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Ghosts in the Museum: The Haunting of Virginia's Public History

Mariaelena DiBenigno

Williamsburg, Virginia

Master of Arts, University of North Carolina Wilmington, 2011

Bachelor of Arts, The College of William & Mary, 2003

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

American Studies Program

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APPROVAL PAGE

This Dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Mariaelena DiBenigno

Approved by the Committee June 2020

Committee Chair
Susan V. Donaldson, NEH Professor of English and American Studies
College of William & Mary

Michelle A. Lelièvre, Associate Professor of Anthropology and American Studies
College of William & Mary

Charles McGovern, Associate Professor of History and American Studies
College of William & Mary

Eric Gary Anderson, Associate Professor of English
George Mason University

ABSTRACT

Ghosts haunt historic sites in metaphorical and literal ways. Visitors, regional communities, museum staff, historic preservationists, interpreters, anthropologists, archeologists, folklorists, tourism bureaus, and schoolchildren tell the stories. Some scholars attribute these specters to the nation's repressed histories as they disrupt linear narratives of American progress. Ghost stories tend to depict histories missing from archives constructed by universities, historical societies, and other research institutions. Public history's ghost stories also highlight the field's long practice of delineating race through the creation of a specific American history.

This project illustrates how ghost stories operate in museum discourse and how they reach out through a myriad of interpretive efforts: in exhibit panels, on guided tours, via tourist publications and online articles, with first-person actor interpretation, through program development and architectural reconstruction. These "new histories" require museums and public history sites to acknowledge openly who and what haunts their institutional narratives and the larger public discourse. Public history's ghosts gesture towards the layered histories at locations obsessed with mythic white nationalism.

Using Virginia's sites of public history, this dissertation explores how ghostly discourse preserves lesser-known histories only recently shared at museums. Despite their problematic elements, ghost stories document how the public understands historic sites and who is missing from museum interpretations. The sites examined are varied, from physical locations to literary fictions, and transdisicplinary. Ultimately, "Ghosts in the Museum" argues that an acknowledgement of ghosts benefits the project(s) of public history. It re-places narratives of enslavement, genocide, dispossession, and violence on commemorative landscapes initially designed to privilege whiteness.

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Preface

This dissertation finalized amid during the COVID-19 pandemic and the racial unrest following the deaths of several Black men and women. During the riots and protests, museums and monuments were targeted for their preservation of white supremacy. In Virginia, elected officials unveiled plans to remove Confederate statuary from the city Richmond. Protesters targeted certain locations, specifically the headquarters of the Daughters of the Confederacy and the Virginia Museum of History and Culture (formerly known as the Virginia Historical Society). The massive Robert E. Lee Memorial, located at the center of Richmond, transformed into a site of communal rage following the murder of George Floyd, an unarmed Black man, by policemen in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Graffiti tags adorned every inch of the statue, and photographs of Floyd, Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, and others were projected nightly on its pedestal. Journalists, photographers, activists, students, teachers, writers, artists, dancers, musicians, singers, and organizers created their own interpretations of the monument.

Public history played a role in fomenting this national moment, and its institutions tried to provide productive spaces in the aftermath. Across the United States, museums and historic sites issued statements regarding Floyd's death and the ensuing outrage. Institutional tones ranged from militant to milquetoast as some organizations chose to deliberately name those murdered by police while others offered vague condolences. Lesson plans and reading lists were quickly drafted. Videos were produced and artifacts unwrapped. The American Alliance of Museums (AAM) virtually convened their annual conference and re-focused on the theme of "Radical Reimagining." In one AAM speech, Dr. Johnnetta B. Cole asked an important question: "As museum directors, how should we respond to the crises that are haunting our country and our world?"

The answers came fast and furious. The most tepid involved convening panels, advisory boards, and diversity committees — all familiar actions from the primarily white museum world. However, more revolutionary responses involved drastically altering the idea of the museum. Social media highlighted a demonstrable desire to abolish museums that maintained white supremacist versions of history. What would a world look like without the harmful tradition of museums?

It is a truism: ghosts require histories in order to haunt. If we recognize the spectral layers of museum histories, what other abuses might we acknowledge? What new interpretations might manifest if museums relinquish their control of knowledge production? How much institutional change will actually, literally, happen at museums and historic sites?

There is much I would revise and rewrite in this dissertation. However, its central conceit is amplified by the historical moment of its creation: what might we learn if we acknowledge the ghosts in the museum?

(Re)searching the Spectral: Ghost Story as Historical Archive

The way of the ghost is haunting, and haunting is a very particular way of knowing what has happened or is happening.

Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*

Just as the formation of nation necessitated coded language and purposeful restriction to deal with the racial disingenuousness and moral frailty at its heart, so too did the literature, whose founding characteristics extend into the twentieth century, reproduce the necessity for codes and restrictions.

Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*

"Lives Bound Together"

Ghosts haunt historic sites in metaphorical and literal ways. Visitors, regional communities, museum staff, historic preservationists, interpreters, anthropologists, archeologists, folklorists, tourism bureaus, schoolchildren, and storytellers tell the stories. In the United States of America, the ghosts of public history represent "some larger facet of American consciousness."[1] They represent the nation's "shameful chapters" and disrupt linear narratives of American progress.[2] They also depict who is missing from archives

[1] Colin Dickey, *Ghostland: An American History in Haunted Places* (New York: Viking, 2016), 9.

[2] Dickey, *Ghostland,* 9. Here, I am specifically thinking of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Nicholas Rand (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994). For Abraham and Torok, the ghost represents repressed ancestral trauma that purposefully occludes healing and expression. Their work influenced transgenerational trauma studies and "renewed psychoanalytic theory and therapeutic practice," according to literary scholar Colin Davis, "E´tat Pre´sent: Hauntology, Spectres and Phantoms," *French Studies* LIX, no. 3 (2005): 374. Transgenerational trauma scholars study how trauma affects historically marginalized groups, specifically among descendant communities of Holocaust survivors, indigenous peoples, enslaved persons, and refugees. Though public historians could benefit from an examination of this field, my dissertation does not engage with its central tenets. Instead I examine how "the shameful chapters" of U.S. history find physical and discursive expression at historic sites. See Cathy Carruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Joanne Chassot, *Ghosts of the African Diaspora: Re-visioning History, Memory, & Identity* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2018); Grace M. Cho, *Haunting*

constructed by universities, historical societies, and other research institutions. Public history's ghost stories highlight the field's long practice of delineating race through the creation of a specific American history. These spooky stories do much work.

Permit me the following example.

In the early nineteenth century, Josiah Quincy III, a Massachusetts congressman, visited Mount Vernon, the former plantation estate of George Washington. Located in Alexandria, Virginia, the manor house had long been a destination for travelers before its conversion to an important historic house museum in the mid-nineteenth century. Quincy was visiting with Washington's nephew, who had inherited the estate in 1802. Upon his assignment to Washington's former bedchamber, only a decade past the first president's gruesome death by throat abscess, Quincy was warned that Washington had a tendency to visit guests in his ghostly form. Quincy was unafraid of this prospect and hoped "he might be found worthy to behold the glorified spirit of him who was so revered by his countrymen."[3] Quincy's son later recounted how his father did see Washington's ghost, though both Quincys were short on details. This story was told and retold in the Quincy family's oral tradition

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the Korean Diaspora: Shame, Secrecy, and the Forgotten War (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); Ron Eyerman, *Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African-American Identity* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002); and Gabriele Schwab, *Haunting Legacies: Violent Histories and Transgenerational Trauma*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

[3] Josiah Quincy, *Figures of the Past from the Leaves of Old Journals* (Boston: Robert Brothers, 1883), 245.

as an important event to legitimate the family's political aspirations. It also shows the haunting effect of George Washington on later generations.

This tale is drolly recounted in "Great George's Ghost: Josiah Quincy III and His Fright Night," a short article available on Mount Vernon's official museum website.[4] The account ends with Quincy's comment that perhaps Washington haunted Mount Vernon because his tomb was not properly adorned for "the august spirits of the great."[5] Even pre-restoration, Mount Vernon was a space for careful conservation and commemoration of Washington; Quincy's story warns against angering the great spirit of Washington by shrouding "his remains" in "such miserable shreds and patches."[6] By the mid-1850s, the Mount Vernon Ladies Association (MVLA) obtained the decaying property, and the site was restored as a secular shrine to a mythologized white male political figure.[7] After Mount Vernon's remarkable transformation from decayed farmhouse to historic house, ghosts continue to haunt the museum.

Fast-forward to the twenty-first century.

On October 1, 2016, George Washington's Mount Vernon, now a well-known museum visited by millions, opened a long-overdue exhibit: "Lives Bound Together: Slavery at George Washington's Mount Vernon." The exhibit

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[4] Adam D. Shprintzen's "Great George's Ghost: Josiah Quincy III and His Fright Night at Mount Vernon," *George Washington's Mount Vernon,* accessed April 13, 2018, http://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/the-man-the-myth/great-georges-ghost/.
[5] Quincy, *Figures of the Past*, 246.
[6] Quincy, *Figures of the Past*, 246.
[7] Patricia West, *Domesticating History: The Political Origins of America's Historic House Museums*, (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999), 5.

spanned seven galleries in the Donald W. Reynolds Museum and Education Center, a complex built on Mount Vernon's grounds in 2006. “Lives Bound Together” took three years of planning and included input from descendants of those enslaved by the first president of the United States.[8] Its opening was accompanied by a three-day scholarly conference and an exhibit catalogue with an introduction written by esteemed historian Annette Gordon-Reed.[9] According to Associate Curator Jessie MacLeod, “Lives Bound Together” was designed to show how “deeply interconnected” the enslaved were to their enslavers.[10] In this endeavor, MacLeod and her colleagues wanted to “ensure that visitors *felt the presence* [emphasis mine] of enslaved people in the galleries” because no documents or images existed to tell their experience.[11] All that is known of Mount Vernon’s enslaved populations comes from documentation of their worth as property. MacLeod and her colleagues

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[8] Wynne Davis, “Records, Descendants Help Weave Stories of George Washington’s Slaves, NPR, npr.org, October 16, 2016, https://www.npr.org/2016/10/16/496770465/records-descendants-help-weave-stories-of-george-washingtons-slaves; Jessie MacLeod, “Lives Bound Together: Slavery and George Washington’s Mount Vernon”: An Interview with Public History Alumna Jessie MacLeod,” interviewed by Maria Miller, University of Massachusetts Amherst History Department, February 9, 2017, https://umasshistory.wordpress.com/2017/02/09/lives-bound-together-slavery-at-george-washingtons-mount-vernon-an-interview-with-public-history-alumna-jessie-macleod/.

[9] “Region and Nation in American Histories of Race and Slavery Conference,” was held October 6-9, 2016 and co-sponsored by the Omohundro Institute of Early American History & Culture and The Fred W. Smith National Library for the Study of George Washington. For panel information, see http://www.mountvernon.org/library/slavery-conference/; *Lives Bound Together: Slavery at George Washington’s Mount Vernon,* ed. Susan P. Schoelwer (Alexandria: Mount Vernon Ladies Association, 2016). Gordon-Reed’s work includes recovering the enslaved Sally Hemings and her extended family from the well-archived biography of her enslaver, Thomas Jefferson. See Annette Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008) and *Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings: An American Controversy* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997).

[10] MacLeod, “Lived Bound Together,” February 9, 2017.

[11] MacLeod, “Lived Bound Together,” February 9, 2017.

wrestled with a challenge faced by many museums and public history sites: how to suggest physical presence when there is an archival absence from the enslaved perspective.

In order to handle this issue, proposals were made to use mannequins or conjectural drawings to display enslaved presence in the museum, but these ideas were ultimately scrapped in favor of "life-sized silhouettes [to] … evoke a human presence while omitting certain details, suggesting information that remains unknown."[12] (This motif is repeated in the exhibit's official catalogue.) Near each silhouette, a touchscreen monitor displayed available information from Mount Vernon's estate records to accompany each silhouette — grey and translucent rather than the usual opaque black and white. These silhouettes suggest newspaper print, with grainy lines running horizontally across frosted human forms. They are semi-transparent. In almost all cases, the nineteen individuals rendered as silhouettes had biographies only because of the meticulous records noting their property value, labor potential, and their intellectual and reproductive ability. In other words, all the visitor "sees" of the enslaved is filtered through their enslaver's archive of possession.[13]

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[12] MacLeod, "Lived Bound Together," February 9, 2017.
[13] In the exhibit catalogue, Barbara B. Lucas, Regent of the Mount Vernon Ladies Association, states, "it might be said that through his meticulous recordkeeping, Washington wrote the biographies of the enslaved people of Mount Vernon." See Schoelwer, ed., *Lives Bound Together*, ix. The exhibit includes items recovered in archeological excavation, architectural history, and descendant oral histories, but these materials are "supplementary" in label copy to the written documentation. Alexandra A. Rosenberg, "*A Case Study in the*

As a museum with over a million annual visitors and extensive archival and library collections, Mount Vernon's website includes a timeline of its interpretation of slavery. Starting in 1929, there have been varying degrees of memorial, reconstruction, research, and operations dedicated to sharing the enslaved experience at Mount Vernon.[14] "Lives Bound Together" is the most recent point in this chronology. Despite an ambitious, well-researched effort, "Lives Bound Together" fails to adequately materialize its enslaved foci, instead displaying the elite white inhabitants of Mount Vernon as primary. The museum's layout first brings visitors up a small hill to view a grand vista of the Mansion House. Enslaved interpretation is tucked in the plantation's outbuildings and on specialized (and at an additional cost) walking tours.

To visit "Lives Bound Together," Mount Vernon visitors have to back track, presumably after an hour or two walking the property. Upon entering the exhibit, located en route to the gift shop and food court, visitors first encounter George Washington's marble bust, screened by tall glass doors printed with the known names of those he enslaved. Visitors learn of Washington's "evolving" views on enslavement but the exhibit does not engage the violence of enslavement. One exhibit review noted "Mount

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Interdisciplinary: The Role of Anthropology, Archaeology and History in Academia and Museums," (Honors Thesis, The College of William & Mary, 2017), 15-16.

[14] See Mount Vernon "Timeline: Interpretation of Slavery at Mount Vernon," http://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/slavery/timeline-of-interpretation-of-slavery-at-mount-vernon. This record is exceptional, as many museums and public history sites do not document their interpretation with such detail. For more on Mount Vernon as a historic house museum, see Patricia West's *Domesticating History: The Political Origins of America's House Museums* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999).

Vernon's slaves are no longer invisible" *but* the violence of their lived experience is overshadowed by curatorial emphasis on Washington's alleged discomfort with slavery as an institution.[15] On the whole, "Lives Bound Together" supports Mount Vernon's mission: "to educate visitors and people throughout the world about the life and legacies of George Washington, so that his example of character and leadership will continue to inform and inspire future generations." It is quickly apparent that the "glorified spirit" still haunts the place.

Alongside the solid, marble and oil painted Washington, the exhibit silhouettes appear unfinished and hazy. One form, representative of the enslaved Christopher Sheels, hovers over a painting of Washington's deathbed scene. He is livery-clad and visible, but unacknowledged in the intimate setting. As the visitor wanders through the galleries, the gray silhouettes feel peripheral. They pose with objects to signify their enslaved identity at Mount Vernon: holding a pot, serving tea, and mending someone else's dress. One man wears chains. Another brandishes an axe. Their outlines are in corners, in doorways, mimicking their daily movements and outside the grandiose founding father narrative. However, the silhouettes do parallel Washington's narrative and force visitor recognition. They refuse to

[15] M.S.R., "The spectre of slavery haunts George Washington's house," *The Economist,* "Democracy in America" (blog), January 15, 2017, https://www.economist.com/blogs/democracyinamerica/2017/01/first-president-slave-owner

remain completely invisible, in that moment of self-guided interpretation, despite their stillness.

The silhouettes exhibit an interesting paradox: the absence-presence of a ghost. In order to "tell" their experience, the silhouettes need the visitor to participate. They need their biographies activated via the touchscreen monitors. Without this initiation, the silhouettes remain inert beings on an estate inventory. A member of the enslaved descendant community remarked on this silence: "they [the enslaved ancestors] have reached out beyond the grave and said to each of us, we're depending on you. You have to do this for us."[16] This is not to suggest that silence must be rectified by sound — by simply acknowledging historical silences, there is commemoration.

Ghosts in the Museum

"Great George's Ghost" and "Lives Bound Together" illustrate how ghosts operate in museum discourse and how they "reach out" through a myriad of interpretive efforts: in exhibit panels, on guided tours, via tourist publications and online articles, with first-person actor interpretation, through program development, and architectural reconstruction. Literal (George Washington's ghost) and metaphorical ("the glorified spirit" of Mount Vernon) ghosts reveal historical narratives not immediately apparent. Specifically, Mount Vernon's "Lives Bound Together" exemplifies a recent public history

[16] Sara Georgini, "In a Groundbreaking Exhibit, at Mount Vernon, Slaves Speak and History Listens," Smithsonian.com, October 12, 2016, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/groundbreaking-exhibit-mount-vernon-slaves-speak-and-history-listens-180960747/

movement in the United States to bring "new histories to light."[17] These "new histories" require museums and public history sites to acknowledge openly who and what haunts their institutional narratives and the larger public discourse. Public history's ghosts gesture toward the layered histories at locations obsessed with "a mythologized white male political figure."[18]

Using sites of public history, this dissertation explores how ghostly discourse preserves lesser-known histories only recently shared at museums. Despite their problematic elements, ghost stories document how the public understands historic sites. The sites examined are varied, from physical locations to literary fictions, and transdisciplinary. Ultimately, this project argues that an acknowledgement of ghosts in the museum benefits the project(s) of public history. The acknowledgement re-places narratives of enslavement, genocide, dispossession, and violence on commemorative landscapes initially designed to elevate whiteness. It also shows how these issues continue to manifest in contemporary issues.

The research questions are when, how, where, and why ghostly discourse is deployed at museumized spaces. As such, they do not come to a conclusion about the existence of the supernatural. Rather, this project focuses on the ghost stories associated with historic sites. Why are so many historic sites also considered "haunted"? Who is the ghost, and what story do they tell? How do ghost stories archive the absences of public history? Are

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[17] MacLeod, "Lived Bound Together," February 9, 2017.
[18] West, *Domesticating History*, 5.

ghost stories also a type of public history?[19] How do ghostly histories revise academic or institutional histories? Finally, though not exhaustively: do ghosts represent Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen's "presence of the past" at sites of public history?[20]

A Note on Boundaries

This project explores who and/or what haunts Virginia's public history. Like the ghost, the terminology within is slippery and contingent on academic discipline, geographic position, and professional experience.[21] Therefore, I ground my discussion within the following boundaries.

As a profession, public history in the United States has not concerned itself with ghosts though it centered whiteness for decades. Beginning in the nineteenth century, preservationist groups, historical and literary societies, federal historians, and early tourism boosters "invented and mapped an idealized American history and tradition across the landscape."[22] These early public histories carefully elevated the well known — Washington, Jefferson, the Rockies, the Mississippi, the Alamo — without exploring hemispheric issues of enslavement, indigenous genocide, environmental impact, imperial

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[19] Gerald Sider and Gavin Smith, *Between History and Histories: The Making of Silences and Commemorations* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 12.
[20] Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, in *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).
[21] Recent interventions into the field and definitions of public history include M.J. Rymsza-Pawlowska's *History Comes Alive: Public History and Popular Culture in the 1970s* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina press, 2017); and Rebecca Conard, "Still Grappling with the Definition Question," *The Public Historian* 40.1 (February 2018), 115-19.
[22] Denise D. Meringolo's *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks: Towards a New Genealogy of Public History* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012) iiv; Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See American First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2001), 4.

expansion, famine, natural and human-made disaster, sharecropping, penal labor, sexual violence, and disenfranchisement. Scholars have examined what Matthew Frye Jacobson terms "the manufacture of Caucasians" by marking the construction of race in public places: the classroom, voting booth, unemployment office, suburban residence, drinking fountain and lunch counter.[23] Rather than overt white supremacy, there is an insidiousness to the racialization of public history as the history of white people. As Shannon Sullivan points out, "big-booted forms of conscious oppression still exist, [but] in the twenty-first century white domination tends to prefer silent tiptoeing to loud stomping."[24] She argues that white privilege is "an environmentally constituted habit" that "functions as if invisible."[25] It slides around historic sites, infiltrates interpretations, and "objectively" states who or what is American History.

As Denise Meringolo persuasively argues, the discipline of public history fomented in the early twentieth century through "the slow emergence

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[23] Scholars of race argue that whiteness is not a monolith; however public history often depicted a specific performance of whiteness: patriotic, flag-waving, exclusive, masculine, and English-speaking. For more on whiteness studies, see Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race* (New York: Verso, 1994); James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (New York: Dial Press), 1963; W.E.B. DuBois, *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1920); Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women Race Matters The Social Construction of Whiteness* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (New York: Vintage, 1992); Nell Irvin Painter, *The History of White People* (New York: WW Norton, 2010); David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991); and Shannon Sullivan, *Revealing Whiteness: The Unconscious Habits of Racial Privilege* (Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006).
[24] Sullivan, *Revealing Whiteness,* 5.
[25] Sullivan, *Revealing Whiteness,* 2, 4.

of history as a job in the federal government."[26] This job involved identifying historically significant sites and managing visitor flows. Verne Chatelain, the first historian of the National Park Service, tied the new role to masculinity and science: "Some [men] were good in the books, but they couldn't deal with the public; they couldn't deal with the physical conditions on the ground. I had to create a new kind of technician."[27] Most of the first federal public historians siloed themselves from collaborative practice with their history adjacent colleagues — "amateur preservationists, academic scholars, and museum curators" — engaged in activities gendered as feminine.[28] They ignored "emotional resonance and material culture as elements of site selection… [in favor of] assembling objective evidence" over interpretation.[29] These "new technicians" were unconcerned with sharing histories lacking empirical documentation. They focused on the management of, and not engagement with, tourists.[30] This perspective influenced generations of public historians.

Under this rubric, many histories were not told to audiences. If artifacts were on display, they were often linked to white historical personages or elevated for their "physical qualities."[31] Without observable presence on and

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[26] Meringolo studies the hiring of historians by the National Park Service and the Smithsonian Institution as her main case studies. Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks,* xxvi.
[27] Charles B. Hosmer Jr., "Pioneers of Public History: Verne E. Chatelain and the Development of the Branch of History of the National Park Service," *Public Historian* 16, no. 1 (Winter 1994): 32-33.
[28] Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks,* 161.
[29] Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks,* 162.
[30] Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks,* 163.
[31] Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks,* 72.

in documents, many historical narratives disappeared into their respective oral traditions. Though the New Deal funded anthropologists, folklorists, and architects to seek out regional "folkways and histories," these endeavors ceased with the outbreak of World War II.[32] For most of the twentieth century, American history was "understood as a narrative of progress through recognizable stages" like Manifest Destiny and the Great Depression until the advent of social history. However, this academic trend was slow to infiltrate the world of public history. In addition to pushback from public historians, visitors also resisted certain inclusions. They anticipated familiar, comforting narratives at historic sites because they were conditioned to expect them. For federal public historians and their successors in both private and public sectors, history had been wielded as "a tool for the expansion of governmental authority and management of both landscapes and people during the twentieth century." [33] Sites of public history were constructed to privilege white audiences' understanding of the United States as a superior and innocent global entity. By ignoring Thomas Jefferson's rape of Sally Hemings or Andrew Jackson's slaughter of Native Americans, public history absolves the Founding Fathers and sanctifies the abstract American values of liberty, justice, and equality as inalienable white rights.[34]

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[32] Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks,* 118, 164.
[33] Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks,* 166-167.
[34] By American, I specifically mean the United States of America. For more on the historical and literary recovery of Hemings in particular, see Gordon Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello*; and Chassot, *Ghosts of the African Diaspora,* 75-108.

Very slowly, the myopic focus shifted with the professionalization of public history.[35] During an economic crisis akin to the current moment, academic jobs were scarce and institutions sought new career paths for their graduating students.[36] One endeavor involved University of California, Santa Barbara history professors G. Wesley Johnson and Robert Kelley. They used grant money to start the Graduate Program in Historical Studies in the auspicious bicentennial year of 1976.[37] Both Johnson and Kelley worked as historical consultants and felt their training made them good candidates for municipal, state, and federal work. This "new field of history" first focused on corporate or governmental work.[38] Early discussions about the nascent discipline rarely mentioned museums or historic sites. However, this "new" public history emphasized "community centered historical research" and "oral history techniques" alongside "media skills" and computer programming.[39] With faculty input from academic programs in historic preservation and applied history, public historians "answer[ed] questions posed by others"

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[35] Charles C. Cole, Jr. "Public History: What Difference Has It Made?" *The Public Historian* 16, no. 4 (Autumn 1994): 9-35; Ronald J. Grele, "Whose Public? Whose History? What Is the Goal of a Public Historian?" *The Public Historian* 3, no. 1 (Winter 1981): 40-48; G. Wesley Johnson, "The Origins of "The Public Historian" and the National Council on Public History" *The Public Historian* 21, no. 3 (Summer 1999): 167-179; Robert Kelley, "Public History: Its Origins, Nature, and Prospects," *The Public Historian* 1, no. 1 (Autumn 1978): 16-28. With a few exceptions, the early public historians were white men. Johnson lauds the work of historian and professor Arnita A. Jones as the first director of the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History, an organization created to address the job shortage. See Arnita A. Jones, "Public History Then and Now," *The Public Historian* 21, no. 3 (Summer 1999): 21-28.

[36] I am finishing this dissertation during the COVID-19 pandemic and in an already/always difficult academic job market.

[37] Kelley, "Public History," 21.

[38] Johnson, "The Origins of 'The Public Historian'," 176.

[39] Kelley, "Public History," 28.

outside the academy.[40] Public history found its logical home in museums, historic houses, living history sites, battlefields, memorials, monuments, archives, and libraries throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

With places to work, the new public historians wanted to clearly define their growing field. Kelley simply stated that public history was "the employment of historians and the historical method outside of academia."[41] At three national history conferences held between 1991 and 1992, papers tentatively shared the following definitions: "the attempt to make thoughtful, critical history… meaningful and accessible to nontraditional … audiences"; "the work product of historians employed off campus"; and "a house with many mansions."[42] Until recently, public history was understood in relation, perhaps even opposition, to academic history. However, with interventions from the fields of folklore and oral history, the National Council for Public History (NCPH) revisited its own working definition and expanded who was counted among its flock.[43] By embracing the notion that "Everyman His Own Historian," (from historian Carl Becker's 1931 speech to the American Historical Association) the field embraced the idea of shared authority and demarcated itself with no mention of the academy: "public history describes the many and diverse ways in which history is put to work in the world. In this

[40] Kelley, "Public History," 18.
[41] Kelley, "Public History," 16.
[42] Cole, "Public History," 9-11.
[43] Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks,* xxii-xxiii.

sense, it is history that is applied to real-world issues."[44] Many twenty-first century public historians work to rectify the field's role in enabling nationalism, racism, and xenophobia through representation, but there is still work to do and bridges to build.

Helpfully, Denise Meringolo outlines a three-pronged public history practice. It is a collaborative effort, with shared authority and community conversation; it is multidisciplinary, with "permeable … disciplinary boundaries" between history, anthropology, linguistics, sociology, public policy and archeology; and, finally, it involves an ongoing discourse about history as a public service.[45] Traditionally, this discourse includes history museums, living history sites, battlefields, archives, libraries, and historical societies and their staffs: interpreters, curators, guides, administrators, security guards, educators, and researchers. However, Meringolo's definition ignores two important distributors of history to the public: popular culture and familial narratives. From the Broadway show *Hamilton: An American Musical* to the Ancestry.com boom, audiences are encountering history in new and problematic ways.[46] In response, public historians have launched podcasts,

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[44] Carl Becker, "Everyman His Own Historian," *The American Historical Review*, 37, no. 2 (January 1932), 221-236; Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990); "How Do We Define Public History?" *National Council of Public History,* February 21, 2016, http://ncph.org/what-is-public-history/about-the-field/.
[45] Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks,* xxiv-xxv.
[46] Jerome de Groot, "Ancestry.com and the Evolving Nature of Historical Information Companies," *The Public Historian* 42, no. 1 (February 2020): 8-28; Lyra D. Monteiro, "Review Essay: Race-Conscious Casting and the Erasure of the Black Past in Lin-Manuel Miranda's Hamilton," *The Public Historian* 38, no. 1 (February 2016): 89-98. Both *Hamilton* and Ancestry.com have serious issues of racial representation and accessibility.

contributed lengthy Twitter threads, and uploaded YouTube videos.[47] Public history works to rectify its own past while addressing historical inaccuracies from present popular culture. These popular public histories and shared familial narratives can also help a wider audiences learn important histories.

Though it might be useful to expansively define public history, it is equally important to carefully consider *who* is the public. Whose history is highlighted for public consumption, whether in a museum exhibit case or on social media? Often, public history requires that outside audiences travel to a community in order to look, see and touch — to consume — another's "authentic" culture. Scholars have studied how this type of tourism influences modern society in the Global North.[48] Certainly, travel occurs in other parts of the world, but in the United States it often serves as a socioeconomic marker, and tourist destinations, such as living history museums and presidential libraries, can designate whose public history matters. As shown in the widening corpus of public histories, sites had their own imagined communities fed by popular culture's depiction of the past.[49] For years, historic sites treated their visiting public as monolithic and single narrative-driven.[50]

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[47] Specifically, I am thinking of the BackStory podcast, hosted by professors Ed Ayers, Peter Onuf, Brian Balogh, Joanne Freeman, and Nathan Connolly; professor Kevin Kruse's prolific Twitter presence; and the "Ask A Slave" YouTube satirical web series hosted by historical interpreter, Azie Dungey.
[48] Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class,* (New York: Schocken Books, 1967); John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze,* (Washington, D.C.: Sage, 1990).
[49] For some recent — and excellent — analysis, see Seth C. Bruggeman, *Here, George Washington Was Born: Memory, Material Culture, and the Public History of a National Monument* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2008); Ellen Noonan, *The Strange Career of Porgy and Bess: Race, Culture, and America's Most Famous Opera*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2014); Anthony J. Stanonis, *Creating the Big Easy:*

Through the beautiful efforts of historians, anthropologists, archivists, and other community activists, the monolith of public history shows cracks. Digital initiatives, like the South Asian American Digital Archive (SAADA), "documents, preserves, and shares stories of South Asian Americans."[51] Oral history projects, like the Southwest Virginia LGBTQ+ History Project, help create "a permanent regional archive of LGBTQ historical materials."[52] Traveling exhibitions, like Gallaudet University's *History Through Deaf Eyes,* show how individuals with hearing loss "have been both a part of and apart from American history all along."[53] Ideally, public history shares histories ignored or disregarded by public and scholarly audiences. Sometimes, before these histories enter the confines of public history — museums, libraries, archives, and historic sites — popular culture labels them as ghosts.

A Ghostly Genealogy

In its English language iterations, "ghost" refers to the soul or spirit of a thing — its essence or life force.[54] From Greek mythology to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, a ghostly apparition signaled "a meaningful encounter between past

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New Orleans and the Emergence of Modern Tourism, 1918-1945 (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2006); and Lynnell L. Thomas, *Desire & Disaster in New Orleans: Tourism, Race and Historical Memory* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

[50] Here, I mean to loosely invoke Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983); as well as the larger discussion on publics, Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, (New York: Zone, 2002).

[51] "South Asian American Digital Archive," https://www.saada.org/. This is also a great definition of public history.

[52] "Southwest Virginia LGBTQ+ History Project," https://lgbthistory.pages.roanoke.edu/our-history/.

[53] Elysa Engelman, "History Through Deaf Eyes," *The Public Historian* 27, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 102.

[54] Oxford English Dictionary, "ghost, n." *OED Online*. March 2018. Oxford University Press, (accessed April 20, 2018).

and present."[55] Ghosts move between the living and the dead for an important reason. Someone needed to know something. In more recent usage, the ghost "describe[s] the manifestation of the souls of the dead before the living" — a sign, symptom, expression, or appearance.[56] Ghosts are often linked to specific place and speak new or unknown narratives. They can be rooted in a historical moment and anachronistic to the present day.[57] In this way, ghosts relate in useful ways to public history, where a visitor's encounter with an actor interpreter, exhibit label, or theatrical performance summons the past into the present.[58]

Though many have written about ghosts within cultural, literary, paranormal, and religious contexts, "at the end of the twentieth-century, a specific metamorphosis occurred of ghosts and haunting from possible actual entities, plot devices, and clichés of common parlance ("he is a ghost

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[55] P.G. Maxwell-Stuart, *Ghosts: A History of Phantoms, Ghouls and Other Spirits* (Gloucestershire, United Kingdom: Tempus Publishing, 2006), 14.
[56] Owen Davies, *The Haunted: A Social History of Ghosts* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 2.
[57] Here, I am thinking specifically of the nineteenth-century rise in spiritualism and spirit photograph. See Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989); Clément Chéroux, *The Perfect Medium: Photography and the Occult*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005); Mitch Horowitz, *Occult America: White House Séances, Ouija Circles, Masons, and the Secret Mystic History of Our Nation* (New York: Bantam, 2009); and John J. Kucich, *Ghostly Communion: Cross-Cultural Spiritualism in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth University Press, 2004).
[58] These definitions do not specifically address ghostliness found in many religious and cultural belief systems around the world. For an encyclopedic treatment, see James E. Myers and Pamela Moro, *Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion: An Anthropological Study of the Supernatural* (New York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2006). See also Mu-Chou Poo, *Rethinking Ghosts in World Religions: Behind the Ghastly Smoke* (Boston: Brill, 2009); Gregory E. Smoak, G*host Dances and Identity: Prophetic Religion and American Indian Ethnogenesis in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); and Spring 2020 *U.S. Catholic Historian* focused on "Experiences of the Supernatural" in global Catholic practices.

himself," "we are haunted by the past") into influential conceptual metaphors permeating global (popular) culture and academia alike."[59] In *Specters of Marx,* Jacques Derrida ruminated on the viability and visibility of Marxism post-Soviet Union within postmodern contexts: "What is the effectivity or the presence of a specter, that is, of what seems to remain as ineffective, virtual, insubstantial as a simulacrum?"[60] For Derrida and other scholars, ghosts were not passive; they are deceptively "insubstantial" and incredibly effective and affective. They seek agency, whether via social justice, direct action, or through historical narrative. For Derrida, it was not necessary to make ghosts intelligible to audiences or exorcise them. Instead, Derrida asks audiences to accept and acknowledge "what is strange, unheard, other about the ghost."[61]

As a conceptual metaphor, Avery Gordon's "ghostly matters," or the fragmented histories occluded by officially archived knowledge, detail the enslaved, the gendered, the indigenous, the exploited, the violated, and the disenfranchised.[62] Gordon argues, "to write stories concerning exclusions and inclusions is to write ghost stories."[63] This is also the process of museum interpretation — selecting (and not selecting) stories to share at public history

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[59] María del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren, "Introduction: Conceptualizing Spectralities," in *The Spectralities Reader: Ghosts and Haunting in Contemporary Cultural Theory*, eds. María del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 1.
[60] Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International* (London: Palgrave, 2006), 10.
[61] Colin Davis, "Etat Present," *The Spectralities Reader.*
[62] del Pilar Blanco and Peeren borrow "conceptual metaphor," or the invocation of "not just another thing, word or idea and its associations but a discourse, a system of producing knowledge," "Introduction," 1, from Mieke Bal, "Guest Column: Exhibition Practices," *PMLA* 125, no. 1 (January 2010): 9-23; Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1997).
[63] Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 17.

sites and design the best mode to express said story. Most importantly for public historians, Gordon treats ghosts as a form of “complex personhood” by "conferring the respect on [them] that comes from presuming that life and people’s lives are simultaneously straightforward and full of enormously subtle meaning.” For Gordon, viewing “ghostly matters” as complex and complicated is a reminder “that the stories people tell about themselves … are entangled and weave between what is immediately available as a story and what their imaginations are reaching toward.”[64] Even those who haunt “our dominant institutions” are themselves haunted by “things they sometimes have names for and sometimes do not.”[65] Haunting has layers.

In the United States of America, place also mattered during the twentieth-century “spectral turn.”[66] In *Possessions: The History and Uses of Haunting in the Hudson Valley,* Judith Richardson studied ghost stories from specific and clearly demarcated locations to show how ghosts “are shifty creatures, drawn to uncertainty and capable of reflecting back to a diverse, restless society the spectrum of its desires and anxieties.”[67] For both Gordon and Richardson, spectralized subjectivities “have an unsettling capacity to switch sides, blur lines and change meanings.”[68] They are not clear cut, black and white. They are gray silhouettes. They are quietly standing by one’s bed.

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[64] Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 4-5.
[65] Gordon, *Ghostly Matters,* 5.
[66] Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, *Spectral America: Phantoms and the National Imagination* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004).
[67] Judith Richardson, *Possessions: The History and Uses of Haunting in the Hudson Valley* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 209.
[68] Richardson, *Possessions*, 8.

They signify greatness and they embody abjection. They must be understood in historical, regional and cultural context in order to properly grasp why they materialize during specific historic and social ruptures. Ghosts — and the stories told about them — are a form of historical production. They (dis)embody change over time.

Ghosts are also evidence of who (or what) powerful official archives ignored and/or overwrote for centuries. In *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History,* Michel-Rolph Trouillot wrote, “The ultimate mark of power may be its invisibility; the ultimate challenge, the exposition of its roots.”[69] Official archives that do not include or highlight certain histories evince this mark of power. In this way, archives are also haunted spaces. Michel Foucault’s “archeology,” or a specific way to recover hidden discourses within official and material documentation, helps to further consider how an archive is not as neat and ordered as it tries to appear. Foucault asked historians to methodologically embrace “the phenomena of rupture, of discontinuity.”[70] Again, this is precisely the work of ghosts — they draw attention to the fissures in a society, instead of connections, and transcend periodization. “Ghostly matters” question how an archive determines both “the system of its enunciability [or subject position]” and “the

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[69] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press,1995), xix.
[70] Michel Foucault, *Archeology of Knowledge* (New York: Tavistock Publications, 1972). 4.

system of its functioning."[71] This is how power operates in an officially constructed archive; it is able to determine its own creation and implementation.

Though this project seeks to expand beyond genre and discipline, the gothic literary tradition offers useful language to examine ghosts. Though gothic theory's roots run deep in the decayed castles and incestuous desires of British literature, Teresa Goddu's *Gothic America: Narrative, History and Nation* argues that American Gothic discourse challenges American myths of purity and "new-world innocence."[72] In *Love and Death in the American Novel,* Leslie Fiedler argues that the gothic tradition initially appeared antithetical to the American project: "the generation of Jefferson was pledged to be done with ghosts and shadow, committed to live a life of yea-saying in a sunlit, neoclassical world."[73] However, as Fiedler famously asserted, American literary tradition *is* a gothic space filled with ghosts. "Through these gothic images are projected certain obsessive concerns," wrote Fiedler, "the ambiguity of our relationship with Indian and Negro, the ambiguity of [American] encounter with nature, the guilt of the revolutionist who feels himself a parricide."[74] This dissertation argues that Fiedler's statement helps

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[71] Foucault, *Archeology of Knowledge,* 129.
[72] Teresa Goddu, *Gothic America: Narrative, History and Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 10.
[73] Leslie Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel* (Reprint: Dalkey Archive Press, 1997), 144.
[74] Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel,* 27.

to reveal the fiction of some public histories.[75] American Gothic public history "tells of the historical stories that make national identity possible yet must be repressed …to sustain it."[76] In museumized spaces, this repression occurs to make one universal history "palatable" and escapist; some visitors often chafe at too much discomfort and not enough American exceptionalism.[77] If public history wants to include "historical concerns," it often flattens the uncomfortable parts in silhouette.[78]

Throughout the following chapters, I use "ghostlore" to discuss supernatural narratives shared in oral and written form. This term refers to the folklore of ghost stories, and I appreciate its emphasis on both the specter and the tradition produced by such apparitions. It also implies the regional intimacy of ghost stories, especially those shared within communities that commemorate specific histories.[79]

Many communities mentioned here have important relationships to the supernatural world. Though I examine ghost stories told about historic sites, this project does not attempt to cover the religious and sacred intricacies of indigenous or African traditions. Instead, it studies how popular cultural forms, like ghostlore and travel narratives, constructed locations as haunted *and* historic in advance of more inclusive public histories. As a white woman

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[75] Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel,* 142, 143.
[76] Goddu, *Gothic America,* 10.
[77] Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel,* 28; Goddu, *Gothic America,* 2.
[78] Goddu, *Gothic America,* 2.
[79] Louis C. Jones, "The Ghosts of New York: An Analytical Study," *The Journal of American Folklore* 57, no. 226 (October - December 1944): 237-254.

discussing ghostlore written by other white people about marginalized public histories, I do not want to replicate problematic power dynamics. Public history has long done the work of enshrining a hyper-nationalistic form of whiteness, and there are very real political issues in dismissing still-active/present/living communities as ghosts. I argue that by critically examining the ghostlore of historic sites, the white privilege of public history gives way to more productive conversations about collaboration, representation, research, advocacy, and accuracy.[80]

In order to avoid slippage into the problematic metaphor of ghostliness, I use the term "ghost" in three distinct ways: as a conceptual metaphor, as a heuristic research tool, and as an actual supernatural creature with agency in the world.[81] These categories are adapted from María del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren's three-part definition of the specter as actuality, metaphor, and concept.[82] Each deployment is indicated to distinguish my specific usage but there is overlap in the following case studies. Each ghost story reveals how the white privilege of twentieth-century public history depicted marginalized subjectivities as ahistorical, inactive, and unimportant. It is not

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[80] The Center for the Future of Museum Studies, an initiative of the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), pointed out how "museum audiences are radically less diverse than the American publics, and museums serve an ever-shrinking fragment of society." In order to remain relevant, museums and historic sites needed to understand the "communities [they] want to serve." Betty Farrell and Maria Medvedeva, "Demographic Transformation and the Future of Museums," (Washington, DC: AAM Press, 2010), 5, 30, https://www.aam-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Demographic-Change-and-the-Future-of-Museums.pdf.
[81] I borrow this conversation about the use of tropes and other figurative language from Donna Haraway, "A Game of Cat's Cradle: Science Studies, Feminist Theory, Cultural Studies," *Configurations* 2, no. 1 (Winter 1994): 59-71.
[82] del Pilar Blanco and Peeren, "Introduction," 2.

that these histories ceased to exist — but they were deliberately ghosted by the production of a specific public history. I argue that ghostlore can be viable sources of knowledge: "the ghost is not simply a dead or a missing person, but a social figure, and investigating it can lead to that dense site where history and subjectivity make social life."[83]

Museums and Interpretation

I use "museumized spaces" to discuss locations of exhibited, ordered display in less formalized spaces than, for example, the National Gallery of Art or the American Museum of Natural History. A museumized space signifies a location with historical meaning for a community that includes one or more marks of a museum: set-off exhibit space, labels, exhibit cases, reconstructed or re-enactive elements, and specific visiting hours. By closely reading these elements of museumized spaces, histories materialize in conversations about what or who receives interpretative attention.

According to Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, twentieth and twenty-first-century Americans are "popular historymakers" with particular interpretations of their heritage.[84] Rosenzweig and Thelen's respondents trusted one source more than teachers (of any education level), nonfiction books, and movies and television programs: the artifact-rich museum.[85] Museums, where public history often happens, are sometimes difficult to

[83] Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 8.
[84] Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 21.
[85] Rosenzweig and Thelen, *The Presence of the Past,* 21.

demarcate. They evolved over time to include cabinets of curiosity, temples for the muses, zoological parks, botanical gardens and planetariums.[86] Museums are identified by their "most significant feature … its collection of objects" and the fact that "museums *use and interpret* objects in all ways, not just for display."[87] These collections are deliberately collected and ordered, unlike object "accumulations" that happen without much arrangement or deliberation.[88] Though a collection's order might not be obvious to an outside observer, there is an effort to use objects that further a museum's mission. The materials are arranged so as to translate certain ideas to the visitor. Often, these ideas interpret one individual, one event, and one historical era.

Since the 1957 publication of Freeman Tilden's foundational manual, the term "interpretation" has been debated and revised.[89] Tilden worked with the National Park Service and his focus was both the natural landscape and its built environment. Tilden's six principles of interpretation stressed relational and comprehensive connections to the [white] visitor's "personality or experience."[90] However, his principles also encouraged provocation and variance — to this, I cling.[91] When I use "interpretation" and its other forms, I

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[86] For more on the history of defining museums, see John E. Simmons, *Museums: A History* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 1-10.
[87] Simmons, *Museums: A History*, 1.
[88] Simmons, *Museums: A History,* 6.
[89] For a recent NCPH conference session on Tilden's legacy, see https://interpretingourheritage.com/.
[90] Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage: Principles and Practices for Visitor Services in Parks, Museums, and Historic Places* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1957) 9.
[91] Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage,* 9.

rely on the Oxford English Dictionary. Interpretation comes from the verb "interpret" — "To expound the meaning of (something abstruse or mysterious); to render (words, writings, an author, etc.) clear or explicit; to elucidate; to explain."[92] In this active definition, there is a projection of power and authority especially when the interpretation occurs within a museumized space. Interpretation is about voice and volume. It connotes a speech-act.

Why Virginia?

The majority of examined public history sites are located in Virginia's Tidewater region. This is a marshy, low-lying coastal plan that extends from the Atlantic Ocean to the city of Richmond. Rivers, streams, and creeks crisscross it, and between cities like Norfolk and Newport News, there are large rural swathes of land. There is a fluid, mercurial quality to the land. Erosion is always an issue — Tidewater Virginia's public history sites are in real danger of sliding into watery graves. Rather than the oft-analyzed, haunted museumized spaces found in Salem, Massachusetts, the Hudson Valley of New York, and the ghost towns of the American West, Tidewater Virginia's museums are tasked to "share America's enduring story" (The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation) and illustrate "the beginning of British North America" (Historic Jamestowne/Jamestown Rediscovery).

As an often-forgotten site of settler-colonial contact in the American imaginary, Virginia's public history positions itself as an originary location for

[92] "Interpret, v.". OED Online. December 2019. Oxford University Press. https://www-oed com.proxy.wm.edu/view/Entry/98205 (accessed January 03, 2020).

conversations about colonization, removal, taxation, and revolution. This positioning primarily occurred in narratives of white masculine revolutionary power that infiltrated museum interpretation. These stories often looked back to an “ancientness” that never existed. For centuries, early public historians museumized Virginia as “old-fashioned as opposed to the modern.”[93] This description found its setting in the marshy estuary of a still-overgrown Virginia wilderness, where “the evil of the [European] past” … haunted the colonial “carriers of Utopia.”[94] If America has “a proper past,” proto-public historians felt it rested in Virginia’s museumized mausoleums and monuments.[95] However, from Indian massacres to the Starving Time to the U.S. Civil War, the colony and later Commonwealth of Virginia was haunted by fertile agricultural promise based on an economy of enslaved labor.

Following the MVLA preservationist push at Mount Vernon, the historic house museum and living history movement gained political traction in Virginia.[96] Beginning in the mid-nineteenth-century, historic sites were fraught with sectional discord, nativist impulses, and mythologizing restoration — despite their institutional insistence on pastoral, reverent [white] American tradition especially following the American Civil War.[97] In particular, the historic house museum became the epicenter for ghosting public histories of

[93] David Punter, *The Literature of Terror,* (London: Routledge, 1996), 6.
[94] Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel,* 143.
[95] Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel*, 144.
[96] West, *Domesticating History*, 3.
[97] West, *Domesticating History,* 161.

colonial enslavement still visible in extant slave dwellings.[98] However, over the last two decades, there has been inclusion of different narratives in the museumized spaces. For example, at Monticello, the home of Thomas Jefferson, online exhibitions highlight “Jefferson’s Attitudes Towards Slavery” and interrogate “what life was like for enslaved people in the early republic.”[99] James Madison’s home, Montpelier, opened a large-scale exhibition titled “The Mere Distinction of Colour.” Housed in the basement of Montpelier, this exhibit is accompanied by an online meditation: “6 ways understanding slavery will change how you understanding American Freedom.”[100] Once a haunted site of American founding mythos, Virginia's museums complicate their narratives by including the American paradox of enslavement.[101]

Intervention

Using the work of spectral theorists and public historians, this dissertation explores how ghostly discourse works in public history as evidence of power relations in Virginia’s museumized spaces. This project considers how ghosted persons (enslaved, immigrant, gendered, racialized, exploited) materialized at museums during the late twentieth and early

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[98] West, *Domesticating History,* 161.
[99] See https://www.monticello.org/slavery-at-monticello for more online exhibits and downloadable cell phone tours of the museum.
[100] See https://www.montpelier.org/learn/6-ways-that-understanding-slavery-will-change-how-you-understand-american-freedom, on Montpelier’s website. Montpelier’s exhibit recently won the 2018 National Council on Public History’s Outstanding Public History Award “presented for work completed within the previous two calendar years that contributes to a broader public reflection and appreciation of the past or that serves as a model of professional public history practice.”
[101] Edmund S. Morgan, "Slavery and Freedom: The American Paradox," *Journal of American History*, 59, no. 1 (June 1972), 5-29.

twenty-first centuries. However, visitors and museum professionals deemed these spaces "historic" based on events from the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. This is a study of *who* gets ghosted, *when* material forces include their narratives, and *why* institutional forces acknowledge their presence. How do public history sites interpret historically ghosted individuals, like the enslaved individuals at Mount Vernon, to help a primarily white audience imagine the historical setting? What methods do historic sites use to suggest presences long removed from the geography or absent from official historical archives? Quite simply, how do people, places, and things disappear from and then reappear on the landscape?[102]

Throughout this project, the ghostly discourses will include public histories (for example, the interpretations shared at museums) and imaginative literature (i.e. novels, poems, ghost tour publications). Avery Gordon argues persuasively that literature provides scholars with "imaginative design, what we need to know but cannot quite get access to with our given rules of method and modes of apprehension," and this project aligns with Gordon's conclusion.[103] The dissertation will also analyze interpretative programs and materials used by particular museums to tell stories. The ghostly discourses also come from ghost tour publications, local folklore

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[102] My work follows the recent dissertation, Alena Pirok, "The Common Uncanny: Ghostlore and the Creation of Virginia History," PhD Diss., (University of South Florida, 2017). Pirok studied how Virginia's early twentieth-century restoration and preservation efforts happened by the encouragement of ghost stories. Her argument stems from tourism's reliance on ghostlore to boost white visitation but does not consider how ghost stories archive non-white narratives overlooked or deliberately ignored by public historians.
[103] Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 25.

collections, and accounts published in newspapers and journals. Primarily, this is a textual analysis using close reading. As Gordon articulates, "the method here involves producing case studies of haunting and adjudicating their consequences."[104] This adjudication seeks to reveal useful interpretative techniques at public history sites and unite a literary tradition of ghosts with an official, brick-and-mortar archive of ghosted public history subjects.

Chapter Outlines

Using the ghostlore of historic sites as its central text, each chapter studies how, when, where and why interpretation emerges at museumized spaces. In Chapter One, "Ghost Interpretation: Indigenous Presence at Colonial Williamsburg," regional storytelling illustrated how local and visiting populations understood historical persons. At Colonial Williamsburg's living history museum, populations contemporaneous to the area's eighteenth-century heyday appeared in programming over a two-decade period. First present in problematic ghostlore primarily produced for and by white audiences, early consumers of public history viewed Native Americans as metaphorical and actual ghosts until the inclusion of indigenous interpretation through intellectual and programmatic partnerships.

Chapter Two, "Palimpsest of Public History: Unearthed Histories at Jamestown," examines the temporally distinct eras that compose Historic Jamestowne. As an important location in the United States' founding

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[104] Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 24.

mythology, Jamestown's public history is a temporal and thematic palimpsest with markings made visible through the archeological, interpretative and scholarly recovery of the last twenty years. Examining two layers from the island's topography shows the eruption of two histories: the recovery of twentieth-century tour guide, Sam Robinson, and material evidence of seventeenth-century survival cannibalism. As researchers re-place these histories on the museum's interpretative landscape, they excavate the seventeenth century and reveal ideological layers present in twentieth-century commemorations.

Chapter Three, "Eve's Curse: Making Space for Enslavement Interpretation," returns to Colonial Williamsburg and the evolving narrative of Eve, an enslaved woman whose history has only recently been interpreted at one historic house in Williamsburg, Virginia. Over the last forty years, urban enslavement found visibility and embodiment through the groundbreaking work of African American actor-interpreters and their administrative allies. By tracing the inclusion of Eve, an enslaved woman with her own powerful ghost story, in Colonial Williamsburg's living history interpretation, the importance of representation materializes in Virginia's public history.

Chapter Four, "Haunted Historians: Archival Absence and Imagined Narratives," examines popular literature set in haunted museumized spaces: historic houses, museum complexes, and research libraries. In many plots, these settings are used to rectify archival absence, and the work of Barbara

Michaels, Tiya Miles, and Attica Locke utilize this motif. Each author uses ghosts to gesture from the past toward injustice in the present in order to understand what is left out of the archive. For Michaels, the imaginative appeals to a gendered audience seeking romance and adventure. For Miles, the speculative elements cohere with her historical foci and methodology. For Locke, ghost stories reveal parallels between past and present injustice. Each uses fiction to display trauma not immediately discernible on the archived and archivable landscape.

To conclude, “A Ghostly Public History” shows how the architectural form of ghost structures demarcates built environments long absented from the topographical and institutional landscape. These ghost marks extend into literary representations of ghostly public histories. Ultimately, a ghostly public history elicits productive sensations of unease, discomfort, and hopefully recognition among primarily white audiences. These sensations combat the indifference frequently exhibited by twentieth-century visitors to historic sites.

Conclusion

Return to Mount Vernon.

“Great George’s Ghost” is seen across the Commonwealth of Virginia. In ghost stories told at Woodlawn, the home of his step-granddaughter, and throughout the colonial town of Alexandria, Washington’s spirit floats across the landscape. In the early days of Mount Vernon’s restoration and conversion into a historic house museum, the MVLA believed Washington's

ghost "'still hovered closely'" and the early preservationists worked to contain his spirit.[105] As a proto-historic house museum, Mount Vernon was a haunted place. “Great George” was still around as a prominent actor in early American history and a powerful commemorative presence for later generations. However, his greatness was achieved due to his reliance on enslavement. While away from his estate, Washington’s wealth, comfort and prestige only existed through the physical labor of enslaved persons. In fact, Josiah Quincy was more likely visited by an enslaved person during his 1802 visit instead of the first president's ghost. Preservationists tended to erase the “historical reality of slavery” — especially that reality as it pertained to the Founding Fathers.[106] Through the “Lives Bound Together” exhibit, enslaved experience is shown but in silhouette.

Folklorist Louis C. Jones wrote that American ghosts "come back to re-enact their own deaths; to complete unfinished business; to re-engage in what were their normal pursuits when they were alive; to protest or punish; or, finally, to warn, console, inform, guard, or reward the living."[107] At public history sites and museumized spaces, thoughtful interpretation completes similar tasks. Using stories from the past, some of Virginia’s museums and historic sites work to protest the ghosting of certain narratives and inform the living about the "unfinished business" of the United States.

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[105] West, *Domesticating History,* 12.
[106] West, *Domesticating History,* 27.
[107] Louis C. Jones, *Things That Go Bump in the Night,* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1959), 19.

Chapter 1: Ghost Interpretation: Indigenous Presence at Colonial Williamsburg

> … [T]hese histories are not finished. They continue into the twenty-first century, underscoring the ongoing agency of Indigenous community members and nations in shaping transits of meaningful objects and practices of fashioning history, and in envisioning alternate Indigenous futures.
>
> Christine DeLucia, "Fugitive Collections in New England Indian Country"

> The wound that was made when white people came and took all that they took has never healed. An unattended wound gets infected. Becomes a new kind of wound like the history of what actually happened became a new kind history. All these stories we haven't been telling all this time, that we haven't been listening to, are just a part of what we need to heal. Not that we're broken.
>
> Tommy Orange, *There, There*

The Brafferton Pupil

Ghost stories abound at the College of William & Mary, a medium-sized institution in Virginia's southeastern corner. As the second oldest college in the United States, William & Mary's "Ancient Campus" provides the perfect setting for ghost stories with its shadowy brick porticos, serpentine oak trees, and creaky wooden floors.[1] These stories narrate the university's traumatic three-hundred year history: wounded soldiers moan from a structure briefly used as a Civil War hospital; an aspiring actor roams the theater where they never got to perform; a French soldier paces the house where he was quartered during the Revolutionary War.[2] One tale involves an

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[1] See Elizabeth Tucker, *Haunted Halls: Ghostlore of American College Campuses* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi), 2007**;** Matthew L. Swayne, *America's Haunted Universities: Ghosts that Roam Hallowed Halls* (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications), 2012; Tom Ogden, *Haunted Colleges and Universities: Creepy Campuses, Scary Scholars, and Deadly Dorms* (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press), 2014 for research on these stories. Tucker's *Haunted Halls* explicitly addresses the Brafferton Indian ghost. She also wrote "Spectral Indians, Desecrated Burial Grounds" *Contemporary Legend* 31 (2005) 10-13.

[2] Jackie Eileen Behrend, *The Hauntings of Williamsburg, Yorktown, and Jamestown* (Winston-Salem, NC: John F. Blair Publisher, 1998), 109-113; Taylor, L.B., *The Ghosts of Williamsburg: Volume II.* (Williamsburg, VA: Progress Printing, 1999), 54-56; L.B. Taylor, *The*

unnamed Native American student whose ghost haunts a central campus site. Built in 1723, the Brafferton is a museumized space on William & Mary's campus.[3] Now used as the university president's office, in the eighteenth century Brafferton schoolmasters educated Native American pupils until the American Revolution.[4] The students were educated in Anglo-European customs in order to serve as cultural ambassadors upon return to their tribes.[5]

According to regional ghostlore, one Brafferton student refused to conform to the school's curfews. Nightly, he would escape from the brick school to freely sprint the campus acreage. One misty morning, he did not return to his bedchamber. Accounts vary, from the conclusion that he "broke his leg and froze to death" to his demise "from a broken heart."[6] The student's spirit allegedly returns to his compulsory home in a spectral re-enactment of his nightly runs, "still seeking the freedom that was denied him so long ago."[7]

Ghosts of Williamsburg … and Nearby Environs, (Williamsburg, VA: Progress Printing, 1983) 27-31; Emily Wengert, "Haunts of Williamsburg," *The Flat Hat,* October 27, 2000, 7.

[3] A "museumized space" is a location with historical meaning for a community that deliberately suggests one or more marks of a museum: set-off exhibit space, interpretative labels, exhibit cases, reconstructed or re-enactive elements, and specific visiting hours.

[4] For more on the Brafferton, see William & Mary's Muscarelle Museum of Art exhibit, "Building the Brafferton: The Founding, Funding, and Legacy of America's Indian School." It ran until January 8, 2017. An edited companion collection was published in 2019. Danielle Moretti-Langholtz and Buck Woodward, eds, *Building the Brafferton: The Founding, Funding, and Legacy of America's Indian School* (Williamsburg, VA: Muscarelle Museum of Art), 2019.

[5] It is so named for the Brafferton Manor Estate, located in Yorkshire, England, whose income financed the Indian School. See Paul Aron, "English Lessons: William & Mary's Indian school's offer of an education never really satisfied either the Colonists or the American Indians," *Trend & Tradition,* Autumn 2017, 72-73.

[6] Stephanie Rose, "Exploring the Haunts of CW: Ghost tours thrill and chill students with tales of horror," *The Flat Hat*, November 9, 1990, 7; L.B. Taylor, *The Ghosts of Williamsburg…and Nearby Environs* (Williamsburg, VA: Progress Printing, 1983), 57-61; Pamela K. Kinney, *Virginia's Haunted Historic Triangle: Williamsburg, Yorktown, Jamestown, & Other Haunted Locations* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, Ltd, 2011), 16-17.

[7] Taylor, *The Ghosts of Williamsburg…and Nearby Environs,* 61.

Often described as a wispy trace on the landscape, peripherally experienced and quickly dismissed as a trick of the eye, a bit of fog perhaps, this ghost represents how some twentieth-century white writers, visitors, and students depicted Native American experience in Tidewater Virginia. The Brafferton pupil's ghost story is not necessarily how Native Americans understood and understand their own connections to William & Mary. As argued elsewhere, "those who see and imagine ghosts are as deserving of interrogation as the ghosts themselves."[8]

At many public history sites in Tidewater Virginia, popular ghostlore recorded how some regional and visiting populations understood historical presences. Recently, these sites incorporated more nuanced narratives through deliberate if uneven planning. This inclusion was overdue, as historic sites long neglected certain pasts and presents in their exhibits, archives, and libraries. The available materials in these locations — the interdepartmental memos, interpretative outlines, program drafts, and label copy — show *how, why* and *with whom* public history sites constructed knowledge for their visitors. Beginning in the early 2000s, museums in Williamsburg integrated indigenous communities who were contemporaneous to the area's eighteenth-century landscape and still active in its twenty-first century interpretative iteration. Early consumers of public history viewed Native Americans as metaphorical and literal ghosts for decades. However,

[8] Emilie Cameron, "Indigenous Spectrality and the Politics of Postcolonial Ghost Stories," *Cultural Geographies* 15 (2008): 390.

beginning in the late twentieth century, indigenous histories achieved representation in some Tidewater Virginia museums.[9]

It is crucial to first consider the present lived experience of Virginia Indians. With late twentieth-century museum inclusion of indigenous history comes a larger, longer history of Native Americans on Virginia's racialized social and political landscape. Beginning in 1982, the Pamunkey Indian tribe sought federal recognition to obtain social services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (or BIA) and potential revenue sources, such as casinos. Other Virginia tribes followed the Pamunkey lead with little movement until the mid-2000s, when the 400th commemoration of the 1607 encounter at Jamestown Island brought more public attention to the tribes if not the desired political recognition. Much of this delay was due to 1924's Racial Integrity Act, which "required that births in the state be registered as either "white" or "colored," with no option available for Native Americans." Historians of this racist legislation described it as the "paper genocide" of Indian tribes." [10] It made the

[9] As a non-native person, I am conscious of my subject position and language use. When I describe a specific tribe and tribal members, I use their tribe name and respective title when known. If discussing wider issues in museums and public history, I use the following terms interchangeably: indigenous, Native American, and American Indian. In 2007, the Virginia Council on Indians issued the "Journalists' Guide to Virginia Indians and American Indians."[9] Many of the guidelines address common stereotypes, such as the use of words like "chants," "costumes," and "villages." When referring to the indigenous groups in what became known as Virginia — the Mattaponi, Pamunkey, Chickahominy, Eastern Chickahominy, Rappahannock, Upper Mattaponi, Nansemond, Monacan Indian Nation, Nottoway, and Patawomeck — I will use Virginia Indian.

[10] Jenna Portnoy, "Senate sends bill recognizing six Virginia Indian tribes to President Trump's desk," *The Washington Post,* January 11, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/virginia-politics/senate-sends-bill-recognizing-six-virginia-indian-tribes-to-president-trumps-desk/2018/01/11/80c56260-f6f3-11e7-b34a-b85626af34ef_story.html?utm_term=.fc75bdfeda70.

detailed documentation required by the BIA extremely difficult as Native Americans simply disappear from the census records. Tribes cannot document the historical indigeneity of their members. As the American Indian Initiative took form at Colonial Williamsburg (CW), a living history museum adjacent to William & Mary's Historic Campus, these developments in the fight for federal recognition reveal the political implications of ghosting communities in historical records. Introducing Native American interpretation at sites like CW might help solidify presence in the historical past and continued presence in the political present for native and non-native audiences. This is not to suggest that the museum's gaze determines whose histories matter. Instead, I want to chronicle how ghostly metaphors and stereotype-laden ghostlore written by non-native persons gave way to more complex histories shared, interpreted, and controlled by indigenous persons in regional public spaces.

Throughout this chapter, I trace early manifestations of the American Indian Initiative (or AII) alongside depictions of indigeneity in popular Virginia ghostlore. As such, it is neither a comprehensive history of American Indians in Williamsburg nor an exploration of indigenous belief systems. It also does not interrogate indigenous presence at other living history museums.[11] However, I do examine Avery Gordon's "ghostly matters" of program

[11] For more on the eighteenth and nineteenth century museum inclusion of Native Americans, see Christine De Lucia, "Fugitive Collections in New England Indian Country: Indigenous Material Culture and Early American History Making at Ezra Stiles's Yale Museum," *William & Mary Quarterly* 75, no. 1 (January 2018): 109-150.

development, budgetary concerns, interpretative placement, and historical representation at Colonial Williamsburg. Gordon argues that “we must learn how to identify hauntings … [and] make contact with what is without a doubt painful, difficult, and unsettling.”[12] Gordon’s ghosts call attention to histories erased by “official” museum interpretation. These absences exist at the edges of archived materials, in faded college newspapers, along the outskirts of historic sites, and in quiet administrative buildings. They are almost always people of marginalized populations. When acknowledged, the ghost can “disrupt dominant and official historical narratives” of linear, placid white progress — even if that disruption moves at a slow pace.[13]

At living history museums, the disruption of familiar and often offensive narratives occurs through an actor interpreter. These museum professionals move through reconstructed spaces, transcending time and space for the museum visitor to perform behaviors from different eras. Stacy F. Roth uses "ghost interpretation" to signal “when the historical character confronts his or her visitors in the present."[14] This interpretation is useful for two reasons. One, it helps to interpret eighteenth-century historic site anachronisms like security systems and electrical outlets.[15] Two, it interprets sites for audiences who better grasp past/present comparisons and contrasts when museum staff

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[12] Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 23.
[13] Colleen Boyd and Coll Thrush, *Phantom Past, Indigenous Presence: Native Ghosts in North American Culture and History* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), ix.
[14] Stacy F. Roth, *Past Into Present: Effective Techniques for First-Person Historical Interpretation* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 17.
[15] Roth, *Past Into Present,* 17, 43.

use contemporary language.[16] However, "ghost interpretation" has deeper implications. What does it mean to incorporate Native American ghost interpretation at a living history museum? Does it maintain ideas of Native Americans as ahistorical or beings from the past? How does such museum inclusion affect nearby native communities?

In their introduction to *Phantom Past, Indigenous Presence: Native Ghosts in North American Culture & History,* Colleen E. Boyd and Coll Thrush "extend the discussion [of ghosts] beyond the realm of the primarily imaginative and immaterial into the world of storied places and embodied practices"[17] (xi). Thrush argues elsewhere how "examining ghost stories can be a sort of place-based methodology, in which hauntings gesture towards salient conflicts and patterns in the history of conflict."[18] Like Gordon, Boyd and Thrush see the utility in pairing an analysis of imaginative literature with physical locations of historical import. In this way, museum interpretation – or lack thereof – is akin to the "actual practices of removal and dispossession."[19] Removal occurs over and over again through decisions about representation in museum programming. If Colonial Williamsburg is a "storied place" then the "embodied practices" of its interpretation merit close attention.

There is a fragmentary record of early American Indian public history at Colonial Williamsburg. In its Corporate Archives, I experienced the "absent-

[16] Roth, *Past Into Present,* 143.
[17] Boyd and Thrush, *Phantom Past, Indigenous Presence*, xi.
[18] Thrush, "Hauntings as Histories," 58.
[19] Boyd and Thrush, *Phantom Past, Indigenous Presence*, xi.

presence of archival research and the haunting affects of re-animating past lives."[20] The space is filled with the remnants of failed programs, exhibits, and publications. It is the residing place for Colonial Williamsburg's institutional memory. At CW's Rockefeller Library, William & Mary Libraries, the Williamsburg Regional Library, in collegial conversations, email exchanges, and surfs through the ever-spectral Internet, one locates the ghostly beginnings of CW's American Indian Initiative (AII). When collecting this research, it is again necessary to note how "indigenous people are more than metaphors in the settler imagination."[21] They are active participants in Williamsburg's museums and the community at large.[22]

Indigenous absence/presence in museumized spaces

Colonial Williamsburg's inclusion of American Indian histories occurred concurrent with recent museum studies scholarship and the building of the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC. Museum studies scholar Laura Peers has argued that changes in Native American representation at historic sites chart the "wider social and political dynamics" of indigenous exclusion and inclusion.[23] Museum professional Raney Bench

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[20] Sarah Mills, "Cultural-Historical Geographies of the Archive: Fragments, Objects and Ghosts," *Geography Compass* 7, no. 10 (2013): 703.
[21] Boyd and Thrush, *Phantom Past, Indigenous*, xi.
[22] The Pamunkey have their tribal museum, the Pamunkey Indian Museum and Cultural Center, on their reservation land in King William, Virginia.
[23] Laura Peers, *Playing Ourselves: Interpreting Native Histories at Historic Reconstructions* (Lanham, MD: Altamira Press, 2004), xxi-xix. Peers also mentions the possibility that Native American interpreters can use their cultural performances to engage in "ethno-protest, a critique of established relationships and received knowledge held by visitors and a way of resisting authority and the status quo."

historicized indigenous exclusion from museums, and the need for collaboration efforts in order to allow "Native peoples to speak for themselves."[24] For Amy Lonetree, historian and enrolled citizen in the Ho-Chunk Nation, museums are Euro-centric spaces deeply entrenched in imperialist attitudes.[25] They house essential elements of native communities still grappling with the effects of colonialism, dispossession and genocide.[26] In order to "decolonize" these spaces, historical traumas must be addressed.

Location is key, for both the records and the histories themselves. Where does the haunting manifest? How is the need for Native American history present in ephemeral memos, programming drafts and financial records? How might the Brafferton ghost articulate the stereotyped imaginings crafted by the white settler society?[27] Renée L. Bergland has argued that in western literary traditions, "European Americans [authors, poets, and critics]… always use the language of ghostliness" to discuss Native Americans.[28] If "one specific discursive technique of Indian removal" is silencing them as ghosts, there is one possibility of reanimation through embodied interpretation at living history museums.[29]

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[24] Raney Bench, *Interpreting Native Americans and Culture at Museums and Historic Sites* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 117.
[25] Amy Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 9.
[26] Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums,* 27.
[27] Thrush, "Hauntings as Histories," 76.
[28] Bergland, *The National Uncanny,* 1.
[29] Bergland, *The National Uncanny*, 3.

In *Silencing the Past: Power and Production of History,* Michel Rolph-Trouillot explicates the import of narrative control over a historical moment.[30] This control determines the historiography of said moment and, arguably more importantly, its commemoration for future audiences. In order to produce historical knowledge, certain pasts are silenced to amplify dominant narratives of whiteness. Trouillot locates "bundles of silences" at four material moments: the making of sources (fact creation), the making of archives (fact assembly), the making of narratives (fact retrieval) and then retrospective significance (making of history).[31] Around indigenous presence in Virginia, there exist a bundle of silences at public history sites and museumized spaces. Identifying discursive silences reveals the priorities of archival creation and how public audiences experience U.S. history.[32]

Haunted William & Mary

At the College of William & Mary, campus traditions frequently utilized racist and stereotyped versions of Native Americans. Examples of students "playing Indian" and "going native" occurred throughout William & Mary's

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[30] Michel Rolph-Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 29.

[31] Trouillot, *Silencing the Past,* 26.

[32] Many scholars have re-examined colonial archives to theorize how the silences might be understood as subjectivities. Ann Stoler describes her process in *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009); Marisa J. Fuentes adapted Stoler's methodology in *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016). Whereas Stoler looks for individuals overlooked and underrepresented by archival sources, Fuentes expands these fleeting mentions by foregrounding the experiences of enslaved women.

history, most prominently in its athletics.[33] Philip J. Deloria argues that the "practice of playing Indian has clustered around two paradigmatic moments – the Revolution, which rested on the creation of a national identity, and modernity, which has used Indian play to encounter the authentic amidst the anxiety of urban industrial and postindustrial life."[34] Shari M. Hunhdorf contends that "going native has served as an essential means of defining and regenerating racial whiteness" that decided which Americans are "native" to the United States.[35] William & Mary students "playing Indian" in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century is arguably an extension of Williamsburg's fixation with the Revolutionary era and its museumification, as discussed in the next section.

William & Mary students used an imagined version of Native American-ness to foment community. Their interpretation of Native American culture was a result of willful ignorance about still-present indigenous peoples. The white student body went "native" by "donning Native costumes and emulating Native practices (real or imagined)."[36] Early twentieth-century William & Mary publications wrote of sports teams "scalping" their opponents and ran columns titled "Smoke Signals," "In the Wigwam," "Under the Tomahawk,"

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[33] Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); Shari M. Huhndorf, *Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).
[34] Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 7.
[35] Hunhdorf, *Going Native,* 5.
[36] Hunhdorf, *Going Native,* 7.

and “Squaw Tidbits.”[37] In 1918, a new commencement ceremony took place “upon a spot that is known to be haunted with the spirits of departed ‘braves’”; students were to wear “tribal raiment” and take part in “smoking the pipe of ‘peace.’”[38] *The Flat Hat,* William & Mary’s student newspaper, described the Brafferton ghost “noisily [revisiting] their *colonial* [emphasis mine] lodgings” as recently as 1979.[39] This type of ghostlore kept Native American activity confined to the eighteenth-century at the height of the American Indian Movement in the twenty-first.[40] In 1992, *The Flat Hat* compared the nameless Brafferton ghost to homesick freshmen: in the “upheaval of going to college, they [the freshmen] can take comfort in knowing that a few of their predecessors had it much rougher.”[41]

These activities and appropriations occurred throughout the late twentieth-century until William & Mary administrators removed the “clownish Indian-face” from college logos and sporting events in 1978.[42] However, both men’s and women’s athletic teams used the moniker “Indian” until 1980, when

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[37] *The Flat Hat,* March 2, 1915. Quick searches of Flat Hat archives reveal many Indian references used to title gossip columns, sports updates, and assorted anonymous items. For more on William & Mary’s Indian mascots, see “History of W&M Mascots and Nicknames,” https://www.wm.edu/about/mascot/history/.
[38] “Senior-Junior Meeting,” *The Flat Hat,* May 22, 1918.
[39] “Happy Halloween,” *William and Mary News,* October 30, 1979.
[40] I searched William & Mary’s Digital Archive for reference to the American Indian Movement (including AIM), Wounded Knee, Pine Ridge Reservation, and Alcatraz but I did not find any article using those keywords. It would seem *The Flat Hat* did not cover AIM.
[41] Elizabeth Lee, “W&M’s school for the original Tribe: Native American Youths experienced culture shock at Brafferton school,” *The Flat Hat,* February 21, 1992.
[42] Rachel Whitmer, “College Eliminates W&M Caricature,” *The Flat Hat,* March 31, 1978, 2.

student publications began to call teams the “Tribe.”[43] William & Mary continues to refer to itself as a “Tribe” including in its fundraising messages.[44]

Haunted Williamsburg

William & Mary’s campus adjoins Colonial Williamsburg, an expansive living history museum interpreting late-eighteenth century Virginia during the American Revolution. In its ninth decade of operation, Colonial Williamsburg is haunted by histories of enslavement, displacement and inequity. Once the eighteenth-century capital of the British colonies, by the late nineteenth-century Williamsburg was abandoned by American memory in favor of cities like Philadelphia and Boston. Emily Tolman, a white visitor in the early 1890s, metaphorically described Williamsburg as “a quaint, peaceful, ghost-haunted place, whose inhabitants had gone to sleep years before, and waked merely in order to show us their interesting antiquities.”[45] Tolman’s trip is still a common pilgrimage for those seeking America’s historic pasts; the “Rip Van Winkle” reference is a “frozen in time” component that still attracts visitors seeking nostalgic narratives of an America that never existed.[46]

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[43] An examination of post-1978*The Flat Hat* student newspapers shows the Sports pages ceasing to use “Indians” in Spring 1980. By January 1981, the teams are referred to as the “Tribe.”

[44] For example, William & Mary’s University Advancement coordinates “One Tribe, One Day” each April to encourage philanthropic donations to campus communities and student organizations: https://advancement.wm.edu/news/2019/otod-2019.php.

[45] Emily Tolman, “The College of William & Mary,” *The Christian Union*, July 2, 1892.

[46] See Anders Greenspan, *Creating Colonial Williamsburg: The Restoration of Virginia’s Eighteenth-Century Capital* (Chapel Hill: Universty of North Carolina Press, 2002); Richard Handler and Eric Gable, *The New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997); George Humphrey Yetter, *Williamsburg Before and After: The Rebirth of Virginia’s Colonial Capital* (Williamsburg, VA: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1988); and Robert P. Maccubbin, editor,

Despite these literary treatments, Williamsburg continued to exist as a small southern town through the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries. In the late 1920s, the Reverend Dr. W.A.R. Goodwin harnessed broader nationalistic impulses to restore the town to its colonial appearance. Goodwin invited John D. Rockefeller (and his vast fortune) to Williamsburg in the hopes that they could restore the former colonial capital to its Revolutionary glory. Both Goodwin and Rockefeller viewed the restoration, begun in 1929, as part of a movement to "institutionalize a respect for the past in American life."[47] This "past" did not include the immigrant influx worrying white Americans in the early twentieth century. It most certainly did not include African Americans and indigenous peoples. For most of the twentieth century, the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation focused on white male Revolutionary narratives. If people of color were visible, they were often frontline coachmen-interpreters who served as "the public face of Colonial Williamsburg" for white visitors until the late 1970s arrival of social history, or the study of how social systems affected groups overlooked by scholars due to their race, ethnicity, and gender.[48]

Williamsburg, Virginia: A City Before the State 1699-1999 (Richmond, VA: Carter Printing Company, 2000).

[47] Greenspan, *Creating Colonial Williamsburg,* 14.

[48] For an analysis of African-American presence in pre-1979 Colonial Williamsburg, see Ywone Edwards-Ingram, "Before 1979: African American Coachmen, Visibility, and Representation at Colonial Williamsburg," *The Public Historian* 36 (February 2014): 11; Greenspan, *Creating Colonial Williamsburg*, 29, 151.

Early Manifestations of Native American Presence

The American Indian Initiative was not the first programming of non-white histories at Colonial Williamsburg.[49] Though race haunted the restoration's labor force, formal African-American interpretation did not begin in the Historic Area until 1979. (African American public history at CW will be examined extensively in Chapter 3.[50]) The population of eighteenth-century colonial Williamsburg was 52 percent black and 48 percent white but for five decades, African Americans and indigenous peoples did not factor in CW's main interpretations.[51] In February 1983, CW's *Question and Answers*, a bimonthly publication of its Department of Interpretative Education used by museum employees, devoted space to discussing "Black Life in Colonial Virginia."[52] The "Other Half Tour" depicted colonial black experience, both enslaved and free; slave quarters were erected at Carter's Grove Plantation; and interpreters held a controversial mock slave auction. Less well-studied are the ways indigenous persons affected the interpretative landscape.

Native Americans have always been present in what is now called Virginia. In the eighteenth century, indigenous groups frequented the colonial

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[49] Throughout this chapter, I will refer to Colonial Williamsburg by its initials: CW.
[50] Hander and Gable, *The New History in the Old Museum;* Greenspan, *Creating Colonial Williamsburg;* Anna Logan Lawson, "'The Other Half': Making African-American History at Colonial Williamsburg" (PhD diss., University of Virginia), 1995; Christy S. Matthews, "Where Do We Go From Here? Researching and Interpreting the African-American Experience," *Historical Archeology* 31, issue 3 (1997): 107-113; Eric Gable, Richard Handler and Anna Logan, "On the Uses of Relativism: Fact, Conjecture, and Black and White Histories at Colonial Williamsburg," *American Ethnologist* 19, no. 4 (Nov. 1992): 791-805.
[51] *Questions and Answers,* February 1985, 6, no. 1
[52] *Questions and Answers,* February 1983, 4, no. 1; February 1988, 9, no. 7; October 1988, 9, no. 7; *Questions and Answers*, February 1989, 10, no. 1; October 1989, 10, no. 7

capital of Williamsburg for trade, education and diplomacy. Local Virginia Indians, descended from the Powhatan chiefdom first encountered by the Virginia Company colonists in 1607, included the Pamunkey, Mattaponi, and Chickahominy tribes. These tribes, long acquainted with European customs, often spoke English, wore European dress, and practiced Christianity; Native Americans also adopted their own hybrid customs and dress, especially when trading. Before the Revolutionary War, the colony of Virginia extended to the Mississippi River, and the capital of Williamsburg received visitors from western tribes like the Cherokee, Shawnee, and Catawba. These arrivals often displayed dress, language, and behaviors outside Euro-American traditions.[53] As such, eighteenth-century Williamsburg was a cacophony of cultural display: the enslaved community, regional colonists, European visitors, local Virginia Indians, and visiting western tribes. However, this diversity was not replicated in the Rockefeller-funded Restoration.

In Tidewater Virginia, white populations displayed problematic interpretations of Native American history for centuries — and not only on the campus of William & Mary. These depictions involved non-native actors and displayed a form of Indian-ness more consistent with the American West and the Great Plains, though still inaccurate. These displays were first contained to Jamestown Island, the 1607 site of colonial contact between the Powhatan

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[53] Bill Sullivan, "5 Things You Didn't Know About Virginia Indians" *Making History* (blog), *Colonial Williamsburg,* October 8, 2015. This blog is an interview with Buck Woodard, former Manager of the American Indian Initiative, https://archive.makinghistorynow.com/2015/10/5-things-you-didnt-know-about-virginia-indians/

Indian Confederation and England and the first permanent European settlement in what became British North America. Pocahontas, a Pamunkey tribal member, was/is the most celebrated Virginia Indian, and she figured prominently at the Jamestown Exposition of 1907, a seven-month affair designed to commemorate the island's three-hundredth anniversary. Native American representation was secondary to "the wonders of Euro-American might."[54] At the Exposition, tourists ferried back in time to the ancient Jamestown from more modern cities like Richmond, Hampton and Norfolk. Attendees "saw [the Indians] as relics of the past."[55] Almost eighty years later, this was still the situation at many regional historic sites.[56]

A Chronology of Indigenous Presence at Colonial Williamsburg

Pre-1980, indigenous interpretation at Colonial Williamsburg was limited or nonexistent. In the United States' bicentennial year of 1976, African Americans, Native Americans, and people of color had little to no presence within the museum.[57] However, in the early 1980s, CW researchers began to include these histories in their interpretative publications.[58] In July 1981, the *Colonial Williamsburg Interpreter*, a publication by CW's Education Division

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[54] Frederic W. Gleach, "Pocahontas at the Fair: Crafting Identities at the 1907 Jamestown Exposition," *Ethnohistory* 50 (2002): 431.
[55] Gleach, "Pocahontas at the Fair," 440.
[56] See Clara Sue Kidwell and Ann Marie Plane's Introduction to *The Public Historian's* Fall 1996 special issue "Representing Native American History."
[57] On November 27, 1976, the *Colonial Williamsburg News*, a weekly newsletter published solely for actor interpreters and tradespeople, published its 50th Anniversary Issue with a chronology of CW's institutional history but there was no mention of African-American or American Indian histories.
[58] Boyd and Thrush, *Phantom Past, Indigenous Presence,* xx.

and used by Historic Area interpreters to answer common visitor questions, explained how the Carter Brothers Apothecary were surgeons who tended to "Indian boys at the College."[59] Museum visitors were asking questions about the Brafferton building and the physical conditions of its students. Moving forward, the May 1983 edition of the *Interpreter* mentions Indians in conjunction with the legal prosecution of African-Americans.[60]

In 1990, CW's Department of Interpretative Education (previously known as the Education Division) published *A Cultural Time Line and Glossary for Williamsburg in the Eighteenth Century: A Special Publication of the Colonial Williamsburg Interpreter.* This timeline specifically mentions the Brafferton School in a short, dictionary-like entry. Again, as a response to visitor inquiry, CW interpreters were briefed on indigenous narratives but this information was not widely shared throughout the Foundation. Interestingly, in November 1990, the United States Congress enacted the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, or NAGPRA. This law outlined the necessary return of cultural patrimony (including human remains, funerary objects, and other sacred resources) to tribes culturally affiliated — and, most importantly, federally recognized — with the materials. As this exchange primarily occurs between a cultural institution, like a museum or living history site, to an indigenous tribe, Colonial Williamsburg might have been

[59] *CW Interpreter,* July 1981, 2, no. 4, 3.
[60] *CW Interpreter,* May 1983, 4, no. 3, 2.

considering the implications of NAGPRA on their own collections.[61] As museums revised their interpretations to include other histories, political implications manifested alongside questions of adequate representation.[62]

By July 1993, it was clear that CW interpreters and frontline staff were frequently vetting questions about enslaved and Indian gardening techniques; in one in-house newsletter to interpreters, these were topics noted as “new avenues of interpretation.”[63] In January 1994, there was ”Cultural Diversity Training” for Colonial Williamsburg employees.[64] In the training’s study packet, assigned readings included the following titles: “British-Colonial Attitudes and Policies Toward the Indian in the American Colonies” and “Warriors in Williamsburg: The Cherokee Presence in Virginia’s Eighteenth Century Capital.” There was also a lengthy article about the Brafferton School. There was no author given for this last document.[65]

Most substantively, in March 1994, CW hosted two Winter Discovery Series dedicated to “the voices of the “silent” finally being heard at Colonial Williamsburg.”[66] The series included two Native-themed programs at the

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[61] See Kathleen S. Fine-Dare, *Grave Injustice: The American Indian Repatriation Movement and NAGPRA*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2002).
[62] Kidwell and Plane, “Representing Native American History: Introduction,” 15.
[63] Janet Guthrie, “The Geddy Garden News,” July 1993.
[64] I am unsure how many employees attended this training, and whether or not it was required.
[65] Thanks to Janet Guthrie for sharing this packet with me. The Brafferton article comprised more than half the packet, and its formatting suggested it came from a dissertation or thesis.
[66] Two native-themed programs, “The Indian Trade” and “Indians’ Use of Horses on the Virginian Frontier” were ultimately left out of the January 1993 Winter Discovery Series. *Colonial Williamsburg Visitor Companion*, February 28 - March 6, 1994, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library. This publication (1988-2004) was published weekly to inform visitors about CW’s daily programming.

Carter's Grove Reception Center Theater, located eight miles beyond Colonial Williamsburg's delineated Historic Area: "On This Land In Time" told the story of "[t]he Native American experience then and now," and "The True Woman of the Century," which depicted "[t]he Native American woman: her culture and family life." Mary Wiseman, a white CW interpreter and former manager of women's programs, identified herself as "the first person to work with Native Americans" for the latter program.[67] Wiseman was integral in the planning for this programming. Her recollections suggest local tribes were initially skeptical about collaborative programming: "they would only participate if they met with us and knew that we had the right intentions."[68] In a later oral history, Wiseman seemed surprised that Indians were still in Williamsburg. She described an "underground community" composed of "the chief and Indian council" who eventually agreed to participate in "'The Day of the Native-American Woman" followed by a pow-wow."[69] Wiseman's reminiscences do not indicate which tribe was approached. However, an internal CW memo about the "Native American Interpretation Programming" lists participants in the "On This Land in Time" program, including Chief Leonard Atkins of the Chickahominy, Chief Emeritus Oliver Perry of the Nansemond, and Ann Richardson, assistant Chief of the United

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[67] Mary K. Wiseman, interview by Lillian Campbell, June 11, 2008, transcript, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library.
[68] Wiseman, interview.
[69] Wiseman, interview. It appears this program is the same as "The True Woman of the Century." Wiseman may have misremembered the exact title or there were many revisions before the final program was issued.

Rappahannock.[70] Following this discussion, Nokomis Lemons of the Rappahannock tribe interpreted a Native woman's experience in "The True Woman of the Century." The day ended with small group dialogue facilitated by the aforementioned panel members. It is unclear, however, how audiences reacted and if participants took any notes. No audio-visual recording exists.

The March 1994 Carter's Grove programs emerged in the same moment as Colonial Williamsburg's Women's History Month programming. The Forum for Women in History, a now-defunct intra-CW collective, spearheaded this inclusion. Later in March 1994, a second Winter Discovery Series focused on "how the elusive "frontier" shaped … American identity."[71] These programs were presented in either the Hennage Auditorium, located deep below CW's art museums, or in the Williamsburg Lodge Auditorium. They are two locations that remain difficult to find, underused by visitors, and outside the well-trodden Historic Area.

The Winter Discovery series attempted to share "cross-cultural influences" by including native experience within the programming — but *who* told these stories, and *what* sources were used to inform the interpretations? In the programmatic plans, the "Native American" experience is monolithic and untethered to a historically present tribe. Though the Chickahominy, Nansemond and Rappahannock tribes were represented, they were confined

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[70] ""Native American Interpretation Programming," Colonial Williamsburg memo, March 5, 1994, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library.
[71]"Winter Discovery Series, March 1-5, 1994," *Colonial Williamsburg Visitor Companion* (brochure), March 14 - 20, 1994, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library.

to one late Saturday afternoon program. The Spring 1994 *Colonial Williamsburg* magazine featured Lemons but it is unclear whether she continued her work at the museum.[72] However, as a result of this programming, the Forum for Women in History suggested a "special group within the (CW) Foundation … [be] formed to research Native Americans." Mary Wiseman acted as a go-between on this suggestion.[73] Because of the Winter Discovery Series, plans were made to repeat the "native [sic] American activities … on November 5, in honor of Native American Month" — a move that reeks of tokenism and two-dimensional representation.[74]

Becoming Americans

After the March 1994 Winter Discovery Series, development of American Indian programming slowed, but there was still indigenous presence at the museum. Colonial Williamsburg's Department of Collections purchased a Woodland Indian artifact and the *CW Interpreter* mentioned "Crossroads of Empire," an exhibit that proposed to "examine Indian, French, and English ambitions, accommodation and warfare within the Ohio Valley between 1740 – 1775."[75] Then, in 1998, CW published its major educational plan.[76] *Becoming Americans: Our Struggle to be Both Free and Equal (A Plan*

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[72] Curtia James, "Five Women of Carter's Grove," *Colonial Williamsburg* (Spring 1994): 53-59, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library.
[73] "Forum for Women in History" memo, May 26, 1994, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library.
[74] "Minutes: Forum for Women in History Meeting" March 31, 1994, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library.
[75] *CW Interpreter,* Fall 1998, Vol. 19, No. 3, pg. 17-23.
[76] This plan that had gone through multiple draft forms, the first in 1994.

of Thematic Interpretation) revised 1985'S *Teaching History at Colonial Williamsburg* and worked to expand racial dialogue beyond the African American and white binary*.* The plan acknowledged how "Native Americans' contributions to American history and identity also deserve reappraisal and appreciation" in the thematic unit, "Taking Possession."[77] This "storyline examines the colonists' quest for land ownership and discusses how their quest affected Native Americans, settlers from other nations, and the development of fundamental American values."[78] The editors of *Becoming Americans* connected this Native-themed unit to the plan's other themes: "Enslaving Virginia," "Redefining Family," "Buying Respectability," "Choosing Revolution," and "Freeing Religion." [79]

These storylines provided interpretative content to be deployed over the span of six years in CW's Historic Area and at its historic house museum Carter's Grove, located several miles away.[80] Each theme explored the cultural interconnectedness of eighteenth-century Williamsburg — a facet the twentieth-century visitor might not notice due to the museum's oversimplified

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[77] Cary Carson, *Becoming Americans: Our Struggle to be Both Free and Equal (A Plan of Thematic Interpretation)* The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1998, vii.
[78] Carson, *Becoming Americans,* 25.
[79] In an interoffice CW Winter 1999 memo, titled "Winter Programming in the Historic Area," it is noted that "The *Becoming Americans* storyline will continue to be incorporated into the programming with an obvious emphasis on "Enslaving Virginia." This leads me to believe "Enslaving Virginia" was the first storyline to receive immediate Historic Area implementation. In 1998, *The Public Historian* review of *Becoming Americans* by historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich barely mentions the "Taking Possession" storyline.
[80] Cary Carson, Editor, *Becoming Americans: Our Struggle to be Both Free & Equal (A Plan of Thematic Interpretation)* The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1998,) 20.

display of Americana and colonial revival.[81] As stated earlier, the colonial capital was a bustling center of commerce where multiple languages, dress and customs could be observed. *Becoming Americans* was meant first to educate then demonstrate this facet for diverse audiences.[82] It was an enormous undertaking for its time: "Never before in Colonial Williamsburg's seventy-year history have so many educators throughout the foundation pooled their talents to create a comprehensive plan of interpretation."[83] The staff of William & Mary's Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture reviewed it, and CW's Board of Trustees attended an all-day retreat to discuss its topics.[84]

It is unclear if native researchers were involved or how non-Western methodologies were included in the final product.[85] In one critique of an early draft, Iroquoian historian and William & Mary alumna, Nancy Hagedorn, criticized the monolithic depiction of American Indian communities, the over-simplified narrative of Native American-Anglo tensions as merely land disputes, cautioned against the use of the word "tribe," and suggested that researchers remember that "factions" existed within Indian groups. The bottom line was clear: there was not one singular Native experience in

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[81] Carson, *Becoming Americans,* 17.
[82] Carson, *Becoming*, vii.
[83] Carson, *Becoming Americans,* vii.
[84] Carson, *Becoming Americans,* ix.
[85] Kidwell and Plane, "Representing Native American History: Introduction," 15.

colonial Virginia and there should not be one monolithic American Indian interpretation at Colonial Williamsburg.[86]

Despite Native American inclusion in *Becoming Americans*, Colonial Williamsburg had “no plans to portray Native Americans” in new interpretative storylines throughout the reconstructed Historic Area.[87] John Caramia, then chairman of CW’s programming, defended this decision by inaccurately stating that Indians were not present in Williamsburg during the interpreted time period of the Revolutionary War. There was also the question of which Native American tribes to represent — a dilemma CW resolved by simply eliminating any Native presence.[88] It is unclear why the historical research department did not tackle this quandary. Troublingly, Caramia “stressed that the programming will use other techniques to tell the Indians side of the story.”[89] These “other techniques” continued the tradition of using white male voices to speak indigenous narratives. For example, one program focused on “Lord Botetourt and his attempts to negotiate with Indians”; another emphasized “Lord Dunmore and his decision to battle with Indians.”[90] Botetourt and Dunmore, both British colonial governors, take center stage and native voices were again ghosted.

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[86] Nancy Hagedorn to Cary Carson, February 22, 1994, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library.
[87] Bill Tolbert, “Land key in new CW programs,” *Virginia Gazette*, January 22, 2000; Deborah Straszheim, “CW Plans to Re-Enact VA’s Expansion Efforts,” *The Daily Press,* January 22, 2000.
[88] Tolbert, “Land key in new CW programs.”
[89] Tolbert, “Land key in new CW programs.”
[90] Straszheim, “CW plans to Re-Enact VA’s Expansion Efforts.”

Spectral Technological Traces

Despite the lack of indigenous actor-interpretation, CW projected indigeneity through their distance education programs. The museum offered electronic field trip programs for schools unable to travel for financial or security reasons. After viewing a short film in their classrooms, students could call in questions to trained CW employees and volunteers.[91] In 2000, Colonial Williamsburg debuted *Missions to America* the first electronic field trip to discuss European colonial contact with Native American tribes. In this 58-minute videotaped program, "[Students] travel to America's first permanent English colony, a French Great Lakes settlement, and a Spanish mission in the Southwest to discover how different European nations colonized America."[92] The description is important here: the focus was on colonization, time travel, and student entertainment — not indigenous cultures.

Following *Missions to America,* Colonial Williamsburg premiered *Hostages of Two Worlds* in 2001. This presentation focused on the Brafferton Indian School: "From 1697 until 1777 when the [Brafferton] closed, small groups of Indian children, from the Nansemond, Pamunkey, Nottaway, Catawba, and other tribes, attended the school. These boys, caught between two worlds, exemplify the clash of cultures that has continued throughout American history."[93] The description is again interesting, and it is indicative of

[91] The electronic field trips were popular programs until their cessation in 2016.
[92] Colonial Williamsburg's John D. Rockefeller, Jr. library catalog.
[93] From CW's Rockefeller library catalog.

how Colonial Williamsburg reinterpreted the Brafferton over time: the indigenous pupils were not ambassadors or willing boarders – they are hostages stuck between warring cultures with no reprieve. With this interpretation, the complexity of colonial (and modern) Native American experience showed through in Colonial Williamsburg's interpretative materials. The Brafferton experience was put in new relief for new audiences.

The American Indian Initiative Commences

In 2002, the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation allotted funding for the American Indian Initiative and formed the Committee on Interpreting Native American History and Culture. At its first meeting, the committee emphatically decided against the inclusion of "1st person interpretation of Indians or Mixed Blood initially." This decision was quickly reversed. Instead, the committee stated that Native presence could be "interpreted in almost all the spaces at the Capitol" building where Native ambassadors and diplomats historically visited. The committee also examined indigenous interpretation occurring at other North American museums, namely the North West Company Fur Post in Minnesota, Oconaluftee Village in North Carolina, and Sainte-Marie Among the Hurons in Ontario, Canada. The committee suggested inviting Native and non-Native scholars to Colonial Williamsburg, including Vine Deloria, Jr., Laura Peers, and Helen Rountree. The committee even went so far as to assemble a bibliography for its programming. Titles included *Playing Indian* by Philip Deloria; *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* by Vine

Deloria, Jr.; and *Fantasies of the Master Race: Literature, Cinema, and the Colonization of American Indians* by Ward Churchill.[94]

By 2004, the American Indian Initiative (AII) had taken shape. Colonial Williamsburg hired Travis Henline, a former National Park Ranger and non-native person, as a full-time contractor. This is the first full-time CW position dedicated to the interpretation of American Indians. In one internal memo from November 2005, Henline wrote, "The initiative seeks to make American Indian programming a permanent part of the Foundation's educational mission." AII was initially run through a Rockefeller Foundation Native American grant and private funds.[95] Laura Peers gave its first public program, "Stories We Cannot Live Without: Native Americas, Living History and the Past in the Present." In correspondence with Henline, Peers discussed AII's "potential to address the legacies of the past which still affect tribal peoples in the present in Virginia" – perhaps with the quest for federal recognition on her mind. She also called for CW to develop an electronic field trip on "Native-White diplomacy and broader related issues" and asked about the presence of "tribal women" in Williamsburg.[96] Henline heeded this last suggestion. In September 2004, AII advertised for an American Indian Programs Interpreter: "He or she must maintain a diplomatic demeanor and a positive attitude in

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[94] "American Initiative Draft Plan 2," Rockefeller Foundation Native American Grant, March 28, 2003, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library

[95] Brittany Voll, "Colorado Couple Donates $800,000 to CW American Indian Initiative," *WYDaily,* June 20, 2013. In June 2013, $800,000 was gifted to establish the Douglas N. Morton and Marilyn L. Brown American Indian Fund for AII programs.

[96] Laura Peers to Travis Henline, April 20, 2005, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library.

responding to guest's comments and questions that may be stereotyped and misinformed."[97]

Within his first year of employment, Henline outlined a "Preliminary Timeline" for AII's goals and objectives.[98] Most notably, he called for more research into the role of American Indians in eighteenth-century Williamsburg as "a substantial amount of material was not included in the final published manual" of the *Becoming Americans* "Taking Possession" storyline. He also stressed the need to provide space for Native Americans "to participate in the interpretation of *their* culture [emphasis mine]." To this end, Colonial Williamsburg should aim to add "Indian material culture" to their collections in order to help interpret or render tangible Native presence in the Historic Area. Finally, Henline proposed "a training plan" and the incorporation of "Indian/Black/White historical interactions." A full-time American Indian actor-interpreter would bolster these interactions.

Ghost Interpretations

In order to implement careful, accurate, and embodied interpretation, Colonial Williamsburg sought counsel from indigenous communities. In October 2004, AII hosted a luncheon with local Virginia Indian tribes and the Virginia Council on Indians. Colonial Williamsburg was represented by its then-president Colin Campbell along with Rex Ellis and Robin Reed of the

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[97] "Job posting for American Indians Program Interpreter," September 2, 2004, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library.
[98] Travis Henline to Robin Reed, Bill Weldon, April 16, 2004, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library.

African American Initiative. In correspondence with Campbell and Ellis, Henline described the meeting as a historic event and reminded CW's staff to treat the Indian chiefs with the respect and deference afforded to other visiting heads of state: "This will represent the first Indian delegation to visit Williamsburg in 227 years and is a historic moment in its own right. As in the past, Indian leaders will be special guests to our city and the tradition of diplomacy renewed."[99]

The luncheon anticipated "Telling Stories: A Symposium on American Indian Interpretation" to be held at the Hennage Auditorium in late 2004. The vaguely worded symposium program emphasized how "professionals" will discuss "teaching American Indian histories and cultures to the public and the development of American Indian interpretative programs."[100] This event included Native representation from the Rappahannock Chief Ann Richardson and Monacan Nation Chief Kenneth Branham. In terms of audience accessibility, the symposium was "invite-only" per correspondence sent directly to panel participants. This communication also stipulated that discussion topics should be shared in advance in a clear attempt to control the conversation.[101] Each of the nine panel participants were Native Americans involved in the public programming of indigenous histories: "never

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[99] Travis Henline to Rex Ellis and Colin Campbell, October 14, 2004, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library.
[100] "Telling Stories: A Symposium on American Indian Interpretation," November 5, 2004, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library.
[101] Travis Henline to symposium participants, August 30, 2004, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library.

before had a group comprised solely of American Indian museum and historic site professionals come together for a serious discussion of American Indian interpretation."[102] Plans to publish the symposium notes did not occur.

In collaborative effort with North Carolina's Cherokee tribe, AII's first interpretative program was held in December 2004. Symbolically titled "'Friends and Brethren': The Cherokee Return to Williamsburg," the program included ghost interpretation from Wilma Mankiller, the first female chief of the Cherokee Nation (Oklahoma) and Lloyd Arneach of the Eastern Band Cherokee. It shared the history of diplomacy between colonial Virginia and the Cherokee tribe and interpreted the Cherokee's friendly encampment at the center of eighteenth-century Williamsburg during their negotiations with the British government. "Friends and Brethren" was held on Market Square, at the epicenter of CW's Historic Area. With this program, one AII goal was achieved: "[t]o present a more balanced portrayal of Williamsburg society in the 18th century through the inclusion in *regular programming* [emphasis mine] of American Indian history and culture for guests to the museum and in educational outreach efforts from the Foundation."

Despite this admirable indigenous interpretation, the visiting public was largely unaware of such programming. Local newspapers reported this ignorance. In 2005, *The Virginia Gazette* ran an opinion column on

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[102] Travis Henline, "A Final Report to the Rockefeller Foundation on American Indian Programming at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Grant Number 2002 WC 144," February 22, 2005, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library.

Williamsburg's "Native American Programs." The author inelegantly argued, "[T]he majority of [CW] offerings center on the slavery issue, which does not give visitors any idea of what else is available from a historical point of view." The writer later pondered "why re-enactment of the Native Americans, who once roamed these woods, fished the streams, planted crops and possessed a profound spiritual feeling for Nature, are not included." This depiction reads like much of the "going native" and "playing Indian" found on William & Mary's campus, as if roaming and communing with nature was the way all American Indians behaved in eighteenth-century Virginia.[103]

Reaction to this column was swift and varied. Rex Ellis, then-director of African American programs for Colonial Williamsburg, responded in the same newspaper a few days later. He agreed that Native American interpretation was overdue, but cautioned that such inclusion required proper documentation and the establishment of "working relationships with the Indian community." Ellis saw the American Indian Initiative as "a natural evolution of the African-American history programs."[104] Kevin Brown, former chief of the Pamunkey Indians, also responded. In the same *Virginia Gazette* issue as Ellis's response, Brown pointed out the difficulty in hiring Indians to "act as historical interpreters" at Colonial Williamsburg. According to Brown, indigenous communities were simply "so busy trying to convince people that

[103] Cecil Johnson, "Native American Programs," *Virginia Gazette*, July 6, 2005.
[104] Rex Ellis, "American Indian Initiative," *Virginia Gazette,* July 9, 2005.

[they] don't live in teepees" that such work was counterproductive to their present existence.

This is still an issue at many living history museums. With time, indigenous interpretation occurred at Colonial Williamsburg. American Indians were hired to educate white audiences about indigenous colonial presence *and* inform about their continued present. As of 2016, there were five permanent American Indian interpreters representing the Cherokee, the Lakota, Navajo, Nanticoke, and Pamunkey.[105] Also in 2016, the Pamunkey receive federal recognition, quickly followed by six other regional tribes: the Chickahominy, the Eastern Chickahominy, the Upper Mattaponi, the Rappahannock, the Monacan, and the Nansemond tribes.[106] Though there are dedicated indigenous interpreters at Colonial Williamsburg, Native American and other historically marginalized communities are still uninterested and/or hostile to the idea of working as public historians for predominantly white institutions.

The Futurity of American Indian Initiatives

This is certainly not the end of the development of indigenous interpretation at Colonial Williamsburg, but tracing its early materialization shows how ghostly absences metaphorically and heuristically operate in the

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[105] The Cherokee are the largest Indian community during the period of CW's interpretation. They have been involved at CW since 2004, the implementation of AII.
[106] Joseph McClain, "President signs legislation granting federal recognition to six Virginia tribes," *William & Mary News*, January 30, 2018, https://www.wm.edu/news/stories/2018/william--mary-celebrates-movement-toward-federal-recognition-for-six-local-tribes.php.

museum. This is not to suggest that ghosts lack agency. Instead, they call attention to interpretative absences and necessarily remind the present of past narratives. Buck Woodard, former director of the American Indian Initiative, stated that in Williamsburg, there was “a forgetting of Indian peoples roles in place and the shaping of what is today America.”[107] Though ghostlore is one troubling way to remember, it is far from an embodied and complex interpretation.[108] Sensationalized ghost stories reduce Native Americans to malleable specters that help further remove indigenous communities from history and rewrite their presents from white perspectives.[109] Considering the “ghostly matters” of public history — the absences, presences, arguments, inclusions, and exclusions found in institutional archives — helps to critically engage with popular narratives and show how museums are haunted spaces.

In Autumn 2017, Colonial Williamsburg’s magazine *Trend & Tradition* showcased Native American experience in their cover story, “Telling the American Indian Story,” but the cover did not depict Native persons. Instead, readers were faced with a white actor-interpreter to embody eighteenth-century tradespeople. However, the magazine contained accessibly written articles highlighting Virginian Indian trade, American Indian first-person interpreters, and the Brafferton educational model. This magazine, with glossy pages and professional photography, is another presence in CW’s

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[107] “Colonial Williamsburg’s American Indian Initiative”, *Colonial Williamsburg Podcast,* http://www.digitalpodcast.com/items/3123536.
[108] Boyd and Thrush, *Phantom Past, Indigenous Presence,* xiii.
[109] Bergland, *The National Uncanny,* 1.

Corporate Archives. It presented American Indians for far-flung audiences — albeit through curated media. This magazine will also undoubtedly enter the archive. (In fact, a kind Colonial Williamsburg archivist drew my attention to this publication.) It will provide future researchers information about the institutionalized indigenous history of Colonial Williamsburg and tell how the foundation included its presence after decades of absence.

Visibility can be key. Embodiment brings useful recognition. American Indians are no longer absent from the public history landscape. They are individuals "crossing paths" with museumgoers and their biographies are fleshed out and present.[110] One article shares an indigenous story: "Who was Henry Bawbee?" Bawbee was a member of the Wyandot people and a student at the Brafferton who came to Williamsburg amid the turmoil of the American Revolution. After his time at the Brafferton, he acted as a cultural ambassador between his home tribe and the colonists.[111] Using primary source materials, the American Indian Initiative interprets Bawbee as conflicted throughout the Revolutionary War. He apparently had no allegiance to the Americans, though he did bring drawings of British fortifications to the American forces.[112] Bawbee's archived documentation includes his signature, and American Indian interpreters embody his story through ghost

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[110] Nicole Trifone, "Crossing Paths: Increasing American Indian Visibility to Tell a More Complete American Story," *Trend & Tradition*, (Autumn 2017), 74-81.
[111] Joseph A. Beatty, "Negotiating a New World: The American education of a Wyandot chief's son," *Trend & Tradition*, (Autumn 2017), 68-71.
[112] "Who Was Henry Bawbee?" 71.

interpretation. However, post-Revolution, Bawbee almost completely disappears from the historical records.

Kody Grant, enrolled member of the Isleta Pueblo, a descendant of the Eastern Cherokee and Senior Interpreter in the American Indian Initiative, often interprets Bawbee on walking tours, theatrical performances, and hands-on activities. Both Bawbee and Grant's name and tribal affiliation is known, and their narrative is embodied in ways that the Brafferton pupil is not. Bawbee's ghost interpretation helps to teach Native American pasts and presents at the largest living history museum in the United States. Grant also frequently shares his own experience as an indigenous living history interpreter. Though CW actor interpreters spend more of their time as an eighteenth-century persona, their ghost interpretation ends when the actor-interpreter breaks character to discuss their individual research methods, cultural backgrounds, and public history experience in the twenty-first century. They will also often take questions. For some audiences, this is the most important moment. It reveals both the artifice and impetus for public living history. In Grant's case, it also serves to show non-native museumgoers that indigeneity is not a historical performance. Instead of ghost interpretation, Native American public historians share their tribal affiliations, customs, languages, foodways, folklore, religions, conflicts, jokes, tools, and histories in these moments of museum transparency. Michel-Rolph Trouillot's bundles of

silences unravel as the public historian shares their research and interpretation as well as the cultural significance of these "new" narratives.

In 2020, the greater Williamsburg community participated in "a shared reading experience." The "inaugural selection" was Tommy Orange's *There, There,* a polyvocal novel about Native Americans in a current moment but rooted in tribal traditions.[113] Programming included discussion groups, film screenings, and lectures on the American Indian Movement and "urban Indians" — two topics covered in the book.[114] Orange, an enrolled member of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, spoke at the Williamsburg Regional Public Library and on William & Mary's campus. While at the university, the William & Mary American Indian Student Association formally welcomed Orange. During his conversation with Dr. Danielle Moretti-Langholtz, Director of the American Indian Resource Center and administrator of the university's interdisciplinary Native Studies minor, Orange discussed the importance of narrative control: "Native people have not been able to own our own stories and we haven't been able to define ourselves; we've been defined by the outside, and this is all storytelling under different names."[115]

Public history is the telling of stories — or rather, deciding which stories to tell and which stories to ghost. This is a powerful decision. By

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[113] "One Book, One Community," https://libraries.wm.edu/node/52012.
[114] "One Book, One Community," https://www.wrl.org/adults/one-book-one-community/.
[115] Phil Schueler, "Acclaimed Author Tommy Orange Discusses New Novel," *The Flat Hat,* January 27, 2020, http://flathatnews.com/2020/01/27/acclaimed-author-tommy-orange-discusses-new-novel/.

examining *who* makes the decision, and *how* it is implemented, we see how indigenous narratives disappear, flatten, and mold at historic sites. When public historians examine the popular ghostlore of a site, they begin to see how visiting and local audiences perceive historical presence. When indigenous and non-indigenous actor-interpreters break from the confines of ghost interpretation, they create new public histories for their audiences.

Chapter 2: Palimpsest of Public History: Unearthed Histories at Jamestown

> Hence it arose in the middle ages, as a considerable object for chemistry, to discharge the writing from the roll, and thus to make it available for a new succession of thoughts. The soil, if cleansed from what once had been hot−house plants, but now were held to be weeds, would be ready to receive a fresh and more appropriate crop…. They did the thing; but not so radically as to prevent us, their posterity, from undoing it.
>
> Thomas De Quincey, *Suspiria De Profundis*

The Slate

Historic sites are composed of the strata of temporally distinct eras. In Virginia, Historic Jamestowne is layered with literal and figurative ghosts that disrupt commemorative practices of erasure. In 2009, Jamestown Rediscovery archeologists unearthed a small slate tablet from an active dig site on Jamestown Island, Virginia. Smaller than a sheet of paper, this artifact lay buried in a trash pit that dated to the winter of 1609-1610, also known as the Starving Time when the first permanent English colony in British North America faced annihilation by disease, violence, and starvation.[1] The slate, akin to a personal school chalkboard or pocket notebook, had etchings of various depths across its entire surface.[2] Typically "used aboard ships to temporarily record the daily wind conditions and the ship's speed and direction," this slate came to Virginia after a shipwrecked sojourn on the

[1] Zinie Chen Samson, "Slate tablet found at Jamestown," *Richmond-Times Dispatch,* June 9, 2009. https://www.richmond.com/news/slate-tablet-found-at-jamestown/article_e0571f46-a00c-5f01-8593-08589fb1aaf7.html.
[2] Paula Neely, "Mysterious Jamestown Tablet an American Rosetta Stone?" *National Geographic,* January 13, 2010. https://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2010/01/100113-jamestown-tablet-slate-american-rosetta-stone/

island of Bermuda in 1609.[3] After conservation and examination, the slate now rests in an exhibit at the Archaearium, the island's museum curated by Preservation Virginia.[4] Suspended in clear glass above an introductory label, the slate is lit from below to accentuate its grooves. As a reusable notepad, it is layered with sketches, notations, and symbols that mark what its users deemed important and inform modern day audiences about seventeenth-century landscapes. Accompanied by a large photograph to note its location in the soil, the slate educates about archeology *and* colonial underpinnings of the United States of America. It is an important and versatile artifact within the museum.

Its ghostly markings transform the slate into a palimpsest, or a multiuse document of markings made and erased over time. The slate reveals what mystified, occupied, motivated, and entertained colonists; it also depicts violence erased in order to preserve more palatable histories. Dr. William Kelso, director of archeology at Historic Jamestowne, once described the slate as a "mini-archeology site." Among the more obvious lines and letters, Kelso identified the barely-visible trace of two figures in the slate: a male figure "wielding a sword, apparently about to slash a well-dressed woman whom he holds by the neck." Kelso describes a time period that has long-

[3] "Slate," Jamestown Rediscovery, Historic Jamestowne, https://historicjamestowne.org/selected-artifacts/slate/

[4] Preservation Virginia is the most recent moniker for the Association for the Preservation of Virginia's Antiquities, or APVA.

haunted the memory of colonial Virginia.[5] Does it document alleged cannibalism from the Starving Time, or does it depict a different violence?

The slate is analogous to the interpretative work done at Historic Jamestowne in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Much like the slate's grooves, the island's topography is layered with histories buried at different depths, carved in relief, and revealed through study and analysis. And much like the user's ability to erase and re-inscribe the slate, the island is also a tabula rasa for the commemorative needs of a particular ideology, whether in 1607 or 1957. For decades, the island's brutal history was overlaid with the thick and sanitizing topsoil of the United States' founding mythos. Still, Jamestown's ghost stories shared narratives that disrupted commemorative cycles of colonial triumph, white exceptionalism, and a particular public history. Two counternarratives manifest from the physical and discursive landscape: acknowledgement of twentieth-century tour guide Sam Robinson and inclusion of seventeenth-century survival cannibalism. As researchers re-place these histories on the museum's interpretative landscape, they physically excavate the seventeenth century and reveal ideological layers present in twentieth-century commemorations. As an important location in the United States' founding mythology, Jamestown's public history is a temporal

[5] Neely, "Mysterious Jamestown Tablet an American Rosetta Stone?"; William M. Kelso, *Jamestown: The Truth Revealed* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2017), 194-195.

and thematic palimpsest with markings made visible through the archeological, interpretative and scholarly recovery of the last twenty years.

Palimpsest of Public History

Throughout this chapter, I refer to Jamestown as a palimpsest of public history.[6] This palimpsest contains the complex markings of public history found in commemorative materials, monuments and memorials, tourist publications, museum exhibits, and administrative correspondence. I use palimpsest in both its literal and figurative meanings. Akin to a ghost, the palimpsest offers much to the field of public history – especially as archeologists actively excavate that field. In its literal usage, a palimpsest is "a parchment or other writing surface on which the original text has been effaced or partially erased, and then overwritten by another; a manuscript in which later writing has been superimposed on earlier (effaced) writing."[7] In the Middle Ages, vellum or parchment manuscripts were re-used by scribes for the following reasons: writing materials were too scarce or expensive; the script was physically deteriorating; language was no longer readable/used or

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[6] To be clear, I am referencing the actual site of James Fort where English colonists landed in 1607 that was "rediscovered" in the 1990s by archeologists. Preservation Virginia and the National Park Service jointly run Historic Jamestowne. Confusingly, there is also the Jamestown Settlement, a living history museum operated by the Commonwealth of Virginia with a reconstructed fort, ships and Indian village. It is located about two miles from the island. The Settlement was built for the 1957 commemoration and does not factor in my conversation today, although it does operate as a simulacrum for the actual fort site – a kind of ghostly double that many schoolchildren (myself included) believed *was* Jamestown.
[7] "palimpsest, n. and adj.". OED Online. December 2018. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com.proxy.wm.edu/view/Entry/136319?isAdvanced=false&result=1&rskey=gmVFco& (accessed February 15, 2019).

the manuscript's content was rendered obsolete by time.[8] When the vellum's iron-laden ink met oxygen, the earlier text revealed itself as ghostly red traces of long-forgotten ideas.[9]

The palimpsest is also an important material and interpretative concept within archeology. In the late twentieth-century, Lewis Binford and the New Archeologists centered time, rather than function, to extrapolate meaning from objects excavated at a site. This concept of "time perspectivism treats all archeological material as palimpsest." Without significant stratigraphic "deposits" it is difficult to properly interpret longer patterns of behavior at a site.[10] For Binford and his colleagues, "the passage of time and the formations of palimpsest as a consequence are the very processes that make the [archeological] record interpretable."[11] By studying the archeological palimpsest, public historians — interpreters, archeologists, anthropologists, folklorists, and curators — encounter the diverse "lifeways" of a site, instead of a uniform experience, and add different viewpoints to the historical record.

Palimpsests occur when a new audience, with different needs, encounters a surface previously used for obsolete, antiquated, or outmoded narratives. Palimpsests are created when the past refuses – if we can ascribe agency to the organic process of oxygenated ink and the spontaneous

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[8] Sarah Dillon, "Reinscribing De Quincey's palimpsest: the significance of the palimpsest in contemporary literary and cultural studies," *Textual Practice* 19, no. 3 (2005): 244.
[9] Dillon, "Reinscribing De Quincey's palimpsest," 244.
[10] Simon Holdaway and LuAnn Wandsnider, "Time in Archeology: An Introduction," in *Time In Archeology: Time Perspectivism Revisited*, eds. Holdaway and Wandsnider (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2008), 1.
[11] Holdaway and Wandsnider, "Time in Archeology: An Introduction," 9.

unearthing of artifacts during archeological digs – to be remade. If we re-configure the parchment palimpsest to a landscape – Jamestown Island, for example – we see how memory of the past merges with the present and leaches into the future: "The presence of texts from the past, present (and possibly the future) in the palimpsest does not elide temporality, but evidences the spectrality of any 'present' moment which always already contains within it 'past' and 'future' moments."[12] Jamestown's archeological palimpsest, accumulated over many centuries, reveals past events, answers present questions, and foreshadows potentially destructive futures i.e. climate change and the James River's devastating erosion.[13] At Jamestown, visitors see the markings of indigenous peoples, English settlers, African slaves, indentured servants, imported wives, colonial merchants, agricultural workers, preservationist societies, commemorative committees, trained and untrained archeologists, tourists, scavengers, caretakers, soldiers, sailors, guides and curators.

In order to show how public history is a palimpsest, I examine three interpretative layers at Jamestown. In layer one, the island was described as a metaphorically haunted space in antebellum efforts to rework the abandoned island as a sacred site. Layers two and three work to disrupt

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[12] Dillon, "Reinscribing De Quincey's palimpsest," 249.

[13] Shannon Lee Dawdy argues for archeology to focus on present and future problems, like climate change, agricultural sustainability, urbanizations, disaster and recovery, rather than "reconstructions of the past." See Dawdy, "Millennial archaeology. Locating the discipline in the age of insecurity," *Archeological Dialogues* Vol. 16, 2: (2009): 131-142.

these Gilded Age narratives. Layer two shows how the singular experience of a mid-twentieth century tour guide, Sam Robinson, both re-inscribed the commemorative palimpsest of Jamestown and, paradoxically, unsettled it. In layer three Jamestown's palimpsest reveals materials that confirmed the occurrence of survival cannibalism during the Starving Time. Each layer contains popular ghostlore to illustrate the lingering presences at Jamestown.

In *The Archeology of Knowledge,* Michel Foucault argued against the historical profession's adherence to strict, linear analysis, periodization, and "the search for silent beginnings." He identified the messier "phenomena of rupture, or discontinuity" studied in literature and philosophy as more useful to historians. Foucault sought the interruptions and irregularities that happened at a particular moment — not the fabricated "common threads." The ghost is one such temporal and narrative interruption. It unsettles the everyday experience of walking through familiar terrain by introducing the unfamiliar. To see or read about a ghost is to face new narrative layers.

But, briefly: why does Jamestown matter?

In the layered historiography of colonial America, Jamestown was long ghosted by scholars who viewed the Virginian colony as lacking industry and work ethic.[14] Overlooked in favor of New England sites like Plymouth, Massachusetts, and the victim of postbellum sectionalism, Jamestown experienced its seventeenth-century economic, social and political flourish

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[14] Joseph Kelly, *Marooned: Jamestown, Shipwreck, and a New History of America's Origin* (New York: Bloomsburg Publishing, 2018).

before abandonment and recession in national memory. However, recent scholarship from historians and literary scholars has repositioned Jamestown within the histories of the Americas. This work revealed Jamestown's existence on the vellum of colonial Virginia and its continued significance within the history of commerce, government, and chattel race-based slavery in North America.[15]

Briefly, Jamestown as an English colony commences in the early 1600s. Under the protection of English King James I, the private Virginia Company recruited colonists with the following imperatives: secure permanent settlement, locate material wealth, and find safe passage to the Pacific Ocean.[16] The only reference to gender on this voyage was first of the three sailing ships: *Susan Constant, Godspeed,* and *Discovery.* The ship names reveal how the English felt about their voyage: it was one of divinely natural rights to land inhabited by indigenous peoples.[17] The group of men

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[15] For recent scholarship that places Jamestown in higher historical regard, see the following list. Their titles suggest increased awareness of Jamestown's historical significance. Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); Kelly, *Marooned*; David A. Price, *Love & Hate in Jamestown: John Smith, Pocahontas, and the Start of a New Nation* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003); Jim Horn, *A Land As God Made It: Jamestown and the Birth of America* (New York: Basic Books, 2005); Jim Horn, *1619: Jamestown and the Forging of American Democracy* (New York: Basic Books, 2018); William M. Kelso, *Jamestown: The Buried Truth* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2008); William M. Kelso, *Jamestown: The Truth Revealed* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2017).
[16] Philip L. Barbour, ed., *The Jamestown Voyages Under the First Charter, 1606-1609,* vol 1, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 45-54.
[17] The earlier attempt at permanent settlement, the Roanoke Colony in North Carolina, was another disaster still popularly considered a mystery.

and boys landed at Jamestown Island in May 1607.[18] The local indigenous people, understood by the English as the Powhatan paramount chiefdom, attacked the temporary English camp almost immediately. As a result, the English colonists began the first layer of *their* built environment. The triangular, palisaded fort – now reconstructed on Jamestown Island – protected inhabitants. This triangle is now a sign of the historic site. The Powhatan had left their own traces (arrowheads, animal remains) on their soon-to-be former hunting ground for centuries.

Despite efforts to secure the colony and exploit natural and human resources for England's benefit, Jamestown was in a near-constant cycle of famine, disease, and fighting both with the Indians and with each other. Though initially unwilling to trade with and provide for the colony, the Powhatan Indians forced a siege upon the fort and during the winter of 1609-1610 starvation and illness reduced the population from 300 to 60.[19] This devastation almost ended the Jamestown project, as the survivors abandoned the fort and set sail for England. However, they were met by a supply ship and ordered to return to the fort.[20] English-Powhatan peace followed Powhatan ambassador Pocahontas/Matoaka/Rebecca's marriage to English farmer John Rolfe, and the colony's prosperity was further solidified

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[18] Philip L. Barbour, *The Three Worlds of Captain John Smith* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin 1964), 3-63.
[19] Mark Nicholls, "George Percy's 'Trewe Relacyon.'" *Virginia Magazine of History & Biography* 113, no. 3 (2005): 213–75.
[20] George Percy,"A Trewe Relacyon of the precedeings and ocurrentes of Momente which have hapned in Virginia," [1609-1612], *Tylers Quarterly Magazine* 3 (1922): 268.

by the introduction of the cash crop, tobacco.[21] In 1619, the first representative government met at the Jamestown church; this year also saw the first influx of captive Africans and marriageable women.[22] These last two arrivals signaled the colony's troubling permanence to the Powhatan Indians, and in 1622 Chief Opechancanough ordered a surprise attack on the colony's spreading settlements; approximately 300 colonists were killed.[23] In 1624, the Virginia Company's charter was revoked and Virginia became a royal colony under the direct supervision of the English crown.[24]

Though the triangular fort disappeared from written documentation of Jamestown by the 1620s, the colonial capital flourished as a bustling port city with brick buildings on a European city grid system. The town spread east across the island but as fast as it grew, in 1699 it declined when the capital moved to Middle Plantation (soon to be Williamsburg, Virginia). As the centuries passed, a few families worked Jamestown on a plantation system. The island was used during both the Revolutionary and Civil Wars but not as a major site of military action. In the late-nineteenth century, 22.5 acres were donated to the newly formed Association for the Preservation of Antiquities (APVA). This acreage included the crumbling seventeenth century church tower and the general area where the fort existed. For decades, popular belief

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[21] Horn, *A Land As God Made It,* 218.
[22] James Horn, *1619: Jamestown and the Forging of American Democracy* (New York: Basic Books, 2018), 1-11.
[23] Horn, *A Land As God Made It,* 255-278.
[24] Horn, *A Land As God Made It,* 279-281.

stated that the fort had eroded into the James River but the site was still visited by tourists in early instances of reverential heritage tourism.[25]

Layer 1: "Colonial Life Continues at Jamestown Island"[26]

Since the early nineteenth century, travelers used spectral metaphor to describe the former colonial port city of Jamestown. Tourists, mostly white and elite, boarded steamships at Richmond, Virginia and made historical pilgrimages along the James River in early iterations of heritage tourism. One such traveller, Charles Washington Coleman, stated, "it would be difficult to find in America a region of the country of the same extent possession greater historical and romantic interest....[27] Coleman summoned the ghosts of Virginian history (as he understood it) while he river-cruised: "Cavalier planters" and "armies of two great wars" and finally, "the first successful English colonists" at Jamestown Island. Coleman noted how the small island, once a mighty center of commerce and politics, "seem[ed] scarcely to rise above the water's edge" and only "the vine covered ruin of a square brick tower" and "a few broken gravestones … [were] all that remain[ed] of the first successful English colony in America."[28] Coleman saw the effects of the river's powerful erosion of the island's "most historic part, the preservation of

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[25] "New Towne," Jamestown Rediscovery, Preservation Virginia, https://historicjamestowne.org/visit/plan-your-visit/new-towne/.
[26] Jackie Eileen Behrend's *The Hauntings of Williamsburg, Yorktown and Jamestown*, (Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, 1998),169.
[27] Charles Washington Coleman, "Along the Lower James," *Century Illustrated Magazine,* January 1891.
[28] Coleman repeats "first successful" in this essay, perhaps to distinguish from Roanoke and to combat the sectional elevation of Plymouth, Massachusetts, as the first productive English colony.

which demands prompt action and a well-filled purse."[29] Most interestingly, he conjured "the men and women who lived out their lives within [the island's] narrow circumference and laid the cornerstone of our great republic." As he ruminated on the legends of John Smith, Pocahontas, and "other shapes," Coleman concluded, "This place is haunted."[30]

American tourists wrote ghost stories about the island as its built environment disappeared from the landscape — but they described a certain kind of ghost. Coleman did not imagine colonists unrecorded by seventeenth-century sources, nor did he reference the Powhatan Indians who inhabited the region long before European arrival. Instead, Coleman invokes names familiar to tourists and central to late nineteenth-century nationalism in the United States. Jamestown's ghostlore involves populations not always included in the island's interpretation.[31] The ghostlore of Jamestown usually mentions female ghosts, but the metaphorical specters in commemorative materials and travel accounts are almost always male.[32] Why does the former

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[29] Coleman seems to predict the APVA's preservationist impulse to save Jamestown Island; his mother Cynthia Beverly Tucker Coleman was active in the Williamsburg chapter of this organization. Coleman does comment on Virginia's "material condition and prospects" post Civil War, writing "this country, teeming with the traditions of past wealth and a romantic social history" is on its way to restoration from "semi-ruin."

[30] For more on "rivers … as liminal places where two worlds met," see Owen Davies, *The Haunted: A Social History of Ghosts* (London: Palgrave MacMillan), 2007, 45.

[31] By ghostlore, I refer to the folklore genre of ghost stories.

[32] See María Del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren, "Introduction: Conceptualizing Spectralities," in *The Spectralities Reader: Ghosts and Haunting in Contemporary Cultural Theory* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013) 1-21. For more on published accounts that use ghostly discourse to describe Jamestown, see Charles Washington Coleman, "Along the Lower James," *Century Illustrated Magazine* January 1891; Mary Lyons Mayo, "The Ancient Capital of the Old Dominion," *Peterson Magazine* VII, no. 9, (September 1897): 850; *Laird & Lee's Guide to Historic Virginia and the Jamestown Centennial*, (Chicago: Laird & Lee

reside in easily dismissible but popularly consumed ghost stories, while the latter dominates the interpretative landscape with striding statues on impressive pedestals? Except for Pocahontas, the island's exhibits, tours, and memorials tended to overlook women's lived histories.[33] Still, Jamestown's ghostlore introduced audiences to a spectralized history of Tidewater Virginia.[34] Though riddled with stereotypes and value systems that share more about the era of their telling, these ghost stories are memory-making devices — akin to built monuments and guided tours — that inform how the visiting public understands history.[35]

Though these spirits reside in imaginative realms of speculation, superstition and genre fiction, they also leave discernible traces on the

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Publishers, 1907), 9, 11. Coleman: "the place is haunted" by the ghosts of men who "laid the cornerstone of our great republic"; Mayo: "Almost the only trace of the town that was once there is the ruin of an old church-tower, standing gauntly alone"; Laird & Lee: "Many who visit Tidewater Virginia for the first time express the utmost astonishment on learning that nothing remains of historic Jamestown but a few crumbling ruins on an uninhabited island…. desolate and deserted."

[33] The Pocahontas Statue, sculpted by William Ordway Partridge and dedicated in 1922, depicts the Powhatan woman in Plains Indian dress that would be more intelligible to early twentieth century visitors. The statue's pedestal was removed in more recent years, and (unlike the nearby John Smith statue) its location has shifted to accommodate archeological digs: https://historicjamestowne.org/visit/plan-your-visit/monuments-pocahontas/.

[34] Historian Tiya Miles uses similar language in *Tales from the Haunted South: Dark Tourism and Memories of Slavery from the Civil War Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 4: "Readers pick up these published accounts [of ghost stories] at tourist shops and in local bookstores, as well as online, often as an accompaniment to their vacations down South." There are few ghost tours of Jamestown Island, though "The Original Ghosts of Williamsburg," a ghost tour company in Williamsburg, recently launched the late-night "Haunted River Cruise of Jamestown Island."

[35] Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 7-25; Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1991); and Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950, 1992). These theorists see memory making in monuments, commemorations, rituals, and other embodied practices that a social group (linked by nation, language, religion, culture) uses to create a collective.

island's landscape that visiting audiences remember. In *Ersatz America: Hidden Traces, Graphic Texts, and the Mending of Democracy,* Rebecca Mark refers to these traces as "visceral graphism," or the nonverbal gestures, movements, and marks made by "groups and individuals demanding to exist." Rather than adhering to "the deadly hallucination Americans call national memory," these traces "disrupt and infect the dominant texts and narratives" by forcing attention on those long ignored. Mark summons the forgotten bodies "to speak up and join the living and invites all the living to learn to hear and see the marks of their presence."[36]

At Jamestown, the landscape is relatively pastoral with few markers of earlier inhabitation. It can be difficult for visitors — perhaps accustomed to the reconstructed Colonial Williamsburg complex — to imagine the 1607 landscape. In the late nineteenth-century, historical preservationists transformed the island from a commerce-fueled port to a commemorative and pastoral landscape. The few visible marks are the ghostly outlines of seventeenth-and-eighteenth-century building foundations and monstrous twentieth-century commemorations. An outdated preservationist impulse haunts Jamestown. This impulse long-interpreted Virginia as the ancient foundations of the Anglo-Saxon United States, worked to preserve the Lost Cause ideals, and combatted the encroaching effects of modern life: increased immigration, urbanization and industrialization.

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[36] Rebecca Mark, *Ersatz America: Hidden Traces, Graphic Texts, and the Mending of Democracy* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2014), 6, 21, 24.

In her analysis of antebellum New York City, Nancy Munn showed how the rapid shifts of modernity created anxiety among wealthier social classes, who were afraid of being forgotten in both the concrete and discursive space.[37] Jamestown's preservation exemplifies Munn's spacetime: the "discursive and concrete practices" that both constitute *and* memorialize place. These practices include speeches, news media, built environments, and memorials – often the traces in Rebecca Mark's *Ersatz America*.[38] For Munn and other scholars, place is always in process of becoming something else – and, for historic sites, a process of becoming-past. In New York City, the antebellum white elite erected landmarks, like Central Park, to rectify the effects of modernity as generations of wealth and power were displaced by citywide demolition and new construction. Like ghosts, these nineteenth-century landmarks remind future generations of past [white, wealthy] importance. They preserve ideologies and remain concretely on the visible horizon. Monuments and memorials rear up — deliberately and unexpectedly — to delay progress. These preservationist and commemorative marks litter the concrete and discursive spaces of Jamestown Island.

One example of Jamestown's commemorative markings is the work of Fred O. Seibel. As an editorial cartoonist at the *Richmond-Times Dispatch,* Seibel often incorporated elements from nearby Tidewater landscapes. On

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[37] Nancy Munn, "The 'becoming-past' of places: Spacetime and Memory in 19th Century, Pre-Civil War New York." *Journal of the Finnish Anthropological Society* 29.1 (2004): 2-19.
[38] Munn, "The 'becoming-past' of places," 2-19.

two separate May 13ths, Seibel used Jamestown in his drawings. On May 13, 1932, his cartoon, “Getting the Lowdown on Hard Times,” depicted the ghost of a virile and smug John Smith looking down upon a much smaller young man (helpfully labeled “Our Soft Generation”) from the doorway of the Jamestown church.[39] Their positioning mimics the visitor’s encounter with Smith’s towering commemorative statue on the island. A small bird, located in the cartoon’s corner, states, “What this country needs today is a ten-minute interview with the Ghost of Captain John Smith.” The message was clear: twentieth-century men did not know how easy life was compared to the seventeenth-century drudgery. The spirit of Smith and his colonial brethren hovered over the modern moment – and they were displeased by the lack of masculinity.

Six years later, Seibel published another Jamestown-centric cartoon: “How Jamestown was Saved for Posterity.”[40] This cartoon also used the Jamestown church as a backdrop, but instead foregrounded a sword-wielding and shield-bearing woman, fending off the much larger, scythe-waving and grey-bearded figure labeled “The Ravages of Time.” The woman’s sword is marked with the letters “APVA” and she wears outdated (for 1938) nineteenth-century dress. By 1938, Jamestown Island was a heritage tourism site, complete with an entrance fee, tour guides and souvenir shop. However,

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[39] Fred O. Seibel, “Getting the Lowdown on Hard Times,” *Richmond Times-Dispatch,* May 13, 1932.
[40] Fred O. Seibel, “"How Jamestown Was Saved for Posterity," *Richmond Times-Dispatch,* May 13, 1938.

its preservation was led by a group of Virginian women who modeled themselves after the Mount Vernon Ladies Association: the Association for the Preservation of Virginia's Antiquities (APVA). Though depicted in Seibel's cartoon, their presence did not counteract the island's interpretation as a masculine space. In fact, the APVA reinforced this idea.

Jamestown was "rescued" by the preservationist impulse of the late nineteenth-century. The Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities formed in 1889 to preserve what was left of Virginia's "ancient" history. Mary Jeffrey Galt, of Norfolk, and Cynthia Beverly Tucker Coleman, of Williamsburg, purchased the Powder Magazine in Williamsburg, Virginia; their geographic locations typified the APVA's "deeply rooted localism" eventually headquartered in Richmond and consisting of "Old South Traditionalists" who "defined polite Virginia" as polite Virginia defined itself.[41] Members included Thomas Nelson Page, Virginia's writer of Moonlight-and-Magnolia nostalgia; Lyon G. Tyler, president of William & Mary and Williamsburg booster; Joseph Bryan, president of the Virginia Historical Society; and George William Bagby, another Southern sentimentalist writer. However, stalwart and politically motivated leadership from women like Galt and Coleman, eclipsed these men; Isobel Lamont Stewart Bryan and Lucy Parke Chamberlyne Bagby helmed the APVA's administration, especially as it moved from the pre-Rockefeller Restoration Williamsburg to the ruination of Jamestown Island.

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[41] James M. Lindgren, "Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities," *Encyclopedia Virginia*. Virginia Humanities, March 21, 2016.

According to historian James Lindgren, the APVA organized during a complicated era of white anxiety. As immigration swelled cities on both coasts of the United States, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century urban populations increasingly did not resemble white elite Virginians. When "the APVA called for a restoration of traditional values and styles of leadership, southern progressives similarly worked to stabilize and protect the local establishment not simply from northern interests but from challenges from poor whites and blacks."[42] As northern states industrialized and southern states took refuge in agrarian romance, preservationist impulses manifested in Virginia as a deeply racist ideology about the Anglo-Saxon [not Spanish, not Catholic, not black] origins of the United States.[43] This racism was reflected in the APVA's choice of places to preserve as "[t]raditionalists also hoped to own the past through the preservation of a family home, burial ground, or ancestral relic...."[44] The eerily preserved spaces, kept in a suspended state, are also locations haunted by the purposeful absences of Africans, Native Americans, and English women. The APVA's preservation impulse was anxiety-driven as the organization worked to preserve places that threatened to splinter, decay, morph into something modern and unrecognizable.

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[42] James Lindgren, *Preserving the Old Dominion: Historic Preservation and Virginia Traditionalism,* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1993), 21.
[43] Lindgren, *Preserving Old Dominion,* 94-95.
[44] Lindgren, *Preserving Old Dominion,* 55.

To avoid being revised out of the national founding myth, and to combat the androcentric historiographical power of New England scholarship and Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier mythology, the APVA increasingly stressed the "strong, virile" leadership of John Smith as ancestral to the "cult of martial vigor" founded in the era of Theodore Roosevelt.[45] The APVA promoted sentimental romanticized myths about Jamestown and relied on "hero worship and mythical history" to bring honor and attention back to Virginia.[46] In restoring Jamestown as a white pillar of the American mythos, the APVA worked to beautify the island with flowers, shrubs, grass, and other anachronistic landscaping.[47] Blacks or poor whites contributed to this labor at the same time enslavement was erased from the Virginian history told at Jamestown.[48] The layers slowly flattened into one, monolithic narrative that adhered to the political and social needs of the white First Families of Virginia.

As a popular mode of public history, some of Jamestown's ghost stories preserve perspectives that maintain a particular social order. While Seibel's drawing depicts John Smith's ghost sneering at modern generations, the island's ghostly women are often portrayed as pathetic and "so transparent, no features could be distinguished."[49] They are akin to other hauntings at Jamestown, namely the spectral waste left by the APVA seen in

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[45] Lindgren, *Preserving Old Dominion,* 98-99.
[46] Lindgren, *Preserving Old Dominion,* 101-102, 104.
[47] Lindgren, *Preserving Old Dominion,* 114.
[48] Lindgren, *Preserving Old Dominion,* 110.
[49] Taylor, *Ghosts of Williamsburg: Volume II,* 120.

the late nineteenth-and-early-twentieth-century markings that rarely commemorate a history of women: the Hunt Shrine, dedicated in 1922 to the first [male] Anglican minister in Virginia; the phallic Tercentennial obelisk of 1907; the striding Smith statue, dedicated in 1909; the Thomas Dale House, named for the post-Starving Times enforcer of martial law; and the Yeardley House, in honor of former Virginia royal governor George Yeardley. However, the APVA's specter is still present if unformed; their name is stamped on the monuments and memorials as an endorsement to men. Their legacy of patriarchical entrenchment also included racist and xenophobic regulations at Jamestown that mark the historic site as "a Confederate shrine" to Lost Cause ideology that has only recently been interrogated.[50]

Layer 2: Sam Robinson and Jamestown Festival of 1957

The Mother-In-Law Tree, by Sam Robinson, is one of the island's most popular ghost stories. First published in 1957, the paper booklet depicts the titular tree on its cover, with its roots wrapped, vise-like, around an aboveground tomb. Other flat tombs rest nearby. The tree is not overtly menacing, with lacy green leaves above uneven green grass, but there is a dark hollow in the tree trunk's center as if it is shouting in outrage. Visitors familiar with the Jamestown landscape might recognize the scene as the graveyard adjacent to the island's small brick church. In regional ghostlore,

[50] This label, "a Confederate shrine," is a direct quotation from the "American Heartbreak: Historical Memory and Racial Amnesia" program offered by Jamestown Rediscovery Public Historian, Mark Summers, in February 2019.

the imposing sycamore, or Mother-In-Law Tree, spectrally separated two lovers after death.[51] This specific booklet, with open-mouthed tree on the cover, was published to commemorate Queen Elizabeth II's visit to Jamestown for its 350th founding anniversary in 1957. It includes a reprinted note from the Queen to Robinson to thank him for the "instructive and entertaining account of the 'Mother-In-Law Tree' outside the Jamestown Church." Photographs in the booklet show Robinson telling "his story to the Royal Couple and Party."[52]

In Robinson's retelling, the story begins as many ghost stories do: with a broken engagement and an untimely death. Sarah Harrison, of Virginia's Berkeley Plantation, wed the much-older James Blair, "founder and Commissioner of William and Mary College," despite her family's objections. Harrison allegedly ended a previous engagement and her fiancé died of a broken heart. Her mother, father, and younger sister were also killed in a freak lightning storm en route to prevent the marriage. However, this powerful desire to inhibit Harrison and Blair's marital bliss extended beyond (and into) the grave. As Robinson narrates, after her 1713 death, Harrison was buried outside her family plot on Jamestown Island. Following Blair's 1743 death, husband was reunited with wife in side-by-side tombs.

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[51] Sarah Harrison Blair's popular tale is shared in other folklore collections and local ghost tour publications, including L.B. Taylor, *The Ghosts of Williamsburg … and Nearby Environs* (Progress Printing Co., 1983), 12-16; Pamela Kinney, *Haunted Virginia: Legends, Myths, & True Tales* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, Ltd., 2009), 53-56; Kinney, *Virginia's Haunted Historic Triangle*, 96-99. For this layer, I rely on the following account: Sam Robinson, *The Mother-In-Law Tree* (Richmond, VA: Whittet and Shepperson, 1957).
[52] Robinson, *The Mother-In-Law Tree*.

Robinson's conclusion provides the ghostly denouement: "7 years later that old sycamore there… came up between 'em as a little while sapling." It grew up between the couple's side-by-side tombs and pushed Harrison's tomb "up out de groun' above Dr. Blair and push de back of the head end 7 feet from her husban' back over to de right within 6 inches of her [family]." Blair's grave remained solitary and separate from his wife. The tree was referred to as the "mother-in-law tree" since Harrison's mother "didn' get a chance in life to separate her daughter Sarah from Dr. Blair, but ... she did come back and plant the old sycamore to separate her."[53]

The Mother-In-Law Tree is printed almost verbatim from Robinson's Jamestown tour. The printed text, with its conversational, colloquial tone, was taken from a 1957 recording of Robinson's tour provided to the U.S. Department of State to share what Robinson would tell the royal couple.[54] The recording and booklet were sold at Jamestown as souvenirs of not only the Mother-In-Law Tree but also Robinson: "The 25-minute tape would have to sell for about $5.00 or $7.50... to people who knew and admired Sam. It would not, however, sell to the general public, those who did not know

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[53] All of the quoted material comes from Robinson, *The Mother-In-Law Tree.*

[54] According to Rodney Taylor, step-son of Jamestown Island's APVA superintendent William Harrison Smith, this recording was made by Jack L. Hiller who worked for the Jamestown Foundation, see "1957 Audio Recording of Sam Robinson, Sexton of Jamestown Memorial Church, Jamestown, Virginia," *Archive Williamsburg,* uploaded August 27, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vLzJQ70L7Lw. A 1964 reel copy of the recording is also in the Rodney B. Taylor Papers at the Special Collections Research Center, William & Mary Libraries. The original 1957 recording was returned to Robinson.

Sam."[55] The recording might not sell because Samuel Andrews Robinson was a Black man in Jim Crow Virginia who gave highly detailed tours of Jamestown, then interpreted as the cradle of white civilization in North America, throughout the mid-twentieth century.

Almost all that is currently known about Robinson comes from mid-twentieth-century ephemera connected to his role at Jamestown: newspaper articles, tourist programs, and commemorative planning materials. In the twenty-first century, he still receives nostalgic treatment in regional retrospectives.[56] Robinson's birthplace remains mysterious. Some sources give Winnipeg, Canada, but his World War II draft card names Manning, South Carolina.[57] The exact date of his birth is unknown.[58] He allegedly worked a series of jobs, including as a circus roustabout, before a mid-1930s encounter with Ellen Bagby, then-chairperson of the Jamestown Committee of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA).[59] Bagby

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[55] Paul Hudson to William Harrison Smith, 7 April 1966, Rodney B. Taylor Papers, Special Collections Research Center, William & Mary Libraries.

[56] As of this writing, the recent reflection on Robinson came from Norfolk archivist/historian, Robert Hitchings, "Jamestown tour guide was a gem," *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot,* February 24, 2019. Hitchings writes fondly of meeting Robinson during a 1960 field trip to Jamestown Island, noting that Robinson was "an outstanding storyteller."

[57] "Samuel Andrews Robinson," WWII Draft Registration Cards for Virginia, 10/16/1940 - 03/31/1947 Record Group: Records of the Selective Service System, 147; Box 624, The National Archives in St. Louis, Missouri; St. Louis, Missouri.

[58] Myrtle S. Barnes, "Sam the Guide Allows As To How: Tree Growed Twixt Two Graves," *Times-Herald,* October 16, 1957, 17. Sam's birth year is given as 1901 and 1906 in two separate newspaper articles; his obituary mentions his "age is unknown," "Services Held for Sexton at Jamestown," *Daily Press,* November 11, 1965. Robinson's parents are dubiously named in "Samuel Andrew Robinson," Find A Grave, last updated 6 April 2019, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/191417559/samuel-andrew-robinson.

[59] Robinson was likely already working at Jamestown in the summer of 1937, as he was directly referenced in a letter from William Harrison Smith to Ellen Bagby, 1 August 1937, Bagby Family Papers, 1824-1960, Virginia Museum of History & Culture.

met Robinson on a Richmond, Virginia, street corner and later hired him as a custodian for Jamestown Island.[60] It was this role that wrote Robinson on the Jamestown palimpsest.

Much like the turn-of-the-century visitor, Robinson traveled east from Richmond to Jamestown for the tourist season. Each April, William Harrison Smith, Superintendent of the Grounds for the APVA at Jamestown, would bring Robinson from his home in Richmond to the island, where Robinson lodged for six months.[61] Robinson and Smith appeared to have a collegial relationship; at the very least, the men traded travel advice. Smith wrote how "Sam warned me last summer [about cabs overcharging] before I came up here [New York City] for school."[62] According to Bagby, Robinson "proved apt and interested in history" and began to give tours on the island.[63] By 1954, Robinson had been appointed sexton of Jamestown Church, a small brick building with structural elements dating back to the 1630s. In this capacity, Robinson interpreted the church and its adjacent graveyard using material provided by the APVA and conducting his own research.[64]

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[60] Parke Rouse, "Miss Ellen Bagby: Power Puff Brunnhilde of Jamestown," *Daily Press,* August 15, 1982, C3. Hitchings retells the same story.
[61] It appears that Robinson either did not drive or did not have access to a vehicle. Sam Robinson to William Harrison Smith, April 7, 1954, Records of the Virginia 350th Anniversary Commission, Library of Virginia.
[62] William Harrison Smith to Ellen Bagby, 30 June 1943, Bagby Family Papers, 1824-1960, Virginia Museum of History and Culture. This brief exchange also informs about Robinson's own urban travel experience.
[63] Rouse, "Miss Ellen Bagby," 1982, C3
[64] Barnes, "Sam the Guide," 17. Barnes quotes Robinson directly: "I looks it up myself," he says. "I spends a lot of time in libraries, looking up family histories and things."

Robinson left behind few clues to his personality. Beyond reading him through correspondence by Smith and Bagby, in newspapers, and by way of his “Mother-In-Law Tree” booklet, there are three letters from Robinson.[65] His handwriting is clear, broad, and slants to the right. He writes in pen and always includes the date: April 7, April 14, May 1. In each note, Robinson inquires about transportation from his home at 108 West Hill Street in Richmond to his temporary quarters at Jamestown. Robinson lived in the Gilpin neighborhood, known as Apostle Town in the 1890s, transformed into the Gilpin Court Housing Project in the 1940s, and cut off from downtown Richmond by Interstate 95 in the 1950s.[66] In one letter, he asks after Alice, an African American woman who did domestic labor on the island. Two letters directly reference Ellen Bagby. He asks after “Benchie and Pup,” makes an indecipherable joke about “Pocanatos” [sic] and apologizes for his bad handwriting. He closes each letter, “S.A. Robinson.” He is comfortable and conversational, but refers to his addressee as “Mr. Smith.” Much like the audio recording of his Jamestown tour, Robinson appeared confident and comfortable with his employers and colleagues. His work was valued, and he seemed to enjoy its seasonal arrival.

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[65] These letters are filed within the Rodney B. Taylor Papers at the Special Collections Research Center, William & Mary Libraries. Taylor was the son and stepson of Vivian and William Harrison Smith. He would have had firsthand knowledge of Robinson as a child.

[66] As of 2019, satellite views of Robinson’s Richmond address show a two-story brick duplex. See “Neighborhood Profile: Gilpin Court,” *Richmond Architecture,* accessed October 31, 2019, https://architecturerichmond.com/2016/01/29/neighborhood-profile-gilpin-court/.

Though there were a few African American interpreters in nearby Colonial Williamsburg, Robinson achieved fame among white audiences as the 350th anniversary of Jamestown's founding approached.[67] Vivian Smith, wife of William Harrison Smith, wrote to Ellen Babgy in anticipation of Robinson's annual arrival: "As for Sam it certainly would be fine to have him here especially on Sundays [high tourist visitation]. Also the nice class of people are coming here now and they are the ones that really appreciate Sam."[68] As African American visitation to Jamestown Island was restricted by 1930, these tourists were most likely white.[69] Robinson's recognition among white audiences peaked in 1950, when Robinson was featured on the back cover of April's *Reader's Digest*. In the watercolor rendering, Robinson stands below the John Smith statue in a red tie and short-sleeved collared shirt. An all-white audience, dressed in springtime attire, surrounds him. Robinson gestures up at the Smith statue in a typical tour guide pose, but Smith's statue faces away from him in striding mid-step toward the river. This image marks Robinson's presence on the landscape for audiences across the country, but he is off center, separate and beneath. Though the focal point, he

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[67] In his dissertation, Dr. Rex Ellis, first African American Vice President for the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, mentions two Black interpreters by name: Alec Pleasant and Lydia Gardner. He erroneously notes that Robinson "interpreted at Jamestown during the turn of the century." See Ellis, "Presenting the past: Education, Interpretation and The Teaching of Black History at Colonial Williamsburg," (PhD diss., William & Mary, 1989), 4.

[68] During World War II, Vivian Smith took over as superintendent and postmaster at Jamestown while her husband served in the U.S armed forces. In this capacity, she corresponded with Bagby about administrative, financial and custodial matters. Vivian Smith to Ellen Bagby, undated, Bagby Family Papers, 1824-1960, Virginia Museum of History and Culture.

[69] "Barred from Jamestown," *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, October 4, 1930, 12.

is dwarfed by Smith's memorial to whiteness. Notably, Robinson disliked the choice of tie color: "I ain't never wore a red tie in my life. I don't like 'em."[70] It is impossible to known whether his statement was conscious pushback against the *Reader's Digest* representation, but Robinson was clearly comfortable speaking up in spaces designated for white commemorations.

Robinson's experience is remarkable, given that he was interpreting at the height of Jim Crow in Virginia. For centuries, Jamestown was gendered and interpreted as an idyllic white male space. One mid-nineteenth century exchange highlights this reaction. On October 18, 1854, the *Richmond Enquirer* reviewed a series of sketches "of colonial antiquity on Jamestown Island."[71] The artist "has done more, pictorially, to rescue from oblivion these time-honored relics."[72] Nine days later, on October 27, 1854, *Frederick Douglass' Paper,* an African American newspaper headquartered in Rochester, New York, republished a *New York Tribune* editorial titled "Virginia's Ruins." In a response to the *Enquirer* piece, "Virginia's Ruins" suggested the artist spend time sketching other ruins located throughout Virginia: "Norfolk is commercially a ruin; and Mount Vernon domestically another ruin; and Richmond, if not a ruin, might as well be one as be sustained by the trade in human flesh." At Jamestown – and by extension, the

[70] "Services Held for Sexton at Jamestown," *Daily Press,* November 11, 1965.
[71] Robert M. Scully, an artist from Richmond, Virginia, completed these sketches. For more on Scully, see Charles E. Hatch, Jr., "Robert Sully at Jamestown, 1854," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 22, no. 4 (October 1942): 343-352.
[72] "The Ruins of Jamestown," *Richmond Enquirer,* October 18, 1854.

whole of antebellum Virginia – “all is ruin.” Most were economically disadvantaged, underfed, and poorly clothed. Perhaps most descriptive, the *Tribune* editorial wrote of the thousand “illegitimate mulatto ruins” who were subject to sale by their own white families to pay for “real estate ruins.” The editorial closes with a warning: “Unless [Virginia] adopts a new policy and seeks profit in some more wholesome business than slave breeding, she will … be given over totally to bats and owls.”[73]

Postbellum, Virginia receded into the rural undergrowth as industries moved into northern and western urban centers. At the turn of the century, Virginia remained undeveloped and littered with deteriorating houses, barns, and storefronts. As Shannon Lee Dawdy and others have examined, romanticized ruination only occurs at the “ancient” brick pillars of burned out eighteenth-century farmhouses, such as the still-preserved Ambler Mansion on Jamestown Island. For early preservationists and public historians, racialized ruins were unworthy of reinforcement or restoration. This only further othered the populations who still lived in them: “Allowing ruins to be dismissed as negative spaces allows their inhabitants to be written off as mutants and specters….”[74] Dawdy, in particular, advocates for an

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[73] “Virginia Ruins,” *Frederick Douglass’s Paper*, October 27, 1854.
[74] Shannon Lee Dawdy, “Clockpunk Anthropology and the Ruins of Modernity,” *Cultural Anthropology* 51, no. 6 (December 2010), 776. See also, Sarah Burns, “Better for Haunts: Victorian Houses and the Modern Imagination,” *American Art* 26, no. 3 (2012): 2-25; D. J. McNutt, *Urban Revelations: Images of Ruin in the American City, 1790–1860*, (New York: Routledge, 2006); Ann Laura Stoler, “Imperial Debris: Reflections on Ruins and Ruination,” *Cultural Anthropology* 23, no. 2 (May 2008): 191-219.

archeological emphasis on “uncovering things thought best forgotten” — or what should be the work of public history.[75]

As the United States moved into the twentieth-century, Virginia’s public history sites increasingly adhered to projects of national tourism that “reshaped and redefined the built and natural environment of the United States… [and] influenced the way people defined and identified themselves as Americans.”[76] National or heritage tourism quickly served “as a ritual of American citizenship.”[77] However, this ritual was not for everyone. At the turn of the century, Virginia’s white population maintained social and racial order through “managed race relations.” This system “wholeheartedly supported segregation and disenfranchisement but rejected the rigid racial oppression and violence trumpeted elsewhere in the South.” Elite Virginians – lawyers, doctors, politicians, judges, preservationists — considered themselves paternalistic toward the black population. They “promised to provide a modicum of basic services and even encouraged a certain amount of black educational and economic uplift. In return, white elites demanded complete deference and expected blacks to seek redress of their grievances only through channels deemed appropriate by whites.”[78] Ellen Bagby and Sam

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[75] Dawdy, “Clockpunk Anthropology and the Ruins of Modernity,” 769.
[76] Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 2001), 6.
[77] Shaffer, *See America First,* 4.
[78] J. Douglas Smith, *Managing White Supremacy: Race, Politics and Citizenship in Jim Crow Virginia* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 4.

Robinson certainly fit into this paternalistic relationship, though there is scant evidence from Robinson's perspective.

After WWI, blacks began to push back against white paternalism and demand an end to Jim Crow inequality; in retaliation for such "betrayal" white Virginians codified white supremacy with Jim Crow laws and restrictions in the 1920s and 1930s.[79] In this increasingly tense environment "[a]s paternalism eroded, urban whites increasingly turned to the state legislature and city councils to redefine the terms of white supremacy; rural whites, who dominated the state's politics, enthusiastically embraced such measures."[80] As the twentieth century rolled on, these sites were increasingly restricted to white Americans through Jim Crow regulation. In March 1924, Virginia's General Assembly passed the Racial Integrity Act, which "defined a white person as an individual with 'no trace whatsoever of any blood other than Caucasian'" and outlawed interracial marriage.[81] Walter Plecker, director of the Bureau of Vital Statistics, led this legislative charge from his powerful political position and "waged a campaign of intimidation and threats aimed at classifying all Virginians by race."[82] Other white Virginians aided in Plecker's quest to clearly and bureaucratically delineate between the races.[83] This

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[79] Smith, *Managing White Supremacy,* 16.
[80] Smith, *Managing White Supremacy,* 15.
[81] Smith, *Managing White Supremacy*, 223.
[82] Smith, *Managing White Supremacy,* 89.
[83] This group included the Anglo-Saxon Clubs, first started by John Powell in Richmond, Virginia. The group advocated for "the preservation and maintenance of Anglo-Saxon ideals and civilization" by increasing Jim Crow statues and racial integrity across the Commonwealth. See Smith, *Managing White Supremacy*, 76-106.

ordering increased in the aftermath of 1954's *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision. In Virginia, the federal mandate to integrate public schools led to massive resistance from elected white officials and community leaders. Municipalities first tried to simply ignore the ruling, then chose to close schools forced to integrate by federal judges.[84]

Codification also affected access to historic sites, where black visitation was increasingly limited and/or prohibited. In 1929, undergraduate students from the Hampton Institute, a Black college in Hampton, Virginia, were denied entry to Jamestown Island based on skin color, and the APVA refused entry to a Black man visiting with his white employer.[85] The Black press immediately called out these affronts. The *Norfolk Journal and Guide,* a regional African American newspaper, pointed out the importance of the site within the "history of the Negro in America" and decried this restriction.[86] Interestingly, this unnamed writer appealed to the genteel and paternal persona perpetuated by elite Virginians who felt they knew best for Black populations: "For Virginians of all people to deny to Negroes the privilege of making a physical inspection of a place so important in their history is indeed unlike true Virginians."[87] Though the platitude may have been disingenuous, its tone shows how African American communities bristled at the exclusion.

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[84] Smith, *Managing White Supremacy,* 296.

[85] "Barred from Jamestown." In 1929, a relative of Julius Rosenwald appealed to the APVA to bring his unnamed Black secretary on a visit to Jamestown; this request was denied.

[86] "Barred from Jamestown."

[87] "Barred from Jamestown."

It was into this racially segregated environment that Sam Robinson guided white audiences across the colonial foundations of the United States. He gave tours to white audiences seeking a great Anglo past at the height of McCarthyism and amid the turmoil of the Cold War. As the Commonwealth of Virginia fought *Brown v. Board of Education* tooth and nail, Robinson educated white visitors about *their* colonial history. Ten years before the 1967 *Loving v. Virginia* Supreme Court decision, he lectured to foreign dignitaries from England and Greece.

As the 350th anniversary of Jamestown approached, white Virginians readied for an influx of visitors. In the late 1950s, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) also considered the power of commemoration. In early November 1956, W.E.B. Du Bois pointed out specific dates that "deeply affect the history of the Negroes and of this country" in a letter to the NAACP board of directors. Du Bois saw 1957 not as a date to commemorate Jamestown but as the centennial of the Dred Scott decision. He also noted, "If we [presumably the NAACP and other Black leaders] neglect to mark this history, it may be distorted or forgotten."[88] Du Bois was undoubtedly noting the erasure of black history from the Jamestown planning. As pointed out by other scholars, efforts to commemorate African

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[88] W.E.B. Du Bois to NAACP Board, November 5, 1956, in Herbert Aptheker, ed. *The Correspondence of W.E.B. Du Bois, Vol. 3* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1978), 405-6.

history faced resistance and zero participation from white people.[89] How might Robinson's presence push back against this deliberate ghosting of Black histories at Jamestown?

Though there had been celebrations in 1807, 1857 and 1907, the Jamestown Festival of 1957 was the most ambitious commemorative endeavor. It was a two-pronged affair, organized at the state level by the Virginia 350th Anniversary Commission and at the federal level by the Jamestown-Williamsburg-Yorktown National Celebration Commission.[90] The APVA had a limited role and busied itself with beautification of their island acreage.[91] In early planning documents, festival organizers wanted the celebrations to be "nationwide in scope" though the historic focus would be Virginia. The eight-months of "living events" would ideally pay for itself.[92] In a public letter to the Virginian population, then-Governor Thomas B. Stanley discussed the "great heritage" that required Commonwealth citizens "to properly commemorate this anniversary."[93] Virginia would transform into a shrine itself, as the Festival would "create a great national historical monument before it is overrun and destroyed by increasing industrialization

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[89] The APVA "belatedly approved" a plan by Elder Lightfoot Solomon Michaux to commemorate the first Africans. See Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 683.
[90] *The Jamestown Festival: Plans for a National Celebration in 1957*, (Richmond, Virginia: Whittet & Shepperson, 1957).
[91] Walter J. Mueller, *History of the Colonial Capital Branch, Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, 1889-1988* (Williamsburg, VA: Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, 1988), 33.
[92] *Report of the Virginia 350th Anniversary Commission, House Document No. 25,* (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1956), 7. The economic boost is often discussed as a "permanent benefit of the Festival" in governmental planning documents, 20.
[93] *The Jamestown Festival,* 2.

and urbanization."[94] The history on display, however, was not reflective of the whole population and it was designed to evoke nostalgia for a white supremacist version of colonial expansion. The planned events focused on Anglo-European arrival and permanent imprint on the landscape, with some archeological discussion of Virginia Indians. Despite an interest in ""learning [Jamestown's] story more completely" the Festival activities at Jamestown, Williamsburg and Yorktown failed to discuss African indenture, enslavement, and material existence on the landscape.[95]

In addition to the history, invited guests were all white for Queen Elizabeth's visit and sit-down dinner in October 1957.[96] The monarch presented a "17th century casket (box) made of tortoise shell and with some reference to American Indians on the exterior" as a gift, but there was no Native American delegation to greet her formally.[97] It was not without an inquiry from Virginia's Mattaponi Chief, O.T. Custalow. In September 1957, Custalow wrote to Stanley and reminded the governor how Virginia Indians "greeted the first English settlers" and the Queen's visit was a "particularly appropriate" opportunity for the Mattaponi chief to present her with "a trinket

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[94] *Report of the Virginia 350th Anniversary Commission, 7.*

[95] John L. Cotter and J. Paul Hudson, "Preface," *New Discoveries at Jamestown: Site of the First Successful English Settlement in America,* (Washington, DC: National Park Service,1957).

[96] As Executive Director of the Commission, Parke Rouse, Jr. fielded multiple inquires into dinner invitations for the Queen's reception. Conrad L. Wirth, then-Director of the Interior Department, chastised Rouse for neglecting to include certain persons. Rouse responded, "This whole operation is complicated and awkward, but I believe we will get through it alive." Wirth to Rouse, September 27, 1957, and Rouse to Wirth, October 4, 1957, Records of the Virginia 350th Anniversary Commission, Library of Virginia.

[97] L.D. Battle memo to Committee members, October 1, 1957, Records of the Virginia 350th Anniversary Commission, 1953-1958, Library of Virginia.

symbolic of the early gifts of [his] ancestors to those first white settlers."[98] Stanley's response is unavailable, but Lewis A. McMurran, delegate and chairman of Virginia's 350th Anniversary Commission, responded with a firm no: "This commission very much appreciates and understands your interest…." McMurran suggests Custalow and his tribe see the Queen when she visited the Festival Park at Jamestown. No Virginia Indians were present at the Queen's official reception and dinner at the Williamsburg Inn in Colonial Williamsburg.

Though Virginia Indians were excluded, Sam Robinson was called upon to interpret for the Queen. Guides were needed on the island "since so much of Jamestown has disappeared and has to be conjured up for the visitor by means of oral explanation…."[99] Though William Harrison and Vivian Smith were still in residence on the island, Robinson personally interpreted for three of the twenty minutes that Queen Elizabeth II was on Jamestown Island.[100] Robinson's reputation had preceded him: he had shared the same tale for Elizabeth's mother, Mary, during a visit in 1954.[101] In one October 17, 1957 newspaper photo, Queen Elizabeth II listens to Robinson's "spiel" with a smile

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[98] Chief O.T. Custalow to Governor Thomas Stanley, September 12, 1957, Records of the Virginia 350th Anniversary Commission, 1953-1958, Library of Virginia.
[99] Parke Rouse, Jr. to Ellen Bagby, February 25, 1956, Records of the Virginia 350th Anniversary Commission, Library of Virginia.
[100] Herb Thompson and Harry Nash, "Queen Attends Service at Jamestown Church," *Daily Press,* October 16, 1957.
[101] Thomson and Nash, "Queen Attends Service."

on her face but the photographer cut him out of the shot.[102] Other photographs show Robinson and the queen shaking hands; Robinson wears a suit and smiles at her. In newspaper accounts, Robinson was directly identified by his full name. In programmatic planning, he is referred to as “a Canada-born Negro guide” and “the old custodian.”[103] Though no film exists of the Queen and Robinson’s interaction, it may have been the only time she directly heard from a Black interpreter while in Virginia.[104]

Robinson’s presence was not the only example of African American involvement in the commemoration. African American labor was required to halt Jamestown’s decay in material and memorial ways. Blackness was also commoditized in tourist publications and through national or heritage tourism in what Grace Elizabeth Hale terms “making whiteness American culture.”[105] In order to consume the landscape at Jamestown, in order to soak up its Anglo-Saxon work ethic and American ancientness, black labor needed to recover it from the ground. African Americans worked on building a seawall along the James River, dug trenches for National Park Service archeologists, and worked as custodians and cooks for white APVA employees.

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[102] “Royal Pair Listen to Sam Robinson’s spiel at Jamestown,” *Times-Herald Newport News,* October 17, 1957.
[103] There are many draft schedules of the Queen’s time in Virginia. See Records of the Virginia 350th Anniversary Commission, Library of Virginia.
[104] This conjecture was shared by Preservation Virginia public historian, Mark Summers, during the Black History Month program “American Heartbreak: Historical Memory and Racial Amnesia” offered at Jamestown in February 2019.
[105] Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 10.

Though available correspondence and newspaper accounts describe Robinson with respect, little is know about his own experiences with that "nice class of [white] people." Robinson died in November 1965 and was buried in Richmond's East End Cemetery. His grave is simple, untended, and difficult to find. However, he left a narrative that grounded him in Jamestown's palimpsest. His telling of "The Mother-in-Law Tree" provided visible public space to act as an arbiter of knowledge for white audiences. Now, as Sarah Harrison's tomb rose up in her ghostlore, Robinson's biography emerges from 1957's Jamestown Festival grounds. Though maudlin in content, Robinson's recitation of Jamestown's history beyond the Mother-In-Law Tree was accurate and well spoken. He shared some Virginia Indian history, but it is not known if he shared the histories of the First Africans. Within the palimpsest of Jamestown's public history, the seventeenth-century mingled with Robinson's mid-twentieth experience. His commemorative mark shows what histories mattered but also who had brief power to tell them in Jim Crow Virginia.

Layer 3: Jane, or Jamestown as a site of horror

In Jamestown's ghostlore, modern visitors recount seeing a starving, poorly clothed child as they stroll along a landscape.[106] This ghost story represents the "restless spirits appear to roam the grounds where they lived and died." In particular, "[e]maciated former inhabitants walk the grounds of the old Jamestown fort." In these hauntings, ghost tour publications detail the

[106] Behrend, *The Hauntings of Williamsburg,* 171-174; Taylor, *The Ghosts of Williamsburg, Volume II,* 76-80.

“tragedy and misfortune” of Jamestown’s 400-year history: the starvation, fire, disease, violence, and eventual relocation that left the island “all gone to ruin.”[107] These miseries left a spectral mark on the island’s landscape.

Emaciated specters mingle ethereally with historical archeology to tell “tantalizing stories” buried in the earth. Anthropologist James Deetz argues that historical knowledge can be located *In Small Things Forgotten*: “Material culture may be the most objective source of information we have concerning America’s past” — we should perhaps set aside the written “and listen to another voice.”[108] The Starving Time misery, once considered regional ghostlore, is now officially shared in museum exhibits using unearthed archeological material.

At Historic Jamestowne, Preservation Virginia archeologists listen to the stories associated with excavated artifacts, as the site is an active archeological dig. In the summer of 2012, while excavating Structure 191 that dated to the 1609-1610 Starving Time, the Jamestown archeological team uncovered the butchered remains of a teenage girl.[109] This recovery occurred as public audiences wandered through the site, though the human remains

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[107] John Fontaine, 1716, qtd in L.B. Taylor, *The Ghosts of Williamsburg, Volume II* (Progress Printing Co., 1999), 77.

[108] James Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten: An Archeology of Early American Life* (New York: Anchor Books, 1996), 254, 260.

[109] Dr. Douglas Owsley, Head of Physical Anthropology at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, analyzed the remains and the “abnormal marks” were confirmed to be the cleaning process to cannibalize her remains. See James Horn, William Kelso, Douglas Owsley, and Beverly Straube, *Jane: Starvation, Cannibalism, and Endurance at Jamestown* (Williamsburg, VA: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 2013), 15; William M. Kelso, *Jamestown: The Truth Revealed* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2017), 188.

were not shared with visitors in the moment. The bones included a skull, jawbone and leg bone that displayed “postmortem cuts” made by human tools and not wild animal predation.[110] The remains belonged to a teenage girl, approximately fourteen years old, and “are characteristic of an early seventeenth-century English female.” Analysis of her bone composition showed that she subsisted on a wheat-based diet.[111] The remains were butchered to render the soft tissue available for consumption. The butchering marks suggest a variety of experience, from utter desperation to calculated deviance. With biological sex and postmortem trauma identified, interpretations were varied but not without careful thought. How might these bones, as the spectral waste of an era the English tried to bury, serve as an instructional tool about one layer of the Jamestown palimpsest? Through extensive forensic analysis and meticulous archeological recovery, “Jane” as the discovered remains were named, provided the “voice” that finally confirmed the six contemporary written accounts of cannibalism.[112]

In Virginia, the Jamestown endeavor quickly turned from Edenic to horrific as disease, starvation, violence, and death trapped the colonists in miserable and taboo territories. For seventeenth-century Europeans, the island was an unknown, quasi-sublime, and bountiful landscape far removed

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[110] Kelso, *Jamestown: The Truth Revealed,* 189.
[111] Kelso, *Jamestown: The Truth Revealed,* 189-190.
[112] For more on scholarly debates about the possibility of cannibalism at Jamestown, see Rachel B. Herrmann, “The “tragicall historie”: Cannibalism and Abundance in Colonial Jamestown,” *The William & Mary Quarterly,* 68, no. 1 (January 2011): 47-74.

from England's crowded cities. Almost from their arrival, Jamestown was terrifying for its new inhabitants; the island contained "the almost infinite manifestations of the forces for chaos, natural and human."[113] To protect themselves from attack, the English quickly built a palisaded triangular fort, complete with armored bulwarks.

The James Fort was an attempt to cloister against the encroaching "New World" strangeness. George Percy, one of Jamestown's original colonists and its council president from 1609-1610, first described Virginia as an abundant and fertile "Paradise." Shellfish were "thicke as stones" and strawberries "foure times bigger and better than ours in England." Corn grew to "a mans height" and there was a "great store of Deere." Percy wrote, "this Countrey is a fruitful soile, bearing many godly and fruitfull Trees, such as Mulberries, Cherries, Walnuts, Ceders, Cypresse, Sassafras, and Vines in great abundance." Quickly, within the span of weeks, the idyllic landscape was transformed, as the English died from "cruell diseases as Swellings, Fluxes, Burning Fevers" and by violence. The group also suffered from hunger, losing several men to starvation within the first six months of landing at Jamestown.[114] However, Percy's most horrific descriptions come from the brief period of his 1609-1610 presidency: the Starving Time. This season is just one layer from the Jamestown palimpsest. Using seventeenth-century

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[113] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Landscapes of Fear* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979), 6.
[114] George Percy, "Observations Gathered Out of a Discourse of the Plantation of the Southern Colonies in Virginia by the English, 1606," In *The Jamestown Voyages Under the First Charter*, *1606-1609,* ed. Philip L. Barbour (New York: Routledge,1969), 129–146.

accounts from European men, Historic Jamestowne now interprets this layer of the island as a landscape of fear.

All in all, there are six contemporary written accounts of cannibalism at Jamestown, and Percy was the only eyewitness in the fort during this period.[115] "A Trewe Relacyon of the procedeings and ocurrentes of Momente which have hapned in Virginia," was written in the 1620s as a rebuttal to John Smith's bombastic Jamestown narratives. However, "A Trewe Relacyon" was not widely available until Lyon G. Tyler, president at the College of William & Mary and later Jamestown preservation promoter, re-published it in 1922. Though there were earlier periods of hunger and disease, Percy wrote about "This starveing Tyme" as a time of utter deprivation and suffering. By late 1609, "all of [the colonists] att James Towne [were] beginneinge to feel the sharpe pricke of hunger which noe man trewly descrybe butt he which hathe Tasted the bitterness thereof."[116] (This last line was perhaps a dig at Smith, who had returned to England earlier in 1609 after an assassination attempt.) The winter made the colonists into ghastly specters with "famin beginnenge to Looke gastely and pale in every face" and "so Leane thatt they Looked lyke anotannes [anatomies or skeletons]." Percy notes that one "mighte Reade a

[115] In addition to Percy, the following accounts tell of cannibalism at Jamestown with varying degrees of detail: John Smith's 1624 *General History*; 1624's "A Briefe Declaration of the Plantation of Virginia" by eight men who refer to themselves as "Ancient Planters"; two Virginia Company reports, *A True declaration of the estate of the Colonie in Virginia, 1610* (with testimony from Thomas Gates, whose May 1610 arrival at Jamestown seemingly ended the Starving Times) and *The Tragical Relation of the Virginia Assembly, 1624*; and a June 1610 letter from the Spanish ambassador to England, Don Alonso de Velasco, to the king of Spain.
[116] Percy, "A Trewe Relacyon."

lecture of miserie in our people's faces" as the he bleakly states: "We are starved."

According to Percy's "Trewe Relacyon," starvation caused the English to display debased behaviors. As hunger set in, Percy had colonists executed for stealing and/or hoarding food. First, the English ate anything animal and organic within the fort confines: horses, dogs, cats, rodents, and leather. The Powhatan Indians, angered by the violent encroachment of the English colony and suffering through their own famine, killed those who ventured beyond the fort palisades to forage. As conditions deteriorated, Percy narrated how some of the English dug up recently dead corpses for meat and lapped up the blood of injured comrades. With gruesome detail, Percy wrote of "one of [the] Colline [colony] [who?] murdered his wife Ripped the childe out of her woombe and threwe itt into the River and after Chopped the Mother in pieces and salted her for his foode." After confession under torture, this man was executed. When the winter ended, with the arrival of supplies and new leadership, Jamestown had been diminished from 500 colonists to a mere 60 survivors. Despite this apocalyptic moment, the colony did not cease operations. Instead, it lived to see another day, month, year, decade and century.

The Starving Time, as an example of famine and natural calamity, "aroused feelings of the utmost horror in passers-by" and operates as a

historically contingent moment in Jamestown's palimpsest.[117] In the island's ghostlore, Percy's seventeenth-century horrors haunt more contemporary visitors. Famine, starvation, disease, cannibalism, and near-constant Indian attack coalesced into what historian Kathleen Donegan termed a "theater of atrocity" that, paradoxically, also cemented its survival.[118] These spectral narratives lingered on the landscape, as academic scholarship now catches up to the public and popular histories long shared on the overgrown, uninhabited island. Donegan argued that first-hand English accounts are not only literal depictions of misery but also an attempt to reconcile English identity with existence in the non-English New World.[119]

In order to properly document their colonial position, the English dutifully recorded their brutal "catastrophe" at sites like Jamestown. This catastrophic experience shook their collective sense of self and removed them from the lived English experience in Western Europe. The colonists did horrible things, and horrible things were done to them. However, permanence was always the end game; colonial (dis)possession required behaviors never before imagined.[120] Donegan dwells on the seasoning period when English colonists became "acclimatized" to the New World. Catastrophe complicates progressive narratives of settlement and cross-cultural interaction. The colony

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[117] Tuan, *Landscapes of Fear*, 72.
[118] Kathleen Donegan, *Seasons of Misery: Catastrophe and Colonial Settlement in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 18, 72.
[119] Donegan, *Seasons of Misery,* 2.
[120] Donegan, *Seasons of Misery,* 6.

was messy, chaotic, and unformed for many years.[121] Thus, the foundations of the United States were rooted in "a state of emergency, a theater of atrocity" that differs greatly from the sanitized colonial world enshrined in early twentieth-century commemorations.

Jane's discovery and the confirmation of survival cannibalism made newspaper headlines across the world, and her story was quickly incorporated into Historic Jamestowne interpretation: alongside the archeological trench where she was recovered, during walking tours through the reconstructed palisades, and in the Nathalie P. & Alan M. Voorhees Archaearium located on Jamestown Island. The Archaearium is Preservation Virginia's traditional museum, a 7500-square-foot space where only a fraction of recovered artifacts are displayed. It opened in 2006, as the island approached the 400th anniversary of 1607. In a museum dominated by masculine materials -- military weaponry, ship paraphernalia, body armor -- Jane is the only woman to have a dedicated exhibit. Her exhibit panels and case were installed in early May 2013, immediately following the announcement of documented cannibalism at Jamestown.[122] Jane's exhibit occupied a space previously held by female remains interpreted as Mistress Forrest, one of the first women to arrive at Jamestown.[123] It was created in-

[121] Donegan, *Seasons of Misery,* 12.
[122] Before her Archaearium exhibit, the Jane remains were on display in the Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History exhibition, *Written in Bone,* open from February 2009 until January 2014.
[123] Beverly A. Straube, *The Archaearium: Rediscovering Jamestown 1607-1699* (APVA Virginia, 2007).

house by Preservation Virginia archeologists and curators.[124] The remains are exhibited in an enclosed gallery named “The Dead Inform the Living.” This gallery displays other skeletons, some plaster and some human, of early James Fort colonists. The enclosed space warns visitors that human remains are contained within, and photographs are not allowed. Jane’s dedicated exhibit spans an entire wall and her narrative is adjacent to a small case displaying other women’s histories. There are also exhibits where the women of Preservation Virginia’s curatorial and archeological staff [Jamie May, Merry Outlaw, Mary Anna Richardson, Bly Straube] are featured alongside materials women would have produced and worked with: pottery, beads, foodways. Pocahontas is only peripherally discussed; instead the Indian women who lived in the fort are highlighted alongside English women.

How best to depict survival cannibalism in the often-sterile museum space?[125] According to curator Jamie May, Jane was deliberately and carefully displayed in a non-forensic manner. Instead of being laid out with all the bone fragments individually and separately spaced, May’s curatorial team gave Jane back her human form. Her skull and jawbone were reconnected and placed in juxtaposition with her reconstructed head. Using forensic reconstruction methods, sculptors molded Jane’s features across her

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[124] Per personal email from Jamie May.

[125] In the United States, few museums have tackled the topic of cannibalism – survival, ritual or otherwise. However, San Diego’s Museum of Man currently has the exhibition, “Cannibals: Myth and Reality”; Chicago’s Field Museum displays the cannibal forks of Fijian tribes; and The Emigrant Trail Museum in Donner Memorial State Park covers the Donner Party expedition and its instances of survival cannibalism.

remaining bone structure. Her head was rebuilt using computed tomography, or CT scanning and computer imaging software. The skull was virtually rebuilt — "filled in … digitally corrected and her bones returned to their proper anatomical position." Then, a resin cast of the reconstructed skull was brought to StudioEIS, a Brooklyn, New York art studio where sculptors do reconstruction, to recreate Jane's visage as "biologically and historically accurate" as possible.[126] She was thus rendered as human again, resurrected, as it were, through this careful reconstruction.

Jane's biography and reconstructed skull help to embody the Starving Time, a moment within the palimpsest that is Jamestown's public history. Her remains were not artifacts of English high culture, but rather its extreme degradation in the early days of imperial expansion. However, acknowledging this violence does not inform the visitor about other traumas inflicted upon the indigenous Powhatan Indians who also existed on the landscape. Native American experience, also operating on this landscape of fear at the onset of the white imperial project, is not discussed in terms of violence or genocide. At the Archaearium, native women are represented through the materials they left inside James Fort: cooking items, beads, animal bones. The presence of these items – those "small things forgotten" – helps the public "see" persons absent from the written records and interpets, or contextualizes, the spectral

[126] Horn, Kelso, Owsley and Straube, *Jane: Starvation, Cannibalism, and Endurance*, 37-38. Interestingly, StudioEIS is also creating the statues for the Richmond, Virginia Women's Monument, dedicated to Virginian women including Jamestown's Anne Burras and the Pamunkey Indian leader, Cockacoeske.

waste of fort inhabitants. Archeological discovery transformed the specter of cannibalism into a named figure who evidences the presence of women at James Fort. According to William Kelso, director of archeology at Jamestown, "[P]erhaps the recovery of Jane from the trash, examining her mutilated remains, and reconstructing her appearance somehow atones for her untimely demise and her body's grim post-mortem history."[127] This resurrection happens time and time again in Virginia's public history, as the forgotten phantoms of the past are recovered from the palimpsest.

Jamestown Re-imagined

In David Glassberg's *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life*, location features prominently in the history of American people: "a nation of immigrants, rootless, always in flux, … this instability made us value the special places in our history [both collectively and individually] all the more… as anchors for our personal and family identities."[128] This "sense of history" links environments – built and natural - to past moments of import for certain communities. At locations like Jamestown, these identities preserve specific histories for specific audiences. Glassberg's "sense of history" concerns how modern audiences connect and belong as it "helps us gain a sense of *where* we are … *when* we are … and *with whom we*

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[127] Kelso, *Jamestown*, 202.

[128] David Glassberg, *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), xiii.

belong."[129] By identifying a space as historic (and designating so in its name) groups lay claim (once again) to location and exclude narratives that might fracture the community's desired imagining of itself in the present. The historic identification is inherently exclusionary when activated by "commemorative ceremonies and historical markers."[130] Although place is not inherently exceptional, these memory-making devices mark the landscape as haunted.[131]

Robinson's work preceded current interpretative interventions as Historic Jamestowne approached its 1619 commemoration of the First Africans. Jamestown archeologists excavated and interpreted the Angela site, where a captive African woman lived in bondage during the first decades of the colony.[132] There were also "First Africans" walking tours and an opportunity to "meet" Angela in the form of an actor-interpreter. Guests were encouraged to "Listen as [Angela] recalls her former home in Angola, her capture and her new life in Virginia." Programming also includes discussions about Jamestown's commemorative power into the twentieth-century. First offered in February 2019, "American Heartbreak: Historical Memory and Racial Amnesia" program told audiences about "the civil rights struggle to

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[129] Glassberg, *Sense of History,* 7.
[130] Glassberg, *Sense of History*, 116.
[131] Glassberg, *Sense of History,* 122.
[132] I borrow "captive African" from a February 19, 2019 program, "The African and African-American Experience at Colonial National Historical Park," sponsored by All Together Williamsburg. First Africans Research Fellow, Chardé Reid, used the phrase to describe Africans who were either enslaved or indentured during the early period of English colonialism in Virginia.

acknowledge black history" at historic sites and African American significant presence within American history.[133] These programs incorporate new interpretations on and about the palimpsest of Historic Jamestowne.

At Jamestown, there is a palimpsest of public history. Narratives of race and violence were erased to express white nationalism fueled by preservationist groups like the APVA. In more recent memory, museum interpretation by curators, guides, archeologists and forensic scientists has slowly and deliberately unearthed complicated narratives underneath the nostalgic "sense of history" long associated with Jamestown. Sam Robinson's role as arbiter of white knowledge and Jane's evidence of survival cannibalism are just two of the island's complicated narratives. There are now programs dedicated to revealing more on the Jamestown palimpsest: a history of women archeologists, the daily experience of the first Africans, and the history of racialized commemoration at Jamestown. Still, Jamestown's ghostlore is not without use. Though violent, flat, and ahistorical, the ghostly gentlemen, heartsick wives, and starving settlers re-imagine histories to already primed consumers of heritage tourism. Exploring them in tandem with other commemorative markings, exhibitions, correspondence, archeology, artifacts, and human remains reveals the dense layers of public history.

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[133] This program was referenced earlier in this chapter. It was routinely offered at Historic Jamestowne and shared in outreach efforts with William & Mary's Lemon Project and the Williamsburg Regional Library. https://events.wm.edu/event/view/wm/113534.

Chapter 3: Eve's Curse: Making Space for Enslavement Interpretation

> Places, places are still there. If a house burns down, it's gone, but the place — the picture of it — stays, and not just in my rememory, but out there, in the world. What I remember is a picture floating around out there outside my head. I mean, even if I don't think it, even if I die, the picture of what I did, or knew, or saw is still out there. Right in the place where it happened.
>
> Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

Eve's Curse

In 2019, historic sites and museums throughout the United States commemorated a specific year in the nation's history: 1619. This date marks the origins of chattel slavery in North America with the arrival of the first Africans.[1] Virginia's public historians examined the four hundred years between 1619 and 2019 with tours, exhibits, performances, interviews, podcasts, television programs, and newspaper articles. In these examinations, historic sites shared previously excluded narratives while national and international publications documented how these inclusions impacted the visiting public. In one interview, public school teacher Gregory Stallings ruminated on his visits to Colonial Williamsburg (CW) as a Black child in the 1960s.[2] On a 2019 return trip, he noted, "It's amazing to see the

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[1] Michael Guasco, *Slaves and Englishmen: Human Bondage in the Early Modern Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014); Nell Irvin Painter, *Creating Black Americans*: *African-American History and Its Meanings, 1619 to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). For some scholars, 1619 is imprecise as Africans were already in North America before this date. However, for many 1619 symbolizes the commencement of forced labor to the English colony of Jamestown and its spread to other regions. For more on this commemoration, see *The New York Times'* 1619 Project, an expansive program consisting of multi-genre writings, a podcast series, and other media organized by journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones and published in August 2019.
[2] George M. Johnson, "Yes, 'Black' is capitalized when we're talking about race," *Mic,* October 10, 2019, https://www.mic.com/p/yes-black-is-capitalized-when-were-talking-about-race-19208252; P. Gabrielle Foreman, et al. "Writing about Slavery/Teaching About Slavery:

African presence that is here [Colonial Williamsburg] right now. When I came before, as a kid, it did not exist."[3] Stallings witnessed this presence as CW commemorated 1619 and its own institutional anniversary of forty years of African American programming.[4] Commemoration exhibits whose histories matter to an institution and who *should* matter to the visiting public. By 2019, enslavement interpretation, or the telling of eighteenth-century enslaved experience to twenty-first century audiences, mattered for Colonial Williamsburg. Much of this history occurred at the Peyton Randolph House, sprawling red building complex located at the heart of CW's Historic Area.

The Randolph House is an important and allegedly haunted structure on Colonial Williamsburg's landscape. Long before the house's transformation to a museumized space, visitors shared their ghostly experiences at the house in personal correspondence and regional newspapers. On his 1824 tour of the United States, the French Revolutionary War general, the Marquis de Lafayette, allegedly heard voices and felt a ghostly nudge on his shoulder that prevented him from entering a room.[5] An upstairs bedroom is allegedly

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This Might Help" community-sourced document, October 10, 2019, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1A4TEdDgYslX-hlKezLodMIM71My3KTN0zxRv0IQTOQs/mobilebasic?urp=gmail_link. I capitalize "Black" to adhere to style decisions made by scholars working to revise linguistic and stylistic histories.

[3] Max Cohen, "Slavery in America: Some historical sites try to show the horrors. Others are behind," *USA Today,* October 16, 2019, https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/education/2019/10/16/slavery-racism-black-history-historical-sites-historic-places-field-trip/1905346001/.

[4] This anniversary includes an exhibit titled "Revealing the Priceless: 40 Years of African American Interpretation," a three-part panel discussion series, Historic Area programming, and a community-driven film series.

[5] Jackie Eileen Behrend, *The Hauntings of Williamsburg, Yorktown, and Jamestown* (Winston-Salem, NC: John F. Blair Publishers, 1998, 2000), 18.

haunted by a white woman "distraught and agitated and … nervously wringing her hands" — perhaps warning of "impending tragedy."[6] Museum personnel have also shared their spectral encounters at the site: "a black woman, in colonial dress, seated at the foot of the stairs, swaying from side to side in time with a [Christmas] carol," "a black man, in colonial costume, shaking his finger at [an employee]" in the cellar. One custodian saw a recently deceased coworker standing at the top of the staircase.[7]

One horrifying ghost story attached to the Randolph site involves Eve, an enslaved woman who reenacts her lived experience within a spectral narrative. Eve labored as a "personal slave" to Elizabeth Randolph, whose "daily fits of temper made Eve's life continuously miserable." In 1775, the British royal governor, Lord Dunmore, issued a proclamation "that granted freedom to all slaves who ran away from their Patriot owners to join the British army." Eve took advantage of this chance at freedom and fled with several other Randolph house slaves. Allegedly, she left behind a young son. However, her freedom was short-lived. By 1780, she was either captured or returned willingly to the Randolph house, where she "received a severe whipping." Eve escaped again before being recaptured and re-enslaved. By Elizabeth Randolph's 1782 death, Eve had been sold away for her "bad

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[6] L.B. Taylor, *The Ghosts of Williamsburg … and Nearby Environs* (Richmond: Progress Printing, 1983), 17-19. Inexplicably, Taylor titles this story "The Nagging Shrew of the Peyton Randolph House." The sexist title suggests the specter is less scary and just annoying. The eyewitness Helen Hall Mason's firsthand account is retold as a warning, not a nag. See also Pamela Kinney, *Virginia's Haunted Historic Triangle: Williamsburg, Yorktown, Jamestown and other Haunted Localities*, (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, 2011), 54.
[7] L.B. Taylor, *The Ghosts of Williamsburg, Volume II,* 3-4.

behaviour." Allegedly, when her new enslaver arrived, Eve physically resisted and was tied "facedown, over the horse's back. Then her wrists were tied to her ankles under the horse's belly." In this torturous position, Eve "vowed vengeance on all who inhabited her former home." In her ghost story, this curse has plagued the site ever since. Children allegedly die tragically at the home, and there are "many angry souls" who "continue to call the Peyton Randolph House their home." Within the "Eve's Curse" ghost story, "[p]erhaps Eve's spirit had returned to carry out her menacing promise." [8] Visitors to the city of Williamsburg often hear about Eve on nightly ghost tours, including those offered by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.[9]

The Randolph House ghost stories include sensations of surveillance and anxiety. With its large enclosed back yard overseen by huge windows, the complex was designed and subsequently interpreted to survey enslaved labor. Over the last forty years, urban enslavement has found embodiment in the groundbreaking work of Colonial Williamsburg's African American actor interpreters and their administrative allies. Tracing the inclusion of Eve, a historically enslaved woman with her own ghost story, in Colonial Williamsburg's living history interpretation shows the importance of

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[8] Behrend, *The Hauntings of Williamsburg*, 16-19.
[9] "Ghosts among Us, Leader Introduction/Summary, Curse of Eve at The Randolph," revised 4/2009, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library. According to this program script, Eve gives a monologue with the exact information from Behrend's book: "Most of you think that we, slaves, have very little power, very little voice. Well the spirits must have heard my voice the night that they were taking me away. I vowed vengeance on this once-powerful house; that the desperation and despair the house brought me, would also come to all who resided under its roof." In this performance-based ghost tour, Eve's spirit also mentions Mary Peachy as another ghost who haunts the Randolph site.

representation in Virginia's public history. This chapter charts Colonial Williamsburg's use of the Randolph site to interpret enslavement and museum transparency, or the museum's inner workings laid bare, alongside its depiction as the most haunted house in Williamsburg. The reconstructed spaces where the enslaved lived and labored make it an important location to reproduce histories displaced for decades by Colonial Williamsburg.

In *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance,* literary studies scholar Joseph Roach examined how long-dead presences manifest in community commemorations. These presences are embodied through "satisfactory alternates" or "performed effigies" that allowed a community to "perpetuate themselves." The alternates or effigies were "specially nominated mediums or surrogates" such as dancers, musicians, and actors.[10] In these memorializing performances, "the voices of the dead may speak freely now only through the bodies of the living."[11] Living history museums, as sites of historical reproduction, show how "the social processes of memory and forgetting… may be carried out by a variety of performance events" staged for contemporary audiences.[12] Until very recently, enslavement was forgotten in favor of other narratives. However, narratives of enslavement metaphorically haunted CW's interpretation and Eve's inclusion as an actual historical actor provides a case study in Colonial Williamsburg's integration of African

[10] Roach, *Cities of the Dead,* 2, 36. For Roach, the "Circum-Atlantic" encompasses Paul Gilroy's Black Atlantic: the triangular relationship between Europe, Africa, and the Americas solidified by the system of slavery.
[11] Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, xiii.
[12] Roach, *Cities of the Dead,* xi.

American history through architectural reconstruction, museum transparency, and living history. These three methods of performance slowly and methodically remember new histories at the old museum.

Museums and Enslavement Interpretation

Until very recently, African American histories were not shared at museums and public history sites across the United States. Middle Passage, Reconstruction, the Jim Crow era, and the Long Civil Rights Movement — all too often, these expansive and important histories were excluded from museums collections, exhibits, and interpretations across the country. Often, this "virtual silence" was chalked up to a lack of archived material.[13] More often than not, the absence indicated deeply racist ideas about slavery's "place" in American history. Largely viewed as a regional [read: southern] issue, slavery did not fit with the progressive narratives about American exceptionalism found in many museums.[14] However, by the late 1970s, museums were challenged to include slavery after the airing of the television miniseries *Roots* and the development campaign for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.[15] In 1979, the Smithsonian's Anacostia

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[13] For a detailed chronology of these silences, see Fath Davis Ruffins, "Revisiting the Old Plantation: Reparations, Reconciliation, and Museumizing American Slavery," In *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations,* edited by Ivan Karp, et. al., (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 395-434. Ruffins is Curator of African American History and Culture at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. For brief but useful comments on archival silences, museum exhibitions, and "interpretative leaps," see Leslie M. Harris' "Imperfect Archives and the Historical Imagination," *The Public Historian* 36, No. 1 (February 2014): 77-80.

[14] Ruffins, "Revisiting the Old Plantation," 397.

[15] Ruffins, "Revisiting the Old Plantation," 398-400.

Neighborhood Museum opened its “Out of Africa” exhibit concerning the transatlantic slave trade; in 1985, the Smithsonian National Museum of American History opened its first social history exhibition that “integrated the history of the slave trade, slavery, and the voices and families of enslaved people into a spacious presentation of American life.”[16] By the mid-1990s, exhibits about enslavement were shown at national (and international) museums, including the Chicago Historical Society, the Museum of the Confederacy, Merseyside Museum, in Liverpool, England, and the Maryland Historical Society.[17] However, there was still much work to do to fully integrate African American history and the experience of enslavement into museumized conversations about the United States.

Though Black museums and cultural institutions had shared their own community’s histories for years, the integration of African American narratives into museums and historic sites with predominantly white staff and visitors required — and continues to require — allocation of physical and emotional resources.[18] In 2002, Jennifer L. Eichstedt and Stephen Small studied museum interpretations, tours, and exhibits at southern plantation museums. Eichstedt and Small concluded that the museums impart “a racialized regime

[16] Ruffins, “Revisiting the Old Plantation,” 402. The Smithsonian Anacostia Neighborhood Museum is now called The Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum.
[17] Ruffins, “Revisiting the Old Plantation,” 407.
[18] For more on the Black museum movement, see Andrea A. Burns, *From Storefront to Monument: Tracing the Public History of the Black Museum Movement* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013); and the August 2019 issue of *The Public Historian,* “The State of Black Museums.” For a discussion of the emotional toll of history museums, see Amy M. Tyson, *The Wages of History: Emotional Labor on Public History’s Front Line* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013).

of representation that valorizes the white elite of the preemancipation South while general erasing or minimizing the experiences of enslaved African Americans."[19] They identified “four representational strategies” used by the museum industry to discuss enslavement: “symbolic annihilation and erasure, trivialization and deflection, segregation and marginalization of knowledge, and relative incorporation.”[20] Notably, Eichstedt and Small identify Virginia as a site of “segregation and marginalization of knowledge” with separate tours that covered enslavement.[21] Though regionally focused, these categories provide insight into enslavement interpretation by certain museumized spaces in the early 2000s. In 2006, James O. Horton and Lois Horton published their edited collection, *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory*; the text addressed increasingly topical issues such as actor interpretation and living history. In the February 2014 issue of *The Public Historian,* editor Randolph Bergstrom called for increased introspection on enslavement interpretation in the eight years since the Hortons’ publication.[22]

From the first incorporation of social history in museum interpretation, conversations about how to best depict enslavement occurred in the fields of public history, museum studies, theater, and anthropology. With titles like *Interpreting Slavery at Museums and Historic Sites, Living History Museums:*

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[19] Jennifer L. Eichstedt and Stephen Small, *Representations of Slavery: Race and Ideology in Southern Plantation Museums* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002), 2.
[20] Eichstedt and Small, *Representations of Slavery,* 10.
[21] Eichstedt and Small, *Representations of Slavery,* 10.
[22] Randolph Bergstrom, “Still Provoking: The Public History of Race and Slavery,” *The Public Historian* 36, No. 1 (February 2014): 7-8.

Undoing History Through Performance, and *The New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg,* the focus was on best (and worst) practices at specific sites; very seldom does the study of enslavement interpretation take a generalized sweep.[23] Instead, using reparation, recovery, and remembrance — akin to sites of conscience identified on an international scale — socially conscious museums and historic sites moved to connect their pasts with descendant communities.[24] In September 2016, the National Museum of African American History and Culture opened on in Washington, DC and provided visitors from all over the world a more wide-ranging history of the United States. In Virginia, arguably the birthplace of the historic-house-museum-as-shrine, institutions work to incorporate community collaboration and recent scholarly endeavors to rectify archival silences and interpretative erasure. At Montpelier, *The Mere Distinction of Colour* exhibit opened in July 2017 and aimed to "flip the

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[23] For some of these recent interventions, see Kristin L. Gallas and James DeWolf Perry, eds., *Interpreting Slavery at Museums and Historic Sites* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015); Max van Baloogy, *Interpreting African American History and Culture at Museums and Historic Sites,* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015); Scott Magelssen, *Living History Museums: Undoing History Through Performance* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2007) and Richard Handler and Eric Gable, *The New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997). Site specific studies of enslavement interpretation include (but certainly not limited to), Steven Burg, "'From Troubled Ground to Common Ground': The Locust Grove African-American Cemetery Restoration Project: A Case Study of Service-Learning and Community History," *The Public Historian* 30, No. 2 (May 2008): 51-82; Jill Ogline, "'Creating Dissonance for the Visitor': The Heart of the Liberty Bell Controversy," *The Public Historian* 26, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 49-57; and Ann Denkler, *Sustaining Identity, Recapturing Heritage: Exploring Issues of Public History, Tourism, and Race in a Southern Town* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007).

[24] Per the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, sites of conscience (museum, memorial, battlefield, monument) "provide safe spaces to remember and preserve even the most traumatic memories, but they enable their visitors to make connections between the past and related contemporary human rights issues." https://www.sitesofconscience.org/en/home/.

narrative …. to tell a more inclusive, problematic, and authentic history."[25] In June 2018, Monticello opened *The Life of Sally Hemings,* an exhibit designed to reveal "the critical nuances, contradictions, and complexities within U.S. slavery."[26] Inclusion, contextualization, interpretation, engagement — these are all current and necessary buzzwords in the museum world. How best to tell violent, traumatic, and always-relevant histories to audiences from all walks of life?

Colonial Williamsburg and Enslavement

As a history museum, Colonial Williamsburg has only recently included African American histories in its interpretation. In 2002, Eichstedt and Small's study classified the sprawling historic houses museum as a site of "Segregated Knowledge," where enslavement was removed from the museum's daily message and "segregated into special tours or separate places within the site."[27] This is also how Mount Vernon and Montpelier were categorized. However, decades before this designation, Black history was present - but only in peripheral bursts. In the first half of the twentieth century, Black coachmen ferried primarily white visitors down CW streets and "contributed toward a nascent, diversified interpretation of the past [and] have

[25] Megan Taylor-Shockley, "The Mere Distinction of Colour" exhibit review, *The Public Historian* 40, No. 4 (November 2018), 169.
[26] A.B. Wilkerson, "Slave Life at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello," *The Public Historian* 71, No. 1 (March 2019): 247.
[27] Eichstedt and Small, *Representations of Slavery,* 170. Eichstedt and Small examine the "Other Half" tour and tours once offered at the now closed Carter's Grove, 170-189. For more chronology of African American interpretation at CW, see Anders Greenspan, *Creating Colonial Williamsburg: The Restoration of Virginia's Eighteenth-Century Capital* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

remained largely untold in evaluations of the early interpretation of African American history and slavery at the museum."[28] *The Negro in Eighteenth-Century Williamsburg,* printed in 1957, provided material for guides in the Historic Area; that same year, "a two minute lesson on slavery" was recorded and installed on a message repeater in the George Wythe House kitchen.[29]

Interpretative integration was slow to gain traction at CW. In January 1969, Edward Alexander, then Vice President and Director of Interpretation, ordered a report on Black history. This was "the first documentation of an attempt to begin teaching black history" in the Historic Area.[30] Later that same year, Zora Felton, assistant director of the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum wrote Alexander to express her unhappiness with the portrayal of African Americans at CW.[31] After several more years, in May 1976, a Black Studies workshop was held for Historic Area interpreters; however, in 1978, a Colonial Williamsburg historian noted that visitors seeking any "black presence" in the Historic Area would not readily find it.[32] This statement reveals much about the acknowledgement of labor by CW staff *and* visitors. One year later, in 1979, Colonial Williamsburg hotel and restaurant workers unionized after many years of debate over "guaranteed pay raises." This largely Black labor

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[28] Ywone Edwards-Ingram, "Before 1979: African-American Coachmen, Visibility, and Representation at Colonial Williamsburg," *The Public Historian* 36, no. 1 (February 2014), 34.
[29] Nicole Trifone, "Half the History" *Trend & Tradition* 4, no. 1 (Winter 2019), 17.
[30] Rex Ellis, "Presenting the Past: Education, Interpretation, and the Teaching of Black History at Colonial Williamsburg," (PhD Thesis, The College of William & Mary, 1989), 259-260.
[31] Ellis, "Presenting the Past," 265-266.
[32] Ellis, "Presenting the Past," 269, 270.

force was always present, but it was unseen by white visitors only seeking Thomas Jefferson and George Washington. Despite the large presence of Black hotel, restaurant, and custodial staff, the museumized spaces were not being utilized to tell eighteenth-century African American histories.[33]

In 1979, perhaps as part of the *Roots* miniseries boon, the African American Initiative took shape alongside the first living history interpretations at the eighteenth-century site.[34] Rex Ellis, now curator at the National Museum of African American History and Culture, was hired in 1984 as the Black Programs Manager; four years later, he was named Director of African American Interpretation and Presentations.[35] Ellis and his successor Christy Coleman, now Executive Director of the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, worked alongside the interpretative and research departments to include enslavement at sites across the Historic Area and the now-defunct Carter's Grove. In 1994, the reenactment of an estate auction included the sale of enslaved African Americans; this event brought much documented protest and attention to the museum. In the 25 years since this moment, Colonial Williamsburg has been nationally (and possibly internationally) marked as a

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[33] Handler and Gable, *The New History in an Old Museum,* 208-212.
[34] Ellis, "Presenting the Past," 272-273. The 40th Anniversary of African American Interpretation is currently (in 2019) being commemorated in Colonial Williamsburg. Events include an exhibit at the Raleigh Tavern, "Revealing the Priceless: 40 Years of African American Interpretation," and a three-part lecture series to "discuss the past, present and future of African American Interpretation. For more, see schedule in *Trend & Tradition* 4, No. 1 (Winter 2019), 20. The connection to *Roots* was reiterated by Christy Coleman during the May 20, 2019 lecture, "Past."
[35] Ellis, "Presenting the Past," 274.

historic site where visitors experience both the failure and the promise of enslavement interpretation.[36]

Now, at sites and on streets throughout the Historic Area of Colonial Williamsburg, visitors encounter the enslaved and free people of color from the late eighteenth century.[37] Primarily, these encounters occur within the realm of living history, through actor interpreters and in dramatic programming. These men and women, some theater-trained, channel the spirits of historical persons such as Aggy of Turkey Island, an enslaved woman who sued her enslaver for her own freedom and that of her children. (Mary Hardy Carter portrays Aggy.)[38] Two actor-interpreters depict Gowan Pamphlet, a Baptist minister born into slavery and freed in adulthood: James Ingram and Joseph Feaster. Actor Katrinah Lewis, who also writes many of the theater programs in the Historic Area, portrays Lydia Broadnax, an

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[36] In the January 1988 *The Colonial Williamsburg Interpreter,* assistant director for African American interpretation, Rex Ellis, argued that at the time, "Colonial Williamsburg is the only history museum that interprets eighteenth-century black history in any comprehensive fashion." Ellis notes that museum staff from all over the country "invited staff members from the [Colonial Williamsburg] Foundation to serve as consultants for programs and exhibits." In the May 3, 2019 podcast, *BackStory,* Christy Coleman shared her experience as "the face" of the slave auction controversy and how it spurred other sites to include or expand their interpretation of slavery: "Other museum colleagues, particularly those at historic houses and plantation sites contacted me and said, 'If they can do that, we at least need to have an honest conversation about the enslaved populations at our sites.' That began what I think was sort of the birth of us finally knowing the stories about Hemings and the other 300 plus people that were in Monticello, and then learning about the 300 plus people that were in Mount Vernon, and so forth and so on. That was the moment…" https://www.backstoryradio.org/shows/the-civil-war-in-the-21st-century/#transcript.

[37] For more on the transition to a living history model, see M.J. Rymsza-Pawlowska, *History Comes Alive: Public History and Public Culture in the 1970s* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2017). Beginning in the 1970s, "newer re-enactments were immersive experiences that could help both reenactors and audiences commune with the past on an emotional or affective level" and not merely in performances passively observed, 122.

[38] Nicole Trifone, "Between Worlds," *Trend & Tradition* 3, no. 2 (Spring 2018): 37-41.

enslaved house laborer for George Wythe in Williamsburg and Richmond. And Hope Wright embodies Eve, the enslaved woman sold by her enslaver Betty Randolph, "with pride and dignity."[39] These actor interpreters move through CW's sites and perform persons long dead and forgotten. They carefully and considerately represent persons ghosted by the museum.

The Randolph Complex

The Randolph complex sits in a prominent location one block from the Palace Green and facing the city's Courthouse. Once painted white with green trim, the house is now a reddish brown designed to suggest brick construction. The structure is so-named for Peyton Randolph, a lawyer, politician and enslaver during Virginia's colonial era who resided at the home for approximately forty years. According to his 1776 estate records, twenty-seven enslaved individuals were also in residence on the property.[40] Upon Randolph's death, his wife Elizabeth controlled the household until her own death when the house was sold at auction. The house had many owners until its 1938 purchase when the Rockefeller Restoration came to town. At that time, Merrill Proctor Ball and Fredrik Ball owned the building. The Balls sold the home to the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation with the guarantee of life tenure, or residency until death.[41] From October 1939 through April 1940, the

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[39] Ywone Edwards-Ingram, "Hope Wright," in *The Art and Soul of African American Interpretation* (Williamsburg, VA: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 2016), 49, 51.
[40] Thad Tate, *The Negro in Eighteenth-Century Williamsburg* (Williamsburg, VA: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1965), 40.
[41] April Taylor, "CW Loses Its Last Lifetime Tenant," *Daily Press,* https://www.dailypress.com/news/dp-xpm-20031217-2003-12-17-0312170100-story.html.

home was restored by the Foundation while the Ball family lived in the house. Pre-restoration, the home appeared antiquated, dwarfed by large trees in its front yard, but it had the dilapidated appearance of other Williamsburg structures.[42] In 1967, Merrill Proctor Ball agreed to move into the house's eastern wing while older portions of the house were restored and renovated for use as an exhibition building.[43] The Randolph House opened on July 1, 1968, alongside the James Geddy House, Wetherburn's Tavern, and the Wren Building (then under the interpretative purview of Colonial Williamsburg). These properties were to include new inclusive interpretation. At the time, CWF President Carlisle H. Humelsine stated, "[W]e chose these [Randolph, Geddy and Wetherburn's] because we saw in them an opportunity to give an even broader view of colonial life."[44] This broader view of colonial life remained primarily upper class and Anglo-centric, with little interpretative

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According to CW protocol, "life tenure meant the tenant would maintain, own and pay the taxes on the properties. Those who remained had to pay rent" to the Foundation. In 2004, the Balls' daughter Gertrude Deversa died in Williamsburg. She had lived in the east wing of the Peyton Randolph House until her death, and was the last life tenant in the Historic Area proper.

[42] For images of the Randolph House pre-Rockefeller Restoration, see Rockefeller Library database: https://rocklib.omeka.net/items/browse?tags=Peyton+Randolph+House.

[43] "Peyton Randolph House Will Open In 1968 As Exhibition Building," *Colonial Williamsburg News* 20, no. 1, February 1, 1967, 1; Patricia A. Gibbs, ""Documentary Research on the Peyton Randolph Property Lots 207 and 237" Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library Research Report Series - 1534, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library, 1978; Willie Graham, "Building An Image: An Architectural Report on the Peyton Randolph Site," Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library Research Report Series - 1542, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library, 1985; Mary Stephenson, ""Peyton Randolph House Colonial Lot 236, Block 28" Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library Research Report Series - 1538, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library, 1952, revised by Jane Carson in 1967; J.F. Waite, "The Peyton Randolph House Block 28, Building 6," Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library Research Report Series - 1533, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library, 1968, 2.

[44] Ellis, "Presenting the Past," 161, 208.

or research attention paid to others living on the property in the eighteenth century.

From February 1969 until the present day, Peyton Randolph became the Historic Area site to interpret slavery for museum audiences.[45] As the home base of a very important colonial era person, the Randolph complex was increasingly viewed as the best location to discuss the complexity of life during the Revolutionary War. And, as living history gained traction in CW's departments, interpretation shifted from passive guided lectures to performed embodiments. Pre-1977, interpretation at Colonial Williamsburg was rote and heavily scripted with almost no room for flourish or improvisation.[46] With the inclusion of living history from Black and white actor interpreters, the Foundation sought locations where well-documented enslavement could be woven into daily activities.

Architectural Reconstruction of the Randolph

Enslavement in urban colonial capitals like Williamsburg often reflected "the same formal premises as rural plantations" and "the physical design of the whole complex compelled [the enslaved] to center their activity upon" their enslaver's commanding structural presence.[47] The only significant difference between an urban and a rural plantation was "the absence of cultivated

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[45] Ellis, "Presenting the Past," 263.
[46] Ellis, "Presenting the Past," 230-231.
[47] John Michael Vlach, "The Plantation Tradition in an Urban Setting: The Case of the Aiken-Rhett House in Charleston, South Carolina," *Southern Cultures*, 5, no. 4 (Winter 1999), 53; Richard C. Wade, *Slavery in the Cities: The South 1820-1860,* (Cary: Oxford University Press, 1967) 56-57.

acreage" though there were often small garden plots. Enslaved spaces — their "dwellings…kitchens, laundries, dairies, carriage houses, and stables" — were tucked behind the enslaver's house.[48] In this design, the enslaver could observe all activity, and the enslaved were always aware of the long shadows cast by the main house.[49] This was the design of the Randolph complex in the mid-eighteenth-century: a large windowed main house with smaller structures reaching out like arms around the busy back yard.

Though eighteenth-century enslavement was hyper-surveyed by the enslaver, visible representation of this confined experience was not included in Colonial Williamsburg's introductory film, pedestrian-only streets, and Historic Area programming. In 1977, an internal CWF report noted early attempts to introduce Black history and explained that "[t]wo summers ago [CWF] specially trained a small group of interpreters to conduct a 'black studies experiment' in the Wythe quarter." The report noted a need for interpretation that did not rely on the rare "extraordinary Negro." However, this "experiment" involved interpretation that was "carefully neutralized to avoid giving offense or causing embarrassment." Most interestingly, this report noted that Colonial Williamsburg had "never come to grips with the central issues of race and slavery" and tells "only half the truth." This document stressed four interpretative directions: to show how Black labor replaced indentured labor, to show development of African American culture, to

[48] Vlach, "The Plantation Tradition in an Urban Setting," 53.
[49] Wade, *Slavery in the Cities,* 60.

contrast urban and rural slavery, and to contrast white and Black family life. The not-yet-reconstructed Randolph site was identified as a potential space "for interpretation of black family life."[50] In 1985, the Randolph site was again identified as a space to educate on the enslaved in Williamsburg: "How, in an urban setting, were large numbers of slaves housed? How were they treated, clothed, and what were their work and living spaces like? How did they interact, and how did they perceive their white masters?"[51]

Throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s, CW staff sought a central Historic Area location to interpret urban enslavement. In 1988, a *CW Interpreter* article noted that in order for "the African American educational program to reach parity with other activities at Colonial Williamsburg, it must have a historic site at the center of its operation.... it is difficult to believe that no data exists to help locate or recreate the site of a black structure." The article identifies the Randolph complex as a "setting [where] visitors can compare and contrast the way blacks lived with the lifestyles of their white counterparts."[52] Though CW initially planned to use the Brush-Everard House, as possible enslaved quarters were located there, "all traces of eighteenth century soil strata … had been destroyed by an early twentieth-century house

[50] *Teaching History at Colonial Williamsburg*, 1977 Curriculum Committee Report (Williamsburg, VA: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation). Thanks to Julie Richter for providing me with access to this internal report. The Foundation emphasized a "reliance on Negro interpreters" and the need to hire "a black teaching-historian to organize and carry [the programming] out." In 1977, Black history was not considered the responsibility of white interpreters or guides.
[51] Graham, "Building An Image," 133.
[52] Spencer Crew, "Giving Black History Life," *CW Interpreter,* January 1988, 7-8.

and utlility lines.” The turn to Peyton Randolph was quick: “the [archeological] work done in the Peyton Randolph yard now seems assuredly to point to both a slave quarter building as well as a sizable two story kitchen structure....”[53] A 1993 CW research report castigated the lack of exhibited material culture to signify enslaved material presence in domestic spaces throughout the Historic Area: “we recommend …. [r]econstruction of the Peyton Randolph buildings as a setting for dealing with urban black life and work.”[54]

With extensive archaeological and historical inquiries through the 1990s, the Peyton Randolph site saw much activity between 1997 and 2002 though its physical reconstruction was slow.[55] As *Becoming Americans* programming occupied the Historic Area, CW historians worked on lesson plans to discuss “adaptations” made in colonial Virginia. The “medium” to share these “adaptations” was “the broad canvas of a restored and reconstructed eighteenth century town....” In order to include African and African American narratives in these pedagogical exercises, Colonial Williamsburg carpenters rebuilt the Randolph outbuildings where enslaved labor occurred: the kitchen, smokehouse, and milk house, as well as the covered walkway that linked the kitchen to the main house in the late

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[53] Robert Birney, “Researching Black History at Colonial Williamsburg,” *CW Interpreter,* January 1988, 4-5.
[54] Martha B. Katz-Hyman, “"In the Middle of this Poverty Some Cups and a Teapot:" The Material Culture of Slavery in Eighteenth-Century Virginia and the Furnishing of Slave Quarters at Colonial Williamsburg,” Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library Research Report Series - 350, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library, 1993, 194, 213.
[55] Mark Kostro, “The 2003 Archaeological Excavations at the Peyton Randolph Property, Williamsburg, Virginia,” Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library Research Report Series - 1726, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Library, 2003.

eighteenth century.[56] Interpretation of these buildings would involve “the evolution of the property and outbuildings, the daily lives of slaves, and historic foods and trades.”

The Randolph site was reconstructed to reflect its appearance during the 1770s when Peyton and Elizabeth Randolph were in residence. In June 1999, regional journalist Mark St. John Erickson stated that Randolph himself would be “fooled by [the site’s] newly restored appearance.” The restoration was not the result of completely new archeological and historical excavation. It was based on examining "evidence that had been largely overlooked [by archeologists and architectural historians] in the 1930s and 1950s.” This return to institutional archives occurred alongside the introduction of social history to Colonial Williamsburg. Instead of top-down history, the Foundation looked to the site’s basic structural components: “Concentrating first on the outbuildings in the back, [CW researchers] brought a new interest and expertise to a complex of utilitarian structures that had always been considered secondary in the past.” St. John Erickson also described the house using uncanny language: “Not since the building was restored in the 1920s and the late 1930s … has anyone had a chance to look so intently beneath its skin.” The home was repainted, with reconstructed outbuildings, new room settings, and new interpretation “in the context of a larger story that

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[56] Rex Springston, “No Kitchenette: Colonial Williamsburg Begins Construction of Outbuilding,” *Richmond Times-Dispatch* October 24, 1999, C-1. Some of these structures were built with funds from “an anonymous private Richmond foundation and the Mars Foundation.” “Digest,” *Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA)* January 15, 1997, D3.

focuses not only on the master and the mistress of the house but also on the servants and slaves who made their lifestyle possible."[57] Visitors would now enter the site through the side entrance — not the massive front door facing Market Square — in one of the first Historic Area experiences to privilege the enslaved perspective over the enslaver's vantage point.[58]

Kitchen is Key

Enslaved spaces were almost always tethered to the enslaver's landscape. Whether garden plots or living quarters, these locations were within the scrutiny of an overseer or the main plantation house. However, as argued by architectural historian John Michael Vlach, there was space for self-determination.[59] The landscape of enslavement was "a reactive expression" to the enslaver's dominion over people, places, and things.[60] On larger, rural plantations, this dominion was comparatively evident in the main mansion's affluence versus the enslaved quarters' sparseness. However, geographic distance between enslaver and enslaved living quarters allowed for "a means of escape, at least temporarily, from their masters' control."[61] This distance was not possible at urban plantation sites, like the Randolph

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[57] Mark St. John Erickson "Style, Drama Revealed: $2 Million Face Lift Restores Peyton Randolph House," *Daily Press,* June 13, 1999.
[58] Edward Chappell, "Re-Translating the Past," *The Colonial Williamsburg Interpreter,* 20, no. 3 (Special Edition 1999), 11. In 1999, *The Colonial Williamsburg Interpreter,* an Education Division publication that gave employees a "souvenir program to this model research-to-restoration project," published a Special Edition designed to inform about recent renovations and reconstructions at the Randolph complex.
[59] John Michael Vlach, *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), xi, 13.
[60] Vlach, *Back of the Big House,* 1.
[61] Vlach, *Back of the Big House,* 13.

complex, where the “big house quarters” were just a stone’s throw from enslaved spaces.[62] There was “a perpetual quality” to domestic enslaved labor because of this proximity.[63] At museumized sites like the Randolph, it was important to show this near-constant work and surveillance while also interpreting the possibility for smaller, daily freedoms.

Around 1753, the Randolph house was remodeled to reflect the Randolph family’s political and social stature in Williamsburg.[64] The most significant alterations were made to the main house’s entrance and the detached kitchen. The entire home was re-oriented from facing west, toward the Governor’s Palace, to facing south, toward Market Square. This re-orientation “reflects a change in the attitude and economy” of Williamsburg, as the British royal governors’ power diminished and colonists’ commercial spaces gained prominence.[65] The old kitchen building was torn down, and the new open space allowed for an unobstructed view of the back yard from the main house’s staircase.[66] The enslaved did most of their chores in this yard: making soap, washing laundry, canning preserves, bottling syrup, and chopping firewood.[67] The yard chores often overlapped with kitchen duties.[68]

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[62] Vlach, *Back of the Big House,* 18.
[63] Vlach, *Back of the Big House,* 19.
[64] Andrew C. Edwards, et al, “Peyton Randolph House Archaeological Report,” 171.
[65] Edwards, et. al. “Peyton Randolph House,” 171; Mark Kostro, “The 2003 Archaeological Excavations at the Peyton Randolph Property, Williamsburg, Virginia,” 2003, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library Research Report Series – 1726, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Library, 11.
[66] Edwards, et. al., “Peyton Randolph House,” 169.
[67] Vlach, *Back of the Big House,* 33-37.
[68] Vlach, *Back of the Big House,* 46.

The building of a new kitchen was an additional sign of the Randolph family's rising public stature and "established a clearer separation between those who served and those who were served."[69] This new kitchen connected to the main house by a covered walkway to ensure the delivery of warm food and well-kept enslaved labor. The kitchen's second story housed enslaved laborers. However, over the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries, this kitchen structure disappeared when the house underwent renovations as a boarding house and later a private residence.

For Colonial Williamsburg, the eighteenth-century Randolph kitchen was necessary for new interpretations in an old building — but issues materialized during its reconstruction. If the site was to be utilized to teach about urban colonial enslavement, then adequate space was needed to stage these important matters of public history. Using architectural plans and archeological reports, CW researchers learned about the two-story kitchen building attached to the main house by a covered walkway.[70] It was important not only to *show* this building — as many CW sites were merely showpieces with zero interpretation — but also to *show* how an enslaved person would have moved through it. Actor interpreters needed the kitchen to ground their

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[69] Vlach, *Back of the Big House,* 43.
[70] Andrew C. Edwards, Linda K. Derry, and Roy A. Jackson, "Peyton Randolph House Archaeological Report, Block 28 Building 6 Lot 00," Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library Research Report Series - 175, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Library, 1988.

performance.[71] This need also unearthed conflict between Colonial Williamsburg's planning and the City of Williamsburg's building codes

Urban planning commissions can affect living history museums. They make for an interesting study in how eighteenth-century interpretative needs are not always attainable in twentieth-century contexts. The kitchen's reconstruction was hampered by concerns about visitor safety that further ghosted those who once lived there. In late October 2000, as the reconstruction was almost complete, then acting CWF Vice President of Presentations, Cary Carson, wrote an official memorandum to then Vice President of Special Projects, Beatrix Rumford. Carson expressed his concern that "public access" to the second floor of the Randolph kitchen would be limited. This was especially pressing as the site's December 1, 2000 completion date approached. For Carson, visitors needed access to this space in order to view the cramped spaces, imagine the kitchen heat from below, and touch the roughly hewn walls of the enslaved living quarters. The public needed to learn about enslaved populations in their living spaces the same as audiences learned about the enslaver. There were few opportunities for visitors to have such an experience in CW's Historic Area.

Carson was reacting to a bigger problem at the site — one of access inequity. It appeared that CW spent less time ensuring the reconstructed

[71] Pam Pettengell to Trix Rumford, "Designated Use of Peyton Randolph Outbuildings," May 8, 1997, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library. The plan was to "develop more accurate biographies" for the Randolph enslaved population once there was a "more complete understanding of the patterns of work."

enslaved spaces were accessible and more time revamping the white enslaver spaces. Carson forcefully wrote, “I cannot condone separate and unequal treatment of African American interpretative spaces on the Peyton Randolph site.” His word choice evokes 1954’s Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court ruling, which declared the unconstitutionality of racially segregated schools. In Brown v. Board, the “separate but equal” doctrine of segregation was primarily overturned because it negatively affected the education of Black school children.[72] Carson clearly saw a parallel issue at public history sites; without accessible interpretative spaces, Colonial Williamsburg could not adequately educate audiences of all racial and ethnic backgrounds about enslavement. CW needed to privilege rebuilding enslaved spaces instead of treating them as an afterthought to the enslaver’s home.

Access to the second floor was clearly always a festering issue.[73] Carson nailed the point home in his memo to Rumford: “From the beginning … educators and historians at CW have prized the reconstruction of the Peyton Randolph outbuildings, and especially the kitchen, because it is the only thoroughly documented slave living space anywhere in the Historic Area.” Carson added, "We must not treat the African American spaces on the site any less fully or with any less veracity than those areas where we present

[72] *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954)
[73] “Building Code Compliance Issues at Peyton Randolph Kitchen,” July 20, 2000, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library. John Catlett, City of Williamsburg Building Code Inspector, wrote “occasional visits to the second floor by groups of no more than 5-7 adult specialists would be acceptable” due to sprinkler absence, “unknown load capacity,” and “only one means of access and egress.” Ergo, the space cannot be used for public programming and is thus [still] inaccessible.

white people's living conditions."[74] This call to action was unheeded. Rumford dismissed Carson's suggestion of a fire suppressant sprinkler expansion, which would have allowed more visitors to the second floor, as too time consuming. She also introduced an additional complication: "A bigger issue is whether the City Building Inspector can be persuaded to sanction public access to a sprinkled area in a frame structure which only has one means of egress."[75] Entry and exit were key to keeping the visiting public safe but also a deterrent to showing the cramped, unfinished, uninsulated, and historically unsafe enslaved living space. Carson apparently lost this battle, as the cost of installing a new sprinkler was deemed too great and too time-consuming to pursue by the site's anticipated opening date.

As of January 2020, the kitchen's second floor is still inaccessible to most visitors, but plans to interpret the lower level workspace with actor interpreters proceeded parallel to the kitchen's reconstruction. If the upper living quarters were off-limits, then the site's planning team would need to rely on other living history techniques to interpret forced labor.

Enslavement interpretation and Living History

Theater studies scholar Scott Magelssen defines living history museums as "sites to which tourists travel in order to engage [with interpreters] in what is advertised as a different temporal space [often

[74] Cary Carson to Beatrix Rumford, October 20, 1999, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library.
[75] Beatrix Rumford to Cary Carson, October 26, 1999, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library.

restored or reconstructed], to interact with a simulation of a past time as part of an educational or recreational enterprise."[76] First-Person [actor] and Third-Person [tour guide or docent] are examples of interactions within the living history conceit. (Second-Person involves hands-on activities that require visitor participation. Magelssen suggests this mode is "not as common," but I see it increasingly, especially at Colonial Williamsburg and other Tidewater museums.[77]) Magelssen argues that scholars have failed to adequately analyze "the modes of institutional representation of time and space" -- modes being the museum's programming, i.e., guided tours, lectures, demonstrations, and immersive theater that require audiences to engage with the performance.[78] Nowhere is the "institutional representation of time and space" more in flux than in the development of living history programming. The Randolph site's surrogation is not a resurrection but rather a reiteration of eighteenth-century behaviors for a twenty-first century audience.[79] It is also a chance to introduce Black colonial history to a primarily white museum audience. Do museums truly rely on "time as a homogeneous continuum," as Magelssen posits?[80] Is it a sliding scale of programmatic development, with reductive nationalism on one end and complex personhood on the other?

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[76] Magelssen, *Living History Museums*, xxi.
[77] Magelssen, *Living History Museums,* xxiv. At Colonial Williamsburg, hands-on programming included "Dig! Kids, Dirt & Discovery," an hour-long archeological experience for children; "Resolved: An American Experiment," an interactive performance that required audience participation; and "Patriots at Play," located at the back of the Randolph site.
[78] Magelssen, *Living History Museums,* xix.
[79] Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 4.
[80] Magelssen, *Living History Museums,* xiii.

How might first-person actor interpreters who perform in the reconstructed Randolph complex, tell histories deliberately forgotten by the museum?

This is where the ghostly matters of public history enhances conversation. It shows how history is layered, organic, uncanny, and multi-dimensional. As an improvisational tool, how does living history interpretation reiterate new, often unstable pasts that have only recently been included in a historic site's interpretation?[81] Living history provided a useful mode of representation for the Black histories of Williamsburg. Its performative style helped to flesh out persons "who did not leave an abundance of material evidence behind them…." It helped to embody those ghosted by research archives. However, living history "had to be used with great care. Misunderstanding could occur quite easily."[82]

Misunderstanding occurred when the museum included enslaved "property" in a 1994 estate auction performance. Audiences across the United States took (and still take) offense to the idea of actors portraying the enslaved – for a variety of reasons. However, as stated by the former director of Colonial Williamsburg's Department of African American Interpretation and Presentations, Christy Coleman: "Some have called our decision to present this reenactment naive or arrogant, but we felt the time had come to reenact this aspect of slavery that most epitomized the true horrors of the institution. Talking about it was no longer enough." The estate auction reenactment

[81] Magelssen, *Living History Museums,* xii.
[82] Crew, "Giving Life to Black History," 3.

provided an opportunity “to review and reintroduce the organization [CW] to the thousands who had not been to Colonial Williamsburg, or who thought they had ‘been there, done that.’”[83] Though not a focal point in this chapter’s analysis, the estate auction was a pivotal moment in how living history enables conversations about enslavement.[84]

However, while interpreters planned the estate auction, local newspapers reported that CW would again center white Founding Fathers — with names like Washington and Jefferson — in its programming. In a May 1993 statement, Colonial Williamsburg’s spokesperson Patrick Milliman declared: “We’ve been moving in the everyday direction for the last three or four years. We’ve developed programs on women, religion, African-Americans. Now we’re letting that go on the back burner and doing more on the Founding Fathers.” At this same time, there was a “Widows of Williamsburg” program held at the Randolph site. It consisted of a conversation between enslaved widow, Charlotte and her recently widowed enslaver Elizabeth Randolph; however, Charlotte rallied Elizabeth to stay the course in her role as enslaver.[85] As CW moved toward more integrated African American living history at the Randolph site, it faced pushback from a variety of sources. There was also the real issue of how to locate these

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[83] Christy Coleman, “Where Do We Go From Here? Researching and Interpreting the African-American Experience” *Historical Archeology* 1997, 109-110.
[84] Erin Krutko Devlin, "Colonial Williamsburg's Slave Auction Re-Enactment: Controversy, African American History and Public Memory" (M.A. Thesis, College of William & Mary, 2003).
[85] Katherine Calost, “New Programs Show Off Founding Fathers - Williamsburg also draws visitors into tableaux,” *Richmond Times Dispatch*, May 16 1993, H-1.

histories within available sources. Enslaved experience resided within enslaver documentation, often visible but not conferred importance. It had been overlooked for decades.

Careful enslavement interpretation rose up from the fragments, traces, and marks overlooked by historians, administrators, and archeologists involved in the early Colonial Williamsburg project. These "traces [of black history] remain in some old reports, diary or tax record." Museum organization also did not prioritize materials from enslaved individuals, as "many important artifacts may have been improperly labeled, lost, or destroyed because they did not tell researchers what they wanted to know about European Americans."[86] In 1988, Rex Ellis summarized the general problem of telling the enslaved story using documentation and material artifacts: "In a history museum like Colonial Williamsburg, the problem is multiplied because the focus is on a time for which little physical evidence and comparatively few documentary sources relating to the black experiences exist."[87] However, by the mid-1990s, Colonial Williamsburg began to diversify its public history. In 1994, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* journalist Jack Severson wrote about his experience on "The Other Half Tour" led by CW's African American interpreter, Arthur K. Johnson. Severson learned more about enslavement on this ninety-minute tour than his formative education: "it puts life in 18th

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[86] Coleman, "Where Do We Go From Here?" 108-109.
[87] Rex Ellis, "Education and Black History," *Colonial Williamsburg Interpreter,* January 1988, 1.

century Williamsburg into proper perspective." However, he made no mention of enslavement interpretation during his visit to the Randolph site. That was all to change with 1999's "Enslaving Virginia" and the transformation of Eve from a ghost story told at the Randolph site to an actor interpreter with agency and voice.

Locating Eve's Biography

In order to include Eve in the Randolphs' reconstructed enslaved spaces, her history needed to be excavated from available flashes of her life found in archives concerned with her enslavers.[88] Much of Eve's inclusion in "reenactive practice need[ed] source material" and libraries and archives were one of "the sites at which historical interventions can be made." Even when centered on preserving white perspectives, living history happens by "animating the archive" and using different modes to display how "the relationship between the past and the present … [are] co-constitutive."[89] Eve's biography tells about the eighteenth century and asks modern audiences to consider both the universality of lived experience and its historically contingent elements. Through thoughtful, well-researched and carefully performed interpretations, the visiting audience might experience empathetic connections to persons from the past. Early planning at the

[88] Joyce M. Thierer, *Telling History: A Manual for Performers and Presenters of First Person Narratives* (New York: Altamira Press, 2010); *The Living History Anthology* (New York: Routledge, 2019). Most manuals for living history practioners provide useful methods for researching and portraying histories, but very little analysis of the political and racial implications of such performance.
[89] Rymsza-Pawlowska, *History Comes Alive*, 162-164.

Randolph site mentioned comparative interpretation among "white men, white women, and slaves." Programming teams noted how, with the newly reconstructed kitchen space, "interpretation can continue into the private areas of slave life…."[90] However, these slaves needed to be named. Eve's residual archival presence provided a starting point for researchers and interpretative planning teams to imagine conversations that might occur in these "private areas."

Before a "co-constitutive" tie between past and present could be interpreted for visitors, available archives of enslavement — probate documents, estate inventories, runaway slave ads, and wills — contained clerical mention of Eve. Colonial Williamsburg researchers read these materials "across the archival grain" to illuminate the Randolph site.[91] Julie Richter, Colonial Williamsburg historian and member of the "Enslaving Virginia" Story Line Team, used York County wills and estate records, *Virginia Gazette* and other regional newspapers to flesh out the story of the Randolph enslaved. Much of Eve's known biography tracks with her ghost story. In a January 1776 household appraisal, Eve and her son George were listed

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[90] "Peyton Randolph Interpretative Planning Team Development Proposal," undated, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library. Several living history programs were proposed for the site, including "Pleasures and Persuasions" about interaction among enslaved persons who resided at the Randolph complex and those visiting with their enslavers. However, it is unknown if this programming ever happened.

[91] Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008). Stoler and others borrow this method from Walter Benjamin's "On the concept of history" where he briefly states: "There has never been a document of culture, which is not simultaneously one of barbarism. And just as it is itself not free from barbarism, neither is it free from the process of transmission, in which it falls from one set of hands into another. The historical materialist thus moves as far away from this as measurably possible. He regards it as his task to brush history against the grain."

among the enslaved living in the main house, where she may have been a personal body servant or seamstress.[92] Eve's physical labor was valued at 100 British pounds and George at 30 pounds. At some point, Eve and George went to the British military lines at Yorktown — this will become a major moment in Eve's living history interpretation — and Betty Randolph noted this flight on a copy of her husband's inventory. Richter conjectured, based on York County justice of the peace records, that Eve and other enslaved individuals from Randolph's household went to the British in mid-1781. By July 1782, Betty had re-captured Eve and noted in her own will's codicil that Eve was sold for her "bad behaviour." This sale paid for two slaves to give to Betty's niece and nephew who would have owned Eve and her children in the original Randolph will. By February 1782, Betty's nephew, Harrison Randolph, placed a runaway ad for an enslaved woman named Eve.[93] The ad provided Eve's physical description: "FOR apprehending EVE, Negro woman slave, who left York after the surrender; she is about forty years old, very black and slender, has a small mouth for a Negro, and a remarkable mole on her nose: She has since been seen on her way to Hampton. She carried with her a variety of striped and checked Virginia Cloth clothes. Whoever delivers her to the subscriber in Richmond, shall receive the above award."[94]

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[92] "Eve … A Seamstress," *Broken Chains* 2, no. 3, January/February/March 1994, 12.
[93] Julie Richter, "'The Speaker's' Men and Women: Randolph Slaves in Williamsburg," *Colonial Williamsburg Interpreter,* 20, no. 3, Special Edition, 1999, 47-49.
[94] "Peyton Randolph House Urban Slavery Story Interpretative Plan – 2003," Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library.

As this research located Eve in Randolph family records, she was physically re-animated by actor Hope Wright. As a long-term CW interpreter, Wright also acts as a contextualist for Historic Area programming.[95] A contextualist "briefs the audience on what to expect" without giving away the program's focus. She also introduces the actor interpreters at the program's completion, thus revealing how the museum works.[96] Wright portrays Eve as code switching — able to move between white and enslaved spaces through her speech, deportment, and dress. Wright researched runaway ads and other primary sources to create a three-dimensional, complex person: "I present Eve with pride and dignity, not just in mannerism, outlook, and speech but in her ability to understand her situation. My interpretation is about the strength of black women in Williamsburg and how they dealt with the difficulties of their circumstances." She also links Eve's experience to other enslaved and free women of color from the eighteenth-century: Lydia Broadnax, Anne Ashby, and Agnes.[97] Wright also includes historical events in her interpretation, like Dunmore's Proclamation and the British occupation of Yorktown: "You can be creative without making things up. I like to help people question their views of history." For Wright, interpretation is "an ongoing process" that requires new sources, conversations, and perspectives.[98] It is

[95] Ywone Edwards-Ingram, *The Art and Soul of African American Interpretation* (Williamsburg, VA: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 2016), 45.
[96] Edwards-Ingram, *The Art and Soul of African American Interpretation,* 47-48.
[97] Edwards-Ingram, *The Art and Soul of African American Interpretation,* 50-52.
[98] Edwards-Ingram, *The Art and Soul of African American Interpretation,* 53-54.

commemorative historical revision and Wright provides necessary representation in living public history.

As research continued, CW programming increasingly incorporated Eve's history. From 2007 to 2016, the Historic Area transformed through an innovative street theater program, "Revolutionary City." Actor interpreters performed in the streets and engaged in dialogues to model how the city "felt" during the American Revolution: anxious, excited, confined, eager, angry. In one program, "Liberty to Slaves," Wright-as-Eve brought word of Dunmore's Proclamation to other enslaved persons and explained (to viewing audiences) how such a gathering was forbidden according to Virginia law.[99] In another program, "Running to Freedom," Eve and other enslaved persons debated running to British lines and Eve chose to go even though it meant she left her young son, George.[100] In a 2012 Black History Month program, "What Eyes Have Seen, Ears Have Heard," the focus was how the enslaved transmitted news: "The Program relates how Johnny and Eve, trusted slaves in the Peyton Randolph household, gathered and used information to improve their circumstances." Eve's story moved from the labor and violence of her ghost story to active and intelligent transmitter of knowledge. With careful and deliberate research, Eve became a well-known fixture in CW programming and Wright, as her actor interpreter, an expert in her field. As a result of her

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[99] *Revolutionary City* (Williamsburg, Virginia: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation 2009), 29.
[100] *Revolutionary City* (Williamsburg, Virginia: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 2009), 69-70.

robust biography, Eve moved beyond the Randolph back yard, to the streets and other Historic Area spaces.

Museum transparency

As Eve moved from ghostly matters to complex personhood, her lived spaces revealed the museum's inner workings. Colonial Williamsburg decided to cast aside its "go back in time" fantasy and openly acknowledge its eighteenth-century constructedness. Since the mid-1980s*,* CW was aware that visitors wanted to know how the museum operates: "the history of the restoration makes Colonial Williamsburg a museum of a museum" and also a force within the popular Colonial Revival movement.[101] Guests were no longer asked to "time travel" but instead consider how the present constructed the past.

Beginning in 1999, the Randolph outbuildings were reconstructed "using only Colonial methods and material."[102] Garland Wood, then Manager of Building Trades, detailed the labor required to locate timber, hew lumber, transport it to the site, and raise walls. Though eighteenth-century enslaved individuals would have completed this work, the twentieth-century work force included approximately seventy CW staff members and roughly one hundred volunteers.[103] The 1753 reconstruction of the site by Peyton Randolph "reflects a deliberate effort to express his gentility and respectability." It also

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[101] *Teaching History at Colonial Williamsburg* (Williamsburg, VA: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1985).
[102] Rex Springston, "No Kitchenette - Colonial Williamsburg Begins Construction of Outbuilding," *Richmond Times-Dispatch,* October 25, 1999, C-1.
[103] Springston, "No Kitchenette," C-1.

displaced and unsettled daily responsibilities at the site.[104] CWF attempted to interpret the hectic combination of active construction site and urban plantation by addressing it head-on with visitors.

This construction was an ambitious, three-phase reconstruction proposed to restore and revise understandings about the Randolph site.[105] Not only would the enslaved have spaces to exist and actors to portray them, but the entire back yard would transform into a construction site focused on eighteenth-century labor. In the proposed first phase, CW pledged the "completion of all necessary research and planning from all departments involved" and "the establishment of an interpretative planning team, led by a member of the historic buildings department." The historic buildings department included architectural historians, conservators, tradespersons, and maintenance workers focused on keeping Historic Area structures accurately interpreted and well preserved. An individual with knowledge of the reconstructed and original building would lead the site's interpretation.[106]

The interpretative "team's role would be to plan, implement, and coordinate interpretation of the construction with the interpretation of the

[104] "Peyton Randolph Outbuilding Project," undated, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library.
[105] "Peyton Randolph Outbuilding Project," undated, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library.
[106] Peyton Randolph Outbuilding Project," undated, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library.

house."[107] The site would not shut down until complete; it would incorporate the renovations into its daily activity as would have happened during the 1753 reconstruction. This phase also included the "construction of the smaller [enslaved] structures, like the dairy, the small storehouse and the smoke house," all historically present at the urban plantation.[108] Building materials were prepped offsite, at the Historic Area carpenter shop. There, actor interpreters discussed their work as part of the "Randolph job" to show how, even in the eighteenth-century, labor was frequently contracted out. In the second phase, "construction would include the two remaining small buildings, the old dairy and the storehouse, and two larger, more complex structures, the granary, and a building now identified as a quarter" [or enslaved living space].[109] CW carpenters would work on the Randolph site, with bricks molded and dried in the back yard.

In the final phase, the site was completed with the construction of "the two-story kitchen and covered walkway." With this ambitious schedule, "the future of Peyton Randolph's past backyard should begin to emerge in this final phase of construction. Foodways and other domestic work activities could begin to occupy and use the yard and the completed buildings." In proposing this reconstruction, Colonial Williamsburg offered to "interpret the

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[107] Peyton Randolph Outbuilding Project," undated, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library.
[108] Peyton Randolph Outbuilding Project," undated, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library.
[109] Peyton Randolph Outbuilding Project," undated, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library.

evolution of the property during Peyton Randolph's lifetime as it paralleled changes in the Randolph family, the growth of the city of Williamsburg, and cultural changes in society as a whole."[110] In the late-1990s, there was zero mention of enslavement in planning documents, though the labor involved enslaved craftspeople.

By making the visiting public aware of its reconstruction, the site revealed the museum's inner workings and its labor-intensive eighteenth-century foundations. This meta-interpretation incorporated a growing living history program designed "[t]o force visitors to think differently, [and] the actors [from the African American Interpretation department] decided to employ a new approach. 'Breaking character' to explain the presentations helped people accept the actors and insured that they properly understood what was taking place." In the late 1990s, this "break" separated Black actors from white actors, who "never broke character" because they did not need to explain who they were or why they mattered.[111] Audiences tended to understand white interpreters as important, revolutionary, patriotic, and knowledgeable simply by their eighteenth-century dress. Black interpreters needed to constantly negotiate their presence and explain to the mostly white audience that they too were public historians.[112]

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[110] Peyton Randolph Outbuilding Project," undated, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archives, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library.
[111] Crew, "Giving Black History Life," 3.
[112] Michael Twitty, *The Cooking Gene: A Journey Through African American Culinary History in the Old South* (New York: Amistad, 2017), 19. Though other Black interpreters have discussed this issue, Twitty recently and powerfully wrote, "I've gotten used to being

In *Living History Museums,* Scott Magelssen stresses the importance of not hiding the museum's machinery from visitors: "Not only do these places [living history museums] offer total, three-dimensional environments in which the visitor can encounter costumed personas from past eras in history, but the experience is heightened - made more *real* - by the curatorial machinery of the museum." [113] By noting the Randolph kitchen as reconstructed, by demonstrating daily the labor of building without power tools, living history animated the historic house in new ways. Brochures, signage and costumed interpreters link each visual image to an archive fact, i.e., this structure is based on an archeological dig, the side street corresponds with a historic map, the interpreter's experience is culled from a diary entry. Living history museums do not merely *represent* the past; they make truths for the visitor.

Can such interpretation fall under the rubric of "defiant memory work, or using cultural forms to foster liberation" as explained by scholars Erica R. Meiners and Therese Quinn?[114] How do African American interpreters "use the tools of documenting, archiving, memorializing, exhibiting, interpreting, and more, to remember — defiantly — and to counter engineered forms of state and other violence"?[115] Meiners and Quinn acknowledge that this work is often unsuccessful, as it destabilizes and unsettles normative practices

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challenged on every fact or word that comes out of my mouth. I am not write, and white men and women make up the majority of credentialed experts in this field."

[113] Magelssen, *Living History Museums,* xii.

[114] Erica R. Meiners and Therese Quinn, "Introduction: Defiant Memory Work" *American Quarterly* Vol. 71, 2, June 2019, 353.

[115] Meiners and Quinn, "Introduction: Memory Work," 355.

within the museum world. There must always be careful implementation by qualified and invested parties; "...to present suffering, particularly Black suffering, for white audiences, as Saidiya Hartman writes, always risks engendering more violence…."[116]

Afterlives of Slavery

In *The Art and Soul of African American Interpretation,* six Colonial Williamsburg actor-interpreters shared "what goes into creating characters" like Eve.[117] Emily James, who has portrayed many enslaved and free Black women, discussed how she would "clear her mind to become that person and wear that person's shoes." In this clearing, this emptying out, James experienced "a psychological connection" to her character: "We connect," she simply stated.[118] The interpreters shared how they channeled their character and the actor interpreters who came before them. The strength to portray Colonial Williamsburg's enslaved and free Black populations came from eighteenth- *and* twentieth-century sources. As history museums — both living and traditional — come under attack from critics with top-down American historical perspectives, such strength is required.[119] The afterlives of enslavement are not only visible in educational, juridical, and social systems; they also manifest themselves in museum spaces as a physical, psychical,

[116] Meiners and Quinn, "Introduction: Memory Work," 359.
[117] Edwards-Ingram, *The Art and Soul of African American Interpretation*, 10.
[118] Edwards-Ingram, *The Art and Soul of African American Interpretation,* 35-36.
[119] For more on recent conversations about "disgruntled white plantation visitors" see culinary historian Michael Twitty's essay on the *Afroculinaria* website, https://afroculinaria.com/2019/08/09/dear-disgruntled-white-plantation-visitors-sit-down/. See also Twitty, *The Cooking Gene*.

and political presence. This type of museum programming must continue to call attention to the architectural and psychical marks of enslavement and locate them on the museum's topography. Enslavement interpretation must also be understood as not only a rural plantation phenomenon, as Eve exists in an urban landscape. Eve and the Randolph reconstruction also underscore the "life-cycle of a museum," a constant loop of origins, conserving, uncertainty, and renewal at institutions with "long, multigenerational life" like Colonial Williamsburg. In this cycle, the museum should welcome "the constant change" not as crisis but as "opportunity." It acknowledges how "all museums are essentially living in a theater of dynamic change."[120]

In its own life-cycle, the Randolph House was an original site of Colonial Williamsburg telling stories about powerful white people, but it slowly became a location to tell stories of enslaved women and men. With the closure of sites like Carter's Grove and Great Hopes Plantation, and the uncertainty of continued enslavement interpretation, the Randolph House transformed into the central site of urban slavery at Colonial Williamsburg. Though programs and tours discuss eighteenth-century enslavement throughout the Historic Area, from (at least) 1999, the house and its various outbuildings were purposefully crafted "to suggest how particular white owners' and black workers' lives were intertwined and how they were affected

[120] Selma Holo and Mari-Tere Álvarez, "Introduction: Panarchy and the Museum," from *Remix: Changing Conversations in Museums of the Americas*, eds. Holo and Álvarez (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2016), 1-8.

by the social structure Peyton Randolph and his predecessors [and successors] tried to enforce there."[121] This tangle is not without contemporary implications, as the site still requires the physical, emotional and interpretative labor of Colonial Williamsburg employees. Though I do not mean to equate the institution of chattel slavery with employment at a living history museum, there is a level of related trauma associated with actor-interpreter work as an enslaved or free Black person from the colonial era.[122] Not only do these individuals bear the brunt of visitor racism and misogyny but also they also experience supernatural phenomena in Historic Area spaces.[123]

The Randolph complex was never an abandoned or decayed structure on the town's landscape. When the Rockefeller Restoration began, the house was easily readied for exhibition. However, ghost stories continued to linger on the landscape. Though exploitative, these stories kept certain histories alive for visitors. As with most narratives not immediately accessible in archived materials, storytelling was always key. Though first interpreted as a

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[121] Chappell, "Re-Translating the Past," 11.

[122] Fore more on the emotional labor of living history, see Amy M. Tyson's *The Wages of History: Emotional Labor on Living History's Front Lines* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013).

[123] In August 2016, the Colonial Ghosts tour company shared a video to their YouTube channel. In it, a former Colonial Williamsburg security officer shared his experience at the Peyton Randolph House. After surveying the basement, the guard heard a moaning behind him. Upon inspection, the house was empty and no activity could explain the guard's experience. Though the guard also told ghostly tales from other Colonial Williamsburg properties, he circled back to the Randolph house throughout the video. For complete video, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_DHNsxn8H8&t=269s. The Colonial Ghosts ghost tour company uses the Historic Area of Colonial Williamsburg to tell ghost stories to tourists (also referred to as "parasite tours" by CWF administrator, per Greenspan, 167. The company features this interview a one-minute clip posted to their homepage: https://colonialghosts.com/. In the video, the man refers to the Peyton Randolph House as the "Peyton Ratchliffe House" but his description of the house's layout shows that he is discussing the Randolph property.

space of white elitism, the residue of enslavement manifested in interpretative plans primarily executed by Black employees of Colonial Williamsburg. Storytelling continued to be central in these improvisational exchanges. The historic house museum is not only a space to witness the life cycle of a museum. It is also a site to re-imagine persons missing from the archive.

Chapter 4: Haunted Historians: Archival Absence and Imagined Narratives

A way must be found to gather descendants — bone of her mothers' bone, flesh of her mothers' spirit. To call upon them — the ones who came later and had no memory — to know and protect the past.

Tiya Miles, *The Cherokee Rose*

"Critical Fabulation"

In the late 1990s, literary studies scholar Saidiya Hartman traveled to Ghana "to reclaim the dead."[1] In an effort to understand the devastating "afterlife of slavery" in the Americas, Hartman "retrace[d] the process by which [African] lives were destroyed and slaves born."[2] She visited Ghanaian museums and other historic sites "to engage the past" not materially present in the archives of enslavement she previously studied: "the manifests of slavers; ledger books of trade goods; inventories of foodstuffs; bills of sale; itemized lists of bodies alive, infirm and dead; captains' logs; planters' diaries." [3] In spite of the abundance of documents, Hartman "searched for traces of the destroyed" and found none. Her research subjects were only notated as anonymous and expendable cargo.

As a powerful tool of historical erasure, an archive – the carefully arranged collection of primary documents, artifacts, manuscripts, and

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[1] Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009), 6.
[2] Hartman, *Lose Your Mother,* 6. Hartman defines the twentieth (and, I would add, twenty-first century) "afterlife of slavery" as "skewed life chances, limited access to health and education, premature death, incarceration, and impoverishment."
[3] Hartman, *Lose Your Mother,* 6, 17. Hartman conducted research at the National Museum of Ghana, visited Elmina Castle and Cape Coast Castle, and visited the many extant Ghanaian "dungeons, prisons and slave pens."

photographs found in brick-and-mortar institutions around the world -- "dictates" what scholars can empirically state about the past. In 2007, Hartman's *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along The Atlantic Slave Route* elegiacally documented her journey to sites associated with the slave trade and challenged the restrictions on historical writing about the enslaved: "My graduate training hadn't prepared me to tell the stories of those who had left no record of their lives…. I was determined to fill in the blank spaces of the historical record and to represent the lives of those deemed unworthy of remembering." Unlike the "mortuary" of constructed archives, Hartman sought the "remnants of those who vanished" within material histories recorded by white enslavers and slavery's profiteers.[4] She sought the individuals who had been made ghosts by the archive but who still haunted the material records of enslavement. For centuries, historians, archivists, and other record keepers continued to keep enslaved persons in the margins. Hartman wanted to make their histories public. [5]

Hartman's project is most evident in one short chapter from *Lose Your Mother.* In "The Dead Book," Hartman illuminates one Middle Passage atrocity present in institutionally archived items: "a musty trial transcript," an abolitionist's speech, a physician's journal, "a satirical print."[6] There was nothing left by the murdered young woman, who was flogged to death aboard

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[4] Hartman, *Lose Your Mother,* 16,17.
[5] Hartman, *Lose Your Mother,* 17.
[6] Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, 138, 145.

a slave ship in 1792. In order to recover her experience and give her presence in the narratives that narrate her torture, Hartman imagined the woman's experience via "critical fabulation … [or] a critical reading of the archive that mimes the figurative dimensions of history … to displace the received or authorized account, and to imagine what might have happened or might have been said or might have been done."[7] Hartman adapted "fabula" to define a rearrangement of "the narrative" in order "to displace the received or authorized account, and to imagine what might have happened…." [8]

Critical fabulation uses available archives while simultaneously acknowledging how "an unrecoverable past" requires imaginary but not unimaginable storytelling.[9] "Critical fabulation" is also done at museums and public history sites, where narratives are crafted to augment the archive's awful silence through (ideally) careful research and interpretation.[10] For Hartman, archival silence limits Black women in history to "a death sentence, a tomb … an asterisk in the grand narrative of history."[11] To combat this erasure – and avoid further violence upon the bodies in the archive – Hartman carefully concedes the impossibility of *really knowing anything* while arguing that her audience must "interrogate the production of our knowledge about the past" because it often solely relies on the "quantitative matters" of

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[7] Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe* No. 26, 12.2 (June 2008), 11.
[8] Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," 11.
[9] James G. Gibb, "Imaginary, But by No Means Unimaginable: Storytelling, Science, and Historical Archeology," *Historical Archeology* 34.2 (2002): 1-6.
[10] Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," 12.
[11] Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," 2.

the archive.[12] Hartman wants readers to witness the "ghostly matters" that materialize where this is no accounting for an experience. Through critical fabulation, Hartman's scholarship conducts intellectual and empathetic recovery. It does not speak for the dead, but instead points to re-imagined spaces where they once lived, breathed, and suffered.

"Critical fabulation" is at work within creative nonfiction and fiction alike, and Hartman is not the only scholar who imagines presence when the archive offers only absence.[13] Often, these re-imaginings use ghosts to address "the blank spaces of the historical record." Like Hartman, historical sites inspire archeologists, historians and screenwriters to set their fabulation in haunted houses, museums, and libraries. In many plots, this setting is deliberately used to rectify archival absence. This is particularly evident in the fiction of Barbara Michaels, Tiya Miles and Attica Locke. For Michaels, the imaginative appeals to a gendered audience seeking romance and adventure. For Miles, the speculative elements cohere with her historical foci and methodology. For Locke, ghost stories reveal parallels between past and present injustice. Each

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[12] Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," 14, 4. Michel-Rolph Trouillot's *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History.*

[13] Early American historians Jill Lepore and Jane Kamensky co-authored 2009's *Blindspot: A Novel* (New York: Random House, 2009), and shared their reasons for writing historical fiction with *The New Yorker: https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/the-exchange-jill-lepore-and-jane-kamensky-part-1.* Medieval historian Deborah Harkness wrote *A Discovery of Witches* (New York: Penguin, 2011), the first novel in her All Souls trilogy (followed by 2013's *Shadow of Night* and 2015's *The Book of Life*) and published *Time's Convert* in 2018. Social historian Demos wrote the young adult novel, *Puritan Girl, Mohawk Girl* (New York: Amulet Books, 2017) based on his own scholarship.

scholar uses fiction to display historical trauma not immediately discernible on the archived (and archivable) landscape

Beginning with a fictional account of Colonial Williamsburg's museums and moving into other historic house museums of the U.S. South, this chapter examines how academically trained scholars use museums and historic sites to re-imagine historical narratives. With varying degrees of success, each scholar uses ghosts in a museum – what I see as an example of Hartman's "critical fabulation" – to show what scholars cannot locate in archives.

Imaginative Literature, Popular Culture and the Museum

As with museums and public history sites, imaginative literature is a useful location to examine the popular construction of history. Avery Gordon's *Ghostly Matters* offers the reminder that "literature has not been restrained by the norms of a professionalized social science, and thus it often teaches, through imaginative design, what we need to know but cannot quite get access to with our given rule of method and modes of apprehension."[14] As noted by Hartman, creative writing provides room to examine who is historically without power in the archive-dependent methodology of the humanities and social sciences. Gordon is concerned with academia's refusal to intellectually consider "the fictive … not simply literature … [but] the ensemble of cultural imaginings, affective experiences, animated objects, marginal voices, narrative densities, and eccentric traces of power's

[14] Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 27.

presence."[15] Nowhere are these "eccentric traces" more visible then in the taken-for-granted realm of popular culture. In video games, movies, television shows, music lyrics, sports paraphernalia, and popular fiction – these are the sites where people most frequently encounter the past.

Akin to popular fiction, museums and public history sites are also consumable sites of popular culture. As scholars have long pointed out, popular culture does not imply the "trivial or easily forgotten."[16] Instead, popular culture illustrates a community's "understanding of [a] culture and its history."[17] Through games, television shows, movies, miniseries, toys, holiday decorations, souvenirs, and other material items, popular culture inflects conversations about how the past is still present. It informs everyday engagement with history. In *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life,* Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen argue that "popular historymaking" occurs beyond the curated confines of academia.[18] For Americans specifically, "the presence of the past" manifests in movie theaters, around television sets, at public libraries, and in books – or, in other words, the world of popular culture. Though Rosenzweig and Thelen's research did not specifically study the consumption of popular fiction, their

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[15] Gordon, *Ghostly Matters,* 25.
[16] Christopher Geist, "Colonial Williamsburg: An Artifact of Popular Culture," *Colonial Williamsburg Journal* (Summer 2006): http://www.history.org/Foundation/journal/Summer06/pop.cfm.
[17] Geist, "Colonial Williamsburg."
[18] Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998): 3.

survey respondents often mentioned reading habits. Therefore, popular fiction may be considered a form of public history.

Historical fiction, especially from widely available publishers, is the production of public history. It creates narratives that are more widely read than their academic counterparts. Though there are poorly crafted examples, it is useful to examine scholars who utilize Hartman's "critical fabulation" or the fictive combined with careful research. Why do they select certain moments in time for their creative interventions? Who is absent from the archive? Why do ghosts offer the imaginative space to affectively explore these silences?

Novels, short stories, poems, and plays are routinely set in museumized spaces. Historic houses, battlefields, and museums offer an alternate reality for escapism and revisionism often found historical fiction. For example, Colonial Williamsburg (CW) has been a recognizable commodity and pop cultural artifact since the 1930s.[19] The contemporary romance novel uses CW as an "inviting backdrop" to explore issues of revolution, freedom, and nationhood with varying degrees of historical verisimilitude.[20] These texts were published in tandem with the Rockefeller Restoration of Colonial Williamsburg and incorporated nostalgic elements of the Colonial Revival movement. Elswyth Thane's seven-book Williamsburg series begins with

[19] Christopher Geist, "Colonial Williamsburg: An Artifact of Popular Culture," *Colonial Williamsburg Journal* (Summer 2006): http://www.history.org/Foundation/journal/Summer06/pop.cfm.
[20] Geist, "Colonial Williamsburg"

1943's *Dawn's Early Light,* an American Revolutionary War romance peopled with "history's famous conspirators in the cause of freedom." In Leila Meacham's 2017 Foreword (issued in *Dawn's* rerelease), these characters are noted as "fancifully described but apparently authentically reported."[21] Thane's text exemplified a new Williamsburg-esque genre concurrent with the 1930s restoration: romanticizing and even eroticizing the Revolution without critically engaging with its traumas, i.e., slavery, freedom, citizenship.[22]

In terms of Williamsburg's "ghostly matters," juvenile and adult fiction also depicts the museum as a haunted locale where the border between past and present is hazy and indistinct. The fictional eighteenth-century Felicity, of the immensely popular *American Girls* series, features a 2009 title, *Lady Margaret's Ghost: A Felicity Mystery* by Elizabeth McDavidson Jones and illustrated by Jean Paul Tibbles; the slim novel centers on haunted heirlooms transported from Europe to the American colonies. Other titles include *A Haunting in Williamsburg* (1990) by Lou Kassem and *Mystery of the Blue-Gowned Ghost* (1994) by Linda Wirkner; these texts are often sold in CW gifts shops. Adult fiction also utilizes the present-into-past conceit though these

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[21] Leila Meacham, "Foreword," from Elswyth Thane's *Dawn's Early Light*, (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1943, 2017), n.p. In Thane's Acknowledgements from the 1943 edition, she thanks Colonial Williamsburg employees Bela Norton and Mary McWilliams, as well as William & Mary librarian Dr. Earl Gregg Swem. This displays a level of historical research, though Meacham notes that the final product is labeled a work of fictional romance.
[22] For more examples of the Williamsburg romance, see Jane Peart's 15-book *Brides of Montclair* series, published from 1985 to 2000, that frequently uses pre and post-revolutionary Williamsburg as a setting. Phoebe Conn, *Wild Legacy,* (New York: Zebra Books, 1999); Taffy Cannon, *Guns and Roses,* (McKinleyville, CA: John Daniel & Co., 2000); Lynne Hayworth, *Autumn Flame,* (New York: Zebra Publishing, 2001); and Corrine Everett, *Loving Lily* (New York: Zebra Publishing, 2001) take the romance theme into bodice-ripper territory, with varying degrees of historical accuracy.

texts notably feature scholar-protagonists who encounter the Williamsburg landscape from academic perspectives. M.G. McManus' time-traveling trilogy involves a pottery artifact that opens a portal to the past for a fictional archeologist.[23] In 2003 and 2009 respectively, *James River Destiny* by Laurie A. Boche and *The Charm Stone* by Lillian Stewart Carl wrote their main characters as visiting academics. Each fictional protagonist explored the region's mystery, museums, and almost always stayed in a cozy bed and breakfast. Interestingly, living history museums ask their visitors to engage in a similar experience: lose yourself in the recreated colonial past but spend your money in taverns and gift shops.

Ghosts of historicity haunt these fictional texts, from romance novels to children's literature, much as they haunt museumized spaces of Tidewater Virginia. There are varying degrees of accurate representation but much is purposefully occluded — i.e., enslavement, race, gender, class — to ensure audience comfort and return to the museum.

"A Never-Never Land"

An established Egyptologist and fiction writer, Barbara Mertz's interest in ancient history stemmed from childhood museum visits to the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.[24] Mertz later pursued undergraduate

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[23] These titles are M.G. McManus, *Nicholson Street* (Williamsburg, VA: Colonial Publishing Incorporated, 1986); *Francis Street* (Williamsburg, VA: Colonial Publishing Incorporated, 1988); and *Duke of Gloucester Street* (*Street* (Williamsburg, VA: Colonial Publishing Incorporated, 1989). It is unclear if McManus is a member of any academic community.
[24] "Books Published as Barbara Mertz": http://mpmbooks.com/barbara-mertz/. Interestingly, the Oriental Institute (like Colonial Williamsburg) was founded through financial support from

and graduate degrees in Egyptology from the University of Chicago, where she completed her Ph.D. in 1952.[25] In 1964, Mertz published the highly readable popular history, *Temples, Tombs and Hieroglyphs: A Popular History of Ancient Egypt* (reissued in 2007 for use in Egyptology courses) followed by 1978's *Red Land, Black Land: Daily Life in Ancient Egypt.*[26] In 1968, Mertz co-authored *Two Thousand Years in Rome*, a travel guide for twentieth-century audiences interested in ancient Roman history. These scholarly pursuits enabled Mertz to apply "rigorous background research" to her popular fiction written under two separate pseudonyms.[27] As "Elizabeth Peters" Mertz wrote the Amelia Peabody series that followed an amateur American archeologist through early-twentieth century Egypt; her Peters pseudonym also authored two additional series featuring, respectively, an art historian and a librarian-turned-novelist.[28] Though the "Elizabeth Peters" pen

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John D. Rockefeller, Jr. See also Mark Rose, "Queen of the Novel," *Archeology* (March/April 2005), 58:2, 46-51.

[25] Mertz's Ph.D. was "Certain Titles of the Egyptian Queens and Their Bearing on the Hereditary Right to the Throne." Her doctoral advisor was Professor John A. Wilson. In the 1950s and 1960s, academia was increasingly an unwelcoming space for women. Mertz instead married and raised two children. Sarah Booth Conroy, "The Triple Threat Mystery," *The Washington Post,* June 11, 1986; Daniel E, Slotnik, "Barbara Mertz, 85, is dead; wrote Egyptian Mysteries," *The New York Times,* August 16, 2013, A14.

[26] For review on Mertz's "popular readability and sound scholarship," see Orville Prescott, "The Joyful Experience of Egyptology," *The New York Times* Mar 30, 1964*; ProQuest Historical Newspapers*, 27

[27] At her agent's suggestion, Mertz began to use a pseudonym, see Wilda Williams, "The Three Faces of Mertz," *Library Journal*, July 1, 1992, n.p.; Sarah Booth Conroy, "The Triple-Threat Mystery," *The Washington Post,* June 11, 1986. Mertz also stated that a pseudonym was unnecessary to protect her academic reputation, see Eleanor Blau, "Name as Mask: The Theory and Practice of Pseudonyms," *The Washington Post,* September 4, 1989, 42.

[28] The Michaels's pseudonym commenced in 1966 and Peters in 1968. In a November 1, 2007 *Library Journal* review of the *Temples, Tombs and Hieroglyphs* reissue, Edward K. Werner argues that Mertz (as Peters) writes about ancient Egypt "using non-technical

name produced the most titles, Mertz's turn as "Barbara Michaels" in the mid-1960s capitalized on the increasingly popular gothic genre analyzed by Janice Radway, Tania Modleski and Kate Ferguson Ellis.[29]

As Michaels, Mertz uses familiar gothic elements: sinister characters moving through decaying spaces with shadowy intentions.[30] With titles like *Someone in the House* and *Be Buried in the Rain*, Mertz-as-Michaels writes educated but naïve heroines, producing sometimes trite fiction that concludes with the villain punished and the protagonist romantically attached. However, Mertz used her Barbara Michaels persona to craft ghost stories frequently set in museumized spaces to acknowledge the thin veil between the past and the present. Several of Michaels' stand-alone novels operate in decaying Virginia manors along the James River or outside Charlottesville with English graduate students, law school dropouts, and budding anthropologists as protagonists. Mertz's home was near Frederick, Maryland, and her novels often centered on museums she had visited.[31] As Michaels, Mertz relies on her audience's awareness of popular cultural and historical commemorations, like the 1976 bicentennial celebrations, to craft her ghostly narratives. Often,

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language with wit and amusing personal asides worthy of [Mertz's fictional character, Amelia] Peabody herself," thus further blurring the line between fact and fiction.

[29] See Janice Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy and Popular Culture* (Chapel Hill : University of North Carolina Press, 1984); Tania Modleski, *Loving With a Vengeance: Mass Produced Fantasies for Women* (New York: Routledge, 1990); and Kate Ferguson Ellis, *The Contested Castle: Gothic Novels and the Subversion of Domestic Ideology* (Chicago: University of Illinois, 1989).

[30] Mertz's first novel, *The Master of Blacktower* (New York: Appleton-Century, 1966), was a painfully obvious homage to *Jane Eyre* replete with an absent wife and a crumbling manor house.

[31] From October 2, 2018 correspondence with Barbara Mertz's daughter, Elizabeth Mertz.

these markers operate in museumized spaces and utilize what Laura Joan George calls a "Gothic archeology." Novels set in and around archeological sites serves as a "master trope" to excavate "timeless female anxieties in a patriarchal culture" –whether the 1790s or 1970s.[32]

In 1976, Mertz-as-Michael published *Patriot's Dream*, a novel set in Williamsburg, Virginia, during the Bicentennial summer. Its initial book reviews were not good: "a totally predictable," "Bicentennial bust" where "the dialogue is stilted and the characterizations sketchy."[33] Despite its formulaic, uncritical prose, *Patriot's Dream* offers a public history mired in gothic conventions that mirrors criticism leveled against Colonial Williamsburg and other living history museums in the 1970s. The novel includes race, but only at a distance, and does not show how past inequity manifests across the centuries. *Patriot's Dream* chronicles disillusioned English teacher Jan Wilde's summer sojourn to Williamsburg, where her aunt and uncle are private owners of a 1754 house on the town's main, museumized thoroughfare.[34] When asleep in this space, Jan has increasingly realistic visions — what she calls hauntings — about the late eighteenth-century. However, "if she had been in any other city in the world, [she] would have

[32] Laura Joan George, "Romantic reading and feminist writing: Political tropology," PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 1992.
[33] Carol Schene, *School Library Journal* review, February 1977, pg. 76; Joyce W. Smothers, *Library Journal* review, October 1976, pg. 2194.
[34] Jan frequently bemoans her classroom situations fraught with violence and disrespect. These sections are hard to not read as commentary on inner-city youth culture and disinterested elite young women. The book's language is dated, with racist, xenophobic, and sexist language.

known … she was dreaming."[35] As Jan is "up to her neck in the past" with a living history museum at her doorstep and an eighteenth-century musical interpreter beau, she initially accepts that "her subconscious must be packed with facts" and "a focusing lens for ancestral memory."[36]

In *Patriot's Dream,* characters critique Colonial Williamsburg as a "never-never land" dependent on "historical nostalgia."[37] However, despite these instances, Michaels adheres to a nostalgic narrative of Colonial Williamsburg as a place of ghosts who do not unsettle so much as re-assure/reinforce social categories. *Patriot's Dream* aligns with Richard Handler and Eric Gable's conclusion that at Colonial Williamsburg, "new characters and topics have become vehicles for an uncritical retelling of some old American myths and dreams."[38] In *Patriot's Dream*, Michaels adheres to historical nostalgia by focusing on history as a progressive, positivist process; as a primarily white, male experience; and as a romanticized idea enshrined in museumized space. The novel does little to show the connection between past and present; it does not "tell stories about the past in a present-day language."[39] There is a clear break between the eighteenth century and the twentieth.

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[35] Barbara Michaels, *Patriot's Dream* (New York: HarperCollins, 1976, 2007): 20.
[36] Michaels, *Patriot's Dream,* 29, 73, 156.
[37] Michaels, *Patriot's Dream,* 37.
[38] Richard Handler and Eric Gable, *The New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg* (Chapel Hill: Duke University Press, 1997), 221.
[39] Handler and Gable, *The New History in an Old Museum,* 223.

In the bicentennial year, Colonial Williamsburg was overwhelmed with commemoration for both the nation's two-hundredth and the Foundation's fiftieth.[40] As a highly commercialized public history site with an overworked and often unqualified staff, CW produced an underwhelming bicentennial "oversimplification" that neglected to discuss the contradictory histories of a "perfect nation" built by enslavement and with traumatic twentieth-century conflicts like Watergate and the Vietnam War.[41] What Colonial Williamsburg needed was an honest and direct "reinterpretation of the past."[42] However, this reinterpretation did not come until long after 1976 – and it did not arrive with the histories made public in Michaels' *Patriot's Dream.*

Patriot's Dream reproduces an "oversimplification" of American Revolutionary history using conventional and trite popular tropes. The house is haunted by simultaneous moments across time – an interesting concept except there is little to no interrogation of racial stereotypes or gender norms. Slavery only materializes in a romantic relationship between fictional characters Leah and Charles, who perform as obvious stand-ins for Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson. In *Patriot's Dream,* Jonathan is the only character with any sensitivity to the American paradox of slavery and freedoms, though his example (paired with his growing attraction to the enslaved Leah) leads Charles to acknowledge the contradiction. Race is

[40] Anders Greenspan, *Creating Colonial Williamsburg: The Restoration of Virginia's Eighteenth-Century Capital* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 144.
[41] Greenspan, *Creating Colonial Williamsburg,* 145-147.
[42] Greenspan, *Creating Colonial Williamsburg,* 147.

superficially explored but only in the eighteenth-century, with brief mentions to twentieth-century race relations underdeveloped and unconnected to what Saidiya Hartman called “the afterlife of slavery.” Through her time travelling, Jan hears about the Bray School, is a witness to a slave auction, and learns about Jefferson’s relations with Hemings. However, much like the oversimplified Colonial Williamsburg of 1976, *Patriot’s Dream* in the 1770s depicts a dangerously nostalgic historical reconstruction for readers. There is no disclosure that the museum is, in fact, an interpretative location. Instead, Jan’s “dreams” are the museum’s realities: the past-present time travel is unacknowledged except as a vehicle to get Jan closer to her love interest.

In *American Quarterly*, Frances Tran recently argued that “the trope of time travel” can be “a reparative approach to the archive” that allows for new stories to be told, for new encounters to occur, for new public histories.[43] Time travel is akin to Avery Gordon’s haunting: it allows for the production of “counter imaginaries.”[44] Jan travels through time, but she passively and uncritically observes eighteenth-century action. She is a spectator, not a participant. Much like an inert museumgoer, Jan moves through tableaus of American history with little reflection on how racial slavery influenced twentieth-century political and social attitudes. There is no long-term acknowledgement of past traumas. Even when Jan witnesses the slave

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[43] Francis Tran, ““Time Traveling with Care: On Female Coolies and Archival Speculations,” *American Quarterly* (June 2018): 189, 207.
[44] Tran, “Time Traveling with Care,” 200.

auction, her commentary is indifferent at best: "The scene lacked the drama and air of tragedy commonly associated with such transactions."[45] The experience barely warrants a mention when she awakens in the 1970s.

Contrast, briefly, Michael's *Patriot's Dream* with Octavia Butler's vastly superior 1979 novel, *Kindred.* (Such a contrast belies the adage that *Patriot's Dream* is a product of its time.) Also set in the bicentennial year of 1976, *Kindred* tells the story of Dana Franklin, who is violently summoned into the past when a slave-owning ancestor is in mortal danger. Like *Patriot's Dream,* the novel is told from first-person point of view, includes a love interest, and depicts research conducted in order to understand the past. In other words, both novels use the resources of the present to operate in the past. Jan and Dana are also both referred to as a "shadow" or "ghost" by those they encounter in the past.[46] Their presences are felt, to varying degrees. Jan and Dana also both ruminate on the "tourist gaze" of their time-travel: from Jan: "It was like the reconstruction, and yet different in many small ways."[47] From Dana: "We were observers watching a show. We were watching history happen around us. And we were actors."[48]

However, the narrative similarities end here. *Kindred* depicts an intimate, dangerous engagement with the past: Dana, an African American, must keep Rufus Weylin, her white ancestor, alive in order to protect her

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[45] Michaels, *Patriot's Dream,* 96.
[46] Michaels, *Patriot's Dream,* 298-299; Octavia Butler, *Kindred,* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979): 24.
[47] Michaels, *Patriot's Dream,* 88.
[48] Butler, *Kindred,* 98.

genealogy. When pulled into the past, Dana's time travel renders her dizzy and nauseous; there is no peaceful sleep, like Jan's experience in *Patriot's Dream*. Once recovered, Dana is taken for an enslaved woman and mistreated as such. Subject to the violent whims of her white enslavers, Dana constantly worries about the ever-present possibility of physical and sexual assault. *Kindred's* finale involves a death struggle between Dana and Rufus – a fight she ultimately wins but not without the physical loss of an arm. Jan's time travel concludes safely, with questions answered and ruminations about reincarnation. Dana's time travel stops abruptly, with maiming, questions, and an uncertain future. While *Patriot's Dream* is an escapist fantasy with little social import, *Kindred* offers a creative recovery for experiences unremarked upon in estate records that register enslaved peoples as inventory. It is a critical fabulation. Butler's *Kindred* is an "effort to recover something of the experiences of the nineteenth-century ancestors" unlike the historical nostalgia regurgitated in Michaels' *Patriot's Dream.*[49]

"Structured Imagination"

Like Butler, other writers deliberately used gothic conventions to explore absence in the archive, and they express what is unknowable through haunted houses. Like Mertz-as-Michaels, these authors reveal their characters' personal histories in museumized spaces: archeological sites, historic house museums and plantations tourism. However, some writers

[49] Robert Crossley, "Reader's Guide: Critical Essay," from Octavia Butler, *Kindred,* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979): 274.

fictionalize the actual discovery of unknown archives; they imagine materials found: diaries, estate records, letters, and photographs. Tiya Miles, a historian of African Americans, Native Americans, and women, is also a fiction writer who uses the gothic to imagine new public histories.[50] Miles has published extensively within the historical field. Her publications include 2017's *The Dawn of Detroit: A Chronicle of Slavery and Freedom in the City of the Straits, 1760-1815;* 2010's *The House on Diamond Hill: A Cherokee Plantation;* and 2005's *Ties That Bind: The Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and in Freedom.* Miles has a Ph.D. in American Studies, a professorship at Harvard University, and her topics are the unknown and unacknowledged intersections between native peoples and enslaved and freed black communities. Miles's historical writing works to "reasonably interpret as truthfully and as accurately as possible."[51]

Miles also self-identifies as a public historian, most notably as a 2011 recipient of a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship.[52] In 2015 she published *Tales From The Haunted South: Dark Tourism and Memories from the Civil War,* a case study collection that analyzed how ghost tours, prominent among historic sites, "continue to feed problematic 'Old South' narratives and erase

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[50] Tiya Miles personal website, http://tiyamiles.com/biography/.
[51] http://tiyamiles.com/biography/.
[52] In 2006, Miles published "African-American History at the Chief Vann House," a booklet for the Chief Vann House Historic Site in Chatsworth, Georgia. Her work, *The House on Diamond Hill* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2011) is well-regarded among public historians; it was awarded the Best Book Award from the National Council on Public History (NCPH) in 2011. Miles is also a frequent contributor to *The Public Historian,* NCPH's quarterly journal. For more on the MacArthur Fellowship, see https://www.macfound.org/fellows/9/.

the hard truths of the Civil War era."[53] However, Miles does not dismiss the ghost as a useless figure. In 2015, she published her first work of fiction, *The Cherokee Rose: A Novel of Gardens and Ghosts*. This novel is a clear imagining of her nonfiction text, *The House on Diamond Hill,* and it explicates her research process: Miles uses her "knowledge of history as an anchor from which [she] could imagine the rest."[54]

Miles is part of a growing cadre of scholars who use fiction to fill archival silences. In *Ties That Bind*, Miles uses the fictional work of Toni Morrison, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Diane Glancy in order to imagine the affective experience of African and Native American women: "I believe that fiction, as its own form of truth, can bridge the gaps in our evidence and allow us access to the marrow of human feeling."[55] Though she does not explicitly reference Avery Gordon's ghostly matters, Miles uses Morrison's *Beloved* to discuss the "impossibility of speaking the stories of the slave past." For Miles, Morrison's fiction, based on historical precedent, "far surpasses what scant historical evidence can illuminate."[56] (There are certainly echoes of *Beloved* in *The Cherokee Rose.*) Historian Steven Weisenburger weaves *Beloved* into his 1998 history *Modern Medea*, based on the historical precedent for

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[53] From book jacket for Tiya Miles, *Tales From The Haunted South: Dark Tourism and Memories from the Civil War,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015).
[54] See http://tiyamiles.com/biography/.
[55] Tiya Miles, *Ties That Bind: The Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and in Freedom* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005): 60.
[56] Miles, *Ties That Bind*, 60.

Morrison's novel.[57] Historian Wilma King uses Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* "in the absence of historical data" about color stratification among black women.[58] However, the use of fiction as historical evidence is not without criticism. In her review of Miles' *The Cherokee Rose*, historian Martha S. Jones expressed her discomfort with the use of fiction to speak for certain silences: "The historian's charge, as I see it, is to explain the lives of slaves through their very distance from the archive. This approach makes the instances in which enslaved people broke the silence all the more meaningful."[59] Unlike Miles, Jones finds power in silence, in letting the ghosts hover in the corner and *just haunt*. However, Jones concludes that "the speculative imagination of fiction" offers much for historians to consider as they approach the "limits of what historical writing might accomplish."[60]

With *The Cherokee Rose,* Miles fully engages in "imaginative reconstructions of the past" – or a fictive rendering of Hartman's "critical fabulation."[61] The novel follows a gothic trajectory of purposeful concealment and healing discovery. The setting is the Chief Hold House, a plantation located outside of Atlanta, Georgia, and modeled after the Chief Vann House

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[57] Stephen Weisenburger, *Modern Medea: A Family Story of Slavery and Child-Murder from the Old South* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998).
[58] Wilma King, *The Essence of Liberty: Free Black Women During the Slave Era* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2006): 28, 43,
[59] Martha S. Jones, "On *The Cherokee Rose*, Historical Fiction, and Silences in the Archives," *Process: A Blog for American History,* Organization of American Historians, posted on May 26, 2015.
[60] Jones, "On *The Cherokee Rose,"* Jones' comments reminds me of Hartman's argument to consider "critical fabulation" when the archive offers only absent narratives.
[61] Miles, *Ties That Bind*, 60.

of Miles's historical research. The house — or rather its spectral female protector, the ghost of Mary Ann Battis, a young Indian woman who once lived on the property — summons three disparate women from around the United States: Jinx Micco, a Cherokee-Creek researcher tracking a student from Georgia's Indian mission schools; Cheyenne Cotterell, an Atlanta interior designer/debutante with plans to turn the house into a chic bed and breakfast; and Ruth Mayes, a magazine writer investigating the plantation's transition from public museum to private home. Though Cheyenne and Ruth knew each other as children, they were not friends. If the house had not purposefully gathered its "descendants … the ones who came later and had no memory – to know and protect the past," these women might have never met.[62] However, on the plantation grounds, in the house's bedrooms and in its secret attic, Jinx, Cheyenne and Ruth come to terms with separate and private pasts: "Three women, so different, enlisted to carry the same story" (245). As the women excavate — quite literally — powerful material narratives of female perseverance, the house is anthropomorphized as a fourth sister.

In Miles's first novel a buried diary reveals the house's unspeakable history, and her prose exposes "the alignment of America's literary histories with the nation's idealized myths."[63] In *Gothic America: Narrative, History, and Nation,* Teresa A. Goddu argues that "the American gothic is haunted by

[62] Miles, *The Cherokee Rose*, 4.
[63] Teresa A. Goddu, *Gothic America: Narrative, History, and Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 10.

race" – specifically the specter of slavery.[64] A slippery and unstable term, the gothic is "the popular, the disturbing, and the hauntings of history" located in much of American literature.[65] Goddu argues, "the gothic is able to rematerialize the ghosts of America's racial history and enable African-American writers to haunt back."[66] Goddu sees African American writers rendering unspeakable things spoken in their literature. Though Goddu primarily examines nineteenth-century American literature, her Gothic America helps amplify Miles's themes in *The Cherokee Rose*. Much like the power of public history to influence national memory, American literature also enshrines particular narratives of American fortitude, resilience, and hard work. Miles's novel reveals the complex intersection of race, gender, and class in both the mid-nineteenth and early twenty-first centuries.

While *The Cherokee Rose* allows Miles to push back against an empirical historical field, the novel also illustrates her own professional haunting. The empathetic experience of historical research and recovery runs throughout the novel. The characters act as surrogates for Miles when they experience the thrill of document discovery through ghostly interventions. Ruth sees the spirit of Mary Ann in the doorway of a cabin used by missionary workers in the early eighteenth century. Upon further inspection, the women find teacher Anna Rosina Gamble's diary buried at the cabin's threshold —

[64] Goddu, *Gothic America*, 3, 7.
[65] Goddu, *Gothic America,* 8.
[66] Goddu, *Gothic America*, 132.

exactly where Mary Ann's ghost shimmered before Ruth. In this diary, Ruth, Jinx and Cheyenne learn about Cherokee Chief James Hold, his enslaved labor force, the Native American and African Americans who came and went through his household, and the violence done to women in particular. Anna's diary is a researcher's dream as it reveals the unvarnished account of an unknown American history: a Cherokee enslaver and a missionary community in the U.S. South. It is also crucial to the women's present day experience, as it reveals the true owner of the Cherokee Rose, Adam Battis, and the danger posed by a local white man, Mason Allen, who wanted the house for himself. In the novel's final moments, Allen sets fire to the land around the Cherokee Rose. While combatting Allen's arson, the women discover the names of runaway slaves inscribed on the walls of an earthen house on the grounds: "These names matter…. We can remember them if we try."[67] After the fire, Ruth sees Mary Ann's ghost for the last time: "she was releasing it all to them, all of the pages, all of the pain. She had trust in their care. She was letting it go."[68] In *The Cherokee Rose,* the ghost literally holds the missing pages, an archive absent for so many decades. Once the diary is entrusted to safe keepers, the haunting ends when the house is restored to its rightful owner.

There are also public history reclamations, as the three women learn how the Hold House was referred to as "The Cherokee Rose" by black sharecroppers who farmed the land. Renaming, especially in the field of

[67] Miles, *The Cherokee Rose*, 210.
[68] Miles, *The Cherokee Rose,* 212.

public history, is an important method for historical recovery. Though the home is not returned to a historic house museum, it is restored as The Cherokee Rose bed and breakfast. The missionary cabin is renamed to honor Mary Ann Battis. Mason Allen receives his just punishment, as he built his newest development atop a burial ground; the National Historic Preservation Act and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act cause the cessation of construction. All of these discoveries happen because of a ghost. The haunting comes in waves, sometimes surprising but never frightening. When Ruth and Jinx locate an enslaved woman's attic prison, Ruth "imagined a female figure brooding" in the room with them.[69] The female characters of *The Cherokee Rose* convene with the past in ways similar to Miles's ability to "picture life" in the Chief Vann House when working on *The House on Diamond Hill.* Miles – and her fictional characters - constantly speak for the spirits of women silenced by historical processes.

Locke: Imaginative as indicator of present pasts, as sign of ambiguity

Attica Locke does not possess the advanced academic degrees of Mertz or Miles, but she is an established screenwriter.[70] After graduation from Northwestern University as a film student, Locke received a fellowship to attend the Sundance Institute's Feature Filmmaker's Lab. However, Locke was quickly disillusioned with filmmaking: when attempting to locate a

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[69] Miles, *The Cherokee Rose,* 235.
[70] Locke is a writer and a producer on the critically acclaimed television show, *Empire,* which chronicles familial power grabs in the multimillion dollar entertainment industry.

distributor for her debut film featuring two black leads, she was informed, “there’s no business model for it.”[71] This attitude drove her into screenwriting, producing television shows, and writing several novels including 2009’s *Black Water Rising* and more recently 2017’s *Bluebird, Bluebird*. Locke’s novels focus on racial dynamics during murder investigations, political turmoil amid tight elections, and the power of big business on non-white communities.

Locke’s 2012 novel, *The Cutting Season,* centers on legal and racial inequity spread out over time but rooted firmly in the same place. Caren Gray, a law school dropout and single mother to young daughter Morgan, manages Belle Vie, “an antebellum plantation-turned-tourist attraction” located in Louisiana. Just beyond its pristine and “award-winning” landscapes, the Groveland Corporation leases five hundred acres to farm sugar cane with a mainly migrant labor force.[72] After one heavy rainstorm, Caren finds the shallow grave of one worker, Inés Avalo, along the fence line between Belle Vie and the sugar fields. With her lawyer ex-husband Eric, Caren fights known and unknown dangers while digging deeper, literally and figuratively, and she learns that “Belle Vie, its beauty, was not to be trusted … that one day it would spit out what it no longer had use for, the secrets it would no longer keep.”[73] Belle Vie, claimed during the postbellum Reconstruction era by its formerly enslaved inhabitants, holds multiple histories: Caren’s own

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[71] Interview with *The Morning News*
[72] Attica Locke, *The Cutting Season*, (New York: HarperCollins, 2012), 4, 8.
[73] Locke, *The Cutting Season*, 4.

unresolved past; the migrant worker experience; and a century-old murder. In *The Cutting Season,* Caren uses her legal training to confront the systems that rendered Inés vulnerable to her killer and exploited as a migrant worker.[74]

Inés's experience is historically paralleled with Caren's ancestor, Jason, one of the formerly enslaved men who worked Belle Vie and disappeared sometime after the Civil War. His cabin, part of Belle Vie's preserved "thriving village of plantation workers," is rumored to be haunted.[75] Throughout the novel, Jason's Cabin physically affects Caren, but it is a particularly potent space immediately following the discovering of Inés's body: "[Caren] felt her chest close, her head go light. She'd had moments like this before, in this very cabin, when she'd felt overcome with dread, a heavy weight pressing in on her sternum. But today, the feeling was worse."[76] Jason's Cabin is where Inés was murdered after she discovered human bones in the sugar cane fields. Bobby Clancy, the second son of Belle Vie, murdered her because he wanted to ensure the remains did not affect the sale of more land to the Groveland Corporation.[77] As this murderer is unveiled, Caren also learns of Jason's murder at the hands of Clancy's ancestor, William Tynan. Rather than lose Belle Vie to the formerly enslaved who legally claimed the land after the end of the Civil War, Tynan killed Jason

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[74] Locke, *The Cutting Season*, 318-319.
[75] Locke, *The Cutting Season,* 11.
[76] Locke, *The Cutting Season,* 14.
[77] Locke, *The Cutting Season,* 352, 354-355

and buried him beyond the enslaved cabins.[78] Jason's legal claim was deliberately removed from Belle Vie's archives, thus perpetuating a cycle of material erasure in constructed archives.[79] Caren ends up as Belle Vie's rightful owner, but her ability to prove it requires picking through "dusty records" but she has no interest in remaining on its land.[80]

Throughout the novel, Caren ruminates on the knowledge that Jason's murder would have never been revealed if not for Inés's death: "Were they so different really, Jason and Inés, two cane workers separated by time and not much else?"[81] Jason's experience, though contextually and historically distant from Inés, was also about restitution amid the power of whiteness to obliterate memory. During the course of the novel, the sins of the past are revisited and rectified to some extent. The heaviness, the spectral weight of haunted Belle Vie, refuses to lift until public audiences understand these two crimes. Both Jason and Inés are remembered by their loved ones but very little is done to avenge their murders because of the precarious nature of these individuals' existence: undocumented migrants, itinerant ministers, non-English speaking day laborers, newly emancipated individuals. These subjectivities, erased in Belle Vie's Lost Cause interpretation, were denied power in the past and the

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[78] Locke, *The Cutting Season,* 355-356. Caren's sidekick, *Times Picayune* journalist Lee Owens, points to the Homestead Act of 1862 as the legal channel used by formerly enslaved individuals to claim abandoned plantations after the Civil War ended. Jason apparently adhered to the act's requirements until Tynan murdered him and his sudden disappearance attributed to his seemingly inconsiderate running off.
[79] Locke, *The Cutting Season,* 368.
[80] Locke, *The Cutting Season,* 370.
[81] Locke, *The Cutting Season,* 256.

present until Caren could not longer bear the spectral weight of Jason's Cabin. Then, she initiates an unloading, *an* unearthing of Belle Vie's racial traumas.

This weight is a sensation experienced by many visitors to plantation or heritage tourism sites. Jessica Adams describes this affective experience as the "wounds of returning," or the way plantation and heritage tourism inflicts psychic injury by encouraging blatant consumption (merchandise, weddings, tours) of historic sites where enslaved bodies were historically commodified with little to no room for introspection or reflection.[82] Like Miles's Cherokee Rose House, Locke's fictional Belle Vie is based on an actual historic site, Oak Valley Plantation in Vacherie, Louisiana. Locke attended an Oak Valley wedding for an interracial couple and "wounds of returning" opened during her visit. In a 2013 lecture, "Touring Tara: The Magic and Menace of Historical Tourism," Locke described Oak Valley as a wedding venue, restaurant, bed and breakfast, and working sugarcane plantation — a model of "historical kitsch." [83] In an effort to understand the commodification of such painful (and public) history, Locke considered how she could "make space for the ugliness" of enslavement and the Jim Crow era. (She notes how there was no attempt to mention *location* during a wedding ceremony.) When she goes home, Locke takes her "wounds of returning" with her; she is

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[82] Jessica Adams, *Wounds of Returning: Race, Memory and Property on the Postslavery Plantation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 5.
[83] This lecture was given at Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle on July 16, 2013: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=URYLSRIyJos.

haunted by Oak Valley.[84] Locke researched the plantation's mistress and felt that she had one commonality with her: she also relied on domestic labor to run her household. By no means a plantation mistress over enslaved individuals, Locke's "middle class existence" required the manual labor of others, primarily Latinx workers. In an effort to soothe her "wounds of returning," Locke deeply interrogated the unseen labor and class issues buried within the American Dream ideology. Her efforts to further understand Oak Valley as a historical site and a heritage tourism destination led to experiential research with an overnight stay at Oak Alley. Locke was quick to share that she did not want to be out around the plantation after dark; she had heard many stories of ghosts at Oak Valley. However, rather than dismiss these stories, Locke acknowledged their voices and their power over her. She wanted to tell them, if she met them, that their labor mattered.

Locke's questions were similar to those of Tiya Miles and largely reflective of their contemporary political situation: what promises does historical tourism offer for twenty-first century audiences, and "what do we do with these [plantation] spaces" after the election of the first Black president of the United States, Barack Obama? In interview after interview, Locke expressed how *The Cutting Season* was written in part as a reaction to Obama's candidacy and presidency. Characters wear t-shirts emblazoned

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[84] Adams, *Wounds of Returning,* 4. Adams wonders why "haunted" is an attractive element for so many plantation tourists. The fact that these places are often haunted by enslaved individuals does not seem to trouble most visitors. If there is no interrogation of why hauntedness is attractive, there is also no room to ask questions of the past and understand the present.

with Obama's visage and ruminate on his historical import. Locke called Obama's election a revision of the "script about race … that doesn't really work anymore."[85] Not only does Locke wrestle with what to do with plantation sites, but she also confronts how to discuss slavery with a Black man in the White House.[86]

In many ways, *The Cutting Season* was the product of Locke as "an eternal optimist."[87] Now, during the current presidential administration, accompanied by a disturbing free-fall into historical nostalgia and white supremacist notions of American history, how might Locke revise her novel? Certainly, her themes are prescient. Locke was aware of the racial situation post-Obama: "I think you can get people to think about things that are new or uncomfortable, if you take them on a journey that feels vaguely familiar."[88] Using imaginative literature, Locke showed how inequity manifests over time on the same landscape and requires a dangerous amnesia: "Most of Belle Vie's latter-day workers are so caught up in fake slavery that they don't see what suffering the migrant sugarcane workers endure."[89]

"Imaginative [haunted] homes"

Each of the aforementioned scholars chose to write imaginative literature to make specific histories public. Inspired by actual museumized

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[85] NPR interview, September 18, 2012.
[86] Erin Z. Bass, "Interview with Attica Locke," *Deep South* magazine, January 16, 2013.
[87] Robert Birnbaum interview, *The Morning News,* November 29, 2012
[88] Alice O'Keefe, "Cut to the Chase," *The Bookseller* magazine, June 8, 2012, 25.
[89] Janet Maslin, "Reaping Secrets Ancestors Sowed," *New York Times* September 5, 2012, C1.

spaces, the scholars wrote narratives with gothic strains. These narratives attempt to illuminate the dark, haunted areas of archival absence using Saidiya Hartman's "critical fabulation." Historian John Demos, himself an author of imaginative literature, describes this dark region as "a borderland of surprising width and variegated topography."[90] He described the scholar's process of speculation and interpretation in a topographical metaphor. When hiking along a well-blazed trail, one is increasingly able to recognize the trail markers. However, when the blaze disappears from the landscape, the historian-hiker is not completely lost. The landscape is familiar as the historian recognizes "where the blazed trees must have stood." Filling in the missing gaps, the historian-hiker works their way out of the forest and might even leave a trail behind for other hikers. This is also the process of imagined interpretation for scholars like Mertz, Miles and Locke. They *know* their terrains, and their topics are their "imaginative homes."[91] However, they also have questions and connections that cannot be made within what historian Deborah Harkness described as the "evidentiary constraints" of an academic and empiricist methodology.[92] These writers explore the trail and move out into the unknown regions because they know their way back home.

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[90] John Demos, "Afterword: Notes From, and About, the History/Fiction Borderland," *Rethinking History* 2.2/3 (June/September 2005): 329-355.
[91] Demos, "Afterword," 334, 331.
[92] "Creatively Writing about Early America and the Atlantic Worlds: a roundtable on fiction, poetry, and history" at the 24th Omohundro Institute Annual Conference on Friday, June 15, 2018.

At the end of *Lose Your Mother,* Hartman reflects on her travels to Ghanaian museums and historic sites. She does not return to the United States with any clear answers but she does see the afterlife of slavery "articulated in the ongoing struggle to escape, stand down, and defeat slavery in all its myriad forms."[93] This afterlife, a haunted articulation after centuries of enslavement, stays with Hartman in her imagination. Instead of following a trail blazed by empirically driven historians, Hartman creates her own path from the past to the present — and she brings the ghosts with her.

[93] Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, 234.

A Ghostly Public History

In my dream, the ghost of history lies down beside me, rolls over, pins me beneath a heavy arm.

Natasha Trethewey, “Pilgrimage, Vicksburg, Mississippi”

The ghosts shudder, but they do not leave. They sway with open mouths again. Kayla raises one arm in the air, palm up, like she’s trying to soothe Casper, but the ghosts don’t still, don’t rise, don’t ascend and disappear. They stay.

Jesmyn Ward, *Sing, Unburied, Sing*

Every historian of the multitude, the dispossessed, the subaltern, and the enslaved is forced to grapple with the power and authority of the archive and the limits it sets on what can be known, whose perspective matters, and who is endowed with the gravity and authority of historical actor.

Saidiya Hartman, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments*

Ghost Structures

In late Spring 2018, I helped construct the wooden outline of a slave dwelling just beyond the main house at the Menokin Glass House Project.[1] Menokin sits outside the town of Warsaw, Virginia, in a rural section of Tidewater Virginia’s Northern Neck peninsula. Now a ruined eighteenth-century plantation house, Menokin was built as a wedding present using enslaved labor. Despite its primary mission to "preserve and interpret the home and life of patriot Francis Lightfoot Lee,” Menokin’s recent interpretative

[1] In May 2016, Menokin Education Outreach Coordinator, Alice French invited me to join the Menokin Foundation's African American Advisory Work Group (AAAWG). I gladly accepted. As a member of AAAWG, I attend twice-yearly meetings, advise on interpretation efforts, and conduct research on descendant communities. Menokin frequently holds workshops, lectures, conferences, and other events to tell its many histories: Native American, enslaved, freed Black, and sharecropper. One educational opportunity was construction of the Menokin Ghost Structure from May 7-11, 2018. I participated in this project alongside French; members of the Salvagewrights, LTD construction team (Craig Jacobs, Steven, Nolan, Barry and Martin); project architect Reid Freeman; and graduate students Amelia Hughes, Julie Judd, and Jane Trask.

efforts focus on the region's other inhabitants: the indigenous, enslaved, and post-emancipation populations.[2] This polyvocal interpretation will not occur in reconstructed rooms, but rather in glass-enclosed areas where visitors will move through the house suspended in time and space, simultaneously viewing the house's craftsmanship and ruination "to recreate an abstract memory of an 18th century house as it once stood while protecting what remains of it today."[3] At Menokin, preservation efforts are not reconstruction but understanding the work of enslavement.

Alongside museum staff, architectural and public historians, I helped rebuild a structure absent from the site for centuries and learned about eighteenth-century construction techniques. We grappled with wood grain and timber strength. I nailed hardwood floors, hand-sawed floor joists, hollowed out mortises, made pegs (that were not long enough), and pulled my back lifting an adze. I learned much from my fellow laborers and the trained construction crew. Once the floor was completed, we raised the wooden superstructure, or the building's skeleton, before finishing with the triangular roof. Finally, the wooden skeleton was wrapped in synthetic Tyvex for a filmy semi-transparent facade. This gave the potential for interior illumination and

[2] "Mission Statement," http://www.menokin.org/mission/; Fall 2016 Menokin newsletter, "Menokin Report": "further understand our vast cultural landscape including interpreting the shared history of the Rappahannock Indians and enslaved people."
[3] "10 Year Plan for Menokin," http://www.menokin.org/our-vision/. "

exterior projection. We built what was once known as the Menokin Ghost Structure.[4]

Ghost structures are a type of architectural public history. They mark the presence of eroded, decayed, and demolished structures. In the bicentennial of 1976, architects built the most prominent ghost structure in Philadelphia to commemorate Benjamin Franklin's lost home and print shop. As "few architectural details" were known, the National Park Service funded the construction of two "Ghost Structures" so named because "if the house itself could not be resurrected, its ghost might appear." [5] They were white steel three-dimensional outlines of the original buildings, designed to "appeal to the viewer's own imagination." Visitors move through the open-air structures unencumbered by the walls or doorways that would be present in a fully reconstructed historic house. The Franklin "Ghost Structures" included inscribed quotations and "viewing wells" where the original eighteenth century foundations were visible. Similar structures were built across the United States, including the Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site in Tuskegee, Alabama; the Historic Polegreen Church in Mechanicsville, Virginia; and Historic Columbia's [South Carolina] Mann-Simons Site. They were erected at sites with few architectural details, but where the visiting public still wanted to

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[4] The Ghost structure was "a physical metaphor" to engage in conversations (or have a discourse on) slavery at Menokin, in Virginia, and the nation at large.
[5] "Ghost Structures (1976)," *Association for Public Art,* https://www.associationforpublicart.org/artwork/ghost-structures/.

"engage with the history and themes…on their own terms."[6] Ghost structures are pedagogical tools — a type of memory palace to remind audiences of lost spaces.[7]

Menokin's Ghost Structure was to be an art installation and a classroom for community outreach, school programs, and hands-on workshops. As with many Tidewater historic houses, the eighteenth-century enslaved quarters were lost to Virginia's vegetation. The foundations were only discovered during the construction of Menokin's visitor center. The foundational footprints were discernible but not the exact architectural design. Instead, architect Reid Freeman looked to extant regional structures for ideas. The project was never meant to be "a reproduction of a slave dwelling, but instead a constructed form that will generate dialog about our past, with the flexibility to garner new knowledge, awareness and understanding."[8]

As a participant in the construction, I would have appreciated more reflection about the enslaved experience constructing not only the main plantation house but also the two room enslaved quarters. Perhaps a quiet meditation, but the physical labor required focus that did not allow for this inclusion. (We could have perhaps opened the day with some small thought.) What might this process look like elsewhere? How to best acknowledge the

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[6] "Ghost Structures," *Historical Marker Database,* https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=100252; "Historic Polegreen Church Foundation," https://historicpolegreen.org/; "Ghost Structures & the Making of an Outdoor Museum," *Columbia Archeology Program,* http://columbiaarchaeology.org/ghost-structures.html.
[7] Frances Yates, *The Art of Memory,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966).
[8] "Ghost Structure: *Memoria and Kairos,"* 2018 Hands-On Workshops, Menokin Foundation, May 8-11, 2018.

ghosts? Consider: how many people would live in this space; what were their living conditions; how many men, women and children; were they gardening nearby; was the eighteenth-century building built before the enslaved arrived, or were they camped out nearby, in the open air?

Ghost structures represent that which once was, of something no longer visible, of buildings that did not matter enough to preserve, of places people wanted to simply forget or quietly build over or violently tear down. On the public history landscape, the visitor comes upon a ghost structure with curiosity and perhaps trepidation: What is it? Is it an unfinished project? Should I be this close? Who could exist in such a space? They beg for narrative and interpretation. They encourage an acknowledgement of what used to be somewhere, and they might inspire visitors to consider the wider topography in terms of what is missing, what decayed, what eroded, what was torn down. They tell ghost stories at public history sites — ghost stories that teach.

Ghost Stories

Ghost structures extend beyond spectral building skeletons. They are also found in recent literature of the United States that imagines histories unrecorded, persons eroded, decayed, and torn down. Recent texts illustrate this spectral recovery of lost pasts. Jesmyn Ward's *Sing, Unburied, Sing* tells the story of a ghost who carries a history of forced Black labor at Parchman

Farm through the convict lease system.[9] When Ritchie, the young Black ghost boy, encounters the grandson of his fellow convict and friend, River, he realizes how much history — painful history — has been lost, repressed, overwritten: "There's much Jojo doesn't know. There are so many stories I could tell him. The story of me and Parchman, as River told it, is a moth-eaten shirt, nibbled to threads: the shape is right, but the details have been erased. I could patch those holes. Make that shirt hang new, except for the tails. The end. But I could tell the boy about what I know about River and the dogs."[10] Ritchie needed Jojo to help with the end of Ritchie's story. He needed to be told of his own death in order to ascend it, be free. Jojo needed to make this happen, but only by facing certain horrors head-on. Ritchie interpreted the past so that Jojo understood his present and possible future.

In her *Native Guard* poetry collection*,* Natasha Trethewey travels to the Deep South, to Mississippi, after the murder of her mother. On this journey, Trethewey excavates the story of the Louisiana Native Guards, an African American supply unit who served with the United States Army during the Civil War. Using diary entries, Trethewey imagines a personal narrative handwritten by a member of this unit; the power of the written word haunts every line: "Some names shall deck the page of history / as it is written in stone. Some will not…. All the dead letters, unanswered; / untold stories of those that time will render / mute. Beneath battlefield, green again, the dead

[9] Parchman is an actual, still-in-use prison, the Mississippi State Penitentiary.
[10] Jesmym Ward, *Sing, Unburied, Sing* (New York: Scribner, 2017), 137.

molder — a scaffolding of bone / we tread upon, forgetting. Truth be told."[11] Trethewey uses the Native Guard, who would have been responsible for military construction and supplies, to build memorials to her dead mother and the unnamed laborers who will not "deck the pages of history." With poems like "Monument" and "Southern History" and "Pilgrimage" Trethewey interrogates the power of public history and heritage tourism to tell or not tell those "untold stories." Her writing is itself a form of public history, a ghost story that centers Black Civil War experience on landscapes long dedicated to white Confederates.

Saidiya Hartman applied her methodology of critical fabulation to the experiences of young Black women at the turn of the twentieth century in cities like Philadelphia, New York, and Hampton. *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments* is creative nonfiction, an effort to "recreate the voices and use the words of these young women when possible and inhabit the intimate dimensions of their lives."[12] Using real characters and events, Hartman includes italicized lines from court cases, newspaper articles, medical examinations, sociological studies, prison case files, and other institutional reports as a starting point. From these utterances, Hartman "[crafts] a counter-narrative liberated from the judgment and classification that subjected

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[11] Natasha Trethewey, *Native Guard: Poems,* (New York: Mariner Books, 2006), 28, 30.
[12] Saidiya Hartman, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2019), xiii.

young black women to surveillance, arrest, punishment, and confinement."[13] This beautiful experiment frees these women from carceral archives focused on scrutiny and persecution. It tells stories that voice place-based histories long elided by ideas of inherent promiscuity and criminality.

A Ghostly Public History

Public history is found in ephemeral, improvisational, and haunted materials: novels, television shows, podcasts, films, scripted plays, electronic games, and museum programs.[14] Like the above ghost structures and ghost stories, these materials provide audiences with pieces of history but they require contextual interpretation only achieved through careful research and planned programming.[15] *Sing, Unburied, Sing* is not a history of the Parchman Farm; it is a ghost story that provides insight into how the past haunts the present when it goes unacknowledged. And, as with all of the above examples, an exorcism is *not* necessary. The ghost can remain. It just needs adequate translation to make meaning for what is long lost. It needs a new exhibit label. It needs interpretation.

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[13] Hartman, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments,* xiv.
[14] Jeffrey Sconce, *Haunted Media: Electronic Presence from Telegraphy to Television,* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000).
[15] Several online public history projects use ghostly and gothic imagery to share "lost and untold" stories. See Hart's Island Project, a "Traveling Cloud Museum" designed to collect biographical information about burials on New York City's Hart's Island, https://www.hartisland.net/; CSI Dixie, a project by the University of Georgia that examined nineteenth-century coroners' inquests from South Carolina, https://csidixie.org/; and Ghosts of DC, a blog that chronicles neighborhoods, buildings, and activities no longer visible in Washington, DC, https://ghostsofdc.org/.

At Menokin, there was community debate about how best to interpret the site's marginalized and ghosted histories. What should the new structure be named? After its completion, Menokin's African American Advisory Working Group rechristened the Ghost Structure as the Menokin Remembrance Structure.[16] This name change circles back to the usage of "ghost." Does the term imply irreverence, trivialization, or impermanence? Does it relegate Black history to the non-human and supernatural? Should the term give way to more nuanced language? Remembrance is an act: a prayer, a moment of silence, a lesson. It denotes dynamic recollection of past events in the present moment. Menokin's Remembrance Structure concretely raised overlooked histories from the ground up but it is a plain, unadorned building that will share many narratives from Menokin's landscape. The multi-purpose building is a memorial, classroom, and public space. It is a new public history, a tabula rasa on a historically layered landscape, to be used for remembrance of things past.

I would like to make a case for ghosts. They should remain. They place living breathing bodies on the historical landscape even if not immediately acknowledged. They frighten. They unsettle. They disturb. They speak. Ghosts serve consumer impulses, but they also represent presences that the public does not quickly forget. They stay popular. In Tidewater Virginia, the

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[16] Cathy Jett, "Menokin's Recreated Slave Dwelling Wins Award for Architectural Excellence," *The Free Lance-Star,* November 6, 2018, https://www.fredericksburg.com/news/local/menokin-s-recreated-slave-dwelling-wins-award-for-architectural-excellence/article_b7415ca7-c716-52a2-ae14-40888b8ffb96.html.

ghosts of public history start as traces on the landscape, as seen in the formation of the American Indian Institute. They tell the messy, tangled layers of multiple pasts occurring in one place, like Jamestown Island. They are disturbed and re-animated through reconstruction and new interpretations, as seen at the Peyton Randolph House. Ultimately, they are a way to re-imagine histories with voice, agency, and power through recent literature.

Public history is the telling of ghost stories. As signs that the past is always present, the ghost stories of Tidewater Virginia archive histories only recently shared in regional museums. Though sensational, problematic, traumatic, one-dimensional, and fictionalized, the ghosts of the Brafferton, Jamestown Island, the Randolph site, and literary texts refuse to rest peacefully. They force one very productive sensation: unease. This feeling combats the indifference of visitors to sites from the distant past. It asks them to feel something more complex than simple nostalgia.

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