

INTERPRETING THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE ON CHARLESTON COUNTY
PLANTATIONS

by

RENEE' ANITA DONNELL

(Under the Direction of Cari Goetcheus)

ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the interpretation of the African American experience on historic plantations in Charleston County South Carolina. The focus is on understanding the definition and components of site interpretation, as well as the role of Historic Site Managers and Site Interpreters, and their standards. Boone Hall Plantation, Drayton Hall, the McLeod Plantation, and the Hampton Plantation are all case studies for this thesis. Each is owned by different organizations and has different African American resources available to them on site. The stated intentions of the Historic Site Managers and Site Interpreters is compared here with the actual experience of visiting each site and, if they prove necessary, suggested changes are discussed. In essence, this is an advocacy effort for a more thorough interpretation of the slave experience on historic Charleston plantations.

Index Words: Charleston County plantations, site interpretation, Historic Site Managers, African American site interpretation, Boone Hall Plantation, Drayton Hall, Hampton Plantation, McLeod Plantation.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“What is preserved is a function of what society thinks is important to it now, and to future generations.” ~Antoinette Lee

It is very important to accurately interpret the African American experience on plantations, not solely in Charleston County, but across the Southeast, for several reasons. Often most of the focus of the site is on the owner of the site, the architecture of his house, and maybe the owner’s family. In addition to the owner, however, there were also slaves, and overseers who lived and worked in unison on the site. Within these three groups were a variety of families, social stratifications, and chains of hierarchy, each contributing to the function and complexity of the plantation. Would it not add power and authenticity to the description of a site if its story were to include everyone who lived there? In the past, the flourishing economy of the southeastern United States depended largely on the institution of slavery. It was the workers in the houses and fields who made their owner’s properties successful, and who provided the labor to grow crops and provide services, and working long brutal hours to do so. We cannot allow the slave story to go untold when they provided a large region of the nascent nation with its economic backbone, free labor, and had significant cultural impacts by introducing new musical styles and new methods of religious worship.

Historic sites are physical places that often have the visual resources to powerfully describe the past and to remind us of what life was like long ago. For me, sites with African American history are a reminder of how far we have come in the last 150 years. How can visitors to historic sites truly understand what life was like on a given site if only one of its many stories is being told or visually emphasized? In school textbooks, students may only briefly touch on the existence of American minorities, while the predominant focus is on the white American or

European immigrant experience. Would it not be more effective, let alone more accurate, if historic sites were to pick up where history books left off, fill the gap and equally acknowledge the contributions of all groups who lived and worked at a historic site? Even historic sites with limited physical resources have the capacity to provide visitors with a basic understanding of what took place on the site, who lived there and what they did. This thesis will explore the interpretation of the African American experience on Charleston County historic plantations that existed between the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. It will point to the limitations of many current interpretations of plantation life and suggest ways to provide a more accurate account to visitors of these historic sites.

I was first exposed to historic sites and African American history in elementary school when my parents took my sister and me to African American historic sites such as the Lorraine Hotel, in Memphis, T.N. where Martin Luther King Jr. was killed, and the Woolworth Museum, in Greensboro, N.C., where the lunch counter sit-ins began. But the site that stood out to me most was the Somerset plantation in Creswell, NC. As a young person being exposed to and beginning to understand for the first time the various levels of plantation life, from the plantation owner, to the overseers, down to the different types of slaves, it was a powerful experience. I was impressed as a child to discover slavery's existence and longed to uncover more details of slave life and its complexities. There was even a whipping post still standing, where the docent explained to us the horrors that had occurred in this dark location.

My interest in learning more about the institution of slavery continued into high school, but it seemed as though the higher the grade level, the less the text books available to me touched on the subject. With only limited access to general information about slavery, I decided to piece together my own family history, and see how far back into slavery I could go. I joined the

African American Genealogical Society, which helped me to learn the necessary research skills. I began researching the paternal side of the family because I knew more about them but soon ran into difficulty reconstructing this tree because of two common issues of slavery: the separation of families and deficient documentation of slaves. My research led me to 1829, which is the closest approximate date that could be determined of the birth of my great x4 grandmother. We could go no further because, at approximately five years of age, she was separated from her family and sold to a different plantation. She never learned the exact year of her own birth, nor was she ever told the names of her mother or father. Still, I yearned to know more. The closeness of slavery had come clear, because it controlled my ancestors' lives less than 150 years ago.

In college I learned more about the broad sweep of African American history. One story that was empowering was of Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, the Founder of my Alma mater Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona Beach, FL. She was born to slave parents who encouraged her to get her education. Mary McLeod Bethune was an educator, a women's advocate, and even close friends with Eleanor Roosevelt. The house where she once lived after Bethune-Cookman University was founded in 1904 still sits in the middle of its campus and is now open as a house museum. I volunteered there for two years, performing various preservation-related tasks like grant research, giving tours, and photograph conservation. That house museum and my experience there is what first peaked my interest in tying African American history with historic preservation.

Another link connecting historic site interpretation with an interest in African American experience occurred during orientation, my first week as a graduate student at the University of Georgia. Orientation week included visits to a variety of historic sites, including theaters, schools, and the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation castle. Another visit was to the Shields-

Ethridge Heritage Farm, a family-run historic farm in Jefferson, GA, which seeks to interpret the 200-year Shields-Ethridge family history. This history, meant to show every aspect of family life and agricultural activity on the site, made no mention of the slaves whose labor and talent helped keep the nearly 400 acre site running. There were, however, pictures scattered around their display boards with black faces doing labor. There were no captions stating who these Black faces belonged to, no explanation of what they were doing, no indication of their relation to the site or the labor they performed. The story of the Shields and Ethridge families shown to visitors felt very safe and a little one-sided. Upon leaving that site, I knew that I wanted to have an influence on the interpretation of the African American experience at historic sites.

After visiting plantations and other historic sites, I discovered repeatedly that not all site interpreters see the importance of telling the complete story of a location, let alone highlighting the African American experience like the site interpreters at Somerset Plantation did so vividly. Why? It is a fact that slavery existed in the South. If there is proof that African Americans were present on a site, why hide it? Is it shame that keeps us from embracing this part of America's collective history? Enslaved African Americans helped the Southern planters become prosperous due to their free labor that produced an abundance of cash crops. They were not granted the inalienable rights of life, liberty, or pursuit of happiness mentioned in the Declaration of Independence. Slaves were constantly insulted, belittled, and brutalized while they were living, yet we continue to disrespect them in death, by writing them out of our history books and too often leaving slaves and everything they contributed out of the interpretation of historic sites.

These questions and concerns led to my research question: What can Historic Site Managers do to interpret honestly and comprehensively the African American experience in the period between the Revolutionary and Civil Wars for visitors specifically to Charleston-area plantations?

Methodology

The search for an answer to the research question was a long process, leading to even more questions. First, background research on the various subjects in the research question was needed. Site management is one of those topics. Research was conducted to discover the roles of a site manager, and whether or not they have influence over the interpretation of the African American experience on the sites they manage. A question arose concerning which standards site managers must adhere to, and who determines those standards? Answers to these questions required searching through various preservation journals, websites, and books. Books were sourced from the UGA library or through purchase as needed. Journal articles were sourced from internet sites and from the UGA library's database. In all cases, notes came from hard copies whenever possible. Websites used were those specializing in historic preservation or site management.

The next topic, explained in detail, is the role of site interpretation. First a distinction was made between interpretation and site interpretation. Research was also done comparing different sets of standards for site interpretation. As with the site management section, I identified who creates interpretation standards and learned how they have the authority to do so. Have site interpretation standards evolved over time? Have they become more specific, or less so, or have they remained close to the original intent? After fully researching standards and the questions around them, this thesis demonstrates their continued relevance. As with the site manager

section, data in journals, books and on websites was gathered and researched to find answers to my research questions.

After defining site manager and site interpretation, outlining their duties and the role standards play in their work, I focused my research on the history of interpreting the African American experience. Sources gathered to cover this topic came from newspaper clippings, journals, interviews, and websites. The section concerning African American history and how it is interpreted addresses a number of questions. Is interpreting the African American experience a new trend? Is it true that African Americans do not visit plantations as often as other ethnic groups? If so, why? Do non-blacks feel it is difficult to interpret history sensitive to all parties involved because one group will be demonized and the other victimized? Who mainly interprets the African American story now? Answering these questions points to specific conclusions explored in the thesis that will be used to note if there is or ever was resistance to interpreting the African American experience on historic sites.

The thesis also looks at the culture specific to Charleston-area plantations between the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. This time period was chosen because it represents the height of slave production in the United States. Primary and secondary sources were used for this section, including slave owners' journals revealing insight into plantation culture, and slave narratives. Census data and maps also aided research subject, along with a number of books dedicated to the Charleston plantation culture which were also helpful. The North Charleston County Public Library and the Avery Institute each provided valuable resource material.

Upon finishing the literature review, I will conduct hands-on research, visiting each historic site comprising the case studies, thus allowing a first-hand look at how specific

Charleston County plantations are currently interpreting the African American experience. Although there are hundreds of plantations in Charleston County, it is not feasible to visit at them all. I felt it would be easier to examine four specific sites, based on certain criteria that would best benefit my research. The first criteria was geographic location. With plantations in each of the southeastern states, I chose South Carolina, the state that would be most cost and time effective for me to visit. Charleston County proved to be the most appropriate area to examine within the state. Charleston is known for its historic sites and plantations, and was also a very wealthy city during the period of significance (1770- 1865) wealthy city due in large part to the institution of slavery.

Second I determined what resources were present on each site, be they physical or intangible. Physical resources are things that one may see and touch like buildings, or cemeteries. Intangible resources are things one cannot touch like music, religious practices, or language. I found sites to consider with no standing resources, but nevertheless attempt to incorporate the African American experience in the interpretation, but finally selected sites that have physical resources present which are actively used as part of the visitor experience and the interpretation of each site. Many plantations in the Charleston area began in the late 1600's and early 1700's and lasted until the end of the Civil War in 1865. While many continued agricultural production after the Civil War, incorporating forms of share cropping and tenant farming.

Finally being open and available to the public was a factor in site selection. There are significant sites not available to the public, and while interpreting them is important, I wished to select sites with a public face, where interpretation is experienced regularly by visitors. Four sites

were finally chosen specifically for this research: Boone Hall Plantation, Drayton Hall Plantation, McLeod Plantation, and Hampton Plantation.

Upon deciding the criteria for each site, I contacted the manager of each site in order to schedule a visit. Site visits were made with three main goals in mind; first to experience each site first-hand, as far as possible having no preconceptions, taking inventory of available resources. Second, to interview the Historic Site Manager or interpretive staff member of each site concerning their duties, basic knowledge of the site, its history, and to learn how the story of the slaves is incorporated into guided tours and overall interpretation of each site. Finally, experience a guided tour of each site along with other tourists, noting the actual storyline or interpretation being presented. Each site manager or interpreter was asked a common set of questions to assure that no bias or skewed information would be added to the research, and that data would be consistent from one site to the next. The survey will have two parts: a list of Historic Site Manager questions, and a list of Site Interpretation Manager questions.

Once all primary and secondary research has been completed, I will review whether or not I found standards for site interpretation and site management. I will also compare my research with what I gathered from my sites. In order to compare the two, I will see which sites followed the standards. For those that did follow the standards, I will try to determine who clung more to the regulations and did them the best. In the case study segment, I will have just written my notes from the interviews and tours. Personal observations concerning elements I felt were missing from a given site interpretation is also part of the analysis section. In addition, this section discusses my summary of best practices, addressing which sites most accurately interprets the lives of slaves, the best on their site and how that conclusion was drawn. A list was compiled of methods of interpretation employed by each site, including re-enactments, displays,

and first person narratives. An assessment was made of each site's success or failure to inform or provoke thought, and its success at reaching different ethnic or age groups.

The analysis section is followed by a list of proposals for site managers suggesting possible improvements to site interpretation. These proposals were drawn using all the research and interview results compiled in the writing of this thesis. In addition, the literature review provides historic background information on the lives of slaves, and lists the accepted standards each site should incorporate to convey such information. The section also reviews some of the struggles accompanying any attempt to tell a story of such sensitive nature. Here, an attempt is made to identify successful methods and practices that might apply to all historic sites with a connection to African American history. The concluding section summarizes all data that was collected, all findings, analyses, and proposals, reviewing all topics previously discussed.

This thesis is organized as follows: Chapter One introduces the topic, how the writer became interested in the topic, and explains the importance of the subject. Chapter Two reviews the literature used, and is divided into four topical sections. The first discusses the role and duties commonly required of a Historic Site Manager, noting accepted standards that should be followed. The next section provides a definition of site interpretation and notes its importance to the research question. This second section also examines a variety of interpretation standards, explains the relevance of site interpretation and its role at every site. The third literature review section discusses the history of African American site interpretation. This section touches on who is believed to deliver the African American story and why it is especially difficult for non-blacks to do so. In addition, this section examines why African Americans tend to not visit plantations or other historic sites with controversial pasts. The fourth and final section of the Literature Review is a short history of Charleston County plantations between the Revolutionary

and Civil Wars. The section discusses plantation life, with emphasis placed on slave culture on Charleston-area historic plantations.

Chapter Three covers case studies. This chapter defines the criteria used for choosing each site, and provides a brief history of each. A description of each site visit follows and includes interview results and observations pertinent to each site. Lastly, are the notes from visitor tours taken at each site along with impressions derived from walking the grounds.

Chapter Four is an analysis of each site. Standards for site interpretation and site managers' adherence to standards are shown here. Comparison of sites based on the research gathered from each site is presented, and the section will point to elements common to each site, and those elements and techniques used most successfully to interpret the lives of African American slaves are identified. Following this are suggestions for how each Historic Site Manager might improve the interpretation of his/her site. The fifth and final thesis chapter presents conclusions summarizing all topics visited in this thesis. The summary chapter also demonstrates how this topic is relevant to the field of preservation as well as to the visitors of historic plantations. This chapter is meant to show readers why this thesis topic is believed to be important and, if successful, will encourage both visitors of historic sites and site staff to aspire toward an accurate and holistic story of the past.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Historic Site Management

There are several questions to consider when managing a historic site. Who will be in charge of the site? What is the purpose of the site? From where will the site receive funding? A Historic Site Manager or Director is the individual who heads and administers a site. A Historic Site Manager, or Cultural Heritage Manager, as the position is also sometimes called, is also accountable for providing social, economic, cultural, and educational perspectives for a site, and must address the contrast between preservation practices and public accessibility to a site and its tangible resources, according to Butcher-Youngmans, author of *Historic House Museums*.¹

Another name for Historic Site Manager is Cultural Heritage Manager. Their job draws from the fields of conservation, restoration, museology, archeology, history, and architecture in order to identify, maintain, and interpret historic and cultural resources.² Site Manager is typically the more of an American term for the position, whereas Cultural Heritage Manager is more often used in European countries. In essence Historic Site Managers and Cultural Heritage Managers do the same thing. They both manage cultural heritage resources and are in a branch of cultural resource management. However, cultural heritage managers typically put more emphasis on identification, and preservation of certain resources at historic sites instead of the entire site as a whole.³

Along with completing the above daily tasks, site directors must always strive to find new ways to attract visitors to the site while protecting the resources present. There have been

¹ Butcher-Youngmans 1993

² Thomas F. King, *Cultural Resource Laws & Practice: An Introductory Guide*, Altamira Press, 1998.

³ King 1998

studies compiled that suggest different ways of doing this. Robert Maitland professor of tourism at the University of Westminster.⁴ His previous experience as an economist and city planner helped mold his interest in tourism and public history. Maitland has written several books and articles and even advised the British government on how to regulate visitors to their nationally sites and larger cities.⁵ Below is his four-pronged tourism strategy that suggests the best way to manage a historic site.

Step one: Regulate the visitor to protect the site.⁶ There should be a maximum number of visitors allowed on the site at a time. By having a maximum capacity, it will ensure that the resources are not being stressed due to heavy traffic. In addition to having a determined quantity of guests on the property, there should also be a set volume of people allowed on tours at a time; which will ensure not too many people are crammed into one room at a time chipping paint off the walls, and taking too many flash photographs that could damage the artwork and other resources. The volume of visitors should have an adequate ratio to the number of staff present at all times. The staff/visitor ratio will be different for each site.

Step two: Regulate the site.⁷ This is a two-pronged strategy that aims to place passive barriers across the property and promote new forms of marketing. Passive barriers tell the guest to not step here, do not go past this point, and do not touch, in a polite manner that will not take away from the feeling of the site or distract the train of thought. Passive barriers also keep visitors safe from hurting themselves by falling, getting lost, or breaking items on the property.

Marketing was the second aim of this site regulation step. The manager must create an

⁴ University of Westminster. 2013. "About our people: Robert Maitland." University of Westminster. December. Accessed April 3, 2014. <http://www.westminster.ac.uk/about-us/our-people/directory/maitland-professor-robert>.

⁵ University of Westminster, 2013

⁶ Maitland, Robert. 2006. "How Can We Manage the Tourist-Historic City? Tourism Strategy in Cambridge, UK ." Tourism Management vol. 27, issue 6, pgs. 1262-1273.

⁷ Maitland 2006

image/logo that sets this site apart from others. The fashion in which the establishment is presented to the public will either encourage a sense of excitement in the potential tourist, creating a desire to visit the property; or it could be viewed as boring and deterring prospective visitors from wanting to come to the site.

Step three: Labor market regulation.⁸ In order to have a site that functions well, the employees must be treated well. Maitland mentions that workers in the tourism field are affected either negatively or positively by the regulations placed on them which can affect their performance at work.⁹ In other words, make sure your employees are content, but understand that the manager cannot please everyone. Adequate pay and incentives for completing their work are ways to encourage the staff to want to continue to do well.

Step four: Regulation of industry.¹⁰ If your property is near restaurants, hotels, small businesses, etc. collaborate with them in order to get the word out about your site. This is another form of marketing. If people riding through a town stop at several small businesses and they see your brochures or flyers, they are more likely to want to visit your site. You just received a visitor that didn't even know they wanted to stop by your site before they made other random stops in the surrounding area. This is an easy way to inform people that your organization exists and that there are interesting attractions available on site.

In addition to encouraging visitors to the site while taking precautions to keep resources safe, site directors are in charge of designating the site at a local or state level significance for the National Register of Historic Places. There are different benefits to each level of significance.

⁸ Maitland 2006

⁹ Maitland 2006

¹⁰ Maitland 2006

There are two types of local designations: local landmarks and local districts. Local landmarks are individual structures, buildings, sites, areas and objects that have been deemed by the Certified Local Government commission to have architectural, historical, cultural, or archeological significance.¹¹ Local landmarks are an honor because it proves that the community sees the importance of the property and knows that it is worthy of acknowledgement and protection. The owners of local landmarks are eligible to apply for an annual property tax deferral (the amount depends on the state) as long as the property's important historic features are maintained.¹² Penalties apply if the agreement is breached.

Historic districts are entire areas or neighborhoods that include several historic properties.¹³ Zoning provides regulations on the appearance of the existing and proposed buildings. Historic district zoning can help to improve property values by stabilizing and enhancing the neighborhood's charm, and it benefits property owners by protecting them from inappropriate changes by other owners that might alter the distinct qualities of the community.¹⁴ On the other hand, unlike local landmarks, historic districts have no effect on property taxes for property owners within the district. Local designations are the only way to protect a property from demolition and unauthorized changes being made to the property. Although historic districts protect against demolition and unauthorized changes being made to a property, sometimes they can lead to gentrification of an area that may erase the cultural essence and

¹¹ Crawford, Rob. 2013. "Comparison of the National Register of Historic Places with Local Historical Landmark and District Designations." North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office. Accessed February 19, 2014. <http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/compare.htm>.

¹² Crawford 2013

¹³ Crawford 2013

¹⁴ Crawford 2013

significance of the area especially in minority communities, which is usually confronted by opposition by residents in the community.

Individual sites, buildings, objects and structures can also be nominated for significance at the state level via a state register. The sites and buildings that are added to the state register have been viewed as important in terms of history, architecture, archeology, engineering and culture, similar to a local designation by the residents of that particular state. Being listed on a state register does not restrict changes that can be made on a property by the owner, nor does it protect a site from demolition.¹⁵ Being listed on the state register does make a site eligible for state income tax credits for the rehabilitation of the property. The primary benefit of getting a property listed on the state register is knowing that you are helping to recognize and preserve local and state heritage. Additionally it offers property owners the ability to apply for state income tax credits and charitable income tax deductions if a state has enabled that opportunity.¹⁶

There is also the option to list a historic property on the National Register for Historic Places. Places listed on the National Register can be buildings, sites, districts, or objects that encompass historic significance.¹⁷ Structures listed create a sense of pride in community and the built environment. The historic districts that are listed can spur economic vitality and be centers of heritage tourism. In addition to building community pride and encouraging economic vigor, these listings can also be used as tools of education and planning to help residents understand why the properties are important and help guide future work in their rehabilitation and

¹⁵ Wisconsin Historical Society staff. 2014. "Historic Preservation Frequently Asked Questions." *Wisconsin Historical Society*. Accessed February 19, 2014. <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/hp/buildings/faq.asp>.

¹⁶ Wisconsin Historical Society staff 2014

¹⁷ Michaud, Peter. 2007. *New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources*. Accessed February 19, 2014. http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/programs/nr_benefits.htm.

stewardship. The last benefit of being associated with the National Register is the same as locally and state designated sites, owners become eligible for grants and tax credits. National Register sites receive a 20% tax credit in addition to local and state tax credits if the property is listed on all three levels.¹⁸ Parallel to state designation, properties listed on the National Register are not protected from demolition nor are they restricted in the changes that can be made to the site.

Other than daily tasks, encouraging guests to visit the site while protecting the resources and getting the site nominated for the various levels of significance, site managers must consider the fashion in which they manage the site because it will determine what preconceived notions visitors may have prior to arrival.¹⁹ In doing so, site managers must also be viewed as peers to the board of trustees.²⁰ The board of trustees is a group of appointed members and investors that mutually administer the activities of an organization. They are usually the highest authority in the management of a corporation. Some of their most common duties include: approving annual budgets, setting salaries and compensation of company management; governing the organization by establishing broad policies and objectives, and holding the stakeholders accountable for the organizations performance.²¹ If a publically owned site, Cultural Heritage Managers have to communicate with whatever branch of the government that is in charge of their property.²²

Outside of being responsible for the performance of their staff members, the site manager must also compose a long term plan for the site. A long term plan for the site could include an

¹⁸ Michaud 2007

¹⁹ Chitty, Gill, and David Baker. 1999. *Managing Hisoric Sites and Buildings: Reconciling presentation and preservation*. New York: Routledge.

²⁰ Butcher-Youngans 1993

²¹ Blumberg, Phil. "Reflections on Proposals for the Corporate Reform Through Change in the Composition of the Board of Directors: "Special Interests or Public Directors"." *Boston University Law Review*, 1973: 53.

²² King 1998

interpretive plan, goals they would like to meet financially, and future additions. The Ohio Historical Society has come up with an outline of the best way to formulate a management plan. First, an organization must explain the purpose of their management plan, clarify why this site needs one, and list the priorities for future changes.²³ After a brief introduction to the purpose of the management plan, a chronological history of the site must be given including as much pre-history as possible and chronology of ownership and occupancy. This is important so the reader can have a better understanding of why the site is noteworthy.²⁴

The management framework should follow the history of the site. There are three parts to the framework; management philosophy, strategies for management, and access. The management philosophy includes the mission statement, vision of the site, and long and short term goals. Strategies for management should include stewardship goals, external leases of the land, creating an advisory board, and discussing various potential partnerships. The access section will encompass the restrictions to tourist accessibility, hours of operation, and access for individuals with disabilities.²⁵

The following section should be the cultural resource preservation and treatment plan. This plan must discuss topics such as how to handle above ground archeological resources. What is the best way to protect those resources? Will the staff cover these resources, place them on display, or cover them, but mention their existence? What is the best way to preserve the standing structures? Are they sturdy enough to allow tours? Lastly, recommendations for future

²³Ohio Historical Society. 2003. *Historic Site Management plan*. Management plan, Columbus. OH: Ohio Historical Society.

²⁴ Ohio Historical Society 2003

²⁵ Ohio Historical Society 2003

research and study should be listed. Does the site plan to do further research or stick with the resources that are currently available and never update the information?

A large section of the management plan should include an interpretation prospectus and list of designated visitor facilities.²⁶ In the interpretation prospectus, the staff must decide the various methods they would like to utilize and decide if they can afford to actually follow through with those plans. They must also choose their target audiences and objectives for each audience. Meaning the staff must decide what they want their visitors to learn/ take away from the site upon exodus.

Last but not least, the management plan should have an implementation segment.²⁷ The implementation section should include an inventory of all things the site will need for operation. Upon creating the inventory, the site will be able to determine how much money will be needed each year to remain in operation. Once a concrete amount has been determined, the staff will be able to decide where they plan on raising the funds for the site. This may include gate and gift shop sales along with memberships and fundraiser, etc. External funding resources will also need to be listed in this section.

One may wonder if there are set standards that all Historic Site Managers must adhere to or an organization that proposes standards for various historic sites. Research has been gathered via sorting through literature and interviewing of several sites. The New York State Department of Civil Services describes the standards of a site manager as completing simple tasks such as planning, directing, and coordinating the administration, operation, development, and

²⁶ Ohio Historical Society 2003

²⁷ Ohio Historical Society 2003

maintenance of one or more historic sites or historic parks. In addition, site managers must also manage and supervise various levels of subordinate staff in historic preservation, interpretation, security, and maintenance while also serving as an agency liaison with nonprofit “friends” organizations and other volunteer groups to coordinate activities and projects to advance the preservation and development of the historic site or historic park. Managers are also required to perform basic computer functions.²⁸ A site manager may follow the proposed duties listed by the New York Department of Civil Services, while personal duties, specific to each site, are listed in the by-laws of the individual sites. This allows for each site to adhere to the different standards in distinct ways; this phenomenon will be expanded further in an upcoming section. However, the regulations that site managers have to follow tend to be more based on the kind of legal entity that established the site. Most historic sites are 501(C) (3) non-profit organizations; although some are owned by municipal or state governments. Privately owned, county run, and state run organizations, along with ones owned by a larger non-profit organizations, such as the National Trust, all have different ways of managing a site.

Privately owned locations follow the mandates set forth by the owners. More than likely privately owned places tend to have people inhabiting the site or have a personal connection with the site. In maintaining private ownership, there is more likely to be certain parts of the site that are off limits to visitors and guests in order to maintain some aspects of privacy for the family or person that lives on the site. Some examples of these privately owned sites are Boone Hall Plantation and the Biltmore Estate. Boone Hall Plantation was purchased in 1955 by the McRae

²⁸ Service, New York State Department of Civil. *Historic Site Manager A/B/C*. November 8, 2013. <http://careermobilityoffice.cs.ny.gov/announarchive/announcements/25-698.cfm?live=false#top> (accessed January 12, 2014).

family. Although they are not connected to the family that originally owned the plantation, they recognized the importance of the history of the site; they opened it to the public in 1959 for tours and education.²⁹ The family currently lives in the main house on the second floor. Due to the family's residence in the house, visitors are not allowed upstairs and are unable to take pictures of the inside of the house. The Biltmore Estate has been owned and operated by the Vanderbilt family since 1895 when construction was completed. It is the largest home in the United States to this day. The house is completely open to the public with no restrictions of access. The estate currently employs 1,200 individuals that must adhere to the regulations of William Cecil, CEO of The Biltmore Estate and descendent of George Vanderbilt.³⁰

County run sites tend to have more control on what can and cannot happen on the site as guided by input from residents of the surrounding community and other interested parties.

County run sites can be operated by organizations such as county parks system and county historic associations. An example of a county run site is the McLeod Plantation which is under the ownership of Charleston County Parks. When Charleston County Parks devised the plan for the site, all plans were shared with the community. The residents of the community wanted few additions to the site and stipulated it must be used to explain the history of the plantation.

Understanding the wants of the community, Charleston County Parks followed the wishes of the residents.³¹

²⁹ Coffey, Brandon. SC Plantations-Boone Hall. 2009. <http://south-carolina-plantations.com/charleston/boone-hall.html> (accessed January 12, 2014).

³⁰ Cecil, William. Biltmore Estate History. 2013. <http://www.biltmore.com/visit/biltmore-house-gardens/estate-history> (accessed January 12, 2014).

³¹ McLeod, The Friends of. Friends of McLeod. June 2012. www.mcleodplantation.org/vision.html (accessed January 12, 2014).

State owned sites do not usually have signature ways of operating sites. They do however tend to have more influence on the story that is being told on the site. Although they are not solely noted for it, they also tend to have partnerships with state schools systems. By partnering with state school systems, they can require certain grade levels to visit the site each year. They can also choose various aspects of the history of the site to tie into the school curriculum. In addition to partnerships with school systems, state owned sites can be operated by a number of different state entities. State Parks and Recreation and state historic organizations are just a few. Two examples of state run models are the Hampton Plantation operated by the South Carolina Department of Parks and Recreation and the Chief Vann House which is operated by Georgia State Parks.

In terms of larger non-profits that may manage other historic sites, the National Trust for Historic Places owns various historic sites around the nation. The National Trust should be viewed as a preservation partner. Although they open historic sites to the public and help them get started, they make the properties they own be self-sufficient and rely on ticket sales, event hosting, memberships and gift shop sales. The sites the Trust controls have a management hierarchy that does not include a site manager. Sometimes sites can opt for a CEO and people in other leadership positions that fall under different leadership titles, but do essentially the same thing as a site manager. A perfect example of a National Trust owned site is Drayton Hall. The CEO of Drayton Hall is responsible for paying and training staff, up-keep of grounds and interpretive methods. If the site is experiencing financial difficulties, they must ask donors for help, host more events, or raise prices. The National Trust is simply the owner, but not in charge of any financial help, guidance or assistance.

There are also historic sites that are federally owned. Federally owned sites are funded through the Federal Reserve and tax payers. One well known federal entity that facilitates historic sites is the National Park Service. They own and operate many sites across the United States. The National Park Service buys, up-keeps, and funds many historic landscapes, battlefields, parks, cultural resources, etc.³² One example is the Chickamauga Battlefield in Chattanooga, TN. This site is a large battlefield with a museum on site that offers various interactive exhibits on special anniversaries. This past year was the 150th anniversary of the battle that occurred on site and the National Park Service arranged for re-enactments, bus tours, and first person narratives in the woods in celebration of the anniversary.

Historic Site Managers and their duties tie into this research topic because they are the individuals that are in charge of maintaining historic sites and providing opportunities for guests to come visit, while also hiring staff members. Being the manager of a historic site requires more than everyday task management; the manager must also be in charge of continuously finding funding for the site, nominating the site for the three levels of designation, and contemplating new ways to encourage visitors to want to come to the site, all while trying to protect the resources on the site.

More importantly, the management plan the manager and other high level personnel create covers, the focus of this thesis, site interpretation. In terms of the topic of interpreting the African American experience on Charleston County plantations, based on their personal interests, biases, and the owner's wishes, the manager can have a large influence on the story being portrayed to visitors on their tours. Although some sites have interpretive managers or

32 National Park Service. National Park Service: About us. January 8, 2014.
<http://www.nps.gov/aboutus/index.htm> (accessed January 12, 2014).

leaders, the site manager still has to approve their story line and interpretive methods. In order to approve interpretive methods, site managers must first consider three factors:

- 1) What kind of entity owns the site?
- 2) In what legal way was the site established?
- 3) What is the overall goal and purpose of the site?

Interpretation is one of the most important acts on a site. It determines what impression the visitors leave with and what knowledge they gained about the site they just visited. The following section further addresses interpretation.

Site Interpretation

“Authenticity is highly subjective. History is but a study of interpretation, with each person afforded his/her own view of the authentic.” ~Henderson

In order to understand how to interpret the African American experience one must first understand interpretation and site interpretation; are they the same or different and how each must be approached at a site. Interpretation is defined as “the act or result of explaining something; a particular action or version of work, method or style; a teaching technique that combines factual with stimulating explanatory information.”³³ Freeman Tilden, a newspaper columnist, author, and well respected National Park Service ranger/interpreter defines interpretation as “an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information.”³⁴

³³ Agnes, Micheal, ed. 2007. *Webster's New World College Dictionary*. 4. Cleveland, OH: Wiley Publishings, Inc.

³⁴ Tilden, Freeman J. 1957-2007. *Interpreting Our Heritage* 4th edition. Chapel Hill: The Univeristy of North Carolina press.

William T. Alderson and Shirley Payne Low of the American Association for State and Local History are both recognized for their books on historic sites and how to fund them.³⁵ Both have won awards for their books and publications and share similar interest in history. Alderson is also a former president of Old Salem in Winston Salem, North Carolina and former director of the Strong Museum in New York.³⁶ They define site interpretation as “both a program and activity. The program establishes a set of objectives for the things we want our visitors to understand; the activity has to do with the skills and techniques by which that understanding is created.”³⁷ The historic sites subcommittee of the American Association of Museums describes site interpretation as “a planned effort to create for the visitor an understanding of the history and significance of events, people, and objects with which the site is associated.”³⁸

From these four definitions, interpretation and site interpretation seem to coincide. All require a planned venue for educating and explaining factual information. Interpretation does not mention an audience that may be receiving the information. It is very general in meaning. Site interpretation is geared towards not only composing a method of explaining a story, but also aiming to include different interactive ways to get an audience involved in learning the information. One cannot have site interpretation without an interpreter. The National Park Service defines an interpreter as: “one who translates artifacts, collections, and physical resources into a language that helps visitors make meaning of these resources in a museum, zoo, or park setting.” They suggest that another term for interpreters could be visitor experience

³⁵ Toll, B. F. (1991). *Leadership for the Future; Changing Directional Roles in American History*. Winston Salem: American Association for State and Local History.

³⁶ Toll, 1991

³⁷ Alderson, William T., and Shirley Payne Low. 1996. *Interpretation of Historic Sites*. Nashville, TN: AltaMira Press.

³⁸ Alderson and Low 1996

specialists. They provide orientation, information and inspiration in the right amounts and at the right times so that visitors will have more gratifying, meaningful and complete experiences.³⁹

John Muir was an author, naturalist, and a preservationist.⁴⁰ He has been attributed as the father of site interpretation due to his efforts to preserve the Yosemite Valley and Sequoia National Park in order to keep them in their natural standing so future generations could be amazed by their beauty and learn from them. In 1890, Yosemite and Sequoia were designated as National Parks due to his petition to the U.S. Congress for the National Parks bill.⁴¹

Site interpretation has changed many times since its conception in 1914 by John Muir.⁴² One thing that has remained constant is there have always been standards. Granted these standards have evolved like the sites they represent. Several people have created interpretation principles. In 1957, Freeman Tilden a journalist turned poet, turned novelist, turned interpretation expert wrote a book on how to properly interpret stories or at least convey them while keeping certain facets like audience in mind in his book *Interpreting Our Heritage*. He was inspired to write this book based on his concerns from traveling to various parks and sites to write about the national park system and the range of quality of the interpretation programs in the parks. Through his concerns, he was able to create the first set of interpretation standards. He and his principles have been studied for over thirty years, and now he is recognized as the father of interpretation. His six standards are:

³⁹ Bacher, Kevin, Beth Barrie, Linda Chandler, and Richard Cohen. 2005. *Foundations of Interpretation Curriculum Content Narrative*. Annual report, Atlanta: National Park Services.

⁴⁰ 2010. *Biography of John Muir*. Directed by National Parks Service. Performed by Lee Stetson.

⁴¹ Stetson 2010

⁴² Bacher, et al. 2005

1. Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.
2. Information, as such, is not interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based upon information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.
3. Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical or architectural. Any art is in some degree teachable.
4. The chief aim of Interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.
5. Interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part, and must address itself to the whole man rather than any phase.
6. Interpretation addressed to children (say, up to the age of twelve) should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best, it will require a separate program.⁴³

In 1992, another interpretation expert, Sam Ham, composed four simple interpretation qualities. Sam directs the Center for International Training and Outreach at the University of Idaho's College of Natural Resources, where he is a professor in the Department of Resource Recreation and Tourism. Ham's research has been centered on applying communication theory to environmental conservation, interpretation and travelers' philanthropy, as well as nature-based tourism and guide training.

⁴³ Tilden 1957-2007

His book, *Environmental Interpretation*, contains four principles that distinguish interpretation from other communication, and have become central to the profession of interpretation:⁴⁴

1. Interpretation is pleasurable.
2. Interpretation is relevant.
3. Interpretation is organized.
4. Interpretation has a theme.

Larry Beck and Ted Cable, creators of the term heritage interpretation, have written extensively in the fields of natural resource management and interpretation.⁴⁵ Both are members of the National Association for Interpretation and worked for the National Parks Service. Each have written books on various forms of interpretation and have jointly created 15 guiding principles for interpreting nature and culture in their book *Interpretation for the 21st Century*. They created the principles by adding to the works of Enos Mills, founder of the Rocky Mountain National Park and environmentalist, and Freeman Tilden.⁴⁶ The fifteen principles are:

1. To spark an interest, interpreters must relate the subject to the lives of visitors.
2. The purpose of interpretation goes beyond providing information to reveal deeper meaning and truth.
3. The interpretive presentation, as a work of art, should be designed as a story that informs, entertains, and enlightens.

⁴⁴ Bacher, et al. 2005

⁴⁵ Beck, L, Cable, T. (1998) *Interpretation for the 21st Century: Fifteen guiding principles for interpreting nature and culture*. Sagamore Publishing.

⁴⁶ Bacher, et al. 2005

4. The purpose of the interpretive story is to inspire and to provoke people to broaden their horizons.
5. Interpretation should present a complete theme or thesis and address the whole person.
6. Interpretation for children, teenagers, and seniors, when these comprise uniform groups, should follow fundamentally different approaches.
7. Every place has a history. Interpreters can bring the past alive to make the present more enjoyable and the future more meaningful.
8. High technology can reveal the world in exciting new ways. However, incorporating this technology into the interpretive program must be done with foresight and care.
9. Interpreters must concern themselves with the quantity and quality (selection and accuracy) of information presented. Focused, well-researched interpretation will be more powerful than a longer discourse.
10. Before applying the arts in interpretation, the interpreter must be familiar with basic communication techniques. Quality interpretation depends on the interpreter's knowledge and skills, which should be developed continually.
11. Interpretive writing should address what readers would like to know, with the authority of wisdom and the humility and care that comes with it.
12. The overall interpretive program must be capable of attracting support, financial, volunteer, political, and administrative, whatever support is needed for the program to flourish.
13. Interpretation should instill in people the ability, and the desire to sense the beauty in their surroundings, to provide spiritual uplift and to encourage resource preservation.

14. Interpreters can promote optimal experiences through intentional and thoughtful program and facility design.

15. Passion is the essential ingredient for powerful and effective interpretation, passion for the resource and for those people who come to be inspired by the same.

These standards can be applied to a variety of historic sites; such as museums, historic parks, landscapes, and cemeteries. The category that will be focused on for this research will be historic house museums; in which there are three main types. The most common category of house museum in the United States is the documentary site. Documentary historic house museums primary objective is to commemorate rich or famous individuals, or influential families.⁴⁷ One can also learn how various social classes may have lived at a point in time based on the quaintness of the dwelling and the lack of luxuries found within. In correlation, the interpretive aim is to chronicle the life of individuals or relate to a historical event. Documentary sites are usually restored to a specific condition at a point in time. According to Alderson, it is not essential that every facet of restoration be provable, but there must be a minute amount of inference in the restoration decision.⁴⁸ Some well-known examples of documentary house museums are: George Washington's Mount Vernon, in Virginia; Helen Keller's childhood home in Tuscumbia, Alabama; Noah Webster's modest four room farmhouse in West Hartford, Connecticut; and The Raleigh Tavern in Williamsburg, Virginia.

The second type of historic house museum is representative historic house museums. The focus of these sites is to concentrate on the way of life during a particular time period rather than

⁴⁷ Butcher-Youngans, Sherry. 1993. *Historic House Museums: A Practical Handbooks for Their Care, Preservation, and Management* . New York: Oxford University Press.

⁴⁸ Alderson and Low 1996

individuals or families. Representative house museums are exemplified by southern antebellum plantations which are used to demonstrate the lifestyle and livelihood of affluent landowners. Wayside inns and pioneer log cabins are also common models.⁴⁹ The key difference between representative and documentary sites is that representative sites are chiefly centered on a period in the past and the people who lived in that period, as opposed to documentary sites mainly placing emphasis on specific people or families.⁵⁰ Two examples of representative sites are the Botsford Tavern in Detroit, Michigan, a mid-nineteenth century home and inn; and Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts. Old Sturbridge Village is a faux village that was created by moving early nineteenth century buildings from all over New England to one location in order for visitors to get a feeling of New England town life in the early 1800's.

The third class of historic house museum is aesthetic. Aesthetic sites are visited simply for their sheer beauty and uniqueness. The historic buildings interpretive focus is on the distinct form and design of the building rather than the history of the structure.⁵¹ In these houses or buildings may also be fine arts, furniture, and antiques from various periods. Some great examples of aesthetic house museums are Frank Lloyd Wright's Falling Waters house in Stewart Township, Pennsylvania, The Henry Francis DuPont Winterthur Museum in Wilmington, Delaware, and Cheekwood in Nashville, the mansion that houses the Tennessee Fine Arts Center. Although these variations of sites are different, no one is less important or more historic than the other. They all serve different purposes and help visitors understand different aspects of history. Regardless of what type of historic site it is, all sites use some form of interpretation.

⁴⁹ Butcher-Youngans 1993

⁵⁰ Alderson and Low 1996

⁵¹ Alderson and Low 1996

Site interpretation can only be effective if there is a plan guiding the content and method of explanation. Interpretive planning is a process that identifies and describes significant visitor experiences in a park, forest, zoo or other resource-based recreation area; and recommends ways to provide, encourage, sustain, facilitate or otherwise assist those experiences.⁵² The National Park Service notes that many interpretation teams seek to answer seven basic questions:

- Why is this area set aside and made accessible to the public? What makes this site so special that it needs to be open to the public?
- What are the likely and desired visitor experiences? What will visitors want to do, learn, experience; and what does the organization hope they will do, learn, and experience?
- What are current conditions affecting visitor's experience and interpretation? What are the important stories and experiences to make accessible to visitors and neighbors of the area?
- What are the laws, mandates, policies or guidelines that affect the site? What information and resources are available, and what are needed? What are significant relationships between resources and visitors? What are key issues?
- How can the agency make desirable experiences more accessible to more visitors? What are impediments to visitor enjoyment of significant area resources and values? Should the agency match or redirect visitor's motivations and expectations? How can the agency serve diverse audiences?
- How can the agency discourage activities that are detrimental to resources or other visitors' experiences, and promote activities that enhance resource protection and visitor enjoyment?

⁵² National Park Service: Division of Interpretive Planning. 1998. "Planning for Interpretation and Visitor Experience." Annual report, Harper's Ferry, WV.

- How can the agency meet visitor experience goals in the most cost-effective manner, considering long- term costs and sustainable values?⁵³

Interpretive planning is critical for assuring that visitors gain the most knowledge and understanding upon leaving the site. It also guarantees that the staff will have a better vision for the site and be able to best facilitate site goals. Without a plan interpreters could be wasting their time creating venues and media to help the visitors comprehend the overall point of a site and especially the minor details of the site. Visitors may miss the point of the site all together.

Before an interpretive plan is created, there are steps that must first be completed. Research is the number one priority. A thorough evaluation of all manuscripts, newspaper articles, familial and census records, diaries, and books should be completed in order to gain a full knowledge of the site.⁵⁴ This should be done by trained researchers such as historians, archeologists, curators, etc. All the resources that have been assessed should then be made available to all persons on the interpretive team. Research can become expensive; however, it is essential to creating a well versed and accurate history of the site. If an organization cannot afford to fund the proper research, they can team up with other local organizations that may also need to have research done, and they can share the research team and costs.

Organization must also be taken into consideration. Major and minor goals and objectives should be established before the site is opened to the public.⁵⁵ Each site should offer an introduction to the background of the site to the visitors and as they progress through the site, the main ideas should be revealed to them via the tour guides or displays exhibited. By the end of a

⁵³ National Park Service: Division of Interpretive Planning 1998

⁵⁴ Alderson and Low 1996

⁵⁵ Alderson and Low 1996

site visit, a reiteration of the main ideas should be given to the visitors so they can walk away with comprehension of the themes of the site.

Accuracy is also very important. Guests of historic sites expect the information being given to them to be truthful.⁵⁶ It does not mean that the information being portrayed has to be dull, it can be very lively. Composing a historically accurate interpretation plan for the site may seem daunting and time consuming, but it is worth it in the end. A well put together interpretation of the site does not mean the story must be glamorized or enhanced at the expense of the truth.

Interpretation should also be done in good taste. The historic site and the storyline that accompanies it should both avoid being cheap in quality, sensational, and vulgar. Interpreters should avoid creating or focusing on scandal, death, or mystery at the site if that is not what it is known for.⁵⁷ By trying to enhance the story of the site with these things, visitors do not experience the true value and importance of the site. Overtime the history of the site will be lost.

Lastly, secondary objectives are to coincide with the major purpose of the site. Secondary objectives are generally a mixture of historical facts and concepts like how the site being visited connects to a greater history of the area, state, or nation, in which visitors will hopefully learn and understand upon leaving the site. The formation of these objectives are important and delicate; once they have been decided upon, they must be put in writing and made available to all staff in charge of interpretation.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Alderson and Low 1996

⁵⁷ Alderson and Low 1996

⁵⁸ Alderson and Low 1996

The largest and most important aspect to interpreting a historic site is to choose one or more primary interpretive methods for the site; likely there are a variety to choose from. The first group of interpretive methods are usually found at outdoor sites or large indoor sites. Place inscriptions are elevated signs that explain technical and unfamiliar language about whatever feature they are placed in front of.⁵⁹ Even if the visitor does not understand the message of the place inscription, they will see the picture and understand that the place depicted is significant. Place inscriptions are usually the first type of orientation to a site that visitors see.⁶⁰ Directional Signs orient the guest to the closest resource, artifact, or place of importance. They are usually small in stature and have limited information on them. Similar to directional signs, there is site orientation. Site orientation is usually characterized by personnel stationed at the main entrance to greet and orient visitors to their guided tours.⁶¹ The guides can also give a brief overview of the site via verbal recitation, videotape, or brochure.

Publications can also be very informative and helpful to the guests of the site. These written aids can come in a variety of forms; such as booklets, brochures, guidebooks and catalogues. Brochures are the simplest interpretive tool. They are short written descriptions that can serve as introduction to the site, and as a souvenir.⁶² Brochures can also be used as promotion for the site if set out at motels, chambers of commerce, and tourist bureaus.⁶³ Booklets are similar to brochures, but much more detailed. A booklet's main purpose is to educate the visitors rather than to orient or promote. It is intended to give details and background that may

⁵⁹ Tilden 1957-2007

⁶⁰ Tilden 1957-2007

⁶¹ Butcher-Youngans 1993

⁶² Butcher-Youngans 1993

⁶³ Alderson and Low 1996

have been left out of the tour and was too long to include in the brochure.⁶⁴ Site books are usually published by the site advocacy or friend organization or bought from other publishers in order to resell them at the sales desk. They are an essential addition to the sites interpretive efforts by helping the tourist pursue interests that have been provoked during the visit.⁶⁵ Guidebooks are used to tell the visitor what they are witnessing via directions for the most effective route to follow within the site. They should give a room by room, or site by site, account of the site and explain the sites history.⁶⁶ Catalogues are comparable to guidebooks; however, they are created more so for aesthetics than documentary and representative sites.⁶⁷ Catalogues are chiefly intended to assist the visitors learn more about the items on display and to serve the intellectual uses of the people creating a study of those objects.⁶⁸

Living history is the next genre of interpretive methods. Living history is a dramatic skit that expands the visitors understanding of the site and may range from re-enactments of special events, rituals, and ceremonies. Following these presentations, interpreters are more than likely available to answer questions and discuss the historical events portrayed.⁶⁹ Role play or character presentation also fall into this category. During role play, an interpreter will portray a person who was associated with the site. For instance, a worker can be acting as a chambermaid that is discussing all of her daily activities and perhaps even acting them out while talking to the audience.⁷⁰ Similar to role play are demonstration and participation. Both demonstration and participation involve role play. However, demonstrations are when the person doing the role play

⁶⁴ Alderson and Low 1996

⁶⁵ Alderson and Low 1996

⁶⁶ Alderson and Low 1996

⁶⁷ Alderson and Low 1996

⁶⁸ Alderson and Low 1996

⁶⁹ Butcher-Youngans 1993

⁷⁰ Butcher-Youngans 1993

is doing a task like churning butter, knitting, or cooking over an open fire and explaining how that task was completed in the past.⁷¹ Participation is when the person doing the role play is asking the audience to help complete that task or do role play along with the interpreter.⁷² Whatever form living history takes on, the interpreters should be in period dress and speak using the dialect of that period.

Another common interpretive tool is museum displays/exhibits. Exhibits are to be installed in the museum based on the purpose and objectives of the site or museum. Commonly displays are set up in particular rooms or buildings on the grounds. These displays portray one particular story and extend, supplement, or clarify what one expects the visitor to learn and understand about the site. Once a storyline has been selected, objects, historic photos, maps, and other graphics should be chosen to illustrate the theme. Concise write ups should be placed under the pictures and around the exhibit to further illuminate the theme being displayed and to offer fun facts.⁷³ When preparing a museum display, careful consideration should be given to making the information comprehensible to all audiences that will experience it.

By far the most common interpretive tool is the tour. There are two types of tours: guided and self-guided. Guided tours are tours that are led by trained docents that accompany visitors through the house, grounds, or museum. Their primary goal is to inform the guests of the history of the sites past residents, period rooms, and exhibits. Guided tours last anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour and should be prepared from scripts in order to provoke emotion from the

⁷¹ Tilden 1957-2007

⁷² Tilden 1957-2007

⁷³ Alderson and Low 1996

visitor.⁷⁴ Self-guided tours are often assisted by a brochure that includes the history of the site with a room by room description. Self-guided tours allow the visitor to set their own pace and spend more time in areas that peak their interest.⁷⁵

Audio and audio visual devices are effective forms of interpretation. Solely audio devices are usually used on self-guided tours. They can range from hand held recorders with headphones to buttons that can be pushed near a picture or object on display. Audio devices serve to provide explanations of rooms, objects, or places without the need of human interpreters being present.⁷⁶ They can also add a touch of realism if the actual voice of the person being discussed is the one talking on the recording. Audiovisual interpretation incorporates both sound and images to the tour. Often more effective than solely audio, it is also more pricey to compose, display and maintain. Audio visual productions are successful to extend the educational programs of a site to visitors and the community by interpreting topics that cannot be handled by interpreters. These moving pictures can show techniques of specialty crafts that only a few people in the country may be well prepared and informed to undertake.⁷⁷

Other miscellaneous methods of interpretation include lectures, workshops, conferences, and classes for students. Each form can be used as focus groups for particular topics. They all require different avenues for getting the story across and usually require an outside party to come in and share their expertise.⁷⁸ Classes for different aged students are the most complex to develop due to state or county curriculum requirements and being able to keep children's interests by getting them involved in the story.

⁷⁴ Butcher-Youngans 1993

⁷⁵ Butcher-Youngans 1993

⁷⁶ Alderson and Low 1996

⁷⁷ Alderson and Low 1996

⁷⁸ Butcher-Youngans 1993

History of Interpreting the African American Experience

“...Put your visitor in possession of at least one disturbing idea that may grow into a fruitful interest.” ~Freeman Tilden

The incorporation or exclusion of the African American experience on historic sites has been an issue for many years. There are several factors that constitute whether or not a site sees it fit to interpret the existence of African Americans and their role on a variety of historic sites. As the years pass, the American population has become more open to admitting that there was another group of people doing work, maintaining, and sustaining significant places. Many factors including fear, discomfort, and not feeling like they could do the story justice because it is not their history, played a role in how the story was, and in some cases may still be, excluded. This section of this thesis will give background as to why the slave story was previously disregarded from plantation interpretation plans and how the inclusion of the slave story has been added in recent years.

It is no secret that America in the 1950's and 1960's was segregated. From water fountains, to schools, to neighborhoods, Blacks and whites could not intertwine lives. This even included historic sites such as Monticello and Colonial Williamsburg. In the years of Jim Crow, African American participation on a site was excluded completely from the interpretation scheme. No mention was given to the slaves that made the family wealthy or at least watched over their children. No mention was given to the indentured servants that cleaned the house and cooked the meals for the family after slavery. During the time of segregation, the African American story was widely viewed as unimportant, irrelevant, and nonexistent.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Dabney, Emanuel. 2013. "Interpreting Slavery at Historic Sites." *Interpretive challenges*. 4 29. Accessed February 14, 2014. <http://interpretivechallenges.wordpress.com/2013/04/29/slaveryathistoricsites/>.

Emmanuel Dabney works at the Petersburg National Battlefield and has his own blog on interpretive challenges. His main focus is nineteenth century American history. He wrote an article entitled “Interpreting Slavery at Historic Sites.” In it he mentions that not only was the African American experience not interpreted on the site; Blacks weren’t even allowed to visit certain historic sites. Colonial Williamsburg was a “generous” site in the 1950’s and 1960’s. Although they did not interpret the story of the Blacks that lived and worked there, they allowed African Americans to visit the site one reserved day a week.⁸⁰ Often Blacks would do their best to make it to the site, but they feared other obstacles that might arise like not being able to stop for gas or for a bite to eat without an unprovoked confrontation.⁸¹ Having been said, perhaps this is why African Americans do not visit historic house museums, plantations, and other sites as often as our other counterparts to this day. It was not until the late 1970’s that Blacks would be allowed onto historic sites on any given day as regular visitors. It was even later than that when the story of African Americans was beginning to be interpreted on sites. According to Drayton Hall and Boone Hall Plantation, interpreting slavery on their sites was not a movement until the 1990’s.

Now that the story of African Americans has been added to a majority of historic sites that had a history of Black laborers or inhabitants, there are still some difficulties the site managers and interpretive leaders encounter. The institution of slavery is a very sensitive topic for all parties involved. Interpreters want to make sure that presenting the story of the slaves is thoroughly planned and inclusive, but not too graphic where guests become scared or upset. Interpreters also want to tell the story of the slave owner in a manner that does not make him

⁸⁰ Dabney 2013

⁸¹ Dabney 2013

seem evil, neither did they want him to appear too nice. If overseers are mentioned on the site, they are more than likely portrayed as men simply following orders and doing their jobs. Some visitors to historic plantations do not want to know how intense slavery really was and some want the plantation to have an overly graphic re-enactment of the slave experience. Either way, a balance must be met to please all parties and make sure all aspects and levels of plantation life are covered.

When staff begin to incorporate new stories into interpretation, sometimes they self-censor the story for the fear of losing their job. Evan Kutzler, a PhD student studying history at University of South Carolina, wrote an article for *History@Work*, a public history commons from the National Council on Public History. In his editorial he described his experience as an intern on an undisclosed South Carolina plantation while trying to create the site guidebook.⁸² He notes how he tried to include a variety of stories that he researched about the site and add them into the guidebook. One story was about how the owner's family was divided on the issue of slavery during the Civil War. Three sons went to fight for the confederate army while the eldest son and father pledged allegiance to the union. Evan also found documentation on the drowning of a slave girl named Rachel. In his research, he also found background insights on the lives of the enslaved population. In 1860, 13 of the 28 enslaved workers were under the age of twelve and produced approximately 12,000 pounds of cotton each year.⁸³ Most of the slaves worked on the plantation year around, but others were often hired out to neighbors and relatives.

⁸² Kutzler, Evan. 2013. "Lessons in Interpreting Controversial History at a Southern Heritage Site." *History@work*. March 15. Accessed February 20, 2014. <http://publichistorycommons.org/controversial-history-at-a-southern-heritage-site/>.

⁸³ Kutzler 2013

Kutzler wanted to add each of these stories into the guidebook, but he ran into backlash from the site staff. The residents of the surrounding community and the Sons of the Confederate Veterans took much pride in the site and were content with the storyline being interpreted on the site as it always had been. They took pride in the confederate history they thought they knew about the site and were content that slavery was barely mentioned on the tours.⁸⁴ The surrounding community donated lots of money to the plantation to keep this storyline continuing. Kutzler felt as though they had a sense of ownership of the site, almost as if they had the staff on their payroll. For instance, one day the site removed the confederate flag for cleaning and the Sons of the Confederate Veterans ordered an investigation of the nonprofit's management and board of directors.⁸⁵

Due to this and other documented incidents, Evan realized that external pressure from the surrounding community, local and national politics can all dictate what story is or is not being told. The external community intimidated the site curator and she encouraged Evan to make the guidebook a single story and to avoid controversial topics. She also encouraged him to self-censor. Instead of using the word plantation, she felt it would be more polite to say farm.⁸⁶ Additionally, she requested that he not mention slavery and say that it was due to limited records and sensitivity to the owner's family descendants. His experience at this internship taught him that interpreting a complicated past is challenging but it is necessary to the field of public history.⁸⁷ The job of public historians is to disseminate the truth, not to be intimidated by people's feelings.

⁸⁴ Kutzler 2013

⁸⁵ Kutzler 2013

⁸⁶ Kutzler 2013

⁸⁷ Kutzler 2013

Outside of external pressure and the fear of losing one's job, people find it equally hard to interpret the story of slavery if they are not Black. The "Challenges and Opportunities of interpreting African American history at historic places" session at the annual meeting of the American Association for State and Local History opened the floor to directors of various historic sites to offer their opinions/struggles with interpreting the African American experience on their sites. Quite a few directors mentioned that they felt uncomfortable sharing the African American experience especially to Black audiences with the fear that they would think "what does he know, he's not Black?" They also mention that they fear they will not be able to tell the story in the most impactful and touching way because they do not have a connection to the story they are telling.⁸⁸ The past director of Drayton Hall said that his biggest concern with interpreting the story of slavery on his site was not that he is not of African descent, but that with the coverage of the architecture, landscape, Drayton family history, etc.; where does one find the time to discuss slavery on the tour? So he created an accompaniment to the house tour called the "Connections" program which goes in depth about the daily tasks and lives of the slaves.⁸⁹

There were a few Black female directors that were present at this session and they explained that they believe that non-Black interpreters feel uneasy telling the African American story because they are afraid to confront race relations, not because they are not African American. The executive director of the Weeksville Heritage Center said "It's the 21st century. We are all aware that slavery existed and know the different roles the different races played. There is no need to skirt around the issue." She and the director of interpreting projects for the Tracing Center on Histories and Legacies of Slavery said that they believe White people are

⁸⁸ Balgooy, Max A. Van. 2011. "Challenges interpreting African American History at Historic Places." *American Association for State and Local History*. Columbia, SC: Engaging Places, LLC. 1-3.

⁸⁹ Balgooy 2011

capable of telling an African American story of slavery. As long as they have done the research and believe the story adds depth to the site, they are welcomed to interpret that aspect of history.⁹⁰ The general consensus at the end of the session was that as long as an individual is well researched and equipped to tell the story of slavery on a site, it does not matter their ethnicity or race.

One barrier that is difficult to overcome is nominating slave and other African American resources to the National Register of Historic Places. Kerri Barile owner of Dovetail Cultural Resource Group and a historical archeologist mentions that “people without history” such as indentured servants, African slaves, women, the artisan class, and other groups that have very little written documentation due to their position in society or cultural difference, have a hard time getting their resources nominated due to lack of significance and integrity.⁹¹ Historic significance is defined as the importance of a property to the history, architecture, archeology, engineering, or culture of a community, state, or the nation. It is attained in several ways: 1. Association with events, activities, or patterns 2. Association with important persons 3. Distinctive physical characteristics of design, construction, or form 4. Potential to yield important information.⁹² Integrity is defined as the authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's prehistoric or historic period. Integrity is composed of seven components: location, design, setting, association, feeling, workmanship, and materials.⁹³

⁹⁰ Balgooy 2011

⁹¹ Barile, Kerri. 2004. "Race, the National Register, and Cultural Resource Management: Creating an Historic Context for Post-bellum Sites." *Historical Archeology* 1-7.

⁹² The National Park Service. 2011. *How to complete the National Register registration form*. National Register Bulletin 16A part 2, Atlanta: U.S. Department of Interior.

⁹³ The National Park Service 2011

People without traditionally documentable history do not have resources that are well maintained. Often they have undergone many changes over the years. According to Barile, the National Register finds these things unacceptable for nomination without understanding that different cultures preserve history in different manners. Each group or individual, may not have had the ability to maintain pristine structures, and many have been expanded over the years to accommodate current uses and functions.⁹⁴ She is not sure if significance and integrity are purposefully used against resources for these people with alternative historical records, or if it is just a coincidence. Either way, it can be gathered that it is difficult to nominate a slave cabin or any other African American resource on a site unless they were well documented in the past.

There are many factors and barriers to excluding the interpretation of the African American experience on different sites. Fear of external pressure, feeling one is incapable of telling the story because one is not African American, and because the National Register may not view your resources as valuable. The fact that interpreting African American existence on a site is a pretty recent phenomenon (within the past twenty years) also makes it difficult to know where to start if a site has not already joined the interpretation train. Jeffrey Crow, a former director of the North Carolina Division of Archives and History, realized that the African American experience was not highlighted on interracial sites such as plantations as much as the slave owner, his house, and his life, so he came up with a four pronged approach to successfully convey the history of slaves on historic sites.

The first point is inclusiveness. Through inclusiveness he means that no longer is history just about the "Big House" and the white family that lived there. The slave quarters, African

⁹⁴ Barile 2004

American culture, poor whites, and interracial tension, negotiation, and accommodation preoccupy historians and historic site interpreters alike. An example of inclusiveness that is not a plantation is Fort Fisher, which is North Carolina's most visited state historic site, near the mouth of the Cape Fear River. Most visitors without a doubt come to see the fortifications that sheltered the Confederacy's sustenance until January 1865. That story by itself is dramatic, but if one were to learn that enslaved African Americans and conscripted Lumbee Indians worked on building the fort and that African American Union soldiers helped capture it, the story expands in complexity and poignancy.⁹⁵

Crow's second point is truthfulness. Slaves were not servants. Although there is much to celebrate in African American folk beliefs, culture, traditions, and resilience, slavery was a cruel and bloody business. Even a broad audience will not be fooled by efforts to illustrate slavery or its circumstances as benign. Language is another important concern. Every slaveholding farmer was not a planter, and not every farm was a plantation. Equally, not every African American was a slave. Distinctions should be made and carefully explained.⁹⁶

Principle number three is research. Not every historic site has a workforce that can achieve in-depth research. The National Park Service has turned to educational institutions and to the Organization of American Historians to help at numerous sites.⁹⁷ Another successful method for accomplishing research is through graduate students and internships. An example of a site that has benefited recognition from continuing research is Monticello. The Thomas Jefferson--

⁹⁵ Crow, Jeffery J. 1998. "Interpreting Slavery in the Classroom and at Historic Sites." *Perspective on History*. February. Accessed February 20, 2014. <http://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/march-1998/interpreting-slavery-in-the-classroom-and-at-historic-sites>.

⁹⁶ Crow 1998

⁹⁷ Crow 1998

Sally Heming's lore has now infiltrated public awareness as never before. And now historical interpreters are prepared to answer questions due to the ongoing research that has revealed much more about slave life at Monticello than was known even 10 years ago.⁹⁸

The last standard is tailored interpretations. A tailored interpretation actually has the advantage of focusing on one or two major themes without trying to interpret them all. One interpretive method does not fit all at historic sites.⁹⁹ One must establish the basic themes of the historic site and determine how do they relate to African American history? Architecture and landscape may be suitable at one site but not at another. Instead of a wide-ranging interpretation that may or may not be relevant to that site, the visitor receives sound facts on some distinct aspect of African American history. The impact on the visitor becomes focused, sustained, and real.¹⁰⁰ Crow's four pronged approach is versatile and can be used at any type of site that has an African American story to tell.

In closing, although the African American experience is being acknowledged and interpreted, however brief or thorough on each individual site, it is important for site interpreters to come up with a new form of interpretation in order to better tell the complete story of the site. If sites just briefly mention that slavery took place on their site, then the site interpreters do an injustice to the paying visitors of the site. The guests leave the site not understanding how that particular plantation actually functioned. Now that sites are willing to discuss the African American experience, perhaps they should take Jeff Crow's advice or come up with their own version of interpreting the African American experience.

⁹⁸ Crow 1998

⁹⁹ Crow 1998

¹⁰⁰ Crow 1998

Contextual History of Charleston County

In the United States of America's early years, there was prosperity and motivation to expand, coupled with turmoil and division due to foreign rule. Upon the onset of the American Revolution, Great Britain had attained the position of a military and economic superpower. The thirteen American colonies were one part of a global empire spawned by the British in a series of colonial wars commencing in the late seventeenth century and continuing on to the mid eighteenth century. The British military expanded relentlessly in size throughout this period as it engaged in the Nine Years War (1688-1697), the War of Spanish Succession (1702-1713), the War of Austrian Succession (1739-1748), and the Seven Years War (1756-1763). These wars brought considerable additions to the British Empire. In North America alone the British victory in the Seven Years War resulted in France ceding to Britain all of its territory east of the Mississippi River as well as all of Canada, and Spain surrendering its claim to Florida.¹⁰¹

The state of South Carolina is one of the original thirteen colonies. Initially populated by both the Cherokee and Catawba Native Americans, European exploration and attempts at colonization began in the early 16th century.¹⁰² The French and Spanish were not successful in their efforts to settle the land, but the English were by 1670. The English arrived to the territory in a ship with three masts commanded by Henry Brayne; Colonel William Sayle was the official governor of the expedition.¹⁰³ The journey from England to the Eastern shores of the Carolinas

¹⁰¹ Baack, Ben. 2005. "The Economics of the American Revolutionary War." EH.NET Economic History Association. July. Accessed February 21, 2014. <http://eh.net/encyclopedia/the-economics-of-the-american-revolutionary-war-2/>.

¹⁰² South Carolina State Library. 2012. "A Brief History of South Carolina." *South Carolina State Library*. March. Accessed February 23, 2014. <http://www.statelibrary.sc.gov/a-brief-history-of-south-carolina>.

¹⁰³ Frazer, Walter J. 1991. *Charleston! Charleston! The History of a Southern City*. Columbia: University of South Carolina.

was financed by eight influential English politicians known as the Lords Proprietors of the Carolinas. The proprietors encouraged settlement of the land by promising all free White men above the age of sixteen 150 acres of land and one hundred more acres for every able bodied servant one could find to work the land. Immigrants and other Americans jumped at the opportunity, and soon the Carolina settlement was a very populated area.¹⁰⁴

Charles Towne was founded in 1670 along the Ashley River by eight English proprietors and was originally deemed Charles Towne after King Charles 1. Soon after it was established, Lord Anthony Ashley Cooper prophesied that one day this city would become a “great American port town”, and how right he was. In 1680, Charles Towne was named the capitol of the Carolina colony because it was the epicenter for further expansion and the southernmost point of English settlement in the late 1600s.¹⁰⁵ Also in 1680, the town form was created. It was designed to be in the shape of a rectangle, but not too isolated or compact that future community growth could not take place.

In 1710, the colony named Carolina was split into North and South Carolina. By the mid-18th century Charles Towne had become a bustling trade center, and the wealthiest and largest city south of Philadelphia. Rice and indigo had been successfully cultivated by slaves of planters in the surrounding coastal low- country, while merchants profited from the successful shipping industry. The area surrounding modern day Charleston and throughout the coastal low-country is where Europeans started their plantations and made their slaves grow rice and harvest indigo. In

¹⁰⁴ Frazer 1991

¹⁰⁵ The National Park Service. 2013. "Community History: Charleston." *National Park Service*. Accessed February 23, 2014. <http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/charleston/community.htm>.

the state of South Carolina alone, there were approximately 2,000 plantations.¹⁰⁶ The Slaves brought to this region were abducted from Western African countries like Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria, and by 1720, they accounted for more than half of the population in a state with a population of over 100,000.¹⁰⁷ They were chosen from Africa's Rice Coast because the people from these countries were expert rice planters and were supposedly resistant to malaria.¹⁰⁸ While slavery was becoming very prosperous in the low- country, the interior/ up-country of the state was being populated by traders and farmers that were pushing the Native Americans further and further west.

Although things seemed to be functioning well across the state of South Carolina and the other colonies, they were not. There were several economic restrictions and expansion restrictions causing American frustration that led to the fight for American independence. Between 1763 and 1774, colonists were not allowed to settle western lands or trade in that territory without British permission. British parliament created this restriction in order to maintain control over the fur trade and to keep money out of colonists' pockets.¹⁰⁹ Following the ban of western expansion without parliamentary permission, taxation was put in place. Because the British paid double the taxes that colonists did, they thought it was time for settlers to start contributing to the empire.

The Sugar Act of 1764, the Stamp Act of 1765, the Quartering Act of 1765, and the Townshend Acts of 1767 all forced tariffs on everyday goods and services that the settlers were

¹⁰⁶Sciway. 2014. *African Slave Trade and South Carolina*. January. Accessed February 25, 2014. <http://www.sciway.net/hist/chicora/slavery18-2.html>.

¹⁰⁷Brawley, Benjamin. 2004. *A Social History of the American Negro*. Harlem: PG distributors.

¹⁰⁸ Brawley 2004

¹⁰⁹ Baack 2005

not accustomed to paying.¹¹⁰ There were peaceful boycotts informing the British of American displeasure. The British kindly repealed the Townshend Act and three years later enacted the Tea Act which led to the Boston Tea party. Bostonians were not the only group of people to revolt against the Tea Act. Residents of Charleston seized tea and warehoused it in the Exchange and Custom House because they viewed the Tea Act of 1773 as the embodiment of "taxation without representation."¹¹¹ Representatives from all over the colony came to the Exchange in 1774 to designate representatives to the Continental Congress, and South Carolina professed its liberation from the crown on the steps of the Exchange. Charles Towne alone was becoming the center for ensuing Revolution as the relationship between the colonists and England weakened. Two continental congresses meetings were held in 1774 and 1775 in order to devise a continental army to fight against the crown of England and become an independent nation.¹¹²

The thirteen colonies were becoming frustrated with all the regulations, restrictions, and taxation the British kept legislating, so they began to unite like never before. South Carolina was one of the richest colonies in the United States by the time of the American Revolution because its planters and merchants produced a solid governing class, which contributed many leaders to the fight for American independence. More Revolutionary War battles and skirmishes were fought in South Carolina than any other state. Some of the defining skirmishes were the battles at Sullivan's Island, Camden, Kings Mountain, and Cowpens. Residents of South Carolina even ratified the United States Constitution on May 23, 1788, which made it the eighth state to enter the Union.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Baack 2005

¹¹¹ The National Park Service 2013

¹¹² Baack 2005

¹¹³ South Carolina State Library 2012

In 1776, America became an independent nation. The American colonies had unified enough to form an army and decided to follow through with the plot of a revolution. The British had military and financial advantages, but the thirteen colonies had drive and determination. Americans also knew the terrain much better than their overseas ruler. In 1777, the Americans were ecstatic about their win at the battle of Saratoga. On the other hand, this war was taking a serious financial toll due to decline in value of the newly established American currency. From 1778-1783, the war continued with several battles, the British invasion of the southern states in 1778, and the battle at Yorktown in 1781 just to name a few. The British even sieged Charles Towne in 1776 but it was effectively safeguarded by American, William Moultrie from Sullivan's Island. By 1780 Charles Towne came under British control for two and a half years. After the British withdrew their troops in December 1782, the city's name was legitimately changed to Charleston.¹¹⁴ Around the same time, the Treaty of Paris officially ended the Revolutionary War in 1783.¹¹⁵ Americans could finally create the country they had longed for since leaving Great Britain years before.

The end of the Napoleonic Wars brought an end to a time of global war and revolt and it began the era of rapid economic growth. In America, the end of the War of 1812 released the swift growth of industry, cities, and westward expansion.¹¹⁶ The years following the war also marked a notable advance in the democracy of American politics. Landowners being the only voters and people that could run for office were a thing of the past. Voters became able to directly elect presidents, state judges, and governors; by doing so, voting participation

¹¹⁴ The National Park Service 2013

¹¹⁵ Baack 2005

¹¹⁶ Mintz, S., and S. McNeil. 2013. "Overview of the Pre- Civil War Era." Digital History. Accessed February 21, 2014. <http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/era.cfm?eraid=5>.

skyrocketed. In addition, the antebellum age saw a great flood in collective energy to improve society through reform. There were campaigns that pursued prohibition of alcohol, the guarantee of women's rights, and the abolishment of slavery like never before.¹¹⁷

Between 1845 and 1853, the nation stretched its boundaries to include Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.¹¹⁸ The United States annexed Texas in 1845 and divided the Oregon country in 1846. Following negotiations with Britain, America gained California and the Southwest from Mexico in 1848 after the Mexican War; and acquired the Gadsden Purchase in southern Arizona from Mexico in 1853.¹¹⁹ Quick national development marked the antebellum period.

Charleston was flourishing in the plantation controlled economy of the post-Revolutionary years. When the cotton gin was invented in 1793, it revolutionized the production of cotton, which quickly made it become South Carolina's major export. Cotton plantations relied heavily on slave labor.¹²⁰ Slaves were the primary labor force within the city, working as domestics, artisans, market workers or field hands. Many Black Charlestonians spoke Geechee, a tongue derived from the combination of English, Portuguese, and a variety of African words. By 1820 Charleston's population had grown to 23,000, with a Black majority.

¹¹¹ Mintz and McNeil 2013

¹¹⁸ Mintz and McNeil 2013

¹¹⁹ Mintz and McNeil 2013

¹²⁰ The National Park Service 2013

Population Figures for Charleston

	<u>Total</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Free Negro</u>	<u>Slave</u>
1790	16,359	8,089	586	7,684
1800	20,473	9,630	1,024	9,819
1810	24,711	11,568	1,472	11,671
1820	24,780	10,653	1,457	11,652
1830	30,289	12,828	2,107	15,354
1840*	29,261	13,030	1,558	14,673
1850	42,985	20,012	3,441	19,532
1860	40,522	23,376	3,237	13,909

Figure 1: Population of Charleston broken down by race from 1790-1860. (Wood, 47)

When a massive slave revolt planned by Denmark Vesey, was discovered in 1822, panic arose amidst white Charlestonians and Carolinians leading to harsher restrictions on the activities of slaves and free Blacks.¹²¹ Hundreds of Blacks, free and slave, and some white supporters that were involved in the planned uprising were held in the Old Jail.

The period's most critical concern was a developing sectional conflict that brought the country to the brink of Civil War- slavery. The addition of new land from Mexico raised the question that would dominate American politics during the 1850s: whether or not slavery would be permitted in the western states. The Compromise of 1850 tried to settle the issue by admitting California as a free state but allowing slavery in the rest of the states seized from Mexico.¹²² But enactment of the Fugitive Slave Law as part of the compromise worsened northern/southern tensions. In 1854, the question of slavery in the territories was brought up again by the decision to open Kansas and Nebraska to white settlement and decide the status of slavery according to the principle of majority rule. The United States divide on the acceptance of slavery was intensified by John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry, the selection of Abraham Lincoln as president

¹²¹ The National Park Service 2013

¹²² Mintz and McNeil 2013

in 1860, and by the Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision, which stated that Congress could not exclude slavery from the western states.¹²³

As both the North and the South prepared for war, the relative strengths and weaknesses of the "free market" and the "slave labor" economic systems became progressively apparent. The Union's industrial and economic capacity continued its rapid industrialization to keep the rebellion at bay.¹²⁴ In the South there was a smaller industrial base, fewer rail lines, and an agricultural economy based upon slave labor that made mobilization of resources more difficult. The Union's advantages in factories, railroads, and manpower put the Confederacy at a great disadvantage.

Although, the South lagged in industrial development, it did not come from any inherent economic disadvantages. There was great wealth in the South that was primarily tied up in the slave economy. By 1860, the economic value of slaves in the United States surpassed the invested value of all of the nation's railroads, factories, and banks combined.¹²⁵ The Confederate leaders were confident that the importance of cotton on the world market would provide the South with the diplomatic and military assistance they needed for victory.

With the invention of the cotton gin, cotton became a major crop, particularly in the upcountry of South Carolina. Columbia was selected to be the new capital because it is in the center of the state and it reduced the political power of the elites from the low- country. However, dissatisfaction with the federal government and its tariff policies grew during this

¹²³ Mintz and McNeil 2013

¹²⁴ Arrington, Benjamin T. 2011. *The Civil War Remembered*. Essay, Washington D.C.: National Park Service and Eastern National.

¹²⁵ Arrington 2011

period. John C. Calhoun, a South Carolinian, designed the theory of nullification in the 1820's which stated that a state could reject any federal law it considered to be a violation of its rights.¹²⁶ Due to the creation of this rule, armed conflict was barely avoided from 1820's-1860's; however, by 1860 tensions between the state and the federal government reached an all-time high. South Carolinians were unhappy about the restrictions on free trade and suggestions that slavery should be abolished; so South Carolina became the first southern state to secede from the Union on December 20, 1860.¹²⁷

Upon the eve of the Civil War, in 1860, the National Democratic Convention convened in Charleston. Hibernian Hall served as the nerve center for the delegates following Stephen A. Douglas, who it was hoped would bridge the gap between the northern and southern delegates on the issue of spreading slavery to the western territories.

The nation embarked into Civil War on April 12, 1861 when the Confederate troops fired on Fort Sumter in the Charleston Harbor. The Civil War and its aftermath devastated South Carolina. The state economy was completely destroyed. To add injury to insult, in 1865 General William T. Sherman marched his troops through South Carolina burning plantations and a majority of the city of Columbia.¹²⁸

The North attracted 7/8 of the European immigrants to the United States through the mid-19th century.¹²⁹ As a consequence, the population of the states that stayed in the Union was approximately 23 million, as compared to a population of 9 million in the Confederate states.

¹²⁶ South Carolina State Library 2012

¹²⁷ South Carolina State Library 2012

¹²⁸ South Carolina State Library 2012

¹²⁹ Arrington 2011

This translated directly into the Union having 3.5 million males of military age - 18 to 45 - compared to the 1 million for the South. About 75 percent of Southern males fought in the war, in comparison to about half of Northern men.¹³⁰

The Southern economy, while shaky throughout the war, grew remarkably worse in its later years. The Emancipation Proclamation both enraged the South with its promise of freedom for their slaves, and threatened the very existence of its primary labor source. The economy continued to suffer during 1864 as Union armies battered Confederate troops in the eastern and western arenas.¹³¹ The Union General Ulysses S. Grant took advantage of the railways and steamships to move his soldiers to deplete the man power and materials of the South. The end of the war rested on a stalemate at Petersburg, Virginia. General Grant stated that he could afford to "fight it out along this line if it takes all summer," while the confederacy could not.¹³² Simply put, the North was the victor of the Civil War, and the United States of America would be a very different nation today than had the war never been fought, or if the confederacy had won.

The Reconstruction period that came after the Civil War was distinguished by economic, social, and political turmoil. After the inevitable destructive defeat of the Confederacy, Federal forces remained in Charleston during the city's reconstruction. The war had shattered the prosperity of the antebellum city. The former leaders found themselves without political power or money, while the large population of freed slaves tried to improve their economic and political positions. Governor Wade Hampton and his group of conservative followers were able to get control back over the state when the federal government withdrew their troops.¹³³ On the other

¹³⁰ Arrington 2011

¹³¹ Arrington 2011

¹³² Arrington 2011

¹³³ South Carolina State Library 2012

hand, the economy continued to suffer in the years to come since cotton prices were low again, and the plantation system powered by slave labor that had brought South Carolina so much wealth had died. In the 1890s, populists' reforms brought more political power to small white farmers, but still left African Americans segregated and disenfranchised. Industries slowly brought the city and its inhabitants back to a renewed vitality and growth in population. As the city's commerce improved, Charlestonians also worked to restore their community institutions.

Plantations and African American Experience.

Plantation: 1) an estate as in a tropical or semitropical region, cultivated by workers living on it. 2) An area growing cultivated crops.¹³⁴

Yes, plantations were amongst one of the first institutions to come to the New World, but our understanding of the word today is not what the original meaning was. The word plantation and the agricultural system that has become known as a plantation are two different things. Originally the term referred to something planted, whether it was colonies or crops. When the term was first used on the East coast of the United States, it referred to new settlements rather than large land holdings.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ Agnes, Micheal. 2007. *Webster New World College Dictionary*. fourth. Edited by David B. Guralnik. Cleveland: Wiley Publishing, inc.

¹³⁵ Hillard, Sam B. 1994. "Plantations and the Moulding of the Southern Landscapae." In *The Making of the American Landscape*, by Micheal P. Cozen, 104-126. London: Harper Collins Academic; Routledge.

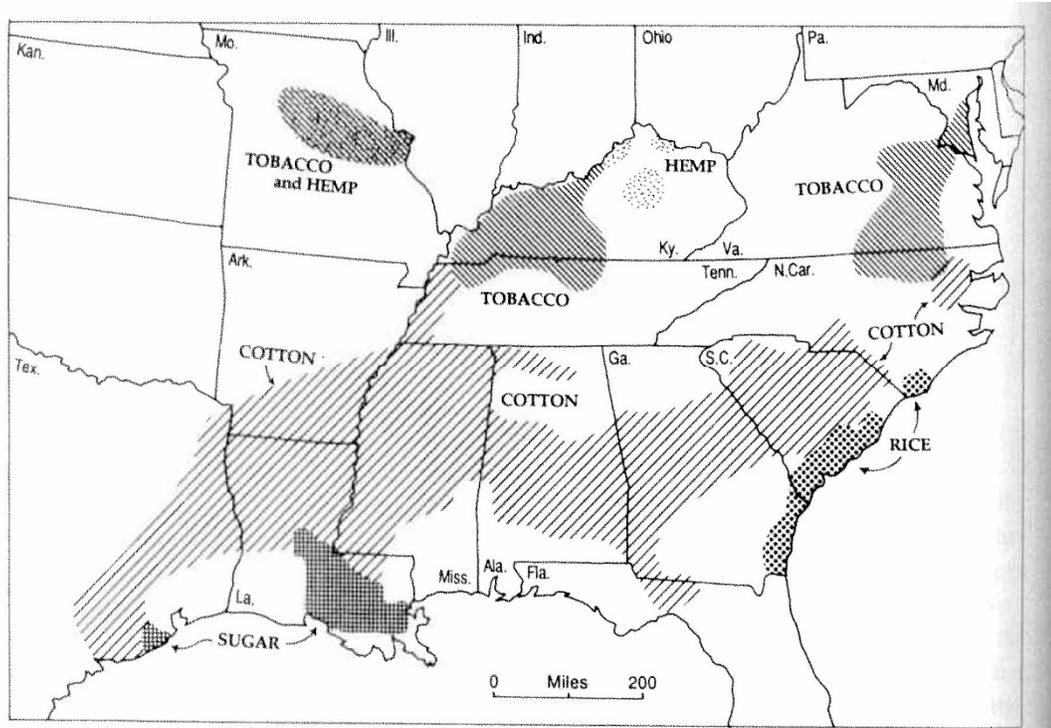


Figure 2: Agricultural crops across the southeast between Revolutionary and Civil Wars. (Hillard, 106)

But as the phrase evolved in the U.S., it began to take on six characteristics: a landholding commonly over 250 acres; a distinct division between labor and management, specialized production, generally one or two cash crops per proprietorship; location in the south in an area with a “plantation” tradition; distinctive settlement forms and spatial organization reflecting centralized control, and a considerable input of cultivating labor or power per unit of area.¹³⁶

The modern day difference between a plantation and a farm is that farms are worked for subsistence. Farms tend to yield a variety of crops, have less capital investment, and have few if any workers. Plantations on the other hand were solely operated for profit, relying primarily on a single cash crop that would be exported out of that region, and had a large labor force (slaves).¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Hillard 1994

¹³⁷ Hillard 1994

(See Figure 3) Plantations support three land occupancy forms: the antebellum plantation, the fragmented plantation, which is comprised of both cropper and tenant type, and the neo-plantation.¹³⁸

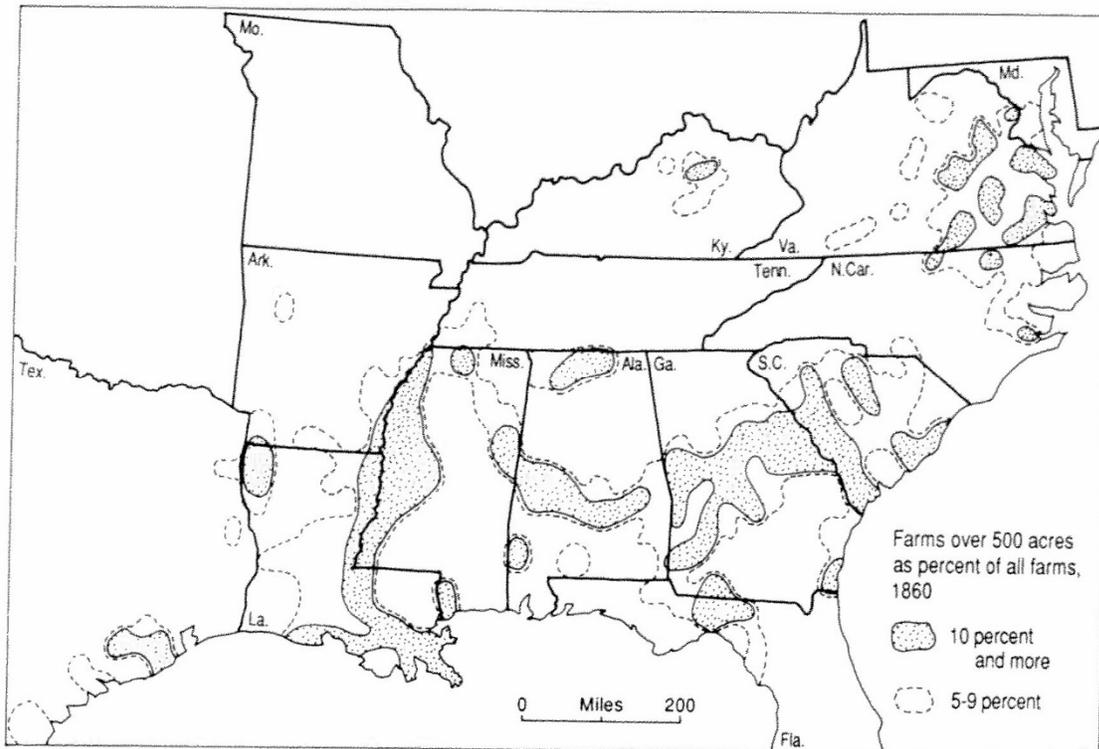


Figure 3: Farm size by acre on eve of Civil War. (Hillard, 107)

The antebellum plantation type was popular between 1830 and 1860 and covered 350,000 square miles across southern states. It is characterized by monoculture cash crops with a variety of subsistence crops in rotation. Most produced two or three money crops. The owner/manager's house was located near a group of service buildings and slave quarters.¹³⁹ Slave cabins were clustered compactly in rows caddie-cornered behind the big house along short roads forming a rectangle of buildings.¹⁴⁰ The service buildings included things like tool and food storage sheds,

¹³⁸ Prunty, Merle Jr. 1955. "The Renaissance of the Southern Plantation." *Geographical Review*, October: 459-491. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/211613>.

¹³⁹ Prunty 1955

¹⁴⁰ Wood, Peter H. 1974. *The Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina*. New York: Norton paperbacks.

an office, barns, cotton gin house, or rice/sugarcane mill and a kitchen. Slaves also had their own plot of land that they shared in order to grow food.

The post bellum “fragmented” plantation arose towards the end of reconstruction and flourished in the years following.¹⁴¹ They were usually started on plots of land that were previously the antebellum form. As previously stated there are two subtypes. The cropper “sharecropper” form was the more popular of the two and were still in use all the way to 1936. Through sharecropping, the owner of the land would supply all supplies used for production including house for sharecropper and half the cost of seed and fertilizer. The worker would split the proceeds from all their hard labor with other workers at the end of each year. The spatial layout has evolved since the antebellum type. The compact plantation village has exploded into various fragments of 30-40 acre plots farmed by individuals.¹⁴² The second type of fragmented plantation is the tenant-renter type. On this type of farm, the tenant supplies their own cultivating power and pays 2/3 of the seed and fertilizer costs. The tenant-renter type is very similar to the share croppers, but there are minor differences.¹⁴³ There are even fewer houses on the tenant plantation due to a greater dispersal of the workers. The central location of barns and sheds for the community have also disappeared because the tools and equipment used in the fields belong to the renter not the owner; however, there are private sheds for each renter. Fences are introduced. There are usually 3-6 fenced in areas on each subunit that encompass 5-10 acres of land.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Prunty 1955

¹⁴² Prunty 1955

¹⁴³ Prunty 1955

¹⁴⁴ Prunty 1955

Last but not least is the newest form, neo-plantations, which are being associated with the mechanization of plantation cultivation. They began to appear after World War II and resemble the antebellum form.¹⁴⁵ The main difference is that the owner has begun to do the work. The farm has reverted back to open fields with centralized buildings. The planter is using machinery now instead of human or animal labor. So now all the outbuildings that are used are barns and buildings to store equipment. It is best to have the house in sight of the barns in order to not make the walk to the tools too long and to make sure that no one can steal your belongings. These plantations are also situated along roads for owner and workers to be able to come and go frequently and easily.¹⁴⁶ There are also designated paths on the plot of land to make it easier to distinguish crops and move around the grounds.

Aside from the spatial layout of the plantation, there was also life, culture, and social stratification. Between the 16th and 19th centuries, approximately 10 million slaves and maybe even 20 million slaves were transported from Western Africa to the American shores.¹⁴⁷ On the trip to the United States, ships loaded anywhere from 200 to over 600 African slaves, that were stacked on top of each other with little to no breathing room. The crowding, ventilation, and food were so bad that the average mortality rate in the Middle Passage was between 14 and 20%; which was still considered good business. According to John Blassingame, author of the *Slave Community*, the slaves that were brought to the United States were mostly members of agrarian groups that were accustomed to continuously strenuous labor followed by a sedentary lifestyle, and were more docile and easy to capture than their Ibo, Ewe, Wolof, Bambara, and Arada

¹⁴⁵ Prunty 1955

¹⁴⁶ Prunty 1955

¹⁴⁷ Sciway 2014

counterparts.¹⁴⁸ The following maps show how the slave population was divided along the east coast from 1810-1830. As one can see, although Charleston had 200 plantations and there were over 2,000 plantations in South Carolina, this area still didn't hold the largest slave population on the east coast; Virginia did.

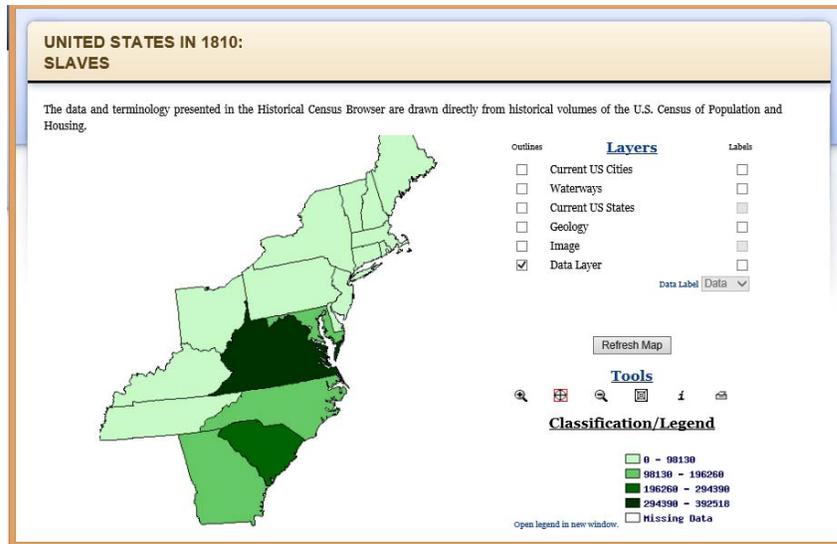


Figure 4: United States Slave population in 1810. (<http://mapserver.lib.virginia.edu/php/state.php>)

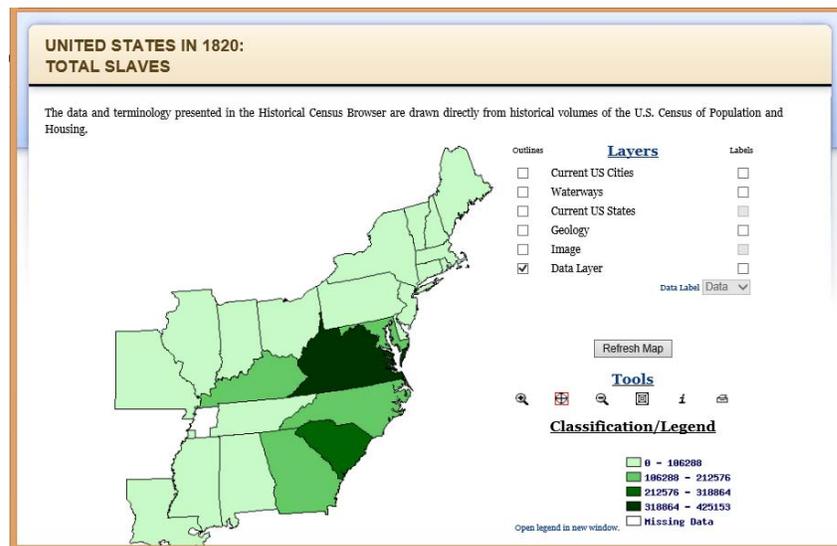


Figure 5: United States Slave population in 1820. (<http://mapserver.lib.virginia.edu/php/state.php>)

¹⁴⁸ Blassingame, John W. 1972. *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South*. New York: Oxford University Press.

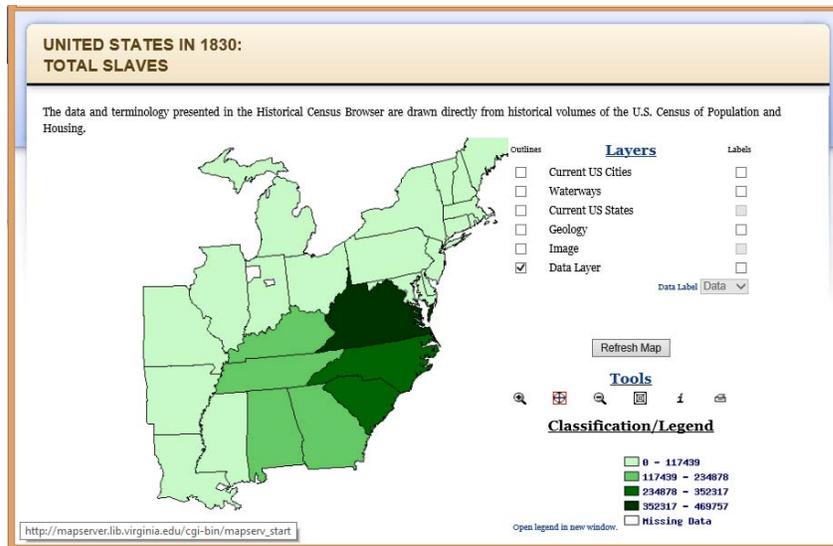


Figure 6: United States Slave population in 1830. (<http://mapserver.lib.virginia.edu/php/state.php>)

Once they arrived in South Carolina, Carolina planters developed a vision of the "ideal" slave – tall, healthy, male, between the ages of 14 and 18, "free of blemishes," and as dark as possible. For these ideal slaves Carolina planters in the eighteenth century paid, on average, between 100 and 200 sterling – in today's money that is between \$11,630 and \$23,200. Many of these slaves were almost immediately put to work in South Carolina's rice fields. Writers of the period remarked that there was no harder, or more unhealthy, work possible. The slaves would be calf deep in muddy water with the hot sun bearing down on them which made it hard to breathe because the air was warmer than their blood.¹⁴⁹ The Carolina rice fields have been described as death and disease huts for slaves. Malaria and other diseases killed off the low country slaves at unbelievable rates. Statistics from plantation accounts mention that while about one in three slave children on the cotton plantations died before reaching the age of 16, whereas nearly two of three slave children on rice plantations died before their sixteenth birthday.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Sciway 2014

¹⁵⁰ Sciway 2014

In Charleston, there was the basic plantation hierarchy. The Planter owned the plantation and was in charge of logistics. On really large plantations, the owner hired overseers that were paid to encourage the slaves to be the most productive by any means necessary. There are documented cases where the slaves ran overseers away for being too cruel. Owners were often not too upset because after all, their priority was keeping their property in good working condition.¹⁵¹ Not all plantations had overseers. Some had drivers, who were slaves themselves. Often drivers were handpicked by the master to “encourage” the slaves to be productive. Although they were hated by their fellow slaves, they kept the position as long as possible for the promise of better privileges from the master.¹⁵² Following the people in managerial positions under the owner were domestic slaves. Domestic slaves lived and worked in the house and were supposedly treated better than the field hands.¹⁵³ On the other hand, the closer one is to the master, the more subject they were to his verbal, physical, and sexual abuse. The stereotype is that domestic slaves tended to be light skinned due to their mixed ancestry. At the bottom of the rung is the field hand. These are the slaves that work in the fields six days a week from sun up to sun down.¹⁵⁴ They had the less desirable housing options, and were usually treated more harshly.

Slaves had a variety of professions on plantations whether urban or rural. Slaves were cooks, masons, butlers, coaches, field hands, and caretakers of the owner’s family. No matter what the profession was, there were certain skills that were desired for each individual. If one was a cook, they had to be able to make food quickly, in large amounts, and still make it taste good. They had to be able to boil, grill, slow cook, and make bread without burning. Masons

¹⁵¹ Independence Hall Association. 2008. *slave life and slave codes*. Accessed February 25, 2014. <http://www.ushistory.org/us/27b.asp>.

¹⁵² Independence Hall Association 2008

¹⁵³ Independence Hall Association 2008

¹⁵⁴ Independence Hall Association 2008

were selected based on their ability to lay bricks neatly and sometimes creatively. Being a brick layer was also seen as an art form. Sometimes slaves were required to create serpentine walls or place designs within the bricks on a building in order to complete a task. Doing these things was not as easy as it sounded, math, precision, and design skills were necessary to do this. Whatever the profession of the slave was, a certain level of skill was needed for the slave to maintain that position and stay in good standing with their owner.

From the early 1800's to the 1850's, Blacks constituted a majority of the Charleston population, as seen in the Figure 1. Leading up to the Civil War, the demand for labor in the Southwest pushed up the price of slaves and encouraged Charleston slave owners to sell their property out west. The exportation of field hands from the south and the rising predominance of domestic slaves tipped the gender ratio so that slave women outnumbered men five to four in Charleston.¹⁵⁵ The enslaved population also participated in some trades and jobs that whites and freed Blacks did. Enslaved Black men were often employed as fishermen, carpenters, masons, tailors, butchers, cooks, and ship workers. Slave women were hired as vendors, nurses, and maids.¹⁵⁶

Aspects of the daily lives of slaves including: diet, dwelling conditions, religious practices, etc. were generally not recorded by the master. Slavery was an economic institution and the only details deemed worthy of being consistently recorded by the master class were those related to the value of their slaves or the value of their production. The daily lives of these African-Americans were not understood and of little significance to the owners, which is

¹⁵⁵ Wood 1974

¹⁵⁶ Wood 1974

interesting since the lives of the whites and Blacks were intertwined. Rigid rules, decorum, and a sense of place, not physical separation kept the races apart.

Although slavery was a major economic institution in Charleston, and the enslaved population was numerous, there was also a large freed Black population. They also played a major role in the development of Charleston. In 1861, 14 percent of the Charleston population was emancipated Blacks and almost two thirds of them lived in the four upper wards of Charleston as carpenters, tailors, and other laborers.¹⁵⁷ Freed Blacks tended to live amongst themselves and some even owned slaves of their own. The freed Blacks had their own businesses, churches, and primary schools.

As more and more Africans ethnicities came to the Carolina coast, they created their own culture and language known as Gullah or Geechee. They live in petite fishing and farming communities that run parallel to the Eastern coast.¹⁵⁸ The Gullah were able to maintain more of their African culture than any other African American group due to the geographical isolation and strong community life. The Geechee created their own creole language by mixing different African dialects (mainly dialects from Sierra Leone) with Portuguese, and English.¹⁵⁹ The Gullah history and language is able to be passed down via oral history and telling African folktales, and maintaining traditional crafts such as sweetgrass basket weaving. Gullah people are descendants of Sierra- Leone rice harvesters on Charleston plantations. As late as the 1940s, a Black American linguist found Gullahs in rural South Carolina and Georgia who could deliver songs and fragments of stories in Mende and Vai, and who could do basic counting in the

¹⁵⁷ Wood 1974

¹⁵⁸ Opala, Joseph A. 1987. *The Gullah: Rice, Slavery, and the Sierra Leone-American Connection*. Columbia: USIS. Accessed February 25, 2014.

¹⁵⁹ Opala 1987

Guinea/Sierra Leone dialect of Fula. In fact, all of the African texts that Gullah people have preserved are in languages spoken within Sierra Leone and along its borders.¹⁶⁰

In closing, historic sites are very complex entities. They are constructed of historic resources, physical and intangible, that must be managed by owners of the site and site managers. The site managers have standards and duties they must complete in order to meet the needs of the site. There must also be funding to keep the site functioning and to maintain the resources present. In order to make the story of the property come to life and be digestible for the visitors, an interpretation plan must be constructed to help guide the methods of interpretation that will be utilized on the site. Coinciding with the interpretation plan, an interpretive staff member must be hired to carry out the goals of the interpretation plan and follow any interpretation standards decided by the site. Although each site has a site manager and interpretation plan, the story of each site has been interpreted differently over time. Sharing the African American experience has not always been imperative to sites that are connected to Black history. Sharing the African American story was either too difficult and uncomfortable to discuss; or it was deemed unimportant and unnecessary. Over time, sites realized that it is important to interpret the Black experience on sites in order to give a more thorough history of the site.

By adding a more complete history of each site, research has found that there are various definitions of plantations and different types. Depending on the time period being examined, there was a plantation type that coincided with that era in American history. The plantation type that was mostly used for this thesis was the antebellum plantation that was used between the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. Between those two wars were many economic, industrial, and

¹⁶⁰ Opala 1987

social changes occurring across the United States. The biggest issue of that time was slavery and how necessary it was. The Civil War ended the institution of slavery, and allowed for the America we live in now to be possible.

CHAPTER 3

CASE STUDIES

With an understanding of site manager roles, site interpretation, the history of plantations, and African American roles on plantations in the Charleston region, it is now time to turn to case studies. Case studies are a good way to get a first-hand look at how some Charleston County plantations are interpreting the African American experience. Four sites were chosen specifically as case studies for this research: Boone Hall Plantation, Drayton Hall, McLeod Plantation, and Hampton Plantation. The sites that were selected have physical resources present, and for the most part they incorporate them into the tour and history of the site. Before visiting each site, a set of common questions was created in order to ensure that interviews at each site were consistent.

Historic Site Manager Questionnaire

1. Who owns this site, and what type of business management is it operated under? (Non-profit, for profit, state run, etc.)
2. What is the period of significance (POS)?
 - 2.1 How did you define that?
 - 2.2 What physical resources influenced that POS definition?
3. What kind of land uses occurred there? (Agriculture, commercial production, etc.)
4. Who did that work?
5. Do you have information on the personal lives of slaves during that time period?
 - 5.1 What are those sources?
6. What physical resources were there historically?
 - 6.1 What exists today?

7. Why did the original property owner/later site managers choose to maintain the resources?
8. When was the site opened to the public?
9. How was that decided?
10. What was the condition of the resources when the property was first opened to the public?
 - 10.1 Has that changed over time?
 - 10.2 If changes occurred, what/how?
11. What kind of funding was needed initially? (Protecting the land, stabilizing resources so tours could take place, interpret, go from private to public, etc.)
 - 11.1 What were/are the most common sources of funding?
 - 11.2 How has it changed over time?
12. Current tourist statistics (race, gender, age, education, from where, economic status, etc.)
13. Since the quarters or other African American physical resources were chosen to be maintained, how are they acknowledged/ interpreted on tours?
14. What are the methods of interpretation for the entire site? (Re-enactment, first person, a tour with guide, etc.)
15. When visitors are on the tour, are the experiences of the slave's lives and owner's life intertwined or are they separated?
 - 15.1 If intertwined, do you provide extra info about differences in their life experience?
16. Is there an interpretation plan?
 - 16.1 Whose role is it to implement that (the interpretation personnel or the site manager)?
17. Would you please explain to me the various roles of the site manager?
18. Are there any site management, interpretation, or standards that you must adhere to, or choose to adhere to?

Site Interpretation Manager Questionnaire

1. Is there an interpretation plan?
 - 1.1. When was it done?
 - 1.2. How often is it updated?
 - 1.3. Whose role is it to implement that??
2. How has interpretation changed since it started on the site?
3. Is there funding for any new or revamping of interpretation?
 - 3.1 Where does it come from?
4. Since the quarters or other African American physical resources were chosen to be maintained, how are they acknowledged/ interpreted on tours?
 - 4.1 If not, why not?
 - 4.2 Are there plans to?
5. What are the methods of interpretation for the entire site? (Re-enactment, first person, a tour with guide, etc.)
6. How many tour guides/docents are on staff?
 - 6.1 Does that change by season? Do they have different responsibilities?
 - 6.1 Do they deliver same story or do some specialize?
 - 6.2 By season/event?
7. When visitors are on the tour, are the experiences of the slave's lives and owner's life intertwined or are they separated?
 - 7.4 If intertwined, do you provide extra info about differences in their life experience?
8. Are the tours aimed for a specific group or are they made to reach every audience?
9. Are there any interpretation standards that you must/choose to adhere to?

10. Would you please explain to me the various roles of the lead/subordinate interpreters?
11. If the African American experience is not one of the foci of site interpretation, what are the other stories that are told?
12. Is the African American experience a component of education for school tours at the site?
13. Related to question 12, would a visit to your site accomplish a local or state curriculum goal?

Each site complied with my requests and allowed me an interview and observe a tour.

Researching the four case study sites lasted three days. Boone Hall Plantation was visited November, 21, 2013; Drayton Hall and McLeod Plantations on November 22nd, and Hampton Plantation on November 23rd. The following section provides a brief history of each site, the questions and answers from the survey, and observations from walking around each site and partaking in the tours.

Boone Hall Plantation

Boone Hall Plantation is a privately owned historic plantation located in Mount Pleasant, SC, approximately eight miles north of Charleston on Boone Hall Plantation Creek (Question 1 of Historic Site Manager Questionnaire). It is believed that in 1681, Theophilus Patey was the first owner of the land. At that time the property incorporated 470 acres. His daughter Elizabeth was granted about 400 acres of the land as a wedding present upon marrying John Boone, for whom the plantation was named.¹⁶¹ Around the year 1711 John Boone died. He left one third of the property to his wife, and their five children divided the remaining two thirds. Thomas Boone, one of the sons, was the one who claimed residency on the land and built a house.¹⁶² From 1749

¹⁶¹ Rivers, J. 2013. South Carolina Plantations: Boone Hall. Accessed January 27, 2014. <http://south-carolina-plantations.com/charleston/boone-hall.html>.

¹⁶² Rivers, South Carolina Plantations: Boone Hall Plantation 2013

until 1811 the property was passed down from generation to generation. The property included the household items, livestock, and slaves. The parcel grew from 400 acres to 1,452 acres.¹⁶³

In 1811, the plantation left the Boone family's hands. All aspects of the property were sold to Thomas Vardell for a mere \$12,000.¹⁶⁴ In 1817, Vardell sold the property to three men in order to settle his debts. The three men, in the same year sold the land to the Horlbeck brothers, who were in the brick-making industry. They bought not only the land, but also all the established brick yard, crops, livestock, and slaves. During the height of production (early 1800s to 1860s), there were approximately 85 slaves producing 4,000,000 bricks a year.¹⁶⁵ Some well-known buildings in Charleston that were constructed using bricks from this plantation are the German Friendly Society Kitchen, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, and St. John's Lutheran Church. For the next one hundred years the Horlbeck family inherited and sold the land to and from one another. In addition to maintaining a booming brick business, the Horlbeck's also had their slave's plant the oak allee leading to the house. There was a grove of pecan trees planted on the property, as well as cotton and indigo cultivation, all done by slave labor.

Thomas Archibald Stone and his wife bought the property from the Horlbeck family in 1935. The purchase included not only the original Boone Hall Plantation, but also the Laurel Hill plantation next door, part of Elm Grove and Parker's Island. In total the Stone's gained a total of 4,039.5 acres which included highland and marsh.¹⁶⁶ The Horlbecks' reserved the right to harvest the existing crop with the exception of the pecan crop. The following year the Stones constructed

¹⁶³ McRae, William. 2013. *Boone Hall Plantation*. 11. Accessed January 27, 2014. <http://boonehallplantation.com/about.php>.

¹⁶⁴ McRae, 2013

¹⁶⁵ Rivers, South Carolina Plantations: Boone Hall Plantation2013

¹⁶⁶ McRae 2013

the house that is standing today, using bricks that had been left in the kiln.¹⁶⁷ For the next 20 years, the property changed hands a few more times. In the meantime, the tenant farmers continued to work on the grounds until the 1940s. In 1955 the McRae family purchased Boone Hall. Four years later they opened the house to the public for tours (Question 8 of Historic Site Manager Questionnaire). In the 1980s, 1990's, and early 2000s the site was temporarily shut down for the filming of several movies (*North and South*, 1980s, *Queen*, 1990s, and *The Notebook*, 2002). William McRae still owns the property and has continued to have dual purposes for the property: tours and farming.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Hedden, Michael, interview by Renee' Donnell. 2013. Boone Hall Plantation Education Coordinator interview (11/21)

¹⁶⁸ Rivers, South Carolina Plantations: Boone Hall Plantation 2013

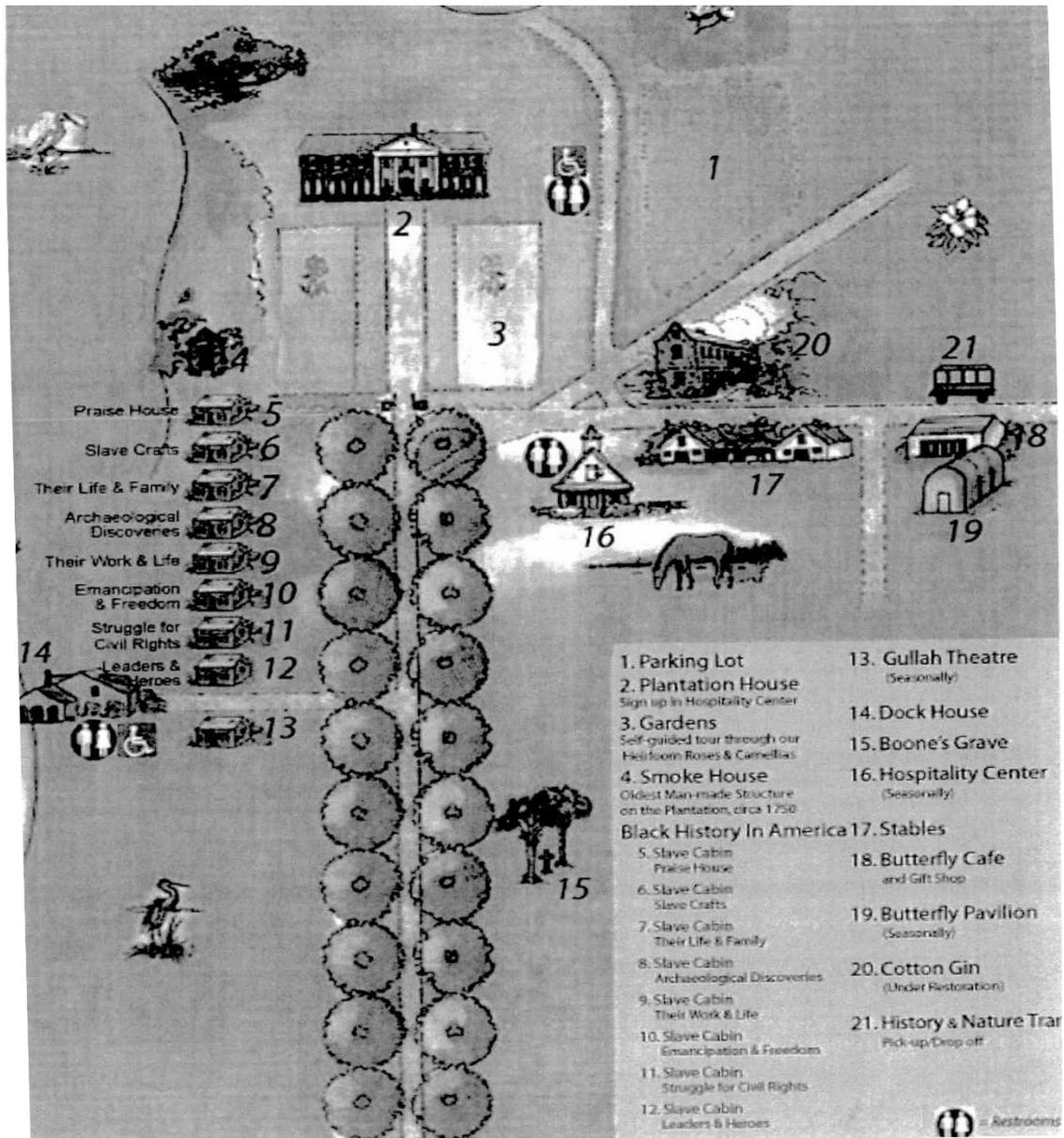


Figure 7: Map of Boone Hall Plantation (<http://boonehallplantation.com/>)

I visited Boone Hall Plantation on a breezy and cool sunny day. I arrived at 9:30 a.m. (about 30 minutes after the site opened). On first impression, the property was very pretty. The entrance was a long driveway with swampy areas on the side. Then the visitor continues on a gravel road going through a three- hundred-year-old allee of live oak trees. The first structures that a tourist sees is the row of slave cabins to the left and horse barns to the right. The last thing they see is the main house at the far end of the driveway. There are parking lots near the house. I parked near the stables and barns in order to meet the education coordinator. There is no designated interpretation personnel, but the education coordinator on this site holds the position closest to that title. He gives a lot of the tours to the school groups that come onto the site. He is also in charge of updating the educational markers around the site.

After we introduced ourselves, he requested that I not record the interview, but I could take notes on our conversation, and that I not take pictures inside the house because the house is still a private residence. I agreed to his terms and he commenced the tour with a walk over to the slave cabins (See Photo 1). Because the interview was intertwined with the tour and walk across the grounds, the results of my tour and interview fall in one narrative. In other case studies, the survey answers and tour insights are separated.



Figure 8: Row of Boone Hall Plantation slave cabins. (Photo by author, 11/13)

The slave cabins that we see today were constructed between 1790 and 1810, but were not the first ones on site (Question 6 of Historic Site Manager Questionnaire). The education coordinator explained that the original cabins were wood with dirt floors. He stated that during a natural disaster, possibly a hurricane, they were destroyed and had to be rebuilt, which is why they are now made out of brick and raised off the ground with wooden floors. The bricks used to build the cabins were left over/ faulty bricks from the on-property kiln. The cabin floors were raised to accommodate floods and high tides since the cabins are located just yards from the river. There were slits in the bottom of the structures that allowed for the water to pass through. The guide explained that the row of slave cabins we see today were for a special caliber of skilled laborers who worked in the brick yard, handymen, or people who worked in the original big house. During the height of production, between 1790 and 1850, each cabin housed from 16

to 18 slaves. The remainder of the slaves that harvested cotton, or indigo lived on other plots of land across the 1,000 plus acre plantation (Question 2, 3 & 4 of Historic Site Manager). These field hands all lived in wooden shacks. Perhaps the owners wanted to establish a social hierarchy within the slave community and by allowing only some to have the most substantial structures to live in, thereby suggesting who might be “better” than whom. (Question 5 of Historic Site Manager Questionnaire).

To interpret the slave cabins, a variety of methods were used. One method was a self-guided tour of the cabins. Each building has a different story to tell, informing the visitor about daily life, life after work in the fields, food, and family of all slaves across the plantation. Archeological research was even conducted under one of the slave cabins. On weekends, in the last dwelling there are ladies that are descendants of slaves who worked and lived on the plantation that sell their sweetgrass baskets and decorations. This cabin was inhabited by a family of tenant farmers, who lived there until the 1940s. For each building there is an audio tract, which tells the story of each cabin with the push of a button. In addition to the audio tract, there are also plaques and displays helping to tell the story. (Question 4 of Site Interpretation Manager Questionnaire). This arrangement allows visitors to stay as long as they please and look around as much as they want without feeling rushed or being asked to move to the next stop. The docents on this site are not allocated a script, so each guide can tell their own version of the site history as long as all topics are briefly addressed (Question 6 of Site Interpretation Manager Questionnaire). The audio tract ensures that no information is left out from tour to tour and that each visitor receives the same information.

The most memorable cabin was the one with an archeological display. Half of the floor boards were removed from the structure. There were tools left and a few artifacts. In the other

half of the structure was a display case holding still more artifacts, cooking supplies, pottery, glass bottles and animal bones among them. The most interesting thing in the case were the slave tags. The education coordinator explained that slave tags were passes allowing slaves to leave the plantation and go run errands for the master. He also said that prior to working at Boone Hall, he had no knowledge that slaves were allowed to leave plantations let alone given passes to do so. Thus we have a good first-hand example of a site being a teaching tool.



Figure 9: Display case in archeological cabin featuring artifacts. (Photo by author 11/13)

On one of the slave cabins closest to the house, there are noticeable fingerprint impressions on one of the bricks. The education coordinator invites groups of school children to place their own fingers in those imbedded in the brick, “you are now touching history,” he tells them, “these are the fingerprints of the slaves who made these bricks.” Interestingly, the

structures built using these “faulty” bricks are still standing 200 years after they were built, and have lasted far longer than the original house. When told these few fingerprints were the only ones found on the site, a third grader responded, “Well Mr. Hedden, how many sides are there to each brick, maybe there are others.” Whether or not children visiting Boone Hall understand the concept of slavery, one suspects they will remember those bricks, thus showing the impact made possible by historic sites using proven interpretive methods. (Question 12 and 13 of Site Interpretation Manager Questionnaire).



Figure 10: Slave fingerprint in brick on the side of a slave cabin. (Photo by author 11/13)

The next stop on the tour was the smokehouse between the slave quarters and the big house. The method of interpretation here was an informational marker. The smokehouse is the oldest structure standing on the site, constructed in 1750 by slaves, for slaves. This smokehouse is important to the site not only because of its purpose of curing meats, and because it is one of

the oldest remaining structures in the state, it also shows the masonry skill of the slaves who built it. Around the building there is a repeated diamond patterned maker's mark. The docent explained the glazing process and how it was more difficult to work the pattern into the bricks than it is to lay brick in a uniform way. The intricacy, detail, and time that went into making this circular brick smokehouse makes it important. In addition, this smokehouse is different from most because it is brick and circular as opposed to the typical wooden square smokehouse. It is not stated why this smokehouse is brick and circular, but the slave who made it may have felt this could be his/her gift to future generations. Or perhaps, he or she wanted to demonstrate his/her artistic abilities and masonry skills for sheer pleasure.



Figure 11: Boone Hall Plantation Smokehouse (Photo by author 11/13)

The master's house was the next stop on the tour. As we walked to the entrance, I noticed a serpentine wall that enclosed the formal garden and house. The actual walkway was made of pebbles lined with bricks. The education coordinator informed me that the house, serpentine wall, and walkway lining were all made from leftover bricks found lying in the kiln. The present house is the fourth to be constructed on the site (constructed in 1936). It is a Colonial Revival styled, 10,000 square foot home with twenty two rooms. In the past, visitors to the plantation arrived by river. The trip from Charleston to Boone Plantation took nine hours by river, a journey that takes twenty minutes today by car. During the tour of the big house, the guide touched on the slave experience on the site, told about the work they did, and the role slaves had in the historic houses that had previously stood on the site. The fact that slaves almost certainly built the present house shows that slaves not only had the ability to make bricks and build small structures, they also possessed the skills to build a large, elaborate home. While not trained architects, many slaves did master architectural principles and understood the math and building techniques required to construct large structures.

In the men's drawing room at Boone Hall, there are documents showing that a "young negro girl" cost \$998.00. This young girl was listed alongside cattle and everyday supplies in a ledger. Even if one visits Boone Hall only to see the main house, and chooses not to visit its slave cabins, he or she will learn something about the slave experience on the site. Ensuring the slave story is an integral part of the history it presents is a tribute to Boone Hall Plantation and the interpreters who work there. (Question 7 of Site Interpretation Manager Questionnaire). Slavery is mentioned inside the main house and outside, and the roles slaves played on the site are clearly defined.

Our final stop at Boone Hall Plantation was the “Gullah Theatre.” This portion of the tour uses first person and participatory methods of interpretation. The Gullah theatre is where a Gullah woman describes her own connection to the Gullah culture, tells traditional Gullah stories, teaches the audience words and African traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation. The traditional Gullah story I heard was about a rabbit, a fox, and a tabby. To tell the story, the orator chose individuals from the audience to come to the stage and act out the different parts. She also taught the audience some words from the Gullah language.

Oman= woman

Bitty= chicken

Cooter= turtle

Table tappa= preacher

She also led the audience through a series of call and response exercises, and closed by singing “Amazing Grace” along with the audience. Each Gullah orator has her own closing technique. This is an effective way to keep the Gullah/Geeche culture alive.

Another form of interactive interpretive method practiced at Boone Hall involves a small cotton field, located alongside the main house. School children are invited to pick cotton and remove the seeds, just as slaves had done. The students learn quickly the difficulty of the task, and that this hard labor was done by slaves no matter how hot, or how cold, for the entire day, day after day. In a small way these young visitors, too, are touching history. (Question 8 Site Interpretation Manager Questionnaire).

While exploring the grounds with the education coordinator, I learned about the demographics of the site and the role of the tour guides. The typical visitor to Boone Hall is a Caucasian senior citizen, with 3rd-5th graders making the second largest visitor group. There are several educational programs geared to adult visitors on the topics of rice culture, Gullah culture, and Charleston history (Question 12 Historic Site Manager Questionnaire). Each year there is a

large group of German tourists who visit the site in honor of one of the past owners, who were also German. The site hosts special events set up just for them, including bicycle tours and American beer tastings (Question 8 Site Interpretation Manager Questionnaire). The site employs 15 part time tour guides and each leads an unscripted tour, providing visitors with a history of the site using his or her own words. One story the guides are required to tell is that of the main house. The narrative of the house is meant to flow from room to room on the first floor. The upper levels are kept private for the residing family. Slavery and tenant farmer lifestyles are briefly mentioned into the storyline of the house as well (Question 6 Site Interpretation Manager Questionnaire). Using the site's many resources along with skill and planning, the interpreters at Boone Hall Plantation are able to demonstrate that historic preservation aims to cover not just one topic, but several aspects of the American past.

A thorough review of the tour/interview has been completed. Most of the questions from both questionnaires were answered, yet some were not. The next two sets of questions were not answered directly, but one can assume the answers based on other information given. Question 1 of the Site Interpretation Manager Questionnaire and question 16 of the Historic Site Manager Questionnaire ask if there is an interpretation plan for the site. The education coordinator never answered this question, but it can be inferred that there is one since the site is so well structured and there are at least eight methods of interpretation utilized across the site. Question 11 of Historic Site Manager Questionnaire and Question 3 of Site Interpretation Manager Questionnaire inquire about funding needed to open the site and if there are any sources of revenue to revamp the interpretation. The McRae family raised the money to open the site to the public and they still privately own the site. In regards to new revenue for updating interpretation methods, the site makes money from gate sales, weddings, the beer tasting, and hosting events

such as jazz festivals; the funds are directed towards interpretation and other functions of the site. The below questions from the two questionnaires were not answered and cannot be assumed. Question 17 of Historic Site Manager Questionnaire and Question 10 of Site Interpretation Manager Questionnaire ask if the role of the site manager and lead interpreters can be explained. Question 18 of Historic Site Manager Questionnaire and Question 9 of Site Interpretation Manager Questionnaire ask if there are any management and interpretation standards that staff must adhere to. Question 2 of Site Interpretation Manager Questionnaire wonders how interpretation has changed since the site opened. The last two unanswered questions are question 10 of Historic Site Manager Questionnaire: what was the condition of the resources when the site opened, and Question 7 of Historic Site Manager Questionnaire: Why did the original property owner choose to maintain the resources? It is understood that by not having answers to some of the questions will make it difficult to analyze across all sites for some questions.

Drayton Hall

Drayton Hall is located along the Ashley River in St. Andrew's parish (the historic name of an area slightly larger than today's Charleston County). It is owned by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and currently sits on 125 acres. When the plantation was originally purchased in 1678 by Edward Mayo, it covered 750 acres. The land changed hands several times before John Drayton purchased it in 1738.¹⁶⁹ In 1742, the construction of the main house at Drayton Hall was completed. This is a Georgian Palladian mansion and is one of the last standing examples of this style in the state of South Carolina.¹⁷⁰ When John Drayton died in

¹⁶⁹ Rivers, Johnie. 2013. *South Carolina Plantations: Drayton Hall*. 11. Accessed January 29, 2014. <http://south-carolina-plantations.com/charleston/drayton-hall.html>.

¹⁷⁰ Reider, Peggy, interview by Renee' Donnell. 2013. *Drayton Hall Lead Interpreter Interview* (11/22).

1779, he left the estate to his fourth wife, Rebecca Drayton, who then sold the house and land to her stepson Charles Drayton in 1783.¹⁷¹ In 1820, Charles died and left the house to his son Charles Drayton, Jr. Charles Drayton Jr. died in 1884, well after the end of slavery, but the Drayton family continued to produce its income primarily by cultivating rice and cotton, and through mining calcium phosphate with free labor. Estimates put the average number of slaves living on the plantation in pre-Civil War years at 45.¹⁷² The house was kept in the family for seven more generations until, in 1974, Drayton Hall was purchased by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The historic plantation was opened to the public in 1977.¹⁷³

Drayton Hall Plantation is accessed by a long sandy driveway leading to the main house. The interview at this site was with the interpretive leader, who has worked for Drayton Hall for fourteen years in its administrative offices. Because she is the lead interpretive staff member, I asked her the set of interpretation questions first. She agreed to allow our interview to be recorded, which is reproduced below.

¹⁷¹ Rivers, *South Carolina Plantations: Drayton Hall* 2013

¹⁷² Drayton Hall Staff. 2014. *Drayton Hall History*. January. Accessed January 29, 2014. <http://www.draytonhall.org/research/history/>.

¹⁷³ Drayton Hall Staff 2014

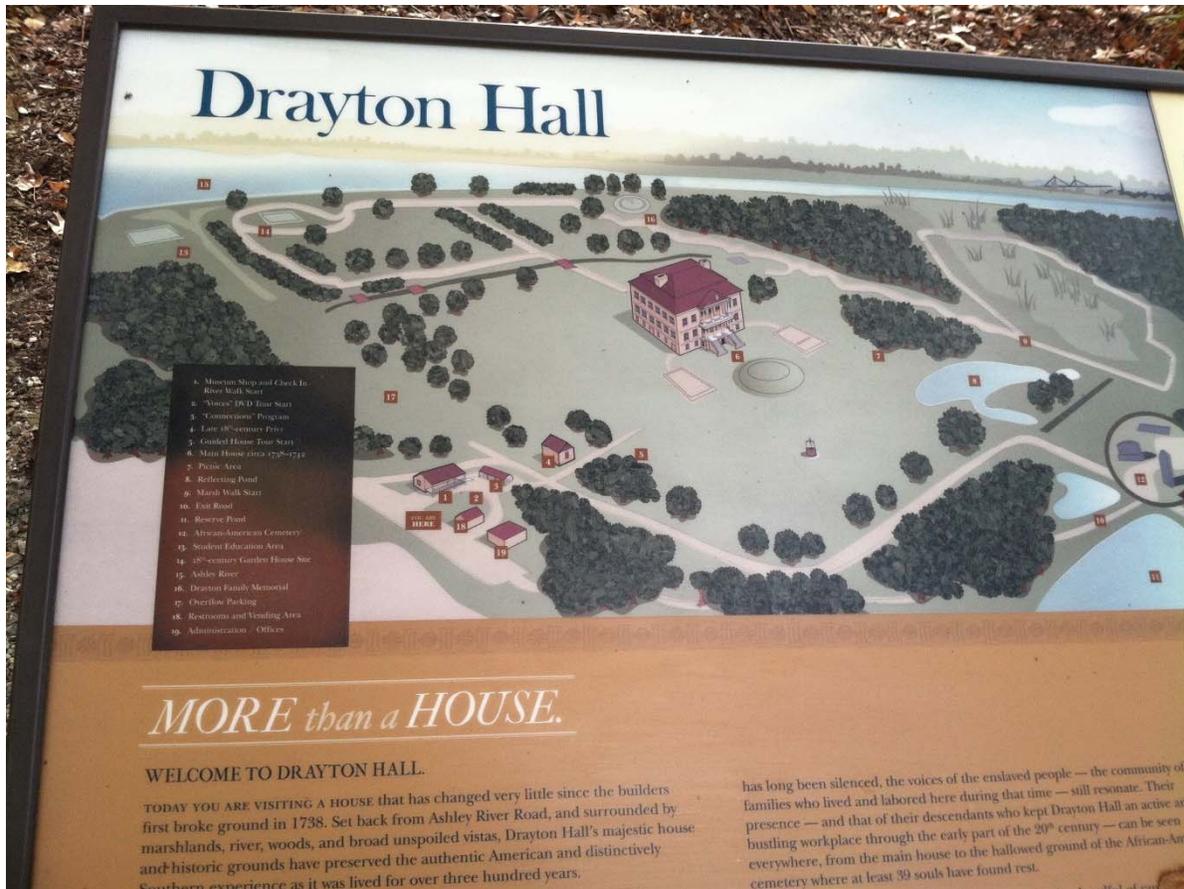


Figure 12: Display of site map of Drayton Hall. (Photo by author 11/13)

Site Interpretation Questionnaire Responses

1. *Is there an interpretation plan? When was it done? How often is it updated? Whose role is it to implement that?*

Yes there is an interpretation plan that was completed in 2000, that is updated each month. The Lead Interpreter and her tour guides are in control of the interpretation plan and they try to alter it based on the new information they gather. Within the interpretation plan they try to interpret the Drayton Hall throughout the entire span of its history from 1700s to 1974. The themes they choose to focus on are landscape, slavery, and family.

2. *How has interpretation changed since it started on the site?*

The Interpretation has evolved over time. From 1991-1998, there used to be an African American, Richard Bowens, on site that would interpret his family's experience on the plantation. He lived in the red building on site when he was growing up, currently used as the gift shop. When he passed away, the guides decided to create the "Connections" program. They focus on the history of Richard Bowens, his family, and daily slave duties since they have records of it through him.

3. *Is there funding for any new forms of interpretation or revamping the existing forms?*

The question was asked, but no definite answer was given.

4. *Since the quarters or other African American physical resources were chosen to be maintained, how are they acknowledged/interpreted on tours?*

There are no remnants of the slave dwellings now. There are records however of 10 slave dwellings in 1791. Visitors that participate in the Connections program can learn things about the slaves of Drayton Hall, like there were approximately 80 slaves around 1791. The second owner of the house built more houses later on. Post-Civil War, the black phosphate miners for the plantation lived closer to Ashley Road because the mines were closer to that.

5. *What are the methods of interpretation for entire site?*

The methods for interpretation for the entire site are Self-guided walking tours, guided tours, audio-visual devices, pamphlets, educational programs for school kids, and participation via the Connections program.

6. *How many tour guides/docents are on staff? Do they change with the seasons? Do they deliver the same story or do some specialize?*

There are about 16 docents on staff that do not change with the season. Each guide has their own script for each tour.

7. *When visitors are on tour, are the experiences of the slave's lives and owner's life intertwined or are they separated? If intertwined, do you provide extra info about differences in their life experiences?*

The experience is not intermingled. They briefly attempt to intertwine the experiences by mentioning the slave stairwell in a closet by stating that it was used to keep slaves out of sight and unheard.

8. *Are tours aimed for a specific group or are they made to reach every audience?*

They have different tours for different groups with focus on the African American experience via rice culture, Drayton family entertainment, and architecture. There is a longer tour, the Connoisseur; that is longer, covers all topics, and shows historic pictures of the site.

9. *Are there any interpretation standards that you must/choose to adhere to?*

The interpretation standards are each guide is given a booklet that discusses architecture, history, slavery, and procedures. Although each guide has a specific focus, they must briefly touch on all subjects.

10. *Would you please explain to me the various roles of the lead/ subordinate interpreters?*

The role of the lead interpreter for this site is to give tours, do Connections program, train new docents, observe and evaluate other tour guides. She writes her material to share based on new information she receives about her site. They try to use first person information, but sometimes they have to find new information via second person sources.

11. *If the African American experience is not one of the foci of the site interpretation, what are the other stories that are told?*

According to the interpretation plan, it is one of the foci of the site.

12. *Is the African American experience a component of education for school tours at the site?*

The African American experience is a component of education for school tours based on the SC state curriculum. One of the specialized segments they offer students is the “day in the life program” which covers field work that was completed, slave culture, house/kitchen work, and being a tradesman (Blacksmith, miner, etc.)

Historic Site Manager Questionnaire Responses

1. *Who owns this site, and what type of business management is it operated under?*

The site is owned by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, a nonprofit organization.

2. *What is the period of significance? How did you define that?*

The period of significance is 1738-1974. This covers the time when the Drayton Family owned the site.

3. *What kind of land use occurred here?*

This was not a cash crop plantation. It was more so the center of John Drayton’s enterprises during his time. However, the family did harvest small amounts of rice, indigo, and cattle. (1738-1779). His son then grew cotton here briefly. After the Civil War, the property was leased out for mining calcium phosphate. The slaves were the miners, and they created railroad tracks on the property that allowed them to move the calcium phosphate that they found.

4. *And who completed the work?*

The slaves completed the work.

5. *Do you have information on the personal lives of slaves during that time period?*

There is information about the daily duties of the slaves from John Drayton's diary and work books that he handed his overseers. In his diary he also mentions some interactions he had with a few slaves. Not much can be said about life outside of work though.

6. *What physical resources were there historically? What exists today?*

There used to be several slave dwellings in the past along with the big house, privy and a gardening house. Now there is an African American cemetery, kitchen, stairwell, and the gift shop area was originally an African American caretaker's cottage from the 1890's. In terms of the stairwell, she refers to John Drayton's diary for its uses and users. They also talked about the Butler George indirectly. This is used on tours to prove how slaves were meant to be neither seen nor heard.

7. *Why did the original property owner/later site managers choose to maintain the resources?*

The question was asked, but the Lead Interpreter was unaware of the answer.

8. *When was the site opened to the public?*

The site was opened to the public in 1976.

9. *How was that decided?*

The National Trust opened the site because they bought it and it has a unique architectural style (Georgian Palladian). It's the only surviving plantation home from original time and open to the public.

10. *What was the condition of the resources when the property was first opened to the public?
How has that changed over time?*

They chose to let the house stand in the condition that it is in now, so visitors can use their imagination.

11. *What kind of funding was needed to prepare the site for opening (protecting the land, stabilizing the resources so tours could take place, interpret, go from private to public, etc.?)*

The funding for site comes from gate and shop sales, and memberships. They also apply for grants and do fund-raising through legacies. The family tries to help out as much as possible. The National Trust does not help financially at all.

12. *Current tourist statistics (race, age, gender, education, economic status, from where?)*

Demographics: 60,000 visitors a year. 10-12,000 students each year In Charleston County, all fourth graders are required to visit the site.

Internationals of all ages.

In the summer you are more likely to have families.

In the spring and fall you get more grownups. Heaviest traffic time at site.

17. *Would you please explain to me the various roles of the site manager?*

There is no site manager per se, but there is a CEO, Dr. McDaniel. The director of education and preservation is below him. Interpretation leader followed by communication chair, finance chair and fund-raising chair.

Once the interview ended, the lead interpreter took me on a walk around the premises excluding the house. She explained how the gift shop was once the house of the caretaker. By looking up at the ceiling, you can see where the building was extended to make more room for the sales floor. After visiting the gift shop, she showed me to the privy. Although it is

represented as solely a privy, she explained that in the past it was a two stall bathroom, but it was extended later and was even once used as a residence for a tenant farmer. Next we walked to the Ashley River. About twenty feet from the river, there is a Drayton family memorial. This memorial is circular and made up of headstones. The family members are cremated and their ashes are spread here. As more and more family members pass away, more circles will be added. In the past fourteen years, at least three feet of land has been eroded by the Ashley River. In an effort to slow this process, rocks have been placed along the bank. Also near the river is a marker representing the former garden house.

The day of my visit was also Children's Tournament Day. Children were playing games that were commonly played by children living around the time of the Revolutionary War. There were different stations set up with diverse activities. One activity was the "what would you do" station. Here, a teacher or leader explained the various options facing slaves during the Revolutionary War. You could stay on the plantation and continue your life as a slave, or you could run away. One could also join the British army, or join the patriots. The teacher then explained the probable consequences of the choices.



Figure 13: “What would you do?” station. (Photo by author 11/13)

After a walk around the grounds to observe the resources present, the lead interpreter took me to see the program she personally had established, the Connections program. This proved to be the most intimate look into the daily life, routine, and punishments of slaves that I had ever experienced. There were actual documents from John Drayton that explained how much land each individual should cover each day based on age and gender. There was also a letter that he wrote to his overseer listing the appropriate punishments if the slaves did not finish their tasks. The lead Interpreter would then ask the audience, “Why do you think he had limits on how many lashings a slave could get?” The audience was then allowed to try their best to answer the question. She explained that if you hit the slaves too much, they would not be able to do work the next day. There were interactive moments where the interpreter would provide facts and allow the audience to comment or ask questions. Visitors also learned how the Drayton’s allotted

fabric for the slave women to make clothing for themselves and their families. There are also stories of a few interactions between John Drayton and his slaves in the slave stairwell, and with his favorite butler. These stories helped make clear to visitors that slaves and their owners interacted and had relationships. We even had the opportunity to separate rice grain from its husks, a job performed by slaves, learning quickly how difficult and cumbersome it is. The lead interpreter then demonstrated a technique for this process that slaves used, and explained how the practice of harvesting full rice kernels came originally from West Africa and was brought to the Carolinas by slaves. During the Connections program, there were even pictures of the land when it was being used to mine calcium phosphate.

Following the Connections program was a tour of the main house. Each room had a different feature that was highlighted. The house has been purposely left in its condition at the time it was purchased in the 1970s. Visitors are asked to not touch the walls to prevent the paint from chipping off. The tour guide briefly mentioned that a stairwell was used by slaves, but that was the only time slavery was mentioned while I was in the house. I had already learned that the site had actual accounts about the stairwell from John Drayton's diary, and felt those stories should have been included in the tour. Slaves would have done the cooking in the basement kitchen, but there was not mention of them.

McLeod Plantation

McLeod Plantation is located along the Wappoo Creek on James Island. Although the plantation was named after William McLeod, he was not the first owner of the site. The year 1671 is the earliest known date of purchase with 617 acres. In 1685, the Rivers family came to America and built the first house on the property near the intersection of the Ashley River and

Wappoo Creek. In 1703, Captain David Davis received the land and turned it into a plantation with a royal grant.¹⁷⁴ Three years later, Davis sold the plantation to William Wilkins. Wilkins then sold the land to Samuel Perroneau who was the first to cultivate the land in 1741. Before he died in 1753, Perroneau wrote in his will that his executors should buy “such a number of slaves as to enable them to settle, plant, and occupy my plantation and lands on James Island.”¹⁷⁵ In 1770, 250 of the acres were sold to his daughter and son-in-law, Elizabeth and Edward Lightwood. Lightwood was a ship owner and slave trader. He owned a minimum of 53 slaves in St. Andrew’s Parish, as Charleston County was then known, but was unable to grow cotton on the land because of the poorly drained and depleted soil. He was the first to construct a house on the current section of property along with outbuildings.¹⁷⁶ A 1785 “Map of the plan of the siege of Charleston” indicates that the house would have been approached from the north by a tree-lined path from Wappoo Creek. Eventually Lightwood’s son-in-law, William McKenzie Parker II, also a slave trader, bought the land and added 779 acres of marsh to the property, for a total combined acreage of 914.5 acres.

In 1851, Parker sold the plantation to William Wallace McLeod, a cotton planter. Parker did inform McLeod of the soil issues. At that time the boundaries of the plantation were from the confluence of Wappoo Creek and the Ashley River, westward following Wappoo Creek to approximately Fleming Rd. It also stretched south to James Island Creek, east to Charleston Harbor, and north back to the confluence of Ashley River and Wappoo Creek. McLeod built the present big house in 1856. According to the 1860 census, 74 slaves lived in 26 cabins on the

¹⁷⁴ Rivers, J. 2013. *South Carolina Plantations: McLeod Plantation*. 10. Accessed January 30, 2014. <http://south-carolina-plantations.com/charleston/mcleod.html>

¹⁷⁵ Rivers, South Carolina Plantations: McLeod Plantation 2013

¹⁷⁶ Rivers, South Carolina Plantations: McLeod Plantation 2013

property.¹⁷⁷ When the Civil War started, James Island was evacuated, so the McLeod's were forced to evacuate their home. It is uncertain if they took their slaves with them. It is known that one slave, Steven Forest, acted as caretaker of the house while confederate soldiers occupied the land from 1861-1865.¹⁷⁸ The main house was used as the confederate divisional field hospital. Although the confederates used this property as a hospital, half of the James Island population, including remaining slaves, died from small pox. In 1865, the property was held by Union soldiers from the 54th and 55th Massachusetts volunteers African American soldiers. Sometime after the Union soldiers left the site, the Freedman's Bureau set up headquarters on James Island and divided the McLeod plantation into 38 plots of land for the slaves.¹⁷⁹ There is even a rumor that freed men claimed residency of the big house before the McLeod family came back to the island in 1870. Upon their return, all plots of land were given back to the McLeod family.¹⁸⁰

William Wallace McLeod and his wife gave birth to their son William Ellis McLeod in 1886. One hundred four years later, he died in the big house. Upon his death in 1990, McLeod left a third of the plantation to the Historic Charleston Foundation, and requested that the house remain a single family home with preservation of the oak avenues being equally important. He also stated in his will that the site should remain a single family residence and have the lowest density possible.¹⁸¹ In 1993, the Historic Charleston Foundation purchased the remaining two thirds of the property. In 1996 a slave cemetery was unearthed on the property holding nearly 100 graves.¹⁸² In 2004, the Historic Charleston Foundation sold the land to the American College

¹⁷⁷ Friends of McLeod. 2012. McLeod Plantation history. May 17. Accessed January 30, 2014. <http://www.mcleodplantation.org/history.html>.

¹⁷⁸ Halifax, Shawn, interview by Renee' Donnell. 2013. *McLeod Plantation Interview* (11 22).

¹⁷⁹ Halifax 2013

¹⁸⁰ Halifax 2013

¹⁸¹ Rivers, South Carolina Plantations: McLeod Plantation 2013

¹⁸² Rivers, South Carolina Plantations: McLeod Plantation 2013

of Building Arts for a campus. The residents of James Island protested this transaction and the financially unstable American College of Building Arts sold the plantation back to the Historic Charleston Foundation four years later. Once again Historic Charleston Foundation tried to sell the parcel, this time to the College of Charleston for an intramural field and, again, there was public outrage and plans were halted.¹⁸³ Finally in 2011, Charleston County Parks and Recreation Commission bought the site for \$3.3 million dollars. James County residents welcomed this sale. The County plans to restore the site and open it for public use by 2015.¹⁸⁴

Because the site is still private and not open to the public, I could not go on a formal tour or ask questions about demographics. The questionnaire that had to be completed for this site was strictly based on future plans to open the site and have an interpretive plan in place. I interviewed the Cultural History Interpretive leader for Charleston County Parks and Recreation. He is one of the staff members planning to work on the site when it opens. He simply sat with me on the steps of the kitchen house and answered my questions. As there is no official site manager, there is no completed site management questionnaire since the plantation is not yet open to the public. The results of the site interpretation questionnaire follow.

Site Interpretation Questionnaire Responses

1. Is there an interpretation plan? When was it done? How often is it updated? Whose role is it to implement that?

He told me that I visited the site at a great time because they just finished the master interpretation plan. The committee in charge of creating the plan based their ideas on the

¹⁸³ Friends of McLeod 2012

¹⁸⁴ Friends of McLeod 2012

standards created by the National Association for Interpretation. There are many different types to choose from; however, they decided to use the 5M model. The M's stand for:

- Management: How will the site be managed and what are the management goals?
- Mechanics: How will the site work?
- Marketing: Who is the audience? What are the markets?
- Message: What is the story you want to share?
- Media: How will you portray your story? (First person, third person, living history, etc.)

This 5M model helped them to break down the different ideas at hand and help them to put emphasis on what was important. This also encouraged them to come up with their themes.

One theme is the transition to freedom. The story of African Americans at McLeod represents the long struggle for personal and cultural freedom at their site, region and the south in general.

Similar to the latter, they also want to demonstrate life on a plantation. The main emphasis of the site will be on what life was like for the slaves during their stay there. They say that most plantations have focus tours centered on the African American experience, they want to be different. There will more than likely be a focus tour on the McLeod's for those interested.

Another theme is the natural and cultural history of the site. This theme will discuss all the crops that were harvested here and what wildlife exists or existed in addition to the soil type and the soil deficiencies.

Another storyline the interpretation staff wants to highlight is McLeod Plantation's importance during the Civil War. As previously stated, the Civil War was a very turbulent time for the McLeod Plantation. The McLeod family was forced off their land, and the slaves were not very well accounted for. There was a small pox outbreak, the Union soldiers took over the site, and the Freedman's Bureau set up headquarters there. A lot of events and occupants

occurred here in a very short period of time. Post-Civil War life and emancipation will also be exhibited. This should be interesting since African Americans lived on the plantation until the 1970's with the son of the plantation owner still living in the big house. In order to portray each of these stories, they are bringing into consideration tangible and intangible facets.

2. How has interpretation changed since it started on the site?

The site has not yet opened, so no change has occurred.

3. Is there funding for any new forms of interpretation or revamping the existing forms?

There is funding for interpretation, but there is no need to revamp the interpretation since the site has not yet opened.

4. Since the quarters or other African American physical resources were chosen to be maintained, how are they acknowledged/interpreted on tours?

The six extant slave cabins on the site were occupied by descendants of the slaves until the 1970s, so each cabin has electricity. I can't imagine living in a building that small by myself, let alone with an entire family. They are all very different and one of the cabins was even turned into a church during the 1960s. They plan on taking on a Boone Hall approach and having each cabin tell a different story.

5. What are the methods of interpretation for entire site?

Visitors will be able to view the plaques and displays, have guided and self-guided tours. They will also be able to follow the trail maps that will have designated stops on the different trails that will have additional information/interpretation. There will also be web activities that people can learn from in order to keep the site from getting too crowded.

6. *How many tour guides/docents are on staff? Do they change with the seasons? Do they deliver the same story or do some specialize?*

There are no tour guides yet.

7. *When visitors are on tour, are the experiences of the slave's lives and owner's life intertwined or are they separated? If intertwined, do you provide extra info about differences in their life experiences?*

The focus of the site will be more African American based. But the story of the McLeod's will be mentioned periodically. But yes, the two stories will be intertwined.

8. *Are tours aimed for a specific group or are they made to reach every audience?*

Charleston County Parks and Recreation plan to get this site placed on the SC state curriculum, so students will be one target audience.

9. *Are there any interpretation standards that you must/choose to adhere to?*

The standards that the site will follow come from the National Association of Interpretation. This is where the 5M model came from as previously listed. The plantation must additionally follow any standards that the Charleston County Parks and Recreation administer.

10. *Would you please explain to me the various roles of the lead/ subordinate interpreters?*

The role of the lead interpreter for this site will be to give tours and train new docents.

11. *If the African American experience is not one of the foci of the site interpretation, what are the other stories that are told?*

The African American experience will be the focus of the site. The McLeod family and architecture of big house or sub-foci.

12. *Is the African American experience a component of education for school tours at the site?*

They are working on getting the site added onto the South Carolina curriculum so school kids will be required to come for a visit. More than likely this site will teach the slave experience and possibly about life in Charleston for whites and blacks during the Civil War.

The land is currently 61 acres. The commercial area behind the house used to be the Sea Island cotton fields. On the property there are six slave cabins, a kitchen and laundry house, a dairy storage room, a barn, cotton gin house, and the big house (See Figure 11). The original big house was altered by William Ellis McLeod who lived in the house for most of his life. The back of the present house was once the front. The original house overlooked the fields and one could see the water in the distance. McLeod converted the back of the house to the front entrance and created a new oak allee to welcome guests. Landscape architect, Loutrelle Briggs, did design work on the property 1936. The slave cabins have also undergone alterations. Most have electricity now because the descendants of slaves and tenant farmers lived on the plantation until the 1970s. The kitchen and laundry house was used as a meeting place of the Daughters of the Confederacy in the early 1900s.



Figure 14: Row of McLeod Plantation slave cabins beside kitchen house (Photo by author 11/13)

Once the site is opened to visitors, there will be a parking lot placed in the trees behind the slave cabins. Plaques will be strategically placed on the site providing background on the land and buildings. Careful consideration is being given to protecting the view shed and overall feel of the site. The Cultural History Interpreter explained that he originally wanted visitors to enter the site by walking past the slave cabins since historically the majority of the people that lived/worked on the site saw the land through that view. However, because of easements placed on the land, they cannot orient the site that way, so a small welcome center is planned near the parking area. There will also be web activities that can help people learn, in order to keep the site from getting cluttered too many displays and plaques. Plans call for the site to be open seven days a week, although hours of operation have not yet been determined.

The target audience of this site is children and African Americans (Question 8 of the Site Interpretation Manager Questionnaire). Planners recognize that African Americans are not the traditional visitors to historic plantations and hope to change that. Inside the welcome center

plans call for displaying a Sea Island cotton gin. Plans also call for a fishing boat to go on display, demonstrate the parallels of how skilled the slaves on this site were as fishermen and how they had access to boats, but never ran away via the two waterways that surrounded the site. Potential visitors may be unaware of the McLeod name because they are not of primary historic significance. It is hoped that visitors coming to McLeod Plantation when it opens will arrive with a desire to learn an accurate, true story of low country slave life.

Hampton Plantation

Hampton Plantation is located off of Wambaw Creek in McClellanville, SC about an hour north east of Charleston. The house is believed to have received its name from the Hampton House on the Thames River in England. The year 1744 is believed to be the date of Hampton Plantation's earliest business transaction. In 1744 Daniel Horry bought Hampton Plantation's 600 acres from Anthony Bonneau.¹⁸⁵ The central portion of the main house was constructed at that time. Later, additions to the left and right and a porch were added. Horry's son, Daniel Huger Horry, inherited the plantation and its slaves from his father in 1762, and modifications to the original house followed soon after with the addition of a ballroom, a dining room, and two additional rooms¹⁸⁶ Daniel Huger Horry married his second wife, Harriott Pickney, in 1768 and the couple had two children, Daniel and Harriott.

During the Revolutionary War, Hampton Plantation became a refuge for the Horry family and friends. In 1780, British troops invaded the Plantation twice. In the first incident the British were searching for a Horry family friend, but he was able to hide in the rice fields across

¹⁸⁵ Rivers, J. 2013. *South Carolina Plantations: Hampton Plantation*. 10. Accessed January 31, 2014. <http://south-carolina-plantations.com/charleston/hampton.html>.

¹⁸⁶ Rivers, South Carolina Plantations: Hampton Plantation 2013

Wambaw Creek among the plantation's slaves. The British came a second time and forced Horry to claim loyalty to the crown.¹⁸⁷ When the Revolutionary War ended in 1782, this backfired on the Horry's. Since he had claimed to be loyal to Britain, the Americans viewed him as a traitor and tried to seize his land and slaves. Horry managed to keep his property with the help of his in laws and restored the land from the damage incurred during the war. He died in 1785 from liver failure, and the next year an inventory was completed on the estate. The inventory included every item he owned and it is from this we now know that Hampton Plantation had 314 slaves at the time of Horry's death.¹⁸⁸

From 1790-1791, at Harriott Horry's instruction, slaves build the Adam style portico on the front of the house, the first of its kind to be built in the lowcountry.¹⁸⁹ Harriott Horry's daughter, also called Harriott, married Frederick Rutledge in 1791 and the couple made Hampton their home. At 56, Harriott Rutledge was widowed with eight children in 1824. From 1828-1876, Hampton Plantation switched hands within the Rutledge family. In 1876, Archibald Rutledge was born.¹⁹⁰ In 1937 he returned to Hampton Plantation to live permanently. He then restored the house and wrote a book about it called "Home by the River." Rutledge was the first South Carolina Poet Laureate. In 1971, the Rutledge family gave Hampton Plantation to the South Carolina State Parks and Recreation Service. In the same year, it became a State Historic Site and was opened to the public.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁷ South Carolina Parks and Recreation. 2014. *Hampton Plantation State Historic Site*. 1 1. Accessed 1 31, 2014. http://southcarolinaparks.com/hampton/history_interpretation.aspx.

¹⁸⁸ Rivers, South Carolina Plantations: Hampton Plantation 2013

¹⁸⁹ South Carolina Parks and Recreation 2014

¹⁹⁰ South Carolina Parks and Recreation 2014

¹⁹¹ Rivers, South Carolina Plantations: Hampton Plantation 2013

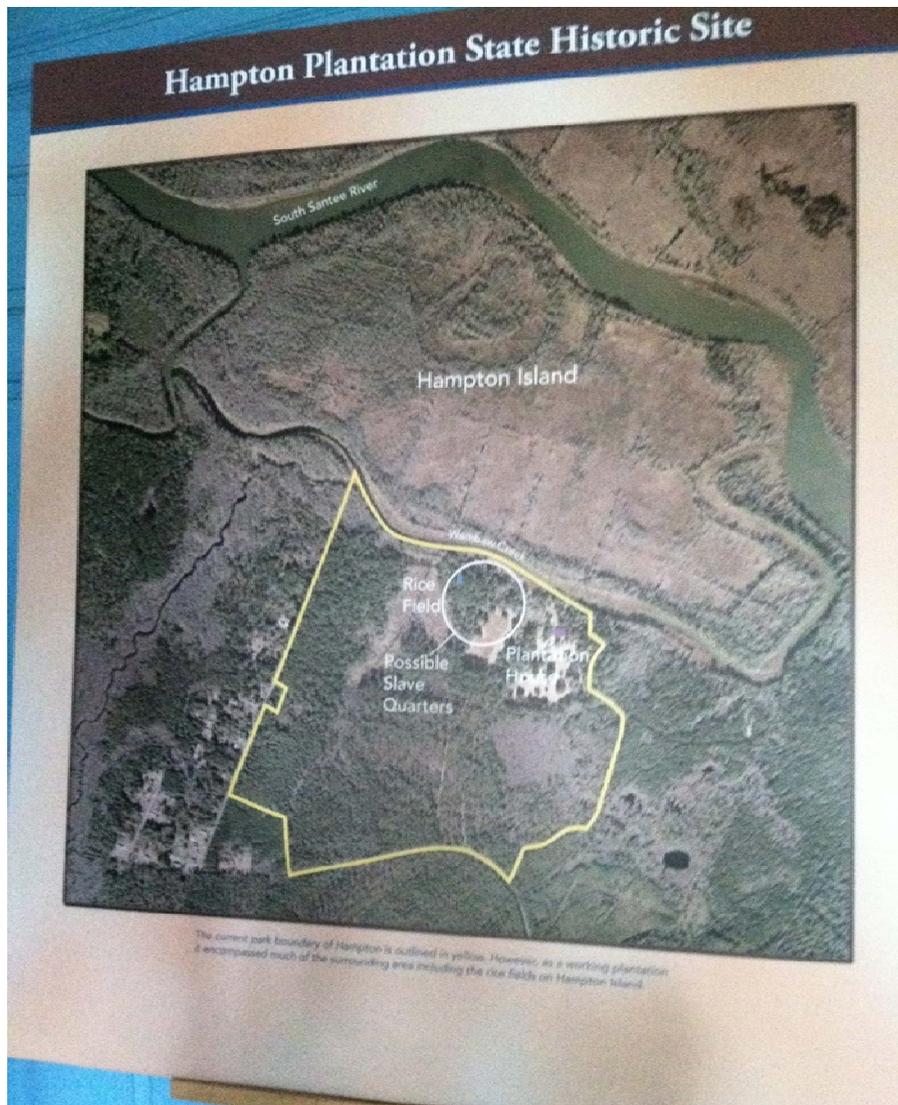


Figure 15: Site map of Hampton Plantation (Photo by author 11/13)

The day of the Hampton Plantation visit was cool and dreary, raining on and off. This was the furthest location from the city of Charleston in Charleston County chosen for research. Hampton Plantation is not necessarily hard to find but it is isolated, with no towns or businesses nearby. Turning from Highway 17, the connecting road that leads to the site is a long and lonely, with no signs and no buildings, just you and the trees. I thought I must have taken a wrong turn, but finally made my way to the site entrance. When I arrived in the parking lot, there were no other cars and the lights on the inside of the visitor's center were dim. I went inside anyway and I

found the park ranger in the back office. We started off with the Site Manager Questionnaire and then went on a tour of the site.

Historic Site Manager Questionnaire Responses

1. *Who owns this site, and what type of business management is it operated under?*

This site is owned by the South Carolina Parks and Recreation (SCPR). It is a non-profit organization.

2. *What is the period of significance? How did you define that? What physical resources influenced that period of significance definition?*

They try to cover the history of the site from erection to SCPR ownership, but most visitors come and want to learn about Archibald Rutledge and his life on the site from 1937-1971. They try to explain the history of the house from beginning to now by explaining how the house and kitchen have grown/evolved throughout the years and mention who was responsible for what.

3. *What kind of land use occurred there? (Agriculture, commercial production, etc.)*

They produced agricultural goods: rice, and food crops. Their Industrial goods were brick manufacturing, turpentine, naval stores, and timber.

4. *Who did that work?*

The slaves did the listed above work. They are also rumored to have built the house, but that is not for certain. They think some French Architects and engineers were called in for the house, since it required such skill to complete the details. The enslaved population (skilled artisans) was about 100-150. But during the Horry heyday, on all of their lands and plantations, there were about 300-400 slaves.

5. *Do you have information on the personal lives or slaves during that time period?*

There is very little information on the personal lives of the slaves, but they are searching for more. There is information about African American tenant farmers that is on display in the house.

6. *What physical resources were there historically? What exists today?*

Historically there were several slave quarter neighborhoods on various parts of the site depending on what crop or product was being produced on that section of land. For example, the rice fields had a few neighborhoods for the rice harvesters. The individuals that worked in the big house were more than likely in the area where the current parking lot is. There was always the big house, a kitchen, and an outhouse. Currently, there is only the big house, the kitchen, which is not open to the public due to an inhabitation of an endangered species of bat, and a chimney of an old slave house. There is some archeology being done on the site right now and they have found a slave community right behind the parking lot. Excavation should be completed in a few years. Upon exiting the site, visitors also drive past the slave cemetery that is maintained by descendants of people that were buried there. New burials also still take place.

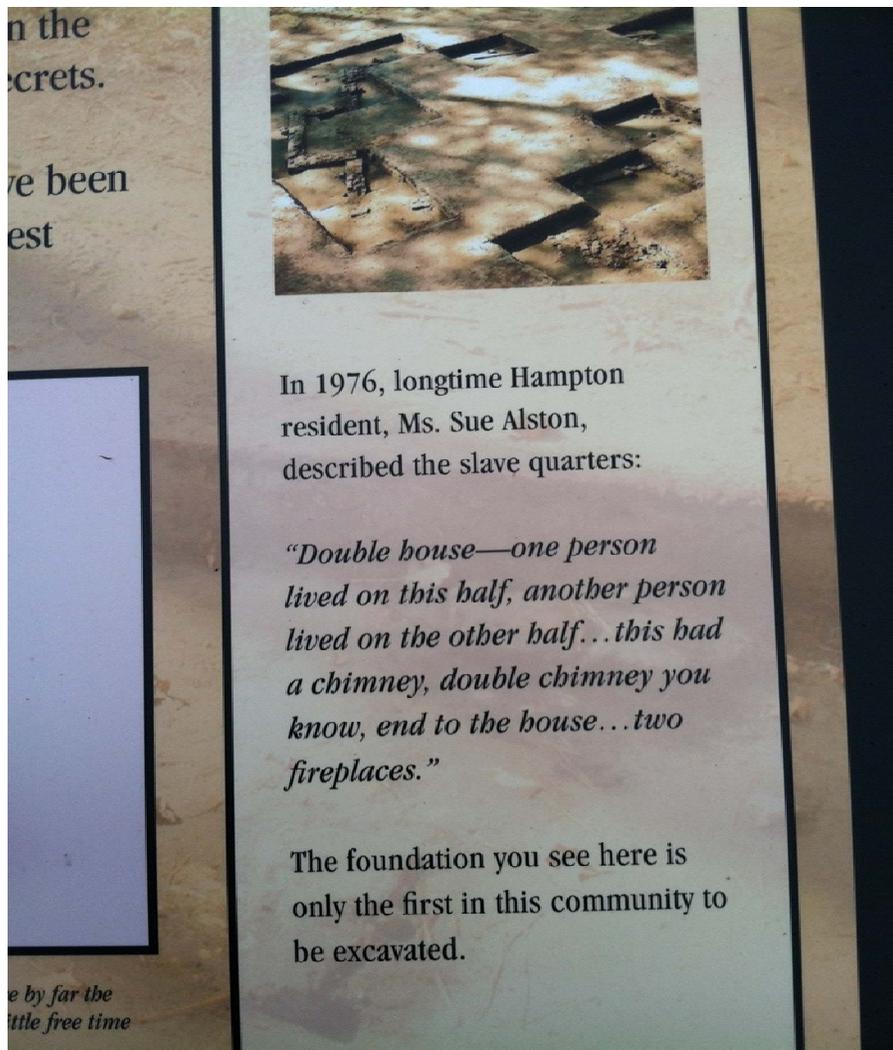


Figure 16: Plaque of archeological dig in front of dig site. (Photo by author 11/13)

7. *Why did the original property owner/late site managers choose to maintain the resources?*

They did not try to save the historic resources.

8. *When was the site opened to the public?*

The house was opened to the public in the late 1980s.

9. *How was that decided?*

The Rutledge family sold 300 acres to South Carolina Parks and Recreation. South Carolina Parks and Recreation opened the site because that was the wish of the Rutledge family and they wanted to honor them and past residents like the Horry family. In addition, that is the only way South Carolina Parks and Recreation can save a site or maintain ownership is to open it to the public.

10. *What was the condition of the resources when the property was first opened to the public?*

Has that changed over time? If changes occurred, what/how?

When the site first opened to the public, the big house needed lots of repairs just to stabilize it, but they decided to preserve the building rather than restore or rehabilitate it. The kitchen house was also standing in decent condition; however, it is home to an endangered species of bats.

11. *What kind of funding was needed to prepare the site for opening? What were the most common sources of funding? How has it changed over time?*

South Carolina Parks and Recreation funds the site. Because this is a state park it is free to the public; however, Hampton Plantation does charge a small fee to take a tour of the house. This is how they help offset costs and help fund maintenance of existing structures. For instance when the site first opened, the big house needed lots of repairs just to stabilize it. The committee that agreed to buy the site decided to preserve the buildings rather than restore or rehab it.

12. *Current tourist statistics?*

The current demographics of site visitors are Caucasian adults from the age of 40- 70 and come to the site to learn about Archibald Rutledge and his life on the site from 1937-1971. Minorities do not visit the site very often unless they are the children in the tour groups.

13. *Since the quarters or other African American physical resources were chosen to be maintained, how are they acknowledged/interpreted on tours?*

I do not believe the kitchen house was saved on purpose. It was just a sturdy building and stood on its own. The African American cemetery is maintained by descendants of people that were buried there. Although this house does not give formal tours, each room in the house has a plaque/display board that gives a tidbit about the individual slaves or their roles on the land, or how they benefited the plantation, so visitors can read each of these displays to learn. Since there are no standing slave buildings, they are working on finding the different slave communities on the site. And they will add that to the tour of the land and the hiking tour.

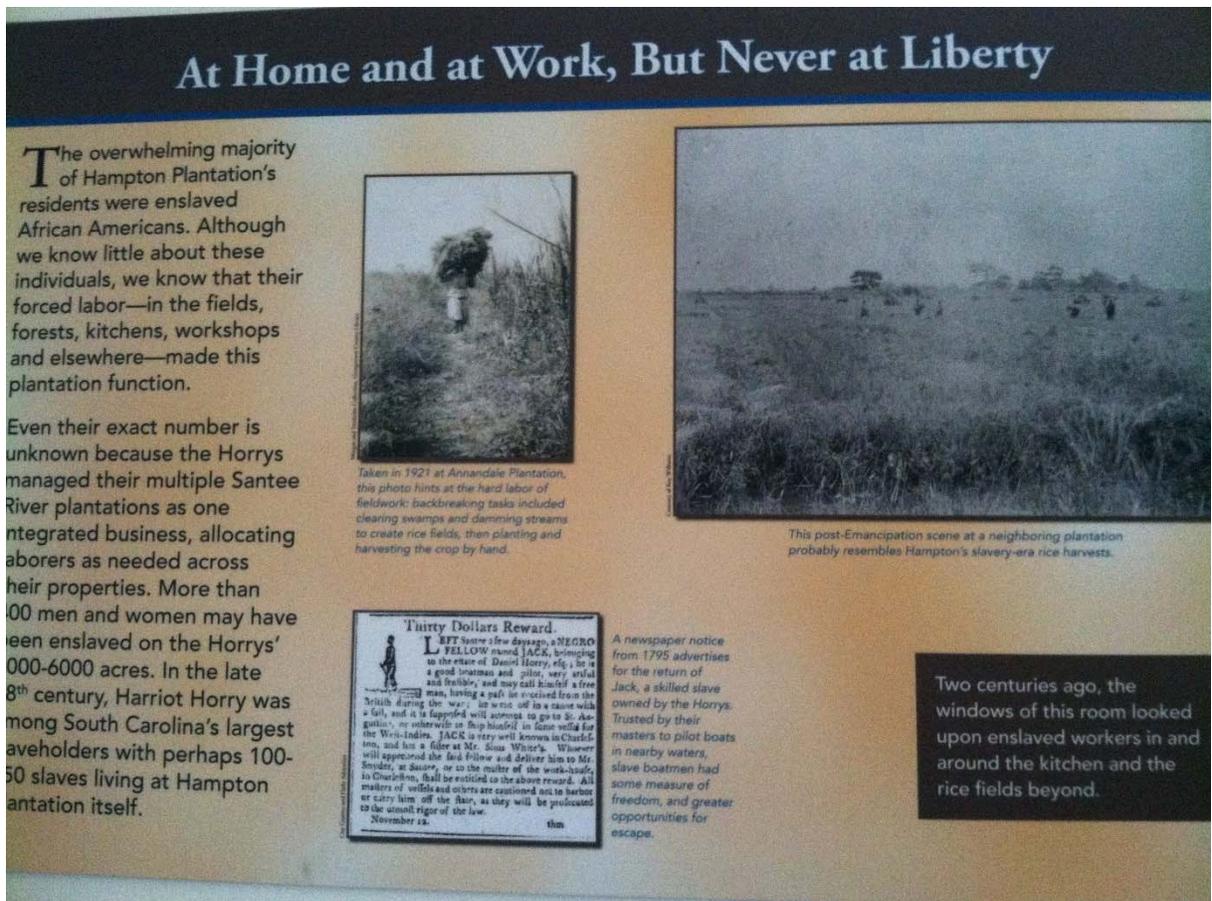


Figure 17: One of the wall displays depicting the lives of the enslaved residents. (Photo by author 11/13)

14. *What are the methods of interpretation for the entire site?*

The different interpretation methods for the entire site include guided and self-guided tours, displays, exhibits, and site orientation. There are also educational programs for 3rd graders that focus on plantation life. The sixth graders receive educational programs on the reconstruction era.

15. *When visitors are on tours, are the experiences of the slave's lives and owner's life intertwined or they separated? If intertwined, do you provide extra information about differences in their life experiences?*

The experience is intertwined. When visitors go on a tour of the house, they learn about the different owners of the house and how the house has changed over time. Additionally, there are displays in every room that describe the lifestyle of enslaved domestics, and the labor intensity of rice cultivation. In other words, guests can hear about the owners, but see and read about the slaves.

16. *Is there an interpretation plan? Whose role is it to implement it?*

There is an interpretation plan that was completed in 2012. It encompasses many themes:

- i. Architecture/craftsmanship
- ii. Time periods of site (1730-1971)
- iii. Slavery/ development of Gullah culture
- iv. Physical changes of landscape
- v. Archibald Rutledge (last/ most famous owner of house)- SC first poet laureate
- vi. Women's history via Sue Alston (not really focused on as of right now.)

The interpretation plan gets updated every five years, but they review it annually to see if it is still feasible and relevant.

17. *Would you please explain to me the various roles of the site manager?*

The site manager here is a park ranger. Her duties are to give the various tours, collect fees, and receive training for her employees from the state. She has to follow what South Carolina Parks and Recreation tells her to do, but she is trying to update the slave portion of

the site and the information that is provided. She is also the reason archeology is happening trying to find the slave communities. In addition, the park ranger acts as the lead interpreter.

18. *Are there any site management or interpretation standards that you must adhere to or choose to adhere to?*

She and her employees have to follow the interpretation plan. She also makes sure the tour guides follow the themes and stick to the facts and not give a biased story of the site or history.

In essence, choosing my case studies was not an easy feat. There were so many plantations that are open as historic sites in Charleston County. Once I did select the four case studies and visited them; I realized how very different they were from their ownership types, to their managerial techniques and duties, to their interpretation methods and plans. Each site has different historic resources and stories to interpret and different audiences to cater to. These differences show the beauty and breadth of knowledge that is in Charleston County.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

“Avoid the pressure to whitewash, or self-censor, by defending the inclusion of the whole story from the beginning. Not doing so may encourage the site to make deeper interpretive erasures.”

~Mark Twain

Upon completing the literature review and description of the case study sites and their survey responses, an analysis must be completed in order to compare the research gathered and the primary information collected from the manager interviews at the case study sites. There were two questionnaires, Historic Site Manager Questionnaire and Site Interpretation Manager Questionnaire that were completed by the case study representatives at Boone Hall Plantation, Drayton Hall Plantation, McLeod Plantation and Hampton Plantation. Within each questionnaire, numerous topics were discussed. This chapter will summarize the responses across all case study sites to assess similarities and differences.

To begin, there is background information we must be reminded of. Each of the sites are operated under different management types. Boone Hall Plantation is privately owned. Drayton Hall is owned by a larger non-profit organization, the National Trust for Historic Places. The McLeod plantation is owned by Charleston County Parks, and Hampton Plantation is operated by South Carolina Parks and Recreation. The literature review mentions that different ownership types yield different management standards and efforts. This is evident in the various site restrictions and interpretation methods. For example, Boone Hall Plantation is owned by the McRae family, who also live on site. When guests go on the house tour, they are only allowed to circuit the first floor because the second floor is where the family resides. Hampton Plantation does not have to give official tours of the entire site because it is open to the public and is a state

park. State parks are available for recreation space and exploration of the land. The fact that a historic site is at the center of the property is simply a plus.

The period of significance for all the sites is nearly the same. The years that are focused on all fall between the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, 1770s-1860s. Each site within the specified time period produced agricultural resources and some produced commercial goods as well. In terms of agriculture, all four sites cultivated rice, while Boone Hall Plantation, Drayton Hall, and McLeod all produced cotton. McLeod Plantation specifically produced Sea Island Cotton. Boone Hall Plantation produced indigo, and so did Drayton Hall briefly. In terms of commercial production, Boone Hall Plantation was famous for manufacturing bricks, Drayton Hall mined calcium phosphate, and Hampton Plantation also manufactured bricks, harvested timber and turpentine, and produced naval stores. One thing all the sites have in common is that all labor was done by slaves. Each site had from 100 to 300 slaves on the property during the peak production period, which falls between 1770 and 1860. Since this is the period marking peak production in the lowcountry region under the plantation model, and is the period most dependent on slave labor, it was chosen for this thesis.

Each site was opened to the public in different years. Boone Hall Plantation is the oldest publicly accessible site of the four, opened in 1959. Hampton Plantation opened its doors to the public in 1976, followed quickly by Drayton Hall Plantation, which opened in 1980. McLeod Plantation plans to open in 2015. Each of these sites were donated to a preservation organization by families having owned the land for generations, and points to the value placed on preserving family history. These sites, along with historic sites of all kinds, are struggling to interpret aspects of difficult history, and helping us become more comfortable talking about that history.

Included in the purchase of the land for each site were all of the historic resources still standing on the property. Originally Boone Hall Plantation had the smokehouse, big house, several communities of slave cabins, and a cotton gin house. The stables, dock house, Seabrook Cottages, commissary buildings, and current big house were all added in the 1930s. Drayton Hall originally had the house that is still standing with two flankers attached on either side, a garden house, and several communities of slave dwellings. A library was later added to the property. The wooden structure that is used as the gift shop now was once an African American caretaker's house. McLeod Plantation originally had the big house that was re-oriented and added onto in 1925, slave cabins, a barn, kitchen and laundry, and dairy house. The gin house was added in the 1930s. Hampton Plantation had the big house and kitchen, each having been were both expanded several times, and slave cabins. In the 1900s, tenant farmer houses were built on the land. All of the resources for each site had different levels of deterioration upon acquisition, and funding from grants and the purchasing entity helped to pay for stabilization of the resources.

Each site discussed here has resources at various levels of repair. Some resources have fallen due to decay and neglect, and even once a site has been opened to the public owners must sometimes make difficult choices using limited resources and allocate funds where they are most needed. The Drayton family of Drayton Hall, for example, inhabited the big house until 1971. The caretaker's house standing near the main house survived because the caretaker Richard Bowen lived there until his death in the 1980s. The Drayton staff and National Trust for Historic Preservation could have chosen to keep the care takers house as an interpretive tool, but practicality called for a gift shop and the caretaker's house was used for that instead. On tours of the site, guides do not mention that the building now housing the gift shop was once the dwelling

of someone who played a major role on the property, and whose experience could add greatly to the site's interpretation of the African American experience on the plantation.

Similarly, Hampton Plantation had to choose which resources to save before the site was opened to the public. The main house was falling apart, and all funds went to preserving and stabilizing it instead of other resources that were available as well. The kitchen house has only recently begun being stabilized, in part to protect the endangered bats that have taken up residency inside. Historic resources are all important to maintain or preserve when dealing with publicly accessible sites. One cannot get a full grasp of the history of a site if all the components and resources are not available. Every resource, even down to a privy, adds more depth to the story that a visitor may be able to connect with. Very little research has been done to make this point or argue its validity, but the argument must be made.

While each site has African American and slave resources, and interprets those resources to some degree, not every site takes the same approach, or presents its African American resources with the same emphasis. Boone Hall Plantation and Drayton Hall Plantation interpret the slave experience separately from the owner's story by using the structures and resources to maintain the separation. Although these two sites do not intertwine the racial involvements of the site, they do utilize the slavery-specific historic resources to equally explain the stories of both parties. Even though the slave cabins of Boone Hall Plantation are self-guided, there is actually more information to learn from them than one encounters in the big house. Here, one gains fascinating insights into the daily lives of the slaves, their religious practices, what they ate, and the tools that they used. The Gullah theater and miniature cotton patch in which school children re-enact slaves' daily labor adds even more depth to the visitor experience at Boone Hall. Most of the educational information on the site is connected to the black resources on the property, and

without them there would be much less to learn about the site. Drayton Hall on the other hand focuses its tours more on the owner experience. The only mention of slavery during a tour of the grounds is on the first floor of the big house, with the old slave stairwell, located in a closet. The docents mention that this stairwell was used by slaves in order to keep them from being seen and heard, but say little else about them. The Connections program at Drayton Hall, which explains in great detail the daily requirements of slaves is optional and not widely advertised to guests of the site. This keeps the daily lives of the slaves and Drayton family separate, so if a visitor does not attend the Connections program, they will have been exposed to little to no information about the slave story that played such a central role on the site.

In contrast, Hampton Plantation combines the slave and owner experience in its interpretive methods. Although history is not the sole purpose of the site, it is a large part of the visitor experience. Tours are not on a regular schedule, they must be requested. While touring the house, a docent explains the architectural and familial history of the property. However, there are plaques and displays on the walls of every room telling another story of rice culture and of the slave and tenant farmer experience of the site. The interpretive technique proves to be the effective way of intertwining the stories at Hampton Hall, and might serve as a model for other sites that may not have standing slave historic resources. Even if a visitor did not expect to learn about the slave culture at Hampton Hall, they would be exposed to it while touring the big house. The current park ranger's aim is to incorporate more African American history onto the site by completing an archeological excavation which will also be interpreted as part of the visitor experience. Once this is completed, visitors will be able to learn about the African American experience outside of the formal tour as well.

Completely different from the other case study sites, the information gathered about McLeod Plantation suggests the intention to focus mainly on the African American experience. Although all the sites have different methods of interpreting the African American experience by using the resources available, it is important that each tells the story of both the owner and the slave. For less than 150 years ago the lives of the slave and owner were very much intertwined.

Although each of the sites place varying focus on aspects of plantation life, they seem to all appeal to the same demographic groups; elderly Caucasians and elementary school children. Hampton Plantation fits this description too, but they have more families visiting than the other sites, probably because the site can be used for more than just education. According to the history of African American site interpretation section in the literature review, during the 1950s and 1960s blacks were only allowed to visit certain historic sites once a week for a limited number of hours. Once historic sites granted blacks full access to sites, the African American story was still not widely told until the 1990s. Perhaps blacks and other minorities do not visit historic plantations today because first they were accustomed to not having access to them, and then when they were allowed to visit they felt little connection to the history being explained. Now that a wider variety of stories are highlighted on the tours of these sites, and minority children are viewing the sites as part of a school requirement, maybe this trend will begin to change as the enthusiasm of minority children infects their parents.

A final similarity between the sites is the fact that each has adopted interpretation standards and adheres to them. Boone Hall Plantation did not delineate its standards, but did indicate that the site adheres to set standards. Drayton Hall's interpretation standards call for each guide to be given a booklet that discusses architecture, history, slavery, and procedures. Although each guide has a different focus, they must briefly touch on all subjects. McLeod

Plantation follows the 5M model from the National Association of Interpretation which requires sites to take into consideration management, mechanics, market, message, and media. In addition to the 5M model, they must also take into consideration whatever policies Charleston County Parks may have in place. Hampton Plantation must follow the themes outlined in its interpretation plan. Additionally, when guides give tours, each must touch on all themes, not putting more emphasis on one story than the others.

It is very important that all sites have interpretation standards, but as has been seen, each site has its own ideas of what is important to the interpretation of that site. None of the sites have the same standards. Aside from not having the same standards, one can see that none of the sites follow the standards listed in the previous literature review chapter, yet each site seems to be operating well, some even drawing repeat visitors. Not only do the sites have repeat visitors, they are all listed as sites on the South Carolina school curriculum, and all elementary school children are required to visit them. This brings up the question of whether or not the standards listed in the literature review chapter continue to be relevant, or if those exact standards are necessary to have a successful site that visitors can learn from and appreciate. Perhaps sites can reference those principles for interpretation as guidelines, but need not adhere strictly to them in order to interpret effectively the various stories of the site.

Interpretive Standards Used by Case Studies

	Boone Hall Plantation	Drayton Hall	McLeod Plantation	Hampton Plantation
Interpretive plan	X	X	X	X
Research has been done	X	X	X	X
Organization of themes	X	X	X	X
Interpretation is done in good taste	X	X		X
Themes must be organized	X	X	X	X
One or more interpretive methods are used	X	X	X	X

Figure 18: This chart depicts that almost all of the case study sites follow all the interpretation standards as defined by Alderson and Low, authors of *Interpretation of Historic Sites* as described on pages 20-21. For further explanation of the listed standards refer to Site Interpretation section of thesis. (Created by author)

Interpretation plans are essential to a historic site because they offer guidance on the diverse topics waiting to be revealed to the visitors, and direct the methods that will be most effective at engaging the target audience. Although all four case studies have interpretation plans, staff members charged with updating them do so at different intervals. For instance, the education coordinator at Boone Hall Plantation reviews its plan annually, while the interpretive lead for Drayton Hall reviews the plan each month and updates it whenever they find new primary resources. The site manager for Hampton Plantation updates the interpretation plan each year. All of these site leaders work with employees to format the best interpretation plans possible. It is important for each site to consider multiple ideas for improving the site, and for each to ensure that the stories interpreted are not all focused on one story, and that no single

method of interpretation is being over used. Variations of interpretive methods and stories make a site more interesting, and will be discussed.

Along with whether or not interpretation plans exist for a site, it is just as important to monitor the growth of the site and the changes occurring to the interpretation of the site. Upon interviewing Boone Hall Plantation, the education coordinator did not explain how interpretation of his plantation has changed over time. On the other hand, Drayton Hall and Hampton Plantation did. Drayton Hall began to unofficially interpret the African American experience on its site with the help of Richard Bowens, a descendant of tenant farmers who worked on the plantation until the 1940s. Bowens told of his family's experience at Drayton Hall, living in the house that is now the gift shop until he passed away in 1998. After he died the interpretive lead was inspired to keep the African American story as a feature on the site. Thus the Connection program was created, and became the first official interpretation of African American existence for site visitors to experience. Similarly, Hampton Plantation is new to the acknowledgment of slavery on its site. The previous park ranger felt it unimportant to recognize the slave culture that once took place there. When the site first opened, the main foci were Archibald Rutledge, his family, and the architecture of the big house. Later, other previous owners of the plantation were included in the history being presented to visitors. Since the current park ranger was hired, she has begun to incorporate the story of slaves, tenant farmers, and rice plantation culture to the site. She said "this was a small town at one point, the story of the majority of the people that lived, worked, and made this small town function should be shared with the guests."¹⁹²

¹⁹² Mikula, M. (2013, November 23). Hampton Plantation Interview. (R. Donnell, Interviewer)

Although each site varies in the opportunities they choose to offer, it is necessary for each property to update its interpretive methods. Changing methods, or adding new ones, often requires additional funding. Each site has devised its own ways to earn the money needed to fund new opportunities and programs. Boone Hall Plantation earns income from ticket sales, grants, fundraising, and hosting events such as weddings, jazz festivals, and beer tasting for their annual German tourists. Drayton Hall does not often have funds to implement new interpretive methods, but if it is a good financial year, they will be able to save enough money from ticket sales to try new things. They also receive funding through applying for grants and are sometime able to host events which bring in income. Hampton Plantation is funded entirely by South Carolina Parks and Recreation. McLeod Plantation currently receives funding from memberships and from Charleston County. Once the site opens, new forms of revenue may be needed. Funding new interpretive methods is difficult when the staff must operate a site daily and still find time to create new ideas for interpretation methods, or apply for funds, but it pays off in the end. Keeping a site static tends to extinguish the spark that visitors may want.

Each site has its own methods to introduce visitors to the historic details that site has to offer. Boone Hall Plantation and Hampton Plantation both have guided and self-guided tours and displays. Boone Hall, Drayton Hall, and Hampton all offer classes or educational opportunities strictly for students. McLeod Plantation plans to offer similar opportunities once it is open for tours. Boone Hall Plantation offers participation, audio devices, pamphlets, and exhibits. Hampton plantation offers displays, site orientations, and is working on a slave community exhibit. Drayton Hall offers participation opportunities using its Connections program, along with booklets available to visitors. Although McLeod Plantation is not yet publicly accessible, it is planning to have guided tours, exhibits in the slave cabins, informative plaques, and classes for

students. No site is required to offer the same methods or have a set number of methods, especially since each site has different historic resources available, and a different story to share.

As one can see, educating students is a priority to each site. Three of the four sites are on the South Carolina State curriculum. In other words, kids between the 3rd and 5th grades are required to annually visit each of these sites to learn about different topics. Both Hampton Plantation and Drayton Hall are used to demonstrate the rice plantation culture and slavery before the Civil War. The African American and slave experience is the educational focus of these sites. Drayton Hall has “a day in the life of a slave,” the Revolutionary War Choice station, and the Connections program, all geared for students. This is a great way to help students begin to learn about the lives of slaves, but at the same time, it could be even more effective if all these opportunities were available for adult tourists as well. Hampton Plantation does not have any resources specific to African Americans for children to see, enter, or truly experience, but they have created interactive programs that allow the children to learn how the plantation was once laid out and functioned, and how this plantation is similar to other rice plantations of the same time period.

Each site offers guided tours, but each site does not have the same audience in mind for each tour. Boone Hall Plantation and Drayton Hall both have separate tours and programs for adults and children. Both have tours that are designated for different visitor interests. Some visitors may be most interested in architecture, ownership history, plantation culture, or the landscape, and these two sites have tours that specialize in these interests. McLeod Plantation plans on having tours specialized for different groups as well. In contrast, Hampton Plantation has one house tour that is for all audiences. The visitors to this property often explore the grounds on their own, and discover the historic resources along the way.

Interpretive Methods Used by Case Studies

	Boone Hall Plantation	Drayton Hall	*McLeod Plantation	Hampton Plantation
Place inscriptions			X	
Directional signs				
Site orientation			X	X
Publications	X	X		
Role Play	X			
Participation/demonstration	X	X		
Displays/exhibits	X			X
Self-guided tours	X			X
Guided tours	X	X	X	X
Audio devices	X			
Audio visual devices				
Classes for students	X	X	X	X

Figure 19: Interpretive methods for each site. (Created by author)

*McLeod is not yet open, but these are the methods that they plan on using for their site.

One topic that is in line with the literature review section is the role of lead interpretive staff members. Although not all sites have a designated lead interpretive staff member, the historic plantation sites discussed here each has a person or team that carries out the themes of its interpretation plan. Boone Hall Plantation, for example, does not have a designated interpretive staff member, but they do have an education coordinator who produces interpretation and class programs, and tour guide material for the docents. Hampton Plantation does not have an interpretive lead either. The site manager gives tours, collects fees, and receives training information for the staff. In addition to those tasks, she must also follow the requirements of South Carolina Parks and Recreation, conduct research, and devise future plans for the site.

Drayton Hall does have a lead interpreter on staff, and she is in charge of giving tours, administering the Connections program, and training, observing, and evaluating docents. She also writes the information for the site based on new primary resources she unearths. The research and interviews conducted here indicates that the role of lead interpreters at all sites chosen are very similar.

Interpretive Topics of Case Studies

	Boone Hall Plantation	Drayton Hall	McLeod Plantation	Hampton Plantation
History of past owners	X	X	x	X
African-American experience	X	x	X	X
Architecture	X	X		X
Landscape		X	X	
How site connects to city/state history	X	X	X	X

Figure 20: This chart shows the various topics/themes that are discussed on each site. The small x depicts that a topic is barely discussed to visitors as a whole. (Created by author)

Each case study site is unique in terms of available resources and methods of interpretation. There are things that all sites share, such as the use of a site manager, the use of an interpretation plan, having one person with primary responsibility for interpretation implementation, and having public accessibility. These shared characteristics points to similarities among historic plantations in the Charleston area, even as each attempts to interpret slavery in its own way.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

When I began this thesis journey, my research question was: What can historic site managers do to comprehensively interpret the African American experience during the period between the Revolutionary War and Civil War on Charleston region plantations? To begin to answer the research question, the literature review defines what a Historic Site Manager is and explains their role on a historic site. In discussing the duties of a site manager, the standards the manager must follow are given in detail. The thesis also describes how site managers and their presence on historic sites relates to the topic of interpreting the African American experience on historic plantations. The definition of site interpretation and its role on a historic site was also discussed in the literature review. Several interpretive standards were listed from different time periods and from different persons specializing in interpretation. Through reading the previous chapters, one can see that interpretive plans and how they are formed are integral to the depiction of a site's story and the layout of the site. The various methods that are used on tours, guided or self-guided, determine how much information the visitor is exposed to, which in turn influences whether a visitor may decide to return again and, indeed, whether or not a site's methods are effective. The history of how African Americans were forced to contend with limited access to historic sites, how their story is just now being added to tours, and the variety of struggles that keep some sites from elaborating on their story are also discussed.

Charleston has a very rich history that must be taken into consideration when studying the topics explored here. The last portion of the literature review briefly discussed the overall economic and social aspects of the United States between the Revolutionary and Civil Wars and the factors leading to the start of each war. The focus then narrowed to the beginnings of the

state of South Carolina, from the failure of French and Spanish settlers to the successes of the English, who finally established fruitful colonies on the land. A section reviewing Charleston's history followed the South Carolina segment. At the very end of the historic background portion of the thesis was information regarding the African American experience on Charleston-area plantations starting with where the slaves came from and the various hierarchies that were in place on those plantations. Additionally, this section highlighted the development of the Gullah culture unique to the coastal region of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

Following the on-site research on these topics, I explained why case studies were needed and what I planned to do with information gathered at each site. The process of deciding the criteria in choosing the sites followed briefly. The sites of choice were then revealed: Boone Hall Plantation, Drayton Hall, McLeod Plantation, and Hampton Plantation. Each site is discussed individually, and each of these individual discussions cover the interview results from each site, analysis of the tours, and my general thoughts and observations about each site. General suggestions for the sites and recommendations regarding interpretation of the African American experience was also discussed later in this chapter. An important question is whether or not the research and first-hand information coincide. Does the information I learned from the sites line up with the standards and information I learned about in the literature review? Are the goals of the site and interpretive managers put forward successfully in the tours visitors experience? The answers to these questions can help provide a solution to the research question: What can historic site managers do to comprehensively interpret the African American experience during the period between the Revolutionary War and Civil War to Charleston region plantations?

Upon completing my analysis of all four sites, I have come to general conclusions. The standards for site managers are guidelines and daily activities that a person in charge must

follow. Every site manager looked at here has his or her own unique approach to the job. Each site interpreter adheres to the roles and duties that were discussed in the literature review. The range in opportunities presented at the site dictates how many or how few things each interpreter must address. Drayton Hall's leader had the most responsibilities, but she is also the only case study representative that actually carries the title lead interpreter.

Regarding site interpretation, all sites had composed interpretation plans and try to follow the themes presented in them to the best of its ability. Based on my analysis, Boone Hall Plantation did the best job covering all topics outlined in its interpretation plan. Boone Hall also utilized the largest number of interpretive methods compared to the other sites. Although the site does not intertwine the experience of whites and blacks, it does provide equal information on both. The interpretive methods used for the children on the site, such as having them place their hands on the fingerprints on the bricks of the slave cabins and telling them they are officially touching history is genius. The small cotton field is another innovative way to allow modern children to understand the grueling labor that was cotton picking.

Also impressive is the interpretive efforts of Hampton Plantation. The park ranger at Hampton is very thoughtful and brave to go against the norm of the site to find ways to interpret the African American experience on the site she manages. For years before her arrival, South Carolina Parks and Recreation avoided the topic of slavery on this site. Along with updating previous location markers to incorporate a balanced history, she has placed new interpretive markers at the site directing guests to the different slave resources and stating what happened at each resource. She also placed displays in the big house that explain the African American experience on the plantation. There are photos with descriptions of slavery, rice culture, tenant farming, and share croppers. The excavation taking place unearthing remnants of a slave

community hidden for decades is another effort of the ranger to expand the knowledge shared on this plantation. These educational measures are happening at Hampton Plantation even though its main purpose is as a State Park. While Hampton Plantation clearly hopes to make the visit of each guest educational, one suggestion is to add more about slave history on the South Carolina State Parks and Recreation website. There is one line on the website stating that slavery occurred on the site, but no more information is provided. With all the efforts taking place on site, the website should reflect all the new information being discovered.

As stated many times before, McLeod Plantation is not yet opened to the public. I chose this site in order to study what the planning process is like when preparing to open a historic site to the public. This site has a lot of potential and might even become an ideal site for interpreting the African American experience. McLeod Plantation plans to focus on the historic majority population on the site, which consisted of slaves. This approach is unique when compared to that of so many other historic plantations, which focus more on the owner, his family and their lives. McLeod Plantation hopes to explore different avenues such as slave existence through both the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, how excellent the slaves were at fishing and understand why slaves chose not to run away when presented with the opportunity to do so during fishing trips. They will also examine the African American experience post slavery and discuss how the descendants of slaves and tenant farmers lived in the slave cabins until the 1970s, thus explaining why the slave cabins all have electricity today. In addition to hosting weddings on their site to raise revenue, they also hope to host family reunions, an innovative way to fund-raise. Also impressive is that the surrounding community felt the site had so much historic significance that it rallied to keep it as a testimony of its historic use rather than allow the site to be used incompatibly by random possible owners.

Drayton Hall is a great site for visitors interested in learning about architecture and the Drayton family as old southern business people. The architecture at the site could even be said to teach visitors about slavery by showing the stark contrast in building types. Slave cabins were usually very small one room structures with a single chimney, whereas the main houses were typically several thousand square feet in size. Although there are no slave dwellings standing at Drayton Hall, there is the former caretaker's house, currently used as the gift shop. The site may benefit from choosing to compare the modest caretaker's home with the elaborate architecture of the Drayton house. It is disappointing that while Drayton Hall possesses the best archival documentation of slave life of all sites considered here, it utilizes those resources so little. On the house tour, the only mention of slavery was directed to the stairwell in a closet. There are documents from John Drayton explaining the happenings in this stairwell, what it was used for and by whom, none of which was discussed on the tour.

Drayton Hall's Connections program, however, was the most insightful interpretation observed at any of the sites discussed here. This program provides visitors with the most vivid information, from among all the sites, about how the brutal institution of slavery actually worked. All information used to interpret this site is primary information, all having come from John Drayton or other Drayton family personal records or from historic newspaper articles. A suggestion for Drayton Hall is to weave information from the Connections program into other aspects of the site. The site could also acknowledge that slaves worked in the kitchen in the basement of the main house, and remind visitors that there is a historic African American cemetery on the site.

Originally I feared that no plantations were interpreting the African American experience or acknowledging the impact that the institution of slavery had had on the individual plantations,

on the city of Charleston and its region. After gathering all my research and visiting these several historic plantations in Charleston, my views have changed. These four case studies and sources from the literature review opened my eyes to the complexities and politics that go into interpreting any story on a historic site, and the efforts sites are making to include the African American and slave experience. I learned that the ownership type, funding, and catering to specific audiences are all factors in creating an interpretation plan.

The research conducted here points to a conclusion that applies to all historic sites whose history involves both blacks and whites, and a suggestion that may sound simple but is not; to intertwine the stories of both blacks and whites on each site. Between the Revolutionary and Civil Wars there were over 2,000 different plantations in South Carolina alone, and over 200 in the county of Charleston. On each plantation there is one historic, indisputable fact; African American slaves and whites interacted daily and, in ways however cruel and inhumane, depended on each other. Although the two races did not live in the same buildings, the slaves provided the food, the labor, and the wealth that often came from that labor. Each day there were slaves in the big house doing chores for the owner's family, and at most plantations, there were overseers out in the fields daily with the slaves. There is evidence of the interaction of slaves and their owners in most plantation houses, hidden stairwells, butlers' pantries, and extra doorways meant to be used solely by slaves. These facts along with my research justify further my case for intertwining the stories when interpreting a site. A site should not focus on one story at the expense of the other. Only by telling both stories can visitors, whether young or old have a comprehensive exposure to the history of how historic plantations in Charleston's lowcountry truly operated.

This topic is important for a number of reasons. For one, as previously stated, telling the slave or African American story on a site gives the complete history of the site. Secondly, African Americans may feel more connected to their ancestors and understand the true horrors that they had to encounter. For historic plantations that talk about the African American experience on their grounds after slavery including tenant farmers and share croppers, blacks can see the struggle their ancestors endured to get them to the place they are today. Even though it may not be something easy to face, it happened, and it may inspire some to want to study their history more or preserve what they know. In addition, some blacks may want to trace their lineage and find out which plantation they came from and see if there is any information is available on their family. By giving the names of the enslaved on the plantations, it will make slaves seem more real and perhaps connect current African Americans to their ancestors.

Lastly, it highlights the story of the people that built this nation and made the economy of the Southeast United States strong in the past. Although slaves were not present all over the United States, their labor was hired out all over the U.S. There were many cases of plantation owners sending their slaves up north or out west to do different tasks building railroads, helping with canals, and field work if the crops were having a bad year. Outside of hiring out labor, the crops that slaves grew and the goods they produced were exported not only throughout the United States, but also to Europe. Those crops and goods were one of the reasons the United States was a very prosperous nation between the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. If we tell the story of the slaves, we will also be telling the history of America's financial prosperity and the history of who built America; and that is why it is important to tell their story at historic sites.

Although this topic is important, some may wonder if it is relevant today. Currently in the United States, there is a movement to recognize the contributions different ethnic groups have made. When we tell the story of America, we need to tell the whole story, not just part of it. Too often, our history of slavery is breezed over because, for some, it is too hard to talk about. But if the story of America is about overcoming hardship and adversity, surely the story of slavery should be told, and remembered.

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