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"It's Not about Us": The Erasure of African American Heritage and the Rehistoricization of the First Africans on Jamestown Island, Virginia

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"It's not about us": The Erasure of African American Heritage and the
Rehistoricization of the First Africans on Jamestown Island, Virginia

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A Thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty of The College of William & Mary in
Candidacy for the Degree of
Master of Arts

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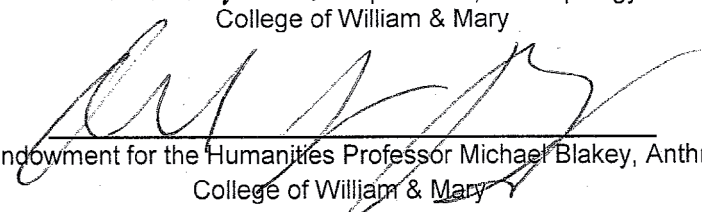


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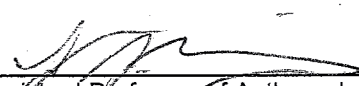
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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the complex relationship between making African Diaspora history and culture visible at Historic Jamestowne, a setting that has historically been seen as “white”. The four hundredth anniversary of the forced arrival of Africans in Virginia has created a fraught space to examine African American collective memories of shared history, community, and commemoration. This thesis operationalizes Page and Thomas’s (1994) “white public space” which describes the utilization of “locations, sites, patterns, configurations or devices that routinely discursively, and sometimes coercively privilege Euro-Americans over nonwhites” (1994:111). When this concept is applied to the construction of heritage and production of history, it may thus be reconceptualized as “white public heritage space”. At Jamestown, Jim Crow-era Anglo-Protestant elites created white public heritage space through their interpretation of archaeological sites, objects, historical events, and spaces to reaffirm white supremacist hierarchical views on the past in an effort to naturalize white privilege and structural violence toward nonwhites. These formulas of silences construct an uneven past which add to what Tillet describes as “civic estrangement,” the feeling of alienation from the “rights and privileges of the contemporary public sphere” (2009:125). For African Americans, civic estrangement further complicates the always complex process of identity formation and negatively affects transnational diasporic relations. To confront early-20th-century misrepresentations, archaeologists and heritage professionals at Jamestown have begun engaging the local descendant African American community in collective knowledge production centered around Angela, one of the first African women that lived at Jamestown in the 1620s. This method draws upon critical praxis as it aims to reconstruct traditional power relationships in archaeological production of histories and identities. Here, the Angela Site is foregrounding the life and influences of one of the first “invisible” African women to have lived and labored in the colony. Connecting postcolonial theory and community-collaborative methods, this thesis explores the production of dominant histories, plausible alternative interpretations of the colonial past, and relationships between heritage sites and local descendant communities.

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I write for those women who do not speak, for those who do not have a voice because they were so terrified, because we are taught to respect fear more than ourselves. We've been taught that silence would save us, but it won't. – Audre Lorde, A Litany for Survival (1997).

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Introduction

The four hundredth anniversary of the forced arrival of Africans in Virginia presents a unique opportunity and challenge to more fully incorporate narratives of the African Diasporic past at Historic Jamestowne. Although people of African descent lived and labored on Jamestown Island for nearly three hundred years, the memory of their presence was purposefully erased from the heritage site during the Jim Crow era. Central to this project was the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA) who transformed the island into a heritage space that valorized perceptions of 17th-century American whiteness that excluded contributions of non-white peoples. Specifically, by using archaeology, objects, historical events, and spaces, Virginia's 19th-and-early-20th-century Anglo-American elites were able to assert their Anglo-Saxon, Protestant identity and reclaim a white Southern culture and history threatened by societal changes after the Civil War and Reconstruction stripped them of power and wealth (Lindgren 1993; Horning 2006). Although the First Africans arrived in Jamestown in 1619, these elites declared the island hallow ground; a shrine to white America (Lindgren 1993:110).

The process of defining heritage is often loaded with social inequalities and political power disparities that are connected to the legacy of colonialism (LaRoche and Blakey 1997). The production of historical narratives is an unequal and political process made up of power differentials that endow the creation of certain histories while silencing others (Trouillot 2015). Over the last thirty years, archaeologists at Jamestown have contested earlier interpretations of Jamestown as a Anglo-Saxon, Protestant heritage space by exploring the roles of Native Americans and African Americans in the colony (Horning et al. 2001; Brown and Horning 2004; Horning 2006), but for many African

Americans Jamestown is still perceived as only for whites, as one African American woman told me, “Why would we want to go to Jamestown? It’s not about us”. Social memories of Jim Crow discriminatory practices and interpretation still influence perceptions of who is and is not welcomed at Jamestown and whose heritage is represented. During Jim Crow, African Americans were excluded from the Jamestown landscape (both figuratively and literally) and the Old South’s role in subjugating and dehumanizing people of African descent was glossed over and blatantly ignored (Lindgren 1993, Horning 2006). A current public archaeology project at the site where one of the first documented African women in Virginia¹ lived in the 1620s, known as the Angela Site, is now implementing community-based approaches in an effort to more fully involve African American voices.

Since the 1990s, archaeologists have taken a self-reflexive approach toward redefining Jamestown’s historical diversity and contemporary inclusiveness (Horning et al. 2001; Brown and Horning 2004; Horning 2006). Jamestown researchers seek to decenter hegemonic knowledge hierarchies and facilitate multiple epistemologies for knowledge production (Perry and Paynter 1999). Despite these more inclusive interpretations, the long shadow of Jim Crow heritage interpretations still dominates the narrative of Jamestown. To confront early-20th-century misrepresentations, archaeologists and heritage professionals at Jamestown have begun engaging the local

¹ The term “First African” can be quite a contentious one since Africans were living free and enslaved in the Americas a full century before the 1619 arrival. Beginning in the early 16th century, Africans were part of Spanish, Portuguese, and French expeditions across South, Central, and North America. Most notably, Estevanico, an enslaved Arabic-speaking black Moroccan, exploration of the Southwestern United States for Spain (Gordon 2006). Free and enslaved Africans were part of the founding of St. Augustine in 1565, the first permanent colony in North America (Landers 1997). In fact, the Africans that arrived in Virginia in 1619 were not even the first people of African descent to live in the James River Valley. In 1526, Luis Vázquez de Ayllon founded the colony San Miguel de Guandape with a group of enslaved Africans. The colony quickly failed and barely a third of the 600 people survived passage back to Havana (Aveni 2013). Although, the settlement has not yet been relocated it is believed that it lies within close proximity to Jamestown.

and descendant African American community members in collective knowledge production centered around Angela, one of the first African women that lived at Jamestown in the 1620s. This approach draws upon critical praxis as it aims to reconstruct traditional power relationships in archaeology production of histories and identities (Harrison 1997; Allen and Jobson 2016). For example, anthropological decolonizing practices contest historical erasures or silences by incorporating marginalized voices in knowledge production to restructure traditional power relationships which are often built upon colonial foundations (Fanon 1963; LaRoche and Blakey 1997; Blakey 1997). Here, the Angela Site is foregrounding the life and influences of one of the first “invisible” African women to have lived and labored in the colony. The very act of naming the site after Angela re-centers the narrative to her and the other “20 and Odd” Africans who arrived in the Virginia colony in 1619 and prioritizes questions about African agency rather than Eurocentric/ white-centered ones. This approach is literally and figuratively ground breaking for an early-17th-century public archaeological site.

The complex relationship between making African Diaspora history and culture visible in a space that has historically been seen as “*white public heritage space*” has created a fraught space to examine African American collective memories of shared history, community, and commemoration centered around the four hundredth anniversary of African presence in English North America. This paper operationalizes Helán Page’s (1994, 1999) “white public space” by considering the concept’s intersection with the construction of heritage, memory, and production of history; thus, I reconceptualize the notion as “*white public heritage space*”. Connecting postcolonial theory and a community-collaborative approach, this paper explores the production of dominant histories, plausible alternative interpretations of the colonial past, and

relationships between heritage sites and local descendant communities. Through historical research and a series of interviews, I seek to further explore the following: 1) how did the erasure of African and African Americans at Jamestown effect perceptions of belonging and civic estrangement (Tillet 2009) of local African American descendants?, 2) how is white public heritage space instituted materially and symbolically?, 3) how can archaeologists empower marginalized communities to more fully tell their ancestors' histories and contest "white public heritage spaces"?, and, 4) how can these efforts assist in advancing current social justice efforts in these local communities? To analyze these themes, I interviewed six African American women who either identify as descendants of the First Africans or live in a Hampton Roads community connected to early African presence. Ultimately, this paper seeks to understand how collective memory, community, and landscape history function within the minds of people of African descent living in Tidewater, Virginia. It sets the stage for a larger, archaeological study of 17th-century African perspectives and influences in the lower James River that decenters Eurocentric practices and knowledge hierarchies to facilitate multiple epistemologies for anthropological knowledge production (Harrison 1995; Said 1997; Risam 2018).

Historic Context of the First Africans & African American Life on Jamestown

Island

The Africans that arrived in Jamestown in August of 1619, were captured the previous year during the Portuguese wars in the regions surrounding and within modern-day Angola. According to historians John Thornton and Linda Heywood (2007), many were likely Kimbundu-speaking peoples from the Kingdom of Ndongo. These were socially complex societies that included interconnected walled urban centers and rural regions. West Central Africans were well known for their skill and knowledge of farming, animal husbandry, metallurgy, weaving, potting, and artistry (Thornton 1998). Additionally, it has been hypothesized that early 17th-century captive Africans may have been more socially mobile in some regions of Europe and the Americas due to their interactions with the Portuguese since the 15th century, this includes widespread adoption of the Christian faith and had a familiarity with European languages, trade items, clothing and customs (Gomez 1998; Thornton 2012).

Religious and spiritual beliefs in this region during the 17th century were highly complex. Long held localized spiritual beliefs and Christianity were in constant tension, especially in the Kongo Kingdom where King João I of Kongo (also known as Nzinga) converted to Christianity and urged the Kongo nobility and rural agriculturalists to follow suit in 1491. The Kongo Kingdom would remain Christian – at least in varying degrees – for the next two hundred years. In fact, the Kongo elite engaged in extensive communication with religious and political leaders from Europe, including the pope and other members of the Vatican, who accepted the Kongo church as orthodox (Gomez 2013; Ross 2002). Tensions continued to increase throughout the century as Portuguese Capuchin monks tried to forcibly convert local people (MacGaffey 1994). "Catholic priests," writes James Sweet, "had little tolerance for African rituals and

practices. Across Central Africa, priests burned 'idol houses' and 'fetish objects' in grand public displays meant to demonstrate the impotence of African spirits and religious leaders" (Sweet 2003). It is likely many of the Africans who arrived in Virginia by 1625 would have at least been aware of Christianity and some Catholic customs. Further, Portuguese law required all enslaved to be baptized before arriving in America (Gomez 1998; Heywood and Thornton 2007; Thornton 1998, 2012). Similarly, many of the captive Africans named on the 1624 and 1625 censuses are listed with Christian Portuguese form baptismal names. Could this be a hint that these individuals adopted or were raised in Catholic households? It is also a worthy consideration of how Catholic and localized African religious practices would have been confronted and surveilled by the overtly Anglican Jamestown colony.

In 1618 and 1619, the ruthless Portuguese governor of Angola, Luis Mendes de Vasconcelos, with help from an African mercenary group, led two campaigns against the Kimbundu-speaking people of the region. During Vasconcelos three-year term as governor, he enslaved approximately 50,000 West Central Africans and bound them for the Americas (Thornton 1998). In 1618 alone, thousands were captured and forced on Spanish slave ships destined for sugar plantations in Vera Cruz. Following a march of approximately two hundred miles to the port of Luanda, about 350 individuals were put on the *San Juan Bautista* (Thornton 1998). The harrowing trip to the Americas, known as the Middle Passage, is infamous for the inhumane treatment of Africans forced to make the journey. Certainly, the numbers of captive Africans on board dwindled through the journey due to malnutrition, diseases, and violence on board.

En route to their destination, the ship was attacked off the coast of Mexico by two privateering ships, the *White Lion* and the *Treasurer*, and robbed of some of their human cargo (Horn 2018). The *Treasurer's* navigator, John Wood, stated under oath that "28 or

thirty negroes” from the San Juan Bautista were placed on the *Treasurer* (McCartney 2019). According to the 1624/5 muster list, Angela was one of these “negroes”. Although sailing under Dutch and Savoy papers, both ships and their captains were English. The ships sailed to the West Indies and then to Old Point Comfort in Virginia (now Hampton, Virginia). John Rolfe describes the arrival of the *White Lion* soon after the event in a letter to Sir Edwin Sandys. Rolfe noted that “20. and odd Negroes, which the Governor and Cape Marchant bought for victualls (where of he was in greate need as he pretended) at the best and easyest rates they could” (John Rolfe, 1620 [Kingsbury 1906-1935:III:243]). Similarly, five men who crewed the *Treasurer* testified before the English High Court of the Admiralty about the alleged piratical activities, confirming that they left “two or three negroes they caste at Virginia” before sailing to Bermuda with the remaining Africans (McCartney 2019). “Angelo”², or Angela, who was purchased by prominent planter and merchant Captain William Pierce of Jamestown, disembarked off the *Treasurer* likely to a foreign and unfamiliar environment. Angela appears in the historical record only twice. Once on a census conducted in the Virginia colony on February 16, 1624, and a January 24, 1625 muster. In the first record, she is one of the colony's twenty-one Africans, identified as "Angelo a Negar" and living in “James Cittie”, Virginia’s first capital located on Jamestown Island. The second record provides a bit more detail, grouping residents according to household and vessels they arrived on. In this list Angela is still listed as living in the James City household of Captain William Peirce, along with Peirce's wife, Joan, and three presumably European indentured

² There are several theories of why the masculine form of Angela was recorded in the 1624 census and 1625 muster. Heywood and Thornton (2007) suggests that the error was likely caused when Angela pronounced her name without the final vowel which was common in both Kimbundu and Portuguese, thus an English-speaking ear would have simply heard “Angelo”. Other historians argue that this recording likely was not accidental but part of the practice of masculinizing African females.

servants. In 1625, Angela is one of twenty-three³ Africans in the colony, she is identified this time as "Angelo a Negro Woman in the Treasurer".

Labor roles around the colony varied by gender, ethnicity, and class (Horn 2018). According to historian James Horn, European indentured servants labor roles were usually segregated based on gender. European men generally worked in more physically strenuous manual labor tasks and European indentured women, on the other hand, usually were given domestic tasks to conduct around the household or in town. However, the situation was quite different for African women during this period. Both African men and women labored alongside each other and their European indentured servant counterparts in the field. African women who did not work in the tobacco fields⁴, likely the case in Angela's situation since she was living in the colony's urban center, usually conducted other arduous domestic chores such as pounding corn (Horn 2018). The Pierce household was described by prominent colonist and houseguest George Sandys as "the fairest in Virginia" (McCartney 2007). The property was located on a large urban lot and included three to four acres where Joan Pierce cultivated a garden, one year harvesting 100 bushels of figs. It is likely Angela and Ester, an indentured servant in the household, worked alongside Joan in the garden (Horning et al. 2001; Brown and Horning 2004; Horn 2018). Additionally, Angela presumably toiled around the house, helped raise cattle and hogs, worked in Pierce's tobacco store, and performed a variety of personal services (Heywood and Thornton 2007; Horn 2018). This likely

³ The increase in the African population is likely due to the births of two children listed with their mothers. Notably, William Tucker was born to Isabella and Antonio in Elizabeth City (current day Hampton) in late 1624 or early 1625 and soon after was baptized in Jamestown (McIlwane 1924). William Tucker is acknowledged today as the first recorded child of African descent born in Virginia.

⁴ The bulk of the tobacco farming was likely conducted at Pierce's 650 acre land holdings on Mulberry Island where he had an additional thirteen indentured servants (McCartney 2007). Peirce and his household (possibly including Angela) would move to Mulberry Island in 1635 (Regan N.D.).

allowed Angela to come into contact with people of diverse backgrounds throughout the day and would have allowed for plenty of time to communicate between a range of actors, including some of her own countrymen and women laboring nearby on the Yeardeley property and Neck O'Land. The channels used in these tasks likely included speaking, facial and body movement, and possibly even singing. It is highly likely the code was paralinguistic and included some form of pidgin or Creole language. Additionally, a form of sign language may have been formed if language failed and the task allowed (Silverstein 1998). Further, these interactions may have led to closer interactions between some marginalized groups, creating stronger associations and perhaps a new shared identity between the members of this newly formed community -- especially between Native Americans, captive Africans, and indentured Europeans. Similarly, there were likely many "double misunderstandings" that led to distrust, dissent, violence which would leave to the construction of racialized subjugation later in the century (Breen and Innes 1980; MacGaffey 1994; Horning et al. 2001; Sikes 2008).

In 17th-century Virginia, European indentured labor made up the majority of the labor force, and it was common for captive Africans and indentured Europeans (and in some cases Native Americans) to work alongside each other in the tobacco fields. Labor conditions in Virginia were known to be severe and cruel for all (Horning et al. 2001; McCartney and Walsh 2003; Brown and Horning 2004). Additionally, during this period it would not have been uncommon for captive Africans and Europeans (especially indentured) to reside together in the same dwelling house (Horn 2018). Census data shows that 32 Africans were living in the colony by 1620, but by 1625 the population had dropped to 23. Two decades later in 1649, the population had risen to about 300 people. Not until the transition from European indentured labor to enslaved African labor after 1700 did a significant spike in African and African American population occur in Virginia

(Kelso & Straube 1994; Wright 1998; Horning et al. 2001; McCartney and Walsh 2003; Brown and Horning 2004). After the capital was moved to Williamsburg in 1699, Jamestown Island transitioned into the “plantation generations”⁵ (Horning et al. 2001; McCartney and Walsh 2003; Berlin 2003). Enslaved West and West Central Africans and their descendants would continue to live, labor, and raise families (biological and adopted) on Jamestown into the 19th century.

The legal status of Virginia’s captive Africans was highly complex. The institutionalization of slavery and the passage of laws that restricted the movements, familial relationships, and legal rights of captive Africans were not codified into law until the 1640s (Higginbotham 1978; Horning et al. 2001; McCartney and Walsh 2003; Brown and Horning 2004; Billings 2007). Further, records indicate that some captive Africans were treated as servants who were able to earn their freedom after many years of servitude (Breen and Innes 1980). But early documentation, including Rolfe’s letter and the 1624/25 census, clearly shows that Africans were marked as “others” from the very beginning. It is clear that these early captive Africans were “unfree”, but it is difficult to assess whether they were recognized as enslaved by colonists until the laws clearly define them so in the late-17th century. It is likely their status dependent on the elite planter class who forced captive Africans into labor on their plantations. It was also this class of elite English men that began to enact more discriminatory laws in the courts and the statehouse located a few hundred feet from the Pierce property. The 17th-century captive Africans living around the lower James River resisted and rebelled from the very beginning. The case of Emanuel the Negro who was living at Capt. Pierce’s property on Mulberry Island is an interesting example. In July of 1640, Capt. Pierce accused six

⁵ For a more in-depth discussion of this transitional period and the complexities related to the demography, family and community life, religious beliefs, and labor roles of African and African American enslaved peoples across different regions of America, see Ira Berlin’s *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves*.

European indentured servants and one captive African, identified as Emanuel the Negro, of plotting an uprising and running away from his property (McIlwane 1924). Pierce accused them of taking one of his skiffs, corn powder, shot, and guns to accomplish their said purpose. The conspirators sailed down the Elizabeth River in the skiff and were soon after apprehended. The court believed this action would set a dangerous precedent and ordered harsh sentences to deter future acts:

*“...and the said Peter Wilcocke to receive thirty stripes and to be Burnt in the cheek with the letter R and, after his term of service is Expired with his said master to serve the colony for three years...and the said John Williams a Dutchman and a surgeon after his full time of service is Expired with his master to serve the colony for seven years, **and Emanuel the Negro to receive thirty stripes and to be burnt in the cheek with the letter R. and to work in shackle one year or more as his master shall see cause** [emphasis added by author of this paper], and all those who are condemned to serve the colony after their times are expired with their masters, then their said masters are required hereby to present to this board their said servants so condemned to the colony. (McIlwane 1924:467)”*

Interestingly, Emanuel’s harsh sentence was similar to that of his European companions, but he did not receive additional years as some of the other runaways which Tom Costa believes this may indicate that Emanuel was already seen as enslaved for life (Costa 2013). This is just one of several examples of captive Africans resisting and rebelling alongside their European indentured counterparts⁶. Since the archival records for this period is extremely sparse since many were destroyed or lost due to

⁶ For more early servant uprisings and acts of resistance see McIlwane 1924

subsequent war and fire, we will never truly know how many uprisings and rebellions took place in early Virginia, but what is clear is that by early the 1640s Virginia's elite began passing laws to discourage mixing between captive Africans, Native Americans, and Europeans. Although there are records which survive that show some captive Africans would eventually become free men and women and some, like Anthony and Mary Johnson and John Pedro, rose to prominence and gained considerable land and respectability in their communities (Breen and Innes 1980; Heywood and Thornton 2007). Nonetheless, by the end of the century it would become more difficult for the biological and symbolic descendants of these early captive Africans to achieve the same social and economic mobility of their forefathers and mothers. As Trouillot (2015) argues, a new symbolic order emerged during this period which created degrees of humans in order to justify the colonization, enslavement, and oppression of wide swaths of the world's population⁷. During the 17th and 18th centuries, Enlightenment philosophers and scholars defined "Man" in the image of Western European men while attributing negative connotations to darker skinned groups which would in turn lead to rationalizations of restricting the legal rights and justifying the enslavement, land expropriation, relocation, and, in some cases, genocide of Indigenous and African people. Virginia's 17th-century law code was part of this new colonial ontology that transformed European ethnocentrism into scientific and structural racism (Trouillot 2015; Billings 2007).

After a fire destroyed the state house and the capital was moved to Williamsburg in 1699, most of the island's Euro-American residents abandoned the decaying former capital. By the latter half of the 18th century the island was essentially reduced to two

⁷ Trouillot (2015) estimates that only 5% of the world's population was considered "free" by the end of the 18th century.

large plantations and the island's population became overwhelmingly African and African American⁸. The total enslaved workforces numbered a hundred or more by the third quarter of the century. The Travis and Ambler Plantations on Jamestown Island were stereotypical examples of the large tobacco plantation complexes that dotted the coasts of the James and York Rivers in the 18th and 19th centuries (Brown and Horning 2004). These complexes were dominated by a great house cared for by many enslaved domestic workers and artisans, as well as multiple outlying agricultural outbuildings, a brick kiln, enslaved dwellings, and overseer houses. The Ambler family's mansion stood within close proximity to where historians and archaeologists believe Peirce's 1620s complex was located. The Travis family's domestic buildings were situated along the waterfront and it is likely that Edward Champion Travis concentrated his slave trading activities to this zone⁹ (Brown and Horning 2004). Henry Beaumont, an Englishman visited Jamestown Island in 1818 remarked on the conditions of the quarters of the enslaved, stating:

... visited several of the Negroes Huts all of which we found in a most deplorable and wretched state - poor creatures. All the furniture was composed of a wooden stool or two and a little straw in one corner which we supposed was their Bed. Some of them had a little fire on the floor and themselves not half clothed. In fact the children were nearly naked. My feelings were no little hurt to see human beings though black in such a wretched condition. And to think they are bought and sold the same as cattle and many of them used much worse (McCartney and Walsh

⁸ Martha McCartney and Lorena Walsh's *A Study of the Africans and African Americans on Jamestown Island and at Green Spring , 1619-1803*, glean information about the lives of some of these individuals, including some of their names (see appendix for full list of recovered names).

⁹ In the 1750s, Edward Champion Travis owned the *Jamestown*, a ship he used to transport enslaved Africans from Barbados to Jamestown (Brown and Horning 2004).

2003:126 [Beaumont 1818])

Although this description illustrates the dehumanizing reality of enslavement, quarters of the enslaved also allowed for shared community and cultural space away from the surveillance of the white gaze. Archaeologist Whitney Battle-Baptiste describes these “homespaces” as environments which shape experiences and memories. Enslaved women, men, children, and elderly would “find a place to sit down and socialize, take time to eat, and relax and take in the benefits of being in a safe place” (Battle-Baptiste 2011:103). The homespace concept also has potential for understanding Angela and other of the First Africans. Although, the early-17th-century homespaces would have, in many cases, been less Afro-centric spaces, more archaeological analysis will be crucial to allow us to more carefully consider how early captive Africans would have created community, and ultimately home.

Court records, runaway slave advertisement, and letters illuminate how the enslaved living on Jamestown Island resisted and fought back against the torment of chattel slavery in a myriad of ways. During the Revolutionary War, Dunmore's Proclamation offered freedom to any enslaved person who fought for the British against the American Patriots in Virginia. It is estimated that around eight hundred enslaved Blacks joined the British in response to Dunmore's proclamation. One of these individuals was Robert Bowland, who reportedly fled from Edward Champion Travis's plantation around 1779 and was relocated to Nova Scotia after the war (McCartney and Walsh 2003:133 [Hodges 1996]). Additionally, archival records report that at least four enslaved individuals mistook an American armed vessel for British and were later executed in order to send a message to others who may try the same. During the Civil War, William Allen owned the 1750s Ambler House and the surrounding area and put soldiers, free Blacks, and the enslaved to work to build the Confederate Fort Pocahontas in 1861.

While building the defenses, some enslaved laborers dug up colonial artifacts related to the 17th-century colonial settlement, including an iron elbow-piece, or vambrace, from a seventeenth-century suit of armor (Maynard 2013). In 1862, the Confederates abandoned Jamestown and the Union army took possession without firing a single shot. Soon after, Jamestown became a locus for the fleeing enslaved, there is an oral and written accounts that enslaved people in Surry County swam across the James River to reach the protection of the Union (Virginia Museum of History and Culture, Hankins Family Papers Mss1 H 1946 a 34-54). The site where the First Africans were forcibly brought to in 1619 now became a symbol of freedom.

In October 1862, long-simmering tensions erupted at Jamestown when a group of enslaved men captured Allen's overseer and his nephew. After staging a trial, the group of African American men found them guilty and they were executed soon after (Horning 2006). Similarly, another group of Jamestown's formerly enslaved servants revolted and burned the Ambler House during the war. The house was later rebuilt, only to be burned down again in 1895. Its brick shell is the only extant feature of the plantation in Historic Jamestowne today (Horning et al. 2001; Brown and Horning 2004; Maynard 2013). The 18th-century plantation house is a palimpsest on the reinterpreted 17th-century heritage landscape of Historic Jamestowne. There is only one interpretive sign dedicated to the plantation period which focuses primarily on the architectural history of the ruin and attributes the building to the Ambler family – not the enslaved laborers who fired the bricks at the nearby kiln and constructed the house. Recollecting on 18th-and-19th-century Jamestown during the quadricentennial, Audrey Horning noted that “violence, inhumanity, and contradictions of the institution of slavery are an inherent, if seldom mentioned, part of the Jamestown story” (2006:7).

The first systematic archaeology in the area of the Angela Site was conducted in

1934 by National Park Service (NPS) field director H. Summerfield Day and team of segregated African American Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) archaeologists. The driving force behind this project was to test hypotheses around the development of the town initiated by Samuel H. Yonge at the turn of the 20th century. Implementing shovel test pits, cross trenching, and limited open-area excavations, Day, the cadre of supervisors, and CCC archaeologists toiled to expose foundations, ditches, wells, and burials related to the 17th-century town. These African American men were actually the first to excavate much of Jamestown, including the Angela Site, but they would not have been permitted to visit the site a few years earlier due to Jim Crow laws. These men not only excavated, but recorded interpretations in the field, and cleaned, sorted, and cataloged artifacts.

In 1940, while excavating two boundary ditches in New Towne under the direction of Conrad Bentzen, CCC archaeologists came across the shallow burial of a young man who died from a gunshot wound to the head. Scientific analysis of the remains showed that he had suffered from syphilis and he was first identified as Native American, but when re-examined in the 1990s in compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) he was determined to be of African descent (Owsley 1999; Horning 2006). Subsequent disturbance from a later ditch complicated analysis of this burial, but reanalysis of the evidence hints to the burial likely dating to the latter half of the 17th century. Similarly, two other individuals of apparent African descent were buried with minimal respect in another ditch (Ditch 76) sometime during the last two decades of the 17th century (Owsley 1999; Horning 2006). These three burials highlight the harsh realities of 17th-century Jamestown, a reminder that ideals of liberty and justice did not apply to all. The lack of dignity that was afforded to these individuals when they were interred highlights the construction of racial differences that occurred

throughout the late 17th-century, as Horning writes “another unresolved legacy from Jamestown” (2006:14). Similar to the story of African and African Americans living at Jamestown during the antebellum period, the CCC workers story at Jamestown was diminished then ultimately silenced in the official narrative of the heritage site that would come to define Jamestown as “white public space” in the early-to-mid-20th century.

The Creation of Historic Jamestowne and National Myths

The main focus of this section is how the APVA's early commemorative activities reconstructed Jamestown as a white public heritage space. Also considered are the contemporary material manifestations of this process found in Historic Jamestowne, primarily its memorial statues and monuments. Eight monuments were dedicated within Historic Jamestowne between 1907 and 1957. Today, Jamestown is primarily a heritage tourist site and educational center. Located on the banks of the lower James River, Jamestown Island is a 1,561-acre landform located in James City County, Virginia (Gould et al. 1993). The landform that makes up Jamestown has been an island only since the 20th century after the remaining isthmus connecting Jamestown to Glasshouse Point eroded away. Three organizations interpret the island's history: Preservation Virginia (PV), formerly Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA) which was founded in 1889 by Mary Jeffery Galt and Cynthia Coleman; the National Park Service, Colonial National Historical Park (NPS) which purchased the remaining 1,500-acres of the island in 1934; and Jamestown Settlement which formed in 1957 and is operated by the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation and the Commonwealth of Virginia (Lindgren 1993). Jamestown Settlement, located 1.25 miles away from Historic Jamestowne, also played an important role in the construction of Jamestown's history.

Virginians began making pilgrimages to Jamestown in 1707 to commemorate the 1607 colony (Horning 2006). The size of the crowds flocking to Jamestown to commemorate the colony would continue to grow during 19th century (King 2001). Jamestown commemorative events could get quite rowdy at times. For example, during one celebration in May 1822, an overzealous crowd swarmed the island and "burnt down one of two large brick houses on the island and broke the tombstones into fragments and scattered them over the face of earth so that the whole island exhibited one wide

spread field of desolation” (Horning 2006:5 [Ambler 1826]). Accounts of these events note that virtually all those who participated “nearly all were male, and all but one was white” (Horning 2006:5; King 2001:1). James Lindgren (1993) argues that these 19th-century events aimed to reassert Virginia’s role in the founding of English-speaking America, a counterweight to Plymouth where New Englanders celebrated with annual festivals. In 1859, Edward Everett called for the preservation of the decaying colony, calling on the memory of Jamestown “where the germs of the mighty republic, now almost coextensive with the continent, were planted in 1607 (Lindgren 1993:92)”. Pilgrimages to the site continued to increase after the Civil War and steamboats began running daily from Richmond and Norfolk to the historic site (Horning 2006).

Ownership of the island was also an issue that underscored the need to affirm Jamestown’s – and the South’s – key role in the founding of America. When a New Yorker purchased the island for \$9,000 at an auction in 1879, the extreme state of decay of the 17th-century church tower ruins and associated burial ground became a rallying cry for a group of Virginian white women seeking to preserve the “hallowed grounds” from “the depredations of that modern vandal, the Relic Hunter” (Lindgren 1993:92). It was under this perceived threat of northern aggression against southern antiquities that the APVA began fundraising to purchase the land around the church ruins in 1889. In 1892, Edward E. Barney, an industrialist from Ohio, purchased Jamestown, but refused to sell the church property to APVA. Instead, Barney promised to preserve the building and build a seawall. Unconvinced, Galt and Coleman persuaded the General Assembly to give them the power to seize the land. It was under this threat that Barney decided to donate 22.5 acres (including the 1647 church ruins, graveyard, a colonial magazine, and Fort Pocahontas) to APVA in March 1893 (Lindgren 1993; Horning 2006). Soon after, Elizabeth Henry Lyons, an APVA member, declared that

APVA would preserve the site as “the Mecca of all true worshippers of a free government” (Lindgren 1993:97).

Although the Jamestown Ter-Centennial Exposition was held in Norfolk, the APVA received \$50,000 in federal funding¹⁰ and an increase in visitation in association with the celebration. The APVA set to work stabilizing the ruins, investigating archaeological sites, and abating river erosion at Jamestown in anticipation for three hundredth anniversary. Mary Galt directed much of this work alongside Lucy Parke Chamberlayne Bagby, a descendant of the Byrd family. Bagby referred to herself as “eternally a Confederate” and would chair the APVA’s Jamestown committee for twenty years (Lindgren 1993:111). Bagby was outspoken and persistent. With Galt, she ushered in what Lindgren (1993) describes as prevailing 19th-century racialized viewpoints of traditionalism with the use of cultural symbols and selective cultural memory. Traditionalism opposed social pluralism, venerated social position by birth rather than achievement, stressed individual responsibility over environmental determinism, and

¹⁰ While Congress appropriated \$100,000 for a Negro Building at the Jamestown Exposition in Norfolk, the Virginia legislature refused to support it. Further, Jim Crow laws allowed exposition officials to separate African American materials from the white ones. Not surprisingly, in view of the attitudes of white Virginian organizers, the Negro Building does not appear on any Jamestown Exposition ceramics (Yarsinske 1999). This treatment led some African Americans to refuse to participate in the Jamestown Exposition, but others, including Giles B. Jackson, W. Isaac Johnson, and Reverend A. Binga Jr. took a different approach. In an "Address to the American Negro," Johnson and Binga made the case that as a consequence of "the uncertain and unsatisfactory conditions now existing as to the Negro in this country... a creditable exhibit of his industrial capacities would result in untold good to the entire race" (Yarsinske 1999:32). Jackson, who was former enslaved body servant of Robert E. Lee, led the effort to construct a Negro Building. Johnson and Binga served as officers of the Negro Development and Exposition Company, established to promote and manage the project. Designed by a black architect, constructed by black artisans and laborers, the Negro Building was filled with the products of Black virtuosity and technical skill, including African American life dioramas by sculptor Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller which included a depiction of the forced arrival of Africans in 1619 (Fitzhugh Brundage 2003). The dioramas were destroyed when Fuller’s Philadelphia warehouse burned down in 1910. Throughout the fair the building received "unstinting commendation" from both black and white visitors, some of whom considered its exhibits among the "most instructive features" of the entire exposition (Yarsinske 1999:174). Despite being relegated to the periphery of the fairgrounds, the Negro Building still managed to draw over 750,000 visitors (Lindgren 1993; Yarsinske 1999).

emphasized historical idealism over historical realism. Another main focus of the APVA was to dispel the "lies" that northern text books had promoted about the Pilgrims being the "first" Americans. An important goal was not only to reassert Jamestown as the first permanent English colony, but, as the president of the APVA stated in 1896, that "America was rescued from the grasp of Spain and France, and reserved to become the home of the Anglo-Saxon race" (Lindgren 1993:95).

From the traditionalist perspective, Jamestown and the United States belonged to Anglo-Protestants and certainly not to people of African descent. Any cultural memory of Angela, the First Africans, or other founding African peoples was actively diminished and erased from the symbolic and physical landscape of Jamestown. Furthermore, Jamestown's official guidelines reflected Virginia's Jim Crow policies, stating that "negro excursions or picnic parties are not admitted" (Lindgren 1993:109). Nonetheless, African Americans continued to challenge their exclusion and the erasure of their ancestors from the landscape. In 1916, J. M. Gandy, president of the Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute in Petersburg, requested permission from the APVA to erect a monument to the First Africans at Jamestown. The APVA responded with a rejection, stating:

"Jamestown was the first permanent Colony of the English speaking people in this Country...and the incident of bringing the negros by the Dutch ship to Jamestown forms no such part in the life of the Colony as will justify our granting permission to erect a memorial to that event" (Lindgren 1993:110 [*"Report of the Jamestown Committee," YB 1931:23; Meeting, 6 Nov 1916, MB*]).

By interpreting Jamestown in this way, early preservationists obtained national recognition to force "an acceptance of the propriety, validity, and effectiveness of the Old South civilization. The past became a prologue to the present" (Lindgren 1993: 245).

The APVA actively transformed Jamestown in order to link the colonial past to the Lost Cause by the selective presentation of past events (often outright fiction), traditionalizing celebrations, placing commemorative plaques to solidify the intended interpretation, and beautifying of the landscape and architecture. By denying Gandy's request the APVA promoted the erasure of the role of colonial Africans in the founding of America. Thomas Nelson Page, a frequent advisor, orator, and interpreter of history for the APVA, claimed that slavery "was brought upon the South without its fault, and continued to be forced upon her against her protests" (Lindgren 1993:110). Joseph Bryan, a Confederate veteran and APVA advisor, argued that slavery was a Northern creation and found "great gratification...to know that careful investigation has failed to show that any Virginian was ever engaged in the African slave trade" (Lindgren 1993:110). The blatant disregard of Jamestown's role in the subjugation, dehumanization, and dependency on forced labor fostered continued structural violence against Native Americans and people of African descent. These formulas of erasure and banalization (Trouillot 2015), were a continuation of the scientific racist ideals that began at Jamestown in the 17th century which continued to be transformed and became more rigid after Reconstruction.

Some African Americans regularly inhabited Jamestown even as it transformed into a white public space. For example, although the APVA embraced Jim Crow laws to ensure Jamestown continue to be interpreted as a shrine for white America, it ironically employed African American custodians who often acted as interpreters (Lindgren 1993). While searching for a custodian in 1902 Galt told Bagby she would prefer a white over a black man, she believed it was more important that the custodian be a Protestant (Lindgren 1993:110). Moreover, these African American men were responsible for giving the APVA approved tours of the island to the scores of visitors who made pilgrimages to the site each year. Sam Robinson was hired by the APVA in 1934 and famously told

“The Mother-in-Law” legend to Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip when they visited the heritage site for the 350th commemorative events in 1957¹¹. Similarly, erosion concerns led to the construction of the seawall by the Army Corps of Engineers which included African Americans from South Carolina. Galt grew concerned about the location of the labor camp at her sacred site, complaining about “the unsightly tents of the colored people so *very near* [the ruins] – the scene cannot be very attractive” (Lindgren 1993:119). Bagby worried that the laborers would disturb visitors and requested that police be on site “to keep order & ensure protection” (Lindgren 1993:119).

In 1930, Jamestown remained racially segregated, but African Americans continued to fight their unequal access. For example, after being refused admittance with some friends, Richmond clergyman WL Ransome wrote the *the Richmond News Leader* to express feelings of “pain to know that Negroes are counted unworthy and unfit to stand on the soil to which their fathers were brought in 1619” (Smith 2002). In response, the APVA began allowing African Americans admission twice a year through the Hampton Institute. Also in 1930, Jamestown was authorized by Congress as a Colonial National Monument. The National Park Service purchased the remaining 1,500 acres and founded Colonial National Historical Park. The National Park Service partnered with the APVA to preserve and manage the island’s historical resources to the public in an educational manner. Presumably, the presence of the federal government also allowed for more access to the site for African American visitors. In anticipation for the 350th commemorative events, archaeologist John Cotter directed a team of African American men and boys in the archaeological investigation and conservation of Jamestown. Much of the landscape familiar to visitors today is the result of their expert excavation,

¹¹ An audio recording of one of Robinson’s 1957 tours has been preserved on YouTube (Archive Williamsburg 2016).

conservation, and restorations. Notably, the detailed personal notes of foreman Emphy Jones would help archaeologists in the 1990s and 2010s reevaluate the diverse history of the island.

In 1957, a commission was founded to build Jamestown Festival Park to celebrate the 350th anniversary of the 1607 landing. This event was by economic means, a success. Once again, tourism increased and a new generation of audience was exposed to the traditionalist viewpoints of Virginia's leading role in the nation first promoted by the APVA. The 1957 commemorative melodramatically played up the role of the English colonists and included a speculative reconstruction of the 1607 fort, wattle-and-daub building, and replica versions of the three English ships that made the first journey to the Chesapeake (Grasso and Wulf 2008).

The Festival Commission allotted a large portion of its resources to publishing educational booklets and microfilming important English documents (Yarsinske 1999). On Jamestown Island, a new Visitor Center was built, interpretive signage was placed throughout the town site and island, and Sydney King was commissioned to paint colonial scenes based on 1930s-50s architectural and archaeological interpretations (Horning 2006). This more scholarly approach to the Jamestown story still focused primarily on Anglo-Protestant influences on the founding of America. However, the Jamestown story broadened beyond "the adventure" to include the lifeways of the village, the roles of European women, and a more accurate portrayal of the role of Virginia Indians in the establishment of the English colony. Nonetheless, the experiences of African Americans, and the origins of slavery and its central role in the development of the colony, received virtually no attention (Yarsinske 1999). This interpretation helped solidify the public's understanding of the American or, as Horning (2007) notes, "proto-American" aspect of the site, and African Americans, in the minds of many white

southerners, were not part of the American story. For instance, the official commission report attributed the “success” of the colony solely to the English colonists:

“The colonists brought with them the law, language, and religion of England. They convened in 1619 the first representative assembly in the New World. One hundred years before the Declaration of Independence, they resisted the British governor when he abused his authority and failed to provide adequate protection for the growing frontier population. At Jamestown, European agriculture and rudimentary industry were implanted in the area of what were to become the 13 original States” (Commission 1958: 2).

There is not a single mention of the contributions and roles of Africans in the colony in any of the official booklets or reports. The memories of two African American women I met with who visited the 1957 celebrations as children illustrate this. They remember the thrill of visiting the Pamunkey Indian village reconstruction, but neither has any memory of the arrival or the role of Africans being acknowledged or represented. To these two women (and others, as discussed below) Jamestown represents a white space. Historians point to the social, cultural, and political upheaval of this period as the reason for the narrow focus of the 1957 events (McLennan 2012). The country was still in the midst of Jim Crow and Black activists and their allies were beginning to win human rights victories in the Federal courts. Namely, the 1954 United States Supreme Court's ruling against segregation in public schools in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education*. In 1956, Virginia in reaction to this ruling adopted the policy of *Massive Resistance*, a policy to block the desegregation of public schools. Certainly, these events influenced the festival's celebratory interpretation of colonial history, but the traditional-minded interpretations APVA followed a half century earlier gave credence to the continuation of

Anglo-Protestant interpretations. This version of the history of the founding of English North America would become highly influential and many textbooks and popular writings relied on this scholarship, promoting race-class hierarchial ideologies and the further erasuer of people of African descent in early America (Lindgren 1993). Thus, Anglo-Protestant elites were able to use “archival power” (Trouillot 2015) to further influence what is and is not a serious object of research, and , thus, who was considered American.

The monumental architecture of Jamestown continues to support the traditionalist ideology first disseminated by APVA. These include statues dedicated to well-known individuals like Pocahontas (dedicated in 1922), Captain John Smith (1909), and a shrine dedicated to Rev. Robert Hunt (1922) who was the first Anglican minister of the colony. Other memorials commemorate famous events like the founding (the Tercentennial Monument and the General Assembly Monument, both unveiled in 1907), mark the location of the early burial grounds (the Wooden Cross, 1957), a horse trough (1907), and the APVA Gate (1909). Only one of these commemorative works, the Pocahontas statue, is dedicated to a non-English individual. Yet, even this statue lacks the cultural sensitivity it deserves as the Algonquian Indian culture is misrepresented in that clothing more representative for a Plains Indian woman. Ultimately, this statue represents the appropriation of Pocahontas by western civilization and silences the complexities of the Powhatan-English relations during her lifetime (Horning 2006).

Additionally, the dedicational text on many of these monuments is extremely ethnocentric and seems to serve early-20th-century white supremacist practices of erasing Black and Native people from the historical record. For example, the Tercentennial Monument dedicated in the memory of the three hundredth anniversary of the founding of Jamestown in 1907 simply focuses on the English inhabitants that

occupied the fort and later colonial town. This is striking because early Jamestown was a diverse place with people living in the colony from numerous European countries, Persia, West Central Africa, and several different Virginia Algonquian-speaking tribes. Further, even primary accounts from 17th-century colonists confirm that the English colony would not have survived without the aid and labor of the Powhatan Indians. Nor would the colony have thrived without the labor of Africans and African Americans. As Horning (2006) has previously stated, the celebratory landscape which transformed Jamestown from a southern to national shrine is still appealing to 21st-century visitors, but this landscape reveals more about the Jamestown of the Jim Crow era than the Jamestown of the 1600s. Jamestown became central to Virginia's Anglo-American elites' efforts to reassert their power in the late 19th-and-early-20th-centuries. By retaking not only political control through Jim Crow laws, but also social control by using the past as a means to assert white supremacy, elite governance, and social hierarchy, Southern elites were also able to define what was and was not "American" by utilizing Jamestown as a national symbol (Horning 2006).

Certainly, the founding of Jamestown as the first permanent English colony is an important history that should continue to be preserved and studied. Still, misconceptions of an isolated colony inhabited only by Anglo-Protestant people must be challenged and addressed. An aim of recent rehistoricization efforts at Jamestown has been to gain a better understanding of interethnic relationships. Over the last three decades archaeologists, historians, and Native American and African Diasporic scholars have worked to contextualize the cultural landscape of Jamestown Island (Horning 1995; Kelso et al. 1995; Horning et al. 1998; McCartney and Walsh 2003; Kelso et al. 2004; Brown and Horning 2004; Horn 2018). During the lead up to the quadricentennial celebrations at Jamestown, two projects led to more nuanced understanding of the

island's multiethnic 17th-century settlement. The Jamestown Archaeological Assessment (JAA), led by Cary Carson, Marley Brown, III, and Audrey Horning, conducted a reassessment of human history and activity on the island as a whole from 1992 to 1996 (Horning 1995, 2007; Brown and Horning 2004). This reanalysis led to better understanding of the long history of Virginia's First People on the island, the colonial town site, the historic landholdings, reassessment of earlier excavations, burial reassessments, and a better understanding of the role of enslaved, indentured, and free African and African Americans (including 1930s-40s CCC workers). Another important contribution of the JAA project, was supporting and utilizing the research skills of graduate and post-graduate African American students in the archival and archaeological research program, including Anna Agbe-Davis whose dissertation (and later book) included a large sample of pipes from Jamestown (Agbe-Davies 2004; Brown and Horning 2004; Agbe-Davies 2015). Although, the JAA project made giant strides in better understanding the interethnic community of early Jamestown, questions still remain about the lives and influences of people of African descent. Accordingly, researchers recommended further research into the roles of enslaved, indentured, and free Africans and African Americans would contribute to the overall understanding of 17th-and-18th-century Virginia (Horning et al. 2001; Brown and Horning 2004).

Similarly, beginning in 1994 Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation (JRF) conducted open air excavations of Preservation Virginia's parcel (formerly APVA) (Kelso 1995; Kelso et al. 2004; Kelso 2006). These excavations continued to focus on the first decade of the colony, leading to the rediscovery of the 1607 fort and better understandings of Powhatan-English relations (Kelso et al. 2004). Additionally, Jamestown Settlement (formerly Jamestown Festival Park) unveiled their "Three Cultures, One Century, America's Story" permanent exhibit in 2007, contextualizing the historical and cultural

milieu of Native Americans, Africans, and Europeans (Grasso and Wulf 2008). The “From Africa to Virginia” section well-researched understandings of Central Africa which included videos, text, and 17th-century objects excavated or recovered from present-day Angola.

Only one of the six interviewees remembers attending the 2007 commemoration. Having grown up only a few miles from Jamestown, she had no memory of being taught about the First Africans in school and believes she first heard of Africans living in colonial Jamestown during one of the 2007 commemorative events. The scholarship completed in the 1990s and early-2000s helped further advance understandings of the presence and roles of people of African descent in the Jamestown colony, but despite calls for reflection by Native American and African American groups, the 2007 commemoration, like previous commemorations, took on more of a celebratory atmosphere (Horning 2006). Although the archaeological research led to better interpretation of the diverse group of actors that lived, labored, and died in the early colony, the four hundredth commemoration of Jamestown once again focused on the master narrative of Jamestown as “America’s Birthplace” (Horning 2006; Grasso and Wulf 2008; Gallivan et al. 2011). For instance, when President George W. Bush visited Jamestown during the 2007 commemoration, instead of framing the event as a time for reflection as some Native American and African American groups encouraged, he saw it as a time to “celebrate”, stating “Yet they are more than just American values and British values, or Western values. They are universal values that come from a power greater than any man or any country. These values took root at Jamestown four centuries ago” (Bush 2007). Addresses like this ignore the history of violence, enslavement, and warfare that took place at Jamestown, and may contribute to feelings of estrangement from this version of history by marginalized groups (Grasso and Wulf 2008; Gallivan et

al. 2011).

Despite the strides that have been made over the last three decades, misunderstandings of Jamestown's historical past still persist in public memory. History exists only in relation to the present, thus individual and collective memory are shaped by the politics and power relations of the present (Trouillot 2015). As Quentin Lewis (2015) notes "Disjuncture's between historical events and the narratives that describe those events reveal underlying power relations and inequality" (p. 279). Therefore, revisions to historical narratives must also take into account various retelling of those events across time and space (Lewis 2015). Failure to challenge these narratives only reaffirms Jamestown as white public space.

Theoretical Framework: Jamestown as White Public Heritage Space

The perpetuation and maintenance of whiteness is a key consideration when examining the history of preservation at Jamestown as a white public heritage space. Whiteness is understood as a constructed identity invented in the 16th and 17th centuries and continues to change over time (Blakey 2001; Orser 2007; Epperson 2004; Trouillot 2015). Thus, non-white identities serve as a boundary allowing for the creation of binaries which promote perceived backwardness of the non-white peoples (Fanon 1963). In this context, Said (1997:5) points out that it is possible to reverse the direction of the Western gaze, to examine “a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West.” Enoch Page (1999:118) argues that “Europeans in America and elsewhere made themselves into a transnational group called whites to distinguish themselves and their supremacist entitlements from those designated nonwhites and seen as deserving few or no racial entitlements.” Whiteness is attached to material privileges that influences social and economic relations. Since the boundaries of whiteness continue to expand and contract, some groups are included and others are not (Lewis 2015). For example, it was not until the mid-20th-century Jewish groups became considered as white (Orser 2007). Conversely, Mexicans at one time in the early 20th-century were considered as white, but today are considered a minority and have faced increased discrimination and dehumanization (Camp 2011). Thus, the mechanisms through which whiteness has been negotiated and enacted vary, allowing whiteness to be continually defended and reasserted (Lewis 2015). The colonial ontologies that white public heritage space contributes to also gives historic precedent to the lack of progress, poverty, and violence in Black and Brown communities and attributes blame to them. Numerous postcolonial scholars have argued that the continuous colonialists blaming of the oppressed results in

low self-esteem, self-alienation, and further discrimination against marginalized peoples (Fanon 1963; Crenshaw 1991; Ren 2006; Collins 2017)

Page and Thomas (1994) define the term white public space, and argue that it consists of “locations, sites, patterns, configurations or devices that routinely discursively, and sometimes coercively privilege Euro-Americans over nonwhites” (p. 111). When this concept are applied to the construction of heritage and production of history, it may thus be reconceptualized as “white public heritage space”. As white public space materializes and reproduces racial hierarchy and privilege to promote white solidarity and white supremacy. At Jamestown, Anglo-Protestant elites created white public heritage space through their interpretation of archaeological sites, objects, historical events, and spaces to reaffirm white supremacist hierarchical views on the past in an effort to naturalize white privilege and structural violence toward non-whites. By using white supremacist symbols and selective cultural memory of the past as early-20th-century APVA members did at Jamestown, white public heritage space establishes a historical context for a social and economic materiality which privileges contemporary whites and separates them from non-whites deemed as biological and social inferiors.

Racial agents who manage white public space construct spatial and symbolic boundaries similar to those that were marked during Jim Crow (Page 1999; Lewis 2015). Thus, historical narratives detailing past societies are usually aimed at a white, middle-class public, resulting in static and essentialized view of non-whites when they are included in these narratives. Ren’s analysis of how colonial ontologies have influenced the view of the Maya applies to Tidewater African American groups, as well as other marginalized communities (Ren 2006). Similarly, bell hooks argues, “[i]n general, the mass media tell us that black people are not loving, that our lives are so fraught with violence and aggression that we have no time to love” (hooks 2001). Historic,

educational, and media representations of non-white groups reinforce the idea of “the other” to Western society by depicting them as mysterious, exotic, ritualistic, homogenous, passive, and/ or violent (Fanon 1963; James 1963; Willis 1963; Crenshaw 1991; Page and Thomas 1994; Ren 2006; Collins 2017). These representations bolster the colonial ontology that European and Euro-American identities are superior since they embody “society with modernity, a culture with logic, real history, good moral values, and so on” (Ren 2006:16). African American visitation and engagement has been noticeably low at Historic Jamestown throughout the history of the site. Could this be because African Americans view Jamestown as white public heritage space? Are there other sites they choose to turn to?

Ultimately, white public heritage space normalizes whiteness and determines who is included and excluded in the narratives of the past, thus influencing access to and control of resources in the present and future. These tropes or *formulas of erasure and banalization* (Trouillot 2015), have been employed to silence the history of resistance of non-white people. Taken together, these formulas ignore the sources that discuss non-white people in a humanizing context (erasure) and then trivialize them and empty them of context (Trouillot 2015:96).

Altogether, these formulas of silences construct an uneven past which add to what Salamishah Tillet describes as “civic estrangement,” the feeling of alienation from the “estrangement from the rights and privileges of the contemporary public sphere” (2009:125). For African Americans, civic estrangement further complicates the always complex process of identify formation and negatively affects transnational diasporic relations. Tillet argues that due to the lack of formal associated with the lives and contributions of enslaved African Americans on national landscapes motivates some African Americans to turn away from American national monuments and heritage

spaces. Instead, they re-appropriate their “forgotten” history by turning to West African sites and symbols. Thus, the national amnesia of American chattel slavery causes these African Americans to dismiss American heritage symbols and sites and embrace a transnational African Diasporic identity which reconstructs “their unique history of American slavery, segregation, and post-Civil Rights racism onto the racial histories of non-US subjects and places” (Tillet 2009:126). This creates an “African American exceptionalism” which both supports the imagined community of the African Diaspora, but also projects a set of uniquely African American nationalist myths onto non-American settings. Thus, the persistent absence of heritage sites in the US commemorating the history of enslaved Africans and African Americans have led African Americans to fixate and transform the histories of West African enslavement in a process of self-discovery and re-memory. Consequently, the economic power of African Americans traveling to slavery context sites in West Africa have resulted in representations of “Africa” as fixed in the pre-colonial slave trade. Back to Africa often discourses conflate “slave fort” and “Africa” creating stronger ties of African Diasporic political identities, but leading to the erasure and marginalization of colonial histories and present-day realities of the African locals the sites are situated in (Osei-Tutu 2002; Tillet 2009). Consequently, the colonial milieu continues to be reinvented and reproduced.

Although racist violence has been a reality of American society over the last four centuries, the tragic events that resulted from a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, in August 2017 emphasized the lack of ethical education about the history and lasting legacies of American chattel slavery, and the need for shared understandings (James Madison’s Montpelier 2018). These events add emphasis to Paul Mullins’s (2008b, 2008a) call for an empirically and politically rigorous African Diasporan archaeology that focuses on activism in the present. Mullins suggests that a diasporic

analysis must take a position in “antiracial discourses” rather than “negotiating between African anti-essentialism and the evidence for African cultural persistence” (Mullins 2008a:104). Historical archaeology should actively dismantle racist stereotypes in order to create a “vindicationist archaeology” which can contribute to present-day discourses on race, class, and gender (Drake 1980; Blakey 2001; Bulger 2013). Black Feminist theory advances this argument, making it a valuable theoretical framework for historical archaeologists interested in interpreting identities and experiences of people of color in the past. Additionally, it provides tools for researchers to engage in contemporary political discourse (Crenshaw 1991; Franklin 1997, 2001; Hill Collins 2000; White 2001; Battle-Baptiste 2011, 2017; Bailey 2015). This theoretical framework is influenced by Black Feminist thought and literature that traces back to the 19th century and draws on various intellectual traditions. Black Feminists illustrate how Black women are marginalized through race and gender in multiple ways. Further, these writers argue the importance of recognizing “intersecting oppressions” and asking new questions about relationships and social constructs that shaped these relationships in the past (Crenshaw 1991; Hill Collins 2000; White 2001).

Black Feminist archaeologists like Franklin and Battle-Baptiste challenge researchers to question their own subjectivities as related to their research and argue for research questions focused on counteracting modern-day injustices. In her 1997 article, Franklin called for archaeologists to be self-reflexive about the reasons they undertake African Diaspora archaeology. She urged that researchers needed to orient themselves toward meaningful collaboration with descendant communities at the critical moments during the formulation of research questions as well as at other stages of research. Put simply, archaeologists must question narratives of the African American past or they may be doomed to repeat it. Further, Black Feminist theory allows

researchers to explore the complexities of subjects' multitude of personhoods. This allows for a deeper understanding of not just race, and gender, but also other modes of social identity, including religious affiliation, occupation, or economic class.

Archaeologists are able to engage diverse communities and individuals about the meaning, value, and interpretation of “hard histories” around enslavement and narratives of resistance and resilience. Some 18th-century-and-19th-century era heritage sites have heeded the call for more inclusive and antiracist representations of the historic past. Several heritage sites are explicitly expressing values of inclusion and antiracism by sharing power and authority with descendant communities including, New York African Burial Ground in New York, Montpelier and Monticello in Virginia, Somerset Place and Stagville in North Carolina, and Whitney Plantation in Louisiana. By incorporating “the stories and experiences of enslaved people through the voices of their descendants” (James Madison’s Montpelier 2018:1), these sites have been able to transform from white public heritage spaces into a more inclusive sites that reflect American history in a spirit of restorative justice and shared understanding. Engaging descendants of enslaved communities is an essential part of this process (La Roche and Blakey 1997). According to the *Engaging Descendant Communities in the Interpretation of Slavery at Museums and Historic Sites* (or the Rubric) released by James Madison’s Montpelier in the fall of 2018, “descendant community” is a group of people whose ancestors were enslaved at a particular heritage site, although this limited definition can be expanded.

Methodology & Positionality

To mark the four hundredth anniversary of the African presence in English North America, a new archaeological project is exploring the emerging narrative of diversity at Jamestown. This project involves advancing scholarship on the ethnic encounters and the construction of race that defined characteristics of early Virginian society. A particular concern was making the space more inclusive to marginalized groups, especially African Americans. I joined the archaeological research team as the inaugural First Africans Research Fellow in May of 2018, to assist with excavations and African American engagement. As we began meeting with community members and holding engagement meetings at Historic Jamestown, COLO and JRF decided to advance engagement efforts beyond the usual NPS model of “stakeholder”, focusing on how archaeology can be used as a vehicle to empower “descendant communities” of color while gaining shared understandings of the role of Africans and African Americans in the colony.

Currently, the descendant community is defined as all African Americans with known ancestral ties to Tidewater Virginia. This symbolic definition of is required in the preliminary stages since it is extremely difficult for most African Americans to trace back their ancestry past the mid-19th-century due to the legacy of slavery. In contrast, oral history traditions are very strong in many African American families and some have been able to trace ancestors back into the 17th century. In order to explore questions around feelings of inclusion and exclusion at Jamestown, production of knowledge and erasures of African American history, and recommendations for respectful remembrance of African and African American culture and history at Jamestown I began meeting with African American community collaborators to delve deeper into these themes. Thus, I conducted a small pilot study with six African American women who live locally in

southeastern Virginia and/ or self-identify as descendants of First Africans, conducted in early 2019.

When working with African American communities, ethical questions addressing power relations associated with structural racism and other colonial legacies of inequality that still disproportionately affect communities of color must be considered (La Roche and Blakey 1997; Franklin 2001; Battle-Baptiste 2011; Grosfoguel et al. 2015; Kehoe et al. 2017; Horning 2017). As examined in the previous sections, Historic Jamestowne has not always been an inclusive space for people of color and the upcoming commemoration is an opportunity to reflect by having conversations about these legacies. This project should be considered in this context, i.e., as an opportunity for critical reflection on Jamestown's legacy as white public heritage space. This project also presented me with unique opportunities and challenges given my role as researcher and my social position as an African American woman who descends from a family of early 18th-century free people of color in Tidewater Virginia. I share a similar cultural background with the women I interviewed. The shared connection helped create a safe and confidential space in which creating knowledge from inside the African American community became possible. At the same time, generational and other differences in our backgrounds allowed for rich exchanges and discussion of ideas from varied perspectives. Additionally, my privileged position as a researcher attached to both a university and a federal government agency allows me a forum to raise the voices of local African Americans who feel like their and their ancestors' narratives have been purposefully left out of historical and anthropological knowledge productions. However, these differences and my role as researcher may also affect the discussed topics and the information that was revealed.

Data collection consisted of autobiographical interviews of six African American

women who live in the Hampton Roads area and/or descend from 17th-century Tidewater captive Africans. The interviews were semi-structured, allowing the women to decide what they wished to highlight and what they did not want to discuss. Therefore, the knowledge production at work is collaborative, shaped by the desires and ideas of the interviewees and interviewer, but also accounting for the social and cultural context (Valkonen and Wallenius-Korkalo 2016). The interviewees were selected through informal conversations with local community members identified through Angela Site community meetings and various African Diasporic related history, culture, and social justice events. Attendees recommended suitable interviewees or an interviewee recommended another. The interviewees are in a unique position of knowledge having grown up around or living near symbols of national heritage that have, in many cases, trivialized (i.e., happy slave narratives at many Southern plantations) or erased the narratives of them and their ancestors. All community collaborators who agreed to be interviewed gave consent to participate in the research and to be audio recorded. They considered the work important and valued the work for revealing hidden histories, experiences, and power structures as well as contributing to healing and decolonizing of Tidewater Virginian communities (Valkonen and Wallenius-Korkalo 2016). One interviewee described the importance of including African American voices in the interpretation of First Africans at Jamestown:

“I think it matters a lot. And I think it’s the African Americans who should be talking about their own history because the other folks on the outside looking in don’t really know what happened. We know what happened. We know how we feel. And some of them looking on don’t really see what they need to see. They might see what they want to see, but they don’t really see what really is to write anything. It needs to be people who are

African American. The other folks who write books, they may have some of it right, but not all the time right."

The interviewees ranged in age from 40 to 87 years. All six women had strong local ties to the Hampton Roads area. Four of the six participants were born and raised in James City County (n=3) or Hampton (n=1), and attended Virginia public schools – three of which attended segregated Bruton Heights School in Williamsburg. Two participants can trace their family history back several generations to ancestors who were born and resided in the Williamsburg or Yorktown area. Two participants grew up in New Jersey and settled in Virginia after completing bachelor's degrees at Hampton University. All six now live within a forty-mile radius of Historic Jamestown. Additionally, five of the six raised families in southeastern Virginia and their children attended public schools in the Hampton Roads area.

All six of the participants are active in their local communities, either through church groups, African American sorority organizations, historical organizations, and/ or activist groups. As the research is based on a small group of individuals within a close-knit community, to protect the interviewees and their anonymity, the women's names are not used, nor will they be described in any particular detail beyond the above demographic data. Finally, three of the six attended the first Angela Site community meeting on July 6, 2018, and two attended the second meeting on April 20, 2019. Data related to the second meeting will not be included in this analysis since the event took place after the pilot study was completed.

As noted previously, the entirety of Jamestown Island was occupied by Africans and/ or African Americans for centuries (1619-1864), but its interpretation since Jim Crow has rendered the landscape as synonymous with Anglo-Protestant heritage. What, then, is the local African American community's relationship to Jamestown? How do community

members think Jamestowne will or will not work to embrace African American culture and history during and beyond the 2019 commemoration? Are the First Africans viewed as an important part of (African) American history? How has the First Africans story been taught and how can it be improved upon? Questions like these offer a reflexive way for participants, Historic Jamestowne, and scholars of Tidewater history to consider different social issues and how power structures impact communities of color.

Focusing on these themes allowed interviewees to actively reflect on their ancestors and begin the process of taking control of the narrative of Africans and African Americans in the local past (Battle-Baptiste 2017). Furthermore, these interviews offer an opportunity for community collaborators to inform researchers about the specific questions they have about the local past and particular research topics they would like to be explored. Many of these questions centered around the cultural history and political economy of the First Africans, both locally in Virginia and abroad in West and Central Africa. Similarly, questions about the treatment of early captive Africans, the construction of race, and connections to 21st-century African American communities were also raised.

In the analysis of the qualitative data, I ask what kinds of meaning the women give to the First Africans, how the erasure of First Africans and African American narratives affect their connection to Historic Jamestowne, desires about how this history will be told to future generations, and whether or not sharing knowledge production at Historic Jamestowne may contribute to the social empowerment of local African American communities. This analysis identified two themes for further investigation: long term effects of white public heritage space and the transformative power of the First Africans story.

Results

Long-term effects of white public heritage space

The autobiographical narratives of the women range from the older women's childhood memories of the Jim Crow era to accounts describing the present day. Producing this material can be seen as part of the decolonizing process, the women's stories form a counter-narrative to the hegemonic white public space narratives and exemplify the value and incorporation of oral history in these contexts (Valkonen and Wallenius-Korkalo 2016). Additionally, these narratives can be regarded as retrospectives on the effects of civic estrangement and assessments on how white public heritage space (especially in the education system) has impacted them.

Why don't local African Americans visit or engage with Historic Jamestowne at the same frequency as their Euro American counterparts? The simple answer: many local Africans see Jamestown as a middle and upper middle class "white people's" heritage site. All but one of the women I spoke to described Jamestown in this way. Most recalled past visits when they felt like they were treated like they did not belong there. Many do not remember any conversations or interpretations of "Black people being there" when they visited prior to the Angela Site or before the 2007 commemoration for one of the interviewees. Many did not express a negative feeling toward the site, but a discernment of insignificance for Jamestown and its connection to them, their families, and communities. Many have no memory of seeing or hearing about first Africans or later people of African descent living, working, and dying on the island prior to 2018, thus cementing feelings of civic estrangement. One woman who grew up five miles away from Jamestown, responded when asked whether she and her family visited Jamestown while she was growing up:

"We knew Jamestown was down [the road] there, but we didn't go there.

It was not something that was thrown out there as ‘you need to go there’ or ‘you need to find out about it.’ We just knew it was there and that was it.”

The only woman who did not view Jamestown in this way had not visited Jamestown until 2018 and specifically came for Angela site-related activities. The opinions of the other five women were shaped by past experiences at Historic Jamestown, school textbooks, popular writings and media representations. In particular, these opinions were formed early for the four women who grew up in the area through school field trips or family visits during or immediately after the Jim Crow era. One woman remembered visiting Jamestown in the early 1960s during a fourth-grade field trip, recollecting:

“Why would we want to go to Jamestown? It’s not about us, so people just didn’t try to go to Jamestown, except for if you were taken there for your school trip because fourth grade was the year that everyone got to go to Jamestown... We never heard anything about that [First Africans or subsequent African Americans at Jamestown]. We didn’t hear anything about that. Like I said the history book on that was closed up. There was nothing mentioned about any Blacks living at Jamestown or even the ones who came here – the indentured servants [First Africans]. Nothing was talked about until people started this celebration [2019 commemoration]. Now more and more stuff is being dug up and it’s being talked about. I mean even though there are Blacks in Williamsburg and Colonial Williamsburg and different things, but as far as Jamestown nobody had a clue whether there were any Blacks out there or even about the indentured servants [First Africans] that came and worked on

the land. It was just one of those things, like I said, one of those closed book things. Nobody knew anything. Nobody talked about it. It wasn't talked about. It wasn't brought up."

Another woman spoke of the long cultural memory of local African American communities and asked why many of these communities may not engage at sites like Historic Jamestown:

"I don't have a sense that its [Jamestown] is prevalent on the minds of Black people in this area. Which may say something. People don't talk about going there, taking their families there... I don't have a real sense that this is something – certainly not within the people who were born and raised here – the older Blacks, that going to these historic places is not necessarily something that's important to them. [PI Reid: Why do you think that is?] I haven't gotten into these deep conversations with people, but I think its because – why keep going to these places and you don't see yourself or you went and had a bad experience. [Perhaps] somebody said something inappropriate or awkward when you were on a tour, so why keep setting yourself up for that? You either have the option of not going to these places or you have the option because more places now are interpreting African American history in a way that makes you feel good about that history and good about hearing that story [in the manner of "white washing" the history]... Now I feel no need or no interest in going to living museums that don't represent Black people accurately... I think people have a long memory, that cultural memory is very long and so they may have a better chance of attracting new people to the area who don't have [the cultural memory]."

Additionally, she also reflected on her own foundational opinions of Jamestown which are in part linked to a distinct memory of driving to Jamestown on the Colonial Parkway with her family in the early 1970s and coming across a disturbing sight:

“My father used to like to do Sunday afternoon rides. We would drive sometimes Colonial Parkway or [other scenic routes], and I remember one Sunday – I think we were on the Parkway, but I can’t swear that, but I remember driving and seeing this wooded area and seeing this state trooper with a shotgun. So, you saw him and [I think] one other before you got to this clearing. And when you got to the clearing it was a Klan rally and they were all in their robes. What I remember is that they were just kind of standing around and I remember this vision of them, and I remember my mom saying ‘[Father’s name], we gotta get out of here’ and he didn’t question that... I remember that very clearly... [PI Reid: And it was somewhere off of the Parkway?] I think it was somewhere off of the Parkway, but I know it was somewhere in this area for sure... I don’t know [how the event influenced her feelings toward the Historic Triangle], but I knew it was scary.”

Although she could not recall exactly where this memory took place in the Williamsburg/ Jamestown area, it was a vivid memory that she attached to feelings toward visiting the area as a child. These experiences with racist and exclusionary symbols both at the heritage site and nearby have likely been shared across local African American communities and become part of the cultural memory of Jamestown and the Historic Triangle for some. Undoubtedly, some families have memories of a time during the early Jim Crow era when the “no Negro picnicking” signs were commonplace at Jamestown. The three women who grew up in James City County had fond memories

of growing up in fairly integrated communities, even though they all went to racially segregated schools. Nevertheless, these women did not consider Historic Jamestown as an African American heritage site, and pointed to sites like the African American beach at Treasure Island as more important to them and the African American communities in which they grew up. Perhaps, unaware to them, their parents remembered when Jamestown would not allow African Americans to visit and feared being treated without dignity if they brought their families there? Additionally, a later transplant to the area expressed similar feelings toward Jamestown, as expressed when reminiscing on a visit to Jamestown in the early 2000s:

“[Laughing] Are black people welcomed there? [continues to laugh] You know, it’s like are we allowed to be there after dark? How welcoming is this place?...It’s always been like how welcoming is Jamestown? I feel a tone of another group, or we’ll just say a group of people own Jamestown and we haven’t really – and other groups haven’t felt welcomed. So, I don’t know how welcoming Jamestown has been.”

For some the “unwelcoming” feeling is linked to the impression that Jamestown chooses to set itself apart from the rest of the Hampton Roads community. This is possibly related to the overt focus of Jamestown as the “Birthplace of America” (Horning 2006). Some of the women expressed that public events at Historic Jamestowne are not broadcast to local Hampton Roads communities – especially African American groups. As a result, there is a sense that Historic Jamestowne is more of a site for middle class, midwestern white tourists than for local African American families. However, the incorporation of diverse narratives like the story of Angela and First Africans at Historic Jamestowne are creating new spaces for archaeologists and community members to explore together. The Angela narrative in particular is causing some community

members to reconsider their previous impressions of whose heritage is represented at Jamestown.

The transformative power of the First Africans story

The Angela Site is opening up space for Historic Jamestowne and local community members to reflect on the history and influences of Africans and African Americans in Tidewater Virginia. All of the women I interviewed expressed interest in learning more about the First Africans and participating in future engagement opportunities at the site. This increased visibility may be attributed to several factors. Building upon the research and interpretations of the 1990s JAA project, archaeologists and public historians are publicizing the history of 17th-century captive Africans, later enslaved populations, and the 1930s and 1950s CCC archaeologists in a myriad of ways. A bi-weekly “First Africans” walking tour by JRF public historians Mark Summers and Justin Bates focus on African and African American life and culture at Jamestown and the archaeological site itself serves as an outdoor museum. Archaeologists interact with visitors and tell them about the most recent information on Angela and the First Africans narrative. They explain the process of archaeology, and may even let visitors hold an artifact or two. These interactions give visitors a tangible connection to the past, and many express feelings of great empathy and emotion when they realize they are standing where Angela once lived and worked. This connection has been important to many of the women I spoke to who have visited Jamestown since the start of the Angela project. After visiting the site in the summer of 2018, one woman began probing her past attitude toward Historic Jamestowne and what’s been written about early American history, stating:

“That’s when I go back to that history book thought process. Has this been edited? Is this the true story? Or is this just the ‘white wash’ of it?”

How many times have I heard this story before? Is it anything new I'm learning? So, I really am going to be honest and transparent – I come in with this bias. I come in with a very strong bias. I remember a family visited us in Williamsburg and we were like 'What do we want to do?' and they were like 'I am not going to Colonial Williamsburg because I don't want to see anymore slave stuff' So it's just like this bias of what to expect and it wasn't until this Angela Project – I'm like 'Maybe I should open my eyes?' And the [events around] 1619 that's going on [made me think] maybe I should start shedding these biases."

As examined above, these “biases” are informed by how African and African American history has been traditionally taught and interpreted at white public heritage sites. Work at the Angela Site counters the traditional view of colonial history by essentially becoming an outdoor classroom for K-12 and college students. Historic Jamestowne archaeologists and education staff are offering opportunities for classrooms across the country to bring students to the site to learn about the science of archaeology, to engage hands-on with history, and to think critically about what artifacts may tell us about the realities of the colony. Project archaeologists have also visited local Hampton Roads classrooms to talk to students about the Angela Site and the diversity of early America. These classroom interactions show students how the past informs the present, allowing students to see that this history is not static and foreign, but all have an active role in interpreting history and legacies of the past. This is critical since all of the women I talked to stated that they learned virtually nothing about the First Africans in Virginia while in school. Most of the women did not learn about the history of the First Africans until college, graduate school, or at 21st-century commemoration events. When asked how she hopes the First Africans story will be taught to her

grandchildren and future generations, one woman observed:

“I’m not sure if any African American history is taught at all. Well, some of the colleges have a specific curriculum for that, but I’m not sure what the [primary and secondary] schools have. And they should. It should start in first grade and be taught all the way through high school. And not only African American history, but I think the children coming need to know the history of the people from the [Caribbean] Islands, the Mexicans, the Latinos. They’re all human beings and they’re not taught about human beings. They might have some cultural differences that you oughta know how that does not negate them from being good people and people you can relate to.”

Moreover, many see the First Africans story as an important history that helps contest stereotypes of the American past. The events that took place in Charlottesville in May of 2017 and conflict over Jim Crow era confederate monuments were talked about in almost every single interview. By talking about the commemoration of the forced arrival of Africans in 1619 to English North America, questions about the construction of race and structural racism are also of interest. For many, the First Africans story illustrates that “we’ve [people of African descent] been here as long as these other people and these three cultures blended together.” Another community member expressed the importance of Angela and the First Africans story as part of the larger African American narrative of oppression, resistance, and resilience, noting:

“I feel like Angela’s story can definitely spark a conversation and understanding of what a group of people have gone through if it’s told right. That’s what I’m saying, you can’t white wash it too much. We might have to get uncomfortable because I think that’s where we start

connecting as people.”

Another woman expressed concerns:

“I have some concerns about how that status apparently changed from that [indentured] to slavery and how that – if that indeed did happen – what governing bodies were instrumental in bringing that about. They were still human beings, why were they treated differently because of the color of their skin. If that started back then, is that why we still have it now? Is that related? It’s a wonder.”

Shedding light on the role of the 1930s and 1950s segregated African American CCC field and lab technicians is another important part of unsilencing this history and highlighting the diverse and important roles that Africans and African Americans have always had in American society. To learn more about their lives, we have begun an oral history project with Mr. Purcell Bailey of Surry County. Mr. Bailey mainly worked at the Williamsburg CCC Camp, but visited the Jamestown excavations regularly. Mr. Bailey, who will be turning 100 in September 2019, shared memories about his CCC service and the Jamestown excavation crew. His job was in the camp office and mainly involved organizing and scheduling classes and activities for fellow workers. Mr. Bailey remembered bringing lunch a couple of times to the men and boys working at Jamestown, and reminisced that they were “digging and arguing a lot.” We have not been able to locate living members of the mid-20th-century excavation or lab crews, but with Mr. Bailey’s help, we hope to identify the names and hometowns of some and reach out to descendants.

Through the community engagement meetings, we are creating a space for researchers, community collaborators, and park managers to reflect together on the effects of white public heritage space and to explore narratives of our shared past. As I

write this paper in the spring of 2019, it is the intention of COLO staff to create an advisory council group to give feedback and recommendations on the Angela Site and future African and African American projects. By sharing power with descendants, we will be able to give them the power to hold the park accountable to more fully interpret the varied and distinct past of the island. This advisory council will be the first of its kind for a 17th-century heritage site.

We are excited to be at the forefront of this type of interpretation, even as we learn along the way. Direct community engagement centered around the Angela Site began at Historic Jamestowne on July 6, 2018 to solicit feedback and recommendations from African American descendant community on current and future research and interpretation efforts at the Angela Sites. Approximately twenty community members attended the meeting and the overwhelming response was enthusiastic and positive. The audience expressed a clear desire for an “unflinching” representation of African and African American history at Jamestown. One of the women I interviewed who was unable to attend this meeting expressed a similar desire, stating:

“I would like to know exactly where did they come from. Did they really come from Africa or from some of the other islands (Caribbean)? Were they slaves? Were they free? Did they come [to] look for a new life or whatever like the English did? Or were they forced to come? What really happened? Because at 87 I’m not clear what that was... Where in Africa did they come from? Because Africa is a huge place... it’s a really large place. Where did the majority of them come from?”

Three of the six women I interviewed attended the first meeting. I questioned them specifically about their impressions of the meeting. All three expressed excitement that the event is helping transform perceptions of Jamestown as only a middle-class

white heritage space. For example, one woman who attended was “*impressed by the number of Black people who were there*”, something she had not seen during past visits to Jamestown. Another woman stated that what she has learned through discussions at the first community meeting, Angela site visits, and independent research has led her to see Jamestown as a “narrative for everybody.” She believes the first African story can be integrated with the already existing narratives at Jamestown, arguing that it will not lessen other stories, but enhance them. Another woman who had resisted visiting and bringing visitors to Jamestown in the past had a similar feeling:

“[After visiting the Angela] Site I was like ‘Oh, OK’ [and then] I’m willing to invest in the community event. But then the community event was like definitely we can shift. Because once the community event happened. And I saw the investment in it, and it wasn’t a check the box event. It didn’t feel like they were just doing it to say ‘We’ve done it. Ok we can move forward now.’ I really feel like they were listening as well. I felt that even the community members that were invited were engaged and they were trying to invest as well. And the panel were not just somebody from the supermarket [laughs]. It was like somebody who actually knew something! [laughs] So, I felt like they got some true experts and that was the sure tell sign that maybe they’re for real”

Along with Steven Williams (Deputy Superintendent – COLO), David Givens (Director of Archaeology – JRF), and Eola Dance (Regional Cultural Anthropologist – NPS), I attended and presented on the Angela Project at various regional events. We presented at the York-James City-Williamsburg NAACP Branch, Surry County Historical Society, All Together Williamsburg, and the Virginia Black Cultural Preservation Summit in Hampton. The 35-day government shutdown from December 22, 2018 until January

25, 2019 set back planning efforts, but a second meeting was eventually held on April 20, 2019. The most recent meeting focused on human remains of possible African ancestry within COLO's collection, including the previously discovered ditch burials. Approximately twenty-one community members attended this meeting, which included scholarly presentations followed by small group discussions. Although this meeting was not part of my pilot study, we have received a lot of interest and expressions of gratitude that the process is continuing.

Several community members have already expressed interest in hosting future meetings at their churches or cultural societies, and several more have voiced interest in being part of the future advisory council. The advisory group is of particular interest to many of the community collaborators. Nearly all the interviewees were energized by the idea of the group. Many of the women believe that individuals who are involved in education, historic churches, with history backgrounds, and involved in activist or community groups are essential considerations for the advisory council. Interestingly, nearly all the women I interviewed did not believe that the advisory council should be limited to specific age or ethnic groups. For all of the women, it's important that the First Africans story be seen as an American story, thus they are interested in opening up space to interested and motivated allies from other racial and cultural backgrounds. When I posed the question of who should and who should not be included in the descendant community, one of the women said:

"It's almost like I want to say everybody [should be involved] because Angela's story is – you know as much as I want to own it as a colored girl, I can't just own her I have to share her. Her story is just not mine and I feel like whoever wants to tell her story needs to be a stakeholder. Whoever wants to make sure her story doesn't die. I think spiritually it's

come out of the ground for a reason. I think it's very interesting that it's come out of the ground at the time it has. I don't think we need to hoard her, I think we need to share her, so whoever wants to be a part of that I think they are the stakeholders."

Discussion & Conclusion

The archaeology and history of the First Africans represents an important counter to white public heritage space and archival power. In order to continue this research, scholars must continue to involve descendant communities and share the power of knowledge production. An oral autobiographical approach allows Jamestown (and other area sites) to transform from a “top down” approach to allow for history to be told “from within” the communities they affect most (Valkonen and Wallenius-Korkalo 2016). Further, this approach creates collaborative knowledge production, situating the knowledge production and sharing within the community the site is located in (La Roche and Blakey 1997; Atalay 2012; Kehoe et al. 2017; James Madison’s Montpelier 2018). This pilot study illustrates that we as archaeologists are not always effective at sharing the knowledge we are creating with the communities in which our sites and research are based in. Twenty-two years after Maria Franklin argued that “it is a sad irony that archaeology is perhaps the only discipline involved in the study of early black lifeways which has yet to incorporate significant contributions from any segment of black society” (1997:39), this remains an unfortunate reality at many African Diasporic sites. The discipline of archaeology and the heritage sites many of us practice in are not timeless or static, nor are our positions within the cultures and communities that we study. While Jamestown is uniquely regarded as the “Birthplace of American Democracy,” we must recognize that each site that we investigate is part of a larger community with living descendants. Their voices should and must be included and taken seriously.

In the winter of 2018, Montpelier hosted the inaugural *National Summit on Teaching Slavery*, where educators, curators, scholars, activists, museum and historic site practitioners, and descendants gathered to come up with guidelines on the best ideas and practices for teaching slavery in a more engaging and inclusive manner. Recently,

James Madison's Montpelier and National Trust for Historic Preservation African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund published *Engaging Descendant Engaging Communities in the Interpretation of Slavery at Museums and Historic Sites: A Rubric of Best Practices Established by the National Summit on Teaching Slavery*, which sets standards for community—collaborative engagement. The standard stresses the importance of incorporating “the stories and experiences of enslaved people through the voices of their descendants” by evaluating the effectiveness of engagement practices on a scale 0-4 (James Madison's Montpelier 2018:1). The scale rates institutions across three categories and related subcategories, including: multi-disciplinary research, relationship building with descendant communities, and interpretation. The ultimate goal is for institutions to “consider descendants not as a supplemental part of operations or programmatic offerings, but as essential knowledge-keepers, experts, and advocates” (James Madison's Montpelier 2018:8). This rubric will be essential for heritage sites such as Historic Jamestowne that set forth to engage and empower African American descendant communities.

The pilot study that started as an offshoot of the Angela Site community engagement meetings will be continued through the summer of the commemorative year. I hope to incorporate the perspectives of various age sets and a wider swath of the Hampton Roads community. Additionally, I hope that the questions and recommendations detailed in the first year of this explorative study will help inform my future dissertation work at Mulberry Island (1620s-1918) known today as Fort Eustis in Newport News. This project will confront white public heritage space misconceptions by collaborating with descendant community members to archaeologically investigate the “invention of whiteness” at three 17th-century sites that may contain three critical spatially distinct stages during this period: early-17th-century bounded labor and shared quarters, mid-

17th-century segregated class housing (separate laborer and planter housing), and late-17th-century-to-early-18th-century racially segregated housing (Epperson 2001, 2004). Thus, the archaeology of Jamestown, Mulberry Island, and other similar sites may help answer both the community's and scholar's questions.

Finally, by focusing on diverse stories that are so often sidelined to the margins, we are not necessarily advocating for replacing current narratives. Rather, as one of the interviewees in the pilot study pointed out, we are enhancing them. Jamestown's importance as the first English permanent settlement in North America should not be diminished. Instead, misconceptions that were promoted at the heritage site during the early Jim Crow era should continue to be challenged and contested by all who work and volunteer at the site, as well as those who visit it. At Jamestown, archaeologists began confronting and complicating the story of English America's first colony in the 1990s, but as another commemorative event faded from the minds of the public much of the gains were lost once again. It is the hope that an advisory council of descendant community members will help hold Historic Jamestowne accountable for future generations. But only time will tell if the current efforts will help break the symbolic power of white public heritage space.

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