museum content more meaningful, thus more memorable, as well as the issues and potentials for doing this with touchable artifacts or digital world creation (For a few examples, see Gold 2010; Heath and vom Lehn 2008; Prytherch and Jefsoutine 2007; Geary 2007; Geller 2006; Hall and Bannon 2005; Asano and Ishibashi 2004; McLaughlin et al. 2000).

Being near the stuff historic people used, as well as being in the spaces where historic moments happened or where historic people lived or did significant things, are potentially power-laden experiences precisely because of the possibilities of touch. The narrative statement, “George Washington slept here” influences tourists to think about the socially-defined important person who was there and even the importance of the space in which tourists are at that moment, precisely because of the potential to touch the vestiges of history by which one is surrounded (Gregory and Witcomb 2007: 265 and Hancock 2010).

While tourists often have to be satisfied with simply being near the artifacts of the past, this was not always the case. Across the history of the museum, touch has undergone a dramatic set of changes that reflect the input of museum staff, museum studies theorists, historians and related researchers as well as visitor and patron demand (Pye 2007: 13-4). In more formal museums, most artifacts are in special display cases or are separated by velvet ropes designed to prevent tourists from taking or touching the important relics of the past.

The transition from personal collections to museum collections and the recognition of a need to preserve historical collectibles, together with a philosophical prioritization of seeing over touching, led to prohibition from touching the artifacts they displayed at most museums. With the enlarged audience and the politicizing of the museum came the need to preserve the vestiges of the past, which needed to be saved for future audiences, reminding them of who they are and what their responsibilities are to the ancient nation of which they are a part (Kratz and Karp 2006). Over time, touchable museum artifacts from the past were not only decontextualized, but also partially desensitized and made into items that should only be seen, except for those who were entrusted with their care (Pye 2007: 17-9).²¹

This responsibility to protect and preserve is powerful and empowering. For example, the postcards that served as source material for a previous chapter in this dissertation are now in individual plastic sleeves for their protection. The thought of their potential damage or loss bothers me for reasons much larger than their economic value,

²¹ A good example of this is unfolding as I write this chapter. Detroit recently filed for bankruptcy and a discussion has started about possibly selling items of the Detroit Institute of Art (DIA) to cover some of the losses of the city's creditors. The idea that the items in DIA collections belong to not only the city government, but also to "society as a whole" serves as a foundation for some of the arguments used as a defense against selling pieces in the DIA (Compare Gallagher and Stryker 2013).

which, per card, is relatively minor. Preserving these decades-old postcards seems to be a social obligation because as a society, we respect those who save certain objects of the past, seeing their acts through the lenses of dedication as well as personal and social responsibility. As a nation, we enact certain statutes to encourage the protection of certain material culture. At various levels, including the nation, the state and the university, we provide places to archive and present certain collections, which in turn increase the value of those archives and museum sites.

According to Kevin Herrington (2002), the existence of the museum is based on the power of regulated touch. “It is the Otherness of touch that poses that threat, not just a threat to the object but to the idea of the museum itself and the kind of scopic regime it helps to constitute” (Hetherington 2002:202). This dangerous Otherness of touch is so important that it proves problematic when trying to deal with the issue of access for the visually impaired (Candlin 2007). The innocent, controlled touch on the part of the visually impaired is framed as polluting to the relics of the museum. The basis of the prestige, power and professionalism of the museum over the collector is whether they follow complex rules of tactile interaction with the objects collected (Compare Candlin 2007). Fiona Candlin (2007) argues that to frame the touch of the visually impaired in any way other than as polluting would be to admit the potential arbitrariness of only allowing certain curators to touch and not the general public as a whole. In this context touch signifies power, because “we touch what we have relative power over and, conversely, in touching we establish our rights to that person or thing” (Candlin 2007: 96). Effectively, while a public museum and the items in it might be considered as belonging to all, that possession demands distance, for too close a proximity, as indicated

by touch, crosses the line that is reserved for those who claim the responsibility (and privilege) of the interest of the greater good of all.

However, in the changing museum, touch is more than current control and possession. Responding to calls for greater public engagement and relevance, some museums use touch – in very limited ways – to encourage greater engagement with visitors and potential visitors (Candlin 2007: 90; Jacques 2007). In some cases, museum staff members produce or otherwise provide replicas of rare artifacts, which visitors are encouraged to touch (Hall and Bannon 2005). Through careful reproduction, such replicas can feel the same as the original artifact in texture and weight. Indeed, there is a place for replicas. As educational aids, these copies allow for extensive tactile engagement while preserving the original artifact for future audiences (Compare Hall et al. 2001).

In those cases where museums allow visitors to touch the artifacts, such touch is still regulated and purposeful. However, museums have not made a wholesale move away from the prohibition of touching artifacts by tourists. Usually, the items that visitors can touch are only a very small part of a museum's holdings and represent minor risks on the part of the museum. Regulating touch in this way empowers visitors while maintaining the status quo of the museum and its staff. Besides limiting touch for most of the objects in the museum to qualified curatorial staff, the museum still presents these select touchable artifacts in selective contexts with docents or signs to indicate what the items were, who created them, their use and other directed ways of experiencing the objects.

Even when touch is not sanctioned, the potential of touching an item influences the veracity of the statements made about it and the histories to which it connects. Thus the focus on the power of touch or touching at a theoretical level risks missing the importance of actively touching material objects. Material in nature and existent in the present moment, historic objects can be troublesome because they deal in what can be seen as multiple temporal and material contexts. Because of this, some researchers exploring the social value of historic objects find it necessary to theorize them beyond the material. For example, Jules Prown saw historical objects as “materialized historic events” that allow “past events to ‘be re-experienced’” (Prown 1993: 2-3). Of course this opens a myriad of possibilities of what past events are materialized through the historic artifact – creation, use, preservation, observation, etc. A more useable way to understand the relationship of object and meaning comes from Susan Pearce,

For humans, one of the principle ways in which objects acquire special powers is the strength of feeling, which has been poured into them. This can happen to any kind of thing, and at every level of social action. For a single individual, it may be a pencil or a shirt, which was part of a formative event and henceforth carries the freight of the event, so we call it a souvenir. For groups – families, villages, regimes – the same kind of piece has a wider frame of reference and might be called an heirloom. For whole societies, an object like the Stone of Scone or George Washington’s sword has come to embody the force of a nation, and acquire the standing of sacred relics or icons (Pearce (2010: xvi).

In this context, “feeling” includes touch as the pencil held, the shirt worn, and George Washington’s sword as both a weapon and ceremonial item. These things suggest both touch over sight and touch as contextualized through sight – a haptically-founded, visual power. Pearce further notes the importance of socialization that goes with this, saying that people need to know the agreed upon history and/or mythology surrounding the object for the item to carry this “special power” (Pearce 2010: xvi).

Christopher Wingfield (2010) advances this idea describing certain objects as having charisma. Before pushing this idea too far – to the point of making the object supernatural – it is important to acknowledge that the power of the item is still rooted culturally, not in some mystic property of the object itself. Mythic representation, spatial context, unique material properties and a quality of the unknown contribute to the charisma of the item. Wingfield's (2010: 56) difficulty to completely get at this leads to him saying, "Charisma, like magic, is a property far easier to recognize than to understand and explain....If it were easy to identify how charisma worked it would cease to operate as effectively." I posit that it is precisely because one feels that there is more to the object – more than what is seen in front of us – that we are drawn to it. The unknown possibilities of certain historic artifacts compel us to want to experience them more completely, to feel them.

Along this line, the settings of plantation house museums contribute to the power of historic objects once associated with known planter-class individuals. At historic house museums, the open presentation of most items – outside of a case, and often, not roped off, allow tourists to get close to historic objects (Compare Hancock 2010). Visitors can get very close to such items without actually touching them. This intimacy contextualized along with narratives presented about the uniqueness of these objects – they no longer are used, they once belonged to someone important, they are decades, even centuries old – become part of the process of not only mythologizing of the object but also a 'pouring special power' into the object (Hancock 2010: 126). Often, succinct descriptions of an item do little to make tourists feel that they know all about the object. The mystique – the 'if these walls could talk' implication – of most historic houses and

even the objects they contain indicate to tourists that there is more to them than can be seen.

It is this “more” that validates what is said about the object. As an authority on a specific portion of the past, the museum and its staff are trusted to be truthful about that past. Though playful innuendo is part of the tour at many sites, as I noted earlier in Chapter Four most docents of plantation house museums pride themselves on the accuracy of their narrative, making sure not to say anything that is not verifiable by the sources that the museum’s curatorial staff views as legitimate (Gable 2005). Indeed, museum staff members often use this caution not to say anything inaccurate as a principle reason to not discuss the enslaved community more completely. Still, the materials of the plantation house, its heirlooms, serve as powerful touchstones to enter other people’s lives (Hancock 2010), communicating what docents do not. Speaking about a set of glasses once owned and worn by Virginia Woolf, Nuala Hancock explains the power of touching these objects,

Such privileged encounters bring us into closer contact with the other; render the intangible tangible; offer us the possibility of ‘sensing’ the other through the enduring fabric of their material lives. But the vicerality of handling a relic such as this rests on a felt disequilibrium; between the survival of the object and distant evanescence of the life it commemorates. The more vividly present through the metonymic object, the more poignantly absent the subject reveals herself to be (Hancock 2010: 119).

The absence of the individual to whom the object connects – like the absences of certain details on the tour – forces tourists to focus on what they do know and what they do feel, while they attempt to fill in gaps with information from the museum staff and their imagination. Effectively, the incompleteness of the encounter encourages us to reflect about it, even to obsess about the topic. This extra time and effort spent trying to make complete our knowledge about the place, its people and pasts, allows the moment and its

memory to become more – more permanent and more meaningful. Thus, in the effort to find out what we can be sure about we often make the imagined certain, effectively recreating as individuals the area’s meta-myths about local plantations that we already believe as social groups and bring with us to the site.²²

Touring as a Visually-framed Haptic Experience

Docents and tourists use the physical environment of the plantation house museum to remember the past. This environment and the elements within it are prompts that influence the direction of memory and how it is framed. In harmony with the above argument, the tourism plantation becomes more than a visual landscape or a simple space with visual cues indicating “the past.” It is multisensory – visual, audible, tactile, olfactorous, and at times, even gustatory. Sensory involvement while remembering the past creates a remembered past that is multidimensional, both more than representation and more than embodied. While this sensuous, multidimensional, remembered past is a reality, it does not mirror “the past” as it actually happened – it cannot because the complete context can never be recreated – instead it politicizes the past (Barthel 1996). Yet, that does not mean that this sensuous past is unworthy of remembering, because it opens up space for the turning of memory toward the visually-centered forgotten.

For most tourists, the plantation-house museum starts as a visual experience and develops into an audio-visual-haptic experience in a process where we get closer and closer to the museum. This occurs in at least three categorical stages that each adds a sensory element or sensorial depth. It is a processual experience that starts with visitors

²² In a previous work (Modlin 2008: 275-6) I draw a distinction between meta-myths related to plantation house museum and the representation of slavery, which are broad myths that “deflect public attention away from the discussion of slavery” and production myths. “Production myths tend to be more specific and many of them are simple statements, often thrown into the discourse of slavery in a way that discourages the visitor to ask for further detail or clarification.”

seeing the brochure, website or billboard for a plantation. Next, tourists approach the plantation house museums, entering the site itself. There is still a visual distance to seeing the plantation, sometimes dramatically created through framed approaches of stately trees, but the plantation is now directly experienced as opposed to being seen through the framed images of marketing material. At some locations, after tourists see the exterior of the house, but before they tour the museum, tourists see an audiovisual presentation about the history of the house and some of the past residents and visitors to the site. This video attempts to further frame the plantation house museum in certain ways by encouraging visitors to see – and know – the place in specific ways. Audio narration explains the importance of what the tourists will shortly see closely. The climax of the sensuous journey is the tour, as tourists look at antique items more closely while docents explain the significance of what tourists see. Tourists feel the museum and the artifacts present there as they walk through the site. Yet, the sensuous nature of the experience does not have to end when the house tour does, because in the gift shop tourists can buy sensual reminders of the experience they just had. This progression from brochure through the end of the house tour and beyond makes history more vivid through an increasingly closer physical contact with material elements connected with the past, making touch more possible.

Tourists walk through the plantation – or at least the plantation house as museum – sensuously *experiencing* the environment. Tourists feel the air on their skin, the floor under their feet, architectural features as they pass through doors, and yes, even the furniture and other artifacts in the house. Some of these touches are directed by the

museum staff, some touches are stolen. Yet, all of these ways of feeling the museum add a concreteness and closeness that a distant “seeing” does not (Candlin 2007).

Not all furnishings and architectural features are tactilely off-limits. Only a few plantation house museums protect the floor by limiting tourists to areas covered by protective materials. Even in those few places where this does occur, the haptic experience of walking on the protective material subtly reminds the visitor of the importance of the place and a socially-defined need to protect it. Yet, the protective covering on the floor does not completely separate the tourists from feeling the house. Acts as simple as moving from outside to inside the house or from room to room within the house, allow tourists opportunities to feel the house by touching door frames or stepping on thresholds.

Demonstrating the selective maintenance of physical separation of museum and tourists, it was in Latta Plantation in January 2007, the very first plantation house that I toured for my master’s research, that the docent, who had discouraged young visitors from sitting in chairs or touching tables, encouraged us to feel a special spot on the floor. The docent told tourists to feel a threshold between two rooms with their feet as they passed from a room to an entryway. Before leaving the room where the planter-class family ate their meals, she instructed tourists to slide their foot from one side to the other as they crossed the threshold because we would feel two indentions. The docent then told us that while we will never know for sure what caused those two indentions, she liked to think that this was where the enslaved person, who served the food to the master and his family, stood, wearing down that spot over the years. As most of the tourists left the room through that door, they stopped and slid their foot across the threshold feeling the

indentions. Usually, they would look at someone else in the group and nod as if accepting this as proof of the veracity of the explanation given us by the tour guide. I vividly remember, feeling the fascinating power of that spot – and admittedly did again the three other times that I returned to the site – enjoying the imagination that those two indentions were sites of resistance against being forgotten by that unnamed enslaved waiter. By touching a spot that might not have been completely created from the movement of enslaved feet (Figure 45), each tourists that touched that spot after hearing that story connected the memory of slavery to the house though a haptic experience.

As I discussed earlier about Hope Plantation it was the wood beams in the basement that supported the floors above, which received the attention of tourists. While

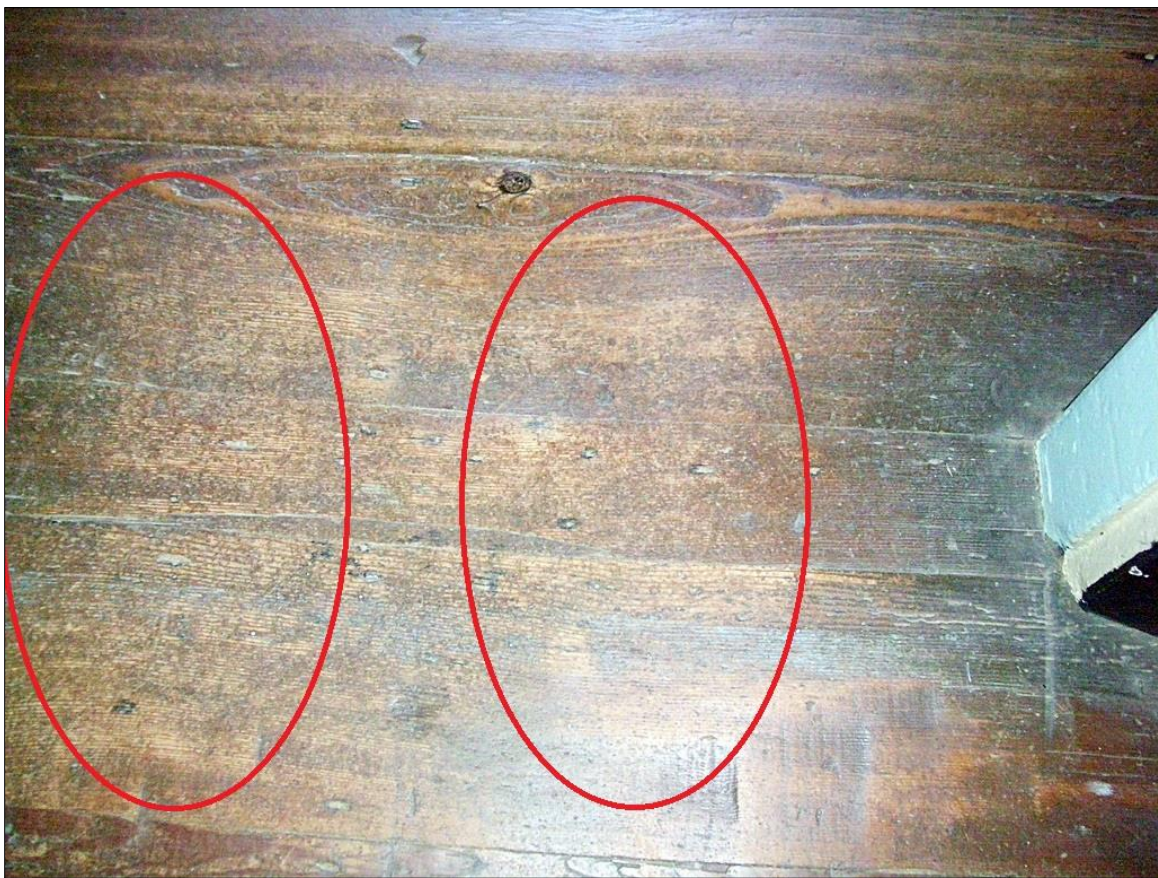


Figure 45. Circles enclose the worn spots in the threshold.

most of the main living areas of the planters' houses had high ceilings by today's building standards, the ceilings for the basement tended to be lower. Ceilings for the upper floors tend to be visually experienced – close enough to see detailed crown moldings, but not close enough to be touched. At Laura Plantation touching floor joists unfolds in a different way. On the multiple tours that I took of Laura Plantation (2008), the staff usually credited African and African American enslaved and free laborers and craftspeople as the skilled workers who constructed the plantation house. Docents pointed out the inscribed numbers on various beams in the basement and explained that the craftsmen who cut the trees for the wood and shaped the wood into beams did so some distance from the actual building site of the house. Once the milled wood was at the site, these workers built the house connecting the wood through mortise and tenon building methods. To help tourists get a better idea of the skill of these workers, docents showed where the numbers were which indicated the connections of the pieces of wood to each other. After that the docent showed the tour group a model of the joint, pulling the peg out and separating the two pieces of wood, discussing how African craftspeople shaped the wood beams in the house to only fit together in a certain way. Again being able to touch the beams and the model of the joints added veracity to the docent's explanation.

Overall, examples where touch connects the plantation to enslaved people are rarely explored by either docents or tourists. Indeed, it is the rarity with which the enslaved are connected to the plantation house and larger plantation as a whole that makes the stories of the floor indentions at Latta Plantation discussed and construction techniques at Laura Plantation so remarkable.

Indeed, docents often used touch to connect tourists to planter-class individuals. Across plantation houses, one of the most frequent potential antiques for tourists to touch were rope beds as mentioned briefly in Chapter Two. At sites where there are multiple rope beds, it is common to see one of the beds unmade. The stop on the tour by these partially-made beds allow for one of the more interactive moments of the tour. In most cases, the docent will point to a bed key (or straining wrench) even holding it up for the entire group to see it. Then the docent would ask if anyone knew what it was. Often, no one knew or no one would volunteer that they did. The tour guide would then pull back the corner of the mattress and show some of the rope running under the thin, flexible mattress (Figure 7 in Chapter Two). After this display the docent explains to the tour group that the ropes ran back and forth under the bed. Loosening ropes gave less support to the mattress and allowed it to sag toward the middle where it was furthest from the wooden bedframe. This would be uncomfortable, especially if the bed was occupied by more than one person at the time. Thus, the ropes needed to be tightened from time to time and the bed key or straining wrench was the tool used to do that. Docents tend to be vague about how exactly the straining wrench worked to the point that although I have heard this story from docents at dozens of plantation house museums over the years, I still did not understand completely how this tool helped tighten the bed until I did additional research. Though the descriptions of how to tighten the bed ropes were short, indicating that many of the docents did not feel comfortable with their knowledge of how exactly to tighten the bed, tourists often overlooked this because they focused on the rope bed or straining wrench, which they could touch.

Further distracting tourists from this, docents point out that the mattress was buttoned up and went on to explain that the mattress was stuffed – usually from materials collected from the outdoors such as bird feathers, Spanish moss or pine straw. Most docents tell the tour group that cotton was not used because it was too valuable to stuff into a mattress. Docents noted that using such material carried a high likelihood that bugs would be introduced to the bed in the process of stuffing the mattress. Each morning someone beat out, rolled and/or manipulated the bed mattress in order to redistribute the material within the mattress. Some beds had a rounded piece of wood as part of the headboard for this task. This rounded piece of wood could be removed from the headboard and used to roll out the bed, redistributing the stuffing. In many houses, docents allow tourists to touch the mattress to see how flexible it is compared to mattresses today.

Docents further bring touch into the story through the interesting connection of reciting the adage “Sleep tight! Don’t let the bedbugs bite!” by imagining how it could feel to sleep in these beds if you did not regularly tighten the bed and if you were unfortunate enough to end up bringing small biting bugs into the bed when you stuffed the mattress initially or added material later. Often, I could feel my skin crawl and noticed that some of my fellow tourists jumped, twitched or jerked parts of their bodies as if they were experiencing the same psycho-haptic experience.

Haptically, rope beds could complicate the tendency of thinking dichotomously about the planter-class family when compared to others. While many of the other artifacts in the house distinguish the planter family from the rest of the population, the rope bed and stuffed mattress could complicate our view of their privilege through the

thought of what they might feel as they tried to sleep. They felt the same things – down to being bitten by the same types of bugs as they slept.

Such beds, tightened and deloused, were probably more comfortable than the wood slat beds often associated with the enslaved servants that docents at some houses pointed out – usually in a corner – and were definitely more comfortable than the pallets on the ground or floor on which many enslaved people across the South slept. Nevertheless, such bedframes often seem deceptively simple to make despite our difficulty in imagining the vast amount of work that went into tightening ropes, cleaning stuffing material, packing mattresses and making the beds. The simple-looking rope beds allowed a space for tourists to reflect on the lives of those planters in the past as not only refined but also simpler and rougher.

Feeling the Atmosphere of the Plantation House Museum

Often experienced without a direct, meaningful connection to the past is the atmospheric environment within the plantation house museum. The inside of the plantation house mansion serves as the setting of the prime locations of the tour. These interior areas are usually climate controlled – air-conditioned in the summer, heated in the winter. While this makes the environment more attractive for touring, staff usually state that air-conditioning was installed for the preservation of artifacts. In an attempt to maximize the length of the existence of old furnishings and restored interior finishes, museum managers control the temperature and humidity in the house. The artifacts, made of paper, cloth, wood and other materials that naturally break down over time, often continue to exist well beyond their counterparts in part because of climate control. This extended life expectancy sets these artifacts apart as unique. Continued existence for

these items often means not just restricted use, but also controlling the decaying potential of the environment around them.

While climate control might be primarily for the artifacts, people who tour these museums benefit too. Spring and summer are often the primary season for touring these historic house museums for tourists arriving from outside of the area nearest the site.²³ Often, docents use exterior spaces around the plantation house museum to frame the importance of the family and the site. In the heat of the late spring, summer and even early fall, particularly on a sunny day, these moments can feel lengthy and uncomfortable to visitors. Indeed, tourists will express their discomfort through shading their eyes with their hands, shifting from foot to foot or even repositioning themselves to shady spots or different angles around the docent. Responsive docents tend to abbreviate these exterior stops, sometimes verbally acknowledging the tourists' discomfort and saying, "Let's step inside where it is comfortable." Occasionally, either outside or right after entering the house, tourists will draw comparisons between the past and the present. Imagining work in the heat under the sun on a hot summer day, they ask questions such as, "How did they do it back then?" – often receiving expressions of agreement from other tourists. This strategy sets up situations that separate slavery from the plantation house museum with few tours even acknowledging that it was in such hot weather that the slaves labored during large parts of their lives.

In home after home, particularly in the Deep South, docents point out architectural features that reflect consideration of the atmosphere. High ceilings were for heat to rise farther from the space where people were in a room. The presence of

²³ This differs a little in Southern Louisiana where the heat and the New Orleans conference schedule shape the flow of tourists toward spring and fall.

chimneys in most rooms indicated not only the possibility of heat in the lived spaces of a house, but also implies harsh winters and inefficient fireplaces. At the King-Bazemore House in Windsor, North Carolina, this tactile experience is considered in a unique way. The docents bring tourists into a room off of the back porch that is interpreted as a visitor's room. The room does not have a fireplace. Docents note this and say that this was to discourage unknown visitors traveling through an area from staying too long, balancing the obligations of Southern Hospitality with the ideology of encouraging self-reliance as one did not want to encourage strangers to take advantage of their cordiality. The idea is that if the room was too comfortable, particularly in the winter, unexpected, uninvited guests would stay longer than one night.

At many other plantation house museums, museum staff members point out that the doors and windows of the house lined up across the house and large covered porches kept the rooms of the house from receiving direct sunlight during most of the summer day. Tour guides inform tourists that the alignment of windows and doors on the outside and inside of the house allowed for breezes to pass through the house unencumbered. For example, at Destrehan Plantation, outside of New Orleans, Louisiana, docents discuss how the house was originally designed this way, but that a renovation in the early 1840s (Cizek, Lawrence and Sexton 2008: 21), which closed in the back porch, failed to account for the fact that it would disrupt the flow of air across the house. As another example where the climate comes up on tours, docents that lead tourists through the King-Bazemore House note that the wide porch keeps the direct sunlight out of the house during most of the day during the summer when the sun is high, while allowing some sunlight into the windows during the winter.

The Untouched Plantation

While much of this chapter focuses on actually touching the material remnants and recreations as well as the felt physical atmosphere of the plantation house museum, we should not ignore the power of not touching in the museum. Not touching the plantation house museum happens in two ways. First, there is the experience of nearly touching items within the plantation house museum. Second there is the absence of touch, which is based on the absence of something that could be touched. Both of these forms of “untouch” influence not only tourists’ experiences in the historic museum, but how they remember the past. I will consider the first of these - nearly touching items in a plantation house museum in this section and absence of touch in the next section.

As noted earlier, there is a power to being near antique artifacts in the house of wealthy and at times, famous, planters and their family or seeing the items that they once owned and used. Tourists can look at pictures other people took of the things visible in many plantation houses either through the books and brochures provided or sold by the plantation house or through images that people uploaded to a host of sites including Facebook, Flickr and Tumblr – to mention only a few photo-centric websites. However, photographs carry a distance that being in place does not. Even at sites where tourists are prohibited from touching, tourists experience the plantation in ways that differ from viewing or even studying photographs. There is a tactile, even haptic potential – ‘I could touch it, because it is right here in front of me’ – that gives authority to the visual and auditory experience of the tour. Tourists believe the stories told precisely because the antiques serve as corroborators to history. They were co-present with historical figures at the very moment(s) we were not and yet exist into the present. These material prompts

serve as witnesses of the past. They add veracity to the stories told to tourists by docents, who as museum staff are part of the group who have the right to touch, and by extension have added knowledge of the artifacts (See Hetherington 2002's connected idea of *praesentia*). Thus touch in the museum not only is empowering to those who possess the right to touch, it empowers the visitor because of their proximity to those same items. We should see this as a natural extension of Psychologist's Stephen Thayer's (1986: 12) thought, "If intimacy is proximity, than (sic) nothing comes closer than touch, the most intimate knowledge of another." While this statement has its fullest application between individuals, it gets at our knowledge of the world we live in too. Close proximity without touch, as in historic house museums, allows one to feel very knowledgeable about the material examples presented and the lives they represent, without polluting the items through the transgressive touch of uneducated hands (Compare Candlin 2007).

Thus, haptic potential is touch adjacent. The ability to almost touch in this way implies adjacency to "most intimate knowledge"—knowledge not as intimate as that acquired by touch, but still more intimate than that achieved through looking at images of the touched item. While such intimateness might not go so far as to connect the person touching to the item in a religious way, the experience is compelling and the item can become relic-like with a charismatic power to the present-day individual close to it, because the item was touched in the past by someone important. Explaining this, Jan Geisbusch (2007: 80) observed, "The whole idea of the relic is based on the idea of the transfer through physical proximity.... These are remarkable (or holy, if you are a believer) not because they depict or signify something but because they have been in actual contact with something (or rather someone)." Plantation house museum staff and

tourists both appreciate this power of past contact. Most docents note the items once owned by the planter family who formerly occupied the mansion, while tourists ask about these items, if docents do not provide such information quickly enough on the tour. For both of these categories of actors – museum staff and tourists – ownership is usually enough to prove the touched relationship and thus make the relic worthy of endowing with charisma.

Absence of Touch

The absence of people and the selected nature of what touchable items are present influences the way that tourists remember and value a plantation's pasts.²⁴ Nuala Hancock (2010: 119) noted that the presence of a pair of reading glasses once owned by Virginia Wolfe brought into focus the absence of the person who once wore them. While plantation house museums are history museums, their focus is almost always on a set of people who once lived at the site, so this issue of the absence of these people can be acute. Plantation house museums across the South do a number of things to deal with this issue. Docents share portrait paintings and old photographs, or their copies, as visuals to show the appearances of some former residents. While many of these images represent planters, some sites such as Mendenhall Plantation do show image(s) of the enslaved individuals who resided and worked there. Other sites use other means to cope with the absence of past residents. At Laura Plantation three-dimensional wood and cloth displays represent a few of the key members of the family. Other sites, such as Destrehan Plantation include mannequins at points on the tour (See Figures 13 and 14). One of the mannequins represents the enslaved woman Marguerite. While the absence of any of the original residents of the plantation is a problem which each plantation must strategically

²⁴ "Pasts" intentionally plural to emphasize the multiple "pasts" every plantation potentially includes.

address, the absence of touchable, slave-connected items causes certain issues related to memory that these sites often fail to consider. Items once owned by slaves might be harder to find and acquire for plantation museums, but ownership is only one way to frame slave-connected items as I will discuss shortly.

The absence of items once owned by the planter potentially leaves the house with fewer material witnesses. Many sites own few of the objects specifically held by the families who once owned the plantation. To overcome gaps plantation house museums compensate by acquiring collections of items very similar to those once possessed by the former owners of the property. Some plantation house museums, such as Hope Plantation in Windsor, North Carolina, which has four items once owned by Governor David Stone and his family, have extensive inventories from past owner estate settlements and use these lists to obtain identical antiques. Others, without such detailed records or with more restrictive financial situations, must settle for items from the period. Either way, plantation house museum staff members use these furnishings to connect visitors to certain planter-class people of the past.

Even with extensive collections of items directly connected to the planter-class family rounded out with supplemental antiques, absences change the haptic-potential of the tour. Visitors think that the lives of those who lived so long ago were so much simpler because of the absences of the odds and ends of life. Less cluttered, such museum rooms imply simplicity because the stuff that indicates many of the moments of a fully-lived life are missing. As some visitors imagine what it would have felt like to live in such a place, the experience is strained by being a simulacrum, inferior and lacking the completeness of the past for which such visitors look. Thus the incompleteness of the

collection of touchable items in plantation house museums effectively highlights a key issue with authenticity arguments for these sites. Even if we see authenticity as in the eye of the beholder (DeLyser 1999), more than a few minutes of being in such a space challenges even the most ardent of those who wish to imagine themselves in an idealized past. One starts to reflect on what is missing and to wish for more – even if it is just to be able to see exactly what they saw, or touch what they could but is no longer there.

Absences of Touching and Enslaved Plantation Pasts

Just as there are auditory and visual deficiencies when it comes to enslaved people and slavery as an institution, there are also haptic inequalities at plantation house museums. Absence of slave-connected objects and haptic experience at plantation museums can be categorized in three ways. First, the touchable items that are associated with enslaved people and families are not there. Second, when plantation house museums do have items used by and tasks completed by enslaved black workers, these items and processes are often reframed as items and processes of whites. Finally, the items that are associated with the enslaved population are treated differently by plantation house museum curators and staff.

Starting with the very first tour that I took at Latta Plantation and repeatedly at other museums over the years, I have heard a number of docents make expressions of lament including a statement of how few items and how little information remains of the enslaved population that once served as the basis and producers of the wealth of the planter class. While such statements mean to indicate a lack of documentation of the lives of the enslaved, particularly from their own perspectives, the implication is that the deficiency excuses the absence of slavery at the site completely. Some docents go so far

as to implicate the quality of the materials of the material culture of the enslaved, be it the missing slave cabins or the items that might have been used in the day-to-day life of the enslaved such as clothing or the rare piece of furniture.

As indicated in the previous chapter by the quotes of formerly enslaved individuals, slaves did have lower quality clothing, beds and home quarters than the planter class and it is possible such items would wear out quicker. Yet, this alone does not completely explain the dearth of slave cabins, clothing and possessions remaining today as compared to houses, clothing and possessions of the planter class. A group of factors contribute to this difference. One of these factors was the difference in economic condition, as a group, between the descendants of former enslavers and former slaves. Even if financially broken by the Civil War, children and grandchildren of the slaveholding planter might have been able to replace items once used, storing the older items not completely worn out of existence in an attic or elsewhere. Meanwhile, former slaves and their descendants who as a class would have started freedom economically poorer would continue to feel economic pressure to use an item as long as possible, wearing the item out for its initial purpose and even reusing the item for purposes not originally intended and wearing the item out for those purposes too.

A second factor was the relatively greater social value placed upon items used by or once belonging to former masters over those once belonging to enslaved people. Social value of items occurs at multiple resolutions, but two of these are important to this discussion: the family and the collector. While members of the planter class might look at old cabins as an indication of what the family once owned and controlled, descendants of the enslaved individuals who once lived in these cabins would see these same cabins as

continuing examples of ongoing wrongs and second-class citizenship. For those that buy into the narrative that those who work hard will rise under American Capitalism these cabins can further indicate personal, familial or systematic failures. On a tour of Frogmore Plantation in early 2011, the tour guide tried to make this connection for another tourist and myself inside one cabin by pointing at the remnants of paper pages from old magazines and catalogues that were forced into so many of the cracks in the walls and saying in a tone that indicated disgust, “Look at how they chose to live.” While the insulating material we saw was probably placed in the cracks of the walls much later than the 1860s, such a comment indicated the ease with which one could assign a negative meaning to what might have been the an act of desperation – trying to keep warmth in using what one could afford.

Plantation museums further separate touch and remembering slavery by crediting tasks formerly done by enslaved laborers to others. Enslaved workers performed many of the agricultural processes that produced the wealth of the planter, made the beds, and often prepared and served the food the planter-class family ate, yet many plantation house museums do not stress this. It is telling that the term “planter” inherently steals haptic experiences away from the slaves by crediting the beneficiaries of the stolen labor with doing it themselves. Even when plantation house museums acknowledge the enslaved housekeepers, cooks and nannies through the use of docent-re-enactors and by connecting the enslaved to items in the museum by invoking their use or care, the largest set of haptic connections - that of agricultural labor – is missing. While this deficiency is related to the very nature of most plantation house museums – how would museum administrators include the haptic experiences of planting, tending picking and processing

a crop on the tour? – most sites fail to even meaningfully acknowledge these felt experiences with the visual or audible cues they do present.

Management and staff at plantation houses museums usually treat items and places that could provide haptic connections to enslaved individuals' experiences differently too. Some plantation house museum sites have slave cabins. Few of these sites make these slave quarters or cabins part of the tours. At other sites where relationships between masters and slaves are considered briefly or superficially, slave residences are not a part of the tour. Slave quarters problemize discourses of “good” masters, which most of these museums idolize. Notably, docents at Laura Plantation and Stagville Plantation, sites where slave quarters or cabins are a significant part of the tour, spent extensive time fleshing out the relationship of at least one of the past owners to the enslaved individuals of that plantation. Since tales of good masters are challenged in such spaces, it is as if additional context needs to be given by the museum staff to maintain the master as good.

In the case of Laura Plantation, docents describe Laura's grandmother, Nanette Prud'Homme, as being mean to most of the people on the plantation – family and enslaved. Effectively, grandmother Nannette is painted as the sole villain to inoculate the other members of the Locoul family against negative association with the conditions of the slave cabins. Docents at Stagville near Durham, North Carolina, use a different strategy. They highlight the ways that the slave quarters were better – healthier places to live because they were raised off the ground and painted white – for the enslaved people who lived in those quarters. Still, the planter crowded enslaved families, one per room, into those buildings. With both of these tours, slave quarters provide a haptically-

different experience for tourists who just toured the Big House and both sites are to be commended for including slave residences as part of the tour.

However, many of the few plantation museums that have them often do not include slave quarters as part of the tour. At these sites, museum employees instruct tourists to visit these buildings “if you get a chance” before or after the house tour. Lacking audible context as provided for the planter’s residence, these homes have different haptic experiences also. Situated at a distance, slave quarters that are not part of the tour as at sites like San Francisco Plantation are available for tourists to enter, look at, and even touch. Inside some of these cabins, such as the one at San Francisco, are a few items, most of which are meant to remind tourists how little the enslaved family had and how little of what they had still exists today. Two incomplete beds serve as the main pieces of furniture in one room. The velvet rope of the house is a plastic chain in the cabin – I do not know if this is intentional (Figure 46). The other notable thing in the room is slave inventories from 1856. In other rooms in the cabin, I saw a display entitled “Construction Methods of the Early 1800’s” and images of slaves from *Harper’s Weekly* framed with captions. In a third room, behind the room with the beds, are an opened cabinet, a table and bench with various cooking utensils and tools – some fastened to the wall, some setting on the table (Figure 47).

On the one hand, the lack of climate control and museum staff might be closer to the reality before the Civil War, but the differences also serve as tactile and haptic indicators of the difference of value these museums place on material that is directly connected to formerly-enslaved people. The lone piece of furniture lacks the controlled access of the furniture directly associated with the planter-class family. Without the

direct attention of the museum staff, tourists are able to touch and interact with the items in slave cabins in ways that they might not feel comfortable doing in the mansion.

Further haptically-indicating a difference in social value, the lack of climate control for these spaces indicates a lower value for these items than those in the “Big” House, where climate control extends the life of those unique antiques.



Figure 46. Two incompletely constructed beds in a slave cabin at San Francisco Plantation

At first, it might seem that I am criticizing plantation house museums from both sides of an argument over the misleading nature of air-conditioning in the mansion while saying the slave cabin needs air conditioning. However, what I am pushing for is 1) a critical consideration of how touch matters for plantation house sites and 2) to consistently apply touch policies throughout the site. At sites where slavery is



Figure 47. Sparsely furnished room in slave cabin at San Francisco Plantation

represented more completely than elsewhere, its memory is still felt in ways that marginalize it. Museum staff members do not contextualize rough furniture or items in slave cabins the way they contextualize the furnishings of the planter's residence. There is no 'pouring' of value into these items; they do not become charismatic to most tourists, because docents do not indicate these items' special value. Choosing to allow items in the slave cabin to decay while air-conditioning items in the plantation house indicates to tourists that these spaces and the things associated with them should be valued differently. Tourists, who for security reasons cannot go into many of the spaces of the plantation house without a member of the museum staff, can come and go in the slave cabin without supervision. The excitement and risk that empowers the item touched in the plantation house, is less effective in the slave cabin, because the exhibit itself implies little risk of loss for the museum.

CHAPTER EIGHT: HOW TOURISTS PARTICIPATE IN REMEMBERING SLAVERY AND THE SOUTHERN PLANTATION PAST

For over a century, tourists have shaped how slavery, the plantation and the South are remembered together. In this chapter, I will review the main points of this dissertation and consider some ways this research has meaning for future research.

While nonresidents have visited the Plantation South for centuries, the decades before the turn of the twentieth century seemed to make a distinct shift toward the development of tourism in the South (Starnes 2003). As Northerners visited the South in the first decades of the twentieth century, they used their communications home to frame memories of the Plantation South. Some tourists from the North viewed cities like St. Augustine or Savannah as refuges from winter weather, even healthy places for certain illnesses (Starnes 2003: 4). At least a few visitors reflected on these places' connections to slavery. While it is impossible to quantify how many tourists to the South reflected on the role of slavery in making these places, enough tourists did so that we can find some of their efforts to make these connections on postcards.

Tourists remembered places of slavery as did postcard manufacturers, local place promoters, recipients of the postcards mailed by tourists and collectors who held onto these postal pieces long after their ephemeral nature would indicate. As with other forms of memory work, including history making, museum tours, letters to editors of newspapers, and personal conversations, we need to appreciate each of the groups and individuals that contribute to remembering the past (Trouillot 1995; Katriel 1993; Zelizer 2008; Wahl-Jorgensen 2002). It is easier to recognize the voices of some groups, such as postcard manufacturers and place promoters, more quickly than others, such as postcard senders, recipients and collectors. These other voices are not as easy to find and in some

cases can only be understood through inference. This seems particularly true of postcard recipients who at first might be thought of as silent. Yet, as Verena Winiwarter (2001: 452) noted, senders mailed postcards to recipients whose values they believed they knew. While we cannot say that each recipient of a postcard with a slave site or formerly enslaved person on it felt a particular way, we can understand that plenty of recipients found such sites interesting and even noteworthy enough that some slavery-connected sites are still on postcards that can be bought in their respective localities today. That some postcard senders wrote such things as “Here is where they used to sell slaves,” or “A relic of barbarism,” indicated that at least a few senders, many of whom were tourists, thought that the people who received these postcards shared their views about the institution of slavery and the site’s connection to it.

Sender text on the vast majority of postcards with images of former slaves and slave sites on them do not directly acknowledge the connection of slavery and site that the postcard makes. These early-twentieth century tourists commented on the weather or connected the site to themselves in other ways. No doubt, the statements handwritten on postcards recounting how the traveler was enjoying the trip to the site also encouraged others to visit the place in the future. These handwritten messages are often short versions of statements similar to tourists visiting a plantation house museums today. Like today, while having information that a site was connected with slavery, many tourists often framed their experiences in ways that overlook that past when they talk about a place. Similar things happen with plantation houses today when tourists go through the site, as indicated by the limited number of reviews that mention slavery when reviewing plantation museums on sites like [yelp.com](https://www.yelp.com) and [tripadvisor.com](https://www.tripadvisor.com).

Whether or not they actively seek out information about slavery and a particular plantation's past, all tourists of plantation house museums participate in the process of remembering the past. In a variety of ways, tourists contribute and even shape how the past is remembered at plantation house museums. At the most basic level, they do this through showing up at plantation house museums and touring it. Their presence at these sites validates the arguments made by museum staff members that these sites are interesting and important. The power of such visitor validation should not be underestimated. Repeatedly over the last six years of my research, tour guides and plantation museum managers have told me this. Sometimes this was directly – “People would not show up, if they were not interested”; other times this was less explicitly about the house – “Tourists do not want to hear about that on a tour” – but still indicated the power tourists have in the memory process.

Nonetheless, tourists' influence on the process of remembering the past is done by more than simply showing up to tour the site. Through asking questions, gazing at and touching certain items, tourists inform museum staff members what things and themes interests them. Most of these momentary acts by themselves have little influence on the work of remembering the past during future tours, though a few seemingly ephemeral acts do have lasting impact. Cumulatively, questions from tourists, voiced comments they make, and the physical connections they make on a tour with the things in the house, shape future tours through the museum. Over time, docents anticipate other tourists' questions, comments and touches, and adjust their presentation in the house accordingly.

While docents may try to direct the discussion of the past as a tour group works its way through the museum – a journey of remembering – they often adjust their words

based on the questions and comments tourists make. Tourists ask questions that prompt docents for more information. As noted in chapter five, such questions may indicate genuine curiosity about a certain topic, which docents will often revisit through the rest of the tour to show their attention to a particular tourist's interests. Additionally, the 'Ohs' and 'Ahs' of tourists indicate acceptance of the docent's remarks and interests in certain things. These interjections thus remind docents that those in the group see them as an authority on the subject, which encourages the docent to share additional, connected knowledge.

Tourists' effects on the process of remembering the past do not end once their tour ends. Tourists leave a site and often recommend a tourism plantation as a historic place to visit, or occasionally as one not to visit. Even after leaving the place, some tourists' expressions continue to have bearing, with docents bringing up remarks made by previous tourists or using certain phrases from one tour on later ones. This continuing influence is particularly noticeable when a tourist who is seen as an authority about a certain topic tours a site and makes statements that the docent accepts and uses on future tours. This is part of what is to be expected when we consider the role of tour guide as influential stakeholder, storyteller and mediator that helps a tour group actively make meaning of the site (Bruner 2005; Reed 2002; MacDonald 2006; Salazar 2006).

Plantation house tours are emotional journeys. During a plantation house museum tour, docents share details with tourists that encourage them to empathize with the members of planter family – to emotionally invest in them. While the wealth of the planter as represented in the number of slaves, acres, plantations and ornate items they owned are always a part of the audible sections of the tour, so are tales of joy and

sadness. The residents of the plantation's Big House are rightly described as complex people. During an emotional journey through the house, tourists connect with the planter as a person who struggled as a parent, spouse, and businessperson. Their spouses and children also struggled. Tour groups hear some of the emotionally moving details of moments of their lives. Understanding and empathizing with them is not necessarily wrong. Yet, they were not the only residents of the plantation and the enslaved people who had equally rich lives are usually marginalized through a lack of development of the stories of their lives. We should not forget though that the planter and other members of his family had a large role in the suffering experienced by slaves, particularly those over whom they claimed ownership.

This does not mean that we need to dehumanize planters and their families, but more should be done to develop stories about enslaved people too. Being specific about the details of their lives can help tourists better empathize with the enslaved. Researchers for the house – owners, curators, historians and other dedicated volunteers – often go to extraordinary lengths to learn about past residents of the plantation mansion. Docents for some plantation houses discuss the amount of work that museum staff members do to find details about former plantation owners. For example, visitors who tour Laura Plantation hear about the five thousand pages of documentation that they found related to the plantation in the *Archives Nationales* in France as well as Laura Locoul Gore's autobiography, on which docents' talking points are heavily based. At other plantation houses, one hears similar stories. While members of wealthy planter families might well have lived better documented lives, other sources are often overlooked including archeological work, and oral histories from the descendants of former slaves.

However, the stage for the stories told at these sites – the planter’s house – sets memories of the enslaved at a distinct empathetic disadvantage. Space, movement and material culture contribute to the process of remembering the past, actively naturalizing a particular set of memories while reinforcing the forgetting of other aspects. As tourists move through the house, they symbolically move closer to planters and their families. Exterior and internal spaces where past associates might have been received are used to connect the house to regional, national and international themes. In those spaces, tourists hear that the house and its past residents were important. In the next set of spaces, semi-private spaces, middle-class tourists hear details that indicate that they share things in common with the planter-class family. Often a “verifying” space or room is between these stops. In these verifying spaces, tourists see things that reaffirm the words of the docent leading the tour. These spaces might have details as simple as an unpainted or deconstructed wall or as impressive as an encased historic document with a famous person’s signature on it.

Finally, tourists enter the bedrooms of the planter family and learn about some of the more intimate details of their lives – childbirth, sickness, loneliness, and death. Stories considered in a room of antiques, especially those that were there when the events being considered occurred, serve as material witnesses to the tourists hearing these tales (Prown 1993; Pearce 2010; Wingfield 2010). For example, Lydia Rost’s bed was both with her and her parents as she died and with me and other tourists as we stood in that room and heard about her death. With the mosquito net hanging from a frame at the end of the bed, verbally, the bed says nothing, but witnesses to each of us the trauma of that

family as they lost two children within a month. The events of those few weeks seem more real because of the setting and the testament of the furnishings.

Such touchable material culture serves as more than distant witnesses. Some of us need to touch these things thinking that in a touch we will find reality. Through touch, some visitors like me imagine that we will connect to the past – maybe even be transported there, if but for a moment. Yet, such touches can lie too. Part of this is because we can only remember the possibilities of which we are aware. Thus, we all become like the tourist who once told me about touching a painting in a museum as he thought about Van Gogh working on it. He was so focused on Van Gogh's association with the painting - and I with his story – that neither of us thought about all of the other people who touched that canvas over the centuries. Similarly, I too forgot about the slaves of Destrehan Plantation who might have been dying or losing their own children to yellow fever as Lydia Rost lie dying in the bed that I touched at Destrehan Plantation when I heard the story.

While there are few things still in existence that once belonged to enslaved people, one of the primary issues with touch at plantation house museum sites deals with the created context we give material culture. Docents frame most things in the plantation museum through ideologies of ownership and control. This framing of things through ideologies dominated by ownership and control extends to the way we imagine when we touch. Thus imagining eating off a set of fragile plates at the table with the planter rarely includes thoughts of the slaves that burned their hands after warming up the plate in a plate-warmer in front of a fire place. How often do tourists imagine the concern over those same dishes as they washed them, fearful that they might break them – or the idea

that might have crossed the minds of other slaves about chipping them as a small act of resistance?

Such tactilely-linked memories in the house are probably more likely than thoughts of the haptic experiences of the enslaved in the field or even in the slave quarter. Short of actually having tourists participate in some sort of agricultural activity as part of the tour (Figure 48) or imagining the felt experience of movement while touching tools that slaves used, I cannot think of a way to make this a part of the touch experience of a tour. This seems unlikely to happen on a large scale.



Figure 48. The author contemplating cotton harvesting at Latta Plantation in 2007.

Future Directions

Research often leads to new questions, and this research project does just that. While I have created a census of the plantation house museums in the South, I think that we need a good survey of the recent historical development of these sites across the South. Finding these sites was a task unto itself, but as I did it, I noticed a couple of interesting trends. In her work on historic houses museums, Patricia West (1999) observed that these sites reflect the moment in which they were started. First a good number of these sites became museums in the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s and were started in association with local, predominantly white history societies. Were some of these places developed as a reaction to the Civil Rights advances of the period? We should also consider the locally-stated role of many of these sites to serve as both a way to remember local history and to function as part of an economic development place.

While I am interested in the history of each of these sites, the felt experiences of remembering in these spaces needs a lot more attention. Emotion and touch both need more research and reflection when it comes to considering how we remember the past in places like plantation house museums. Indeed, in this dissertation, I made a deliberate decision to move from emotion to sensual modality when considering the processes of remembering the past. Much of the initial review of others' research indicated that many researchers move in the other direction – from tactile and haptic sense and interaction to emotional involvement with material things (external to internal). Particularly, neuroscience research on touch and empathy seems to move in this direction (For example Iacoboni 2008). I made the choice to move counter to this for two primary reasons.

First, this reflects the temporal direction of how I recognized the connections between touching and emotion. I started to recognize the role of material culture and memory as emotionally connected before I started to think about the role of the modality of touch in remembering the past. Things, in an abstract way, served as material witnesses. Over time I realized that not only is being in the place of a historic figure and emotionally connecting with them an important aspect of remembering, but the act of touching is itself important to remembering. Through acts of touch – even the potential to touch, in spaces where things are considered so valuable that museums prohibited it – time is transcended as Nuala Hancock (2012) explained and illustrated with Virginia Woolf’s glasses, collapsing for many people the process of remembering into a timeless, but not placeless experience of remembering, where the ‘The past is not dead. In fact, it's not even past[,]’ but is with us at that moment (Faulkner 2011 [1951]: 73).

A second reason that I order emotionally touched before modality touched is to challenge a developing naturalized way of understanding these concepts and their connections. By moving from touch as a physical sense to touch and emotion, as has been common, I think researchers risk missing a fuller development of the role of the senses in connecting with the past. Effectively a channelized way of approaching this set of subjects for research has developed that pushes us past unexplored territory when it comes to touch, taste and smell, and to a lesser degree, hearing. Mark Smith’s (2006; 2007) way of approaching this is exemplar, which he does by pulling emotion just far enough away from the senses to highlight their roles in identity and race. By traveling outside of this channel, it was easier for me to reflect on the problems of touch, especially in museum environments where it is so often outwardly prohibited.

It is the gaps with touch and memory research that I struggle with and I even think that this is apparent with this dissertation. The academic silo effect (Linton 2009) is obvious with touch research. The gap seems largest between memory work in the neurosciences on one end, and the humanities and social sciences on the other. Finding connections between the works of these communities can be frustrating. Indeed, Constance Classen's (2012) observation that when some researchers try to bring the physiology of touch together with the history of touch, they have the tendency to use physiology to explain touch in history in a determinist-fashion. It is a caution we should heed, but I feel like we are approaching social memory through the individual's experience by treating physiological processes of memory with a blackbox approach. While we might not completely understand the relations between the biochemical process of remembering and social memory in a historical context, not taking the physiological processes into consideration could prove to be an issue – but exploring and working through issues like this is important.

Recently, I found out that some of my plantation house research over the next three years will be funded by a National Science Foundation grant that will be shared by geographers and their students at six universities. The project will allow us to get a better idea of how memory-making at these sites has changed in the last few years, as well as allow us to take a very holistic approach to examining these sites. In addition to doing entrance and exit surveys, we will conduct interviews, and participant observation to explore the interaction between owners, docents and tourists at plantation house museums. For me, much of what I will explore with that project is possible because of the themes that I explored with this dissertation.

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**APPENDIX 1: LIST OF PLANTATION HOUSE MUSEUMS IN THE
CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES**

Full Plantation Name	City	State
Aduston Hall	Gainesville	AL
Altwood	Faunsdale	AL
Arlington Antebellum Home & Gardens	Birmingham	AL
Battle-Friedman House	Tuscaloosa	AL
Belle Mont	Tuscumbia	AL
Bluff Hall	Demopolis	AL
Bragg-Mitchell Mansion	Mobile	AL
Everhope Plantation	Eutaw	AL
Faunsdale Plantation	Faunsdale	AL
Gaineswood	Demopolis	AL
Glencairn	Greensboro	AL
Ivy Green (Helen Keller Birth Place)	Tuscumbia	AL
Joseph Wheeler Plantation	Hillsboro	AL
Kirkwood Mansion	Eutaw	AL
Magnolia Grove	Greensboro	AL
Marengo Plantation	Lowndesboro	AL
Montgomery James-Whitaker House	Prattville	AL
Moore-Webb-Holmes Plantation	Marion	AL
Oakleigh Historic Complex	Mobile	AL
Spring Villa	Opelika	AL
Weeden House Museum	Huntsville	AL

Full Plantation Name	City	State
Lakeport Plantation	Lake Villiage	AR
Scott Plantation Settlement	Scott	AR
Decatur House	Washington	DC
Tudor Place Historic House and Garden	Washington	DC
Governor Ross Mansion and Plantation	Seaford	DE
John Dickinson Plantation	Dover	DE
Bellevue Plantation (Tallahassee Museum)	Tallahassee	FL
Bulow Plantations Ruins Historic Park	Flagler Beach	FL
Gamble Plantation & Historic Site	Ellenton	FL
Historic Haile Homestead	Gainesville	FL
Kingsley Plantation	Jacksonville	FL
Alexander H. Stephens National Site	Crawfordville	GA
Andrew-Low House	Savannah	GA
Antebellum Plantation & Farmyard at Stone Mountain	Stone Mountain	GA
Archibald Smith Plantation	Roswell	GA
Barrington Hall Plantation	Roswell	GA
Bellevue Mansion	LaGrange	GA
Boyhood Home of Pres Woodrow Wilson	Augusta	GA
Bulloch Hall Plantation	Roswell	GA
Callaway Plantation	Washington	GA
Cannonball House	Macon	GA
George Walton (Meadow Garden) House	Augusta	GA

Full Plantation Name	City	State
Harper Fowlkes House	Savannah	GA
Heritage Hall	Madison	GA
Hills & Dales Estate	LaGrange	GA
Historic Westville	Lumpkin	GA
Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation	Brunswick	GA
Jarrell Plantation Historic Site	Juliette	GA
Johnston-Felton-Hay House	Macon	GA
Pebble Hill Plantation	Thomasville	GA
Road to Tara Museum	Jonesboro	GA
Robert Toombs House	Washington	GA
Rogers House	Madison	GA
Stately Oaks Plantation	Jonesboro	GA
T.R.R. Cobb House	Athens	GA
Tullie Smith House	Atlanta	GA
Uncle Remus Museum	Eatonton	GA
Walker-Peters Langden House	Columbus	GA
Wayne Gordon House	Savannah	GA
Wormsloe Historic Site	Savannah	GA
Adsmore House & Gardens	Princeton	KY
Ashland	Lexington	KY
Bibb House Museum	Russellville	KY
Brown-Pusey House	Elizabethtown	KY

Full Plantation Name	City	State
Dinsmore Homestead	Burlington	KY
Farmington	Louisville	KY
Gov. Owsley House	Lancaster	KY
Harriet Beecher Stowe, Slavery to Freedom Museum	Washington	KY
Historic Locust Grove	Louisville	KY
Jack Jouett House	Versailles	KY
Mary Todd Lincoln House	Lexington	KY
My Old Kentucky Home Park	Bardstown	KY
Riverside Farnsley-Moremén Landing	Louisville	KY
The Hunt-Morgan House	Lexington	KY
The Pope Villa	Lexington	KY
Ward Hall	Georgetown	KY
Waveland State Historic Site	Lexington	KY
Whitehall Mansion	Louisville	KY
William Whitley House	Stanford	KY
Acadian Village	Lafayette	LA
Aillet House	Port Allen	LA
Alexander Moulton House	Lafayette	LA
Bocage Plantation	Darrow	LA
Butler Greenwood Plantation	St. Francisville	LA
Chretien Point Plantation	Sunset	LA
Cottage Plantation	St. Francisville	LA

Full Plantation Name	City	State
Destrehan Plantation	Destrehan	LA
E. D. White Historic Site	Thibodaux	LA
Evergreen Plantation	Edgard	LA
Frogmore	Frogmore	LA
Greenwood Plantation	St. Fancisville	LA
Grevemburg House Museum	Franklin	LA
Houmas House Plantation and Gardens	Darrow	LA
Judge Felix Poche Plantation	Covent	LA
Keegan-Cook House	Robeline	LA
Kent Plantation House	Alexandria	LA
Laura: A Creole Plantation	Vacherie	LA
Laurel Valley Village Plantation	Thibodaux	LA
Longfellow Evangeline State Historic Site	St. Martinsville	LA
Madewood Plantation	Napoleonville	LA
Magnolia Mound Plantation House	Baton Rouge	LA
Magnolia Plantation	Melrose	LA
Mount Hope Plantation House	Baton Rouge	LA
Nottoway Plantation and Resort	White Castle	LA
Oak Alley Plantation, Restaurant & Inn	Vacherie	LA
Oakland Plantation	Bermuda	LA
Oaklawn Manor	Franklin	LA
Oakley Plantation House at Audubon Memorial State	St. Francisville	LA

Full Plantation Name	City	State
Park		
Ormond Plantation	Destrehan	LA
Parlange Plantation House	New Roads	LA
Popular Grove Plantation House	Port Allen	LA
Prudhomme-Rouquier House	Natchitoches	LA
Rosedown Plantation	St. Francisville	LA
San Francisco Plantation	Garyville	LA
Shadows-on-the-Teche	New Iberia	LA
Southdown Museum	Houma	LA
St Emma Plantation House	Donaldsonville	LA
St. Joseph Plantation	Vacherie	LA
The Mytles Plantation	St. Francisville	LA
Whitney Plantation	Wallace	LA
Winter Quarters State Historic Site	Newellton	LA
Yucca (Melrose) Plantation	Melrose	LA
Darnall's Chance House Museum	Upper Marlboro	MD
Godiah Spray Tobacco Plantation at Historic St. Mary's	Saint Marys City	MD
City		
Hampton National Historic Site	Towson	MD
Marietta House Museum	Glenn Dale	MD
Meredith House (LaGrange Plantation)	Cambridge	MD
Montpelier Mansion	Laurel	MD

Full Plantation Name	City	State
Mount Calvert Historical and Archaeological Park	Upper Marlboro	MD
Mount Claire Museum House	Baltimore	MD
Mount Harmon Plantation	Earleville	MD
Northampton Plantation and Slave Quarters	Bowie	MD
Riversdale House Museum	Riverdale Park	MD
Snow Hill Manor	Laurel	MD
Sotterley Plantation	Hollywood	MD
Surratt House Museum	Clinton	MD
Crestmead Plantation House	Pilot Grove	MO
Pleasant Green Plantation House	Pilot Grove	MO
Auburn	Natchez	MS
Beauvoir	Biloxi	MS
Cedar Grove Mansion Inn	Vicksburg	MS
Duff Green Mansion	Vicksburg	MS
Dunleith	Natchez	MS
House on Ellicott's Hil	Natchez	MS
Linden Plantation Gardens	Vicksburg	MS
Longwood	Natchez	MS
Magnolia Hall	Natchez	MS
Melrose	Natchez	MS
Monmouth Historic Inn	Natchez	MS
Mount Locust Inn and Plantation	Natchez	MS

Full Plantation Name	City	State
Rosalie Mansion	Natchez	MS
Rosemont	Woodville	MS
Rosswood Plantation	Lorman	MS
Sedgewood Plantation	Canton	MS
Springfield Plantation	Fayetteville	MS
Stanton Hall	Natchez	MS
The Towers	Natchez	MS
Waverley Mansion	West Point	MS
William Johnson House	Natchez	MS
Windsor Ruins	Port Gibson	MS
Alexander Dickson House	Hillsborough	NC
Allison-Deaver House Museum	Brevard	NC
Asa Biggs House	Williamston	NC
Attmore-Oliver	New Bern	NC
Ayr Mount	Hillsborough	NC
Barker House	Edenton	NC
Bellamy Mansion Museum	Wilmington	NC
Bennett Place State Historic Site	Durham	NC
Blandwood	Greensboro	NC
Blount Bridgers House - (The Grove)	Tarboro	NC
Boggan-Hammond House & Alexander Little Wing	Wadesboro	NC
Bonner House	Bath	NC

Full Plantation Name	City	State
Buckner Hill Plantation	Faison	NC
Burgwin-Wright Museum House	Wilmington	NC
Burwell School Historic Site	Hillsborough	NC
Cedar Grove and Hugh Torrance House and Store	Huntersville	NC
Cedarrock Historical Farm	Burlington	NC
Charles Aycock Birthplace	Fremont	NC
Connemara: The Carl Sandburg Home	Flat Rock	NC
Cowan Museum - Kelly-Farrior Home	Kenansville	NC
Cupola House	Edenton	NC
Darshana Hall Plantation	Cleveland	NC
Dr. Josephus Hall House	Salisbury	NC
Duke Homestead	Durham	NC
Fort Defiance (William Lenior)	Lenior	NC
Foscue Plantation House	Pollocksville	NC
George W Dixon House	New Bern	NC
Green River Plantation	Rutherfordton	NC
Harmony Hall - Lenoir County Historical Association	Kinston	NC
Harmony Hall Plantation	White Oak	NC
Hay House	New Bern	NC
Haywood Hall	Raleigh	NC
Heritage Square	Fayetteville	NC
Hezekiah Alexander Homesite (Charlotte Museum of	Charlotte	NC

Full Plantation Name	City	State
History)		
High Point Museum - Haley House	High Point	NC
High Point Museum - Hoggatt House	High Point	NC
Historic Latta Plantation	Huntersville	NC
Historic Oak View County Park	Raleigh	NC
Historic Rosedale Plantation	Charlotte	NC
Historic Rural Hill Plantation Scottish Heritage Center	Huntersville	NC
Historic Stagville	Durham	NC
Historic Woodside House	Milton	NC
Hope Plantation	Windsor	NC
House in the Horseshoe	Sanford	NC
Humphrey-Williams-Smith Plantation	Lumberton	NC
Joel Lane House	Raleigh	NC
John Wright Stanly House	New Bern	NC
Joseph Montfort's House - Montfort Archaeological	Halifax	NC
Exhibit		
King Bazemore	Windsor	NC
Liberty Hall: A Southern Plantation	Kenansville	NC
Mendenhall Plantation	Jamestown	NC
Mordecai Historic Park	Raleigh	NC
Owens House	Halifax	NC
Palmer-Marsh House	Bath	NC

Full Plantation Name	City	State
Poplar Grove Plantation	Wilmington	NC
President James K. Polk State Historic Site	Pineville	NC
Quaker Meadows Plantation	Morganton	NC
Sally-Billy Plantation House	Halifax	NC
Shiloh Farm of Pitt County	Ayden	NC
Smith-McDowell House Museum	Asheville	NC
Somerset Place	Creswell	NC
Spring Hill House	Raleigh	NC
Stonewall Manor	Rocky Mount	NC
The Carson House	Old Fort	NC
The Latimer House (Lower Cape Fear Historical Society)	Wilmington	NC
The Newbold-White House: A Colonial Quaker Home	Hertford	NC
The Old Stone House - The Michael Braun House	Salisbury	NC
Thomas Day House	Milton	NC
Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens	New Bern	NC
TYRO Historic Plantation Home and Tavern	Lexington	NC
Utzman-Chambers House / Rowan Museum	Salisbury	NC
Vance Birthplace	Weaverville	NC
VanDerVeer House	Bath	NC
Pomona Hall	Camden	NJ
George M. Murrell Home Site	Park Hill	OK
Aiken-Rhett House Museum	Charleston	SC

Full Plantation Name	City	State
Ashatabula Plantation	Central	SC
Auldbrass Plantation	Yemassee	SC
Boone Hall Plantation & Gardens	Mt. Pleasant	SC
Charleston Tea Plantation	Wadmalaw Island	SC
Columns Plantation	Florence	SC
Darby Plantation	Trenton	SC
Drayton Hall Plantation	Charleston	SC
Edmonston-Alston House	Charleston	SC
Fort Hill Plantation House	Clemson	SC
Hampton Plantation	McClellanville	SC
Hampton-Preston Mansion & Gardens	Columbia	SC
Hanover House	Clemson	SC
Hazelius House	Lexington	SC
Heyward-Washington House	Charleston	SC
Historic Brattonsville (Hightower Hall)	McConnells	SC
Hobcaw Barony	Georgetown	SC
Hopsewee Plantation	Georgetown	SC
John Fox House	Lexington	SC
John Mark Verdier House	Beaufort	SC
Joseph Manigault House	Charleston	SC
Kaminski House & Museum	Georgetown	SC
Kensington Mansion	Eastover	SC

Full Plantation Name	City	State
Kershaw-Cornwallis House	Camden	SC
Leaphart/Harman House	Lexington	SC
Magnolia Plantation & Gardens	Charleston	SC
Magnolic Dale	Edgefield	SC
Manns-Simmons Cottage	Columbia	SC
Middleton Place Gardens & House Museum	Charleston	SC
Millford Plantation	Pinewood	SC
Nathaniel Russell House	Charleston	SC
Oakley Park	Edgefield	SC
Pick Pocket Plantation	Beaufort	SC
Redcliffe Plantation	Beach Island	SC
Robert Mills House & Park	Columbia	SC
Rose Hill Plantation	Bluffton	SC
Seay House	Spartanburg	SC
Spartanburg-Price House	Woodruff	SC
Walnut Grove Plantation	Roebuck	SC
Woodburn Plantation	Pendleton	SC
Belle Meade Plantation	Nashville	TN
Belmont Mansion	Nashville	TN
Bowen-Campbell House	Goodlettsville	TN
Brabson's Ferry Plantation	Sevierville	TN
Carnton Plantation	Franklin	TN

Full Plantation Name	City	State
Davies Manor Plantation	Bartlett	TN
Historic Cragfont	Castalian Springs	TN
James K Polk Ancestral Home	Columbia	TN
Lotz House	Franklin	TN
Oaklands Historic House Museums	Murfreesboro	TN
Ramsey House	Knoxville	TN
Rattle and Snap	Mt. Pleasant	TN
RippaVilla Plantation	Spring Hill	TN
The Carter House	Franklin	TN
The Hermitage	Nashville	TN
Travellers Rest Plantation & Museum	Nashville	TN
Tulip Grove	Nashville	TN
Wheatlands	Sevierville	TN
Abner Jackson Plantation Site	Lack Jackson	TX
Dewberry Plantation	Bullard	TX
Egypt Plantation Antique Barn & Trade Days	Egypt	TX
Historic Liendo Plantation	Hempstead	TX
John Jay French Museum	Beaumont	TX
Levi Jordan Plantation	Brazoria	TX
Monte Verdi Plantation	Cushing	TX
Roseland Plantation	Ben Wheeler	TX
Seward Plantation	Independence	TX

Full Plantation Name	City	State
The Goodman Museum	Tyler	TX
Varner-Hogg Plantation	West Columbia	TX
Adam Thoroughgood House	Virginia Beach	VA
Appomattox Manor	Hopewell	VA
Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial	McLean	VA
Ash Lawn - Highland	Charlottesville	VA
Avenel	Bedford	VA
Avoca	Altavista	VA
Bacon's Castle	Surry	VA
Barboursville	Barboursville	VA
Belle Air	Charles City	VA
Belle Grove Plantation	Middletown	VA
Belmead Mansion	Powhatan	VA
Ben Lomond Historic Site	Manassas	VA
Berkeley Plantation	Charles City	VA
Berry Hill Plantation	South Boston	VA
Booker T. Washington National Monument	Hardy	VA
Carlyle House Historic Park	Alexandria	VA
Castlewood Plantation	Chesterfield	VA
Chatham Manor	Fredicksburg	VA
Chelsea Plantation	West Point	VA
Cherry Hill Farm	Falls Church	VA

Full Plantation Name	City	State
Chippokes Plantation	Surry	VA
Cyrus McCormick Farm	Raphine	VA
Edgewood Plantation	Charles City	VA
Ellwood Manor	Wilderness	VA
Elsing Green Plantation	King William	VA
Endview Plantation	Newport News	VA
Eppington Plantation	Chesterfield	VA
Ferry Farm	Fredicksburg	VA
Ferry Plantation House	Virginia Beach	VA
Francis Lane House	Virginia Beach	VA
Graffiti House	Brandy Station	VA
Gunston Hall	Mason Neck	VA
Historic Huntley	Alexandria	VA
Historic Magnolia Grange	Chesterfield	VA
John Marshall House	Richmond	VA
Kenmore	Fredicksburg	VA
Lee Hall Mansion	Newport News	VA
Lee-Fendall House	Alexandria	VA
Lower Brandon Plantation	Spring Grove	VA
Lynnhaven House	Virginia Beach	VA
Magnolia Grange Plantation House	Chesterfield	VA
Mary Washington House	Fredicksburg	VA

Full Plantation Name	City	State
Meadow Farm Museum	Glen Allen	VA
Menokin	Warsaw	VA
Monticello	Charlottesville	VA
Montpelier	Montpelier Station	VA
Mount Vernon	Mount Vernon	VA
North Bend Plantation	Charles City	VA
Oatlands Plantation	Leesburg	VA
Patrick Henry's Scotchtown	Beaverdam	VA
Piney Grove at Southall	Charles City	VA
Poplar Forest	Forest	VA
Prestwould Plantation	Clarksville	VA
Raspberry Plain	Leesburg	VA
Red Hill Patrick Henry National Memorial	Brookneal	VA
Rippon Lodge	Woodbridge	VA
Rosewell	Gloucester	VA
Sherwood Forest	Charles City	VA
Shirley Plantation	Charles City	VA
Smithfield Plantation	Blacksburg	VA
Smith's Fort Plantation	Surry	VA
Stonewall Jackson House	Lexington	VA
Stratford Hall	Stratford	VA
Sully Historic Site	Chantilly	VA

Full Plantation Name	City	State
Tuckahoe Plantation	Richmond	VA
Weston Manor	Hopewell	VA
Westover Plantation	Charles City	VA
Wilton House Museum	Richmond	VA
Woodlawn	Alexandria	VA
The Adam Stephen House and Triple Brick Museum	Martinsburg	WV
The Jenkins Plantation Museum	Lesage	WV

APPENDIX 2: OUTLINE OF SITES VISITED

2010

Hope Plantation (June 21 to July 3, 2010)

Entrance and Exit Interviews – 10 family groups

Destrehan Plantation (August 18, 2010)

Participant observation – 1 tour, 6 other people

Hope Plantation (December 18, 2010)

Participant observation – 1 tour, 4 other people

Walk through with curator, Gregory Tyler

2011

Destrehan Plantation (March – May 2011)

Participant Observation – 12 tours

Longwood (August 19, 2010)

Participant observation – 1 tour – 9 other tourists

Natchez Pilgrimage (Fall 2010)

Participant observation – Toured of 6 houses over 1 day (October 1, 2010)

Hope Plantation (May – July 2011)

Participant Observation – days

May 20,

June 2, 3, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19, 23, 24, 25,

July 1, 8, 9, 10, 15, 26

Other sites Toured as a Participant Observer

Longwood Plantation (August 16, 2010; October 1, 2010)

Fall Pilgrimage – Natchez, MS (5 private residences open for the pilgrimage)

Laura Plantation (October 2010, October 2012, March 2013)

San Francisco Plantation (October 2010, October 2012, March 2013)

Haumas House (October 2012, March 2013)

Oak Alley (August 2011, October 2012, March 2013)

Frogmore Plantation (April 2011)

Somerset Plantation (December 12, 2012)

APPENDIX 3: DATING HISTORICAL POSTCARDS

Below are some examples of each of the first five postcard eras.

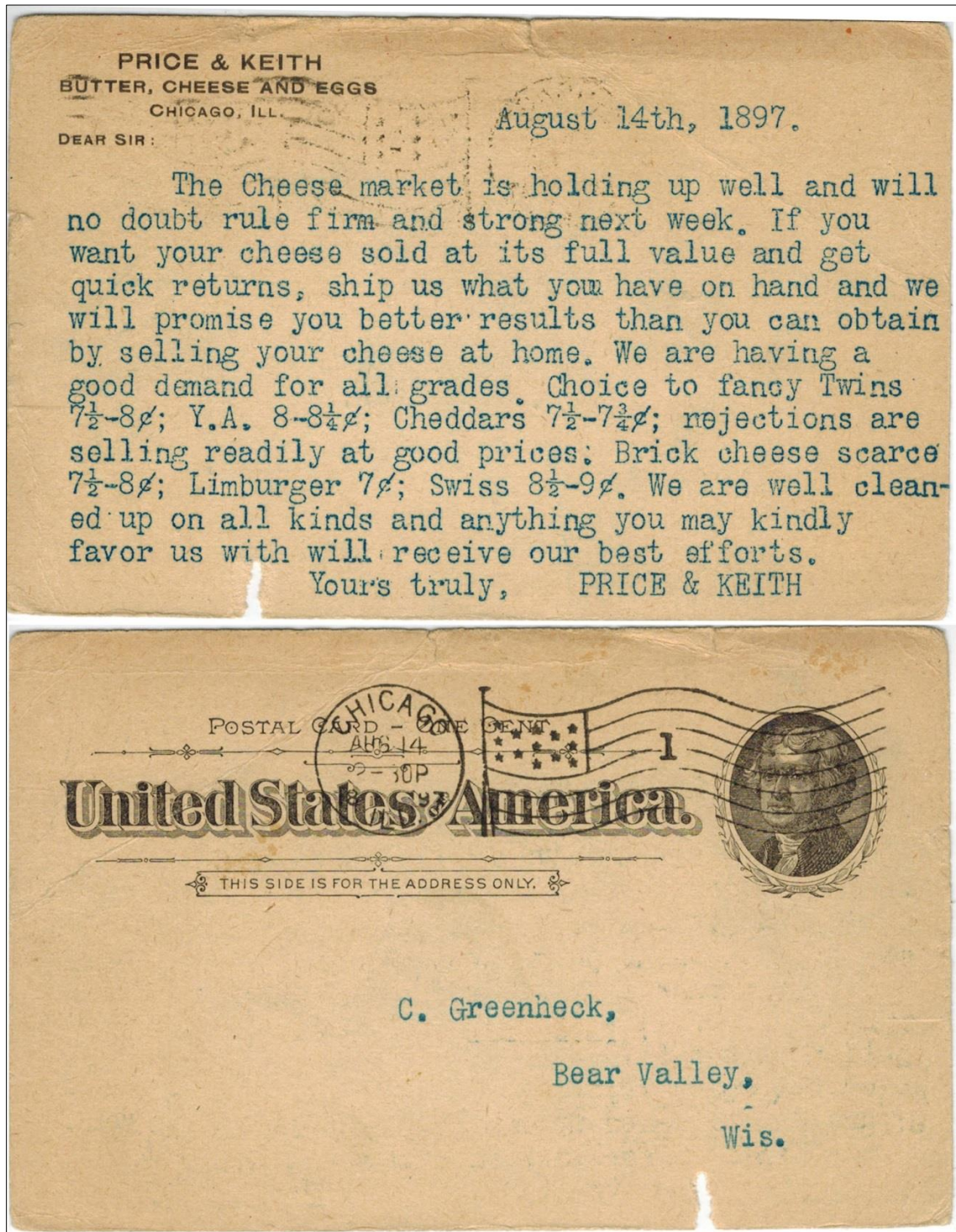


Figure 49. Front and verso of a postcard from 1897. All U.S. postcards from this time, called the "Pioneer Era" had to be purchased directly from the U.S. postal service.



Figure 50. Private Mailing Card. The card was manufactured by a private company and a U.S. postage stamp was affixed afterwards.



Figure 51. Postcard from the Undivided Back Period. As in previous periods, only the address was allowed on the verso.



Figure 52. Divided Back Period, the first time period when postcard senders could write text to recipients on the same side as the address.

APPENDIX 4: ARTICLE REPRINT PERMISSIONS

The following pages contain two sets of reprint permissions. The first is from *Historical Geography* to reprint “Representing Slavery at Plantation-House Museums in the U.S. South: A Dynamic Spatial Process”. The second is from the publishers of *Tourism Studies: An International Journal* to reprint “Tour Guides as Creators of Empathy: The Role of Affective Inequality in Marginalizing the Enslaved at Plantation House.” For both, I have included the request for permission indicating this dissertation will be published online and the editor or publisher’s approval as copyright holder.

Norfolk State University
History Department
700 Park Avenue
Norfolk, VA 23504
July 25, 2013

RE: Request for reprint permission of an article for dissertation

Dear Dr. Lane and Dr. Myers:

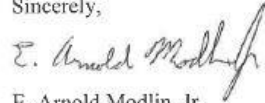
I hope you are having a productive and enjoyable summer.

I am contacting you regarding the article that I was author of for the 2011 issue of *Historical Geography*, entitled "Representing Slavery at Plantation-House Museums in the U.S. South: A Dynamic Spatial Process." I need your written permission to reprint this article as a chapter for my dissertation at Louisiana State University. This dissertation will be viewable from the web and will include a statement saying that the chapter was published as an article in *Historical Geography*.

If you are agreeable to this, all I need is a simple letter granting permission to use the article that I authored, "Representing Slavery at Plantation-House Museums in the U.S. South: A Dynamic Spatial Process" as part of my published dissertation, so that I can included this as an appendix in my dissertation as required by LSU.

Thank you, in advance, for considering this request.

Sincerely,



E. Arnold Modlin, Jr.

Figure 53. Request for permission for "Representing Slavery at Plantation-House Museums in the U.S. South: A Dynamic Spatial Process" from *Historical Geography*.

22 August 2013

E. Arnold Modlin, Jr.
Norfolk State University
History Department
700 Park Avenue
Norfolk, VA 23504

Dear Mr. Modlin,

Thank you for your inquiry regarding permission to reprint your 2011 *Historical Geography* article entitled "Representing Slavery at Plantation-House Museums in the U.S. South: A Dynamic Spatial Process" as a chapter in your forthcoming dissertation at the Louisiana State University.

On behalf of the journal *Historical Geography*, I am pleased to grant permission to reprint this article, with a statement to be included in the web edition and in an appendix that acknowledges the chapter's original publication in *HG*. There is no permission fee required.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



K. Maria D. Lane, Ph.D.
Editor, *Historical Geography*
Associate Professor, Department of Geography & Environmental Studies
University of New Mexico
MSC01 1110
Albuquerque, NM 87131
E-mail: mdlane@unm.edu
(505) 277-4075

Figure 54. Response from Dr. Lane, one of the editors of *Historical Geography*, granting reprint permission for this dissertation.

Norfolk State University
History Department
700 Park Avenue
Norfolk, VA 23504
July 25, 2013

RE: Request for reprint permission of an article for dissertation

Dear Dr. Edensor:

I hope you are having a productive and enjoyable summer.

I am contacting you regarding the article that I was the first author of for the April 2011 issue of *Tourism Studies: An International Journal*, entitled "Tour Guides as Creators of Empathy: The Role of Affective Inequality in Marginalizing the Enslaved at Plantation House Museums." I need your written permission to reprint this article as a chapter for my dissertation at LSU. This dissertation will be viewable from the web and will include a statement that the chapter was published as an article in *Tourism Studies: An International Journal*. Derek Alderman and Glenn Gentry were aware that as the principle author I intended to use this article as part of my dissertation as allowed by Louisiana State University.

If you are agreeable to this, all I need is a simple letter granting permission to use the article that E. Arnold Modlin, Jr, Derek H, Alderman and Glenn W Gentry coauthored entitled, "Tour Guides as Creators of Empathy: The Role of Affective Inequality in Marginalizing the Enslaved at Plantation House Museums." as part of my published dissertation, so that I can included this as an appendix in my dissertation as required by LSU.

Thank you, in advance, for considering this request.

Sincerely,

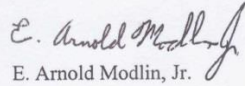

E. Arnold Modlin, Jr.

Figure 55. Request for permission for "Tour Guides as Creators of Empathy: The Role of Affective Inequality in Marginalizing the Enslaved at Plantation House Museums" from *Tourism Studies: An International Journal*.



E. Arnold Modlin, Jr.
Department of Geography & Anthropology,
Louisiana State University,
Howe-Russell Geoscience Complex,
Baton Rouge, LA 70803,
USA

29 July 2013

Dear E. Arnold Modlin, Jr.

Re: Permission to republish in Dissertation

I am writing to confirm that you were the first author of the article in the April 2011 issue of *Tourism Studies: An International Journal*, entitled "Tour Guides as Creators of Empathy: The Role of Affective Inequality in Marginalizing the Enslaved at Plantation House Museums" and coauthored by Derek H. Alderman and Glenn W. Gentry. I further confirm that you have permission from both the editor and the publisher, on whose behalf I write, to reprint this article as a chapter for your dissertation at Louisiana State University.

Yours sincerely

Dr Jayne Whiffin
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Figure 56. Response from Sage on behalf of *Tourism Studies: An International Journal*.

APPENDIX 5: FIGURE COPYRIGHT AND PUBLIC DOMAIN STATEMENT

Both maps used in this dissertation were produced by the dissertation author and all photographs were taken by the author.

None of the scanned images of postcards used in this dissertation required reprint permissions to be used. The postcards used in this dissertation were either 1) published prior to 1922, 2) published without a copyright noticed prior to 1977 or 3) both.

According to information published by Peter B. Hirtle (2014) Senior Policy Advisor of Cornell University Library, these images meet the standard of being in the public domain.

VITA

Eddie Arnold Modlin, Jr. earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in history and geography at East Carolina University in August 2006. He earned his Master of Arts degree in geography also at East Carolina University in August of 2008. In August of 2008, he entered the doctoral program in geography at Louisiana State University. Starting in August of 2011, Arnold began teaching geography at Norfolk State University.