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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the history and archaeology of a postemancipation community that developed around the Benjamin W. Jackson Plantation in Bethel, Texas, particularly concentrating on the transformation of the landscape through the rise of black land ownership and material culture collected at two households occupied by generations of the Davis family. The Davises were tenant farmers whose ancestors were previously enslaved on the plantation and members of the family continued to occupy the lands through the 1950s. In the decades following emancipation the antebellum landscape of the Benjamin Jackson plantation and the Bethel community in East Texas were slowly transformed and developed into an economically diverse community of African American tenants and independent landowners. Over generations, people who were formerly enslaved on the Jackson Plantation as well as people from neighboring plantations and communities built the infrastructure necessary for semi-autonomy, practicing subsistence agriculture and developing formal and informal economies, while in many instances continuing to labor through the production of commercial cotton on white owned land. Drawing upon diverse sources including archaeology, archival research, forms of oral history, art, and landscape, I consider how the material world functioned in the maintenance and reinforcement of unequal social and economic conditions, and also how over generations people engaged with the material world as a mechanism to reformulate and transform these conditions. The active participation of rural black farmers in consumer markets as a means to subvert and challenge day to day racism is explored, as are shifts in consumption from one generation to another following WWII and the accompanying increase in product diversity and availability during this period.

**Postemancipation Landscapes and Material Culture: The Bethel Community
and the Benjamin W. Jackson Plantation**

by

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Dissertation

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology.
Syracuse University

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Warren Kinney helped with the fieldwork and has been a great friend over the years. Additionally, I want to thank Haley Rush who performed the faunal analysis and whose support helped me get through the dissertation process. That goes for all my friends in general, especially Melanie Nichols and Stephanie Martin who shoveled dirt. Thank you. It has been a long road.

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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION: A TEXAS PLANTATION DURING THE JIM CROW ERA AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY

The rise of a nation, the pressing forward of a social class, means a bitter struggle, a hard and soul-sickening battle with the world such as few of the more favored classes know or appreciate (W. E. B. Du Bois 1903: 20).

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Considering postcolonial archaeology, Jane Lyndon and Uzma Rizvi argued that totalizing narratives of historical and cultural process need to be countered through local perspectives that challenge historical assumptions concerning peoples experiences in the past (Lyndon and Rizvi 2010: 17). Their arguments echo calls from fellow anthropologists and historians who have increasingly heralded the need for scholarship to move away from essentialized histories that fail to notice inconsistencies and nuances, and instead encourage the recognition of plurality in identity, culture, and historical process (Sitton and Conrad 2008; Voss 2008).

In an effort to engage with alternative perspectives on the rural plantation south in the United States, this dissertation focuses on local transformations within a postemancipation community in East Texas that developed around the Benjamin Jackson plantation. Varied sources are utilized to consider the restructuring of the antebellum plantation landscape through the rise of black property ownership and the material culture and consumption choices of two generations of an African American family, as they moved towards freedom within a context of racial oppression and violence. While focused on the local, this history is not divorced from

larger ongoing social, economic, and political transformations and potentially complicates and broadens our understanding of people's diverse engagements after the Civil War and during the Jim Crow era.

1.2 PREVIOUS HISTORICAL CHARACTERIZATIONS OF EMANCIPATION IN THE AGRICULTURAL SOUTH – REEVALUATING THE UNREVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE

Many historians have argued that emancipation presented the agricultural southern United States with the potential for great reforms and revolution, but inadvertently concede that the ensuing failures and disappointments of Reconstruction led the region to assume social and economic stagnation (Litwack 1998:135). Considering Reconstruction in Texas, historian Carl Moneyhon argued,

The emancipation of the slave population, the blow to prosperity produced by economic destabilization, and the breakdown of traditional political relations among the state's elite produced a situation that made maintaining the society that had existed before the war impossible" ... "Nevertheless a radical revolution never took place, Texas in 1874 was different, still it resembled the Texas of 1861 more than anyone might have predicted at the war's end (Moneyhon 2004:3).

Moneyhon is not alone in his evaluation. Many histories that confront Reconstruction in Texas draw similar conclusions, as do narratives that have evaluated the basic state of change across the agricultural southern United States from emancipation through WWII. Such arguments accurately consent that while the institution of slavery was abolished, exploitive systems of tenancy, wage labor, and convict labor arose in its place, and rural poverty was rampant among formerly enslaved peoples as well as among poor whites and other people of color. However, while accurate in many respects, these narratives frequently fail to account for the diversity of people's struggles and varied social and economic experiences within this history.

Unrevolutionary perspectives on emancipation are not only consistent with the majority of scholarship on post-Civil War Texas, but in general dominate narratives concerned with emancipation in other parts of the Americas. Regarding histories that address the end of slavery in the Caribbean, Sydney Mintz wrote,

we are told again and again, that the freedom of the freed did not amount to much – indeed, that it could not possibly amount to much, unaccompanied as it commonly was by the continued support of the abolitionists, by access to additional economic resources, and by the exercise of political power (Mintz 1992:245).

While these common historical narratives have begun to capture the great failures of white institutions and a white public to enact reform, they have grossly overshadowed the grinding everyday generational struggles of African Americans pursuing the freedom that emancipation promised, but failed miserably to deliver. The ongoing social and economic transformations that began with emancipation and the reorganization of communities in rural agricultural areas dominated by plantation agriculture were dynamic and multi-generational; however, the complexity of this history is frequently homogenized. The significance of people's daily interactions and expressions of agency are lost within larger narratives of static continuity, that while accurate in portraying the deep failures of Reconstruction, and in characterizing the extreme poverty and violent racism suffered by the vast majority of African American farmers and laborers in rural areas through the twentieth century, also fails to recognize the diversity of people's daily struggles and fight to move beyond the legacy of slavery, while facing the emergence of a modern capitalist system firmly rooted in inequality and Jim Crow.

1.3 THE BENJAMIN WALTER JACKSON PLANTATION AND THE BETHEL COMMUNITY

The Benjamin Walter Jackson plantation is located on the southern outskirts of the small community of Bethel in East Texas and contained 575 acres during the antebellum period. The lands were once part of a much larger 5,000-plus acre plantation system owned by Benjamin Jackson’s father, Frederick Stith Jackson, and spanned across much of northwest Anderson County along the banks of the Trinity River. The Jacksons were a wealthy white planter family from Virginia who arrived in Texas during the early 1850s. At the time of emancipation in Texas over 150 individuals were enslaved on Frederick Jackson’s vast plantation estates and fifty-one people are believed to have been enslaved on his son’s smaller plantation (Anderson County Probate Record # 63; United States Census Records 1960). This dissertation focuses on the smaller Benjamin Jackson plantation and explores local transformations following the Civil War.

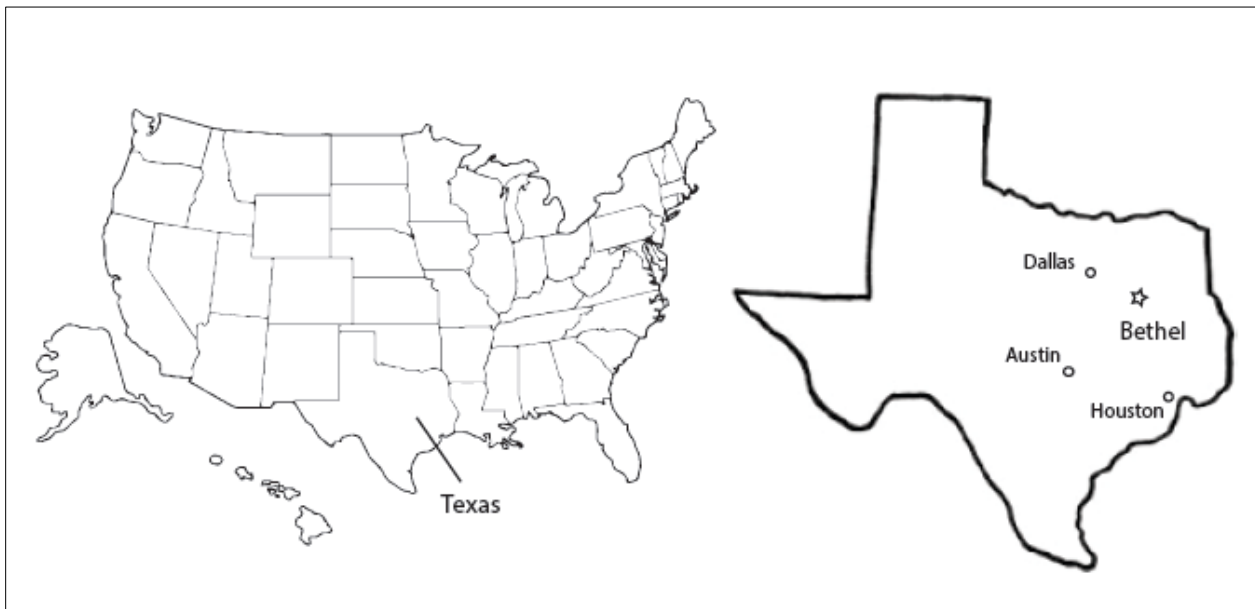


Figure 1.1: Map of Bethel, Texas where the Benjamin Jackson Plantation is located in relation to the rest of The United States.

In the decades after Emancipation the antebellum landscape of the Benjamin Jackson plantation and the surrounding lands were slowly transformed, and over time developed into an economically diverse community of African-American tenants and independent landowners (United States Census Records 1860, 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930, 1940). Over generations, people formerly enslaved on the Jackson plantations, as well as, people from neighboring plantations and communities, built the infrastructure necessary for semi-autonomy, practicing subsistence agriculture and developing formal and informal economies, while in many instances continuing to labor through the production of commercial cotton on white owned land.

In exploring the various dynamics of this history, I relied upon a diverse set of documentary sources including archaeology, archival research, art, and forms of oral history and tradition in an effort to consider how the landscape and material culture may have been employed as mechanisms for maintaining and reinforcing unequal social and economic conditions (Anderson County Deed Records, Atkinson 2008, Crider 2011, Jackson circa 1930, Jackson 2012, Johnson 2013). And how over generations people engaged with the material world to actively reformulate and transform these conditions. My interactions with the descendent community and the Jackson family, in particular Robert Crider, the current land owner, and Henry Jackson were paramount to developing an understanding of the plantation's history. The dissertation could not have been written without generous input from the Jacksons and from the local community, which is discussed in Chapter 4. Archival research was primarily conducted at the Anderson County Courthouse, the Texas State Library and Archives, and the Center for American History at the University of Texas, as well as, the local library in Palestine and the Museum for East Texas Culture.

The archaeological excavations focused on midden deposits that were identified at two former households occupied by several generations of African-American sharecroppers who were descendants of the Delia and James Davis family (Robert Crider, personal communication, May 2011; Jackson 2012; Jackson circa 1930). The names have been changed to protect the family's privacy. Delia Davis and her husband James Davis arrived in Anderson County as enslaved laborers in the 1850s. Little documentation concerning the Davis's early history has as yet been located, but based on census and archival records it is assumed that they were both born on Alabama plantations and locked into slavery during the mid-nineteenth century. James Davis was born around 1845 and Delia Davis a few years later around 1849, almost two decades before the end of slavery's empire in the United States.

How they arrived in Texas and became enslaved on Benjamin Jackson's Plantation is not entirely clear, but it is possible that one or both of them were born into slavery on his father Frederick Jackson's plantation in Perry County, Alabama (United States Census Records 1850). If so, they may have traveled to Texas with the Jackson family in the early 1850s. A second possibility is that Delia or James was originally enslaved on a cotton plantation outside of Mobile owned by James Douglas. Douglas's daughter Ellen married Benjamin Jackson in 1857 and upon her wedding several enslaved individuals were transferred to her as part of a dowry (Douglas Probate Unknown Date). Journal records authored by the Jackson's suggest this later scenario may be correct (Jackson circa 1930).

All that is known for certain is that sometime in the 1850s, while still children, Delia and James with or without the Douglas or Jackson families, made the long treacherous journey across the southeastern United States, traveling from Alabama to the open expanses of East Texas. Once in Texas, it is assumed that they were both enslaved on the Benjamin Jackson Plantation in

Bethel sometime shortly after the land was purchased in 1857. It is unknown if any members of James or Delia's immediate families were also enslaved by the Jackson's, or if they were separated in Alabama, a likely scenario.

Enslaved throughout their childhoods, as teenagers they would have seen the horrors of slavery abolished and sharecropping and convict labor systems ushered in as replacements. While, James and Delia Davis moved off of the lands sometime after the Civil War, their son James Davis Jr. either remained on the plantation, or moved back there, and became an overseer. He and his wife Lillie Davis occupied a house on the lands from sometime around 1900 through their deaths in the early 1940's. Midden deposits associated with James and Lillie Davis Jr.'s home were excavated, as were midden deposits associated with a home that was occupied by their daughter Viola Taylor and her husband Cleveland Taylor from the 1930's – mid 1950s (Anderson County Deed Records 1900-1940; Jackson 2012).

While not always directly, the Davis's story is intertwined with that of the Jackson family and the relationships between the two developed over several generations through slavery, the Civil War, Emancipation, Reconstruction, WWI, the Great Depression, and WWII only concluding in the 1950s after the Davis's granddaughter Viola and her husband Cleveland Taylor moved off of the lands their family had farmed for over a century, first as slaves, and then as sharecroppers, but never as owners.

1.5 GENERAL THEORETICAL OVERVIEW: STRUCTURE, AGENCY AND EVENT AT THE MICRO-SCALE

In the essay *Literature and Revolution*, Leon Trotsky wrote,

When one breaks a hand or a leg, the bones, the tendons, the muscles, the arteries, the nerves and the skin do not break and tear in one line, nor afterwards do they grow together and heal at the same time. So in a revolutionary break in the life of society, there

is no simultaneousness and no symmetry of process either in the ideology of society, or in its economic structure (Trotsky 2005:135).

Trotsky's analogy underscores a central issue with generalized "top-down" approaches to understanding social change and the benefits of engaging in microhistorical study. While, generalized models succeed in highlighting broad historical patterns, they frequently fail to recognize the diversity of local experience, or engage with the asymmetries of history and social transformation, which are necessarily an equally perplexing aspect of understanding broader patterns of human history (Walton et al. 2008:6; Beaudry 2011:145). The Bethel community and the Benjamin Jackson Plantation were one of countless nerves exposed in the wake of the Civil War, and people's local experiences here provide windows into the complexity of the long-term generational transformations that occurred in the American South. More broadly, these local transformations also provide a context for considering the relationship of temporality to the progression of social transformation following an event that mandated structural change, and explores how local people negotiated oppression within a larger resistant landscape; a landscape that retains aspects of this resistance today. People's engagements with material culture over generations as a means to create identity and also subvert and challenge racial oppression are considered as well as the development of an economically diverse community of black landowners and tenants. While research on urban black settlement and consumption has been explored, the participation of rural black southern farmers as active consumers during the Jim Crow era is less well understood, particularly following WWII as product diversity and availability increased and the Civil Rights Movement accelerated.

1.5.1 EVENTS

Focusing on Emancipation, the dissertation engages with William Sewell's definition of an event as something transformative and in particular with his use of the metaphor of "rupture"

to describe an event as both dislocating and rearticulating social structures (Sewell 1996: 845).

Sewell argues that,

In spite of the punctualist connotations of the term, historical events are never instantaneous happenings: they always have a duration, a period that elapses between the initial rupture and the subsequent structural transformation. During this period, the usual articulations between different structures become profoundly dislocated. Actors, consequently, are beset with insecurity: they are unsure about how to get on with life. This insecurity may produce varying results, sometimes in the same person: anxiety, fear, or exhilaration; incessant activity, paralysis, extreme caution, or reckless abandon. But it almost certainly raises the emotional intensity of life, at least for those whose existence is closely tied to the dislocated structures (Sewell 1996: 845).

Sewell's discussion of (1) the importance of temporality and its situational dependence, and (2) the metaphor of rupture and dislocated structures, are both useful for exploring the transformations that occurred within the Bethel community and on the Benjamin Jackson Plantation following the Civil War as people grappled with the social, economic, and political uncertainty that was necessarily unleashed with the abolition of slavery.

1.5.2 DEFINING STRUCTURE

The word "structure" has been associated with various theoretical camps over the last century and has been assigned various meanings. My own definition of structure and its use in this dissertation draws upon the work of Pierre Bourdieu and also engages with Anthony Giddens ideas concerning the duality of social structures (Bourdieu 1977; Giddens 1981; 1984). As such, in referring to structure, I imagine something that is not rigid, immutable, and deterministic, but instead view structures in relation to Giddens's theory that they are "both the medium and the outcome of the practices which constitute social systems" (Giddens 1981: 27, Sewell 1992: 2). In this sense, "structures shape people's practices, but it is also people's practices that constitute (and reproduce) structures" (Sewell 1992:4)

This is in contrast to alternative theories of “constraint” where human behavior is theorized to be completely dictated according to overwhelming external social and cultural forces, and instead makes room for the particularities of context and agency (Ortner 2006: 4). Giddens’s and Bourdieu’s theories concerning structure and Sewell’s adapted use of them to explore the temporality of an historical event allows for a degree of human agency, and I have tried to achieve a balance between theoretical perspectives that over-privilege individual freedom, and conversely, those which deny the role of people as active social agents. Referencing Karl Marx’s phrase, Giddens wrote in the introduction of *The Constitution of Society*, “Men [let us immediately say human beings] make history, but not in circumstances of their own choosing” (Giddens 1984: xxi). He follows this, almost in exasperation, with a statement considering the complexity of Marx’s seemingly simple words regarding agency and structure, “Well, so they do. But, what a diversity of complex social problems of social analysis this apparently innocuous pronouncement turns out to disclose!”

The relationships of agency and structure has been heavily debated by people studying slavery and historians continue to dispute how much agency people were realistically capable of exercising while enslaved, or as emancipated people living within a society that was defined at its core by racial inequality and Jim Crow. Wilma Dunaway, Cornell West and others have cautioned historians approaching slavery and its aftermath not to overstate individual autonomy and consequently lose sight of the structural constraints that defined the American South, and the discrimination that trickled into every aspect of political, economic, and social life, and in many ways continues to do so (Dunaway 2003: 4; Palmer 2011: 143; West 1993: 22).

I have tried throughout the dissertation to remain mindful of the setting of violence and discrimination that characterized the southern United States, and the ability of these established

structures to overwhelm agency. However, I also believe that while recognizing the limitations of this violent and impoverished setting, by focusing on the duality of structures - the idea that they exist because human beings constantly reinforce them or subvert them through daily often mundane actions - historians can explore the possibility of agency even within circumstances of poverty and extreme structural constraint. This allows us to explore the different ways that people actively engaged with the material world over time, and their efforts to obtain greater control over their lives and identities even when facing deep oppression. With this general theoretical commitment in mind, I draw upon archaeology to consider recent debates concerning the relationships that exist between agency and materiality, and specifically focus on landscape and consumption (Miller 2010, Ingold 2000, Mullins 2011, Douglas and Isherwood 1996).

1.6 PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGIES OF AFRICAN DIASPORA

Within the field of archaeology, the plantation system has been a developing line of inquiry since the early 1930s with noted excavations conducted in the southeastern United States by Morley Jeffers Williams at George Washington's Mount Vernon in Virginia, and by James Ford at the Elizafield Plantation in Georgia (Singleton 1990; Gijanto and Horlings 2012). But, it was not until the 1970s following the Civil Rights Movement brought about through the persistent activism of black Americans, that archaeologists (primarily white males at that time) began to consider the possibility of an archaeology concerned with slavery and the history of people of African descent in the Americas (Singleton 1999:1; Fairbanks 1974). While early studies initially focused solely on plantations in the southeastern United States and concentrated on demonstrating that African American life was distinctly visible in the archaeological record, they initiated what has become a diverse and international field of study concerned with many different aspects of African Diaspora in the Atlantic world.

Archaeological research has expanded far beyond plantations in the southeastern United States to include studies in Central and South America, Africa, and the Caribbean where researchers have employed a variety of theoretical perspectives to explore diverse questions related to African Diaspora experiences (Agorsah 1993; Armstrong 2003; Barnes 2011; Battle-Baptiste 2011; Deagan and Landers 1999; DeCorse 2001 and 2014; Fennel 2008; Ogundiran and Falola 2007; Schimdt 2009; Singleton 1999 and 2009; Weik 2004 and 2012; see also the African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter, a publication that has seen various formats since 1994 and is currently housed at the University of Massachusetts). These studies have been particularly productive since the 1980s following the emergence of new theoretical approaches that pushed archaeologists beyond the heavily positivist agendas of the 1970s to include innovative research on subjects such as identity, ethnicity, gender, capitalism, power, ideology, racism, and resistance.

More comprehensive overviews of the history and varied trajectories that African Diaspora Archaeology has taken over the last several decades are critically explored in detail in a number of articles and texts (Singleton 1999; Franklin and McKee 2004; Leone et al. 2005; Barnes 2011). These archaeologies continue to build upon a long legacy of scholarship on African Diaspora and black experiences in the Atlantic world that expand across disciplines and include the works of early scholars such as W. E. B. DuBois, Zora Neale Hurston, Melville Herskovits, and E. Franklin Frazier (DuBois 2013; Hurston 1990; Herskovits 1990; Franklin 1997: 44).

In the United States, the plantation setting has been the most explored context within African Diaspora archaeology, so much so that this focus has been critiqued for its over emphasis on slavery (Barnes 2011: 5). However, while there is a substantial body of

archaeological work considering plantations (Deetz 1993; Ferguson 1992; Singleton 1985, 1990) few of these have explored the transformation of the plantation setting after the Civil War and people's experiences during Reconstruction and through the Jim Crow era as communities were built and real citizenship was sought (Exceptions include: Singleton 2011:279; Orser 1988; Wilkie 2000, Brown and Cooper 1990, Palmer 2011 and in the Caribbean Armstrong 2003, Wilkie and Farnsworth 2011).

Particularly, modest are studies which look at the daily lives of African Americans living in the midst of previous plantation settings over the long-term to examine the role of material culture in people's negotiations with the legacy of enslavement and Jim Crow. Barnes has pointed out that this may in part be due to the diffuse nature of tenancy as people moved out of concentrated slave quarters and "left more ephemeral archaeological remains" making these sites less visible and less attractive to archaeologists (Barnes 2011: 6). Additionally, while slavery has in some aspects become more readily framed and talked about as part of "the past", the more recent history of Jim Crow remains intimately tied to the poverty and racial inequality that continues to plague the United States, particularly the rural south, which sometimes leads to socially and politically uncomfortable situations for descendant communities and researchers.

Charles Orser's research on Millwood Plantation in South Carolina was one of the first studies to focus specifically on postemancipation plantation life and tenancy through the twentieth century (Orser 1988). Orser combined an analysis of landscape with the study of social proxemics to examine shifts in laborer housing. His study moves from the antebellum period, through wage labor and tenancy, and considers alterations in the spatial arrangement of housing and access to economic resources, as they relate to transitions in relationships of power within plantation settings (Orser 1988: 85). As pointed out by Laurie Wilkie, Orser's approach

primarily centered on exploring power in terms of resource access and did not consider factors related to identity and cultural heritage (Orser 1988; Wilkie 2000: 8). Wilkie's own work at the Oakley Plantation in Louisiana begins to address this gap through an examination of the construction of identity, and its use in social dialogues from the period 1840-1950. David Palmer's excavations at Alma and Riverlake sugar plantations in Louisiana continue along this line (Wilkie 2000; Palmer 2011).

In Texas, few in-depth archaeological studies have focused on the daily lived material experiences of African Americans in rural agricultural settings during the late-nineteenth and twentieth century (Feit 2008: 1). Exceptions to this include recent work sponsored by TxDOT at the Ransom and Sarah Williams farmstead in Central Texas. In partnership with Maria Franklin and graduate students at the University of Texas, the excavations have uncovered a wealth of information pertaining to an early black landowning family living outside of Austin (Boyd et al. in press). Excavations at the Levi Jordan Plantation in southern Brazoria County led by Kenneth Brown have also considered tenancy (Brown and Copper 1990; Brown 1994). However, the Levi Jordan Plantation studies are limited to earlier contexts due to the forced abandonment of the site in 1891 (Brown and Cooper 1990: 9). Aside from this work, a handful of cultural resource management (CRM) projects, including the seminal Richland-Chambers Reservoir survey led by Southern Methodist University (SMU) back in the early 1980s, have been conducted on African American tenancy, but nothing has specifically dealt with the transformation of the plantation setting or addressed materiality during this pivotal period in American life (Brown and Cooper 1990; Brown 1994; Saunders 1982; Blake and Myers 1999).

1.7 DISSERTATION OVERVIEW

The dissertation begins with Chapter 2, *Situating the Bethel Community and the Jackson Plantation within a broader framework of social and economic change*. This chapter positions the community within a particular historical context beginning with a brief overview of the second middle passage and the spread of slavery across the southeastern United States and its comparatively late arrival in Texas. This is illustrated through archival research documenting the social and economic circumstances of the Jackson family's arrival in Texas and the experiences of people who were enslaved during this period of migration. Emancipation is framed as a structural rupture, and the emergence of various forms of tenancy as replacements for slave labor are discussed. African American experiences within this new exploitive system are considered in light of the failures of Reconstruction and the emergence of Jim Crow, and the development of rural black communities in Texas during this period is reconsidered. Chapter 2 concludes with an examination of contemporary social and economic situations in rural East Texas and considers both the progress made as well as people's ongoing struggles with poverty and inequality.

Chapter 3, *Negotiating "ownership" within a Contested Landscape*, builds upon the previous chapter and sets up a specific local community context within which to consider the archaeology of generations of the Davis family. The chapter considers the transformation of the antebellum plantation landscape following emancipation and the negotiations that took place between the Jackson family and the developing African American community. This transformation is explored through varied sources including land transactions, census records, property sales, shifting community boundaries, infrastructure, and more personal accounts offered through oral history, local art, and journal records. I consider local people's investment in the landscape and their struggles over generations to acquire property and build community (hooks 2009:34). The imperfect and drawn-out process of establishing ownership was subject to

both successes and failures that highlight the tensions between social and economic structures and agency.

In Chapter 4, *Methods for Approaching a Complex Historical Landscape*, the methods used in the investigation are discussed along with the results of the initial testing. My decision to focus the final archaeological excavations on midden deposits at two former home sites in order to look comparatively at material consumption over generations is also discussed. Chapter 5 documents the final excavations performed at the James and Lillie Davis household and the Viola and Cleveland Taylor household. The actual methods of excavation are described along with the results of those excavations including the physicality and material culture of the sites, which are considered comparatively.

Chapters 6 and 7 provide an overview of the material culture of both households and begin to consider the collections comparatively. There are striking differences between the artifact assemblages identified at the Davis household and that of the Taylor household. Most noticeably is a significant increase in the quantity and diversity of materials collected from the midden associated with the later Taylor generation, particularly, in terms of decorative ceramics and glass tablewares, commercial health and hygiene products, and items of personal apparel. These increases suggest a generation coming out of WWII who are more actively engaged with commercial products and appear to be using these products to create an identity that differs from their parents' generation.

Chapter 8 further builds upon the descriptive comparisons presented in Chapters 6 and 7 and is informed by theoretical perspectives concerned with consumption, and the relationships between items of material culture, and the people who create, use, manipulate, and discard them. The chapter engages with a varied and developing body of theory concerned with materiality, to

explore how material culture was employed in the creation and maintenance of identity, and in the negotiation of social and economic transformations over two generations, as well as, the effects of modern capitalism, the rise of mass consumer culture, and accompanied marketing on rural black consumers during the transitional post WWII era (Mullins 2011; Miller 2010; Cohen 2003; Weems 1998). Consumption is one means through which people, even those with limited capital can participate within an American culture that frequently defines citizenry through materiality. How rural southern black farmers may have been actively using material culture as a means to express identity and also for political and social posturing is explored.

Chapter 9 summarizes the dissertation and restates the major conclusions. This chapter also offers suggestions for improvement and future work considering the diversity and historical development of rural southern black farming communities and peoples engagements with material culture within these settings.

CHAPTER TWO:

POSITIONING AN EAST TEXAS PLANTATION WITHIN A BROADER FRAMEWORK OF SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL CHANGE

2.1 TEXAS AS A CROSSROADS

Texas is often referred to as a crossroads, a border province between Mexico and the southern and western United States. Consequently, it has never been easily categorized within a particular environmental, historical, or cultural region (Foley 1997: 3). This expansive diversity allows Texas history to be fluidly cast depending on contextual motivations and to satisfy various agendas (Kelley 2000:2). The romantic cowboy image of Texas often prevails and the State's historic ties to the plantation economy that dominated the southern United States and its links to the failed Confederacy are often only quietly recognized (for an extended conversation on the politics of this see Foley 1997 and Kelley 2000). While plantation agriculture arrived comparatively late, and was only prominent in the southern and eastern regions of the State, Texas shares the "Deep South's" historical ties to antebellum slavery and to the century of segregation and Jim Crow politics that followed. Understanding this historical legacy is essential for understanding the State's present social, economic, and political makeup (Foley 1997: 3).

2.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SLAVE STATE

The history of slavery in Texas varies from that of other former Confederate States. Texas was a province of Spain until 1821, and though slavery was tolerated by the Spanish government, the institution was not prevalent until the arrival of European settlers in mass beginning around 1820, and the accompanying plantation economy. While under Spanish rule people of African descent living in Texas were afforded equal rights, and as a result many blacks

living in the United States, as well as people who had escaped enslavement, moved from the United States territory to Texas where they were able to exercise a greater degree of freedom, purchase land, and farm successfully in a less radically discriminatory climate (Barr 1973: 5; General Land Office 2010).

Following Mexico's independence from Spain in 1821, and as more settlers from the United States were granted Texas land under the Mexican government, slavery became a contentious issue. This was not necessarily due to moral objections raised by the Mexican government, but to an influx of wealthy and thus powerful slave holders from the United States perceived to be a threat to tenuous Mexican authority in the border region. In 1829, Mexico abolished slavery across its territories in an effort to maintain control, but following intense political pressure, granted an exception to established Texas slave holders. The further importation of slaves to the region was made illegal (Barr 1973). A move the Mexican government hoped would halt the growth and establishment of additional large plantations.

Despite Mexico's efforts to limit slavery, by 1834, two years before Texas formed its own Republic there were an estimated four thousand "indentured servants" in the State (Smallwood 1981:6). During the years of the Texas Republic (1836-1845) slavery subsequently increased, and the rights of free blacks living in Texas were correspondingly diminished. While the State Congress voted to "allow" free blacks to remain in Texas, they began to severely limit people's freedoms through disenfranchisement and by revoking property rights. Discrimination, as well as slavery, only further increased with the annexation of Texas by the United States in 1845 (Foley 1997: 20). One of the prevailing arguments among legislators pushing for the annexation of Texas was the need to secure it as a slave state within the Union, so that abolitionists in the Republic would not have the opportunity to join forces with Great Britain

against the United States (Narrett 1997: 271). Following the loss of Texas, Mexico maintained an anti-slavery stance throughout the Antebellum period and many enslaved Africans and African Americans escaped across the Texas-Mexico border, forming communities on the southern banks of the Rio Grande and often settling among indigenous peoples (Kelley 2004: 709).

2.3 UNITED STATES EXPANSION AND KING COTTON

The population of Texas dramatically increased following annexation, and statistics for growth mirrored the rapid rise in European immigrants settling across the southeast. Major territorial acquisitions by the United States including the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the addition of Florida from the Spanish in 1819, and finally the acquisition of Texas in 1845 resulted in a massive shift in the southern population (Berlin 2003: 162). Entire plantations, and in some cases small towns, picked up and moved from the worn-out nutrient depleted lands of the Upper South and East Coast to stretches of rich mostly virgin soil available in the Lower South, and West of the Appalachian Mountains (Figure 2.1). These migrations trailed in the wake of violent government removals of Native peoples, and the signing of coerced treaties forcing Indian Nations to abandon their homelands.



Figure 2.1: Map of Southeastern United States affected by mass migration as people traveled west from Virginia and the Atlantic coast in search of agricultural lands

Paralleling the rampant increase in land acquisition by the United States was a significant rise in the demand for raw cotton spurred by expanding textile markets in Europe and other parts of the world (Surdam 1998: 114). Eli Whitney's cotton gin had revolutionized the industry by allowing for the easy separation of the fluffy white lint from the tough seeds of short-staple cotton, and people were scrambling to get a hold of more land to meet commercial demands (Scarborough 1994: 1239). Unlike the more vulnerable long-staple Sea Island cotton grown in the Carolinas and along the east coast, coarser and heartier short-staple cotton was capable of surviving in harsh climates and readily adapted to a range of environments. The short-staple variety also wreaked havoc on soil and rapidly depleted nutrients. These qualities, coupled with

the aggressive farming techniques of early planters led to lower crop yields with each successive harvest. The low production levels and soil degradation motivated people to travel farther west into the Mississippi Territory in search of new fertile lands to exploit. Within a few decades of this rapid expansion the majority of the world's cotton supply was grown on plantations scattered across the southeastern United States as far west as Texas, after which it was shipped to England, likely spun and woven in to cloth by textile workers in Lancashire, and sent around the world for consumption in burgeoning capitalist markets (Beckert 2004: 1405).

2.3.1. THE JACKSON FAMILY MOVES WEST

The Jacksons were one of many families living on the east coast of the United States who moved westward towards Texas during this transitional period. Originally from Virginia, like many other agricultural families, they sought opportunities for expanses of cheap and fertile land. Stopping first in Tennessee, the family eventually established a plantation outside of Birmingham, Alabama before finally heading further west to Texas where they permanently settled (Figure 2.1; U.S. Census Records). Traveling with the Jacksons were families with similar ambitions for acquiring inexpensive tracts of fertile land to harvest cotton. These families were accompanied by thousands of enslaved peoples whose forced labor clearing fields, planting and cultivating agriculture, and building irrigation systems, roads, houses, outbuildings, and other infrastructure turned the ambitions of early white settlers in to a reality.

2.4 THE SECOND MIDDLE PASSAGE

Historians have referred to the mass migration of enslaved peoples from the southeastern seaboard (primarily Maryland, Virginia and the Carolinas) to the southern interior as the Second Middle Passage (Berlin 2003: 161). The mortality rate during this further period of African

Diaspora (1810 – 1861) was higher than average and resulted in additional disruptions to the already impossibly disjointed social life that people experienced under slavery. The fragile connections that people struggled to maintain with family were further shattered as they were again dispersed far and wide.

While the Atlantic slave trade had officially ended in the United States in 1808, illegal importation continued, and the internal trading of enslaved peoples remained one of the largest economies in the southern United States. People were regularly sold from the eastern seaboard farther west as labor demands increased following European expansion in to new territories. An individual born to slavery on the southeastern sea board had a thirty percent chance of eventually being sold west. “The Second Middle Passage remade black life” (Berlin 2003: 162). By this, historian Ira Berlin refers to several significant changes in daily life that resulted in a variety of social transformations across the newly populated southern regions. This included new landscapes and environments, shifts in labor from what was predominately tobacco and rice, to cotton and sugar, and changes in the relationships between whites and blacks, and within African American families. Dale Tomich further characterized this period as “Second Slavery” an era in which industrialization and product demands in Europe and specifically England, where slavery had been abolished, paradoxically lead to the intensification of slavery in the United States, Cuba, and Brazil (Tomich 2004: 63).

2.4.1 SLAVERY’S DOCUMENTATION

Working with available records documenting the journeys of enslaved people is challenging due to the scarcity of personal information that was kept. Official government records are vague, and slave censuses which came about in 1850 are typically limited to age, sex, and perceived skin color. Records indicate that when Frederick Jackson was planting in Alabama

seventy-eight people were enslaved on his plantation, including thirty-four women aged infancy to thirty-five, and forty-four men aged infancy to seventy (1850 U.S. Census Records). The majority of the enslaved were in their twenties, a peak period of physical condition, both in terms of work and reproduction, which was exploited by slaveholders.

In addition to poor official documentation, the history of people who were enslaved is further concealed because the overwhelming majority was denied literacy. As a result, few people had the formal knowledge or means necessary to document written versions of their stories. The limited number of accounts authored by freed blacks and by African Americans who escaped from slavery and fled to the north provide the most uninterrupted means for beginning to appreciate what life was like for enslaved people (Documenting the American South 2015). Additionally, interviews collected by the Federal Writers Project during the 1930s connect us with over 2,300 first-person accounts of life under slavery. The interviewees often endured slavery as children, witnessing both Emancipation, and its aftermath. Their voices document the bitter sweet transition African Americans in rural America experienced, as the hopes and joy accompanying freedom were muted by the realities of wage labor, tenancy, and Jim Crow. Many of these narratives provide direct, though distant memories of the Second Middle Passage including those of mass migrations to Texas by wagon-train from Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, and Alabama. These stories reference parents and grandparents born along the eastern seaboard in the states of Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

Steve Jones, who was enslaved on the Irving Jones plantation in the same part of Anderson County as the Jackson Plantations, recalled traveling from South Carolina to Texas in 1856. His parents were from Georgia. “*We traveled by mule team and wagons, he had 80 wagons, sometimes we would go in droves like cattle*” (Jones 1929: 2135). When asked about his

grandparents, Jones's reply speaks to the disruption and constant instability, "*No, I've don't remember anything about my grandparents or any stories told me about them. They told us the last time they saw my grandparents was in Atlanta, Georgia* (Jones 1929: 2136).

Other sources for learning about enslaved life are records maintained by plantation owners and their descendants including inventories, bills of sale, newspaper records, journals, and other documents. During the 1920's and 30s Walter Benjamin Jackson, the son of plantation owner, Benjamin Jackson, authored a weekly column in the Mexia, Texas newspaper entitled, *Our Sunny Friend*. Mexia is approximately 50 miles west of the plantation and several of the Jackson's settled there after the Civil War. These columns and other journal records provide an incredible source of information documenting the history and also the culture and attitudes of the period. Walter Jackson's 1929 eulogy for a former slave, Paul Gee, who worked for the Jackson family after emancipation speaks to the complicated personal relationships and disconnections generated by slavery and the Second Middle Passage.

Paul was born in old Virginia... the son of Matt and Polly Gee...He always wanted to go back to old Virginia, his native home, but never could get anybody to go with him. He loved his mother and his father. Grieved for them all his days. He did not want to sleep his last sleep in Texas. Longed to go back home. I miss "Saint Paul". We were boys together. We had our fun (Walter Jackson circa 1930).

While this dissertation is primarily focused on the postemancipation era, appreciating the trauma of people's journeys across the southeastern United States to Texas under slavery allows for a more nuanced understanding of the history of generations of African Americans who successfully carved out a life in the sandy post oak savannah of Anderson County.

2.5 ANDERSON COUNTY, TEXAS

Anderson County is one of 83 counties that constitute the overall East Texas region. Situated in between the Trinity and Neches Rivers, the county is part of a transitional ecological zone bordered by the Blackland prairie to the west and the Pineywoods to the east. The Trinity was navigable during the nineteenth century prior to extensive damming, and along with large open expanses of tillable land, provoked initial interest and settlement in the region. During the Antebellum period, flat bottom boats floated cotton and other crops down the Trinity River to the Gulf of Mexico for export to markets in the northern United States and across the Atlantic. Overall, the landscape of Anderson County is characterized by rolling hills with some flatter low regions to the south. The major drainage divide between the Neches and Trinity rivers lies near the center of the county, and the rolling contours that dominate the landscape today largely resulted from long-term river processes related to this drainage system (Dumble 1893: 217).



Figure 2.2: Map of Anderson County, Texas (S. Loftus)

Originally a sparse landscape predominated by native grasses and scattered post oaks, along with a few blackjack and live oak, population influx and wide-spread agricultural farming and ranching during the second half of the nineteenth century led to significant environmental changes. Massive clear cutting efforts coupled with the cessation of natural brush fires devastated the ecology. In 1850, around the time of the Jackson's arrival, Anderson County had close to 2,900 inhabitants. Within ten years the population had more than tripled to over 10,400, of which upwards of thirty percent, were enslaved laborers of African descent (Caraway 2010). Today the county is characterized by mixed hardwoods and a thick understory, including elm, cedar, sugarberry, and yaupon, that have replaced what was once mostly open grasslands (Texas Parks and Wildlife Department 2011).

2.6 THE FREDERICK STITH JACKSON PLANTATION

Frederick Jackson first purchased property in Anderson County in December of 1853. He paid \$4,000 for 640 acres in various land surveys along the banks of the Trinity River and eventually another \$6,928.50 for an additional 3,500 acres in the same part of the county (Anderson County Deed Records). The bulk of the land was part of the Thomas H. Kinley League and Labor, an original land grant that was issued by the Board of Land Commissioners of San Augustine County prior to the formation of Anderson County (Caraway 2010). Within less than a decade of his arrival, Frederick Jackson had amassed an agricultural empire that included three plantations and over 5,000 acres of land (Anderson County Deed Records). He was the largest plantation owner in Anderson County and one of the largest in Texas and by 1860, 118 people of African descent were enslaved on his plantations (Wooster 1961:78). Fifty-

four women aged infancy to fifty, and sixty-four were men ranging in age from infant to sixty-five (1860 United States Census Slave Schedule).

Many of the people listed on the 1860 slave schedule are over the age of thirty in comparison with the large number listed in their twenties on the 1850 census, suggesting some enslaved people may have traveled with the Jackson's from their Alabama plantation to Texas. Further evidence of this exists in post-Civil War census records that document Alabama as the place of birth of many black tenants and landowners who remained in the area after emancipation.

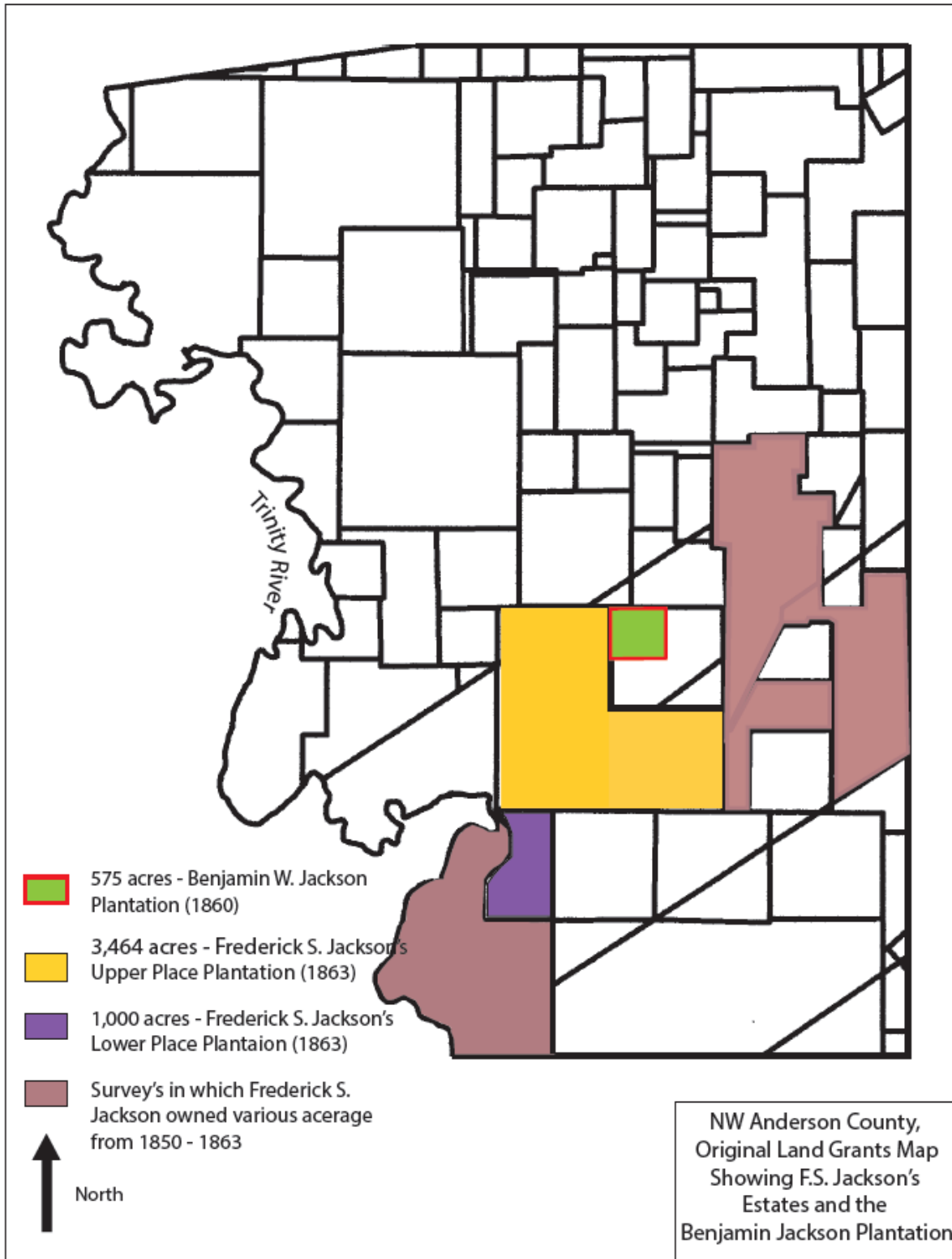


Figure 2.3: Northwest Anderson County original land grants showing the location of Frederick Jackson's holdings and the Benjamin Jackson Plantation (Drawing by S. Loftus)

The Jackson's agricultural estates were located in the northwest corner of the county; however, the family spent the majority of their time in the town of Palestine, located approximately twenty-two miles to the east. Palestine was the hub of social and economic activity in Anderson County and remains so today. Frederick Jackson owned 606 acres on the southeast side of town (Anderson County Deed Records Volume F, Page 216). The no longer extant two-story home was reportedly built by enslaved people, and based on oral traditions and probate records, the Jackson's enjoyed many luxuries commonly associated with southern planters (Avera circa 1985; Anderson County Probate Records # 36). Silver cutlery, tea sets, gold spectacles, chandeliers, and pianos, along with other more practical items are listed within the probate inventory. While the family's holdings fit romanticized versions of the southern slave holder, the Jackson's were exceptional, particularly given their location within a borderland setting on the edge of the plantation frontier. Most Texas farmers were not wealthy and the large majority struggled to get by on small tracts of land (United States Census Records 1850 – 1880).

2.7 THE BENJAMIN WALTER JACKSON PLANTATION

Frederick Jackson's plantation system eventually included three separate holdings; Lower Place and Upper Place, his agricultural estates along the Trinity River, and Town Place, the family's Palestine home. Within the Trinity River estates was a 575 acre tract of land near the community of Bethel that would become the Benjamin Jackson Plantation and the focus of this dissertation. The lands were purchased in 1857, from John Witherspoon, who had acquired the property five years earlier from John H. Reagan, a prominent land speculator and later a Texas Congressman with significant holdings in Anderson County (Anderson County Deed Records Volume C, Page 211) Frederick Jackson paid a substantial \$3,742.37 for the land, which at the

time was perhaps over its value suggesting that improvements existed - possibly a house, well, and/or other out buildings (Anderson County Deed Records Volume H, Page 186).

In 1860, Frederick Jackson gave the 575 acres along with an additional 100 acre tract near the Trinity River to his oldest son Benjamin Walter Jackson (Anderson County Deed Records Volume K, Page 281). The larger parcel is referred to in the historic records as the “B. W. Jackson home place” or the “B. W. Jackson farm”. While Benjamin Jackson officially obtained ownership in 1860, an 1858 advertisement for a “runaway slave” in the *Trinity Advocate*, a local newspaper, requested that a man named Henry should be returned to F. S. Jackson at Palestine, or to B. W. Jackson at Bethel, suggesting he assumed control of the property shortly after it was purchased and was involved in maintaining his father’s estates (Trinity Advocate 1858). 320-acres of the 575-acres are still owned by descendants of Benjamin Walter Jackson and contain the farmsteads that were occupied the Davis and Taylor families during the twentieth century described in the following chapters.

Frederick Jackson’s Upper Place property which included over 3,500 acres was located directly adjacent to Benjamin Jackson’s 575-acres and there was likely a good deal of operational overlap between the two enterprises (Figure 2.3). Whereas household goods and luxury items are listed in the appraisal of Frederick Jackson’s other properties, the inventory for Upper Place is devoted to agriculture and labor and includes 33 mules for pulling plows, 51 cows, 30 calves, 100 pork hogs, 30 chickens, a sugar kettle and blacksmith equipment. Also listed are items likely used to feed and clothe people enslaved on the plantation – 225 bushels of potatoes, 3,400 bushels of corn, 3,000 pounds of salt, 100 pounds of bacon, and 9 spinning wheels, and 3 looms for making clothing (Anderson County Probate #36). It is likely that

Benjamin Jackson relied on his father's established estates as he developed his own plantation holdings (Figure 2.4).



Figure 2.4: Aerial overview of the Benjamin Jackson Plantation (Google Images 2012).

In 1860, forty-six people were enslaved on the Benjamin Jackson plantation (1860 United States Census Records). Fifteen of these individuals were part of a dowry inherited by Jackson's wife Ellen Douglas upon their marriage in 1857. Additionally, when Frederick Jackson died during the middle of the Civil War, Benjamin Jackson inherited ownership of several enslaved people (Anderson County Probate #36). Jackson's original will stipulated the value of his slaves

be appraised, and arbitrarily divided amongst his living heirs, but he revised this statement just prior to his death in 1863. His last will appears to have paired the slaves according to his perception of family groups, perhaps a last minute change of conscious. His instructions were as follows,

I then give to my son B. W. Jackson the following named negros to wit: Ellick and his wife Lucky, and her children Lewis, Charles, Caroline and her Berry, Norman, and Henrietta with their future increase forever (Anderson County Probate Record #36)

These lines, along with a further post script addressed to his son Benjamin Jackson, testify to the tragedy and tenuousness experienced by black families under slavery. In closing Frederick Jackson wrote the following,

I hope Ben, Bob, and Mary Lee [his heirs] will exchange Little Charles for Van so as to keep husband and wife together. I think Ben ought to do so (Anderson County Probate Record #36)

2.8 THE CIVIL WAR

Though the plantation economy arrived in Texas later than in other states, the social attitudes and practices that accompanied it were well established among the white community when the issue of secession was raised, and conflict between the north and south appeared inevitable. Enfranchised voters, all white males, in Anderson County voted overwhelmingly in support of withdrawing from the United States, and of the more than 1500 votes cast in 1861 only seven were opposing (African-American Roots 2006: 3). The major battles of the Civil War were fought east of the Mississippi, and most of the action in Texas took place along the Gulf Coast at the port of Galveston and further south around Brownsville, far from the large cotton plantations of northeast and central Texas. Though not as disruptive as it was in other southern

states with regards to the destruction of infrastructure and loss of life, people were affected at all levels by the war either through loss of family members, accrued financial instability, or in terms of political, social, and economic restructuring.

During the war, daily life for people enslaved in Texas remained relatively the same as it had prior to its start. This differs from the experiences of enslaved people living in the Deep South, and in areas where violent conflicts occurred. The chaos that ensued in places such as Virginia, where major battles took place, led to varied reactions among enslaved people. Over 150,000 individuals fled plantations to join Union soldiers in the fight against slavery. Others who remained wary of the North's intentions and feared the violent reprisal of slave owners, continued to endure life on plantations holding hope that slavery was coming to an end (Hahn 2003:14). Some enslaved people were circumstantially enlisted in the service of the Confederacy and accompanied slave holders to the front lines, often dying alongside Confederate soldiers. When Benjamin Jackson and his brothers left Anderson County to fight for the South several enslaved men traveled with them. Some of their names are listed on Frederick Jackson's 1863 probate and include; Brown, Bob, Theopolis, Wyatt, Bill, Edmond, Harry, Jim, John, Fed, Van, and Big Lewis (Anderson County Probate Record #36).

The Emancipation Proclamation that was issued on January 1, 1863 freeing slaves in the Confederate States had a limited impact in Texas due to the lack of Union troops present to enforce Lincoln's Executive Order, and an intentional lack of communication on the part of Texas slave holders. It was not until General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston on celebrated June 19th, 1865, after the April surrender of Robert E. Lee, and announced that the war was over and slavery was abolished, that enslaved African Americans began to realize their freedom (Campbell 1984: 71). Granger's order was as follows:

The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired labor. The freedmen are advised to remain quietly at their present homes and work for wages. They are informed that they will not be allowed to collect at military posts and that they will not be supported in idleness either there or elsewhere. (General Gordon Granger, Galveston June 19th, 1865; Texas State Library 2015)

Granger's words, while ending slavery, foreshadow the general lack of support that freedmen would receive under Andrew Johnson's presidency, and the evolution of the tenancy system that would keep many people tied to plantation lands for decades to come.

2.9 THE END OF THE WAR

The close of the Civil War ushered in a period of immense upheaval and confusion in the southern United States. The question of how to transition out of an economy based on slavery, and how to reformulate basic social, economic, and political structures, was further complicated by a devastated economy, national mourning, and a rising state of anger among southern whites. While initial Reconstruction offered a glimmer of hope as African Americans began to gain some political clout through elections, these early victories were quickly devastated when various laws were established that prevented blacks from exercising the vote and participating as citizens. The Black Codes, a series of racially discriminatory laws were passed in Texas beginning in 1866. These codes unfairly regulated labor and the acquisition of land (Smallwood 1981: 64; Barr 1973:56). Additional legislation at the state level enforced de facto racial segregation and successfully disenfranchised the majority of recently freed African Americans through unfair registration policies, poll taxes, and literacy tests. Furthermore, Andrew Johnson's

lack of support and ultimately the abandonment of Reconstruction by President Taft in 1876, which led to the closure of the Freedmen's Bureau, left southern African Americans in a tenuous position at the hands of hostile local governments and with few alternatives (Crouch 1992: 120).

Trapped in a horrible state of limbo, options were slim and extreme racism, violence, and intimidation limited the possibilities that accompanied freedom. African Americans faced a devastating set of circumstantial factors including among them, an often complete lack of personal finances. While, many formerly enslaved laborers moved to the industrialized north in order to escape the hostile southern environment, or into urban areas to find work, there were a significant number of people who for various and often encumbered reasons remained in southern agricultural settings as tenants and laborers.

2.10 TENANCY AND “THE RURAL POOR MAJORITY”

The tenancy system that emerged as a replacement for slave labor during the postemancipation era left agricultural workers and farmers impoverished, and often with little control over their working lives (Blackmon 2008; Foley 1997; Wilkinson 2008; Sitton and Conrad 2005; Nieman 1994; Mandle 1992). Previously enslaved people, poor whites and other people of color searching for work in the war-torn south, sometimes started off as wage laborers, but most eventually transitioned to tenancy arrangements, which primarily benefited land owners who could avoid paying workers in cash, something that they lacked after the war (Smallwood 1994: 227). This lack of capital is exemplified in tax records documenting the decline in Benjamin Jackson's wealth. In 1863 his holdings were valued at \$50,315, the large majority of which was invested in human bondage. Accounting for inflation, this was equivalent to over one million dollars in today's U.S currency. Two years later, at the end of the Civil War his wealth

had been reduced by 92 percent to an estate total of just \$4,428 (Anderson County Tax Records 1863 and 1865). Jackson's financial losses were by no means uncharacteristic and reflect those experienced by the majority of the South's wealthy slave holders.

Contracts for tenants were notorious for being unfairly drawn, if drawn at all, and aside from being contractually tied to the land, people were often forced to rely on purchasing supplies and daily necessities from commissary stores. These small general stores were typically owned and operated by former plantation owners and price gouging was common and unregulated (Smallwood 1994: 227). This in turn often kept individuals and families in a continuous state of debt or with little extra income with which to save and purchase their own land. Tenancy rates in Texas rose rapidly in the decades following Reconstruction through the 1940s, and perpetuated poverty and misery among what historian Kyle Wilkinson refers to as Texas' "rural poor majority", which included a varied demographic of African Americans, Mexican Americans, and poor whites trying to earn a living practicing small-scale agriculture in East Texas (Wilkinson 2008: 2).

As it emerged this labor system took on several different contractual forms, none of which typically proved to be a profitable situation for the tenant. If a prospective tenant was able to provide the equipment and supplies necessary to farm successfully, including the tools, work animals, food, and other supplies – then the individual, or family typically received one-half of the crop produced during a given season. Alternatively, and as was often the case, if a tenant was not able to provide the necessary equipment, they were in the unfortunate position of having to rely on a landowner for supplies. In these situations, the tenant's share of the crop was often reduced (Wilkinson 2008:25; Smallwood 1994:7).

Historical literature often refers to farmers who had to rely on landowners for equipment and other necessities as sharecroppers, a term which usually infers a status somewhere below the ranks of a tenant (Smallwood 1994:7). The resulting indebtedness experienced by those farmers, or sharecroppers who did not own their own equipment, provided landowners with a level of authority that was unchecked and frequently resulted in unfair and unjust labor practices that left landless farmers with little to no negotiating power. The third option available to tenants was a cash-rent agreement, which though seemingly less paternalistic, was usually no more profitable for a tenant farmer. Tenants working under cash-rent agreements paid landowners a fee (generally ranging from \$3 - \$7 an acre), and were responsible for providing all their own equipment, and paying their own expenses (Smallwood 1994: 7; Smallwood 1981: 46)

None of the above situations proved to be regularly or even irregularly prosperous for tenants due to several factors, including the unpredictable nature of farming, for example crop failure during periods of drought, fluctuations in markets, and unfair practices on the part of landowners. As a result, tenant farmers remained economically impoverished and due to the rising cost of land and rapid immigration, the number of people trapped in this system rapidly increased through the mid-twentieth century (Smallwood 1994: 227). Though, tenancy affected small farmers regardless of race, this system hit black farmers particularly hard due to the social and economic constraints of de jure and de facto racial discrimination (Barr 1973:60). Though many black farmers were successful in devising ways to acquire their own land, particularly in the southern regions of Texas, by 1910 a majority were trapped in tenancy situations (Wilkison 2008: 24).

For many there was little choice in the matter. The rumor of “forty acres and a mule” was revealed to be a fallacy, and any hopes for economic opportunity following Emancipation were

quickly vanquished due to discriminatory policies and low wages (Smallwood 1994: 228). As a result, the majority of formerly enslaved people found themselves with nothing in the way of property, and little means to obtain the necessary wages that would allow them to move outside of the trappings of wage labor and tenancy on white owned land. Though the Federal Government made attempts to aid previously enslaved African Americans during the Reconstruction period, including efforts to reorganize state government and the development of the Freedman's Bureau, which provided some positive change, racism was well entrenched in East Texas and the lax and failed policies of Andrew Johnson's administration fell far short of enforcing any sort of equality (Annette Gordon-Reid 2011: 3). This was complicated by significant immigration to Texas from war-torn southern states after the Civil War and the arrival of the rail roads which opened the state to National markets and drove the price of land up and out of reach for most small yeoman farmers, particularly African American's who were discriminated against at every turn (Wilkinson 2008: 2).

Facing these challenging circumstances African Americans in Texas avidly protested unfair government policies and discrimination through creative and ingenious means. This included forming communities with infrastructures independent of white authority, including churches, schools, stores, and newspapers. A crucial part of this process was acquiring land which afforded people semi-autonomy. By the 1920s small black farming communities were established on pockets of land throughout East Texas (African-American Roots 2006; Sitton and Conrad 2005: 3).

2.11 THE EMERGENCE OF RURAL AFRICAN AMERICAN FARMING COMMUNITIES

Research on postemancipation African American communities and their presence across the rural southern United States has increased, however the diversity of these communities and the circumstance of their development remains under explored and somewhat poorly understood outside of perhaps, the communities themselves. As recent historians have pointed out, past historical studies that considered rural black experiences during the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century tended to concentrate specifically on two opposing forms of community: 1.) tenancy and sharecropping and this system's characteristic degradation, or 2). the formation of independent black-owned and/or squatter settlements often referred to as "Freedom Colonies", "Freedom Settlements", or "Freedmans Towns" where people moved to acquire their own land and attempted to escape the immediate violence and control exercised by the white population (Sitton and Conrad 2005). This juxtaposition of tenancy or semi-autonomy - i.e. sharecroppers indebted to and controlled by white landowners or independent black landowner communities living in relative isolation - sets up an either/or scenario that does not necessarily mirror historic realities. These two binaries mask the complexity of emerging post-Civil War black communities, which were often economically and demographically diverse and developed over generations through a series of negotiations and compromises with white community members and internally among African American community members who were not a unified homogenous group, but a collective of individuals with varied backgrounds.

Documentation and further investigation of where these rural settlements developed during the postemancipation era is also in need of expansion. While prefacing that much of the research on postemancipation black communities remains conjectural, Thad Sitton and Charles

Conrad speculate in their important text *Freedom Colonies: Independent Black Texans in the Time of Jim Crow*, that “Whether composed of squatters or landowners, most freedmen’s settlements began in wilderness areas previously untouched by ante-bellum cotton agriculture.” They follow this with an observation made by historian Edward Ayers in *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction*, “that blacks took the “backbone and spareribs” that the whites did not want.” (Sitton and Conrad 2005:22; Ayers 1992). While for discriminatory reasons this was often true, and many African American settlements formed in less than desirable uncleared areas such as lowlands, swamps, and sandy hills located along county lines and in unplatted territories, there were exceptions.

The community that developed around the Benjamin Jackson Plantation, known by community members as Bethel, complicates the either/or sharecropper/landowner dichotomy and in some ways contradicts elements of Ayers “backbone and spare ribs” observation, while in other ways confirming it. In northwest Anderson County, African American landowners and tenants successfully carved out spaces and developed communities in areas that were previously dominated by antebellum cotton agriculture and were already appropriated and regulated by white power structures. Unlike traditionally defined “freedom colonies”, which are typically known for their isolation, the black communities around the Jackson plantations, such as Bethel and nearby Yard, developed within an established agricultural landscape assumed within the white economy, and one that was known for its particularly virulent racism both in the past and more recently (Vaughn 1967 and 2012).

Communities that developed in this fashion are not typically recognized as “freedom colonies” and were historically referred to as “quarters”, and this is true in Bethel where the black community was referred to as the “Jackson Quarters”. This nomenclature is somewhat

misleading, while the community that developed here, was not by definition a “freedom colony” comprised of black landowners, it was also not dominated by temporary sharecroppers. People were invested in the land. This area of northwest Anderson County was a site of mixed resistance and complex social interactions that took place over several generations, as some tenants eventually acquired property, even having tenants themselves, and others continued to remain landless. This phenomenon is further discussed in Chapter 3, which moves further towards the local scale by considering specific transformations in Bethel and on the Benjamin Jackson plantation after the Civil War and through the twentieth century.

2.12 THE RISE OF JIM CROW

In the midst of these struggles to form communities, Jim Crow erupted across the south in what has been described by historian James Smallwood, as the war that followed the Civil War, a race war that was equally virulent (Smallwood 1981: 32). Overt and subtle physical and psychological violence characterized the vast majority of relationships between white and black Texans throughout this period, overwhelmingly taking on the form of white violence perpetuated against blacks. For example, in Freestone County, located adjacent to Anderson County, and less than 10 miles from the Jackson Plantation, a county-wide resolution passed ordering whites not to hire, or contract with any African Americans or they were to face public whipping (Smallwood 1981:29).

Deeply engrained fear driven racism was devastatingly strong in East Texas, and led to untold violence towards African Americans, and also to whites who appeared in any way to contradict pretend notions of white supremacy. In Tennessee Colony, a few miles from the Jackson Plantation, a confederate veteran attempted to open a school for African American

students in 1869, and was driven out of the town (Sitton and Conrad 2006: 109). This was preceded by an incident that took place prior the Civil War involving two white abolitionists who stood accused of trying to incite a slave rebellion in the same area. The men were quickly hung (Hohes 1936: 52).

While the violence experienced by these white men is documented, the physical and psychological violence experienced by individual African Americans during the nineteenth and early-twentieth century is largely undocumented and in many instances purposely absent from public history. The Slocum Massacre which occurred in the unincorporated town of Slocum, located approximately 35 miles southwest of the Benjamin Jackson Plantation is an example of these historical omissions. On July 29th 1910, a group of white men apparently spurred to violence by escalating racial tensions and rumors of a disputed debt between a white man and a black man, shot and killed an unknown number of African Americans living in Slocum. The estimated death count ranged from fifteen to twenty individuals (Madigan 2011a).

The tragedy was widely reported in both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, but somehow failed to make it into local history books (Bills 2014; Hohnes 1936). An excerpt from an August 1, 1910 article in *The New York Times* quoting then Anderson County Sheriff W. H. Black paints a disturbing picture of the seemingly indiscriminate racially motivated violence.

Men were going about killing Negroes as fast as they could find them, and, so far as I was able to ascertain, without any real cause"... "These Negroes have done no wrong that I can discover. I don't know how many there were in the mob, but there may have been 200 or 300. They hunted the Negroes down like sheep. (Sheriff W. H. Black quoted in *The New York Times* August 1, 1910).

The Slocum Massacre had a profound impact on Anderson County and on the psyche of local African Americans (African-American Roots 2006: 4). Most blacks living in Slocum fled the town immediately, losing their homes and businesses in the process. People of African descent living in adjacent communities were already cautious due to previous lynchings and violence and fear of similar events occurring was constant (Bills 2014).

While the massacre was a gruesomely unique event, violence was certainly not unusual. Outright racism was tempered by more subtle, yet equally damaging forms of discrimination sanctioned by the government. State and Federally enforced legislation passed in the United States during the nineteenth and twentieth century secured an unfortunate place for racism and perpetuated and encouraged discrimination. The United States Supreme Court's ruling in favor of separate but equal institutions in the 1896 case of Plessy vs. Ferguson, a statute that would remain standard doctrine until 1954, only further reinforced de jure and de facto segregation at state and local levels.

While the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s ushered in newly protected rights for African Americans, in East Texas these rights were slow to materialize. The desegregation of schools mandated by the Supreme Court in 1954 was met with resistance from both black and white communities. In Texas, demonstrations preventing integration at the Mansfield school outside of Fort Worth, that were supported by both the mayor and the police chief, preceded the more visible events surrounding the desegregation of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas where the governor ordered the National Guard to prevent African American students from entering the building (Green 1979: 26). In Anderson County, school desegregation did not occur until seventeen years later, when a 1971 lawsuit, "The United States vs. The State of Texas" ordered the immediate desegregation of over 1,000 school districts across the state that

had failed to comply with “Brown vs. the Board of Education” (Schott 1982:2). Nearby, Dallas was the last city in the country to integrate.

Following the National Voting Rights Act of 1965, lawsuits were filed across the south by African Americans who challenged discriminatory policies in place in voting districts that prevented black people from actively participating in local and regional governments. The fight to end racial gerrymandering in Anderson County was led by Frank Robinson who along with others sued the Anderson County Commissioners Court in 1973. The lawsuit led to the transformation of Anderson County’s political landscape. New single-member voting districts were redrawn to reflect the demographics of the county and this led to the election of African Americans in local government for the first time ever (Roberts 2000).

Though violent and overt acts of racism have subsided in recent decades, the larger community continues to struggle with the generational impacts of structured discrimination and resulting inequality, and it has a pervasive underlying presence across many sectors of society. As recently as April of 2011 a Confederate flag was raised over the county courthouse in Palestine in celebration of Confederate History/Civil War History month. The flag was removed four days later following statewide protests. This was followed by the construction of the privately funded and owned Confederate Veterans Plaza in downtown Palestine in 2013, largely seen as a response to the flags removal. The six flags of the Confederacy fly over the Plaza alongside two Official Texas Historical Markers commemorating local efforts during the war (Figure 2.5). As a counter weight, the African American community organized to erect an Official Texas Historical Marker dedicated to Timothy Stephen Smith, a local African American, who peacefully fought a legal battle alongside Frank Robinson and others to successfully sue Anderson County for racial gerrymandering in an effort to dismantle discriminatory policies

(Figure 2.6; Texas Historical Commission 2014). More recently, local people secured an official state historical marker dedicated to the previously discussed Slocum Massacre (Figures 2.7 and 2.8). The acceptance of the marker has not been without controversy and many white county officials are opposed to its placement, arguing the history presented by descendants of massacre survivors was inaccurate. The dispute was settled at the state level in Austin and the marker is scheduled for dedication in 2015. The following excerpt from the Palestine Herald-Press describes the tensions surrounding the markers placement,

On Thursday, commission members in Austin authorized an 18-by-21-inch marker that would help bring the long-buried story to life. [marker was changed to 27-by-42-inch]

“I feel like my ancestors didn’t die in vain,” said a tearful [Constance] Hollie-Jawaid, who was in the hearing room with her only sibling, Leo Hollie, and other relatives for the late-afternoon decision....

In the same radio report, Greg Chapin, an Anderson County Commissioner, predicted that a Slocum marker would be thrown in the river within a day of its installation.

(Palestine Herald-Press, January 29, 2015)



Figure 2.7: Constance Hollie-Jawaid whose relatives were killed in the Slocum Massacre and her brother Leo Hollie Jr. on the day of the Austin hearing before the Texas Historical Commission (Sam Houston State University History Department 2015)



Figure 2.8: Descendants of the 1910 Slocum Massacre, from the left, L. D. Hollie, Constance Hollie-Ramirez, Colecia Hollie-Williams and David Lee Hollie, participate in a ceremony honoring the victims of the massacre at the Texas House of Representatives chambers in Austin, on Wednesday, March 30, 2011 (Fort Worth Star-Telegram)

While certainly not defined by these tensions, it is within this continued backdrop of social, economic, and political turmoil that the African American community of Bethel formed and continues to exist. The following chapters consider the rise of Bethel's black community during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century and specifically the long term transformation of the Benjamin Jackson plantation over generations. Though only functioning as an antebellum plantation for eight years, the post-civil war history of the individuals who continued to farm this piece of land through the twentieth century and developed a vibrant community in this area, both embody and complicate current narratives of social history during this turbulent and transformative era.

CHAPTER 3:

NEGOTIATING “OWNERSHIP” WITHIN A CONTESTED LANDSCAPE

Following Emancipation “[African Americans] began to build – with an assortment of tensions and conflicts – new political relations, institutions, and aspirations within their own communities. How former slaves accomplished these tasks remains one of the most remarkable, though yet relatively unexplored, chapters in American history (Stephen Hahn 2004:165).

The following chapter builds upon the broader context presented in the Chapter 2 to explore local history and landscape transformations on the Benjamin Jackson plantation following emancipation through the end of tenancy in the 1950s. Considering the plantation at this scale, allows for a local community context to emerge within which to explore the material culture of the Davis and Taylor households, families who were tenants on the plantation lands circa 1900 – 1940 and circa 1930 – 1955, respectively. This is accomplished primarily through an analysis of property transactions available at the Anderson County Court House tracing the rise of black landownership in the area and the development of community infrastructure over time.

3.2 LANDSCAPE

‘Landscape’ like the term ‘culture’ is understood in different ways depending on the context and perspective (Johnson 2007:3). Writing about landscape in the late 1970’s when cultural geographers were beginning to encourage a more humanistic approach to place Edward Relph wrote,

Landscape is not merely an aesthetic background to life, rather it is a setting that both expresses and conditions cultural attitudes and activities, and significant modifications to landscapes are not possible without major changes in social attitudes (Relph 1976:122).

The ways that the Benjamin Jackson Plantation lands were divided, sold, built, lived in and abandoned during the century that followed the Civil War provide evidence of shifting social and economic realities, and demonstrate a slow transformation that occurred over multiple generations as people grappled with what the politics of freedom actually meant within a landscape previously dominated by slavery and awash in the racial disparities that plagued the United States throughout Jim Crow. These discourses in many ways mirror broader struggles across the colonized world as the politics of modernity and the emergence of the citizen individual coincided with the rise of industrial capitalism and the end of state sanctioned slavery (Bender 2002: 104; Delle 1998). They also complicate traditional narratives concerned with the transformation of plantations in the rural southern United States which have obscured the complexity and diversity of peoples experiences during the period that some have referred to as the New South (1880 – 1940) and during the post-WWII era leading up to the 1960s Civil Rights movement (Aiken 1998: 16).

3.2 PREVIOUS INVESTIGATIONS - ARCHAEOLOGIES ENGAGEMENT WITH THE VARIED DYNAMICS OF LANDSCAPE

Over the last several decades, archaeologists studying the recent past have increasingly engaged with landscapes to understand the varied dynamics of a site or region, and in particular, to explore the ways that landscapes have informed, normalized, and/or challenged certain deployments of power and ideology (Smith 2003; Matthews 2010). Tim Ingold has argued that

“the landscape is constituted as an enduring record of – and testimony to – the lives and works of past generations who have dwelt within it, and so doing, have left there something of themselves” (Ingold 1993: 152). At the same time, Stephen Daniels and Barbara Bender have cautioned that though it may be possible to access a record of social life in the past through an analysis of landscape, landscapes can also mask inequality and conceal past and present social and political conflicts (Bender 1999:33, Daniels 1989: 196). In this sense landscape is where the materiality of daily life is enacted and also a site of continual social struggles.

The Archaeology in Annapolis program in Annapolis, Maryland, associated with critical theory, offered some of the earliest archaeological interpretations of recent American historical landscapes (Leone 1984; Kryder-Reid 1991; Leone 2005). In particular, archaeologist Mark Leone’s work on William Paca’s gardens and his exploration of Georgian order architecture, both of which explore the possibility that dominant ideology was intentionally built into the landscape by elites as a means to naturalize and disguise unequal social and economic relations (Leone 2005: 63). While critiqued for assumptions concerning the extent to which people were actually deceived by such designs, the work was pivotal in opening up rigorous debates concerning the role of landscape among archaeologists studying the recent past. This has led to a significant increase in the varied theories and methods that have been applied to explore how ideology and power are situated and negotiated within particular settings and across landscapes at multiple scales (Johnson 1996; De Cunzo and Ernstein 2006: 258; McGuire 2013; Richard 2013)

Expanding this dialogue, recent work by archaeologists considering colonialism has emphasized the heterogeneity of landscapes and their uneven development based upon the interests of various invested groups. Shannon Dawdy’s use of the landscape to understand the

emergence of French colonial New Orleans approaches this issue. Dawdy revealed how a new vision of urban planning arose, as old world French city models meshed with landscapes already established by Native Americans, and drew influence from urban lifeways imported by Africans. This resulted in a unique city plan that embodied these various tensions (Dawdy 2008:66). Additionally, considering landscapes in the Siin (Senegal), Francois Richard emphasized taking a more ambiguous approach when looking at relationships between divergent groups and their impact on the lived environment. He argued that archaeologists studying colonial geographies should pay attention to how colonized peoples and colonial governance were intertwined and “how they partook – unevenly, both unconsciously and by design – in – each other’s making (Richard 2013: 55).

While the dynamics of colonial encounters differ markedly from those of enslavement situations, they both deal with relationships of power among disparate populations and Richards argument can be usefully applied to studying the postemancipation southern United States and the ways that plantation dominated landscapes were renegotiated by African Americans and the predominately white governing population. This balanced approach is useful for exploring the postemancipation transitions that occurred over generations on and around the Benjamin Jackson Plantation.

3.3 APPROACHING PLANTATION LANDSCAPES – PAST ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDIES

Archaeologists studying plantation systems in the Americas have increasingly turned to landscapes as a medium for looking at the various dynamics of relationships of power within plantation settings. Some of the most successful of these studies have furthered our

understanding of the ways that owners and overseers manipulated and created landscapes to exert control over enslaved laborers, and conversely how enslaved laborers used the landscape in ways to subvert this authority and actively resist acts of domination (Singleton 2001; Delle 1998, 2014; Epperson 1999; Armstrong 1990, 2003). Additionally, archaeologists, as well as, cultural geographers and historians have turned to landscapes as a means to explore emancipation and the transitions that ensued as plantation based economies in the Americas and the Caribbean shifted from slavery to free labor, and modern capitalism emerged (Orser 1988; Wilkie 2003; Aiken 1998).

Many of these studies have applied the theories of Michel Foucault to understand the ways that landscapes have been adapted to, shaped, built, lived in, appropriated, and changed in relation to particular social, economic, and political contexts. Foucault's emphasis on power and the interplay between domination and subjugation creates a platform from which to explore how power relationships are manifest in people's material lives and surroundings, and his development of the concept of the "panoptic" has been particularly useful within plantation settings (Foucault 1977). Archaeologists have employed the idea of the panoptic to demonstrate how power is realized and how individuals are subjugated through the purposeful manipulation of lived space (Foucault 1977). Much like a drone, the ubiquitous camera in the corner of today's convenience store, or a prominently displayed Christian cross, the panoptic landscape positions authority within space in such a way as to convey a feeling of constant surveillance whether real or imagined. Foucault argues, it is this possibility, whether actual or symbolic, that acts as a form of control by engaging the subject's conscious.

Archaeologist James Delle, engaged with Foucault's theory in his study of coffee plantations in Jamaica's Blue Mountains as a means to explore how space was reconfigured as

the island transformed following the emergence of competitive capitalism. One aspect of his study considered the panoptic relationship between the buildings associated with the plantation overseer, and the space occupied by enslaved laborers. Delle reveals that much like Bentham's prison guard-tower, an overseer standing at his doorstep, would have been able to readily monitor most aspects of plantation life (Delle 1998, 2014). Similar explorations of panopticism have been carried out at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, within downtown Annapolis, Harper's Ferry, and at sugar plantations in Cuba and other parts of the Caribbean (Singleton and Bogard 1995:18, Shackel 1996: 74; Singleton 2001; Epperson 1999).

Charles Orser's study of Millwood Plantation in South Carolina was one of the first to consider the postemancipation plantation. Orser engaged with proxemics, the study of space in cultural contexts, to examine laborer housing and the transitions that occurred during slavery, wage labor, and tenancy (Orser 1988:83). Orser argued that despite slavery's end, the planter classes manipulated the landscape in ways that reinforced a class structure in which they essentially remained in control of both the land and production (Orser 1988; Delle 1999: 139).

The following chapter builds upon this body of previous work and considers the interactions and negotiations that took place between the Jackson family and African Americans who lived on and around the Benjamin Jackson Plantation following emancipation. These negotiations highlight the complexity of people's engagements in situations where there has been a significant rupture in the overall social and economic fabric of a society. Historic records (deed, tax, and census records) along with residues of community boundaries and infrastructure are used to explore the complexity of these engagements. Most of these records were available at the Anderson County Courthouse in Palestine and on microfilm or online at the Texas State Library in Austin. While sometimes challenging and time consuming, the records allowed me to

develop a fairly complete baseline concerning landownership, bills of sale, and occupancy. Additionally, more personal perspectives including oral traditions maintained by the Bethel community, journal records kept by the plantation owner's son, Walter Benjamin Jackson during the 1920s and 30s, and local art are considered. My engagement with the descendant community and the collection of oral traditions is discussed in the following chapter. Robert Crider, the current land owner and a descendant of Benjamin Jackson generously provided several of the documents that are utilized, including property maps, old photographs, and copies of journal entries and newspaper articles authored by Walter Benjamin Jackson. These varied sources are woven together in an effort to document the transitions that occurred in this rural community following the Civil War, and the ways that people facing deeply structured inequalities sought empowerment both individually and communally over generations through their encounters with landscape and the material world.

3.4 THE BENJAMIN JACKSON PLANTATION - ACQUIRING LAND AND BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE

Purchased in 1857, the Benjamin Jackson Plantation produced both cotton and corn for commercial purposes, as well as, subsistence crops through enslaved labor. In 1860, 46 people were enslaved on the lands, possibly more by the time of emancipation in Texas (1860 United States Census Records). According to oral history provided by living descendants, as well as, primary accounts in the form of journal and newspaper articles authored by Walter Jackson, Benjamin Jackson's son in the 1920s and 30s, Benjamin Jackson, his wife Ellen Douglas Jackson and their three children lived in a house on the plantation lands throughout the Civil War. They also spent a great deal of time at his father, Frederick Stith Jackson's estate in Palestine, and at a

second family home located near Green's Bluff, not far from the Bethel plantation (Crider, personal communication 2011, Jackson 2012; Jackson circa 1930).

Conversations with descendants of Benjamin Jackson who have remained close to the land and continue to live in the area indicate that the main house on the Benjamin Jackson plantation burned down shortly after the Civil War (Crider, personal communication 2011, Jackson 2012). The structures exact location within the plantation landscape remains circumspect, as do the events surrounding the fire. While the location is unconfirmed, the home is referenced in the journal records kept by Walter Jackson and his great grandson, Henry Jackson, remembers his grandfather pointing out where the old house stood (Jackson 2012). Limited archaeological testing within this central area of the plantation recovered cultural materials that potentially fit within the antebellum time period and may be associated with the main house occupation, but more extensive excavations and survey would need to be undertaken to conclusively determine whether this was the actual location (Figure 3.1). Future work could target this area.

Census records indicate that in addition to the main house there were at least eight structures on the plantation that housed enslaved people during the antebellum period (1860 United States Census Records). While no official records or photographs documenting the slave quarters construction or layout has been uncovered, historic maps refer to the far southwest corner of the plantation as "the quarter". A hand drawn map shown in Figure 3.1 produced by a member of the Jackson family sometime in the 1950s depicts the parcel (Figure 3.1). Enslaved people were likely housed in this area and it may also have been occupied by recently emancipated free laborers during the initial transition to a tenancy system after the Civil War.

The Jacksons did not live on the plantation for very long after Emancipation. Ellen Jackson died young shortly after the fall of the Confederacy, leaving Benjamin Jackson and their three children behind. Devastated by her death and suffering financially as a result of the War, Jackson made the decision to leave Bethel and move with his young children to the burgeoning town of Springfield in adjacent Limestone County (Henry Jackson 2012). According to journal entries by his son, Walter, he did not frequently return to the plantation after the move, and instead acted as an absentee landowner, an arrangement that was common during this period (Jackson circa 1930). Following Jacksons absence, the overseeing of the property appears to have been entrusted to a cousin, James H. Gee, who lived nearby and owned a local store in Bethel; however, records concerning Gees specific role in the enterprise are inconclusive.

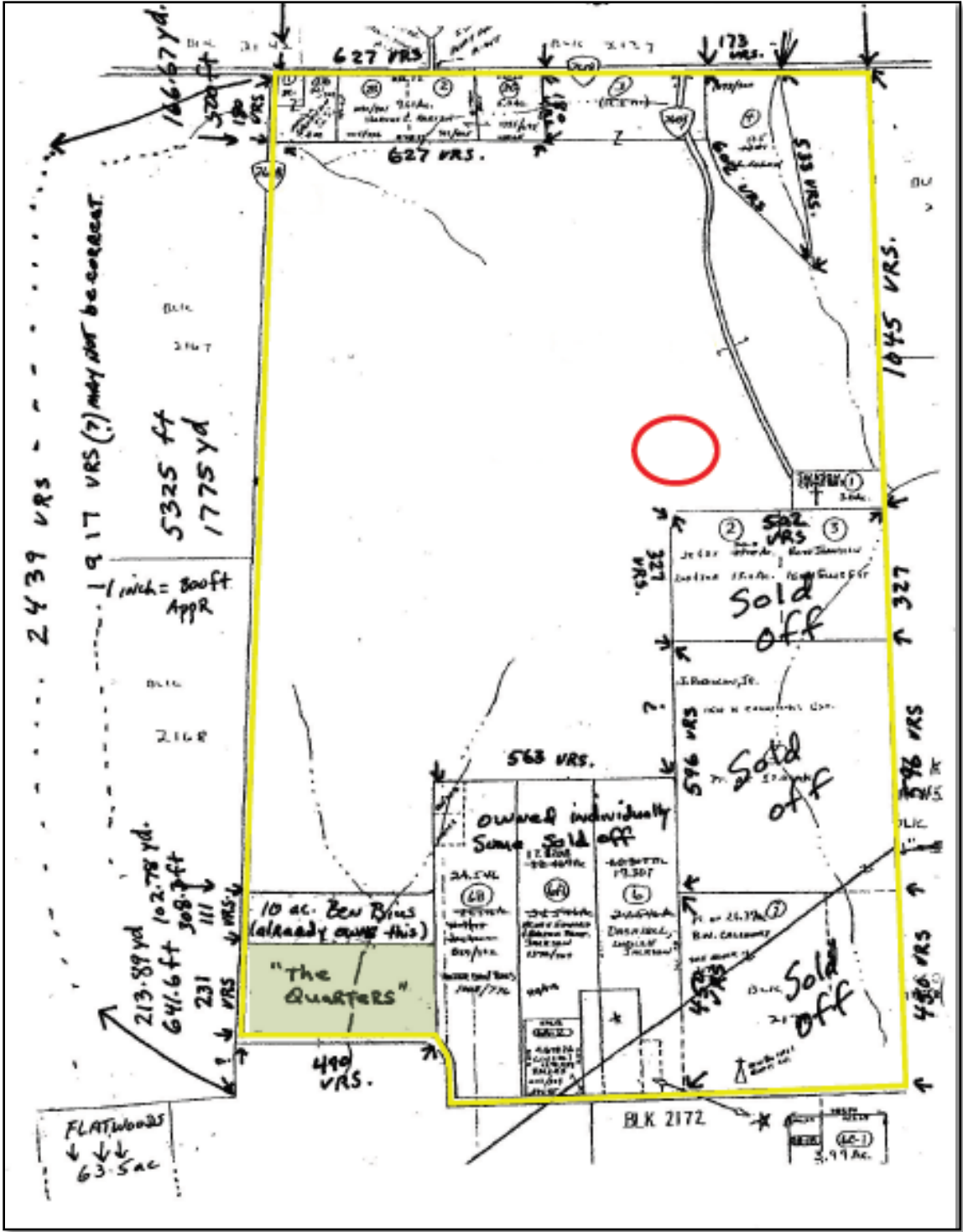


Figure 3.1: Map produced by the Jackson family circa 1950 showing the location of “the quarters” (in green) and the possible location of the original Benjamin Jackson family home (shown in red). (Copy provided by Robert Crider, the current land owner, the provenience of the original in unknown).

3.3.1 REORGANIZATION AFTER EMANCIPATION

Benjamin Jackson's abandonment of the property after the Civil War resulted in an altered setting, in which people began to actively reformulate the plantation landscape. Archaeologist Adam Smith has argued that landscapes in the United States, both real and imagined, "*regularly pivot around a central apparatus of political authority—a civil axis mundi*" (Smith 2003:9). Within typical plantation landscapes the "*civil axis mundi*" aptly describes the planter's main house which served as a panoptic symbol, as well as a literal point upon which all other built elements typically revolved. The power relations that plantation landscapes espoused and the control that owners tried to implement with varying degrees of success through manipulation of the environment is representationally depicted in the famous circa 1825 painting, *The Plantation*. The artist placed the larger than proportionate main house at the top of an exaggerated hill (or axis), grossly overshadowing all other structures (Figure 3.2; Vlach 2008:27). During the postemancipation era both the symbolic and real presence of this manufactured axis were fractured and power was slowly disseminated and renegotiated. On the Jackson plantation, the hill was metaphorically leveled, at least to some degree, when the Jackson's moved away, and the main house was literally removed by fire.



Figure 3.2: *The Plantation*, ca, 1825, by unidentified artist, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York. The main house grossly overshadows the landscape visually manipulating power structures. While exaggerated, the image is a powerful representation of how the environment was controlled on many plantations and a certain relational aesthetic was achieved by owners.

Historian Dylan Penningroth has argued that during the decades that followed emancipation “black peoples fierce resistance to anything that smacked of slavery destroyed the plantation, not just as a labor system but also as a physical landscape” (Penningroth 2003: 148). What was once a centrally controlled agricultural setting began to be transformed as previously enslaved people began to disperse and moved away from concentrated “quarters”. This transformation is evident on and around the Benjamin Jackson plantation. After emancipation, people who remained on the lands to work as tenants moved out concentrated living spaces occupied during slavery and established small farmsteads across the plantation landscape. These

settlements formed in clusters that skirted the edge of the plantation and were near access to main roads and water sources, which provided new measures of independence.

The movement eventually resulted in the development of a small semi-autonomous African American community that included a school, church and other infrastructure. These institutions became essential support systems as people in the area sought empowerment and negotiated oppressive social and economic structures through community building, and eventually through purchasing sections of the plantation lands. In order to accomplish this, people often pooled resources within and between families, forming alliances that were mutually beneficial.

Previous studies that have addressed the rise of tenancy and postemancipation transitions during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century have often overlooked black community formation in the rural south and black people's relationships with the land. While many African Americans quickly fled plantations and rural areas heading north and in to urban areas, experiences were heterogeneous, and in some situations the physical landscape became an immense source of strength and deep attachments to place, land, and community were formed that have lasted for generations. In her 2009 essay, *Touching the Earth*, bell hooks explores African American's relationships with community and in particular with the land itself after emancipation, arguing both were central to survival during Jim Crow (hooks 2009:118). Remembering her grandfather, hooks wrote,

Working the land was the hope of survival. Even when the land was owned by white oppressors, master and mistress, it was the earth itself that protected exploited black folks from dehumanization. My sharecropping granddaddy Jerry would walk through neat rows of crops and tell me "No man can make the sun or the rains come – we can all testify. We can all see that ultimately we all bow down to the forces of nature. Big white

boss may think he can outsmart nature, but the small farmer know. Earth is our witness.” This relationship to the earth meant that southern black folks, whether they were impoverished or not, knew firsthand that white supremacy, with its systemic dehumanization of blackness, was not a form of absolute power. (hooks 2009: 118)

While hooks is writing about a deeply personal experience and sentiments for the land that were not shared by everyone, her focus on people’s relationships with place and environment add new dimensions to the complexity of why people moved in different ways after emancipation. While white discrimination, violence, intimidation, vagrancy laws, and poverty have long been recognized as defining African Americans movement in this region after slavery’s end and during Jim Crow; the influence and power of black community and environment have been overlooked and their roles in settlement and migration undermined. Within the Bethel community, such attachments are evident and are explored below through a consideration of community development and property transactions.

3.3.2 THE EMERGENCE OF A FREE BLACK COMMUNITY AROUND THE BENJAMIN JACKSON PLANTATION

By the early-twentieth century Bethel, where the Benjamin Jackson plantation is located, was reportedly a comparatively less violent space for African Americans to establish a home in contrast with neighboring towns, such as Cayuga where white supremacy politics and the Ku Klux Klan dominated (Vaughn 2012). These political dogmas were certainly not liberated in Bethel, but this region appears to have been less outwardly violent and eventually held a majority black population (Johnson 2013, United States Census Records). While the surrounding threat of violence across sections of northwestern Anderson County resulted in restricted movement within certain spatial boundaries, African Americans sought to develop this marginalization to

their advantage (Price 1999: 334). People living within and around Bethel appear to have used a semi-imposed landscape of social marginality to develop insulated communities that afforded protection, but also, and perhaps more significantly generated social, economic, and cultural opportunities among community members. As has been pointed out by Maria Franklin, the autonomy of rural black communities resulted just as much from an internal desire to commune with people with a shared history, experience, and cultural background, as it was a response to white racism (Franklin 2012: 30).

To advance community and solidify space within the region residents persistently negotiated with the white land owning population to acquire greater control over the local landscape through the purposeful acquisition and planned development of key properties and infrastructure (a cemetery, school, and church) that cemented and furthered community growth. Negotiations also took place internally among members of the black community, who had diverse economic and social backgrounds and were not necessarily a unified group, a subject that historian Robin Kelley has argued deserves further consideration. While the area around Bethel was initially populated by sharecroppers and wage laborers working commercial cotton and corn on white-owned land, by the turn of the twentieth century, this demographic shifted to include a mix of prominent black landowners, small land owners, tenants, and laborers.

3.3.3 BLACK LAND OWNERSHIP – STRUGGLES AND SUCCESS

The rise of black property ownership following decades of sharecropping and tenancy was crucial to successful community formation, and opportunities to purchase land were prioritized by many people living in the area. Immediately following the Civil War, tenancy dominated northwestern Anderson County and appears to have continued with no exceptions on the Benjamin Jackson plantation through the beginning of the twentieth century. This system

remained unaltered on the former plantation until Jackson's death in April of 1914, and the shift of control of the lands to his sons, Walter and Douglas Jackson (Texas Death Certificate 1914). Within a year of their father's death, the two sons began to sell parcels of the plantation lands to African American individuals and families. Many of whom had already established households as sharecroppers.

The only parcel of land that Benjamin Jackson agreed to part with during his lifetime was a three acre tract containing the Jackson Quarters Cemetery (Figure 3.3 and 3.4). This tract was deeded to the black community in 1899 for a sum of fifteen dollars (Anderson County Deed Records Volume 65, Page 221). The cemetery dates to the antebellum period and contains the unmarked graves of people who were enslaved as well as the burials of local community members interred as recently as 2014. The cemetery was the first of many tracts that would eventually be subsumed by the black community, but the only parcel that Benjamin Jackson would actually convey. The unwillingness of former plantation owners to sell land to African Americans was a common phenomenon across the south, and Penningroth has argued,

...although most ex-masters understood that the war had ended their property rights in black people, they never the less expected to keep their wide claims over land and movable property." These claims had formed the basis of the slave economy, and their general belief was that if they could hold onto them, they would effectively keep blacks under their thumb. (Penningroth 2003:142)

The initial cemetery transaction between the Jackson family and the black community marks the beginning of decades of officially documented negotiations that took place regarding how the postemancipation landscape was to be occupied and controlled. Unlike some previous narratives concerned with tenancy in Texas, in which renters are primarily depicted as living in a

largely unorganized and mobile fashion, with few attachments to the land, people in the Bethel area actively invested in the long term. Community members, including both new black landowners, and long-term tenants slowly and persistently laid down roots in the community and over generations acquired more control over property and infrastructure.

The process was a long, drawn out, and imperfect, and marked by both successes and failures. The initial cemetery purchase exemplifies these tensions. While the purchase was a victory and a step forward for the black community, the deed itself was subject to stipulations that ensured that while officially transferring responsibility for the cemetery's upkeep, Benjamin Jackson still ultimately remained in control of the property. The deed states that the land, "*is to be used only as a cemetery and for nothing else, and if it is used for anything else the land will revert back to me or my heirs*" (Anderson County Deed Records Volume 65, Page 221). This paternalistic over reach prevented the black community from exercising true ownership over the cemetery, and would have limited their control of the burial grounds both in a literal sense as well as a deeply psychological one.



Figure 3.3: Sign leading to the Jackson Quarters Cemetery taken in 2012. Since that time the sign has been replaced with a new marker (S. Loftus 2012)



Figure 3.4: Overview of the Jackson Quarters Cemetery, facing west (S. Loftus 2012)

The shift that occurred after Benjamin Jackson's death regarding the sale of land to black tenants and neighbors likely resulted from a combination of economic and social factors. This included the persistence and determination of the local black population to secure land in order to successfully establish community and infrastructure over generations, changes in social attitudes among the next generation of the Jackson family, a decrease in the land value of the sandy soils in this area which had suffered from cotton production, as well as, the movement of former plantation owning families into new business ventures in urban areas. The following provides an account of the transactions that took place between Benjamin Jackson's sons and the local black community during the years 1914 – 1935 as a means to demonstrate the transformation and negotiation of the landscape in relation to ownership and control.

3.3.4 INDIVIDUALS IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY BEGIN TO BUY LAND

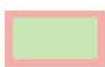
Tillis Washington was the first African American to purchase his own farm from Benjamin Jackson's sons. Washington's history is largely absent from most official records, and he only appears in the Texas census in the year 1900. At that time he was 21, and living with his mother and stepfather, Jana and Robert Govan in the Fifth Precinct, an area that includes the Benjamin Jackson plantation. The Govan's were tenant farmers and their household was next door to James and Delia Davis (1900 United States Census Records).

As discussed in Chapter 1, journal records indicate that the Davis family, who are the focus of the household archaeology discussed in the following chapters, were enslaved on Benjamin Jackson's plantation during the antebellum era. While, the family moved off of the property sometime after the Civil War, they remained in the larger community and farmed the Jackson's lands (1870 and 1880 United States Census Records). Their son James Davis Jr. and his wife Lillie Davis became tenants on the plantation and James Davis Jr. eventually assumed a

position similar to that of an overseer. Tillis Washington's connection with the Davis's, a family that the Jackson's appear to have developed a close relationship with, may have been instrumental in his ability to purchase the property, and it is likely that he was already living on the land as a sharecropper at the time he made the purchase.

The conveyance took place on November 15, 1915. Washington purchased 25 acres of land in the far northwest corner of the plantation (Figure 3.5). The deed record for this transaction could not be located, so how much money was exchanged, and the terms of the purchase are not known; however, an oil and gas lease from March of 1928, references the sale. The lease indicates that Washington had a house and barn on the property and documents the sale of his oil and gas rights to R. R. Jackson, a white physician and descendant of Benjamin Jackson, in exchange for \$150 he owed for treating his "sore leg" (Anderson County Deed Records Volume 140, Page 94). Based on inflation rates this would be roughly \$3,500 today, a fairly expensive medical treatment. This type of negotiation was not unusual and demonstrates the lack of currency exchanged within rural East Texas communities. It also provides evidence of another underlying battle for the control of mineral rights in a region rich in oil and natural gas deposits.

The additional Glenn properties are located along here -
Map coverage does not extend to this northern area



Parcels of land sold by the Jackson brothers to African Americans during the early-twentieth century



The Benjamin Walter Jackson Plantation



North

Figure 3.5: 1933 Aerial showing parcels of land on the Benjamin Jackson plantation sold by the Jackson brothers to African Americans during the early-twentieth century (Drawing by S. Loftus, 1933 Tobin Aerial Photograph, Anderson County Deed Records)

The struggle to maintain ownership of a parcel of land once it was purchased affected many families who bought property either from the Jacksons, or from other white families in the area. People frequently lacked the capital to pay for land in full and warranty deeds typically came with attached vendor's liens and steep interest rates. These debts were often settled through the sale of mineral rights, which provided the Jacksons with a degree of control over some of the lands that were sold. Washington eventually forfeited ownership of his 25 acres because today it is back in the hands of the Jackson family; however, no documentation of this transaction was found in the archival record, and it is possible it may have happened after his death. Negotiations that took place regarding foreclosures further exemplify the back and forth struggle of many African Americans to gain independence through land ownership, and alternatively, the hesitation of white landowners to relinquish control.

Less than a month after selling the first tract to Washington, the Jackson brothers sold another parcel to Bruce Glenn; a one-acre tract in the far northeast corner of the plantation, not far from Washington's tract, housing the community's first African American school, the Green Street School (Anderson County Deed Records Volume 135, Page 439). The Glenn family eventually became one of the most prominent black landowning families in this part of Anderson County. Bruce Glenn's father and mother, Reverend Jessie and Catherine Glenn, already owned 200 acres of land across the street from the Green Street School, abutting the Jackson plantation on the north side. This initial acreage was purchased in 1902 and 1909 from Ben Gee and M. J. Derden, respectively, both white landowners in the area (Anderson County Deed Records, Volume 71, Page 343 and Volume 72, Page 102). Figure 3.6 shows the Glenn's acreage and the location of the Green Street School.

With the purchase of the Green Street School by the Glenn family, the African American community established ownership and control of the place where their children were educated. In a publication compiled by the Palestine Negro Business and Professional Women's Club, titled *A History of the Education of Black People of Anderson County, Texas*, documenting the early history of black schools, Reverend E. N. Glenn, a descendant described the Green Street School as,

a one-teacher school taught by Mrs. Maggie Vance and located across the public road from the late Rev. Glen's, sawmill, canemill, and store. In later years it was named Bethel and then moved to another public road now FM2707 (Palestine Negro Business and Professional Women's Club 1989:14).

Prioritizing the purchase of the Green Street School, and also the Jackson Quarters cemetery, allowed black residents to gain control of important elements of basic community infrastructure and suggests careful planning by the community to acquire key properties as important steps towards building independence. It also suggests willingness by the Jackson family to relinquish control and let go of spaces within the plantation landscape that were clearly an established part of the black community.

In January of 1916, Walter and Douglas Jackson sold another parcel of land to Charlie Norris, a ten acre tract at the opposite end of the plantation near the southern boundary. Norris paid \$25 in cash and agreed to pay two vendor's liens with eight percent interest totaling \$200 (Anderson County Deed Records Volume 142, Page 571). A year later in January of 1917 the Jackson's sold him an additional adjoining 22.4 acres for ten dollars in cash and \$326 in vendor's liens with the same interest rate (Anderson County Deed Records Volume 142, Page 570). This left Norris with a total of 33.4-acres. Included within Norris's purchase, was the previously mentioned "quarters" depicted in Figure 3.1, the probable location of the eight "slave

houses” listed on the 1860 census records. As with the Green Street School and the Jackson Quarters cemetery, this parcel of land was strongly tied to the African American community, and may partially account for why Charlie Norris wanted to buy it and also why the Jackson’s were willing to sell it. Establishing ownership over an area where African Americans, and quite possible Norris’s relatives, were enslaved may have held some redemptive and symbolic meaning not only for Norris, but the entire black community.

Eleven months after selling “the quarters” to Norris, the Jackson brother’s sold an additional five tracts of land totaling 154.5-acres to African American community members some of whom already owned property or had family in the area that owned property (United States Census Records). Two of the subject tracts were sold to other members of the Glenn family. Bruce Glenn acquired an additional nineteen acres surrounding the Green Street School that secured an insulating buffer around the original one-acre piece of land. The same year, his brother Mathew Glenn purchased 12.5 acres also located along the northern boundary of the plantation and abutting Tillis Washington’s property on the east (Anderson County Deed Records Volume 135, Page 439 and Volume 116, Page 475). The land has a perennial stream running through it that would have been useful for agriculture both on Mathew Glenn’s land, and possibly across the street on his parent’s larger 200 acre farm. While unoccupied today, descendants of the Glenn’s still grow hay on the property.

In 1916 the Jackson brothers began selling several tracts of land on the southern end of the plantation. One of the tracts was sold to Caldonia Jackson; an African American woman whom historical records indicate was single and divorced. Caldonia Jackson purchased 40-acres from the Jackson brothers in the far southeast corner of the plantation (Figure 3.1; Anderson County Deed Records Volume 116, Page 350). Her brother Ben Cummins also purchased

property from the Jacksons (Anderson County Deed Records Volume 116, Page 354). His 53 acres was located immediately north of his sister's 40 acre tract (Figure 3.5). Caldonia Jackson's ability to purchase land given society's discriminatory attitudes towards woman, divorce, and people of color is remarkable. Census records indicate her parents were from Alabama, where the white Jackson's had a plantation prior to settling in Texas, and along with her last name, this suggests a possible long-term relationship with the Jackson family.

The history of Caldonia Jackson and her brother Ben Cummins is interesting and remains shrouded in mystery. Additional research and oral history with community members may eventually shed more light on the family's history. Neither Caldonia Jackson nor Ben Cummins appear in any Texas census records prior to 1900, but in 1880 a man named Jesse Cummins was living in Precinct 5 next-door to John H. Gee, a cousin of Benjamin Jackson and one of the presumed overseers of his plantation. Cummins is described as "mulatto". The designation of mulatto possibly allowed the family access to white community members that other African American families did not have, and a familial relationship may have existed. While purely speculative, this possibly may have provided some advantage in negotiating the sale of land.

Historic and contemporary ideas concerning "race" are blurry and problematic and it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to address this important issue, but it should be clear that the terms black, African American, white, and Anglo-European speak to social and cultural constructions of race, not inherent biological differences. For an idea of the complexity of the genealogy of people in this area of Texas, I'll refer to a conversation I had with a woman in Tennessee Colony, just outside of Bethel, who self-associates as African American, but has ancestry that is African, Anglo-European, and Blackfoot Indian. For more detailed discussions that explore conceptions of "race", particularly within the context of historical archaeology, I

refer the reader to Terrance Epperson's article *Critical Race Theory and the Archaeology of African Diaspora* (Epperson 2004: 101).

In 1900, prior to purchasing land from the Jackson brothers, Caldonia Jackson and Ben Cummins were both tenants on the Benjamin Jackson plantation and lived next-door to Charles Alexander, one of the men who represented the black community in the sale of the Jackson Quarters Cemetery (United States Census Records 1900). Caldonia Jackson was a widow. Her husband Samuel John Jackson died sometime prior to 1900 and census records indicate she shared a household with her brother Ben Cummins who was single at the time. Together, it appears they developed a plan for acquiring their own land within the community.

In 1901, Ben Cummins bought his first parcel, 100 acres located near the eastern boundary of the Benjamin Jackson plantation (Figure 3.6). The land was purchased from John H. Regan for \$200 with a vendor's lien and 10% interest (Anderson County Deed Records Volume 69, Page 308). A year later, after having satisfied the lien on the 100 acres, Regan sold Cummins an additional 50 acre adjoining tract (Anderson County Deed Records Volume 74, Page 574). Over the next several years, Ben Cummins and his sister Caldonia Jackson appear to have developed a successful farming enterprise on the property and five years later purchased another 75 acre tract in the same area, this time abutting Benjamin Jackson's eastern plantation boundary (Anderson County Deed Records Volume 85, Page 231). After Benjamin Jackson passed away, and his sons began selling the land, the family purchased what may have constituted their original home place as tenants. With the final purchase of the previously mentioned 40 acres parcel by Caldonia Jackson and 53 acres by Ben Cummins in 1916, the family had secured 318 acres of farmland, a significant amount of land for a small farmer in east Texas (Figure 3.6).

Around the time that Jackson and Cummins acquired their 40 and 53 acre parcels, the Jackson brothers sold two additional parcels of land to African American community members. Ruben Alexander acquired a 73 acre tract along the southern end of the plantation located between Caldonia Jackson and Charlie Norris, and a 30 acre tract adjacent to Ben Cummins land and the Jackson Quarters Cemetery was sold to Billy Jones (Anderson County Deed Records Volume 120, Page 175 and Volume 115, Page 631). In 1920, one final 15 acre parcel, adjacent to Billy Jones and Ruben Alexander's land, was sold to Levi and Delia Terry, and then the brothers stopped selling lands on the Benjamin Jackson plantation. In general, the Jackson brothers only parted with lands that skirted the perimeter of the original plantation, parcels that were concentrated along the northern and southern boundaries and along the eastern edge near the Jackson Quarters Cemetery (Figure 3.5). The family remained in control of the central area and descendants continue to own this property today.

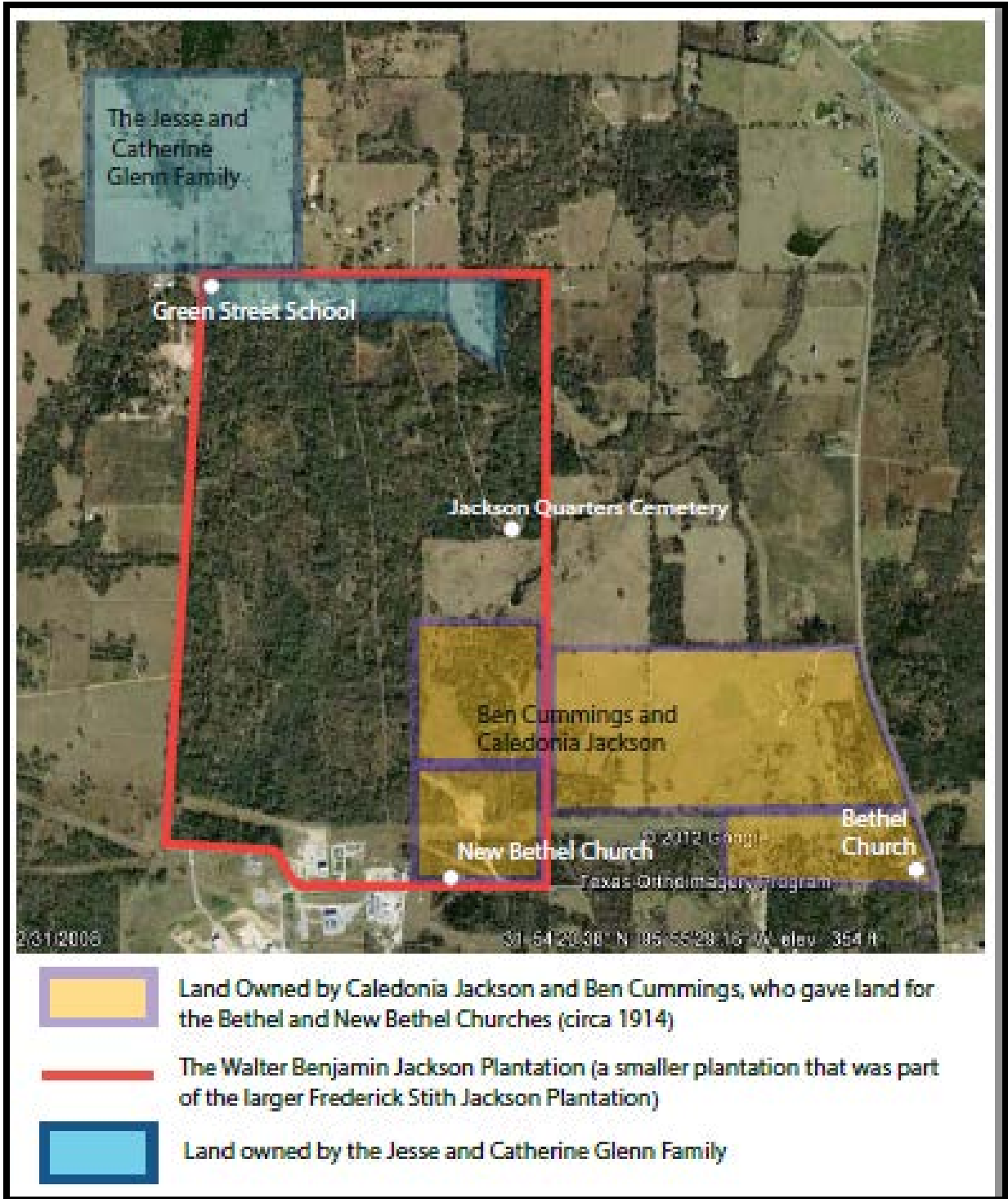


Figure 3.6: Lands owned by the Cummins and Glenn Families located on and around the former Benjamin Jackson Plantation (Drawing by S. Loftus, Anderson County Deed Records, Google Earth 2014)

Though no members of Benjamin Jackson's immediate known family lived on the lands permanently during the late-nineteenth and twentieth century, his son Walter Jackson spent a great deal of time living off and on at "the den", a centrally located three-room board and batten structure built by the family in the late-nineteenth century. The den became a sort of secondary axis-mundi during the early twentieth century after the main house burned down (Figure 3.7). Based on conversations with the Jackson family, during the periods Walter Jackson lived out at the den, much of his time was spent with the black community whom he considered friends. Journal records provide some insight on these relationships and in an entry from around 1930 Walter Jackson wrote the following,

The den house is vacant all the time out in a small pasture, to itself, not a pane of glass, not a thing in the world has been molested. Don't cuss negroes to me. If you are good to them they will be good to you unto death. I know what I am talking about. I am no better than they are. They love me and I love them, old time darkies, most were born and raised on that old plantation. If I have corn, they have corn. I never robbed a one of them nor will I ever take bread from their children's mouths. If they starve I can starve too. They do anything I ask them to do for me. No wonder I go back to Dixie now and then... (Jackson circa 1930).

The paternalist and nostalgic tone in Jackson's writing is not uncommon among white planter families and belies the realities of black experiences under slavery and during the Jim Crow era, but it also offers insight into the contradictions and complexities of racism. People's struggles, both black and white, in dealing with then contemporary ideas concerning race were complex, as they remain so today.



Figure 3.7: Photograph of the Den, a hunting and recreational camp used by the Jackson family that was built during the early-twentieth century, facing north (S.Loftus).

A series of paintings by Walter Jackson's son, Everett Gee Jackson that document the plantation landscape during the 1920s and 30s provide further insight into the complicated relationships, racial divides and social tensions that plagued rural East Texas during the Jim Crow era. Images such as those presented in Figures 3.8 - 3.10 convey with a dose of tension the lives of black sharecroppers and landowners living on the former Jackson plantation lands. Everett Jackson painted these images after returning from Mexico where he lived for several years during the post-revolutionary era, often focusing his eye on the experiences of rural farmers (Atkinson 2008:19). There is a palpable tension in the portraits, which based upon the subjects closed body language, portrays a world that Jackson was unable to enter aside from through the gaze of a painter.

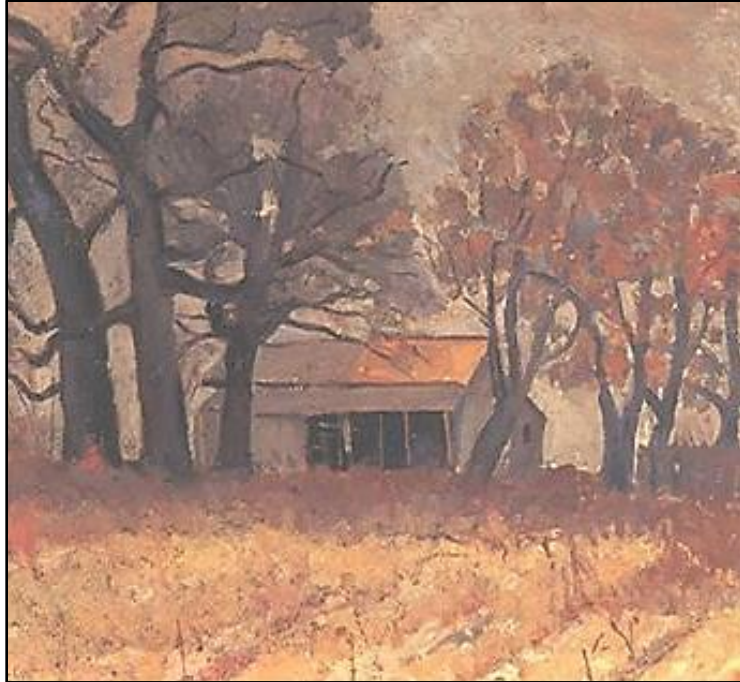


Figure 3.8: *Cora Alexander's Cabin*, by Everett Gee Jackson circa 1923. Cora Alexander was married to Charlie Norris, the owner of the parcel labeled as the Quarters on a 1950s map (Image provided by Robert Crider, a Jackson descendant).



Figure 3.9: *Plantation Nativity*, by Everett Gee Jackson, circa 1927 (Image provided by Robert Crider, a Jackson descendant) .



Figure 3.10: Unknown title, by Everett Gee Jackson, circa 1929 (Image provided by Robert Crider, a Jackson descendant).

As previously discussed, while many of the people who purchased parcels of land on the Benjamin Jackson Plantation were able to hang on to their property, others were unable to meet the liens outlined in the bills of sale. Official records document the difficulties people had making payments and meeting required interest in order to maintain their properties. An analysis of the records indicates Benjamin Jackson's sons typically sold parcels for a small amount of cash up front, though not a meager sum given the context, around \$25, to be followed by a series of annual payments at 8 percent interest. Other white landowners in the area, such as John H. Reagan, sold lands at 10 percent interest, a relatively steep payment plan. In several instances the Jackson's renegotiated the terms of the vendor's liens instead of forcing foreclosure when someone could not meet payments.

Ultimately, three families who purchased lands from the Jackson brothers on the Benjamin Jackson plantation during the early-twentieth century lost their titles; Tillis Washington, Levi and Delia Terry, and Cora and Charlie Norris all eventually forfeited their property back to the Jackson family. All of the foreclosures occurred during the early 1930s, the time of the Great Depression in the United States, which had devastating effects on small farms. In one document, Delia Terry argued that the vendor's lien along with the accrued interest exceeded what her land was actually worth, and therefore she would not pay it. The deed states that Ms. Terry, "*not being able and willing to pay of the indebtedness existing against the above described tract of land which with accrued interest is as much if not more than the land is worth*" (Anderson County Deed Records Volume 234, Page 457).

As previously mentioned, in events of foreclosure, people frequently sold their mineral rights and oil and gas rights to the Jacksons in an attempt to cover interest payments. For investors, mineral rights were essentially the only monetary value that was held in lands, but for small farmers a parcel of land provided independence, a home, and a means of subsistence. These deals were just one more way that the landscape was negotiated after the Civil War and power relations played out between white plantation owners and people who had suffered through slavery.

As previously discussed, owning land was a priority for most people in East Texas regardless of racial affiliation, but this was particularly true for African Americans who were able to gain limited autonomy through purchasing land, and some relief from persistent racism. Conversations with local residents reinforce how important land ownership was within the context of Jim Crow. A descendant of the Cummins family who I had several conversations with over the course of the research told me that his family did everything they could to hold on to

their land, “no matter how bad things got, you held on to your land” (Anonymous 2013). He said it was usually hard, if not impossible to get property back, once you let it go and he knew of many black families in the area that had suffered as a result of forfeiting ownership, and thus their independence.

3.3.6 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Once community members acquired land, a permanent place of worship, the Bethel Baptist Church, was established to house the local congregation. The church was organized in 1872, and members previously met in people’s homes and other donated spaces. Bethel is often referred to as the “Mother Church” and several other black churches in the area eventually split off from Bethel to serve adjacent communities in northwest Anderson County (Browne 2012). Church partnerships, or covenants, as they are known in parts of East Texas, allowed for congregations to pool resources and strengthen community ties. Covenants would gather on alternating Sundays and one gospel preacher would circulate to several churches (African-American Roots 2006: 123). Covenants were common across rural East Texas and fostered communication and the development of important relationships and alliances between adjacent rural communities by providing opportunities for people to come together and discuss social, economic, and political challenges.

Bethel church was built on land owned by Ben Cummins, whose history was previously discussed. The church is referred to by present day community members as “Old” Bethel Church. The lands were not part of the original Benjamin Jackson plantation, but an adjacent parcel Cummins had purchased from John H. Regan (Anderson County Deed Record Volume 69, Page 308). According to local history, M. C. Hunter was the first reverend at the new location. The Hunter family owned 300 acres to the south of the Cummins land, a parcel that

remains in the family and is currently occupied by two of M. C. Hunter's daughters and a grandchild, one of whom, Mrs. Johnson was generous enough to allow me to record her oral history (Johnson 2013). While the original wood frame structure of the Bethel Church has been covered with a brick façade, it remains standing and continues to serve the community (Figure 3.11). Two long-time congregation members in their late 80s and early 90s recalled the way the community slowly acquired brick for the façade from a local kiln in Athens as funds became available, and how people gathered on weekends to build the façade as well as a concrete wheelchair ramp that leads to the front door (Johnson 2013).



Figure 3.11: Bethel Church (S. Loftus)

A second church, New Bethel, was established down the street in 1916 (Figure 3.12). New Bethel was formed by members of the original Bethel Church who shared a difference of opinion on how the church should operate. Oral tradition offers that the new congregation originally met in an old log cabin, until they acquired two acres of land from Caldonia Jackson in 1918 located on the former Benjamin Jackson Plantation (African American Roots 2006: 424). A 1949 United States Geological Survey topographic map shown in Figure 3.13, mistakenly refers to the location of the New Bethel Church as the Old Bethel Church, and vice versa. Jesse Glenn, the prominent land owner previously discussed, was one of the original trustees of New Bethel Church and provided the lumber as well as carpentry skills for its construction. Glenn also served as the first Pastor of New Bethel (African American Roots 2006: 424). Tillis Washington, the first person to purchase a homestead on the Benjamin Jackson plantation was also an original trustee (Anderson County Deed Record Volume 120, Page 563).



Figure 3.12: New Bethel Church (S. Loftus)

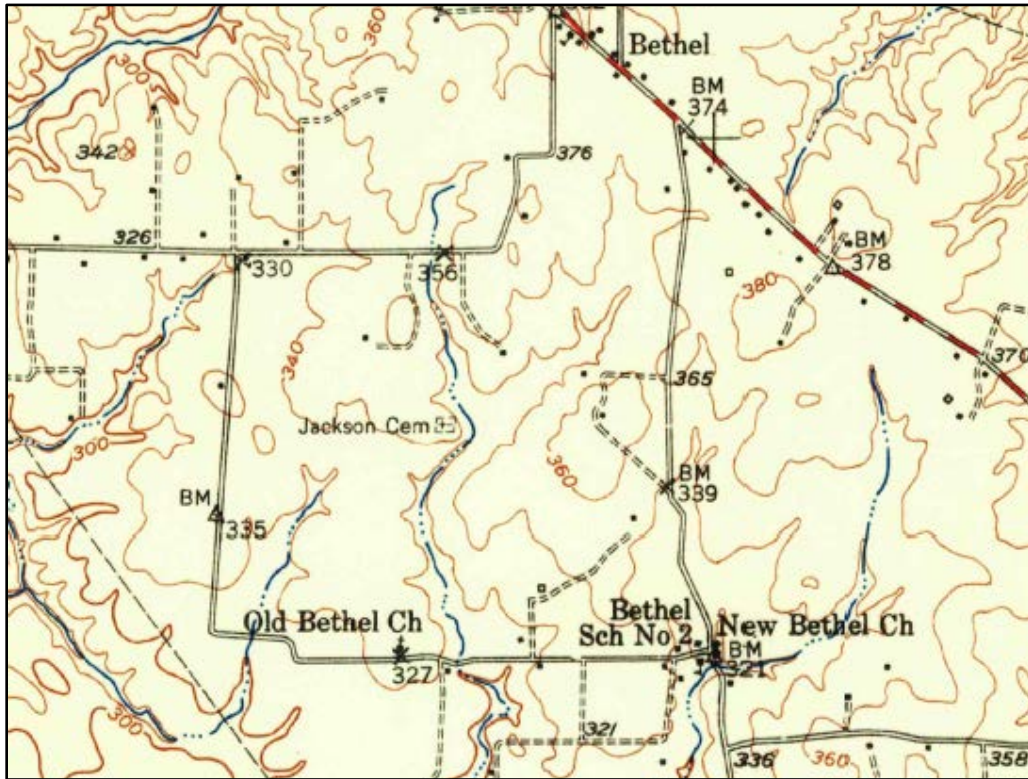


Figure 3.13: 1949 USGS map switching the locations of the New and Old Bethel Churches (United States Geological Survey, Tennessee Colony Quadrangle, 1949).

Bethel and New Bethel Church continue to operate today and community members often go to services at both, attending on alternating Sundays depending on the Pastor's schedule (Johnson 2013). The Bethel School was built next to the original Bethel Church and served as a replacement for the original Green Street School. Ben Cummins is believed to have been the first teacher and principal, receiving a teaching certificate from Austin in 1892. The school operated until integration took place here in the early 1970s and children were required to attend school in Cayuga. The Bethel school is no longer extant, but the concrete foundation remains visible, and the lunch room, a single story wood-frame structure remains standing (Figure 3.14 and 3.15). Next to the lunchroom is another structure that housed the local African American fraternal

organization, the Order of the Eastern Star, a group that included hundreds of area members during the early-twentieth century (Figure 3.16). Mrs. Johnson recalled people lined up all the way to Bethel Church to attend the meetings (Johnson 2013).



Figure 3.14: Bethel School Foundation (S. Loftus)



Figure 3.15: The Bethel School Lunch House (S. Loftus)



Figure 3.16: The Bethel Community Fraternal Meeting House (S. Loftus).

The African American community in Bethel thrived during the first half of the twentieth century through people's combined efforts to acquire land, develop infrastructure and create informal exchange economies that empowered people to survive in the environment of Jim Crow. The formation of a somewhat insulated community landscape within a context of extreme racism, enabled and provided support for successive generations to engage in opportunities both within and outside of the community. "Grass-roots institutions such as mutual benefit associations, fraternal organizations, and religious groups not only helped people with basic survival needs, but created sustained bonds of fellowship, mutual support networks, and a collectivist ethos that ultimately informed black working-class political struggle" (Kelley 1996: 38).

Conversations with locals in Bethel indicate that people survived and in some instances prospered through communal solidarity. There was little monetary wealth or exchange during the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century, however people regularly exchanged goods and services. Families often specialized in certain commodities or labor and these informal economies allowed people to survive in the face of economic challenges and segregation. People who grew up during the 1930s and 40s recalled how one family might have sweet potatoes, and another always had milk. In terms of labor, one family may have a well digger, one a syrup maker, and another a blacksmith. Medical needs were also met in this way and according to local history Caldonia Jackson was a midwife for the community (African American Roots 2006). As one woman I spoke with several times put it, "*you knew your own family's needs and you could also anticipate what other families needed*" (Anonymous 2013). This internal economy and communal self-reliance ran counter to the capitalist ideals of individual property and wage labor that were engrained in other parts of the United States, particularly in urban settings.

3.3.7 THE MECHANIZATION OF FARMING AND COMMUNAL DECLINE

The introduction of mechanization coupled with industrialization, the burgeoning of the oil and gas industry, and the rise in abundant, cheap, mass produced and readily available goods all contributed to the demise and shift away from the informal economies that bound small rural communities together. When asked why people started to leave the community, one local resident had this to say,

Well, it wasn't nothing down here at the time! We couldn't make a living. There wasn't enough farming...And then later on there was something came out they called the cotton picker. Well, we didn't have to pick cotton no more. They would pick it with their cotton picker, which they still use it. They could pick more with that stripper in a day then fifty of us could pick in a month! And so that put us out of business of pulling cotton (Johnson 2013).

This shift in labor coupled with other economic, social, and cultural milieu led to a rapid decline in small farms and ultimately ended small farming and tenancy as it existed in the late-nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century. Altered forms of farm labor endured on large scale commercial farms, but in many cases in even more tenuous forms, with much of the labor being performed by migrant workers, particularly people seeking employment from Mexico and South America. Additionally, during the post-World War II period many black men who fought overseas and experienced equality in Europe, including those from the Bethel community returned to a deeply segregated East Texas and decided there was nothing there for them, opting instead to move to urban areas and out west.

Ironically, community decline was further accelerated in many ways by integration, which brought opportunity, but also necessarily fractured the communal ties and insulation that people had built up over decades. Integration was resisted by both blacks and whites alike in this

area, and during an informal conversation, one local African American resident told me that in his opinion integration was one of the worst things that happened to the community (Anonymous 2013). While in theory and in some cases reality, integration corrected the gross fallacy of “separate but equal”, it also necessarily fissured ties that bound small rural black communities together by closing local schools, which were important centers of communal learning and action and instead centralized people into a controlled institutionalized environment that was disconnected from elder community members.

The exploration of oil, natural gas, and coal accelerated throughout the twentieth century, and what was once farm land began to be bought and sold for mineral rights alone. Today the landscape is marked by massive energy related infrastructure and pipelines as well as pumping stations that have replaced what was once mostly an agricultural landscape (Figure 3.17). Tenancy ceased on the Benjamin Jackson plantation in the 1950s. Cattle were run on the land through the 1970s, but today it is designated as an unofficial wildlife refuge and populated by dense scrub and new growth forest. A wrought iron sign still marks the entrance to the plantation, adjacent to a large oak tree that splits the main county road in half (Figure 3.18). In the 1930s Walter Jackson described the tree in his journal, writing that it had been there since at least 1863,

There is an old oak tree at the den in the middle of the road, where my father had a beef pen in 1863. I went to see the road overseer about that tree. It is three feet in diameter, a giant tree for an oak tree. I am a very poor man but I would not take a hundred dollars for that tree. I have known it since '63 (Jackson circa 1930)

Celebrated by the Jackson family as a symbol of their heritage and labeled with a wood sign as the “Jackson Oak”, this tree has a much darker significance in the narrative history of the

African American community. On three separate occasions local African Americans told me the oak was a hanging tree, and a young County Commissioner offered that he has tried to have it cut down, but is continually meet with fierce opposition from elderly African Americans for whom the tree embodies a painful history they do not want forgotten.



Figure 3.17: Substation located south of the Benjamin Jackson Plantation (S. Loftus)



Figure 3.18: Jackson Oak (S. Loftus).

3.4 THE BETHEL COMMUNITY TODAY

While many people moved away from the Bethel community and other rural communities in this area during the second half of the twentieth century, and into larger cities in Texas or out of state, others have stayed, maintaining the local churches which continue to serve as centers of community. Some people eventually returned to Bethel after years of living elsewhere. One elderly man who recently moved back with his wife told me, “*I wanted to come back home, before they brought me home*” This is a sentiment that seems to be shared by many people (Anonymous 2013). During my interview with Ms. Johnson she had the following to say about the landscape in the 1930s and peoples decisions to move back to it today,

There wasn't nobody in the community then but African Americans. Wasn't nobody around here but us. Everybody had homes 'round here, and all this, as far as you can go down there, was just houses, houses. Where this oil well is? Well, it was the Jackson houses, and all that (referring to Caldonia Jackson). But they died out, and them died out, moved to town. And it just ain't too many people, just—and what few you see now is coming back in. Just like the Nollie farm up there? It's seven houses, seven of the Nollie kids have come back on their daddy's place. One, two, three, four of us have come back on our daddy's place, because Sherry Ann up here, she came from Houston back here. I came back from Hillsboro. And Michael, he had been here a long time. And Mary, she came back from California. She lived in California at one time, and she came back home (Ms. Johnson 2013).

While the landscape has transitioned throughout the last century and many people have moved away, the sense of community, family, and place that was built over the generations remains strong among some and offers people a place of return. The lands continue to embody the diverse history of generations emerging from the shadowy legacy of slavery to find a way forward in a society that was dominated by Jim Crow. The subsequent chapters, build upon the overall context described here and in Chapter 2, to consider the household archaeology of two generations of the Davis family who lived on the Benjamin Jackson plantation through the 1950s and their engagements with material culture during this turbulent era.

CHAPTER 4:

METHODS FOR APPROACHING A COMPLEX HISTORICAL LANDSCAPE

I decided to open this chapter by backtracking to share the story of how this dissertation was developed and my first encounter with the Benjamin Jackson Plantation in the summer of 2009 before returning to graduate school. This brief discussion is followed by an overview of the general methods employed during a reconnaissance survey of the plantation lands still owned by Jackson's descendants, including pedestrian survey and limited shovel testing to identify former households. My decision to focus the archaeological excavations on the Davis and Taylor households is also discussed and the results of the original archaeological testing are presented. Additionally, there is a discussion of my interactions with the descendant community.

4.1 CHAIN OF EVENTS

I was introduced to the Jackson Plantation while researching a farm settlement in the no longer extant community of Blunt in Freestone County, directly across the Trinity River from Anderson County. Blunt, or what remained of it, was slated to be destroyed through strip mining and the company I worked for was contracted to carry out National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility testing on several archaeological sites within the former community to fulfill requirements under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). One of the sites was a tenant farm occupied by generations of the same family over a period of fifty years. When the landowner decided to sell in the 1960s, the tenant family, having no avenue of legal recourse, was forced to abandon their home, not an uncommon story in this part of East Texas. At the time of our excavations, the house had burned down, allegedly at the hands of a

disgruntled family member, and all that remained above ground was a log barn, a smoke-house, and a pile of bricks that oral history identified as the remains of a cane syrup-mill (Loftus 2008).

Mule-driven cane syrup mills were common across rural sections of the southeastern United States during the first half of the twentieth century, and syrup provided an important form of sustenance throughout the Great Depression, often appearing on the table at every meal. However, even given the ubiquity of syrup mills during the first half of the twentieth century, few remain active or in a preserved state today (Dean 2010). While searching for any available information on local syrup production in East Texas, I stumbled on a website maintained by Robert Crider. Mr. Crider is the present owner of 320-acres of the original 575-acre Benjamin Jackson Plantation and a descendent of Frederick Stith and Benjamin Walter Jackson. A photograph on his website showed an early-twentieth century syrup mill that included an historic Chattanooga #8 cane press and an associated baffled syrup oven in much better condition than the remains of the oven we found during our excavations. I emailed Mr. Crider and asked to visit the mill. He generously agreed.

Our meeting led to a conversation about the historic use of the mill by an African American community that emerged on and around the plantation after Emancipation. At this point, I was in the process of looking for archaeological sites that would be a good fit for a research program exploring tenancy and local social and economic transitions in East Texas. In particular, the development of rural black communities after the Civil War. I asked Mr. Crider if he would mind if I carried out a pedestrian survey to try to identify former household locations on the plantation and possibly used the results to develop a dissertation project. He generously agreed.

4.2 THE INITIAL PEDESTRIAN SURVEY

During the summer of 2011, I returned to the Benjamin Jackson plantation with Warren Kinney, a local archaeologist who volunteered to help with the initial reconnaissance survey. In order to expedite the process we uploaded georeferenced 1933 aerial photographs into ArcMap to identify areas with a high probability for being former household locations before going into the field. These are referred to throughout the text as high probability areas (HPAs). The HPAs were marked in places where structures appeared in 1933 and in areas where structures may have been previously located based on vegetation patterns, and the arrangement of two-track roads and cultivated fields (Figure 4.1) Additionally, a review of historic maps was completed prior to the survey and I had several conversations with Mr. Crider and members of the Jackson family about the location of former households. In total 9 HPAs were identified on the 320-acre property. Several other HPAs were identified within the boundaries of the original 575-acre former plantation, but we did not have access to these parcels.



Figure 4.1: Overview of high probability areas visited during the pedestrian survey (Google Earth 2014).

Concentrating on pre-determined HPAs is not as comprehensive as doing a 100 percent pedestrian survey, but it greatly reduced time and labor expenditures and seemed to be the most logical approach given the constraints of a limited budget and the extremely dense scrub vegetation that consumed the lands once farming ceased in the 1960s. While, cattle were run on the plantation until the mid-seventies, within the last 50 years the place has become an almost impenetrable thicket of greenbrier and hackberry.

A GPS unit, Garmin E Trex 30 was used to locate HPAs on the ground by their UTM coordinates. Once located, these areas were surveyed for any signs of occupation and shovel tests were judgmentally excavated when appropriate based on the sites surface expression to determine if artifacts were present. The table below outlines the results of the original pedestrian survey (Table 4.1). Of the nine HPAs investigated, one was associated with the plantation owning Jackson family (HPA 1), one showed no signs of any former occupation (HPA 6), one had evidence of a late-nineteenth century as yet unknown occupation (HPA 7), and two were associated with African American tenant farmers who based on deed records, had purchased the lands at some point and then forfeited the property back to the Jackson's (HPAs 2 and 8). The four other sites were known to be associated with African American tenant farmers during the early to mid-twentieth century based on information provided by the Jackson family (HPAs 3, 4, 5, and 9) (Crider, personal communication 2011, Jackson 2012).

High Probability Area (HPA)	Occupants	Structural Remains	Shovel Tests Y/or N	Survey Results
1	The Jackson Family, decedents of Benjamin Jackson	Standing Structure	No	Circa 1900 three-room wood frame house known as the "Den". Used by the Jackson family as a hunting camp and retreat. A second "Den" was built next to the historic one in 2011.
2	Cora and Charlie Norris, African American family	Two pier stones observed	Yes	Artifacts suggested a late-nineteenth to early-twentieth century occupation. This area is labeled as "The Quarter" on an earlier deed map, possibly referring to enslaved laborers quarters, or postemancipation laborers quarters that previously existed in this area. Cora and Charlie Norris purchased and lived on the land during the early-twentieth century eventually forfeiting the acreage back to the Jackson family.
3	Unknown, African American tenants	Concrete lined well	Yes	Artifacts suggested a late-nineteenth to early twentieth century occupation.
4	Unknown, African American tenants	None	Yes	Artifacts suggested an early-twentieth century occupation
5	Jim and Lillie Davis, African American family	Collapsed wood-frame structure	Yes	Artifacts suggested an early to mid-twentieth century occupation. The Davis's were tenants of the Jackson family. Jim Davis served as an overseer of the plantation lands.
6	Unknown	None	Yes	No artifacts were identified through shovel testing and no structural remains were observed, no evidence of an occupation in the area
7	Unknown	one possible pier stone	Yes	Artifacts suggested a late-nineteenth century occupation.
8	Tillis Washington, African American	None	Yes	No artifacts were identified through shovel testing and no structural remains were observed, however limited surface artifacts were present that date to the early-twentieth century and a few glass bottles from this period were identified in a near-by creek. Washington purchased the land in 1915 and eventually sold it back to the Jackson family.
9	Viola and Cleveland Taylor, African American family	None	Yes	Artifacts suggested a mid-twentieth century occupation. The Taylors were tenants of the Jackson family until 1953 when they purchased land across the street.

Table 4.1: Results of the original pedestrian survey – High Probability Areas (HPAs). Locations of the HPAs are shown in Figure 4.1.

4.3 THE DESCENDENT COMMUNITY

In addition to identifying household sites through pedestrian survey, I was also working with the archival records discussed in Chapter 3 to identify occupants and beginning the important process of reaching out to locals in an effort to engage the descendant community. Descendant communities are crucial partners for historians who explore the recent past and researchers have increasingly recognized a responsibility for considering how a particular history may impact and involve a community (McDavid and Babson 1997; Franklin 1997, 2001). Given the sensitivity of the subject of slavery and Jim Crow within the context of the rural south, I was concerned with how to best approach people. I was also very aware that without community engagement, there was no way I could complete the project with any chance of producing something meaningful.

My initial plan was to record formal oral histories with people who self-identified with the traditionally African American community and the white community, including Jackson family descendants. However, once I was on the ground and talking to people, I realized this approach was not necessarily the best option or the one the community preferred. While I ended up recording two formal histories, most of my interactions and communications were informal conversations in more comfortable settings at kitchen tables, over cups of coffee, driving around the community, in local churches, and out on site. People were invariably more comfortable in these casual settings, including myself, and were willing to broach difficult topics without the fear of an official record being produced and possible repercussions. While, I hope to continue to gather more formally recorded oral histories as I work with and develop relationships with the community, this more informal method seemed the most appropriate for this dissertation. The

following provides a brief narrative of my journey with community engagement and how I reached this decision, complete with some of the initial stumbles.

My first point of contact was with a man recommended to me by one of the Jackson descendants whose family was historically prominent landowners in the local black community. He lives in a small town across the county line and I sent him a letter introducing myself and the project. Receiving no response, I followed up with a phone call a few weeks later. The conversation revealed ignorance on my part in regards to the depth of ongoing racial anxieties and tensions in this part of East Texas, particularly among older generations who lived through segregation and Jim Crow. After several minutes of introductions and friendly small talk, I asked him about syrup production and the old syrup mill on the plantation lands. He paused, and politely told me I was going to have a hard time getting people to open up about that period in Bethel, as it was potentially “dangerous”. He declined my invitation to record an oral history, offering that he did not have a problem with my researching the history, but warned me my sources would likely be limited to public records and books.

I decided not to make any more cold calls or unwittingly put someone else on edge, so instead I tried my luck with local historical associations, people with an admitted interest in history. Through various visits to the East Texas Historical Museum, the Anderson County Historical Society, and the local library in Palestine, I got the contact information for Reggie Browne Jr. Mr. Browne is a retired Houston businessman who has been active in preserving Texas history for many years and helped compile and author a book on African American life in Anderson County (*African American Roots* 2006).

I sent him an email and he responded saying he was happy to help and invited me to an annual reunion at the New Hope Church, an historically African American church just south of

Bethel where he was speaking the following Sunday. Browne's father, Reggie Browne Sr. was the first black elected official in Anderson County in 1978, an achievement that was only possible through the activism of a team of local African Americans who sued Anderson County over gerrymandering practices that systematically depleted the black vote. The lawsuit resulted in a 1974 verdict by the Fifth U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals that ended the practice of racial gerrymandering and established single member voting districts in Anderson County (505 F. 2d 674 - Robinson v. Commissioners Court Anderson County N R).

It is also widely believed to have contributed to the death of Frank Robinson, one of the initiators of the lawsuit and the founder of the East Texas Leadership Forum (ETLF), an organization whose main objective was to help African Americans pool their resources together to seek redress through the courts for blatant civil rights violations (Robinson 1994; Epps and Abigail 2013). Mr. Robinson, who led the charges against the county on the stand, was found shot dead in his garage in Palestine in 1976. While his death was ruled a suicide by local Anderson County law enforcement, considerable evidence to the contrary has led many to believe it was a political assassination and retaliation for his work with the Leadership Forum and for black civil rights (Robinson 1994).

The following weekend, I drove up to New Hope and met with Mr. Browne. The church is a single story white wood-frame building dating to around the 1930s, set back on a patch of manicured green grass with a dirt driveway winding up to the entrance. I sat down on a wooden pew near the back and being the only stranger among people who seemed to consider each other part of an extended family, immediately felt intrusive. During his speech Mr. Browne introduced me and provided a brief overview of my research which was welcomed with warm smiles and a round of applause leaving me feeling slightly better for any interruption. This initial introduction

and informal acceptance by Mr. Browne, a respected member of the community opened up new doors. Through the contacts I made at New Hope, I subsequently visited two other historically black churches in the area, the Bethel Church and the New Bethel Church, one of which is located on the old Jackson plantation lands, and met with people from across the community.



Figure 4.2: New Hope Church (S. Loftus).

During these visits, some were understandably weary of my intentions, but many people accepted me after I explained the research I was doing and were willing to have conversations about the history of the area and their families. While, I approached the idea of recording formal oral histories, this was not something most people were interested in, particularly the elderly, and not wanting to pressure, I eventually stopped asking, instead opting to learn about the community through informal conversations where people appeared more at ease. It was through these

conversations and also conversations with white residents that I began to develop a deeper appreciation of the history of the community, their struggles and triumphs over generations, and what my first contact meant by “dangerous”.

4.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL TESTING AT TWO FORMER TENANT HOMES

Following conversations with the community and in particular with Henry Jackson, the great-great-grandson of Benjamin Jackson, who was incredibly generous and helpful and allowed me to conduct a formal interview at his home, I decided to focus the archaeological research and excavations on HPA 5 and HPA 9. As a child growing up in East Texas Mr. Jackson had spent a great deal of time on the plantation helping his father and grandfather with cattle operations in the 1950s and 60s. He remembered HPA 5 and HPA 9 were former households occupied by two generations of the Davis family. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, the Davises were an African American family, who lived and worked on the plantation lands as tenant farmers during the late-nineteenth and twentieth century. James Davis Jr. , whose parents James Sr. and Delia Davis had been enslaved on the plantation, was the overseer of the lands during the early-twentieth century after the Jackson’s moved off the property, he and his wife Lillie lived at the site we had labeled HPA 5 (Figure 4.2). One of their three daughters, Viola, and her husband Cleveland Taylor lived and worked nearby at HPA 9.

I saw potential in these generational household sites to explore material consumption over several decades within a single family. A family that had suffered through slavery and emerged to face the deep challenges of Jim Crow; hopefully providing an opportunity to expand documentation and understanding of people’s daily lives during this period of dramatic social

and economic change. I began by carrying out further shovel testing at the two former household locations in order to evaluate the archaeological integrity and research potential of the sites.



Figure 4.3: The Davis site (HPA 5) during the initial survey before vegetation was cleared. Volunteer Warren Kinney is in the foreground (S. Loftus).

4.4 METHODS

Both sites were heavily overgrown and I began by clearing vegetation with the help of volunteers during the spring of 2012. Using a Sokkia Total Station a permanent datum (1000N/1000E, Elevation 100) was established at each site in an area that would not be disturbed during the investigation (Figure 4.3). A five-meter grid was then staked out across each site based on the surface artifact expressions and the natural topography.

In order to explore the nature of the subsurface deposits and identify areas that would potentially benefit from further archaeological research, a program of controlled shovel testing

was carried out at each site. While opinions on shovel testing vary and some archaeologists find this method to be overly intrusive and potentially destructive, I believe this was an appropriate strategy and provided an important early data set that was key for determining where to place larger excavation units. Shovel tests were excavated along the established 5 meter grids in 10 centimeter controlled artificial levels and screened through ¼ inch mesh. Each shovel test measured 50 x 50 cm wide. The stake from the grid, which also served as a vertical control datum, was always placed in the SE corner of the shovel test unless a tree or other obstacle made it necessary to place it in the SW corner. All shovel tests were labeled according to their grid location, for example 990N/1005E. Profiles were recorded for each shovel test and all artifacts were bagged by 10 cm levels and processed and catalogued at a lab in Austin, Texas.

Artifacts encountered during excavations at both sites were collected for analysis and will eventually be permanently curated at the Texas Archaeological Research Laboratory (TARL) at the University of Texas in Austin, Texas following completion of the project. This nationally recognized perpetual curation facility houses the largest number of archaeological collections in the State of Texas. In addition to the artifact collections, all of the original paperwork will also be housed there for the long-term. As such, the curation standards and procedures for labeling and storage preparation outlined by TARL were followed. The standards are available for review at <http://www.utexas.edu/research/tarl/curation/default.php>.



Figure 4.4: Sarah Loftus using the Total Station to establish a grid at the Davis Household (J. Shipp).

4.5 TESTING RESULTS

Shovel testing led to the identification of midden deposits at both sites and also provided significant information related to yard use, structure locations, and general site orientation. Additionally, important information was obtained related to natural and cultural post-occupational disturbances. The following provides a summary of the initial testing at each site.

4.5.1 JIM AND LILLI DAVIS'S HOUSE (SITE 41AN189)

The Davis home is located centrally within the plantation in a heavily forested area characterized by large oaks trees and thick secondary growth that has developed in the last 70 years since its abandonment (Figure 4.4). The site is located approximately 100 meters northeast of a stock pen and large cattle pond that are no longer functioning. Based on 1933 aerial photographs this area appears to have been a central hub at one time, and several two-track roads

meet just south of the Davis site. “The den”, a hunting camp that served as the Jackson home when the family visited after the original plantation house burned down in the 1870s, is located approximately 250 meters to the southwest of the site.



Figure 4.5: Overview of the Davis site facing southwest after most of the vegetation was cleared, volunteer in the background (S. Loftus).

4.5.1.1 SHOVEL TESTS

A five-meter grid was established at the Davis site measuring 40 meters north-south x 25 meters east-west. The grid was arranged based on the surface expression of the site, which includes a heavily deteriorated collapsed wood-frame structure and surface artifacts. The structure was converted to a hay-barn in the 1950s and a corrugated sheet metal addition was added off of the south wall (Jackson 2011). This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. While only a few artifacts were identified on the surface, the site appears to be concentrated within a space that is bound on the south by an old fence line, along the north by a previously cultivated field, to the east by a rising slope, and to the west by a low lying wetland area. A total of 35 shovel tests were excavated during the testing phase. Thirty-one of the shovel tests were positive

and contained cultural material in various quantities; 4 were negative (Figure 4.5). A total of 548 artifacts were recovered and included a variety of glass, ceramic, metal, and other materials dating to the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century (Table 4.2). The artifacts are typical of those commonly associated with a domestic occupation and appear to align with the history provided by Henry Jackson.

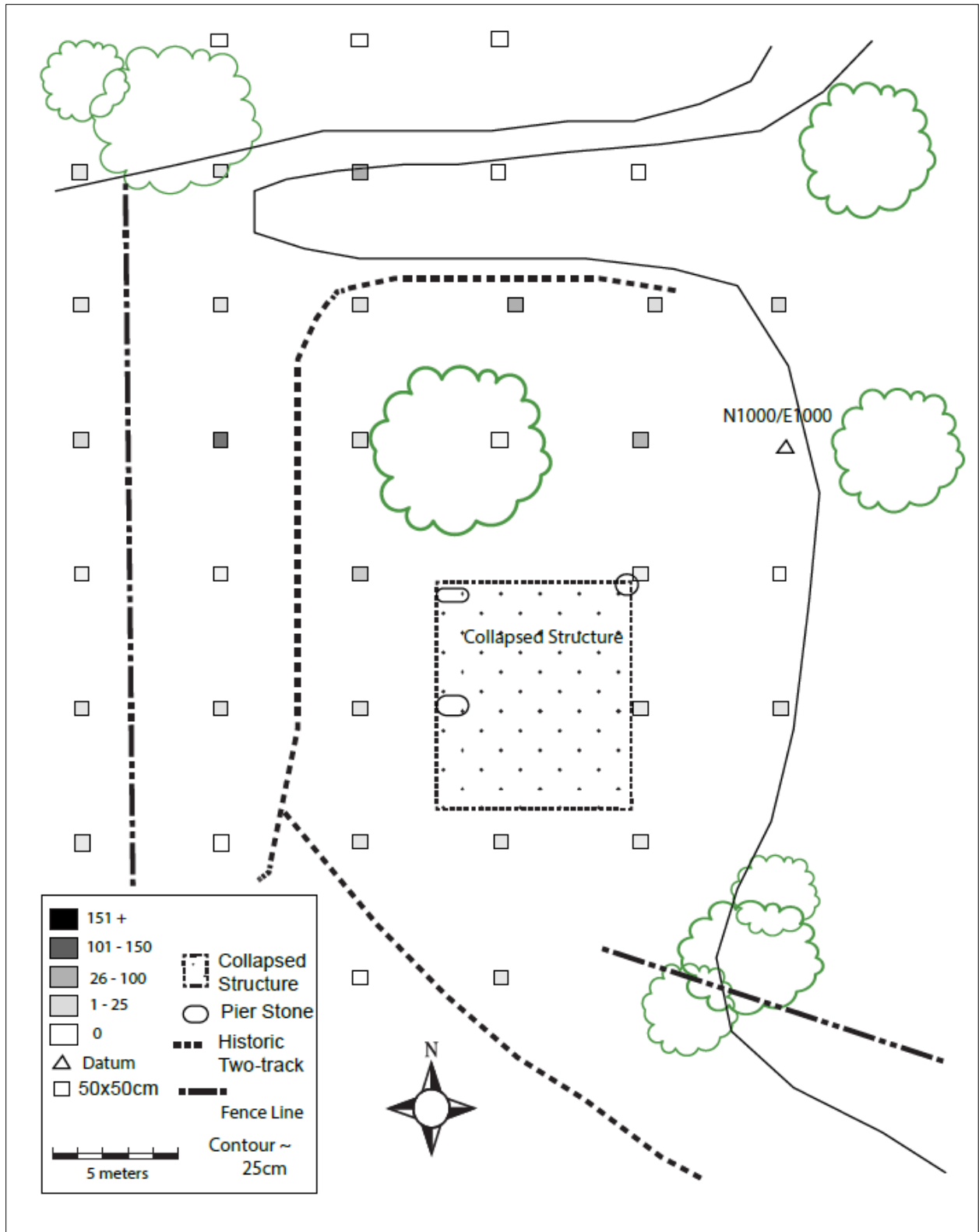


Figure 4.6: Site map of shovel testing at the Davis household 41AN189 (S. Loftus).

Table 4.2: General Artifact Categories from Shovel Tests at site 41AN189

Shovel Test	Ceramic	Glass	Ferrous Metal	Non-Ferrous Metal	Fauna	Botanical	Plastic	Other	Total Count
N1015/E980									0
N1015/E985									0
N1015/E990									0
N1010/E975		10							10
N1010/E980		3							3
N1010/E985		2	66						68
N1010/E990									0
N1010/E995									0
N1005/E975		4	4						8
N1005/E980		4	3						7
N1005/E985	1	7							8
N1005/E990	2	21	19	1					43
N1005/E995	1	10	1						12
N1005/E1000		16							16
N1000/E975		6	28						34
N1000/E980	2	36	68	1	1	7			115
N1000/E985		23	8						31
N1000/E990		3	2						5
N1000/E995		32	13						45
N995/E975		1	8						9
N995/E980	3	1	12		2	4			16
N995/E985	6	12	18			3			36
N995/E990	Not Dug								
N995/E995		9				1			9
N995/E1000	Not Dug								0
N990/E975	1		4						5
N990/E980		3	15			4			22
N990/E985			8						8
N990/E995	7	12	4			1			24
N990/E1000			2						2
N985/E975			2						2
N985/E980									0
N985/E985		2	1			1			4
N985/E990		1	2						3
N985/E995			1						1
N980/E985									0
N980/E990	1		1						2

4.5.1.2 SOILS

The soils at the site are part of the Lilbert series and consist of very deep, well-drained loamy fine sands with 0 – 3 % slopes. These fine grained soils are known for being very friable, non-plastic, and highly acidic and this may in part be responsible for the lack of identifiable subsurface features (NRCS 2011). Based on the shovel tests, the artifacts appear to have traveled vertically in many cases and no apparent micro-stratigraphy was observed. In some instances fragments from the same broken glass container or ceramic vessel were recovered at depths that differed up to 15 cm. This appears to be in large part due to bioturbation and heavy rodent disturbance, which is rampant in the loamy fine sands that characterize the site.

4.5.1.3 ARTIFACT DENSITY

The majority of the artifacts recovered during the initial testing were concentrated between 5 and 9 meters north of the collapsed structure in shovel tests N1005/E990 and N1000/E995 and approximately 8 meters to the west of the structure in shovel test N1000/E980 (Figure 4.5). Aside from having high artifact yields, the artifacts were diverse, and charcoal was mixed within the soil matrix. Additionally, some of the recovered materials from these tests appeared to have been thermally altered. This evidence suggested that the area may have been the location of a midden, a place where refuse was collected and burned, a common practice in rural parts of East Texas both historically and today.

Based on the densities, little artifact generating activity appears to have taken place to the south or to the east of the structure. Historical aerial photographs along with black and white photos taken by the Jackson family indicate that there was a cultivated field immediately east of the Davis home during the 1930s. This area also quickly rises up, and the structure is sitting on slightly lower ground than the old agricultural fields. The slight shift in topography and the use of the land for farming may explain why few artifacts are present in this area. To the south, a

barbed-wire fence cuts across the site and an old two-track road that is no longer in use, but still apparent, parallels the fence-line.

4.5.2 VIOLA AND CLEVELAND TAYLOR'S HOUSE (SITE 41AN188)

The Taylor home is located approximately 600 meters west of the Davis site along the western edge of the former plantation on a small rise south of an intermittent stream. The site is immediately adjacent to County Road 2608 which runs north-south and historically formed the western boundary of the plantation (Figure 4.6). The community syrup-mill that originally led me to investigate the settlement, sits approximately 80 meters down-slope to the north of the site, across from a fresh water spring that was used as a source for drinking water (Jackson circa 1930; Crider 2011). A two-track road once connected the Taylor home with the Davis home during the early-twentieth century. The deep incision is still visible for part of the way, but the area is now completely overgrown, saddled by a few large oak trees that remain standing among recent green briar and new growth forest (Tobin 1933).

4.5.2.1 SHOVEL TESTS

Based on the topography and the surface expression of the site a 5 meter grid, similar to the one at the Davis site, was established measuring 25 meters north-south by 35 meters east-west. While clearing the vegetation, 3 possible pier stones were identified and the grid was centered on these and further extended to capture the natural rise the structure appears to have been situated on. The site is bound on the west by County Road 2608, to the north by the old two-track leading to the Davis home, to the east by a significant downward slope, and to the south by a rise in the topography that levels out to an area that was previously cultivated fields (Tobin 1933).



Figure 4.7: Overview of the Taylor Site after the majority of the vegetation was cleared, facing west (S. Loftus).

A total of 32 shovel tests were excavated during the testing phase. Twenty-eight of the shovel tests were positive and contained cultural material in various quantities, 4 were negative. Midden deposits (Feature 1) and the remains of a possible collapsed chimney (Feature 2) were identified. A total of 1551 artifacts were recovered and included a variety of glass, ceramic, metal, and other materials dating to the early to mid-twentieth century (Table 4.3). The artifacts are typical of a domestic occupation for the period and the significant increase in quantity compared to the Davis site, which totaled 548, is likely a reflection of various factors including increased mass consumption following World War II that are explored in later Chapters.

Table 4.3: General Artifact Categories from Shovel Tests at site 41AN188

Shovel Test	Ceramic	Glass	Ferrous Metal	Non-Ferrous Metal	Fauna	Botanical	Plastic	Other	Artifact Total Count
N1000/E1005									0
N1000/E1010	1	11	5					1	18
N1000/E1015		7		1				8	16
N1000/E1020		3					2		5
N1000/E1025	1	6	5						12
N1000/E1030	5	34	134						173
N1005/E1000		2	5						7
N1005/E1005		4	5						9
N1005/E1010		17	27	1				2	47
N1005/E1015		1	3				1	16	21
N1005/E1020	1	18	6						25
N1005/E1025			7						7
N1005/E1030	4	119	49	2	1		1		175
N1010/E1000									0
N1010/E1005									0
N1010/E1010	1	6	5				1	1	14
N1010/E1015	1	22	5					11	239
N1010/E1020	1	9	21	5			7	3	36
N1010/E1025	20	90	76	1	1			1	189
N1010/E1030	5	92	28	2					127
N1015/E1000	1	8	1						10
N1015/E1005	not dug								
N1015/E1010		34	31	1	2			3	71
N1015/E1015	1	20	12		2				35
N1015/E1020									
N1015/E1025	4	94	29	1				1	128
N1020/E1000	1	8	13	1					23
N1020/E1005									0
N1020/E1010	2	85	17			2		3	104
N1020/E1015									0
N1020/E1020		5	1	1					7
N1020/E1025		12	1						13
N1020/E1030	not dug								

4.5.2.2 SOILS

The soils at the Taylor site are the same Lilbert series found at the Davis site consisting of very deep, well-drained loamy fine sands known for being friable, non-plastic, and highly acidic. As with the Davis site this may in part be responsible for the lack of many identifiable subsurface features (NRCS 2011). No clear micro-stratigraphy was observed during the testing and there is clear evidence of bioturbation and rodent disturbance. Artifacts have traveled vertically and horizontally as a result of these processes.

4.5.2.3 ARTIFACT DENSITY

Based on the shovel tests, the highest artifact yields are along the eastern boundary of the site down-slope from the house location in an area with concentrated midden deposits (N1010/E1025, N1015/E1025, N1000/E1030, N1005/E1030, N1015/E1030). The materials recovered in this area are a mix of broken glass, ceramic sherds, and various metal artifacts dating primarily to the mid-twentieth century, circa 1930 – 1950, which corresponds with census data and oral history for the Taylor family. Soil profiles of the shovel tests in this area revealed a dark greyish brown sandy loam that included broken down organic materials and charcoal. Some of the artifacts exhibited evidence of thermal alteration. The refuse was likely pitched down-slope, and as with the midden identified at the Davis site, burned in order to maintain and reduce the amount of household waste that accumulated.

Further east of the slope, there is a relatively dense accumulation of surficial deposits that may have resulted from post-occupational dumping (Figure 4.5). Artifacts observed in this area exhibited little evidence of exposure to heat and no charcoal was identified that would suggest an established midden was maintained over time. Due to the location of the deposits along an old

two-track road that intersects with County Road 2608, it is possible the materials are associated with a dumping episode that occurred after the home was abandoned. Because of the potential that the materials in this area are post-occupational, no further work was carried out in this section of the site during the final excavations. Instead, the decision was made to concentrate additional excavations closer to the structural remains, where charcoal, and the heavily broken up nature of the artifacts suggest a midden was maintained throughout the household occupation. The information gathered during the initial testing at both sites revealed significant artifact yields and the presence of established middens at the households. This data was used to develop a program of further excavation that is discussed in the following chapters.

4.6 RETURNING TO THE DESCENDENT COMMUNITY

Before moving forward with the results of the excavations, I'd like to return once more to the descendant community and consider the weight and importance of what my first point of contact meant when he said it is "dangerous" to talk about the past. These were not casual words and while I won't pretend to know his experiences, the possible meaning and heartbreak of his sentiments became most visible to me one grey fall morning over cups of coffee at a local couples kitchen table. They had been kind enough to invite me over to meet a friend of theirs and I was happy to have a reason not to shovel dirt for a couple hours. The man's family had been instrumental in establishing the Bethel Church and he knew a great deal of community history. He had moved to Dallas for the later part of his life, but after his wife's death, had retired and moved back to Bethel. After this initial meeting he would become a friend and frequent visitor to the site, always offering a story or a joke, usually a good-hearted one at my expense, because he

could think of better things I might do with my time besides digging holes and sifting old garbage. He also offered a wealth of information and insight on the community.

Up to this point, most of the conversations I had with people centered on the history of the community; churches, cemeteries, farming, landowners, old stores, schools, and fraternal organizations. While people's experiences with racism, poverty, and violence often unavoidably trickled in to conversations, more often these issues and tensions lurked quietly in the background. This morning over coffee was different though; my friends spoke openly about the tragedy of racial violence in the area and personal experiences with a devastating legacy of oppression. These were stories of the recent past and in some cases the present. Most were of exclusion and antagonism, both subtle and overt, and explained some of the heaviness that hangs around parts of Anderson County.

That racism and de facto segregation continue to plague the United States, particularly the rural southern United States, is not something new. This is a well-established fact, but one whose depths are difficult to comprehend when you are not immediately affected. While news stories expound on police brutality, inflated incarceration and arrest rates for people of color, as well as, unequal access to education, housing, health care, and employment, if you are not immediately confronted with these realities, it is easy to ignore and remain ignorant of racism's pervasiveness in America. The depths of our violent struggles were recently brought to the forefront following the murder of nine people at a historic African American Church in Charleston, South Carolina.

A few weeks after coffee, I was working alone on the old plantation and a white man who lived on several acres down the street pulled over on the side of the road. We began a mostly genial conversation that quickly took an unfortunate turn when he asked about my research and I

began talking about the black community that developed in the area after the Civil War. In response, he proclaimed the Klu Klux Klan controlled the entire Bethel area from Tennessee Colony to the Trinity River. Seeing my discomfort, he lifted his t-shirt, exposing a prominent KKK tattoo backed by a large Confederate flag spanning the width of his stomach. After a few additional disturbing remarks he drove off.

I tell this story not to be dramatic, but to acknowledge the powerful racism that continues to exist here among certain sectors of society and the context of the research. Things are changing in positive ways in East Texas and across the United States. People are beginning to have open conversations about these issues across perceived racial boundaries and working together to move beyond them, but it is important to recognize that while progress has been made, much remains to be overcome and the history explored in this dissertation is ongoing and still very much shapes the present.

CHAPTER 5:

AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF TENANT FARMERS IN EAST TEXAS – FINDINGS FROM THE EXCAVATIONS

Archaeology has the potential to reveal the subtle details of people's daily lives that are not recorded or preferred in written documents and provides a means to consider aspects of history that may otherwise be omitted from our larger collective understanding of the past. The following chapter presents the results of the final excavations at the Davis and Taylor households and builds upon the historical context that was developed in Chapters 2 and 3 to begin to consider people's daily material lives on the former Benjamin Jackson Plantation during the turbulent Jim Crow era. This is part of an overall goal to explore this transitional period in American history and people's struggles on a local material scale within the setting of a historic rural black community.

5.1 THE FINAL EXCAVATIONS

The excavations targeted concentrations of household refuse (middens) that were initially identified through the excavation of 50 x 50 meter units described in the previous chapter. Excavations adhered to the same general methods and practices at both sites. While efforts were made to identify micro-stratigraphy, the nature of the soils, which are loose fine sandy loams, as well as the presence of heavy bioturbation made this impossible. Instead of working with stratigraphic layers, all 1 x 1 meter units were excavated in controlled 10 cm levels using established datum points for controlling and measuring depth. Excavation proceeded through careful uniform scrapping using a hand trowel, brush or a flat head shovel. When anomalies or

features were encountered mid-level, excavation was halted and features were excavated as appropriate, mapped, and recorded.

All units were photographed and mapped at the base of each level and standard forms were filled out characterizing the soils, artifacts, and any features that were encountered. When more control was necessary, levels were excavated in 5 centimeter increments. Units were expanded based on the nature of the deposits, and the quantity of the artifacts recovered. At least 25% of each midden was collected and the excavations were designed to capture a profile in order to explore the depositional nature of the deposits, how they formed over time, and their relationship to the rest of the site.

In addition to the midden excavations, a few units were placed around the former households. The no longer extant structures at both sites were originally elevated pier and beam wood-frame structures. These units were excavated to sample these areas in comparison to the yard and midden deposits. Previous excavations have demonstrated that artifacts often collect in areas underneath pier and beam houses as a result of the common practice of yard sweeping, to keep trash from accumulating in open space. Future excavations within these areas could reveal significant information about the structures at the site and the organization of household space, but for the purposes of this dissertation efforts were focused on the middens.

Units were also strategically placed across yard areas at each household to differentiate the midden deposits from other everyday depositional events. In total fourteen 1x1 meter units were excavated at the Davis household and fifteen 1x1 meter units were excavated at the Taylor household (Figure 5.1 and 5.2). As during the testing phase, all of the artifacts were collected and labeled according to levels and then processed and catalogued at a lab in Austin, Texas. The

following provides an overview of the history of each site, the materials that were found, and a general characterization of the midden deposits and other features.

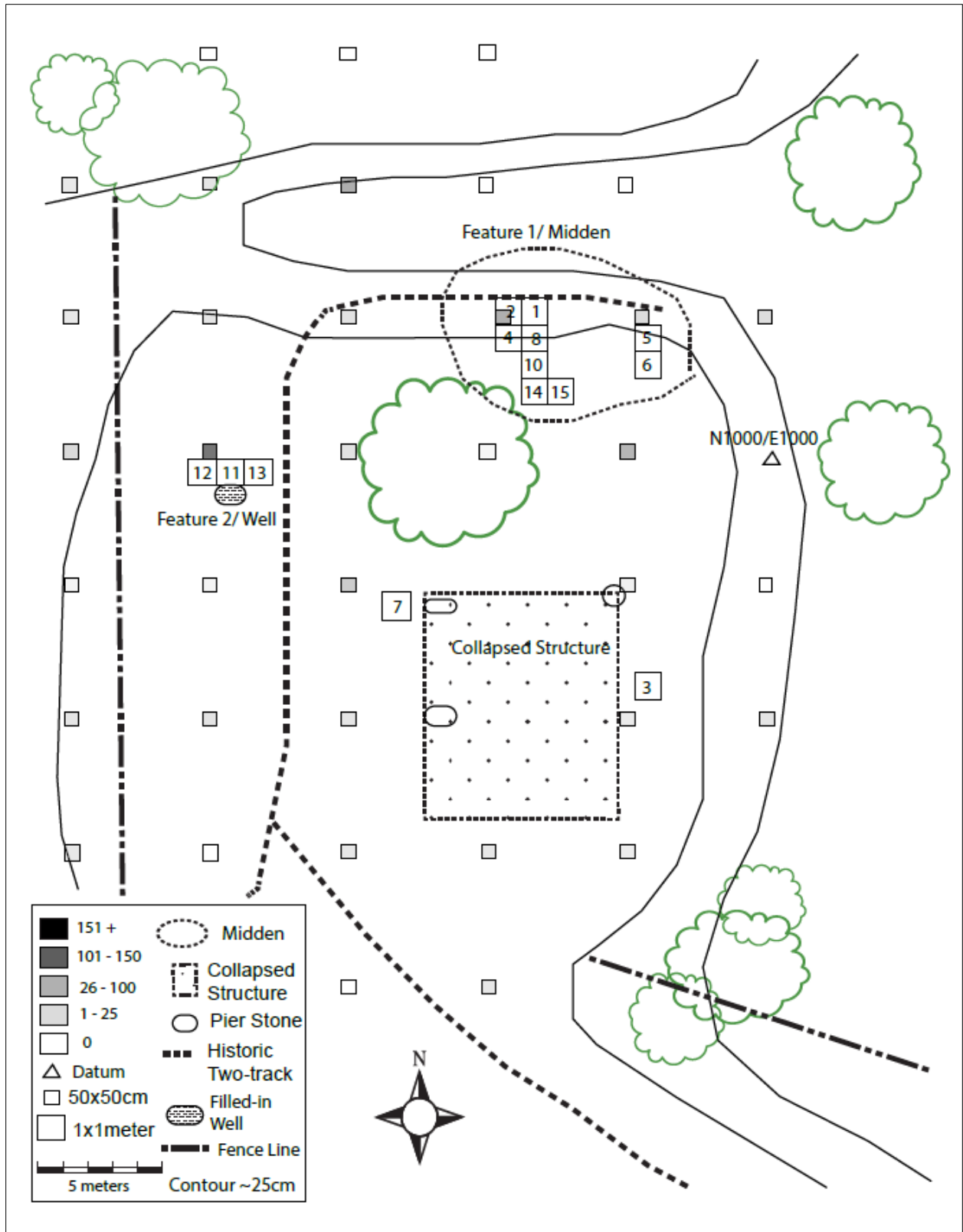


Figure 5.1: Site map of the Davis household (Site 41AN189) (S.Loftus)

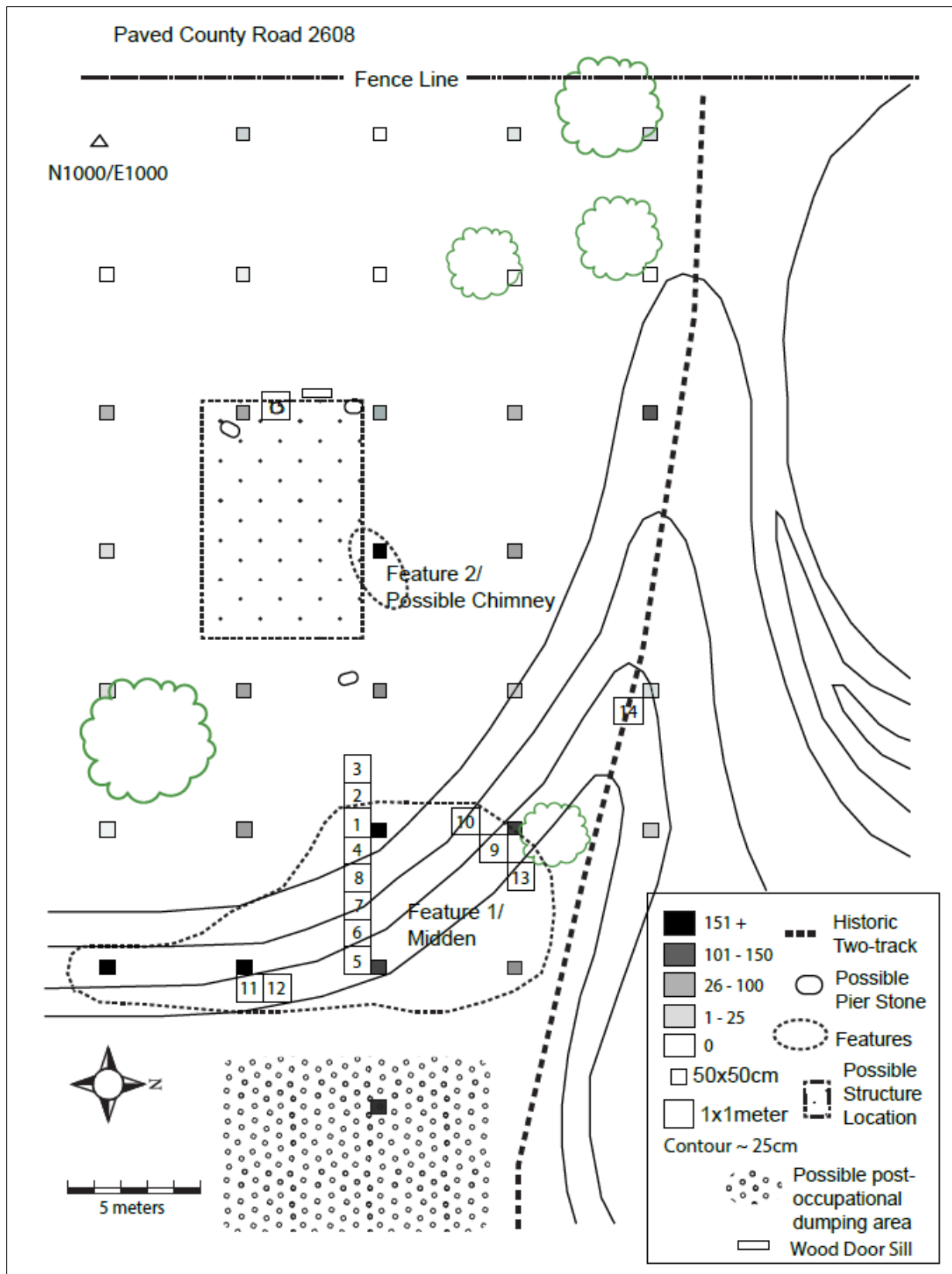


Figure 5.2: Site map of the Taylor household (Site 41AN188) (S. Loftus)

5.2 THE JAMES AND LILLIE DAVIS JR. HOME (SITE 41AN189)

The collapsed wood-frame domestic structure at the Davis site underwent modifications during the 1950s when it was transformed for use as a hay barn, and a sheet-metal addition was placed along the south end. Since that time, the structure has collapsed and is currently in a heavily deteriorated condition. Two hematite pier-stones comprised of local rock, are still visible, as are the remains of the collapsed eastern wall. Based on the structural remains the home appears to have measured approximately 8 meters (26 feet) north-south x 7 meters east-west (23 feet). A 1930s photograph of the Davis's standing in front of their home that was shared by the Jackson family after the excavations had taken place indicates that the structure was originally a single-story wood-frame dwelling with a front gabled roof and porch extending from the south side (Figures 5.3 – 5.5).

Due to the structure's pier and beam construction and collapsed state, it was difficult to determine the interior layout because there are no visible dividing wall residues, and the excavations concentrated on midden deposits, as opposed to exploring the structure itself. Based on the photograph it appears likely that there were at least two rooms, if not more internal divisions. This simple style of wood-frame dwelling mirrors many rural tenant and small farm owning houses in East Texas and across the southeastern United States, and is typical for the time period. Board and batten, or commonly just board structures replaced the log construction that dominated this area from 1840 -1880 during the initial period of American settlement in this region and remained the prominent construction style through the 1930s (Jordan 1978: 101).

There appears to have been at least one window along the western façade and possibly a second entrance and side porch along this same side. Evidence for a porch was uncovered in Unit 7, which revealed heavily deteriorated cut wood boards running parallel in an east-west

direction, measuring 1 x 2 inches (Figure 5.6). These boards were originally believed to be part of a collapsed wall, but the position of the nails, which were flush and pointed down, suggests a porch. The top of a Bristol-glazed stoneware butter-churn was also found in this area, and may have been left hanging on one of the collapsed walls and eventually buried and forgotten. Photographs taken by Walker Evans for James Agee's seminal 1939 book, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, on the state of rural southern tenant farmers, suggests that when not in use, butter churn lids were commonly hung on a nail within the home, likely as a form of safe keeping (Agee and Evans 1939; Figure 5.7). The churn itself, a valuable and sizable vessel could then be used for additional household activities.

Based on the presence of a stove-pipe exit in the upper northeast corner of the eastern wall, it appears that a wood-stove was located within this corner of the structure. The placement of an additional side-door and porch along the western-side of the home across from the wood-stove would have increased airflow while using the stove during brutally hot East Texas summers (Figure 5.5). No evidence of a privy was found during the excavations. Oral history and previous archaeological research in the region indicates that privies were often ephemeral features, or nonexistent on many small farms and tenant households (Moir et al. 1987:135). I encountered a similar situation while excavating a tenant farm occupied by white residents in Freestone County. Oral history revealed no designated privy was in use at the site (Loftus 2008).



Figure 5.3: James and Lillie Davis in front of their home (Site 41AN188) circa 1930 with their well and torpedo bucket (long narrow bucket used to retrieve water) (Courtesy of Bob Crider and the Jackson family)



Figure 5.4: Overview of collapsed structure at the Davis Site (41AN188), facing east. The shovel handle is in the location of the Feature 2, the well (S. Loftus).



Figure 5.5: Overview close-up of the collapsed structure at the Davis Site (41AN188), facing east. The visible pier stones are in circled red and the stove pipe exit is circled in yellow (S. Loftus).

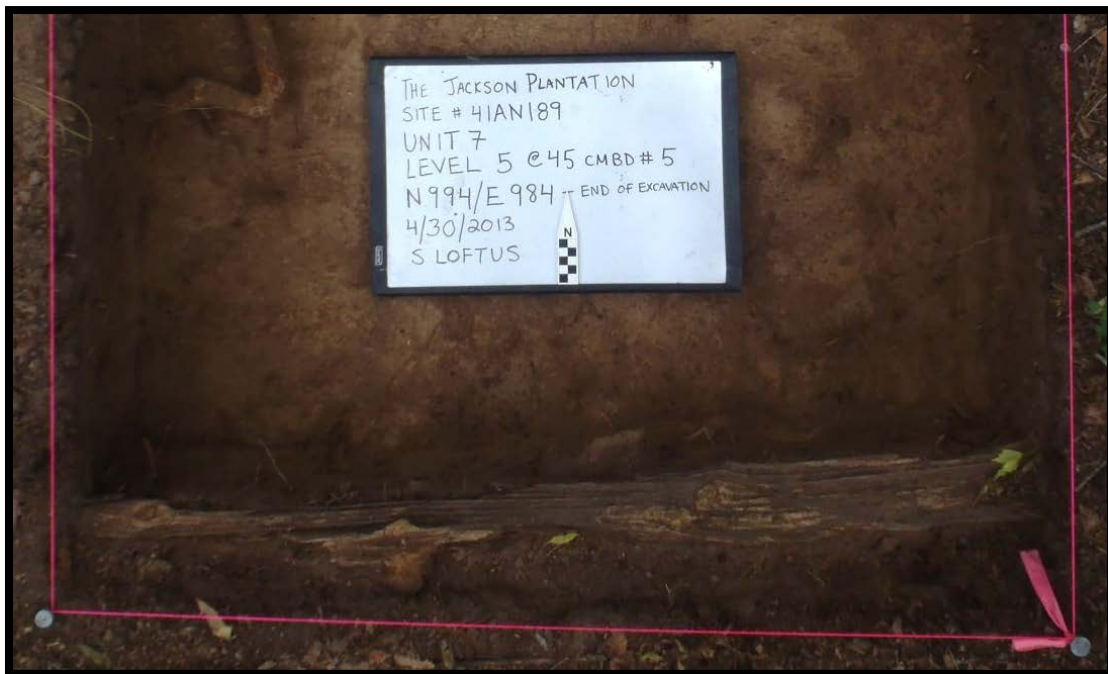


Figure 5.6: Possible evidence of a side-porch along the western façade, Unit 7, facing south (S. Loftus).



Figure 5.7: The walls of two tenant farmer households in Alabama with a butter churn lid hanging on the wall, photographed by Walker Evans in 1936 (Reproduced from Agee and Evans 1939)

5.2.1 HISTORY OF THE DAVIS FAMILY

As discussed in the previous chapters, the Davis Family has a long history with the Jackson Plantation and with the Jackson family. Delia Davis and her husband James Davis arrived in Anderson County as enslaved laborers in the 1850s. Based on limited census and archival records it appears that they were both born in Alabama during the mid-nineteenth century - James Davis was born around 1845 and Delia Davis a few years later around 1849. By the time emancipation was declared, both of them were living as enslaved laborers on the Benjamin Jackson Plantation and they remained in this part of Anderson County following the Civil War. While the Davises moved off of the plantation sometime after 1865, it appears that they continued to have a relationship with the Jacksons. Walter Jackson remembered visiting

them in their home during the early part of the twentieth century, and in the following quote, refers to James and Delia as Aunt and Uncle, suggesting a close relationship.

Uncle Jim and Aunt Delia use to live close to Ned and Nancy a little up the river from them. But they are gone now. I went to see them on Eel River a long time ago. When I left them, they were following me out the gate, and all of us weeping. They belonged to my mother in Alabama (Jackson circa 1930).

Delia and James's son, James Davis Jr. and his wife Lillie Davis, who are pictured above, occupied the excavated farmstead from circa 1900 to 1942.

James Davis Jr. was born around 1868 and lived with his parents, two sisters, and a brother. He grew up working with his family on their rented farm and attended one of the local black schools, most likely the no longer extant Green Street School, located in the northwestern corner of the plantation. Census records indicate that he learned how to read and write to some extent, as did Lillie. A deed record indicates that his parents, Delia and James were eventually able to purchase a small piece of property, but available census records list the family as renters. This may be an error by the census taker, or potentially suggests they continued to rent a house after purchasing property, possibly using the land for farming purposes (Anderson County Deed Records, Volume 15, Page 63).

James Davis Jr. was married to Lillie Jemison in October of 1887 (Anderson County Marriage Records). Lillie's parents, Ben and Clarisa Jemison lived in an adjacent precinct in northwest Anderson County where they also rented a farm. The last name Jemison suggests that Lillie's father and possibly her mother were previously enslaved on the nearby Jemison Plantation, another large cotton plantation located southeast of the Benjamin Jackson Plantation. Lillie was slightly younger than James and was sixteen at the time of their marriage.

The couple first appears in census records as sharing a household in 1900 (most of the 1890 census records for the state of Texas were destroyed by a fire). At this time they were living in Precinct 5 where the Benjamin Jackson Plantation is located. The 1900 census does not provide conclusive confirmation that the Davis's were living on the former plantation, but based on the neighbors who are listed, it appears likely. By 1910, available oral history and property records indicate the Davises were definitely living on the plantation lands. The time period of the artifacts collected at the Davis household correlate with census records, the 1930s memoir writings of Walter Jackson, and conversations with Henry Jackson, who worked on the plantation as a child in the 1950s, and it is believed that the Davises were the only occupants of this excavated household. Often tenant sites are occupied by multiple families and occupancy shifts frequently; however, as was discussed in Chapter 3, it appears that many tenants in the Bethel community stayed on their lands for generations and often eventually purchased property. Additionally, the Davises appear to have had a close working relationship with the Jackson's which may also have encouraged them to remain on the plantation lands.

At this point, the Davises had four daughters, Rebeka, Viola, Lusilia, and Bula; the oldest one, Rebeka, being 18. The youngest daughter, Bula was two-years-old. James's mother Delia had passed away by this time, and his father James Davis Sr. was living in the household with them. Lillie and James Davis both appear to have worked for the Jackson family while living on the plantation and aside from farming; James Davis Jr. served as a general overseer and was responsible supervising the farming and for tending to the cattle that were run on the lands by the Jacksons in their absence (Jackson circa 1930 and Jackson 2012).

None of the Jacksons lived permanently on the plantation during the twentieth century. However, they often visited for recreational purposes and to oversee general maintenance of the

lands. Journal records indicate that Lillie and Jim Davis sometimes prepared meals for the Jackson's when they visited, and performed other household tasks during their stay (Jackson circa 1930). Walter Jackson's journal records reference Jim and Lillie and the lines below were taken from his writing,

We hated to leave the sweet gum tree and the quiet at the den...where Jim and Lilly [Davis] slip up on us in the dark to cook for us another corn cake and bring us more milk...It's hard and smooth sand around the den. You can go barefooted all around the house if Jim has swept the yard clean of sticks and things (Jackson circa 1930).

Old photos from the 1920s and 30s show the couple with members of the Jackson family and other unidentified community members (Figures 5.8 and 5.9).

Lillie and James continued to occupy the structure pictured in Figure 5.1 throughout the 1920s and into the 1940s, both farming and working for the Jackson family. In 1940 the census taker listed James Davis as 72 years and indicated that at the time he was no longer able to work. The couple was paying four dollars a month in rent, or likely the equivalent in crops, and had no listed cash income. James Davis passed away in 1941. Lillie Davis lived another 10 years after her husband, possibly continuing to live in their home on the former plantation, or more likely moving in with one of her daughters nearby. By this time, the Davis's daughter Viola and her husband, Cleveland Taylor, were living on the former plantation. The two farmsteads were connected via a dirt road that appears on 1933 aerial photographs. While the road is no longer extant and efforts to follow the exact former path failed due to excessive overgrowth, the worn incision of a section of the road still appears along the north side of the site of the Taylor household.

Based on oral history, the Jackson family, with the help of Cleveland Taylor, converted the Davis home into a barn in the mid-1950s, after both James and Lillie Davis had passed away

(Jackson 2012). Cattle were run on the property until the 1970s, at which point the converted wood-structure was abandoned and eventually collapsed insitu. Lillie and James Davis are buried next to each other in the Jackson Quarters Cemetery.



Figure 1.8: James and Lillie Davis with members of the Jackson family in front of the Den circa 1930 (Courtesy of Bob Crider and the Jackson Family)



Figure 5.9: James and Lillie Davis with members of the Jackson family outside the Den circa 1930 (Courtesy of Bob Crider and the Jackson Family)

5.2.2 FEATURES AND EXCAVATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE DAVIS HOUSEHOLD

Aside from the architectural features associated with the immediate household, other yard features were also observed during the excavations, including a bored well and midden deposits. These features are discussed below and an overview of the main trash midden, which was the focus of the excavations is provided. Details of the artifacts recovered from the midden are further explored in the following chapters.

5.2.2.1 THE WELL

Evidence of the well that the Davises are standing next to in the photograph shown in Figure 5.3 was uncovered during the final excavations. The well appears to be bored. Bored wells can be hand dug, or augured, and differ from drilled wells in that they are typically shallower, terminating just below the water table, and do not need to penetrate bedrock to tap

into an aquifer. The outline of the well excavation was apparent in the southern wall of Unit 11, approximately 9 meters northwest of the collapsed structure. A deep pit was revealed that tapered with depth measuring about 30 cm (12 inches) wide, just large enough to accommodate a well bucket (Figure 5.10). The well bucket, which you can see in the photograph Figure 5.11, was found at the base of the large oak tree on the north end of the former structure. This type of bucket, sometimes referred to as a torpedo bucket for its shape, is still available for sale at Lehman's Hardware, an Ohio company originally catering to the local Amish community that now markets itself as the "Purveyor of Historical Technology" (Lehman's Hardware 2014).

Prior to the arrival of indoor plumbing in this area, having a well at your home was a great advantage and not one that everyone shared. Some families relied on local springs and others shared wells, which meant having to haul water back to your home several times a day. Mrs. Johnson, whose family owns land in the Bethel community, remembered getting water from their household well throughout the day when she was a child. When I asked her how often she replied,

Well, whenever we need it! We carried it to the house. We would use it cook with. We had a bucket out on the porch that we would put water in. We would use it wash dishes, and bathe in. So we'd draw water every hour, every two, three hours, to have, you know, water in the house. When we got ready for the day, we'd have to draw water. And we heat it on a stove, because at that time we didn't have a bathtub. We used a number three washtub (Johnson 2013).



Figure 5.10: Bored well feature (S. Loftus)



Figure 5.11: Bored water well buckets (“Torpedo Buckets”). Lehman’s Hardware on the left and the one found at the Davis home on the right (Lehman’s Hardware 2014 and S. Loftus).

5.2.2.2 THE MAIN MIDDEN DEPOSITS

The main midden at the Davis site is located on the north side of the structure approximately 7 – 10 meters from the house in an area with a slightly depressed elevation. Based on the photograph in Figure 5.1 and field evidence this area used to be located along the south side of an old two-track that circled around the west side of the property. In the photograph there appears to be a collection of materials in this area, possibly felled wood. Evidence of occasional burning was uncovered during the excavations in the form of charcoal flecking and larger charcoal chunks, and several artifacts display evidence of having been exposed to high temperatures. The wood in the photograph may have been used as fuel to aid in burning household waste. As mentioned in the previous chapter, disposing of household waste in this manner was historically a common practice in rural East Texas, and continues today in areas where there is no city/county sponsored trash pick-up. Several of the people I spoke with around the Bethel community remember having a place in the yard where trash was burned when they were children in order to keep the household area clean (Anonymous 2013).

Using the original shovel test results as a guide, eight 1x1 meter units were excavated in the midden area (Figure 5.1). The units were expanded based on the quantity and concentration of artifacts recovered. This resulted in a block of four units that extended north-south and revealed a profile of the midden deposit (Figures 5.12 and 5.13). An additional two units were excavated immediately west of these units to get a better idea of the size and concentration of the midden. Two units were also excavated three meters east of the block in an effort to sample other areas (Figure 5.14). Based on the initial shovel testing and the excavations the midden appears to measure approximately 4 meters north-south and 6 meters east-west, possibly extending slightly farther east, but becoming more diffuse. In total the midden covers approximately 24 square

meters. Artifact concentration within this area varies, but appears contiguous. In total, 8 square meters were excavated, or approximately 33 percent of the midden.

Artifacts were primarily concentrated from 5 – 25 centimeters below surface (cmbs) and completely sterile soils were encountered at 40 cmbs. Units were initially dug in five centimeter increments in order to try to place the artifacts within a tight stratigraphic sequence; however, after excavating two units, the levels were increased to ten centimeters due to obvious bioturbation. Rodent disturbance and roots appear to have destroyed any meaningful microstratigraphy that may once have been present in the loose loamy sand matrix.



Figure 5.12: Overview of midden excavation at the Davis Site (41AN189), Units 1, 2, 4, 8, 10, and 14 facing southeast (S. Loftus).

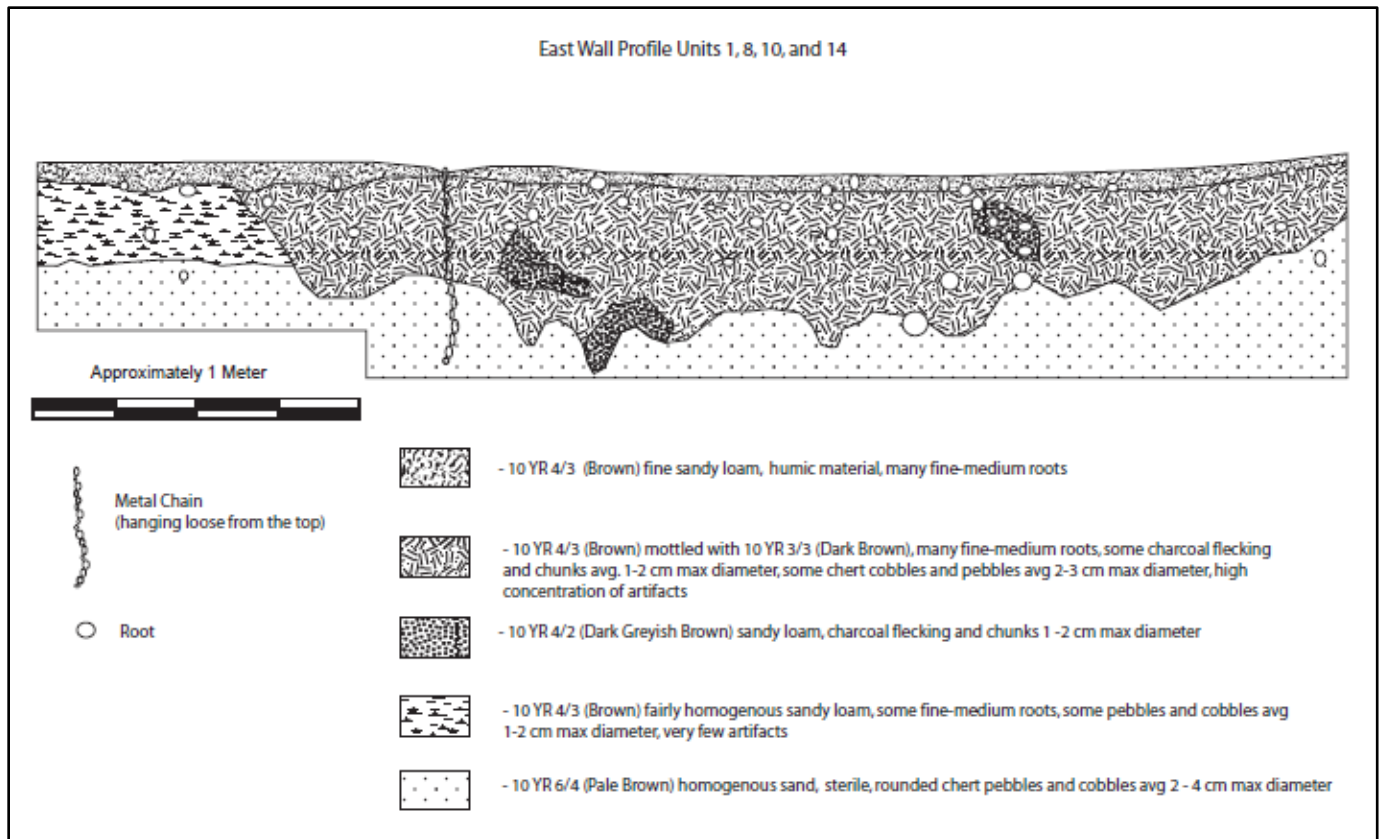


Figure 5.13: Profile of the midden at the Davis Site, West Wall Units 1, 8, 10, 14 (S. Loftus)



Figure 5.14: Overview of midden excavation at the Davis Site (41AN189), Units 5 and 6 facing north (S. Loftus).

5.2.2.2.1 MIDDEN ARTIFACTS

The artifacts recovered from the midden associated with the Davis household are various and include items that are typical of excavations at early-twentieth century farmsteads in this region of Texas (Moir and Juney 1987). Common artifacts included glass and ceramics related in some way to food and drink whether through preparation, storage, or actual consumption. A variety of curved glass – colorless, aqua, green, sun-colored amethyst, and cobalt blue colors – primarily associated with bottles and jars were present. A number of milk glass canning jar lid inserts were also collected. Other bottle and jar closures included crown caps, and threaded screw top lids. Most of the artifacts recovered were fragmented and have been subject to some form of extreme heat that resulted in melting or discoloration.

Ceramic varieties included both earthenware and stoneware, the majority being undecorated whitewares in different forms. Stoneware glazes included Albany type natural clay slip glazes, salt glaze, Bristol glaze, and alkaline glaze. Metal artifacts were primarily ferrous metals, and had deteriorated considerably, often beyond identification in the acidic soils that characterize this part of East Texas. Items included wire nails, screws, fence staples, bailing wire, fragments of food cans, and oil cans, along with a few brass and aluminum artifacts. Faunal materials were very rare, a further result of the acidic soils, as were botanical remains. Only 12 fragments of bone were recovered from the midden deposit and 22 botanicals. The specifics of the artifacts are further discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.

5.2.3 ADDITIONAL EXCAVATION UNITS

Aside from the excavations around the main midden additional units were excavated near the well feature (Units 11, 12, and 13), where shovel tests indicated a relatively high frequency of artifacts, and in strategic areas across the site (Units 3, 7, and 9) in order to gain a better understanding of the yard and associated material culture.

Unit 3 was placed immediately adjacent to where the eastern wall of the structure would have been located and was excavated to capture deposits that would have been swept under the house in this area or accumulated from nearby activities (Figure 5.15). The artifact density was relatively low and included wire nails, fragments of asphalt roof shingles, a few fragments of glass, and two stoneware sherds with an external salt glaze and an interior Albany slip type glaze. A complete colorless glass, externally threaded, condiment bottle was also recovered from underneath the structure.

Unit 9 was placed in an area approximately five meters to the west of the structure that was slightly mounded and did not have the characteristically thick vegetation cover that the rest

of the site has succumbed to over the last 70 years. A few bricks appeared in this area on the surface and initial shovel tests revealed charcoal and ash deposits in the top 20 cmbs. Excavations exposed a single course of five bricks aligned roughly east-west and placed end to end flush with the ground. The bricks are machine-made and not mortared together, and over time appear to have been pushed slightly askew through various bioturbation activities. Very few artifacts were collected from the unit and those that were are primarily wire nails.

Initially it was hypothesized that this area was possibly an outdoor kitchen or some form of a barbeque. This remains a possibility, but appears unlikely. This part of the site appears to have served primarily as a driveway while the Davises occupied the home and is cleared in the photograph (Figure 5.3). The presence of ash, which typically dissipates quickly in these soils, coupled with the lack of vegetation, as well as markings on the bricks, which indicate they were made in Mexia, Texas suggests that this feature is possibly associated with secondary use of the farmstead by the Jackson family after the Davises passed away. Walter Jackson moved to Mexia as a young man and many Jackson family descendants still live in Mexia, which is about 40 miles southwest of Bethel. The bricks are likely associated with activities performed by the Jacksons when they were using the former home for agricultural purposes during the late 1950s and 60s.

Units 11, 12, and 13 were excavated in an area where shovel tests revealed a relatively high density of artifacts (Figure 5.16). This is also where the previously discussed bored well feature was identified. Artifact densities in the units was fairly high, but unlike the main midden deposit, the units in this area contained less charcoal and the artifacts were not as heavily broken up – three complete bottles were found. This area is near a former fence line and would have been on the edge of the yard along the far side of the dirt road/driveway that ran along this side

of the house. It is likely that items were swept over to this area or pitched by hand to move them away from the central yard area, but they were not subject to the intentional burning that is evident with the main midden deposit. More specific information concerning the artifacts that were recovered is discussed in the following chapter.



Figure 5.15: Overview of Unit 3 at the Davis Site, facing south (S. Loftus).



Figure 5.16: Overview of Units 11, 12, and 13, Facing Southwest (S. Loftus).

5.3 THE VIOLA AND CLEVELAND TAYLOR HOME (SITE 41AN188)

The parcel of land where Cleveland and Viola Taylor lived is located in the northwestern corner of the plantation lands near the intersection of CR 2601 and CR 2608. The first black school, the Green Street School was also in this corner, and the Glenns, a prominent local African American family discussed in Chapter 3, owned roughly 300 acres of land just north of their household. The location of the Taylor family's farmstead along a county road in the northern section of the plantation allowed them to be in easy communication with the rest of the community. This differs significantly from the Davis home, which was centrally located on the plantation near the Jackson's residence, and as a result was somewhat isolated. The locational shift was likely an intentional move by the Taylors to be closer to other community members,

increase mobility, and move away from the plantation interior typically associated with the Jacksons.

Unlike the Davis farmstead, there are no above ground intact structural remains at the Taylor site aside from three hematite pier stones made from locally sourced rock. Based on the layout of the pierstones, and also the presence of a wood door sill, the home appears to have measured approximately eight meters east-west x five meters north-south. Conversations with Henry Jackson, who visited the house as a boy during the early 1950s, indicate that it was a simple rectangular wood structure comprised of vertical boards, and most likely built during the late 1920s or 1930s, which fits with the archaeology.

Jackson remembers the Taylors having a wood-stove, and a barn that was located east of the house along the two-track that once connected the Taylor house to the Davis house. Their home was likely similar to the one that the Davises lived in, and typical of those occupied by East Texas tenant farmers during the early to mid-twentieth century. As with the Davis farmstead, no evidence of a privy was found during the excavations. This was not a surprise given the information that is available concerning privy construction and their use patterns in this part of Texas as was previously discussed in relation to the Davis household (Moir and Journey 1987).

Douglas Carter, who grew up in the Bethel community and knew Cleveland and Viola Taylor when he was a young man, walked around the site with me one day and recalled that a smoke-house used to be located just east of the home near the edge of the landform. A structure appears in this area on the 1933 aerial and archaeological evidence appears to correspond with Carter's memories. Smoke houses were common in East Texas during this period and were used

for curing and storing pork. Hogs were a central part of the diet throughout the region and they were slaughtered, salted and smoked once a year when the weather was cool.

Archaeological evidence from a tenant farm in the adjacent county of Navarro revealed pork consumption was five times higher than any other meat source (Sharpless 1999). Pork could be relatively easily preserved in comparison with beef and chicken and kept for several seasons. During our interview, Mrs. Johnson had this to say about preserving pork when she was growing up in the Bethel community,

Now hogs, we would cure it. We wouldn't kill a hog until end of winter, you know, and they had a certain time they would kill it, because on the wax of the moon, it would all go to grease, whether you knew it or not. But they'd kill it on the full of the moon, and the meat would be firm. And they had a old smokehouse. We had a old smokehouse that we would smoke it, salt it down and smoke it. And it would keep. But lord, you can't salt one down and smoke it now (referring to the summer heat). It would rot overnight (Johnson 2013).

For water, the Taylor family relied on a nearby spring located approximately 40 meters north of the household instead of drawing from a well, as the Davis's did at their home. The same spring the Taylors relied on was in use by the Jackson family dating back to the antebellum period and several journal entries by Walter Jackson document the importance of the water source (Jackson circa 1930). In following one, he refers to James Davis,

Jim (referring to James Davis) and all the other darkeys were too busy for us to ask one of them to fetch a pail of water from the spring, went after our own water, went there for water, good water. Clear as crystal, pure, out of white sand at the bottom of the gum...a gum that has been in that spring over fifty years. I'm not guessing about that, my father put it there, then I made a concrete box around that gum...and there is a sign on a board there, tacked to a red oak tree, that reads thus:

“Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again, but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give shall never thirst again”...John 4:14

When that spring is disturbed gas bubbles come to the top of the gum in droves, looking like diamonds. Go there, you can see. I love to go to that spring, lie on my stomach, drink all I can of its pure bubbling water...(Jackson circa 1930).

The concrete spring box that Walter Jackson described remains in place today. Though the spring no longer flows as it used to and the sign is no longer there, during seasonally wet periods, water pools within it (Figure 5.17).



Figure 5.17 Spring box located north of the Taylor household, built by Benjamin Jackson, facing northeast (S. Loftus).

The syrup mill mentioned in previous chapters is located just a few meters north of the spring and this area was a place where locals recall members of the African American community gathered each fall to process ribbon cane (Figure 5.18). The cane press, a Chattanooga #8 is still on the ground and most of the syrup oven, which was built of locally

sourced hematite cobbles, remains intact. However, the smoke stack has collapsed and the baffled syrup pan has rusted out. No one I have spoken to within the community recalls anyone actually owning the mill, though it has been suggested that the Jacksons may have been the ones who initially purchased it. The mill functioned as a communal endeavor with each family growing their own cane and hauling it to the mill for processing. Usually three men would oversee the operation which required a great deal of skill to produce good flavor and not burn the syrup (Anonymous 2013; Jackson 2012; Sharpless 1999).

In his autobiography, George Dawson, who was born in Marshall, Texas in 1898, 120 miles from Bethel, shared these memories of processing, consuming, and selling cane,

Taking that extra ribbon cane to sell in town was a good idea, but it meant crushing more cane. At times, it seemed that all I did was cut cane. Generally, I would do the morning chores early so as to be out in the field at first light. Within minutes of swinging that old machete, the morning chill would leave my body...But cutting cane only got us partway to ribbon syrup. Crushing the cane was the next step. I would hook up the mule to a long bar that was attached to a crushing machine. We worked together. All day long, the mule would walk in a circle to move the gears. I would feed cane into the machine. I had to keep pace with the mule. As we worked, cane juice would run down a trough into a barrel. We called it ribbon syrup. It was good.

It was just the thing on a little mush or with some hominy and grits. Since money was scarce, ribbon syrup also made for good trading stock. At a general store we could trade a barrel for just about anything; nails, shotgun shells, and, if times was good, store-bought cloth and such things. We could even trade for flour if we had the mind to, but we generally took our corn to the mill to be ground (Dawson 2001:37).



Figure 5.18: Ribbon cane syrup mill and Chattanooga No. 8 cane press located north of the Taylor Household (S. Loftus).

5.3.1 HISTORY OF THE TAYLORS

The history of the Taylors has been pieced together through archival records and conversations with community members and the Jackson family. While many people remember the family, I have not yet met anyone who claims to be a direct descendant and according to locals many in the family moved to Dallas. Hopefully, this will change and more information will come to light. From the information I have gathered, Viola Davis was born around 1895 and grew up in her parents' home helping out with the farming and briefly attending the local school. The nearby Green Street School, where her father Jim Davis Jr. likely received his education, had been relocated by this time and Viola probably attended the Bethel School, located on the corner of CR 425 and CR 2608. The school no longer stands, but a photograph of the foundation is in Chapter 3. According to census records Viola was in school through 4th grade and then began to help out full time around her parent's farm. When she was twenty-one years old she married Cleveland Taylor who was three years her younger. Cleveland was born in Athens,

Texas which is where the couple was married in 1916. Little information concerning the early life of Cleveland Taylor and his parents, Robert Taylor and Melinda Thompson has yet been identified aside from their living in Athens.

Athens is located approximately twenty miles north of Bethel in the adjacent county of Henderson. People in Bethel appear to have had close ties to Athens. Along with Palestine, it was one of the larger towns in the area and people would go there both to purchase goods and to sell crops that remained after the harvest. One woman with ties to the Bethel community remembered traveling to Athens with her father when she was a child to sell peas and other vegetables in the town square where her father's reputation for quality had earned him a loyal customer base (Anonymous 2013). The closest pottery manufacturer was also located in Athens and some of the stonewares identified at the site may have come from this shop. The Athens pottery is further discussed in the following chapters.

In 1920, Cleveland and Viola Taylor were renting a farm in Anderson County in Precinct 5, where the Benjamin Jackson Plantation is located, but they do not appear in the 1930 census. It was not unusual for census takers to miss houses, or record false information, particularly in rural black communities. By 1940 records confirm they were living at the excavated household and based on the census notes they had been living there since at least 1935. At this time they were listed as being one household away from Viola's parents, Jim and Lillie Davis. It is possible that another tenant or tenant family occupied the structure prior to the Taylor's moving in, however an overwhelming majority of the diagnostic materials collected date to the Taylor period of occupation circa 1930 – 1955. While initial occupation of the site is slightly hazy, it is known for certain the Taylor's were the final occupants based on conversations with Henry

Jackson (Jackson 2012). It is the materials from this later time period that were essential for making meaningful comparisons between the material culture of the two generations.

The couple continued to live here until the mid-1950s' and raised two daughters Queen Allie and Lillie, presumably named after Viola's mother. A nephew, Leon Dawson was also living with them. Both Queen Allie and Lillie attended school through high school and may have eventually moved to Dallas based on conversations with community members, however this is not confirmed.

During an interview, Henry Jackson remembered traveling with his grandfather from Mexia to collect crops from the Taylor family, and loading sweet potatoes into the back of the truck as a rent payment (Jackson 2012). By 1950, the Taylors were the last tenant farmers occupying the former plantation property. The family typically planted 5 to 10 acres each of cotton and corn, and based on oral history, maintained an extensive home garden that produced most of the food they consumed throughout the year. The Jacksons typically collected 1/3 of the cotton and 1/4 of the corn. Henry Jackson believes that his family made just enough money on the tenant farming to pay taxes on the property, but never saw any profits from the endeavor (Jackson 2012).

By the mid-twentieth century most of the sandy soils of the region had been completely depleted of nutrients due to continued aggressive cotton farming and without the use of today's readily available fertilizers, crop yields were low. Farming these lands was not an easy endeavor and provided limited to naught rewards. Tenant farmers suffered the brunt of this, trapped within a system that required continual hard labor but produced little profit and more often left people in debt. Most of the monetary value of the land at this time was tied up not in agricultural wealth, but in mineral and gas rights.

Following James Davises death, Cleveland Taylor appears to have taken over the basic overseer duties on the plantation including helping to build the sheet-metal addition for hay storage that was constructed at the Davis house in the 1950s (Jackson 2012). The Taylor's continued to live at the site until purchasing a three-acre tract of land from Frank and Luciler Campbell in 1954, African American landowners who owned 53 acres adjacent to the Glenn family's land and across the street from the Taylor's tenant household (1954 Anderson County Deed Records Volume 493, Page 309). It is believed that Cleveland and Viola Taylor lived on the purchased property until their deaths, which for Cleveland was violent, but this is unconfirmed.

In July of 1963 Cleveland Taylor suffered a gunshot wound and died as a result of his injuries. The death certificate lists cause of death as "Shot in stomach with shotgun" and is recorded as an accident (State of Texas Certificate of Death, July 21, 1963). No autopsy was performed. No evidence of an investigation was uncovered during research at the court house, and the local newspaper made no mention of the violence. In fact, an article in the Palestine Herald-Press published the Monday following his death, describes an extremely hot July weekend that was tempered by violence across the state, including eight traumatic deaths, but there is no mention of the shooting of local resident, Cleveland Taylor (Palestine Herald-Press July 22, 1963). Given the politics of race at the time, it is likely Taylor was left out of the white news because he was African American.

The summer of 1963 was a pivotal moment for the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. The March on Washington took place, Martin Luther King delivered his "I have a dream" speech, four young African American girls lost their lives in the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing in Birmingham, Alabama, and that November President Kennedy was assassinated.

Racial tensions were running incredibly high across the South. While the circumstances surrounding Cleveland Taylor's death at 63 years old by gun violence remain unknown and I do not want to speculate on the tragedy, it is not a far stretch to conceive that the shooting was symptomatic of the overall racial violence that terrorized African Americans living in the southern United States during this time period. Regardless, it is paramount to keep this setting of violence and terror in mind while considering the daily lives and material culture of families who lived through this era.

5.3.2 FEATURES AND EXCAVATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE TAYLOR HOUSEHOLD

As with the Davis home, the excavations at the Taylor home primarily focused on exploring the midden deposits associated with the household. However, several units were placed in other areas within the yard for comparative reasons and to better understand the spatial layout. The excavations are discussed below and an overview of the main midden feature is provided. The details of the artifacts recovered from the midden are further explored in Chapter 7.

5.3.2.1 BRICK FEATURE AND EXCAVATION UNIT ASSOCIATED WITH THE STRUCTURE

As mentioned in the previous chapter, several bricks and heavily broken-up mortar fragments were uncovered along the north side of the no longer extant main structure (Feature 2) and further investigation suggests the materials may be the remains of a chimney. During an interview with Henry Jackson, who visited the house several times as a young man, he recalled that the Taylors used a wood stove in their home and did not have an exterior brick chimney on the house. Artifacts recovered during the excavations including cast-iron stove parts and a stove dampener suggest that his memory of a wood stove is correct, though it may be possible his

recollection of no brick chimney is inaccurate. Future excavations in this area should be able to provide more conclusive evidence as to what the brick feature is related to, but for now several interesting things can be discerned from the materials themselves.

Few brick fragments were present in comparison to a substantial amount (200 +) of heavily broken up soft white lime-based mortar fragments, suggesting bricks in good condition were salvaged after the structure was abandoned, possibly by the Taylors when they built a new house across the street. If this was the case, it appears this was not the first time the bricks were recycled. Many of the mortar fragments had varied brick stamp impressions, including at least three different varieties that were manufactured in both Mexia and in Groesbeck, Texas. The mixing and matching of bricks, suggests that the materials were possibly acquired at different times and through different means. The Groesbeck and Mexia brick kilns are located in nearby Limestone County, Texas where many members of the Jackson family lived after the Civil War and it's likely that the bricks were brought to the property by the Jackson's. Recycling materials during this period was common, especially bricks, which were expensive in comparison to wood and local rock sources.

Additionally, the bricks date to the mid-twentieth century during a period when Portland based mortars were available and were more prevalent than the traditional lime based mortars that were predominate during the nineteenth century. The use of lime mortar could be an indicator of several things including, a lack of access to Portland cement, or a personal preference for lime. Lime is known for being a more forgiving and workable material that also provides a greater degree of structural flexibility. The builder, possibly Cleveland Taylor, may have had specific reasons for choosing this type of mortar.

Unit 15 was excavated along the western side of the structure and placed in an area immediately adjacent to what appears to have been the home's main entrance based on the presence of a wood door sill, and purposefully aligned to catch the edge of the house and the underside where household debris may have been swept. The artifacts recovered were primarily architectural including, wire nails, roof tacks, shingle fragments, mortar, and flat aqua glass that appears to be window glass. Other items included a few fragments of colorless and amber curved glass, a 1943 steel penny, a rubber shoe heel, and a square metal locket with an embossed floral pattern. These artifacts are revisited in Chapter 7.

5.3.2.2 MAIN MIDDEN AND POSSIBLE INTACT LIVING SURFACE

The majority of the other 1 x 1 meter units that were excavated at the Taylor farmstead were concentrated on the midden deposits. In order to get a better idea of how the midden formed and its relation to the house, a line of units was excavated east-west beginning at the top of the slope where the house was located and extending down to the base of landform. This allowed us to bisect the midden and also get a glimpse of what sort of activities were taking place at the top of the slope in the yard area immediately adjacent to the midden (Figures 5.19 and 5.20)



Figure 5.19: Overview of excavations (Units 1 – 8), facing east from the top of the landform where the former structure was located, facing east (S. Loftus).



Figure 5.20: Overview of Units 2 and 3 showing living surface adjacent to the midden, facing north (S. Loftus).

Figure 5.20 is an overview of what appears to be a living surface uncovered in Units 2 and 3 just before the land slopes down to the east where concentrated midden deposits are present. Based on conversations with local residents who remember the farmstead layout, this area would have been part of the yard area that was located in front of the smokehouse. The artifacts visible in the photograph include two No. 3 washtubs. The base of both tubs was rusted out. One of the bases was located about 60 cm west of the rest of the washtub; the other was not identified during the excavations.

A concentration of twenty-three fence staples were found within one of the washtubs, the rest of the artifacts that were identified within the tubs are similar to those found in the surrounding matrix (fragments of glass, ferrous metal, and ceramic) that appear to have been deposited through post occupational disturbance/bioturbation. Other artifacts include two zinc Ball Jar screw top lids that date between 1933 and 1960 with accompanying milk glass lid inserts, a six nail horse-shoe, a tripod for a glass oil lamp, and a 6 inch cast iron stove damper made by the Adams Company, 1888.

Based on the artifacts present, including the washtubs and the canning jars, this area appears to have been a household activity center, possibly where food preparation activities such as canning took place, and/or washing and cleaning. This is further discussed in Chapter 7. It is not difficult to picture members of the Taylor family working in this area and tossing and/or sweeping away any broken or no longer useful household items down slope to remove them from the yard area.

As was the case at the Davis site, the soils associated with the midden downslope from the living surface are loose fine sandy loams that exhibit considerable disturbance and bioturbation (Figure 5.21). Refit artifacts from the same vessels were found at considerably

varied depths. This made it impossible to discern any discrete temporal layers within the deposits. Charcoal was found throughout the deposits and several artifacts exhibit exposure to high temperatures or fire, suggesting that as was speculated during the initial shovel testing, household refuse was burned in order to minimize waste accumulation. This activity likely resulted in mixed deposits, as well. Rodent disturbance in the midden area was intense, as can be seen in Figure 5.22 and artifacts were found at depths ranging from 0 – 55 cmbs, with high concentrations from 0 -30 cmbs.

The artifacts identified downslope in the midden area (Units 1, and 4 – 8) include a wide variety of household related items including glass, metal, ceramic, plastic, rubber, and faunal materials dating to the 1930s through the early 1950s that can be attributed to various activities. In many ways the artifacts are similar to the types of materials associated with the Davis site, but there is a significant increase in quantity and variety. Tables of the artifacts collected at each site according to material type are presented in Tables 5.1 and 5.2. The specifics of the artifacts and their relationship to consumer choice and action are further discussed in the following chapters.

In addition to the long trench that was excavated across the yard and midden area, several additional units were also excavated to get a better sense of the spatial layout and the size and density of the midden. Units 9, 10, and 13 were excavated to the north of the trench in an area that slopes down to the two-track dirt road that once connected the Taylor household with the Davis home. These units also contained high quantities of household refuse and based on the testing appear to comprise the northern extent of the main midden deposits.

Two additional units (11 and 12) were placed near the base of the slope down from the yard in an area where a 50 x 50 cm test unit indicated a high density of artifacts. Based upon the

landform, this area appears to constitute the southern end of the midden deposits. Materials were similar to those found in adjacent units (1 and 4 - 8).

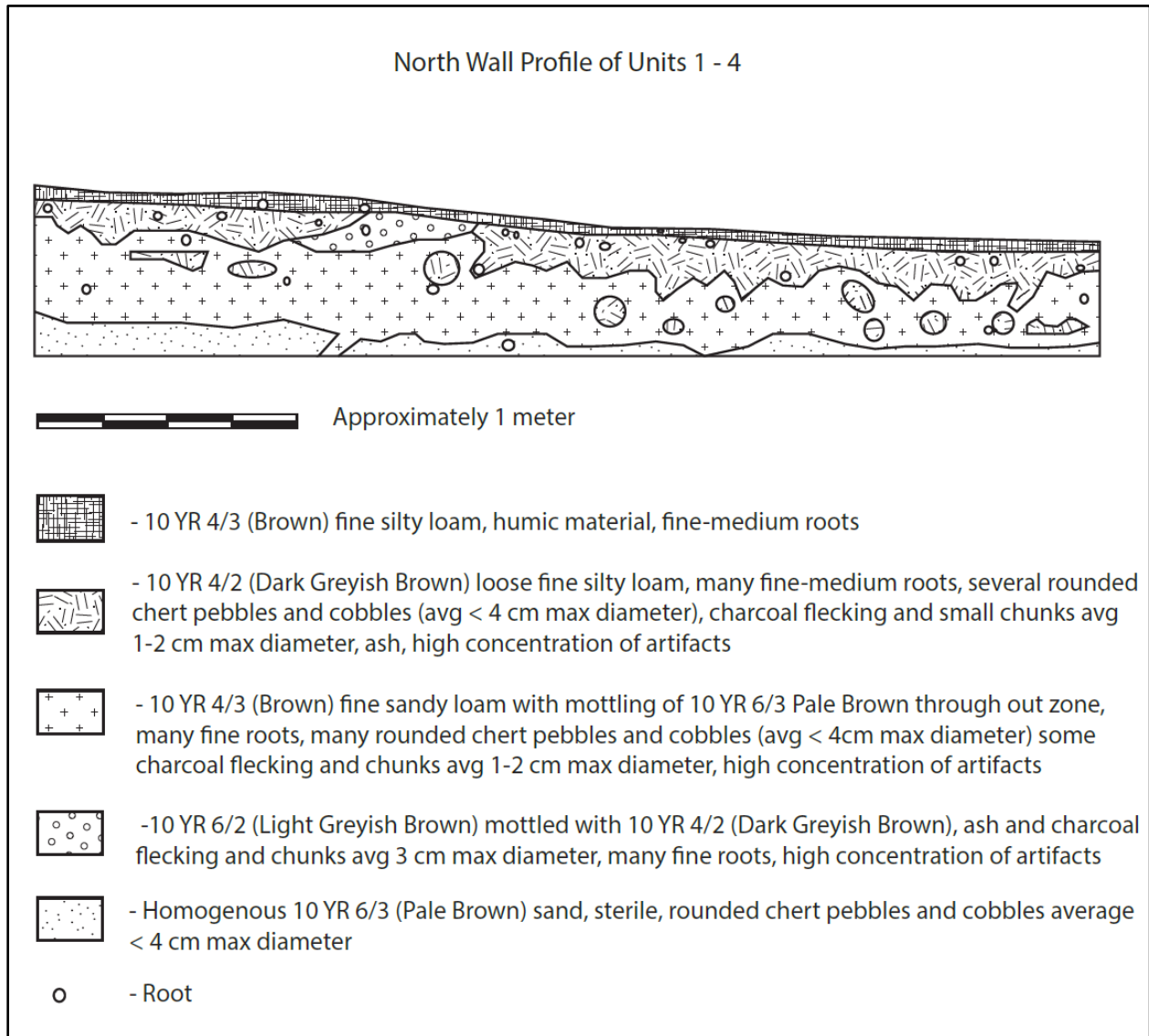


Figure 5.21: North wall profile of midden deposits, Units 1, 8, 10, and 14 (S. Loftus).



Figure 5.22: Overview of rodent disturbance observed at the Taylor Site, facing west (S. Loftus)

5.3.2.3 ADDITIONAL EXCAVATION UNITS

The area to the east of the midden deposit levels out and there appears to have been some post-occupational dumping in this area along the two-track road, as such materials and artifacts observed on the surface and in 50 x 50 cm units from this location were not included in the analysis and were not further explored through 1 x 1 meter unit excavation (Figure 5.2).

One unit (Unit 14) was placed in a level yard area north of the former structure location and approximately 4 meters to the west of where the downslope to the midden deposits begins. This unit was excavated to see what sort of artifact density is present within this section of the site in comparison to areas where household waste appears to have been intentionally discarded. A total of 13 artifacts were recovered from the unit and included fragments of curved glass (possibly bottle glass), wire nails, an ironstone rim sherd, and a metal heel plate for a shoe.

5.4 HOUSEHOLD LAYOUT

Based on the excavations the layout of the two households is similar to those that have been recorded for other tenant farmsteads in East Texas. During the 1980s, Southern Methodist University (SMU) carried out a large-scale survey in this region of Texas in association with the construction of the Richland Chambers Reservoir, located approximately 16 kilometers (10 miles) west of the Benjamin Jackson Plantation. The project resulted in the inundation of approximately 47,500 acres along Richland and Chambers Creeks. SMU investigated and performed varying degrees of archaeological excavations on thirty-eight historic properties in the area, including one plantation site, thirty-one farmsteads, and five light industrial sites that all dated between 1855 and WWII (Moir and Journey 1987: v).

Twenty of the excavated farmsteads were occupied by tenants, and of these, nine were known to be occupied by African American families or individuals, four were white, and seven were of unknown racial affiliation (Moir 1987:100). The results of the SMU investigations provide an excellent backdrop from which to make general comparisons between the tenants on the Benjamin Jackson Plantation prior to WWII and other tenant farmers living in the wider region. SMU researchers also focused their excavations on household refuse found within yard areas, which they refer to in their publications as sheet refuse (Moir 1987:139).

SMU's investigations revealed patterns in the layouts of the farmsteads, and these patterns applied equally to small landowners and tenant farmers. Figure 5.23 is a drawing of a model farmstead that was developed based on the results of the fieldwork and an idealized SYMAP that was generated based on the collected artifact data. The location of the midden at the Davis farmstead near the house, but at a distance as well as the locations of other less concentrated household refuse, are very similar to those depicted in the drawing. Additionally,

the immediate yard areas around the Davis house, as with the SYMAP farmstead, were cleared of artifacts, especially around the front of the home, where shovel testing revealed very little household refuse. Similar evidence was encountered at the Taylor household. While there was an increase in the quantity of the artifacts and the family appears to have been taking advantage of the slope to pitch their garbage, the overall layout is similar in terms of artifact deposition in relation to the household as well as in terms of the practice of burning accumulated waste.

The paucity of artifacts in areas immediately surrounding the households most likely resulted from repeated yard sweeping. Yard sweeping was a common practice across the rural south and was performed to keep areas around the home clear of debris that might be hazardous or unsightly (Wilkie 2000: 208). Before electricity and air-conditioning became common, people spent a good deal of time, if not the majority of their time outside of the home and congregated on the porch and in the immediate yard areas. A 1920s painting by Everett Gee Jackson of a sharecropper's cabin that was on or near the plantation shows the cleared yard area and the porch as important centers for activity (Figure 5.24). Activities in the yard included certain aspects of food preparation, such as butchering and smoking meat, as well as cooking, bathing, and laundry.

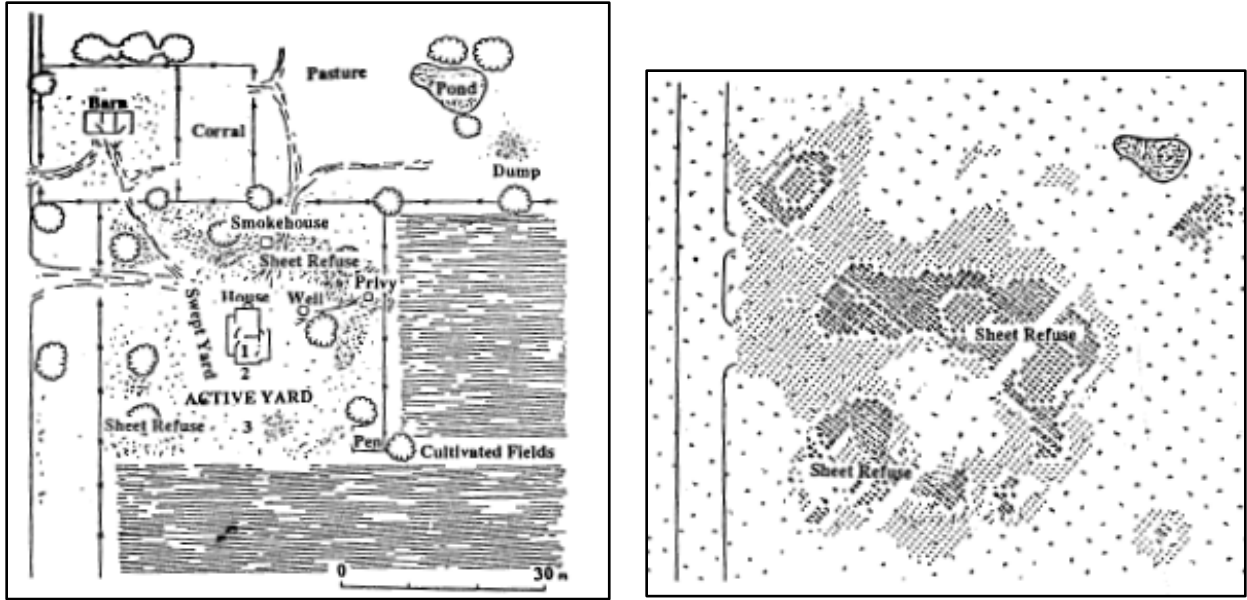


Figure 5.23: Model of a typical North Central Texas farmstead and a SYMAP that was developed based on the results of the Richland Chambers Reservoir Project (Moir 1987: 232)



Figure 5.24: Painting of a Sharecropper's Cabin by Everett Gee Jackson circa late-1920s (Courtesy of Bob Crider).

The artifacts at the two sites are varied and the specifics of each collection are discussed in the following chapters. At a basic level, a materials comparison between the two sites reveals a definite shift in the type and quantity of artifacts represented at each site. Based upon the percentages, the most predominant artifact material at the Davis household is metal at 56.9% followed by glass at 33.3%, and ceramics, which represented 5.1% of the total assemblage. The other categories represented at the Davis site include asphalt, botanical remains, brick, chert, concrete, faunal remains, mortar, plastic (including Bakelite and celluloid), and wood, which all comprise less than 1 percent of the overall collection (Table 6.2.).

Based upon the artifact percentages at the Taylor site, the most predominant artifact material is glass at 62.8%, followed by metal at 25.6%, and ceramics, which represented 4.8% of the total assemblage. Mortar makes up 3.2% and Asphalt (asphalt roof shingles) comprises 1.8 % of the collected artifacts. Other categories, including faunal, botanical, brick, chert, concrete, wood, and plastic (containing Bakelite and celluloid) items, all comprise less than 1 percent of the overall collection.

Table 5.1: Artifact Totals at Davis Site According to Material Types

Material	Totals	Percentage
Asphalt (Roof Shingles)	29	1
Botanical	22	< 1
Brick	24	< 1
Ceramic	140	5.1
Chert	1	< 1
Concrete	2	< 1
Faunal	12	< 1
FCR	14	< 1
Glass	917	33.3
Leather	0	0
Metal	1562	56.9
Mortar	15	< 1
Plastic (Bakelite, Celluloid)	8	< 1
Rubber	0	0
Shell	0	0
Slate	0	0
Wood	0	0
TOTAL	2746	100

Table 5.2: Artifact Totals at the Taylor Site According to Material Types

Material	Totals	Percentage
Aluminum	1	< 1
Asphalt (Roof Shingles)	169	1.8
Bakelite	20	< 1
Faunal	45	< 1
Botanical	3	< 1
Brick	7	< 1
Ceramic	451	4.8
Chert	4	< 1
Concrete	2	< 1
Glass	5846	62.8
Leather	2	< 1
Mortar	309	3.2
Metal	2388	25.6
Shell	2	< 1
Slate	8	< 1
Rubber	10	< 1
FCR	8	< 1
Plastic (Bakelite and Celluloid)	34	< 1
Wood	2	< 1
TOTAL	9311	100

Table 5.3: Comparison of Materials Percentages at the Davis and Taylor sites

	Ceramic	Glass	Metal	Other
Davis	5.1	33.3	56.9	4.7
Taylor	4.8	62.8	25.6	6.8

The percentages indicate a significant change in the types of materials that were used by these two generations (Table 5.3). While ceramic percentages are fairly consistent at both sites, comprising approximately 5 percent of the overall collections, the metal and glass categories vary significantly. The dominant material at the Davis site is metal at 56.9 percent, while at the

Taylor site, metal accounts for only 25.6 percent of the artifacts, a decrease of 31.3 percent at the later occupation. A similar phenomenon exists when the glass percentages are compared. Glass accounts for 62.8 percent of the Taylor collection and 33.3 percent of the Davis collection, a difference of 29.5 percent, a considerable discrepancy.

The variations in the materials found at each site are likely reflective of a combination of factors including shifts in the glass industry from mouth-blown bottles to machine-made bottles that led to lower production costs and an expansion of glass products during the early-twentieth century (Miller and Sullivan 2000:161). In 1903, the first fully automated bottle maker was introduced by the Owens Bottle Machine Company and the technology rapidly spread. Coupled with the crown cap and sanitary can, these innovations were all part of a broad shift in consumption patterns, product development, and marketing (Miller and Sullivan 2000:161). While the Davis's were around during the introduction of these innovations, they would have grown up without them and had already established a household by the time the products were popularized in rural areas. Their daughter, Viola, and her husband Cleveland Taylor; however, would have grown up with these new technologies and appear to have incorporated them into their lifestyles at a much higher rate. This is further explored in the next chapters.

In comparison with the SMU studies, the artifact material percentages found at the Davis site do not vary significantly from those recorded at similar pre-WWII households. Studies in this part of Texas on post-WWII rural households, such as the Taylor site, are unavailable and the comparative data presented in the following chapters is relatively unique for this area. During the SMU study of pre-WWII households, the authors found that while they hypothesized that landownership and ethnicity would be major variables impacting the types of materials found at each site, as well as the overall layout of the farmstead, this was not necessarily true. Moir

concluded that, “Ethnicity, similar to land ownership up to a point, does not exert a great influence over the structure and content of these farmsteads (Moir 1987: 17). However, if you look more closely at the types of things people were consuming and the context and personal history of individual families, this may not be the case, particularly in the rural south during a period when racism and accompanying social and economic impacts heavily influenced daily life, affecting both access and consumer choice. Moving the focus of the study away from general comparative analysis and looking more closely at the specific items and products people were consuming reveals something about daily life, identity, and adaptation. Particularly within a community context that was defined by the conflicting parameters of hope, faith, and optimism on one hand, and oppression, polarization, and virulent racism on the other. These issues are further considered in the following chapters, which present the complete artifact assemblages collected from each household and also consider them comparatively.

CHAPTER 6:

THE MATERIAL CULTURE OF THE DAVIS HOUSEHOLD

Building upon the results of the fieldwork and archival research discussed in the previous chapters, Chapters 6 and 7 begin to explore historical change through material culture and a discussion of the overall characteristics of the Davis and Taylor household assemblages. The sites date from circa 1900 – 1940 and circa 1930 – 1955 and capture life during a transitional period in American history. A time when people were continuing to struggle forward from slavery's haunting legacy and the inequality, oppression and violence that accompanied a deeply racially divided country entrenched in Jim Crow.

As was briefly discussed in the last chapter, the assemblages coincide and diverge in terms of the overall composition of the artifacts as well as the quantity of materials present. Various factors influenced the collections, including unique life experiences and personalities as well as the social and political atmosphere, shifts in technology, rural markets, and consumer product variety and availability post-WWII. The materials that were collected are items that people used in their everyday lives, and contribute to further documenting and understanding the diverse experiences of black farmers in rural southern contexts during the first half of the twentieth century. The data presented below is further explored in Chapter 8, which considers consumer choice at each household comparatively, and the shifts and continuities that occurred over time in regards to household consumption within an extended African American family during the first half of the twentieth century.

6.1 MATERIAL CULTURE

Until the second half of the twentieth century material culture and patterns of consumption were often considered to be fairly straightforward and dominated by particular material conditions and economics (Miller 1995: 142; Mullins 2011: 5). People's material decisions were primarily viewed as motivated and constrained by relatively simple parameters related to how much money and/or resources they had available for exchange, as well as what a particular good or service provided the user in terms of rational benefit, or in terms of acquiring social status through display. Theorists often reduced consumption "to a rational and predictable activity that mirrored dominant material conditions and particular consumers' positions within those conditions" (Mullins 2011:5). While debates over labor and production were ongoing, surprisingly little conversation had occurred over the end result of these activities – product consumption (Miller 1995:142; Mullins 2011:5). The focus began to shift following massive increases in the quantity and variability of goods flooding consumer markets after WWII, which drove researchers to reconsider some of the assumptions surrounding product consumption and why people purchase certain products.

As scholars began to address these issues beginning in the 1970s, they began to question the rationality and predictability of consumers. New theories were put forth by Mary Douglas and Barron Ishwerwood, as well as Pierre Bourdieu that questioned the idea that consumption is an activity merely reflective of economic factors, and instead considered the potential for consumers to act in irrational and unpredictable ways (Douglas and Isherwood 1979; Bourdieu 1979; Miller 1995: 142). These approaches considered new dimensions of material consumption that explored the social, symbolic, and cultural implications of consumer choices, arguing that

“the consumer’s choice is his free choice... He can be irrational, superstitious, traditionalist, or experimental” (Douglas and Isherwood 1996: 36; Mullins 2011:5).

Douglas and Isherwood further reasoned that “goods are coded for communication” and advocated that anthropologists should consider how goods allow consumers to engage with each other through material exchange (Douglas and Isherwood 1996: xxi). Following in the wake of this theoretical advancement, other scholars began to consider the rise of commercial consumption in the twentieth century and its effects on society, particularly exploring the ways that consumerism has empowered people while at the same time also fostering inequality and further dividing society along class, gender, and racial lines (Cohen 2003; Weems 1998). Mary Beaudry has suggested that archaeologists can begin to consider these aspects of material culture within specific social settings by initiating a process of recontextualization that involves weaving together various lines of evidence and metaphorically putting the artifacts back into the hands and worlds of their owners and users” (Beaudry 2011:147). The following section works towards recontextualizing everyday items used by the Davis and Taylor families.

6.2 ARTIFACT CLASSIFICATION AND CULTURAL PLURALITY

The complete artifact assemblage at each household is examined here in order to consider the evidence in its entirety and provide an inclusive discussion of the materials that were recovered and their potential significance in regards to material consumption. While hesitant and somewhat wary of rigid formal artifact classification systems, I decided it was best at this point in the research to employ one in order to fully explore the nuances of each assemblage as a whole, and not unwittingly privilege certain materials over others. Along these lines, it is important to point out that there is considerable debate among historical archaeologists concerning the most appropriate methods for classifying material culture. Opinions on best

practice vary greatly. These discrepancies have largely resulted from differing theoretical stances, or in relation to the questions being asked of the data. The following briefly addresses some of the issues surrounding artifact classification by considering one of the most frequently referenced, and also consequently one of the most heavily criticized classification systems, Stanley South's 1977 "artifact pattern analysis" (South 1977).

South's system was introduced during a period of great innovation, and though flawed due to its rigidity, has served for better or worse as a baseline for many future classification systems (South 1977). While, initially designed to characterize North Carolina farmstead assemblages, it has been repeatedly adapted for use in other contexts. South's ideas concerning classification reflect tendencies archaeologists had during the first half of the twentieth century and through the 1970s to focus on the functional and stylistic attributes of artifacts. These observable attributes are inherently more accessible to a contemporary researcher than say the complexities of something more interpretive or symbolic, and were frequently employed with little consideration for the possibility that an artifact might transcend multiple categories depending on the cultural context and/or the intentions of the user. Ironically, South was one of the first archaeologists to realize the problems that arise with strict functional classifications and argued in his *Method and Theory in Historical Archaeology*, that

we may find that in order to understand a past cultural system, the classification of marbles, Jew's harps, and "whizzers" as artifacts in a class called "Toys" is not acceptable procedure. This may become apparent if we learn that in the eighteenth century "whizzers" were used for gambling, marbles for witchcraft ceremonies, and Jew's harps for making music and thus better classified under "recreation", "religion", and "musical instruments". The point being that classification may vary with the questions being asked, because many artifacts functioned in different ways in different contexts in past cultural systems (South 1977: 183).

As South describes, the emphasis in many classification systems has been on intended manufacturer use, which often leads researchers to overlook or ignore the possibility of an items alternative use, or symbolic function. They can also lead to over classification, which can be equally as limiting.

For example, the broad classification of “Food Related Items” might be further broken down into subcategories of “food preparation”, “food consumption”, “food storage”, etc. While useful in organizing comparative data, these categories are potentially problematic in the way that they limit the potential use life of an artifact. A wine bottle classified according to this system would be Food Related – Food Storage, but through secondary use, a wine bottle could also fit in additional categories such as food preparation if reused for distilling. Additionally, it may have functioned in a manner unrelated to food such as holding a candle, or as something more symbolic like the creation of a bottle tree, a popular southern yard art tradition with West African history.

This variability of artifact use and intentions is often referred to in archaeological literature as multivalence, which denotes the range of potential symbolic and functional meanings that can be ascribed to a particular object depending on the context. Being attentive to the multivalence of material objects, allows archaeologists to avoid constructing overly simplistic interpretations of material culture that preface manufacturers intentions, or dominant cultural use over the realities of the people who used the objects within a specific context (Wylie 1996: 436-442; Matthews 2010:179).

It has been demonstrated through many archaeological studies that material culture is continually circumscribed by broader discourses and social structures that are dependent upon and also fluid in relation to time and space (Mullins 1999; Voss 2008; Leone et al. 2005;

Armstrong 2003). Paul Mullins has argued that by approaching material culture through methods and theories that focus on the interpretive potential of artifacts and peoples relationships with the things they acquire and come into contact with it is possible to maintain greater awareness of “contradictory details” and “illuminate the incongruities between assemblages and social assumptions” (Mullins 1999: 30).

Considering the transformation from slavery to freedom in the East End Community in St. Johns, Virgin Islands, Douglas Armstrong pointed out that classification systems that focus on normative and “whole culture” as opposed to those that consider the multivalent nature of material culture, necessarily miss the variation of meaning and function that individuals and communities bring to the objects they employ (Armstrong 2003:66). As a result the complexity and active nature of culture and the nuances and transformations that are potentially visible through an examination of material culture are lost.

As such, the artifact classification system adopted for this dissertation cautiously borrows from South’s initial work and that of others who have expanded the dialog concerning classification, but is drawn broadly in an effort to capture the flexibility and contextual nature of artifact use and intention on two twentieth century farmsteads in Texas. Initially, the artifacts are discussed in relation to the possible activities and/or uses a certain item appears to reflect based on the context of the sites. These categories are presented in Table 6.1. They were developed with a degree of fluidity, recognizing that these are not the only appropriate categories. Hopefully such classification does not inhibit or restrict interpretation, but provides a method for organizing the data assemblages to facilitate further critical comparisons between the two generations represented at the households.

Table 6.1: Adapted artifact classification categories for the Davis and Taylor households

- **Tools**
 - Household
 - Non-Food and Drink Related
 - Food and Drink Related
 - Agriculture and Construction
 - Fishing
 - Health and Hygiene
 - Arms
 - Writing
- **Personal Items and Adornment**
- **Tobacco**
- **Toys/Games**
- **Currency**
- **Architectural Items**

6.3: ARTIFACTS RECOVERED AT THE DAVIS SITE

The following provides an initial overview of the artifacts as they have been divided and classified according to the categories outlined in Table 6.1 and provides the baseline data for Chapter 8, a comparative exploration of the two household assemblages within the context of Jim Crow and the turbulent first half of the twentieth century in the rural southern United States.

6.3.1: HOUSEHOLD TOOLS

For the purposes of this dissertation, household tools include items that were used in direct association with the actual house and activities that took place within the house and immediate yard area. This includes food and drink related artifacts such as ceramics, and tin cans, as well as household artifacts not typically directly associated with food and drink. Items classified within this general category are diverse and form an important group in terms of the variety of representation present among the two assemblages, and the implications of this variability between the households.

6.3.1.1: FOOD AND DRINK RELATED ARTIFACTS

Artifacts related to food and drink was among the most common identifiable objects collected during the excavations. While archaeologists often further divide food and drink into sub-categories such as preparation and consumption, I found this to be problematic due to the common multivalence of the items, particularly within the context of a rural area and economic poverty, which allowed for limited purchasing opportunities. People living in such situations may have had a greater propensity to inventively use and recycle items for tasks other than those intended by the manufacture. As an alternative to assigning further researcher derived subcategories, the artifacts related to food and drink are organized and discussed according to basic material types (ceramic, metal, glass, and faunal).

Ceramics

Ceramics are among the most pervasive artifacts that archaeologists consider. Their diagnostic features and preservation within even the most acidic soils provides a wealth of information to researchers. And their everyday use and association with the most basic and universal of human activities, eating, gives them a transcendent personal quality that is attractive

when trying to understand the past. A total of 140 ceramic vessel fragments, 5.1 percent of the total artifact assemblage, were identified at the Davis household including a variety of refined earthenwares and stonewares. This is a relatively small number in comparison to many twentieth century household sites, but not unusual based upon the results of excavations at similar rural tenant and small landowner households in East Texas (Moir and Jurney 1987). Formal currency was not common among the rural poor in this area and ceramics were a relatively expensive commodity.

The ceramics, as with the other artifacts present at the site are broken and fragmented and in many cases it was not possible to determine vessel form with any amount of certainty. Additionally, many vessel fragments display evidence of exposure to extreme heat likely reflective of midden deposits being burned to reduce waste accumulation. Choosing to error on the side of caution, small fragments questionable in form were assigned an unknown designation. This decision was made in part based upon the incredible variety of ceramic forms that were available as well as variations within forms, and an overall lack of standardization.

The majority of the ceramics, 57.9 percent, recovered during the excavations are refined earthenwares and most of these are undecorated or relatively low cost banded wares. The ceramics appear to have been collected and purchased in a piece-meal fashion, and not as a set. Stonewares accounted for the other 42.1 percent of the collection. No porcelains or other characteristically expensive wares were recovered. In total, 42.1 percent of the collected sherds (including all of the stonewares) appear to be utilitarian (storage or containers), 25.7 percent are hollow table wares, 12.9 percent are flat table wares, and 19.3 percent are of an undetermined form. The data is presented in Table 6.2. Table 6.3 provides the form percentages without the unknown included in the total, which raises the utilitarian ware to 52.2 percent of the

assembled. The high percentage of utilitarian stonewares is significant and suggests a reliance on sturdy highly functional wares, as opposed to fragile and often less versatile table wares. Utilitarian wares were easily purchased and readily available from local shops and potteries and some of the vessels may have come from the nearby Athens Pottery, in Athens, Texas. They were also less likely to break and require replacement and could be used for multiple purposes including storage, preparation and consumption.

The following provides specific information regarding the ceramics that were collected. A table is also provided for easy reference (Table 6.4). The categories in the table were used to classify the collections from both households. As a result, some of the ceramic types were not found at the Davis household, but are included in the table for comparative purposes because they were identified at the Taylor household.

Table 6.2: Ceramic Form Percentages at the Davis Household

Vessel Form	No. of Sherds	Percentage
Flat wares	18	12.9
Hollow wares	36	25.7
Utilitarian	59	42.1
Unknown	27	19.3
Total	140	100

Table 6.3: Ceramic Form Percentages at the Davis Household without the Unknown

Vessel Form	No. of Sherds	Percentage
Flat wares	18	15.9
Hollow wares	36	31.9
Utilitarian	59	52.2
Total	113	100

Table 6.4: Ceramic Totals and Percentages at the Davis Household

Ware Type	Decoration	No. of Sherds	Percentage
Stoneware		59	42.1
	Salt Glaze	5	3.6
	Alkaline Glaze	34	24.3
	Bristol Glaze	12	8.6
	Bristol Glaze w/Albany Slip	2	1.4
	Slip Glaze	5	3.6
	No Glaze	1	< 1
Refined Earthenwares		81	57.9
	Undecorated	53	37.9
	Molded	1	< 1
	Decalcomania	6	4.3
	Hand Painted	0	0
	Fiesta	0	0
	Gold Applique	0	0
	Solid Glaze	0	0
	Banded	21	15
	Gullet Stone	0	0
Porcelain		0	0
	Undecorated	0	0
	Molded	0	0
	Hand Painted	0	0
	Solid Glaze	0	0
Total		140	100

Refined Earthenwares

Refined earthenwares collected from the middens and yard areas at the Davis household include fragments of flat and hollow undecorated whitewares, sherds of a Green and pink floral decalware bowl, a blue and black banded bowl, and fragments of molded whiteware plate (Figure 6.1). Undecorated whitewares were the most common refined earthenware and accounted for 65 percent of the collection, followed by banded wares at 26 percent. No maker's marks were identified at this site.

As previously mentioned, undecorated, molded, and simple banded wares are both low cost ceramics that were readily available. The choice of these types of wares and their majority presence at the household is not surprising within the context of a rural tenant farm where cash income was low and mirrors assemblages from similar nearby sites (Moir and Journey 1987). In Joe Saunder's article, *The Material Manifestations of Social Stratification among Tenant Farming Families*, which was developed through an analysis of SMU's Richland Chambers data, he noted some evidence of patterning in ceramic usage that suggested a higher percentage of undecorated wares among tenant farmers across racial lines in comparison to land owners (Saunders 1982: 188).

Decal wares were also relatively inexpensive and began appearing on American ceramics around 1900. The wares can be distinguished from earlier transfer prints by their sharp, crisp edges and polychrome patterns. The decals are typically brightly colored and often include details such as shading that were not possible through transfer print methods. While never considered cost prohibitive, they were particularly affordable after 1930 when American producers began making decals in house instead of relying on European imports. The wares quickly gained popularity throughout the first half of the twentieth century and by 1920 were

available as patterns on a variety of low cost earthenwares (Majewski and O'Brien 1987:146). Decal ceramics provided an affordable, colorful, and durable alternative to undecorated wares for people who enjoyed decoration, but could not afford porcelain and hand painted wares, which were typically more expensive.



Figure 6.1: Sample of Refined Earthenwares identified at the Davis Household (S. Loftus).

Stoneware

A variety of stoneware was collected including fragments of salt, Bristol, and alkaline glaze vessels primarily dating to the late-nineteenth to early-twentieth century (Figure 6.2). Sherds from two salt glaze vessels were recovered and include fragments of a grey utilitarian

storage vessel with lug handles, and a light grey rimmed bowl. Both vessels have an Albany slip type interior (Greer 2005: 96). Salt glazed vessels were primarily produced prior to the twentieth century and first appeared in the Rhein region of Germany in the fifteenth century. Salt was thrown directly into the kiln during the firing process, reacting with the heat and clay to produce a hard transparent glaze. The visual effect of salt glaze is often described as “orange peel” due to the dimpled pattern that results on the vessel surface. Salt glazed vessels with an interior Albany-type slip, such as those found at the Davis household, usually post-date 1860 in Texas (Greer 2005:180).

Fragments of an interior and exterior Bristol glazed crock or jug were also present, along with a heavily crazed Bristol glazed butter churn lid, (Figure 6.3). Bristol glazes were introduced to the United States from England and dominated the utilitarian pottery industry beginning in the early-twentieth century. Initially the glaze was paired with the interior Albany-type slip mentioned above, but by around 1920, Bristol glaze was applied to both the interior and exterior of commercially produced vessels. The ceramics at the Davis household appear to date to this transitional period (Greer 2005:212).

The butter churn lid that was found would have been used by the family to produce butter and cheese from fresh milk and suggests that the Davis’s had a milk cow, or were able to acquire fresh milk from someone in the area. As described in Chapter 5, the lid was found near the edge of the house and no other artifacts were found in association with it aside from architectural materials. Photographs of tenant houses in the 1930s often show a butter churn lid hanging on the interior wall of the house as a place of safe keeping. When not in use for making butter, the rest of the churn, the base portion, could be used for other purposes including storage or other food preparation activities, particularly in settings where few ceramics were owned by the

household (Agee and Evans 1939). It is likely the lid came to rest where it was found after the wood walls of the structure collapsed.



Figure 6.2: Sample of stonewares collected at the Davis Household (S. Loftus).



Figure 6.3: Heavily crazed Bristol Glaze butter churn lid at the Davis household (S. Loftus).

The broken sherds of an alkaline glazed jug were also identified (Figure 6.4). The vessel appears to have been ovoid in form with lug handles and of considerable size, possibly holding upwards of 2 gallons of liquid. The glaze is a drippy olive green with streaks and patches of light blue. Southern Alkaline Glaze, as it is often referred to, was developed in South Carolina at the Pottersville Shop outside of the town of Edgefield. Pottersville was the first in a long line of potteries operated by enslaved people that produced both basic utilitarian stoneware for plantation use, as well as, highly artistic wares (Figure 6.16; Greer 2005: 202; Todd 2008; Steen 2011: 22).



Figure 6.4: Sample of Alkaline Glaze jug fragments collected at the Davis Household (S. Loftus).

Following emancipation many African Americans continued working in the pottery industry, utilizing these skills to establish kilns and pottery shops of their own. These shops were heavily patronized by local black communities. Recent excavations at the Sarah and Ransom Williams farmstead outside of Austin, Texas suggest that African Americans would go out of their way to support distant black owned pottery shops, as they did other black owned businesses, forming economic networks among communities across rural areas (Boyd et al. In Press).

Along this line, it is likely some of the vessels at the Davis household may have been purchased from the Athens Tile and Pottery Co., which was located approximately twenty miles north, and was the closest kiln to the Bethel community. The kiln operated in Athens from 1885 through the mid-1970s until it was shut down by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) for failing to meet current worker safety codes (Miller 2008:51).

Photographs taken in 1890 and 1905 of pottery workers at Athens include African American men alongside several white workers. Additionally, a circa 1935 photograph of the “crew” includes six African American men (Figure 6.5 and 6.6). Depending on the circumstances, local blacks may have been encouraged to patronize the business given that they had a history of employing African Americans.

Overall the ceramic assemblage, while small in quantity, provides significant information concerning everyday material life at the Davis household. Comprised primarily of hollow and utilitarian wares, and including a high percentage of stonewares, it is apparent that the Davis ceramics were highly functional, readily available, and low cost. Few decorative wares, or flat wares were identified and no porcelains were found, which are typically categorized as more expensive specialty wares. As will be seen in the following chapter this differs significantly from the Taylor household ceramic assemblage, which is diverse and includes a range of various decorated table wares including porcelain.



Figure 6.5: Athens Pottery Workers circa 1905 (Miller 2008: 23)



Figure 6.6: Athens Pottery Workers circa 1935 – 1936 (Miller 2008: 50)

Metal and Glass Items

Various metal and glass items classified as food and drink related household tools were also collected. As discussed in Chapter 5, metal was the most predominant artifact material at the site, comprising 56.9 percent of the collection. Glass was the second most common at 33.3 percent. Lard buckets, crown caps, can fragments, bottles, and jars were all identified. Several artifacts associated with home canning were among these including milk glass canning jar lid inserts, a zinc screw top lid, and fragments of colorless and aqua glass canning jars (Figure 6.7). The presence of these materials suggests that the family was actively preserving fruits and vegetables, and possibly meats.

Commercially available mason jars became common in the 1890s and were first produced by the Ball Company of Illinois. They continue to be produced and sold today in a variety of forms. The jars that were recovered at the Davis household include both aqua glass Ball jar fragments (circa 1900 – 1920) and colorless glass threaded jar rim fragments, which

have a less diagnostic date range (Toulouse 1969: 29). Additionally, many unidentified flat ferrous metal fragments were collected and these artifacts are potentially associated with metal canned goods, which became increasingly popular in the United States following the introduction of the sanitary can in 1905 (Busch 1981: 97).

Canning was at the center of the rural food revolution launched by the Agricultural Extension Service in the first decades of the twentieth century. During this period field agents implemented a series of educational programs directed at alleviating nutritional deficiencies and food shortages among rural southern populations. This included separate programs of educational outreach to segregated black communities across Texas, particularly farming communities in the eastern part of the state. The Texas “Negro” division, as it was referred to, was one of the most successful programs in the country and secured greater funding than any other segregated unit (Scott 1970: 206 and Reid 2000). Extension agents held community based meetings focused on teaching people how to preserve and can fresh fruits and vegetables during harvest seasons so that in winter months they could better supplement the grain, meat, and the root vegetable meals typically produced (Reid 2000: 37). Aside from health benefits, canning also allowed people to further economic independence and maintain self-sustainability within a cash-poor setting for a minimal investment in jars. For black tenant farmers living within the context of Jim Crow furthering independence was of great importance.



Figure 6.7: Canning jars and lids (S. Loftus).

Evidence of liquor consumption was also found. The Davis's would have been occupying the household during prohibition in the United States (1920 – 1933), and also before and after. While no direct evidence of moonshine or its production was found at either site, this region of Texas was notorious for home distilleries, where spirits were typically produced out of fermented corn, with some claims that sugarcane was also used (Loftus 2008). Interviews and oral histories collected in East Texas often indicate that people had their own stills, or at least knew someone in the community with a still from whom they could acquire alcohol as needed.

Neighboring Freestone County was known as the bootleg capital of Texas and one of the biggest producers of illicit liquor in the state. The small farming community of Young (or Young's Mill) located across the Trinity River, exported mass quantities of moonshine, known at the time as Freestone County Bourbon De Luxe. Moonshine was typically bottled in inexpensive and readily available "fruit jars", similar to the canning jars and mason jars recovered at the site; however, given that canning jars were multi-purpose items it is difficult to say what the jars at

the Davis house contained, but the family likely used them for a combination of things and it's possible that in addition to fruits and vegetables, a jar may also have contained liquor (Leffler 2010).

As has been pointed out in numerous studies, alcohol was not just for recreation but also served important medicinal purposes within many communities. This was particularly true of rural communities where access to doctors and hospitals was limited and home remedies were heavily relied upon. Alcohol was also the main ingredient in many commercial pharmaceuticals, which often contained a high percentage of the substance. Previous studies have noted that African American informants who have provided oral histories covering this time period recall that spirits, and in particular whiskey, was used as a base for many homeopathic remedies and cures (Wilkie 2003: 126). Walter Jackson, who along with his brother, inherited the plantation from their father Benjamin Jackson, wrote that whiskey was believed to be a cure all for many ailments, and recalled a man in the black community who survived a rattle snake bite treated with a bottle of whiskey (Jackson circa 1930).

From 1935 to 1963, the United States Government required companies to emboss all liquor bottles with "Federal Law Forbids Sale or Reuse of this Bottle". The law was part of an effort to combat the reuse of bottles by home distillers who sold unregulated alcohol (Lindsey 2015). A bottle of Wilken Family Whiskey with the government warning label on it was found within one of the middens at the Davis household (Figure 6.8). Based on the images, appearance, and embossing, it dates to 1936, shortly after the labeling law came into effect.

The choice of Wilken's Family Whiskey is interesting. The Wilken's marketed their whiskey as a high quality, yet affordable product that was within the price range of the average working man. The brand was frequently advertised as a product synonymous with domesticity

that should be enjoyed by everyone in the family, with the exception of women, who were relegated to using the product for cooking. A 1935 promotional cookbook, *The Wilken Family Home Cooking Album*, contains family portraits, simple and affordable recipes, and photos of the Wilken's performing everyday activities such as feeding chickens, shucking corn, and riding in a horse-drawn wagon (Wilken Family 1935). This possible significance of the Davis's purchasing Wilken's Whiskey is further discussed in Chapter 8.



Figure 6.8: Wilken Family Whiskey bottle, produced circa 1936 (S. Loftus).

Additional evidence of alcohol consumption includes a late-nineteenth to early-twentieth century dark olive green wine bottle base with a mamelon kick-up found near the east side of the house. Fragments of an “Old Taylor” whiskey bottle were also identified, however, based on the location of the bottle fragments which were just below the surface and not in direct association

with either midden feature, the bottle appears to be post-occupational and may have been deposited after the Davis's were no longer living in the structure.

Fragments of beer bottles and soda bottles were also identified at the site, along with five crown caps. The only diagnostic soda bottle recovered during the excavations was a broken aqua "Crown Bottling Works" bottle embossed "Palestine, Texas" (Figure 6.9). A 1905 newspaper advertisement in the Palestine Daily Herald offers that the Crown factory bottled the highest grade of soft drinks with a specialty in Dr. Pepper, Coca-Cola, and Soda Waters (Palestine Daily Herald, Vol. 4, No. 96, Ed. 1, Monday, October 30, 1905).

During the Jim Crow era, the Crown Bottling Works employed local African Americans as factory workers. A display in the Black History Room of the Museum of East Texas History in Palestine presents a newspaper article documenting the retirement of two black men who worked at the bottling plant for several decades beginning in the 1940s. The display was curated by local African American women in response to a general lack of black history representation within the collection. As mentioned previously, employment opportunities for blacks in East Texas during this period were often limited to low paying agricultural work and jobs in black owned and operated businesses. As such, Crown's employment of African Americans was significant to the local community.



Figure 6.9: Aqua Crown Bottling Works Bottle, Palestine, Texas (S. Loftus).

Glass dishes were also found including a fragment of a colorless glass tumbler, as well as three decorative pressed glass fragments that appear to be from a bowl, a possible candy dish, and a plate. Often referred to as Depression Glass, pressed glass dishes were inexpensive, and frequently given away as promotional items from the 1920s – 1940s. The plate fragment that was found is made of green glass, a popular color, and is pressed with a pattern known as “Flower Garden with Butterflies”. The pattern was produced in the late 1920s by the U.S. Glass Company based in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania (Schroy 2010: 211). The manufactures of the other two glass dishes were not identified, but the patterns and styles are not uncommon for the time period.

Faunal Remains

Faunal remains at both sites were relatively scarce considering the excavations focused on midden deposits. The paucity of bone is likely a result of the acidic soils characterizing the site, which are known to rapidly accelerate deterioration and possible secondary use of food remains as fodder. In total, six bone fragments were collected from the site, two of which exhibit evidence of having been burned. All of the bones appear to be from medium to large mammals, but due to fragmentation and deterioration only three specimens were identified by species. All three identifiable bones appear to be pig and include the fragment of a humerus, a tibia, and part of a tooth.

The presence of pig bone at the site is assumed to be an indication that the Davis's were consuming pork. This corresponds with oral history that suggests the annual slaughter of a hog was an essential part of a rural family's diet in this part of East Texas (Johnson 2013). Archaeological evidence from excavations at a tenant farm in the adjacent county of Navarro revealed pork consumption appeared to be five times higher than any other meat source (Sharpless 1999). Slaughtering practices and the importance of pigs within people's diets are further discussed in Chapter 5.

6.3.1.2: NON-FOOD AND DRINK RELATED

At the Davis household, the collection of non-food and drink related items were somewhat limited. For this dissertation, these are items defined as household tools that were used within the house or yard areas to perform activities related to the home and were not necessarily related to the production, consumption, storage, or procurement of food and drink, though it is

possible their functions may have included these activities in some form. This includes artifacts related to lighting.

Electricity did not reach rural areas in this section of Anderson County until after WWII. In *Fertile Ground Narrow Choices*, an account of women's lives on Texas farmsteads from 1900 – 1940, Rebecca Sharpless found that most rural farmsteads lacked electricity until at least the 1930s and it does not appear the Davis's were wired for electricity (Sharpless 1999:89). The electrification of this area is further discussed in Chapter 7. Several fragments of oil lamps were identified and aqua and colorless chimney lamp glass was collected. These glass lamps would have been fueled by kerosene and provided the only source of light once the sun went down.

Other non-food and drink household related assemblage items, include several fragments of the bases and sides of metal washtubs that have rusted and deteriorated over time as well as two washtub handles. Washtubs, particularly No. 3 galvanized steel washtubs were a common multipurpose item on farmsteads in rural East Texas and could be easily acquired locally, or through a catalogue. Sears & Roebucks sold them for forty-two cents in 1927, and they continue to be sold today for various purposes (Figure 6.10).

The tubs were used for gathering and heating water for washing clothes, washing dishes, making lye soap, personal bathing, and other household undertakings (Johnson 2013). There was no running water throughout most of this region of Texas until the second half of the twentieth century and washtubs provided a place for people to store water as well as perform various activities. The bored-well discussed in Chapter 5 provided the Davis family with the fresh water they needed on a day to day basis, but having a working well in close proximity to the house, was not a possibility for many rural people. Often people in this region, particularly tenants and

sharecroppers had to walk significant distances to acquire water from a natural spring or stream, or from a neighbors well (Moir et al 1987).



Figure 6.10: Washtub handles (S. Loftus).

A fragment of a cast-iron stove door was also recovered during the excavations. The stove would have provided heat for warming water during the winter months, as well as a fire and space for cooking. As previously discussed the stove pipe exit was still visible along the collapsed eastern wall of the structure and the Davis's appear to have relied upon a wood-stove as opposed to a fireplace and chimney for cooking and general warmth.

A knife with a 2.2 inch long blade and aluminum handle was also recovered. The knife is similar in style to aluminum handled knives that were issued with soldiers mess kits during WWI and likely dates to the 1920s or 30s (Figure 6.11). It may have served multiple functions, possibly being used during the annual slaughter and curing of hogs, which provided the most

important meat source for people living in this region, or for more general everyday purposes around the farm.



Figure 6.11: Aluminum handle knife (S. Loftus).

6.3.2: TOOLS RELATED TO AGRICULTURAL AND CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES

The Davis's were engaged in agriculture as tenants for the Jackson family producing cotton, corn, and other staples; and also producing their own food and surplus crops for sale and exchange. Many items related to agricultural activities and possible farm and household construction were identified during the excavations including fence staples, barbed wire, and bailing wire, as well as fragments of oil cans, a wrench, and a cast-iron pick (Figure 6.12). The fencing materials were likely used for animal husbandry and the wrench and pick were multi-purpose tools that could have been used for a variety of tasks.

Materials associated with planting, harvesting crops and raising cattle, such as animal tack were also identified. A horse bit was collected along with a variety of buckles. The presence of materials related to agriculture is not surprising based upon oral history and journal records, which document that James Davis worked as the overseer of the plantation lands during the early-twentieth century and was responsible for taking care of cattle run on the land after cotton production slowed. The Davis household is adjacent to the main cattle pens and stock pond.



Figure 6.12: Artifacts related to construction and agricultural activities (Oil can cap, buckles, horse bit, wrench, pick) (S. Loftus).

6.3.4: TOOLS RELATED TO FISHING

Fishing was important to the community both in terms of sustenance, as well as, recreation. As with home gardens and canning, fishing provided people with a measure of economic independence and freedom within an environment where such independence was crucial for physical and emotional wellbeing. A hollow cylindrical shaped piece of lead was found near the bored well feature described in Chapter 5 (Figure 6.13). The lead may have been used as a fishing weight or sinker, possibly even in association with a small net as opposed to a casting rod.

The cylinder measures approximately 1.2 inches (3 cm) and weighs 22.6 grams which would have been excessive and cumbersome for rod casting, but may have been used as a simple weight to drop the line from the bank in order to catch bottom dwelling species such as catfish. This is not an unlikely scenario in this region of the southern United States. Fishing in nearby

streams, particularly Cat Fish Creek located to the east of the Davis home, provided an important dietary staple to community members and many of the people I spoke with mentioned fish as a part of their regular diet (Anonymous; Johnson 2013).



Figure 6.13: Lead cylinder, possibly used as a fishing weight (S. Loftus).

6.3.5: HEALTH AND HYGIENE TOOLS

Items related to personal health and hygiene include five possible medicine bottles, or patent medicines in colorless, aqua, and amber fragments. The fragments exhibit the classic rectangular indented front or side paneled form that dominated the industry from the late-nineteenth century through the Great Depression. None of the bottles are embossed, and the labels did not survive in the acidic soils of East Texas, so it was not possible to determine what they contained.

Aside from evidence of patent medicine use by the Davis household, fragments of a Moroline jar and a Chesebroug Vaseline jar were collected, both of which are petroleum jelly products. Petroleum jelly was discovered in 1859 by chemist Robert Augustus Chesebrough who observed Pennsylvania oil field workers rubbing petroleum drill residues on their skin to heal

minor cuts and burns. After devising a method for extracting and purifying the substance, he promoted the product as “Wonder Jelly” and it gained popularity across American demographics. Chesebrough patented the product under the name Vaseline in 1872 (Vaseline 2014). People across class and color lines used petroleum jelly as a multi-purpose ointment that as with whiskey formed the base of a variety of home remedies and herbal salves. It was also used and continues to be used as a moisturizer and hair product. Women have relied on it as a lubricant during childbirth and people mixed it with various herbs to produce cures for venereal disease. Laurie Wilkie has a section devoted to this in *The Archaeology of Mothering: An African American Midwives Tale*.

Access to a doctor in rural East Texas was rare and outside medical help was only sought in extreme cases, for everyday matters and even for more serious illnesses, people within the community relied upon the knowledge of elders coupled with traditional healing practices that were passed down through generations (Johnson 2013). Mrs. Johnson recalled that when she was growing up in the 1930s and her brother broke his leg, they did not take him to the doctor, but treated him at home. “Mama made mud clay out of vinegar and clay, and kept his leg wrapped. And he got well” (Johnson 2013).

Mrs. Johnson also remembered her mother making a tea out of horehound, a perennial with small white flowers that was grown in the household garden and prescribed for general sickness. Horehound has several medicinal uses including relief of coughing, indigestion, and menstrual cramps (Grieve 2014). She also recalled her mother giving her a substance referred to as “Black Draught” sold in a box (Johnson 2013). In an interview with archaeologists working in Brazoria County, Texas, an African American woman recalled her mother prescribing Black Draught for a variety of illness,

Mama would say she was cleaning you out. She'd give you Black Draught. That was another thing I couldn't hardly stand. Triple 6 and Black Draught. Not that syrupy Black Draught, the powder. She would put it in your hand, and see that you licked it off. It would gum all up. It was nasty stuff too. I hated it. It would clean you out. She'd say, 'Does your head hurt? Well, we need to clean you out.' My mother, in October or the last of September she'd line us all up and give us a dose of Black Draught and Castor Oil. Getting out all the impurities. And you were clean! So you wouldn't get sick. Mama would make everyone of us take that Black Draught and boy, I would feel good. Powder is what I took. You would steam it. My mama used to boil it and make a tea. And that was bitter! Bitter as gall. I didn't ever taste gall, but I heard people talk about it. Bitter as Quinine. I know what that is. I hated Black Draught until I learned to take it dry." (Wright 2014).

The vast majority of professional medical doctors in Anderson County were white during this period and segregation and racial discrimination prevented most blacks from accessing the same medical care as whites. Even if professional medical care was a viable option, there was justified mistrust of white institutions as a whole and this further discouraged blacks from seeking medical attention from white doctors. Instead, effective traditional practices were used and sometimes combined and supplemented with newly available patent medicines, which were accessible to community members through catalogues and could be purchased at local stores.

This phenomenon of limited professional medical treatment and care among African Americans continues to plague this part of East Texas. A 2011 newspaper article covering the "Stroke Belt", a name given to a group of East Texas counties with poor health statistics and below average life-expectancy, concedes that Anderson County has one of the earliest mortality rates in the state. White males in Anderson County currently die at an average age of 73, seven years earlier than most Texans, and black males typically only live to the age of 65, one of the largest disparities by race in the state. In comparison, statistics for someone living in the United

States averages 79, fourteen years longer than statistics for a black man in Anderson County. According to the author, “In a still largely racially divided county, many blacks believe that the health care system is on the other side of the metaphorical tracks.” (Ramshaw 2011).

6.3.6: ARMS

Weapons and ammunition are multi-purpose tools associated with hunting, protection, and recreation. Most can be used interchangeably, making it difficult to determine specific function without contextual details. At the Davis household artifacts related to arms were limited to eleven shell casings (Figure 6.14). Four center fire shot-gun shell headstamps were collected along with seven rim fired 9-mm brass cartridges, and one .22. Three of the shot gun shells are stamped "REM UMC NEW CLUB No. 12" which was produced from circa 1911 - 1934 and one is stamped “WINCHESTER LEADER No. 12” manufactured prior to 1933 (). Of the seven 9-mm cartridges, five are stamped with a single impressed “U”, one has no markings, and one has a diamond headstamp. The “U” stands for Union Metallic Cartridge, which merged with Remington in 1912. The stamp was used for several decades and is not particularly diagnostic. Western Cartridge Company used the diamond headstamp design from 1910 to circa 1927 when it was replaced by a bulls-eye. The company made ammo for their own independent distribution, as well as provided ammo to Sears and Roebuck which could be purchased through a catalogue (Steinbauer 2014).

The assortment of ammunition found at the Davis household would have loaded a .12 gauge shotgun, a 9mm and a 22. The shells likely represent ammunition from a gun or guns owned by the Davis family, but it is also possible one or more of the cartridges, such as the isolated .22, were introduced by someone outside the family at a later date. Guns likely meant a great deal in terms of providing subsistence independence through hunting and also offering

some sense of security within an environment that was frequently violent and characterized by relentless racial tensions. While shotguns are frequently used for hunting, the 9mm and the .22 are weapons that are more typical of self-defense. The anxiety of unpredictable and often random acts of violence perpetrated upon members of the black community, often in association with the Ku Klux Klan, were constant in the daily lives of African Americans in this region of Texas and having a gun may have provided some limited amount of comfort (Anonymous 2013).

As far as hunting, wild game was an important part of peoples diet in rural East Texas and aside from annually slaughtering a hog, people relied upon raccoon, possum, squirrel, and deer meat as sources of protein (Johnson 2013; Anonymous 2013). There was also a demand for mink pelts from the fur industry. Minks were common in East Texas during the early to mid-twentieth century, but their numbers have since dwindled. One local resident recalled hunting minks as a teenager to supplement his family's income. They would skin them and sell the furs to a middle-man in Palestine who would in turn sell the pelts to garment industries in Chicago and across the Midwest (Anonymous 2013).

Table 6.5: Shotgun shell headstamps and cartridges collected at the Davis household

Make and Gauge	Number	Provenience
Shotgun shell headstamp - "REM UMC No. 12 NEW CLUB with star stamp	2	Unit 10 – Level 2 Unit 13 – Level 2
Shotgun shell headstamp, "WINCHESTER LEADER No.12"	1	Unit 10 – Level 3
Shotgun shell headstamp heavily corroded, illegible	1	Unit 9 – Level 3
.22 rim fired "U" stamp	1	Unit 8 – Level 2
9 mm rim fire, diamond stamp	1	Unit 8 – Level 2
9mm rim fire, "U" stamp	5	Unit 5 – Level 4 Unit 6 – Level 3 Unit 10 – Level 2 and 3 Unit 13 – Level 2
9 mm, rim fired, no stamp	1	Unit 10 – Level 1



Figure 6.14: Shotgun shell headstamps and cartridges collected at the Davis household (S. Loftus)

6.3.7: PERSONAL ITEMS AND APPAREL

Personal items and artifacts that would typically be associated with someone's apparel such as clothing related items offer a rare personal glimpse in to people's lives and can provide information on taste, style, preferences, economic wealth, and daily activity. Buttons are one of the most common clothing related artifacts found at archaeological sites due to their durability and also their propensity for loss and replacement. Several metal buttons were found during the Davis household excavations, most of which are round with a flexible shank and heavily corroded. No legible maker's marks were identified on the buttons and they were likely fasteners for pants or possibly work shirts or jackets. A couple of two-hole buttons were also found, one metal and the other brown Bakelite, along with several metal snaps that appear to have once served as shirt fasteners (Figure 6.15). The majority of the buttons look like they fell off of work style shirts and pants typically associated with labor, which is not unusual in the context of a working tenant farm.

A possible silver plated money clip was also identified. No other evidence of official currency was found. Aside from the possible money clip, the personal items collected at the Davis household appear to be primarily related to clothing and dress. One exception is a flat brass oval that appears to be part of a purse closure or clasp for a handbag. Additionally, part of a plastic buckle, possible associated with dress was found. Few items that would typically be considered luxury items were collected. The lack of personal items likely underscores the cash poor nature of tenant farming. Most necessary items were produced at home if possible, whether food or clothing. The lack of many items that would be considered personal or luxury items may stem from a combination of factors related to poverty and the material austerity that

accompanied it during the early to mid-twentieth century, as well as personal decisions and preferences for relying on items that could be produced within the home.

One possible exception to this is an “extract” bottle (Figure 6.16). The embossing around the base indicates the bottle was manufactured by Owens Illinois in 1930 at their Alton Illinois Plant. According to Bill Lindsey a similarly sized bottle and shape are listed in the 1930 production catalogue under the “extracts” page. Based on the bottle height which measures approximately 6 ¼ inches, the container held 4 oz of liquid (Lindsey 2015). Without the labeling, it is difficult to determine with any certainty what was inside. Bottles from this period were often sold and used for a variety of products. However, the shape and size the bottle suggest it probably contained a valued liquid, possibly flavoring extract, toilet water, perfume, or even a condiment such as hot sauce. The base of a similar bottle was collected at the Taylor household suggesting the product was used in both households.



Figure 6.15: Personal Items and Apparel identified at the Davis Household (S. Loftus).



Figure 6.16: “Extract” bottle possibly containing a flavoring extract, medicine, perfume, toilet water, or a condiment (Lindsey 2015). The base portion of a similar bottle was identified at the Taylor household (S. Loftus).

6.3.8: TOBACCO

Fragments of amber tobacco snuff jars were one of the most frequent diagnostic artifacts recovered from the Davis household, a pattern that is in keeping with other sites in the region dating to this era (Figure 6.17). Tobacco is indigenous to the Americas and the practice of sniffing and smoking it was adopted by the Portuguese and other European colonists who initiated commercial farming and production of the weed both overseas and on American

plantations. Inhaling and dipping tobacco in the form of snuff was widely popular in the United States through the 1930s and the product was typically packaged in metal or glass jars.

Both complete snuff jars and fragments of jars were recovered from the midden deposits. Snuff jars have a characteristic square shape and cylindrical wide mouth that makes them easy to identify even in fragmented form, and are one of the more common artifacts found on rural East Texas farmsteads. The base of snuff jars produced throughout the early-twentieth century is commonly embossed with a series of small raised dots. There continues to be considerable debate as to what the dots signify; some argue they refer to the strength of the tobacco and others claim the dots are signatures for certain glass manufacturing facilities (Lindsey 2015). The snuff jars found at the Davis site had two, three, and four dots on the base suggesting the later of the two, unless the user or users frequently changed their strength preference.

Snuff was popular among both men and women in the South and oral and written accounts suggest that women in East Texas, regardless of color partook in snuff. However, contrary to European practice, many southerners would mix snuff with saliva and form a paste, placing the mixture between the lip and gum to ingest orally, as opposed to sniffing the powder through the nose. In an 1889 book titled *The Tramp at Home*, a conversation between a northern snuff salesman and another man traveling by train across Louisiana speaks to the common practice of snuff consumption among Southern women, as well as ideas concerning gender and class at the time.

“They ought to prosper down here,” said the mild-eyed old gentleman. “The soil is rich, the climate genial; what’s the matter – laziness?”

“Snuffs the matter,” said the younger man, with a self-complacent smirk.

“Snuff?”, repeated the mild-eyed old man.

“Yes; they’ve got the climate, and they’ve got the soil. It’s all the women’s fault they are kept so poor.”

“How so?”

“The women spend all their money on snuff: they eat snuff from morning until night. That’s what makes them so lazy and shiftless and sallow.”.....

“I travel all over the south and sell merchants snuff. They sell it to women, and the women eat it.”....“ I sell millions of dollars’ worth a year”....

“Southern women buy every year four million dollars’ worth of snuff’

“And Northern women?”

“Oh, Northern women seldom use it; although the factory women of New England eat a good deal” (Meriwether 1889: 60)

Excavations associated with the 1980s Richland Creek Reservoir survey, which documented dozens of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century East Texas farmsteads occupied by tenants and owners, and both whites and blacks frequently included evidence of snuff consumption regardless of ownership status and/or racial affiliation. Snuff jars often accounted for 5% or more of the total diagnostic glass assemblages at these sites (Moir and Journey 1987: 69).



Figure 6.17: Amber Snuff Bottle Fragments and Complete Bottle (S. Loftus).

A metal tobacco can lid and a Bakelite pipe bowl provide additional evidence of tobacco consumption. The pipe bowl is black with a mottled amber horizontal band that wraps all the way around giving the appearance of a wood inlay (Figure 6.18). The stem is broken off and the bowl is partially melted, possibly the result of the midden deposits being burned periodically in order to reduce and maintain waste accumulation.

Bakelite was an early form of plastic that was popular throughout the early-twentieth century and Bakelite smoking pipes were produced by a number of manufacturers in the United States. Due to Bakelite's sensitivity to heat, the bowl itself was usually comprised of a more fire resistant material, most commonly meerschaum. The entire bowl or the interior of the bowl was typically screwed on and this is true for the Davis pipe. While the interior bowl is missing, the internal threading where the bowl would have attached remains apparent. Bakelite pipes were a

less expensive alternative to solid meerschaum pipes but offered a sleek look and substitute for more traditional wood pipes (Mirken 1980: 621). Given the overall lack of personal and leisure artifacts that were identified, the pipe was likely a valued possession.



Figure 6.18: Black Bakelite pipe bowl with a brown faux-wood Bakelite inlay, burned (S. Loftus).

6.3.9: ARTIFACTS RELATED TO ARCHITECTURE

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Davis home was a board and batten wood frame structure that was converted to hay storage in the 1950s. The excavations primarily focused on the yard areas and midden deposits, but many items related to architecture were collected. Most predominately, nails and roof tacks. Close to 450 wire nails of various sizes were found. These nails typically date post 1900 in Texas, which makes sense within this context. Additionally, eight cut or square nails dating to the nineteenth century were collected. The presence of the earlier cut nails within a twentieth century context suggests people were recycling materials from

elsewhere on the plantation. The reuse and repurposing of materials, particularly architectural ones, was common among rural farmsteaders in East Texas, both tenants and landowners, and evidence of recycling was also found at the Taylor household (Moir and Jurney 1987).

Other items related to architecture include fragments of aqua window glass. Based upon the photograph, the structure contained at least one window along the western side of the house. Descriptions of tenant houses from the 1930s and 40s often describe windowless structures, or windows with no glass panes that allowed bugs, vermin, and rain to enter (Agee 1939). The presence of glass windows suggests that the Davis's home may have been more comfortable than many average tenant farm structures. Fragments of plank wood siding were also found, as well as, sections of corrugated sheet-metal from the later hay-storage addition. A metal door hinge was also collected. The hinge is simple and plain in design and may have been part of the house or an outbuilding, such as smokehouse or barn. Several fragments of speckled green asphalt roof shingles were also identified along with several roofing tacks. The roof shingles found at the Davis site appear to be identical to shingles encountered at the Taylor household, a phenomenon that suggests materials for both houses were purchased at the same time, or from the same source. These materials may have been supplied by the Jackson family to their tenants for the upkeep of the structures. The Davis household is believed to pre-date the Taylor structure and evidence of similar shingles suggests that the homes were maintained and kept up to some extent over time.

Fragments of machine-made red brick as well as complete machine-made red bricks were also found along with a few small chunks of soft white lime mortar. These artifacts were scattered across the midden deposits within the yard area and aside from the previously discussed

row of dry laid bricks uncovered in Unit 8 , the brick and mortar were diffuse and not suggestive of any intact structural features.

6.4 SUMMARY

Overall, the collection of artifacts identified at the Davis household corresponds at a basic analysis level with previous research carried out on tenant farms and small landowning farms in East Texas (Moir et al. 1987: 117). When looking comparatively at the data that was collected during the Richland Creek Reservoir Project described in the previous chapter, the collection is within the range of a typical tenant farm artifact collection for the period and reflects the general austerity and lack of personal and luxury items encountered at these sites. The overall composition of the ceramic assemblage, which archaeologists often use when considering wealth and expendable income also reflects this. The ceramics consist of low cost undecorated earthenwares, decal wares, and utilitarian stonewares with no evidence of porcelain or other typically more expensive decorative luxury wares. Additionally, the wares are predominantly highly functional utilitarian wares, 42.1 percent, that could serve multiple purposes within a household. Only 12.9 percent appear to be flat serving wares and no decorative wares, teacups, platters, or other specialty type wares were identified.

Evidence of self-sufficiency is also present at the site. Home canning, preserving, and butter making is apparent and Mason jars, canning jar lids, washtubs, and a stoneware butter churn were all collected. Conversations with locals recall a time of extreme self-sufficiency when people relied on home gardens, berries, fruit trees, fish from local streams, wild game, and limited livestock to survive. The artifacts collected at the household conform in many ways to what one would expect to see in a tenancy farm setting from this period, during which people survived with very little monetary wealth and relied primarily on farming skills and barter

exchange with neighbors to get by. The general lack of personal items, toys, and other non-essentials suggest monetary spending was very limited. When money was spent, it appears to have been on highly functional items that could not be self-produced.

Interestingly, however, the presence of a high percentage of snuff bottles is indicative that some wealth was put towards personal recreation and enjoyment in a manner that was typical of the time period. Snuff reached its peak popularity in the southern United States during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, particularly among women (Meriwether 1889: 60). The consumption of tobacco is further evidenced by the presence of a decorative and stylish Bakelite pipe bowl that would have been used for smoking. Evidence of alcohol consumption is also present, whether recreationally or medicinally, and a possible flavoring extract bottle, or toilet water/perfume bottle was found, suggesting that when money was spent on luxury items, it was often on items offering a sensory experience as opposed to merely decorative items.

Overall the findings at the Davis household were not surprising for a tenancy setting in this region and are comparable to those recovered at similar nearby excavations (Moir and Journey 1987). Where our examination of the Davis household will differ from previous efforts considering African American farm life in East Texas during this period, is in a comparative analysis of the material culture at the Davis household, with that of their daughter, Viola Taylor and her husband Cleveland Taylor's household, occupied through the mid-1950s. This generational divide corresponds with a major shift in the culture and materialism of the United States following WWII including an increase in commercial production, targeted corporate marketing, and consumer choice and activism.

The following chapter presents an overview of the material culture collected at the Taylor household. This data is then considered comparatively in Chapter 8 building upon Sewell's

concept of events as “ruptures” with a transformative lag extending well beyond initial revolution (Sewell 1996: 845). This is a useful a metaphor for exploring the slow grueling transformation that occurred in various forms across the United States following emancipation through the Jim Crow era, and how these struggles may be evidenced in the material culture of people’s daily lives.

CHAPTER 7:

MATERIAL CULTURE AT THE TAYLOR HOUSEHOLD

As with the Davis household, the artifacts collected at the Taylor household point to a mix of daily practices and activities. By way of comparison, this house site yielded a larger collection of artifacts and a larger range of materials. A combination of reasons may account for this shift including finances to support greater purchasing power, a later period of occupation tied to greater product availability, marketing, personal consumption tendencies, political and social motivations, and site preservation. The following chapter provides an overview of the artifacts collected at the Taylor household and the possible activities with which they might be associated. The observable shift in consumption practices in comparison with the Davis assemblage, an earlier generation household, is explored and further considered in Chapter 8.

7.1 HOUSEHOLD TOOLS

The household tools identified at the Taylor site are diverse and the overall range of items recovered exceeds those found in association with the Davis household. This suggests an increase in the purchase and variety of commercially manufactured household goods used by the family. This is particularly evident in the ceramic and glass ware assemblages. In the following section, household artifacts are again split in to two groups for organizational and comparative reasons; food and drink related and non-food and drink related artifacts.

7.1.1 FOOD AND DRINK RELATED

As with the items collected from the Davis household, food and drink related artifacts comprise one of the largest groups of identifiable objects apart from architectural and

construction related materials. For the ease of presentation, the following sections subdivide the diagnostic food and drink related artifacts according to basic material types; ceramic, metal, and glass.

7.1.1.1 CERAMIC

There was a significant increase in the number and variety of ceramics collected at the Taylor household in comparison with the Davis assemblage. This appears to indicate a rise in consumption, either through purchase, or by another means of acquisition, such as trade, or as hand me downs. In total, 451 ceramic sherds were collected, comprising 4.8 percent of the total artifact assemblage. This is in comparison to 140 sherds collected at the Davis household, a substantial increase of almost 70 percent. While the number of ceramics increased dramatically, their percentages in comparison to the entire household assemblages are similar; 4.8 percent for the Taylor household and 5.1 percent for the Davis household. The artifacts include a variety of decorated and undecorated refined earthenwares, stonewares, and porcelains (Table 7.1).

As with the ceramics at the Davis household, the sherds were mostly heavily fragmented and it was often difficult to narrow down a specific form, in such cases form was designated unknown. The results are presented in Tables 7.1 and 7.2. Generally, the unknown ceramics are fragments of flat or hollow refined earthenwares that would have been used for serving, as opposed to utilitarian wares. The percentages vary significantly from the Davis assemblage when you look comparatively at the known forms that were identified (Table 7.3). Utilitarian wares, which make up the bulk of the ceramics at the Davis site, are present in the Taylor household collection, but the percentage is only 23.5 percent in comparison with 52.2 percent at the Davis household. Similar discrepancies exist for the percentage of flat and hollow wares that were identified. At the Davis household, 15.9 percent of the ceramics are flat wares and 31.9 percent are hollow wares, in comparison with 54.3 percent flat and 22.2 percent hollow at the Taylor

household. This marks a significant shift, hovering around a 38 percent increase in flat wares, and a 10 percent decrease in hollow wares.

In terms of ware types, refined earthenwares comprised the majority of the assemblage at 82.9 percent, stoneware totaled 14.2 percent, and porcelain 2.8 percent. At over eighty percent, refined earthenwares were by far the most dominant ware type in comparison with 57.9 percent at the Davis household. The presence of stonewares, which are typically utilitarian, decreased significantly from 42.1 percent to 14.2 percent. The following provides more specific information concerning the individual ceramics that were collected (Table 7.3).

Table 7.1: Ceramic Form Percentages at the Taylor Household

Vessel Form	No. of Sherds	Percentage
Flat wares	127	28.2
Hollow wares	52	11.5
Utilitarian	55	12.2
Unknown	217	48.1
Total	451	100

Table 7.2: Ceramic Form Percentages at the Taylor Household without the Unknown

Vessel Form	No. of Sherds	Percentage
Flat wares	127	54.3
Hollow wares	52	22.2
Utilitarian	55	23.5
Total	234	100

Table 7.3: Ceramic Totals and Percentages at the Taylor Household

Ware Type	Decoration	No. of Sherds	% of Assemblage
Stoneware		64	14.2
	Salt Glaze	0	0
	Alkaline Glaze	0	0
	Bristol Glaze	60	13.3
	Bristol Glaze with Albany Slip	4	< 1
	Slip Glaze	0	0
	No Glaze	0	0
Refined Earthenwares		374	82.9
	Undecorated	232	51.3
	Molded	51	11.2
	Decalcomania	31	6.9
	Hand Painted	19	4.2
	Fiesta	21	4.7
	Gold Applique	14	< 1
	Solid Glaze	4	< 1
	Banded	1	< 1
	Gullet Stone	1	< 1
Porcelain		13	2.8
	Undecorated	10	2.2
	Molded	2	< 1
	Hand Painted	0	< 1
	Solid Glaze	1	< 1
Total		451	100

Stoneware

Stonewares comprised 14.2 percent of the collected sherds, most of which appear to be fragments of utilitarian storage wares (Figure 7.1). The vast majority of the stoneware, 93.7 percent has an undecorated interior and exterior Bristol glaze and the other 6.3 percent have an exterior Bristol glaze with an interior Albany slip type glaze. As mentioned previously, Bristol glazes became popular in the early-twentieth century, initially being produced with an Albany type interior, and by around 1920, typically exhibited both an interior and exterior Bristol glaze. The wares were commercially produced, affordable, and readily available (Greer 2005: 212). Most of them were used for utilitarian purposes such as storage or as butter churns. One of the collected fragments has been hand stamped in blue with a number two indicating that it was part of a two-gallon storage jug.



Figure 7.1: Stonewares identified at the Taylor household (S. Loftus).

Refined Earthenwares

As previously mentioned, refined earthenware's dominate the ceramic assemblage at 82.9 percent and there is a variety of undecorated, molded, hand painted, decalcomania, banded, and gold applique decorations (Figure 7.2 and 7.3). Most of the ceramics recovered were highly fragmented and no complete vessels were excavated. Sixty-two percent of the refined earthenware's are undecorated whiteware fragments and include body, base, and plain rim sherds. Undecorated whitewares are typically the least expensive wares available. This is followed by plain white molded wares which comprised 13.6 percent of the collection.

The molded wares appear to be primarily undecorated aside from having a molded edge, but it is possible that some had transfer print designs that have weathered away. Most of the molded wares are delicate variations of the royal pattern, and while some patterns appear to be repeated on more than one vessel, most of them vary slightly. As a collection, the molded ceramics do not appear to comprise an individual set, but they would have given the appearance of a set given the close similarity in their patterns and it is possible this was intentional on the part of the Taylor family (Figure 7.4).

Other decorated wares that were identified during the excavations include yellow and blue Fiesta ware, flat wares with gold applique banding along the rim, a hand painted polychrome majolica lead glaze bowl, a red, green, and yellow hand painted bowl, and several polychrome floral decalcomania designs (Figure 7.3). One of the decal wares strongly resembles a twentieth century pattern referred to as "Bouquet" produced by Homer Laughlin (Jasper 1993: 85). Fiesta ware was also a creation of the Homer Laughlin Company, which cornered much of the American ceramic market throughout the twentieth century. Originally debuting at the 1936 Pittsburg China and Glass Show, Fiesta ware's art deco design and the bright colors were an

immediate public success and within two years over a million pieces were sold. Yellow and Cobalt Blue were both among the original five colors produced from 1937 to the early 1950s, at which point a softer palette of pastel colors was developed in accordance with changing American domestic styles (Fiesta 2014). The wares at the Taylor household would have been stylish for the time period and suggests an awareness of urban trends.

Four base fragments with sections of a stamped maker's marks were collected (Figure 7.5). One of the marks is attributed to the Cannonsburg Potteries in Pennsylvania, which operated from 1900 – 1975. Another one, is for the Edwin M. Knowles China Co. which operated throughout the twentieth century. The Knowles mark recovered at the Taylor household was stamped “Made in the U.S.A”, which dates to post-1930. The other two only contain small sections of the mark, making it difficult to identify the potter, but they appear to be from the Crown Potteries Co., which operated from 1902 – 1963, and Paden City Pottery, which operated out of West Virginia and manufactured dinner ware during the 1930s until closing in 1953 (Kovels 1986).



Figure 7.2: Sample of earthenwares collected at the Taylor household (S. Loftus).



Figure 7.3: Refined earthenware teacup fragments collected at the Taylor household (S. Loftus).



Figure 7.4: Sample of molded whiteware patterns identified at the Taylor household (S. Loftus).



Figure 7.5: Makers Marks identified at the Taylor Household (S. Loftus).

Porcelain

A few fragments of porcelain were also identified. The sherds are primarily undecorated body fragments, along with one pink over-glazed body sherd and two fragments of a molded teacup (Figure 7.6). Porcelain is typically a more expensive tableware product than refined earthenwares and as a result, is often considered a specialty ware, frequently associated with tea service or formal dining. While porcelain appears to have only made up a small percentage of the Taylor households ceramic collection, it was completely absent from the artifacts excavated at the Davis household, which has possible social and economic implications. The apparent increased variation in form, ware type, and decoration between the Davis and Taylor household ceramic assemblages are further discussed in Chapter 8.



Figure 7.6: Porcelain collected at the Taylor household (S. Loftus).

7.1.1.2 METAL

Several fragments of can lids, bases, and sides were found within the midden deposits including a hole-in-top can, external friction cans, a “Clabber Girl Baking Powder, Double Acting” can, and several sanitary cans (Figure 7.7). Sanitary cans were first patented in 1894 and

were in common use by 1922. The sides seams, and top and bottom lids of sanitary cans were crimped and no lead soldering was required along the interior of the can, as was necessary for earlier hole-in-top cans (IMACS 2001; Busch 1981: 97). It is difficult to determine what the contents of the cans were because the paper labeling is no longer present and in most instances the exact shape of the can is difficult to distinguish, but it is likely many of the cans contained food items. A key to a sardine can was found, which would have been used to peel back the lid, suggesting at least one of the cans contained pickled or smoked fish. The top of a rectangular spice-container was also collected, which may have contained seasoning such as pepper, or some other shaken spice used for cooking or possibly for household remedies.



Figure 7.7: Clabber Girl Baking Powder external friction can lid (S. Loftus).

Interestingly, one hundred and eighty-two crown caps were collected, a significant number given that soda and beer were likely considered luxury items usually paid for with cash, and most tenant farmers were cash poor. The number seems perhaps less substantial when you consider the midden contains the accumulation of over twenty years' worth of household refuse. Crown caps served as closures for glass bottles typically containing beer or soda and were initially patented by the Crown Company in 1892 as "Crown Corks" (Crown Holdings 2014).

The caps were used in connection with the Owens Automatic Bottling Machine and were abundant across the beverage market by 1910 (Lindsey 2015).

Nine of the collected caps are perforated near the center, possibly as a way to open the bottle in the absence of a can opener, however, if that was the intent, the practice would likely have resulted in some degree of spillage, or even possible explosion, due to carbonation and accompanying pressure (Figure 7.8). The puncture holes are all the same size, approximately 3 mm, roughly the diameter of a standard nail. Liquid would have poured out slowly, if at all, and most likely in droplets rather than as a steady stream of fluid. All of the punctures were made from the same direction, entering from the top of the cap, further suggesting that the practice had something to do with opening the bottle to access the liquid.



Figure 7.8: Perforated crown caps (S. Loftus).

The perforated caps were found at varying horizontal depths across and the site within Units 1, 3, 4, 5, 9, and 11. It is possible the caps are linked to some sort of special use or purpose, and it is worth mentioning that perforated objects, particularly coins, have been documented in several archaeological contexts related to African American sites and according to 1930s WPA

narratives, were used as good luck charms and for healing and protection (Singleton 2010: 176; Davidson 2004:22; Wilkie 2000:189). Other possibilities include anything from instruments strung on a wire, tambourines, wind chimes, fasters for roofing materials, or ant traps for garden insects. More information on perforated caps within an articulated context is needed before conclusions concerning their function can be drawn.

Additional metal items found at the household typically involved in food preparation, storage, or consumption include a cast-iron handle for a pot or pan, a blue and white enameled pot handle, the handle of a grinder or sifter, possibly for grinding grains, such as corn, and several canning jar lids (Figure 7.9). One W. M. Rogers and Son AA silver plated spoon was also collected (Figure 7.10). The spoon is in the Hampden pattern, a common decorative floral pattern that was available through Sears and Montgomery Ward Catalogues. The absence of any other utensils suggests this was a prized possession and any other pieces may have been taken with the family when they moved. It's also possible this was a solitary item, part of a collection of assorted utensils used by the family, and not part of a larger complete set. During our interview, I asked Ms. Johnson about the kind of utensils they used when she was growing up and she recalled it was a,

...long time before we got—we had stainless steel. And a long time before we got up to silverware! I remember the first silverware set Mama and Daddy owned, I bought it, and I was married and gone. And that was in '48, I believe (Johnson 2013).



Figure 7.9: Food related household tools (blue and white enameled pot handle, cast-iron pot or pan handle, handle of a possible grinder or sifter) (S. Loftus).



Figure 7.10: W. M. Rogers and Son AA silver plated spoon (S. Loftus).

7.1.1.3 GLASS

As previously mentioned approximately 57% of the collected artifacts were some form of curved glass suggestive of bottles, jars, plates, tumblers, lamps, and other glass items aside from windows. The high percentage of glass in comparison to other materials is a reflection of the time period, which coincided with a massive increase in the availability and affordability of glass, both from a production standpoint and in terms of consumption. This is further discussed

in Chapter 8. Many of the curved glass artifacts that were collected are related in some way to food and drink. Some of the more prevalent diagnostic artifacts were fragments of colorless glass canning jars and milk glass canning jar lid inserts (Figure 7.11). All of the collected canning jars with identifiable embossing on the jar or the lid were produced by the Ball Company out of Illinois. These were likely used to preserve and store fruits and vegetables for winter. In addition to canning jars, assorted unknown bottle fragments and other jar glass were collected that may have contained various food items such as condiments and pickled items.



Figure 7.11: Two milk-glass lined Ball Company canning jar lids collected at the Taylor household (S. Loftus).

Soda and/or beer bottle fragments were abundant and their prevalence at the site was also evident from the previously mentioned crown caps found within the midden deposit. Many of the soda bottles have applied color labels (ACL), a manufacturing technique that post-dates 1933. While the colorful labels are weathered and peeling off, several of them were intact enough to identify the contents and manufacturer. There is a diverse mix of flavors and brands including Royal Crown, Pepsi, NEHI, Delaware Punch, 7-Up, BOTL-O, Mack's, Circle A, and Sun Crest all of which were popular from the mid-1930s through the 1950s. The following table and

figures provide an overview of the soda bottles that were identified (Table 7.8; Figure 7.12 and 7.13). The prevalence of soda bottles is in marked contrast to the artifacts collected at the Davis household and the variety and selection potentially reveal much about shifting consumption practices and also the effects of marketing, as access to commercial products in rural areas increased and corporations began to pursue an African American demographic. It may also reveal something about how the Taylor's chose to construct an identity and the items they considered worthy of purchase given the constraints of a limited cash income. The consumption of these particular brands and flavors and the possible implications these choices may have as far as consumer choice is discussed in Chapter 8.



Figure 7.12: Soda bottle fragments collected at the Taylor household (S. Loftus).



Figure 7.13: Examples of soda bottle fragments collected at the Taylor household in complete bottle form (S. Loftus).

Table 7.4: Soda bottles identified at the Taylor household

Brand	Description	Manufacture and Dating Information
Royal Crown	Aqua glass, red and yellow ACL design	Cola flavor, post-dates 1933
7-Up	Green glass, "bubble swim" label in red and white ACL	1938 - 1953, lemon-lime flavor (Lockhart 2010)
Delaware Punch	Colorless glass, white ACL design	San Antonio, Texas Company founded in 1923, bottle post-dates 1933 grape flavor (Delaware Punch 2014)
NEHI	Colorless glass, "silk stocking" pattern, red and yellow ACL design	1929 - 1950, unknown flavor, available in orange, grape, peach, and rootbeer(Lockhart 2010)
PEPSI	Colorless glass "wave" bottle with pressed basketweave design and embossing	1940 -1958 , Cola flavor (Lockhart 2010)
Circle 'A' Brand Beverages	Colorless glass, blue and white ACL design	Produced by the Dr. Pepper Bottling Company, unknown flavor, Post 1933 (Lockhart 2014)
Sun Crest - Orange Soda	Colorless glass, blue and white ACL design	Post-1938, orange soda made with cane sugar, produced by National NuGrape Company of Atlanta, Georgia
Mack's	Colorless glass, blue and white ACL design	Unknown flavor, No information found; post-dates 1933
BOTL-O	Colorless glass, green and white ACL design	Produced by Grapette founded in 1939, grape flavored

Several fragments of embossed bottle bases with unknown contents were also collected and these appear to correspond to the Taylor occupation beginning in the 1930s and lasting through the mid-1950s; including: Duraglass produced by Owens Illinois from 1940 -1963, an amber Obear-Nestor bottle dating to 1946, several Owens Illinois bottles dating from 1929 – 1958, including bottles with specific dates produced in 1939, 1940, and 1941, the stippled base

of a bottle produced by the Ball Company from 1940 -1960, A Knox Glass Company bottle from Jackson, Mississippi dating 1932 – 1953, and an Anchor - Hocking bottle produced during the period 1938 – 1980 (Lockhart 2010; Lindsey 2015).

Liquor bottle fragments were also identified. While none of the bottles were labeled and their exact contents remain unknown, they were embossed with the slogan “Federal Law Forbids Sale or Reuse of This Bottle”. This label was required on all liquor bottles produced during the years 1935 – 1964, as part of a government effort to curb bootlegging, which increased substantially as a result of prohibition (Lindsey 2015). In addition to liquor bottles, it is possible that some of the curved amber bottle fragments may have been beer bottles. While, it is unknown what sort of spirits the Taylor household was consuming, given the popularity and multi-purpose use of whiskey, it would not be surprising if this is what some of them contained.

Fragments of several pressed glass dishes and decorative wares were also collected, many of which can be categorized as Depression glass (Figure 7.14). The term Depression glass is a general name applied to a variety of affordable, mass produced, and often colorful glass wares that were made during the years surrounding the Great Depression. Fragments of a pink salt shaker made in “Floral” pattern sometimes referred to as “Poinsettia” were present at the site. The pattern was produced by the Jeanette Glass Company in Jeanette, Pennsylvania from 1931 to 1935 (Schroy 2010:195; Eickholt 2008). Other Depression glass found in the midden deposits includes fragments of a Fire King Jade-ite teacup made by Anchor Hocking during the 1940s, and several pieces of white and jade-ite saucers and plates in the “Alice” pattern. “Alice” pattern wares were produced during the early 1940s and the saucers and teacups were given away as promotional items, often in boxes of oatmeal (Figure 7.15). Alice plates; however, were only available for purchase and may have been sought out by consumers hoping to create a matching

set (Schroy 2013: 40). At least one of the collected fragments appear to have been from a plate with a larger diameter than a saucer, suggesting that the Taylors may have purchased the plate to compliment saucers and teacups they collected as promotional items. This practice would have been in line with evidence possibly demonstrating an effort to collect similarly molded whitewares to form a dining set.

Two patterns produced by the Mac-Beth Evans Glass Company of Charleroi, Pennsylvania during the 1930s were also identified. One Cremax colored bowl in the “Petalware” pattern and one Cremax colored bowl in the “American Sweetheart” Pattern (Schroy 2010: 62). A fragment of pressed Cobalt blue glass with a geometric pattern was also collected along with a sea foam blue pressed and stippled glass fragment that appears to have been part of a pitcher, or other standing vessel. Several fragments of dark green glass with a pressed ribbed pattern resembling pieces of a drinking glass, or tumbler were also collected, as were several colorless glass tumbler fragments with yellow, orange, and red ACL bands, and two other colorless glass tumblers, one with horizontal ribbing, and one with a pressed rope design. Fragments of a colorless pressed glass candy dish from the Depression era and part of a solarized decorative bowl likely dating to before 1920 were also collected.



Figure 7.14: Depression glass collected at the Taylor household, the Alice plate is the white fragment center-left (S. Loftus).



Figure 7.15: 1940s and 50s advertisements for oats containing promotional glassware (S. Loftus).

7.1.1.4 FAUNAL

As with the Davis assemblage, the faunal remains collected from the Taylor household midden deposits were not as extensive as might be expected for a deposit representing decades of household waste accumulation, but this may be due to several factors including the acidity of the soils and secondary use of faunal materials by the family. In total 45 faunal specimens were collected. The majority of these were heavily fragmented and in many cases deteriorated and several displayed evidence of having been burned. The collection was predominately characterized by large and medium sized mammal bone, including six teeth. Additionally, there were 10 specimens that appeared to be from small mammals, possibly rodent, squirrel, mink, raccoon, or possum and one fragment of mussel shell.

Specimen identification was limited due to the high level of fragmentation and deterioration, but the teeth all appear to be pig and several fragments of long bones were also identified as pig. As previously discussed in Chapter 6, the presence of pig bone is not surprising and is line with oral history and previous archaeological data for tenant farms in East Texas (Johnson 2013; Sharpless 1999).

7.1.2 NON-FOOD AND DRINK RELATED

The non-food and drink related artifacts collected at the Taylor household are also diverse and point to number of activities. The presence of a stove-damper, as well as, heavy cast iron fragments that may have formed sections of a wood stove, suggest that the family relied upon a cast-iron stove for heat and likely for some household cooking, similar to what evidence suggests the Davis's were using (Figure 7.16). As discussed in Chapter 5, the presence of a brick and mortar feature near the side of the former house location is suggestive of a chimney;

however, oral history provided by Henry Jackson who visited the home in the 1950s suggests otherwise (Jackson 2013). Stove dampers, like the one recovered, are traditionally placed within the flue or chimney of a stove to control air flow and thus the temperature of a burning stove. During winter months dampers also act to seal the chimney or flue, preventing valued warm air from escaping.

The damper was manufactured by the Adam's Company of Dubuque, Iowa. The Adams Company was founded in 1883 as a gear manufacturer, eventually producing one of the most successful automobiles of the early twentieth century, the Adams-Farwell Sedan (The Adams Company 2014). The stoves were something of a side project for the company during the mid-twentieth century and the damper found at the Taylor household was filed for patent in 1931 and patented two years later (Patent No. US1937708).

The age of the patent suggests the stove may have been fairly new when it was installed within the household. Stoves were an expensive, yet essential item, particularly if there was no fire place present, as oral history suggests. It is unknown if the stove was purchased by the Taylor or Jackson family, but given the Taylor family's position as tenants on the land, it would not be unusual for the Jackson's to have purchased the stove as part of a tenancy agreement between the families.



Figure 7.16: Adam's Company stove damper, Dubuque, Iowa (S. Loftus).

Many household artifacts related to lighting were collected during the excavations including several aqua and colorless chimney lamp glass body fragments, and a metal tripod used to support an oil lamp. A metal lantern handle was also collected, as were more decorative fragments of colorless lamp globes with decorative beaded edges (Figure 7.17). The Taylor's appear to have relied primarily upon kerosene lamps as a main source of light through the mid-1950s. While, two low wattage light bulbs were found during the excavations and a fragment of a porcelain insulator was collected, it is unlikely these would have served as primary light sources. No other evidence of electrical wiring, or other household accessories that might suggest electric power was in common use was found.

The first comprehensive efforts to electrify rural areas of the United States were spearheaded in 1935 by the Roosevelt administration. At the time, only 10 percent of farms had central-station electricity. In Texas this statistic was even lower. Sparse population coupled with a vast amount of open space in between settlements resulted in few rural farms with electric

power, just over two percent of the population (Davis 2014). The lack of power particularly affected black Texans, the great majority of whom lived in rural areas prior to WWII (Reid 2000: 37). By 1965, following successful programs at federal, state, and local levels the power statistic was reversed and over 98 percent of rural Texas farms were tapped into a central grid and had access to some form of electric capability. Having power capability; however, did not necessarily imply a household had the means to purchase infrastructure needed to channel the electricity or the amenities that required it. As a result many people continued to live without many of the luxuries that electricity afforded.



Figure 7.17: Artifacts related to lighting (oil lamp tripod, lantern handle, light bulb, chimney lamp glass) (S. Loftus).

The oil lamp tripod was found in the yard area within Unit 2, adjacent to two washtubs clustered near the top of the slope down to the midden. As described in Chapter 5, the washtubs appear to have been part of a central activity area (Figure 7.18). This flat area extends across the eastern section of the yard, and would have been a convenient work space, far enough away from the main road to be somewhat private, yet providing easy surveillance of the house and a view

shed to monitor the road and approaching visitors. According to oral history the family's smokehouse was located just to the south (Anonymous 2013). Additionally, the position of the area near the downslope to the household midden would have allowed the family to conveniently dispose of waste while performing activities.

The washtubs likely served multiple purposes in household daily life including washing, bathing, laundry, and cooking. Several Ball Company canning jar lids and jar fragments were also found in this location. As discussed in Chapter 6, canning was an important activity during the early to mid-twentieth century, particularly in rural areas and many people, who could not afford manufactured steam pressure canning equipment, relied upon improvised methods to preserve fruits and vegetables. One of the more common means to can, and one that was promoted by the Agricultural Extension Service was the use of two washtubs, one of which would have holes punched in the bottom and fit inside a slightly larger one filled with water, serving as an alternative dipping vat. Due to the deteriorated condition of one of the tubs it was not possible to tell if this may have been what was occurring in this area, but, it is very possible the Taylors employed this method of canning to provide the family with fruits and vegetables during the winter season when fresh foods were hard to come by and rations were slim.



Figure 7.18: Overview of activity area and associated washtubs and other artifacts at the Taylor Household (S. Loftus).

As historian Deborah Ann Reid has argued canning was a community endeavor that solidified relationships and networks as knowledge was shared and passed down through generations,

Personal and public networks combined as women and girls raised the funds, organized activities, and did most of the canning while men and boys helped construct, fuel, and operate the centers. Time has obliterated the physical evidence of much of this economic development and community building, and historians have overlooked the written evidence that the individuals generated. Yet, canning addressed many economic problems and provided a focus for community organization that had not existed previously (Reid 2000a:37).

Other household tools include a metal spool that appears to have held sewing thread, a pair of scissors, and a safety-pin. These items were all probably used to make and mend clothing and possibly for other household uses. Buttons were also common at the site, and these are

discussed further below. Based upon the varied button assemblage, it appears that some of the clothing worn by the Taylor family was commercially produced, but other clothing items were likely sewn by hand, and store bought items would have been mended and repaired as needed (Figure 7.19).

Two metal springs that closely align with those commonly employed on rodent traps were also identified within the midden deposits. Traps were possibly used by the family to prevent mice and other vermin from living around and within the structure.



Figure 7.19: Non-food and drink related household tools (scissors, possible rodent trap spring, thread spool, safety pin) (S. Loftus).

7.2 TOOLS RELATED TO AGRICULTURAL AND CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES

A variety of materials possibly related to agricultural and construction type activities were identified at the site, and some of these materials overlap as far as functional categories are concerned. Artifacts including bailing wire, a wire spool, and single and double-barbed wire were found, as well as, fence staples and wire post ties that were likely used to keep farm animals, such as hogs and chickens penned in, and possibly to fence off the home and garden. A couple of single-loop handmade hay bale ties were also identified.

Several items related to animal tack were also collected including fragments of an eight-hole and a six-hole horse shoe and harness buckles, suggesting the family may have had a horse or mule, or at least access to one. In an interview, Henry Jackson, who knew the Taylor's when he was a boy, recalled Cleveland Taylor pushing a plow through a field without the aid of a horse or mule, so if they did have access to a work animal it appears to have been used in a limited fashion, or for a limited time (Figure 7.20; Jackson 2012).

Other items that might be related to agriculture or construction include general hardware such as grommets, square nuts, round bolts, staples, washers, a slotted screw, a carriage bolt and a hinge. Part of a broken hand saw blade, a cast iron hoe head, a possible hitch, and a cast iron handle that looks like the top of a pulley were also identified (Figure 7.21).



Figure 7.20: Animal tack, buckles, horseshoe, and possible muleshoe (S. Loftus).



Figure 7.21: Artifacts related to agriculture and construction (baling tie, wire spool, square nut, slotted screw, hand saw blade, cast iron hoe head, pulley) (S. Loftus).

7.3 TOOLS RELATED TO FISHING

As mentioned previously, fishing was important for subsistence and also as a recreational activity (Palmer 2005: 224). Two metal hooks that appear to have been used for fishing were identified within the midden deposits at the Taylor household (Figure 7.22). Evidence for fishing at the Davis household was more circumspect. A possible lead fishing weight was collected, but no fishing hooks were recovered. Several creeks and streams are within walking distance of the household and the Trinity River flows a few miles west. Fish likely played an important role in the family's diet and would have been a resource they exploited along with other wild game. When I asked Ms. Johnson about eating fish she recalled better times,

“Yeah, we’d go to fishing. And you know, when we was at Crossroad (a town about twenty miles from Bethel), we’d do chopping cotton until about eleven o’clock, then go to fishing about twelve, and go to the house, and cook and eat. It was—it wasn’t like it is now, but we lived, and had a nice, good time! Had a good time” (Johnson 2013).



Figure 7.22: Fishing hooks (S. Loftus).

7.4 HEALTH AND HYGIENE

Items collected related to Health and Hygiene included three diagnostic bleach bottle fragments (Figure 7.23). One from an amber Hi-Lex Bleach bottle, one amber PUREX bottle fragment, and a colorless CLOROX bottle fragment that were all found within the midden deposits. The Clorox and Purex bottle fragments were located in close proximity to the washtubs excavated in Units 1 and 2. Clorox bottles were typically amber in color, but colorless bottles, though rare, are known to have existed during the mid-twentieth century. Based on the solid rope lettering around the neck, the bottle postdates 1930 (The Clorox Company 2014). The Purex Company was founded in California in 1922 and was producing commercially available bleach by 1923 and the Hi-lex Company began operations in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1927 (Purex). The bleach was likely used for laundering clothes and possibly for other cleaning and disinfecting

purposes. Past archaeological studies and oral history have revealed that during this period African American women often made a living or pulled in additional income through laundering clothes (Sharpless 1999). This was particularly true in urban areas where population created demand. While, evidence for such practice by Viola Taylor is not conclusive, it is possible that beyond tenancy the family was supplementing their income through laundry. This would account for the variety and quantity of bleach bottles and could also potentially be related to the significant number of buttons collected at this site. The buttons are depicted in Figure 7.31.



Figure 7.23: Fragments of bleach bottles collected at the green household (Clorox, Hi-lex, and Purex) (S. Loftus).

Ten fragments of various patent medicine bottles were collected (Figure 7.24). All of the fragments were colorless with the exception of three aqua fragments with the characteristic rectangular side panel that is common on early to mid-twentieth century patent medicines, and one clear yellow green tooled neck and finish fragment that may date as early as the late-nineteenth century. Several of the bottles are embossed. In most cases there is not enough lettering to determine with any certainty what the bottle contained, or who was marketing it. One bottle fragment is labeled Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription. Dr. Pierce began marketing his

prescriptions through a company he entitled the World's Dispensary Medical Association out of Buffalo, New York in 1883. The product was in production until the late 1940s, eventually coming under the supervision of his son who changed the company name to "Pierce's Proprietaries" (New York Heritage 2014).

The formula was marketed to cure "Woman's Ills" and was unique among many patent medicines in that it contained no alcohol, but a mixture of lady's slipper root, black cohosh root, unicorn root, blue cohosh root, grape root, and viburnum (Figure 7.25 and 7.26; The National Museum of American History 2014). The prescription was a product of its time and the advertising, as well as the product itself and its lack of alcohol, are illustrative of women's stereotypes, socially appropriate roles for women at the time, and ideas concerning women's mental health. The bottle is aqua suggesting that it may date prior to 1920, which was when colorless glass began to dominate the glass manufacturing industry. If this is the case, the bottle may pre-date the Taylor family's occupation of the home and could have been dumped in the area, or the bottle may have been kept and reused for other storing purposes. Aside from the three aqua glass prescription bottle fragments, other aqua glass fragments were from mason jars and soda bottles, which retained their aqua color well into the mid-twentieth century (Lindsey 2015).

Several fragments of wide mouth milk-glass cosmetic jars were also collected, as were two colorless Chesebrough Vaseline jars, and a cobalt blue Phillips Milk of Magnesia bottle (Figure 7.27). While today Milk of Magnesia is primarily marketed as an antacid for heartburn and upset stomachs, during the first half of the twentieth-century the tablets were advertised for specific maladies, such as curing tobacco and alcohol related headaches and depression (Saturday Evening Post 1932). A possible nail polish bottle and an "extract" bottle possibly

containing a flavoring extract, medicine, or even perfume, similar to one collected at the Davis household was also found (Lindsey 2015; Figure 7.28).



Figure 7.24: Sample of fragments of patent medicine bottles collected at the Taylor household (S. Loftus).

"FEMALE WEAKNESS."

Mrs. WILLIAM HOOVER, of *Bellville, Richland Co., Ohio*, writes: "I had been a great sufferer from 'female weakness;' I tried three doctors; they did me no good; I thought I was an invalid forever. But I heard of Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription, and then I wrote to him and he told me just how to take it. I took eight bottles. I now feel entirely well. I could stand on my feet only a short time, and now I do all my work for my family of five."



Figure 7.25 Advertisement for Dr. Pierces Favorite Prescription (Reproduced from *Fort Worth Gazette* circa 1890)



Figure 7.26: Barn with Advertisement for Dr. Pierce's as a product for "Weak Women" (Unknown location circa 1900, Reproduced from Peachridge Glass 2015)



Figure 7.27: Cosmetic and ointment jar fragments collected at the Taylor household (S. Loftus).



Figure 7.28: Possible nail polish bottle collected at the Taylor Household and the broken base of an “extract” bottle similar in design to one collected at the Davis Household (see Figure 6.16) (S. Loftus).

Additional items marketed for and possibly related to health and hygiene include, a black plastic IPANA toothpaste threaded screw cap, a fragment of a bone toothbrush produced by the Reputation Company, a double edged razor blade, two rectangular medicine tins, several hair comb teeth, and two black plastic comb fragments, one made by Surrey (Figure 7.29). IPANA toothpaste was available through the Sears and Roebuck Catalogue, as were Reputation toothbrushes. IPANA was one of the more expensive toothpastes, almost twice the price of Colgate in 1927 and Reputation toothbrushes were the most expensive brand offered for sale (Mirken 1970). In addition to the IPANA toothpaste cap, several other black plastic screw tops were collected that may have been used as closures for medicinal products, or other hygiene related products. This suggests a significant increase in the use and consumption of commercial products typically related to health and hygiene, and also the selective purchase of quality items according to the pricing.



Figure 7.29: Health and hygiene items Collected at the Taylor household (comb fragments, screw caps, IPANA toothpaste cap, bone toothbrush fragment (Reputation brand), double edged razor blade fragment) (S. Loftus).

7.5 ARMS

As with the Davis household, artifacts related to arms included numerous shell casings (Figure 7.30). Twenty cartridges were collected representing at least twelve different maker's marks and five different gauge varieties (Table 7.5). Nine shotgun shell headstamps were collected including three "REM UMC No.12 NEW CLUB", one "FEDERAL MONARK No. 16", two "PETERS VICTOR" 16 gauge, one "PETERS" 12 gauge, and two unidentifiable headstamps. Interestingly, the "REM UMC NEW CLUB No. 12" headstamps were also the most common headstamps found at the Davis site.

Other arms include two Union Metallic Cartridges 9 mm brass cartridges stamped with a "U" which are not particularly diagnostic. This was also common at the Davis household,

possibly suggesting the family may have shared ammunition, maybe even arms and had a preference for these particular types of shells and bullets. A number of .22 mm brass cartridges were also collected and the variety among manufacturers is interesting, of the nine cartridges collected, six of them vary in manufacture and style. As with the Davis family, the Taylors would likely have used the guns for hunting and subsistence purposes, as well as for protection.

Table 7.5 Shot gun shell headstamps and cartridges collected at the Taylor household

Make and Gauge	Number	Provenience
Shotgun shell headstamp - FEDERAL MONARK No. 16	1	Unit 12 – Level 2
Shotgun shell headstamp - "REM UMC No. 12 NEW CLUB with star stamp	3	Unit 4 – Level 2 Unit 7 – Level 4 Shovel Test N1010/E1030 – Level 1
Shotgun shell headstamp heavily corroded, illegible	2	Unit 11 – Level 3 Unit 10 – Level 3
Shotgun shell headstamp –PETERS 16 gauge, Made in USA, VICTOR	2	Unit 2 – Level 5 Shovel Test N1010/E1020 – Level 3
Shotgun shell headstamp –PETERS 16 gauge, Made in USA	1	Unit 2 – Level 3
9 mm rim fire, diamond stamp	1	Unit 8 – Level 2
9mm rim fire, "U" stamp	2	Unit 3 – Level 5 Unit 4 – Level 1
.22 long brass cartridge, stamped "PETERS HV", rim fired	2	Unit 4 – Level 5 Unit 13 – Level 5
.22 short brass cartridge, stamped "HP"	1	Unit 15 – Level 2
.22 mm short, rim fired, "U" stamp	1	Unit 3 – Level 5
.22 short brass cartridge, stamped "X" with "SUPER" over the top	1	Unit 15 – Level 4
.22 long brass cartridge, stamped "X" with "SUPER" over the top	3	Unit 15 – Level 2 Shovel Test N1010/E1020 – Level 1 Shovel Test N1020/E1010 – Level 1

7.6 WRITING

A few items typically used for writing were identified during the excavations including the eraser end of a standard No. 2 pencil. The wood body of the pencil has decayed, but a section of the lead remains in place. A metal eraser end from a second No. 2 pencil was also identified. Both were found in Units 3 and 4 of the midden deposits. Aside from writing utensils, seven broken slate fragments were also found in Units 11 and 12 (Figure 7.30). The slate may have been used by the Taylor children when they attended the local Bethel school, or in the home. Slate reached popular heights during the nineteenth century and could be purchased by catalogue from Sears and Roebuck and Montgomery Wards. During the early twentieth century the use of slate began to wane, eventually being replaced with more practical paper products (Swords 2008: 48). The presence of slate at a mid-twentieth century site is interesting and suggests the materials may have been acquired by previous generations. In contrast, no materials associated with writing were identified at the Davis household suggesting that the use of these materials both for learning and practicing writing may have been more prevalent for the next generation. Based on conversations with local residents, education was extremely important within the community. Access to materials such as slate, paper and pencils may have increased over time as the materials were made more widely available and the community further established the local school.



Figure 7.30: Artifacts related to writing (pencil lead and eraser, slate fragments) collected at the Taylor household (S. Loftus).

7.7 PERSONAL ITEMS AND ADORNMENT

Many items that could be considered personal items or items associated with adornment, either as clothing or as jewelry, were identified during the excavations. Buttons were the most common personal item totaling 47 (Figure 7.31). An assorted variety was present in terms of style and materials and most of the buttons were individual. The majority are metal buttons with a flexible shank, something that would typically fasten a pair of work pants, or a jacket. There are also several Bakelite buttons, an early form of plastic. The Bakelite material, which is dyed phenol-formaldehyde plastic became popular in the United States after 1927, when it was introduced by the American Catalin Corporation and then by Bakelite (Chemical Heritage Foundation 2014). The Taylors had two girls and many of the buttons, particularly the colorful Bakelite ones, appear to be associated with clothing designed for women. Four overall buckles,

or sections of overall buckles were also identified, along with a brass zipper embossed “TALON” (Figure 7.32).

Several items associated with footwear were also found including three black rubber shoe heels and a complete rubber sole. Two heel-plates were also identified one of which appears to be for a women’s heel (Figure 7.33). Other personal adornment items include a decorative brass buckle, a wire string of small black beads that was possibly a necklace or bracelet, half of a Bakelite maroon tube bead, two metal locket with decorative floral designs, a brass hair clip, and a tie holder (Figure 7.34). The materials suggest a certain amount of attention to style and dress that is often over looked in the analysis of rural tenant farmers, where the focus has primarily and justly emphasized the poverty that plagued people, as opposed to the creative and expressive ways they lived their lives.

The presence of an abundance of clothing and personal items at the site in comparison with the Davis household is significant and points to increased consumption of commercially produced adornment items. This is likely due to a combination of factors such as greater interest in current styles and trends, increased availability of affordably priced commercial dress, increased monetary exchange within the community after WWII, and possibly an increase in expendable income.



Figure 7.31: Buttons Collected at the Taylor Household (S. Loftus).



Figure 7.32: Buckles and Other Fasteners Related to Personal Adornment Collected at the Taylor Household (S. Loftus).



Figure 7.33: Footwear Items Collected at the Taylor Household (S. Loftus).



Figure 7.34: Items Collected Related to Personal Adornment Collected at the Taylor Household (S. Loftus).

7.8 TOBACCO

As with the Davis site, fragments of amber glass snuff bottles, similar to those associated with the Davis household, were also present across the midden deposits, but in a smaller quantity (see Figure 6.17). The apparent decrease in the number of snuff bottles reflects trends in snuff use, which declined in popularity during the mid-twentieth century. One rusted metal tobacco

can was also collected. The labeling on the can is no longer legible, but the shape is similar to a Prince Albert Can containing loose leaf tobacco. No other evidence of smoking was identified, but in an interview Henry Jackson recalled Cleveland Taylor would sometimes smoke a cigarette while working in the fields (Jackson 2012).

7.9 TOYS AND GAMES

One red and white cats eye marble was found along with a small black rubber wheel embossed “TOYS” (Figure 7.35). While the evidence for toys is scarce, there is more at this site than was recovered at the Davis household where no direct evidence of toys was identified. This does not necessarily imply that the Davis children were without toys, among whom Viola Taylor would be included. Many toys were made of ephemeral materials such as wood carvings and rag dolls. Additionally, objects that served as toys may not be recognizable if they were being used in an alternative manner from those intended by manufactures. Based on conversations with community members, children growing up in Bethel during the first half of the twentieth century often improvised when it came to toys, engaging with everyday household items in creative ways for entertainment purposes and these activities may not be archaeologically visible. Recalling her own childhood when asked about toys, Ms. Johnson replied,

Oh, no. We didn't have no games to play. All we know how to do is roll a tire around the house, a old car tire. Yeah, and just rolled behind it. I played all the time, but it wasn't like it is nowadays. Kids got everything they want (Johnson 2013).



Figure 7.35: Artifacts Related to Toys and Games Collected at the Taylor Household (S. Loftus).

7.10 CURRENCY

Two coins were found during the excavations near the western entrance to the structure. Both are pennies dating to 1943 and 1944 (Figure 7.36). The 1943 penny is a heavily rusted Lincoln steel penny located in Unit 15 near the western entrance to the structure. Steel pennies were produced as part of an effort to save copper during WWII in support of the Allied war effort. The pennies were struck with a steel core and then covered with a thick plating of zinc (Scott 2014). The one identified in association with the Taylor household was rusted and heavily corroded. The 1944 penny is a standard copper wheat penny that was recovered from a 50 x 50 cm unit located at N1005/E1010, approximately one meter south of Unit 15.

Currency was not something that was common among rural tenant farmers, particularly during the early twentieth century and no evidence of official currency was collected at the Davis household. Within rural contexts currency was often rendered obsolete to some extent and people more often relied upon barter and the exchange of goods and services for trading purposes. This system began to slowly shift during the twentieth century and evidence at the Taylor site suggests an increased reliance on commercially produced goods. Items such as soda, commercial

spices, canned goods, commercial clothing, adornment items, and serving wares suggest of an increase in the use of currency and its availability.



Figure 7.36: Currency Artifacts Collected at the Taylor Household (1944 Copper Wheat Penny and 1943 Steel Penny) (S. Loftus).

7.11 ARTIFACTS RELATED TO ARCHITECTURE

As previously discussed in Chapter 5, none of the structures associated with the Taylor farmstead remain extant. Unlike the Davis site where the dwelling has collapsed in place, the wood siding and other materials appear to have been recycled, and/or sections of the structure may have been removed, possibly when the Taylors relocated to a few acres of land across the street in the mid-1950s. The materials that remain include several hematite pier stones, a wood door sill, and Feature 2, a cluster of lime mortar, possibly the remnants of a chimney. Other architectural materials include over 900 nails of various sizes. The majority of the collected nails appear to be wire nails, which typically post-date 1890 in Texas. Most are heavily corroded and it is therefore difficult to identify their specific manufacture, but thirty-three of the nails, or 3.6 percent, appear to be cut nails. Cut nails or square nails pre-date wire nails and were common

throughout the nineteenth century until they were replaced with wire nails, which were made through a process that rapidly increased and eased production (Adams 2002: 70).

The presence of cut nails at the Taylor household, which is believed to be a mid-twentieth century occupation site is interesting and potentially indicates the site was occupied at an earlier date; however, no other materials suggestive of a nineteenth century occupation were identified and very scant materials that could potentially suggest an occupation prior to around 1930 were excavated. It appears more likely that the presence of the cut nails is indicative of additional materials being recycled from older plantation structures, or community structures that were no longer in use.

Other collected architectural materials include a few fragments of machine-made red brick, lime mortar, and a couple chunks of Portland cement based conglomerate. The cement appears similar to construction materials used to build the spring box pictured in Chapter 5 located adjacent to the site that was used by the Taylors and the Jackson family (Jackson circa 1930). Additionally, a door hinge, roof tacks and fragments of asphalt shingles, similar to those present at the Davis household, were collected. Over two hundred small fragments of flat aqua window glass were also present, suggesting that the structure had a least one window. Windowless structures, or window openings with no glass, were not uncommon for East Texas tenant farm structures, which were notorious for their poor condition and lack of basic amenities.

7.12 SUMMARY

As evidenced in the previous sections, there appear to be significant variations in the material culture of the Taylor family in comparison with the Davis household. These shifts mirror that of American consumer culture as a whole post-WWII as product diversity and availability increased following technological innovations that lowered production costs and

improved market access. At a very basic level of analysis, the surge in material items from 2746, at the Davis site to, 9311 at the Taylor household speaks to an overall increase in the purchase of commercial products and a movement away from the self-sufficiency and communal independence that characterized daily rural life during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. The shift from predominately metal items, 56.9 percent, at the Davis household to predominately glass, 62.8 percent at the Taylor household, also reflects this tendency, as mass produced glass containers and the variety of goods available within them accelerated and costs plummeted.

The data also reveals an increase in the variety of ceramics at the Taylor household in terms of decoration, form, and ware type. While practical utilitarian stonewares dominate the Davis assemblage, the Taylors were using a higher percentage of refined earthenware; 82.9 percent in comparison with 57.9 percent at the Davis site. The Taylors also acquired a limited number of porcelain wares, which are typically more expensive than earthenwares as well as specialty wares such as teacups. Decorations are also more varied in the Taylor assemblage and the family appears to have made a concerted effort to compile similarly patterned molded whitewares that while slightly varied, would have given the appearance of a set. Additionally, the significant increase in personal items, adornment, hygiene related products, and goods such as soda and nail polish point to an increase in monetary spending that may be related to more available income, or personal decisions to spend money on items of adornment and enjoyment.

While characteristic of general patterns in American consumer culture, the nuances in these shifts and the selection of certain items and product brands potentially reveals something about the lifestyles, preferences, ambitions, and even the political and social posturing of household occupants during a particularly oppressive and challenging period in American history

for black Americans. Especially interesting, is what the archaeology and material culture at these two sites can tell us about life in the context of the rural south during an era of tremendous upheaval in regards to Jim Crow and the emerging Civil Rights Movement.

CHAPTER 8:

TWO GENERATIONS OF CONSUMPTION

“Consumption is eminently social, relational, and active rather than private, atomic, or passive”
(Arjun Appadurai 1986: 31)

The following chapter builds upon the discussion of material culture at the Davis and Taylor households presented in Chapters 6 and 7 and works within theoretical precedents initially established by Pierre Bourdieu and others such as Anthony Giddens, who recognized both the enormity of social and economic structures on people’s lives as well as the endless ways that people thwart these constraints through various engagements (Miller 2010:4). My approach is inspired by previous studies considering consumer cultures intersection with the emergence of modern capitalism and mass consumption including the archaeology of Paul Mullins. In *Race and Affluence: An Archaeology of African America and Consumer Culture* Mullins built upon Bourdieu’s theoretical standpoints to consider not just how the structures of everyday life are reflected in material culture, but how people both conform to and subvert social structures through the use of everyday objects (Mullins 1999 and 2011). This includes the various motivations that lead people to purchase and consume particular products as well as their personal desires, preferences, and political and social aspirations (Mullins 1999:161; Leone and Schablitsky 2012: 6; Davis 2010:22).

Approaching consumption in this manner, differs in some ways from much past archaeological research on African Diaspora, which has frequently focused on identifying particular cultural and ethnic markers as a means to consider cultural continuity and creolization (Gijanto and Horlings 2012: 134). While not inattentive to these themes, my focus has primarily

been on generational shifts in materiality and consumer choice and corresponding changes in the political, economic, and social atmosphere.

This chapter begins by considering aspects of African-Americans organized collective engagements with material culture and consumption during the Jim Crow era as part of a larger effort to assume political and social power within the American capitalist system. This includes well-known boycotts, such as those that took place in the transportation sector as well as the establishment of black owned businesses and the selective patronizing of stores with equal employment opportunities. With these collectivist practices and consumer protests in mind, the discussion then returns to the local scale and further considers the material assemblages collected at the Davis and Taylor households, which date circa 1900 – 1940 and circa 1930 – 1955. The possibility of selective purchasing as a result of political and social posturing, as well as material transitions related to general shifts in consumer culture, product access, monetary wealth, and personal preference are explored.

As discussed in the opening chapter, William Sewell has argued that historical events and ruptures within social systems, such as the end of racially based, state sanctioned slavery in the United States, create a setting of extended transformation that lasts well beyond immediate repercussions. Looking comparatively at the household material culture of two generations of a family of black farmers living within a former landscape of slavery provides a platform for building upon existing conversations considering the diversity of peoples experiences within this extended transformative period. Additionally, the households span a transitional phase in American consumer culture that corresponds with postwar shifts in production that led to accelerated mass consumption and the introduction of a variety of new products that were cheaply and widely available for purchase. How generations within the same extended family

interacted with these material products sheds an interesting light on local consumption over several decades and potentially highlights broader cultural shifts and social transformations in the rural south, particularly when the households are considered within the context of Jim Crow.

8.1 THE AGENCY DEBATE

People's interactions with material culture and consumption practices are frequently discussed in conjunction with the notion of "agency" and I feel it is important to discuss some of the critiques of agency before moving forward with this chapter. Agency theory gained considerable popularity in historical archaeology during the 1990s, primarily as a means to counter what were believed to be overly deterministic models of human action and behavior prominent in the 1960s and 1970s. The turn to agency resulted in a considerable body of work among historical archaeologists examining the fluid ways that people create and maintain identity through material culture, and also the ability of individuals and groups to engage with the material world in situations of resistance and ambition.

However, some have argued that the concept is primarily reflective of modern, and in many cases predominately western ideas concerned with the plight of the individual and the individuals pursuit of her/his own interests. These critics point out that theories concerning agency often fail to take into account the overriding extent and influence of economic and social structures, particularly those of global capitalism, seen as actively dominating people's day to day lives (Patterson 2005: 373). Thomas Patterson has argued that agency centered approaches to archaeology often reflect neoliberal concepts in which people are perceived to be on a level playing field with equal opportunities, access to information, and the means to act in the pursuit their own interests. Patterson argues such a position ignores reality and the powerful social, political, and economic inequalities that exist globally (Patterson 2005: 373). This valid critique

reminds us of the potential to overestimate the power of the individual and the modern root of this concept, however; it would be a mistake to completely dismiss agency all together.

The idea of agency has been especially debated by those studying slavery and slavery's aftermath. Historians continue to dispute the amount of agency people were realistically capable of exercising while enslaved, or as emancipated people living within a society that was defined at its core by racial inequality and Jim Crow (Dunaway 2003:4 Palmer 2011: 143; West 1993: 22). While recognizing the limitations imposed by a setting of violence and discrimination, the following chapter explores the possibility of agency within circumstances of oppression and extreme structural constraint enforced through facto and defacto racial discrimination across the rural South. Taking this middle ground position, allows for a consideration of the myriad ways that black Americans living in this region actively engaged with the material world over time, and their efforts to obtain greater control over their lives even when facing deep inequality and violence.

While recognizing Marxist ideas of consumption as “false consciousness”, which contend that elitist producers have deceived the working classes with a fabricated equality offered through cheap material goods, the perspective offered in this chapter instead preferences the idea of “conspicuous consumption”, seeing purchasing and consuming as having social utility (Davis 2010:22; Douglas and Isherwood 1979; Veblen 1899). That being said, I also acknowledge the pitfalls of an unequal modern capitalism system, and the tremendous environmental, health, and social problems that have resulted from excessive production and consumption. However, as inherently problematic as modern materialism may be, which is a corresponding topic beyond the level of this research, meaningful and active consumption has shaped our histories, and the power of concerted and thoughtful purchasing can be seen on many levels from the collective

organizing of interest groups, to the more personal contexts of everyday life, and people's day to day choices.

8.1 COLLECTIVE CONSUMPTION EFFORTS AMONG BLACK AMERICANS DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Black American's engagements with material culture during the first half of the twentieth century and how race has shaped American consumer practices has often been left out of white scholarly publications concerned with the rise of mass consumption. However, a growing body of work building upon the early publications of scholars such as W. E. B Dubois, Frances E. W. Harper, Booker T. Washington, and Paul K. Edwards continues to emerge considering various black consumer practices and identity during this pivotal era (Dubois 1907; Edwards 1969; Kelly 1996; Mullins 1999; Weems 1999; Cohen 2003; Davis 2010). More recently, scholars such as Robin Kelley have begun to seriously explore black consumer agency during the Jim Crow era. In his monologue *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class*, Kelley considered the role of fashion within urban black communities during the 1940s. His essay, *The Riddle of the Zoot Suit*, opens with a line from Ralph Ellison that contemplates the potential meaning behind people's material choices,

Much in negro life remains a mystery; perhaps the zoot suit conceals profound political meaning; perhaps the symmetrical frenzy of the Lindy Hop conceals clues to great potential power – if only Negro leaders would solve this riddle (Ellison 1943).

Building upon Ellison, Kelly demonstrates the power of black youth to commandeer aspects of dominant material culture and transform them into something original and subversive. Focusing on the critical post WWII era, the transitional period with which this dissertation engages, he argues that black working-class youth exercised political conscious by

seeking alternatives to wage work and found pleasure in the new music, clothes, and dance styles of the period...[they] were “race rebels” of sorts, challenging middle-class ethics and expectations, carving out a distinct generational and ethnic identity (Kelley 1996:162).

Similarly, in *Desegregating the Dollar*, Robert Weems considered the rise of black consumerism in the twentieth century and its impacts on American society leading up to the Civil Rights Movement. Weem’s argued that the power of black consumers and their individual and collective economic impact through purchasing power are severely under appreciated.

Minimizing the central role of African American economic retribution erroneously suggests that civil rights legislation resulted from white “moral transformation,” rather than from the skillful use of African Americans’ growing economic clout (Weems 1998:56).

One of the most prominently cited examples of this power are the collective boycotts of segregated public transportation, particularly buses and streetcars, which took place in cities across the south throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Black business people established carriages, vans, buses, and other privately funded alternative forms of transportation, which were encouraged among people of color (Glickman 2009: 172). The success of the boycott method and the establishment of black owned transportation are further documented in W. E. B. Du Bois 1907, *Economic Cooperation among Negro Americans* (Du Bois 1907).

While transportation boycotts have since been immortalized in popular culture, less well known are protests that erupted during the 1920s and 1930s, particularly in Chicago and Harlem that urged people to patronize businesses with policies of equal employment opportunity. Effective and powerful protest slogans such as “*Spend Your Money Where You Can Work*” were promoted among black consumers and resulted in changes among several major corporations, including Woolworths, who agreed to hire a staff comprised of at least ¼ African Americans in

black neighborhood stores (Cohen 2003:44). Other businesses reacted by posting signs in the windows advertising their employment of blacks, hoping to draw African American customers through the doors. In addition to boycotting racially discriminatory white owned businesses, movements to establish and patronize black owned businesses also had great success. The National Negro Business League was formed in 1900 and Booker T. Washington and other prominent black leaders, including, Marcus Garvey, worked to support black capitalism throughout the early twentieth-century (Cohen 2003: 43). Concerted activism encouraged many people, particularly in urban areas to seek out black owned businesses and/or stores and companies known to employ black workers.

In downtown Palestine, the county seat and closest city to the Benjamin Jackson plantation, black businessman pooled their resources together to establish the Farmers and Citizens Bank in 1906. The bank eventually purchased a plot of land and established McKnight Plaza in 1910. Aside from the bank, the plaza included an African American owned cab company, grocery store, barber shop, doctor's offices, dentist, café, certified accountant, and funeral parlor. In operation until 1945, the plaza served as the center of African American business and entrepreneurship and was heavily patronized by people of color throughout Anderson County. In addition to serving as an economic hub where people were able to support the black community and purchase goods in a less-discriminatory environment, the plaza also served as a social and political center (McKnight Plaza Marker Dedication Program, Unknown Date).

While historic black consumer movements during the first-half of the twentieth century are increasingly documented in urban areas, the impacts of these movements across rural landscapes remain less well understood (Mullins 1999). Conversations with people in Bethel as

well as the archaeology of the Davis and Taylor households suggest similar ideas concerning selective patronage existed and influenced peoples purchasing decisions in the rural sector. An interesting example of this came up during a discussion with members of the New Bethel Church about catalogue shopping and its rampant popularity during the first half of the twentieth century. One woman I was speaking with offered that Alvah Roebuck, of Sears and Roebuck, was African American and as such her family had frequently shopped from the Sears catalogue. Her statement was immediately affirmed by another local resident whose family had also patronized Sears Roebuck and Company and understood that Roebuck was black. Rumors that Sears was Jewish and Roebuck was of African descent were spread by white merchants during the late-nineteenth century in an attempt to dissuade similarly racist white consumers from patronizing catalogues and instead urge them to continue shopping at local “white owned” brick and mortar stores (Davis 2007:2). Historian, James Davis argues in *Commerce in Color: Race, Consumer Culture, and American Literature, 1893 – 1933* that,

Though the rumor was technically inaccurate, it took on the ring of truth in 1895, when Aaron Nusbaum and Julius Rosenwald [both Jewish] bought Alva Roebuck’s share of the company. Of course, the accuracy of the rumor is less significant than the fact that it was used in the first place to intimidate rural consumers from mail-order shopping with remote merchants whose race they could not verify (Davis 2007: 255).

Such tales had the opposite effect on consumers of color. In addition to rumors of black ownership, investment in the company by Rosenwald, who funded the construction of over 5,000 schools for African Americans in the rural south as well as his seat as a board member of the Tuskegee Institute, may also have swayed those aware of his philanthropy to patronize Sears (Ascoli 2006). These motivations appear to have influenced black residents in rural Anderson County and the Bethel community during the first half of the twentieth century and resulted in an

increase in the consumption of Sears' products among some families. Possible material evidence of this can be seen in the household assemblages of the Davis and Taylor families which include items sold through Sears catalogues. Scholars have also pointed out that catalogues along with prepackaged brand goods, unlike bulk goods at local stores, offered African Americans assurance they truly got what they paid for. Shopping through catalogues cut out the middle man, and in the rural south, the middle man was frequently white and racist (Mullins 1999:173).

Archaeological evidence and further community conversations likewise suggests people patronized local stores where blacks were employed, including the Athens Pottery Company in Athens, Texas. When the Bethel Church was restored during the mid-twentieth century and a brick façade was added to cover and strengthen the original wood-frame building, the bricks were purchased from Athens Pottery as funds became available (Johnson 2013). As previously discussed in Chapter 7, photographs documenting Athens pottery workers show several African American's employed at the shop as early as 1890, and a circa 1935 photograph depicts an all-black work force including a black foreman. This may have informed local decisions to patronize this particular shop given their apparent policy of equal employment opportunities.

Recent excavations at a late-nineteenth century black owned farmstead outside of Austin, Texas, the Ransom and Sarah Williams home, suggest the Williams family patronized a well-established African American pottery shop in Seguin, Texas, the Wilson Potteries. The Wilson Potteries are a group of three kilns located within a two mile radius that were owned and operated by the Wilson family. Archaeologists were able to determine several of the vessels at the Williams' farmstead were from the Wilson shops by performing Neutron Activation Analysis (NAA) on the collected stoneware sherds and comparing them with those from the Wilson Potteries, and other nearby pottery shops (Boyd et al. 2014: 326). While not all of the vessels

recovered at the Williams farmstead match the chemical signature of Wilson pots, evidence suggests that the family was patronizing the business.

8.2 PERSONAL CONSUMPTION AND PERSONAL EXPRESSION AMONG RURAL BLACK FARMERS

Aside from politically collectivist purchasing, more personal decisions concerning material culture and the items people use in their day to day lives, such as those described above by the William's family, are also inevitably socially charged and considered in context can reflect consumers wants, needs, desires, and ambitions in relation to particular social, economic, and political settings. Historians Lunt and Livingston have argued that while not always representative of collectivist strategies, personal consumption allows people to take control of their identities and to some extent shape their personal lives (Lunt and Livingston 1992:169; Mullins 1999:27). While, an inherently unequal process, tethered to monetary wealth and access, particularly within the bounds of a capitalist system, the material choices people make within these limitations reveal something about the myriad ways we actively shape our everyday realities within varied sociopolitical contexts.

The differences evident between the Davis and Taylor family artifact assemblages provide an interesting local perspective on one family's consumption practices in rural East Texas during the Jim Crow era and potentially highlight generational shifts in local consumer attitudes and ideals during this period. One of the most striking differences between the two household assemblages, which date circa 1900 – 1940 and circa 1930 - 1955 is the significant increase in the overall quantity and diversity of materials at Viola and Cleveland Taylor's household in comparison with Viola Taylor's parents household, the Davises.

As previously mentioned the Taylors occupied the excavated household during the transitional World War II era and postwar period, an age of tremendous product and materials

innovation accompanied by increased access and product availability that triggered a cultural revolution in the United States. The Taylors engagement with these newly available products and their purchasing decisions offer subtle insight into the family's overall wants, needs, ambitions, and desires (Mullins 1999: 27). While the poverty and discrimination experienced by rural southern black tenant families is documented, the details of people's daily lives and personal expressions in the face of these challenges is less well known. The following considers some of the discrepancies in the artifact collections from one household generation to the next within the context of a pivotal period in American history and consumerism. Within archaeology several works have begun to consider these questions; however most studies end by 1940 and post-WWII era experiences are under explored (Barnes 2011, Franklin 2012, Lee 2014, Palmer 2005 and 2011, and Wilkie 2000) (Lee and Franklin's work concerns landowners).

As previously discussed in Chapter 6, the ceramics collected at archaeological sites offer a great deal of information due to their ubiquity and preservation. While the ceramics collected at the Davis and Taylor households make up similar percentages of the overall collections, 5.1 percent of the Davis assemblage and 4.8 percent of the Taylor assemblage, the overall numbers are dramatically different. 140 ceramic sherds were identified at the Davis household and 451 were collected at the Taylor household, an almost 70 percent difference between sites subject to a comparatively similar amount of excavation. The difference in ceramic quantity is consistent with increases in other artifacts, such as glass, throughout the Taylor assemblage and speaks to an overall escalation and increased diversity of product consumption postwar.

While the ceramics recovered from the Davis household are primarily sturdy, moderately priced, utilitarian stonewares and undecorated whitewares, the Taylors were using a higher percentage of refined earthenwares with a variety of decorative patterns including hand painted

porcelain, gold applique, Fiesta wares, banded wares, molded wares, and decalcomania. Additionally, the Taylor's exhibited an increased variety of vessel forms, including teacups, saucers, and other flat and hollow wares that may have served as specialty table wares. This differs from the highly utilitarian and practical nature of the stoneware, and flat and hollow undecorated whitewares that dominate the Davis collection. The actual percentages of the wares collected at each site are presented in Table 8.1.

The Taylors also collected a variety of very similar, yet slightly different molded whitewares exhibiting a royal pattern. As a group, the molded wares would have offered the appearance of a matching dinner set, something that may have been visually pleasing to the Taylors, and also portrayed a certain sense of outward style to visitors. Such attention to stylistic detail appears to be less prominent and more subdued in the Davis collection. Palmer's work at Alma and Riverlake Plantations in Louisiana which looked comparatively at pre-1910 and 1910 – 1940 African American tenant household assemblages revealed an increase in decoration in the later period at Riverlake, but similar proportions between the two time periods at Alma. Additional data concerning ceramics at tenant sites over generations and shifts in decoration and ware type could potentially reveal interesting comparative data (Palmer 2005: 193).

Table 8.1: Ceramic Assemblages at the Davis and Taylor Households

Ware Type	Decoration	Davis Household No. of Sherds	Taylor Household No. of Sherds	Percentage Davis Household	Percentage Taylor Household
Stoneware		59	64	42.1	14.2
	Salt Glaze	5	0	3.6	0
	Alkaline Glaze	34	0	24.3	0
	Bristol Glaze	12	60	8.6	13.3
	Bristol Glaze with Albany Slip	2	4	1.4	< 1
	Slip Glaze	5	0	3.6	0
	No Glaze	1	0	< 1	0
Refined Earthenwares		81	374	57.9	82.9
	Undecorated	53	232	37.9	51.3
	Molded	1	51	< 1	11.2
	Decalcomania	6	31	4.3	6.9
	Hand Painted	0	19	0	4.2
	Fiesta	0	21	0	4.7
	Gold Applique	0	14	0	< 1
	Solid Glaze	0	4	0	< 1
	Banded	21	1	15	< 1
	Gullet Stone	0	1	0	< 1
Porcelain		0	13	0	2.8
	Undecorated	0	10	0	2.2
	Molded	0	2	0	< 1
	Hand Painted	0	0	0	< 1
	Solid Glaze	0	1	0	< 1
Total		140	451	100	100

This is also true of the glass wares recovered from the Taylor household, which represent 62.8 percent of the assemblage in comparison with 33.3 percent of the Davis household collection. While heavily fragmented, the glass at the Taylor site includes a variety of colorless and amber glass bottle and jar fragments as well as an increased variety of colorful Depression glass and tablewares. While Depression glass is present in a limited quantity at the Davis household, most of the glass appears to be from canning jars, snuff jars, and oil lamps. Based upon the collections, the Taylor family appears to have been more engaged with decorative Depression glass wares and their collection was significantly more diverse.

Included within the Taylor household assemblage are several fragments of “Alice” pattern dishes and tea cups. “Alice” pattern wares were produced during the early 1940s and the saucers and teacups given away as promotional items in boxes of oatmeal and other cereals. “Alice” plates; however, were only available for purchase and may have been sought out by consumers hoping to piece together matching sets (Schroy 2013: 40). At least one of the “Alice” fragments collected from the Taylor household appears to have been from a plate with a larger diameter than a saucer suggesting that as with the molded wares, the Taylors may have purchased the dinner plate to compliment saucers and teacups they collected as promotional items in an effort to create a set of dishes offering a certain aesthetic ideal.

The recovery of teacups at the Davis site, but not at the earlier Taylor site is also interesting. At Oakley Plantation, Wilkie found teacups present within both antebellum and postbellum African American households (Wilkie 2000: 143). She points out that many archaeologists have considered tea cups and tea wares as forms of social display and wealth. Wilkie suggests in the context of slavery other potential uses for teawares should be considered, arguing that WPA ex-slave narratives never mention social tea and, “slaves, even if consuming

tea, had little use for mimicking the elite activity of the social tea” (Wilkie 2000: 143). While, not necessarily related to ‘social tea’, in the traditional sense, the presence of teacups in the later post-war context at the Jackson Plantation, but not in the earlier assemblage is interesting. Particularly, given the overall increase in decorative ceramics and glass wares at the site. Present day, it would be a challenge to find a traditional tea service outside of perhaps a Ritz Carlton in the United States, but I would argue that people’s selection of tea/coffee cups is quite telling of aspects of their personality, as well as, their economic and social standing. The Taylor family may not have engaged in formal tea, but they possibly enjoyed using and displaying decorative tea cups. An activity that does not appear to have been favored by Ms. Taylor’s parents.

Aside from an increase in the style and variety of ceramic and glass wares among the later generation, other artifact categories reflect similar tendencies towards the consumption of commercially popular products including personal items. A greater variety of clothing and other adornment items possibly highlights increased attention to popular styles and fashions among the Taylors. This is evidenced through a greater number and decorative variety of buttons collected at the Taylor household in comparison with the Davises, and the presence of adornment items such as a tie holder, jewelry items, hair clip, and nail polish. In comparison, commercially produced decorative adornment type items were largely absent from the earlier generations artifact assemblage. Exceptions to this within the Davis collection include a metal clasp that appears to have been part of a handbag and a Bakelite tobacco pipe, both items that offered visual appeal, but maintained highly functional practical uses.

The marked shift in attention to stylistic attributes and material goods among the Taylors was likely due to a combination of factors such as greater interest in current styles and trends, increased availability of affordably priced commercial dress, increased monetary exchange

within the community after WWII and possibly an increase in expendable income. Perhaps more interestingly, the changes also correspond with postwar cultural shifts away from ideas of austerity and temperance that were espoused by early-twentieth century black leaders such as Booker T Washington, particularly in rural areas. These cultural attitudes may have influenced older generations including the Davises, who grew up during Washington's era, to maintain a more somber asceticism that was seen as intimately tied to ideals of work, church, and morality, a view that was not equally shared and celebrated by the younger generation (Davis 2010: 33). Palmer's excavations at tenant households in Louisiana found a decline in the value of the ceramics at both sites from 1910 – 1940 in comparison to pre-1910 contexts. His study does not continue beyond the WWII-era, but it would have been interesting to see what happened in terms of value in the subsequent generation (Palmer 2005 196).

The increase in material culture and the diversity of personal items also reflects postwar attitudes in the United States that intimately linked consumption with citizenship and democracy. While, the white majority enacted policies of “separate but equal” at lunch counters, water fountains, buses, theatres, hotels, and other private and public spaces, essentially denying citizenship to black Americans, they had less control over what people purchased and acquired through various marketplaces. While consumer access and systematic discrimination remained a constant looming concern for people of African descent and other people of color, particularly in housing markets, the education sector, and in skilled employment, these policies of exclusion had their limitations.

African Americans worked with whatever fissures existed to crack open and expose the fallacies of racial discrimination. Consumption was one of the means by which people, even those with minimal capital, could actively participate within this system. The basic material

choices people made through brick and mortar shops, many of which were black owned, or through catalogue purchases to acquire and display certain goods, lay outside the parameters of white control (Mullins 1999). As Lizbeth Cohen argues in *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*,

The Consumer's Republic, in prizing broad participation in mass consumer markets, provided a wide range of black Americans – differing in locale, class, and ideology – with an available and legitimate recourse for challenging racial discrimination (Cohen 2003: 190).

As black Americans began engaging with the market at accelerating rates after WWII, many industries began competing for their business, even as segregation raged in other sectors. In 1944, David Sullivan, an African American scholar who pioneered early market research targeting black consumer groups, published “*The American Negro – An Export market at Home*”, arguing the potential monetary benefit of tapping into black markets (Sullivan 1944: 277; Weems 1998: 34). Much of the competition that followed to secure black business was played out through corporate advertising campaigns. The black owned newspaper conglomerate, Interstate United Newspapers Inc. formed in 1940 was instrumental in its encouragement of the campaigns. William Black, who was appointed to head the newspapers advertising division, played a major role in facilitating the courtship between corporate America and people of color by attracting major corporations including the automobile companies Chrysler, Ford, and Buick, and several major soft drink and grocery moguls to place advertisements targeting black audiences (Weems 1998: 36). This increase in advertising as well as overall increased product availability corresponds with the increase in commercial product engagement visible in the collection of artifacts recovered from the Taylor household.

The Taylor family's consumption of soda is particularly interesting when considered in this context. The history of soft drink advertising during the 1940s and 1950s, particularly the opposing campaigns of Coke and Pepsi notoriously highlight the politics and tensions that existed between race and consumption. While Coke rigorously pursued the white middle class, placing promotional materials in segregated spaces featuring white only models, Pepsi broadened its advertising model, creating a "negro markets" department (Hale 2013). Pepsi's CEO at the time, Walter S. Mack, hired Edward F. Boyd to head a team of black marketing strategists. Boyd was one of the first African American executives in a major American corporation and broke racial barriers with advertising campaigns that included prominent black citizens such as Duke Ellington and Lionel Hampton. Upon his death in 2007, an obituary in the New York Times described Boyd as "*a young sales executive [who] parlayed his assignment to promote Pepsi-Cola to fellow blacks into a war against white racism and black stereotypes, meanwhile selling oceans more soda*" (Martin 2007). Boyd was responsible for advertisements such as the one from the 1940s depicted in Figure 8.1, which portrays a middle-class black family drinking Pepsi. In addition to Pepsi, NEHI, whose products were also found at the Taylor household, placed similar advertisements featuring soda endorsements by black celebrities including "Peg Leg" Bates and Erskine Hawkins (Weems 1998: 36).



Figure 8.1: Pepsi advertisement designed by Edward Boyd featuring a black middle class family that was popular during the 1940s (reproduced from Martin 2007)

Interestingly within the context of the Jackson plantation, there is evidence of a significant increase in soda consumption at the postwar Taylor household in comparison with the earlier Davis household where a single diagnostic soda bottle was found on the surface. As described and photographed in Chapter 7, evidence suggests the Taylor's primarily consumed Pepsi, Crown products, NEHI, 7-up, and local Texas sodas, including Dr. Pepper and Delaware Punch. Coca-Cola products and their characteristic contour bottle design, which were extremely popular during this period, are conspicuously absent from both assemblages. While it is impossible to know the motivations behind the Taylor family's apparent decision to forgo Coke products, and purchase Pepsi products as well as other sodas such as Crown and NEHI, which

are known for actively pursuing black business, it is possible they were aware of the opposing campaigns and the controversy. This would suggest that even in economically depressed rural areas, people were exercising their rights to protest and challenge discrimination through active consumption.

In addition to the potential meanings that may be embedded in the Taylor family's decisions to purchase certain individual items, the overall increase in commercial products and variability speak to broader changes in the American consumer landscape. The increase in commercial consumption heralds a movement away from the self-sufficiency that characterized earlier generations and captures a period of transition in rural areas as people became more reliant on commercially produced goods. While many of the artifacts recovered from the Taylor household indicate self-reliance and independence, including fishing hooks, canning supplies, stoneware for storage, shell casings from a weapon likely used for hunting, pig bones indicative of slaughter, farming tools, and a spool of thread and safety pins for clothing production and mending, other items suggest increased engagement and reliance on commercial products.

This is particularly evident when you look comparatively at the use of hygiene and medicinal products. While the Davises appear to have used certain common pharmaceutical products including the petroleum jelly products Moroline and Chesebroug Vaseline, a significantly greater number of commercial hygiene products were found within the Taylor collection, including similar ointment jars, pharmaceutical bottles, three different bleach varieties, toothpaste, toothbrush, metal pill tins, a double-edged razor blade, several hair combs, and black hard rubber screw tops, likely from tubes of ointment and other hygiene related products. It is also interesting to note that while the Taylors had limited monetary income and appear to have been thrifty and creative with their ceramic and glass collections, they also appear

to have purchased quality hygiene items that in many cases were not the lowest cost product available. Examples of this include Ipana toothpaste and a Reputation Company toothbrush, both of which according to a Sears catalogue were the most expensive of the available products (Mirken 1970: 635). While oral histories from the period indicate people relied heavily upon herbs and homeopathic medicines during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, peoples engagement with commercially produced pharmaceuticals increased over time and this appears to be true among the Davis and Taylor families.

The end result of people's increased engagement with commercial goods within the Bethel community, and beyond, is bitter-sweet depending on who you ask. While offering a broad platform for civic engagement, identity creation, and protest against the inequality of white government and ideals, commercial consumerism also led to a decrease in self-sufficiency and thus an increased dependence on monetary individual wealth. Commercial items, such as pre-packaged canned goods offered convenience and the benefits of certain pharmaceuticals are appreciated, but their introduction and people's eventual reliance upon such products to meet every day needs played a hand in accelerating rural community decline.

Increased commercial consumption was coupled with the increased mechanization of farm labor which essentially destroyed small farm markets in favor of industrial agriculture. Communal self-sufficiency, along with a shared history, culture, and the collective struggle against the injustices of racism, initially bound people together, and new waves of consumerism, while offering empowerment through civic engagement, contributed in some ways to the erosion of these bonds as reliance on neighbors declined and dependence on capital increased (Johnson 2013). The decline in communal reliance as a result of industrialization and commercialism

extends beyond racial boundaries and impacted rural communities throughout the United States during this era.

In conclusion, active consumerism among African Americans was perhaps not limited to the urban middle-class where previous studies have focused, but also extended to the rural south, where farmers, many of whom were economically impoverished tenants, may have actively consumed products from corporations known to be less discriminatory in their business practices (Mullins 1999). I recognize this suggestion is based on limited archaeological evidence and oral history, but it serves as a point from which to consider the extent to which consumer protest reached the rural South, even when protest was as simple as buying a soda or purchasing goods through a Sears catalogue. The crippling poverty and rampant discrimination faced by the majority of black southern farmers, particularly tenants has been documented, but the creative ways people within these settings engaged socially and politically through the material world has been less well explored. Further consideration of the relationships between consumption and agency within these situations has the potential to reveal important information concerning the ways African Americans in the rural south chose to engage with new markets and emerging mass produced products within the context of Jim Crow and the development of the Civil Rights Movement.

Additionally, the archaeological evidence appears to point to a set of new cultural attitudes being espoused by a postwar generation of rural African Americans who to some extent rejected past ideals of temperance and austerity in favor of new urban fashions and trends which allowed people to engage more actively within a capitalist system that frequently defined and continues to define citizenry through consumption. A further exploration of generational shifts

and overall consumption practices among rural southern black farmers, particularly through additional archaeology at postwar households, would potentially expand this dialogue.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSIONS

“Everyday forms of resistance make no headlines” (James Scott 1985:36).

To frame the conclusions I would like to begin with the words of W. E. B. DuBois from *The Souls of Black Folk*, authored four decades after state sanctioned slavery ended in the United States,

For this much all men know: despite compromise, war, and struggle, the Negro is not free. In the backwoods of the Gulf States, for miles and miles, he may not leave the plantation of his birth. In well-nigh the whole rural South the black farmers are peons, bound by law and custom to an economic slavery, from which the only escape is death or the penitentiary (W. E. B. Du Bois 1903: 29).

DuBois words offer a condemning picture of tenancies rise as a replacement for slave labor and it's persistence throughout the early-twentieth century. During this time, emerging doctrines of modern capitalism based on the premise of individual freedom, wage-labor, and consumption were stifled across the southern United States and a quasi-feudalist society erupted after the Civil War. To briefly review the historical context, in 1880 roughly 1/3 of all Texas farmers were landless and this number steadily increased until tenants reached a majority population across the State. While effecting economically poor people across the South, the system disproportionately impacted African Americans who were struggling in slavery's wake to establish a foothold within a system designed to prevent their ascension (Wilkison 2008: 14).

However, during this same period more black landowners arose in Texas than in any other southern state (Wilkison 2008:25; Sitton and Conrad 2005: 2). As African Americans gained economic footing, black communities emerged across rural areas of the South, often relying upon networks of extended family ties, shared culture, and self-sufficiency to solidify

spaces within an overwhelmingly discriminatory political environment. Once established these communities frequently became platforms providing opportunities where individuals seeking, for better or worse, to embrace the ideals of American capitalism, including individual property, capital accumulation, and a market economy could attempt to do so.

At the same time that black community and business development were increasing, the predominately white male southern landowning population fought to maintain absolute control of local and regional politics and worked to prevent the subversion of pre-Civil War power relations. Their actions were both overtly violent and subtly discriminatory and the back and forth struggles that resulted inevitably restructured rural farm life in ways that continue to effect social, political, and economic life in East Texas. The goal of my dissertation was to consider this extended transitional period on a local material scale. Particularly to document people's daily lives within the setting of a rural black Texas community that evolved within a former plantation landscape.

While the spatial and material evidence identified during the investigations echo aspects of the deeply embedded contradictions of emancipation and freedom that DuBois described in the introductory quote, the deep struggles and efforts by community members over generations to negotiate this reality, build community and survive within the context of Jim Crow were also revealed. Local people's determination to engage with and transform a resistant plantation landscape over generations became apparent through the material culture they left behind as well as historical records and oral traditions documenting struggles to purchase land, build community infrastructure, and prosper within a context of extreme oppression. Additionally, household items recovered from two generations of tenant farmers, the Davis and Taylor families, who occupied the lands from circa 1900 – 1953, revealed the complexity of people's

personal realities on a microscale and the possible social, symbolic, and cultural implications of consumer choices.

The first three chapters of the dissertation established a general context, followed by a consideration of overall changes in the Benjamin Jackson plantation landscape, particularly in regards to negotiations over landownership between the Jackson family and African American individuals and families. The local history of property ownership provides an important framework for understanding the development of the community and situating the archaeology of the Davis and Taylor households within a layered context that included a socially and economically diverse mix of early black landowners and tenant farmers. The initial property research presented in the beginning also further revealed the complexities of postemancipation rural black agricultural community life and development, a history which has been poorly documented and frequently homogenized.

Speaking to this lack of documentation, bell hooks eloquently discussed the need for further consideration of historic African American farming communities in a 2009 collection of essays titled, *Belonging: A Culture of Place*. hooks wrote,

I was consistently puzzled by the way in which black experience was named and talked about in colleges and university settings. It was always the experience of black people living in large urban cities who defined black identity. No one paid attention to the lives of rural black folks...There is so little written about these agrarian black folks and the culture of belonging they created...We have forgotten the black farmer...It has been in the interest of imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy to hide and erase their story. For they are the ancestors who gave to black folk from slavery on into reconstruction an oppositional consciousness, ways to think about life that could enable one to have positive self-esteem even in the midst of harsh and brutal circumstances (hooks 2009:43).

Existing documentation concerning postemancipation African American life in the rural south often over simplify and falsely divide black experiences into two oppositional categories,

tenancy and landownership. Narratives related to 'Freedom Colonies' typically characterize communities as independent and self-isolated from white communities, and alternatively narratives of tenancy focus on impermanence, mobility, and exploitation by white landowners. Bethel differs in many ways from these dichotomous narratives of tenancy and its degradation, versus freedom, isolation and independence, and hopefully complicates and broadens conceptions of how rural black agrarian communities successfully emerged in this region after the Civil War (Sitton and Conrad 2008:4).

Unlike more traditionally defined Freedom Colonies that developed in areas that were not yet assumed within the white economy, such as lowlands, swamps, and previously undeveloped forested lands, Bethel existed within an already established agricultural landscape that grew over generations to include a mix of black landowners and tenants, many of whom were formerly enslaved on the Jackson plantation. This contrasts with postemancipation narratives portraying tenants and sharecroppers living in largely unorganized and vagrant like fashions. Community members in Bethel, including new residents, and long-term tenants whose families were previously enslaved on the plantation, slowly and persistently acquired parcels of land from the Jackson family and from other white and eventually black landowners, gradually gaining more control and independence. The first half of this dissertation considers these changing power dynamics throughout the early twentieth century and the development of the African American community around Bethel.

This local community context established a framework for the second part of the dissertation which moved further towards the local scale and engaged with the household archaeology of the Davis and Taylor families. The Davis's have a long history with the Jackson Plantation that originates with Delia and James Davis Sr., both of whom were born in Alabama

and were originally enslaved on the lands as a result of the Second Middle Passage. Census records indicate that James and Delia moved off of the Jackson plantation sometime after emancipation, but remained in the immediate area farming a rented piece of land. Their son, James Davis Jr. either continued living on the Jackson plantation as a tenant, or moved back a few years later, eventually assuming the position of an overseer for the Jackson family who no longer maintained a permanent household (Anderson County Deed and Census Records).

James Davis Jr. and his wife Lillie Davis occupied one of the excavated households from around 1900 through their deaths in the early 1940's. The household of their daughter Viola Taylor and her husband Cleveland Taylor, which was also excavated, was occupied from the 1930's – mid 1950s. In 1953, the Taylor's purchased and relocated to three acres of land across the road from their tenant household, which they bought from a local black landowner (Anderson County Deed Records 1900-1940; Jackson 2012). As described in the introduction, while not always directly, the Davis's story is intertwined with that of the plantation owning Jackson family and the relationships between the two developed over several generations through slavery, the Civil War, Emancipation, Reconstruction, WWI, the Great Depression, and WWII. Finally concluding when the Taylors moved off of the rented lands their family had farmed for over a century and onto their own property.

The Davis and Taylor households capture one picture, among many, of rural black farm life in the Southern United States during the Jim Crow era, and the transitional postwar period. This was a time during which people's engagements with commercial goods and American's relationships with mass consumption accelerated in new ways as products diversified and became cheaper and more accessible. Archaeology allows us to look at how this shift in consumerism impacted rural African Americans and to what extent people in rural areas, even

economically strapped tenant farmers, engaged with a sea of newly available commercial products. While several studies have considered black consumerism during the Jim Crow era within the context of urban areas, particularly among the middle and upper class, archaeologists and historians have often assumed that in rural contexts, particularly those involving tenancy, poverty and impermanence resulted in material evidence too ephemeral for meaningful evaluation. While this is true at some sites, there was diversity in tenancy, as there was diversity within other contexts during Jim Crow and many sites have the potential to reveal a wealth of information, particularly those associated with southern black agrarian life during the first half of the twentieth century.

Research on the Bethel community and at the Davis and Taylor households revealed two interesting lines of evidence concerning the rise of modern consumption within the context of Jim Crow and peoples conscious engagements with commercial products. Based upon the archaeology and oral history, it appears that people within the community were to some extent purchasing products from local and national businesses, such as the Athens Pottery Company, Pepsi, and Nehi that employed black workers and/or approached black consumers through nonracist commercial advertising. Local black consumers were also frequently shopping from Sears Roebuck catalogues and based upon oral history many people in the community were under the impression that Roebuck was African American. This was a common rumor spread by racist, white, brick and mortar merchants to attract similarly racist white customers, but it had the opposite effect on African Americans some of whom saw an opportunity to patronize a black owned company.

In addition to what might be considered activist purchasing, evidence of overall increased commercial consumption by the later Taylor household, which dates circa 1930 – 1955, in

comparison with the Davis household dating circa 1900 – 1940 is striking and provides an interesting perspective on generational shifts. While the increase in materials at the later site was anticipated, the quantity and diversity of these materials exceeded my original expectations. The Taylor's occupied the excavated household during the transitional World War II era and postwar period, an age of tremendous product and materials innovation accompanied by increased access and availability that triggered a cultural revolution in the United States. Archaeology suggests the Taylor family actively engaged in the product revolution, shaping their own identities in ways that differed in many respects from those of their parents while also maintaining a large degree of self-reliance and independence.

Earlier prewar generations, particularly within rural farming communities, often prided themselves on temperance and austerity inspired by Booker T. Washington and other early twentieth century leaders. However, the postwar generation appears to have adopted new cultural attitudes that to some extent rejected these ideals in favor of experimentation with new products and trends. Purchasing goods in this manner, even items that are seemingly trivial and inexpensive, such as soda and new hygiene and personal products such as nail polish, allowed people, regardless of skin color, to actively engage, for better or worse, within a capitalist system that frequently defined and continues to define its citizenry through consumption.

Future research on postwar era rural black farmsteads, including tenants and landowners, would provide more evidence for considering cultural shifts between pre and postwar generations of rural African Americans within the context of Jim Crow and a rising Civil Rights movement. Within the Bethel community it would be beneficial to excavate additional households associated with black tenants and landowners that span this era to see if the rise in commercial product use occurred throughout the community, and if similar products were being

purchased by people in other residences. New excavations might also be undertaken to consider how the use of space may have shifted at households over generations and if there are corresponding changes in the ways people were engaging with their homes and yards. Additionally, studies considering the positioning of the body and an evaluation of changing dress and style over time would be valuable for developing a more nuanced understanding of the impact of the postwar consumer revolution and how rural African Americans were engaging with this cultural shift as an avenue for personal and political posturing within the context of Jim Crow. The collection of additional oral history with community members would also be invaluable, and this dissertation and any future research on the community, would benefit greatly from further conversations with community descendants.

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Anderson County Probate Record

1863 Record # 36

Unknown James Douglas Probate

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- 2012-2015 I use “Anonymous” to refer to informal conversations I had with members of the Bethel community who did not give specific permission for the use of their names within the text.

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Sarah Loftus

Archaeologist

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Expertise

- Cultural Resources
- Historic Archaeology
- Archaeological Survey
- NRHP Testing and Data Recovery
- Archaeological Monitoring
- Archival Research
- Artifact Analysis and Curation
- CRM Report Production

Education

- Doctoral Candidate, Anthropology Department, Syracuse University
- M.A. Anthropology, Syracuse University, 2007
- M.A. Managing Archaeological Sites, University College London, 2006
- B.A. Anthropology, University of Houston, 2003

Total Years of Experience

10 +

I am a Cultural Resources Specialist with over ten years of experience as an archaeologist working across Texas and other parts of the Southeastern and Midwestern United States. I have supervisory experience in a variety of project settings related to Section 106 and NEPA, including archaeological survey, National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Testing and Data Recovery, archaeological monitoring, archival research, artifact analysis and curation, and all phases of report writing and production.

Burns & McDonnell Engineering, Inc., Austin, Texas (2013-2015)

I serve as the Austin office archaeology Lead and Principal Investigator for Burns & McDonnell Engineering, Inc. I am responsible for all phases of project development and completion, including proposal writing, agency and client coordination, fieldwork, and report writing. Select projects listed below.

Northwest Water System Improvement Project, Greenwood Utilities *Leflore County, Greenwood, Mississippi*

Principal Investigator and Lead Report Author for an intensive cultural resources survey. The Project crossed through a USACE owned property that contains Fort Pemberton, a Civil War Fort listed on the NRHP. Ms. Loftus secured an Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) Permit from the USACE to conduct the survey and led the field investigations, agency coordination, and report production.

Cultural Resources Reconnaissance Review for the East Brine Pond Site, Mont Belvieu Natural Gas Liquids Fractionation Facility *Chambers County, Texas*

Principal Investigator and Lead Report Author for a cultural resources survey of 90-acres associated with the East Brine Pond Construction Project. Five new archaeological sites were recorded and extensive archival research was conducted in order to document structural features (canals and pumping equipment) related to early rice farming in the region.

Cultural Resources Reconnaissance Review for the Proposed Frac-3 and Frac-4 Expansion of the Mont Belvieu Natural Gas Liquids Fractionation Facility

Mont Belvieu, Chambers County, Texas

Principal Investigator and Lead Report Author for a cultural resources survey and historic structures survey that included an 89-acre facility footprint and a windshield survey covering a 4.5 kilometer radius larger project review area.

Feeder #32 Transmission Line Rebuild, GRDA

Rogers and Tulsa Counties, Oklahoma

Principal Investigator for a proposed 14.6-mile transmission line rebuild project that included an intensive cultural resources survey. Ms. Loftus was involved in all aspects of the field work and report production for the project.

Feeder #22 Transmission Line Rebuild, GRDA

Craig, Delaware, Mayes, and Ottawa Counties, Oklahoma

Principal Investigator for a proposed 31.2-mile transmission line rebuild project that included an intensive cultural resources survey. Ms. Loftus was involved in all aspects of the field work and report production for the project.

KC West Pipeline Project, Atmos Energy Corporation

Taylor County, Texas

Principal Investigator and Lead Report Author for a cultural resources survey that included 6.5 miles of new pipeline ROW.

Loves Travel Stop Project

Rockwall County, Texas

Principal Investigator and Lead Report Author for a cultural resources survey of a new pipeline installation

Syracuse University, Anthropology Department, Syracuse, New York (2010- 2015)

Benjamin Jackson Plantation Archaeological Research Project, Anderson County, Texas 2010 - present

Field Director and Lab Director

Research Assistant, Douglas Armstrong Ph.D., Fall 2013

Lead Teaching Assistant, Douglas Armstrong Ph.D. Maxwell Professor of Teaching Excellence, Syracuse University, Instructor: ANT/HST 145, Introduction to Historical Archaeology, Spring 2011

Teaching Assistant, Maureen Schwarz Ph.D. Professor, Syracuse University, Instructor: ANT 111, Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, Fall 2010

During graduate school I was a consultant/historic archaeology specialist for Cox/McLain (Austin, Texas), William Self and Associates (Austin, Texas), and Perennial Environmental Services (Houston, Texas). Select projects below (2011 – 2013).

Pfluger Farm Lane Report, City of Pflugerville, Texas

Travis County, Pflugerville, Texas

Co-Author and Field expert for an intensive archaeological survey for Pfluger Farm Lane in the city of Pflugerville, Texas. Ms. Loftus served as an expert in historical archaeology and performed testing, mapping, and artifact analysis for an early-twentieth century farmstead.

Bexar County Flood Control Improvements

Bexar County, San Antonio, Texas

Project Archaeologist for the monitoring of Bexar County flood control improvements along VFW Boulevard, San Antonio, Texas.

Apex-Matagorda Survey

Matagorda County, Texas

Sarah Loftus

(continued)

Principal Investigator and Lead Report Author for the Apex-Matagorda survey.

Intensive archaeology survey at the Burke Hollow Uranium ISR Mine, Uranium Energy Corporation
Bee County, Texas

Data Recovery for the Sessom Creek Wastewater Improvement Project, City of San Marcos
Hays County, Texas

A Phase I Cultural Resources Assessment of the Proposed Southeast Market Expansion Project
Jasper, Forrest, Perry, Greene, and George Counties Mississippi and Mobile County Alabama
Served as historic consultant and report co-author.

A Phase I Cultural Resources Assessment of the Proposed Panda Power Lateral Project
Grayson County, Texas
Served as historic consultant and report co-author.

PBS&J (now Atkins North America, Inc.), Austin, Texas (2008-2010)

While at PBS&J I served as a Principal Investigator and Project Archaeologist for a variety of projects and provided support for all phases of project planning and completion, typically serving as the field director and lead report author. Select projects listed below.

NRHP Testing of Historic Sites 41FT592, 41FT600, 41FT619 and Archival Research for site 41FT574 Located within Luminant's Turlington Mine

Freestone County, Texas

Principal Investigator, Field Director, and Lead Report author for the NRHP testing of four late-nineteenth to early-twentieth century domestic sites located in Freestone County, Texas. Ms. Loftus supervised all aspects of the investigations which included pedestrian survey, shovel testing, and test unit excavation, as well as archival research and oral history.

NRHP Data Recovery at Texas Sports Hall of Fame

McClellan County, Waco, Texas

Principal Investigator, Field Director, and Lead Report author for NRHP Data Recovery investigations at Site 41ML296, a domestic site that was part of an early-twentieth century African American community in Waco, Texas. Ms. Loftus supervised all aspects of the investigations which included hand and mechanical excavation, as well as archival research and oral history.

NRHP Testing of Historic Sites 41RT530, 41RT537 and 41RT53, located within Luminant's Kosse Mine

Limestone County, Texas

Project Archaeologist, Field Director, and Lead Report author for the NRHP

Sarah Loftus

(continued)

testing of three late-nineteenth to early-twentieth century domestic sites located in Limestone County, Texas. Ms. Loftus supervised all aspects of the investigations which included pedestrian survey, shovel testing, and test unit excavation, as well as archival research.

Cultural Resources Assessment of Proposed Medina Base Road Improvement Project

Bexar County, San Antonio, Texas

Principal Investigator and Lead Report author for a 16-acre survey performed at the request of the City of San Antonio in order to improve Medina Base Road. The project required a Texas Antiquities Permit (TAP) #5477, and involved both intensive archaeological survey and deep testing.

Cultural Resources Survey for the Houston National Cemetery Phase IV Expansion Project

Harris County, Texas

Principal Investigator and report author for a 35-acre cultural resources survey performed at the request of the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) in association with proposed development of the Houston National Cemetery.

Center for Big Bend Studies, Sul Ross University, Alpine, Texas (2006-2008)

I served primarily as a field archaeologist and also assisted with analysis, research and report writing.

Tranquil Rock Shelter Excavation, O2 Ranch

Brewster County, Texas

Excavation of various features associated with a middle archaic rock shelter occupation.

Rough Cut Rock Shelter Excavation, O2 Ranch

Brewster County, Texas

Excavation of various features associated with a late prehistoric rock shelter occupation.

Cerro Chino Petroglyph Site Excavation, Pinto Canyon Ranch

Presidio County, Texas

Excavations associated with the Cerro Chino Petroglyphs.

Big Bend National Park

Brewster County, Texas

Intensive cultural resources survey to systematically document and assess archaeological sites within the park boundaries.

Sample of Additional Previous Field Experience:

Cultural Resources Cultural Resources Survey and NRHP Testing, Camp Gruber Maneuver Training Center, Lopez Garcia Group, Muskogee County, Oklahoma: Field technician for the survey and NRHP testing of both prehistoric and historic sites, including extensive mapping and testing of a World War II

Sarah Loftus

(continued)

Prisoner of War Camp

Data Recovery for East Grand Forks Levee Construction, Great Lakes Archaeological Research Center, Polk County, Minnesota: Field technician for data recovery at a bison kill site in Minnesota for Great Lakes Archaeological Research Center, Minneapolis

Avon Park Air Force Base Survey, Parsons, Florida: Field technician, cultural resources survey of the Avon Park Air Force Base that recorded multiple prehistoric and historic-age archaeological sites

Mark Twain National Forest Survey, Parsons, Missouri: Field technician, cultural resources survey in Mark Twain National Forest that recorded multiple prehistoric and historic-age archaeological sites

Falcon Reservoir Survey, Lopez Garcia Group, Zapata, Texas: Field technician, cultural resources survey of sections of Falcon Reservoir that recorded multiple prehistoric and historic-age archaeological sites including Colonial Rancheros

National Park Service, Canaan Valley, West Virginia: Field technician on an intensive cultural resources survey in Canaan Valley

Select Recent Publications:

Sarah Loftus, *Cultural Resources Reconnaissance Review for the East Brine Pond Site, Mont Belvieu Natural Gas Liquids Fractionation Facility, Chambers County, Texas*, Burns & McDonnell, 2014.

Sarah Loftus, *Northwest Water System Improvement Project - Greenwood Utilities, Greenwood, Mississippi*, Burns & McDonnell, 2014.

Sara Lawrence, Chris Dayton, Sarah Loftus, *Intensive archaeological survey for Pflugger Farm Lane, City of Pflugerville*, Pflugerville, Texas, Cox McLain, in press.

Julie Shipp, Sarah Loftus, Jason Maywald, *A Phase I Cultural Resources Assessment of the Proposed Panda Power Lateral Project, Grayson County, Texas*, Perennial Environmental Services, 2013.

Sarah Loftus, James Karbula, *Apex-Matagorda Survey in Matagorda County*, William Self and Associates, Inc., 2012.

Sarah Loftus, Brandy Harris, *NRHP Testing of Historic Sites 41RT530, 41RT537 and 41RT538 located in Luminant's Kosse Mine*, PBS&J, 2011.

Sarah Loftus, Brandy Harris, Amy McWhorter, *Testing of Historic Sites 41FT592, 41FT600, and 41FT619 and Archival Research for 41FT574 Located within the First Five-Year Area of Luminant's Turlington Mine*, PBS&J, 2010.

Sarah Loftus, Brandy Harris, *Texas Sports Hall of Fame Expansion Data Recovery Investigation*, PBS&J, in press.

Sarah Loftus, B. Harris, *Interim Report for NRHP Testing of Historic Sites 41RT530, 41RT537, and 41RT538 located in Luminant's Kosse Mine*,

Sarah Loftus

(continued)

September, 2009.

Sarah Loftus, B. Harris, A. McWhorter, *Interim Report for NRHP Testing of Historic Sites 41FT592, 41FT600, and 41FT619 and Archival Research for 41FT574 Located within the First Five-Year Area of Luminant's Turlington Mine*, May, 2009.

Sarah Loftus, J. Shipp, B. Harris, *A Cultural Resources Survey for the Lundelius-McDaniel Water Quality Control Project, Travis County, Texas*, Document No 080090, December 2008.

Sarah Loftus, *Interim Report for Texas Sports Hall of Fame Expansion Data Recovery Investigation*, November, 2008.

Recent Conference Papers:

- 2014 Sarah Loftus, *The Bethel Community and the Benjamin Jackson Plantation: Postemancipation Landscapes and Material Culture*. Council of Texas Archaeologists Annual Spring Meeting, Austin, Texas.
- 2012 Sarah Loftus, *Postemancipation Community Transitions on the Benjamin Walter Jackson Plantation, Anderson County, Texas*. Texas Archaeological Society Annual Conference, Tyler, Texas.
- 2011 Sarah Loftus and Brandy Harris, *Blunt: A lost community at Turlington Mine*. Society for Historical Archaeology Annual Conference, Austin, Texas.
- 2011 Brandy Harris and Sarah Loftus, *Urban Renewal and the archival record at Site 41ML296, Waco, Texas*. Society for Historical Archaeology Annual Conference, Austin, Texas.

Grants/Awards:

- 2013 Anthropology Department, Syracuse University, Writing Fellowship
- 2013 Council of Texas Archaeologists, Student Research Grant
- 2012 Anthropology Department, Syracuse University, Graduate School, Summer Research Grant
- 2011 East Texas Historical Society Research Grant, Otis Locke Endowment
- 2011 Maxwell School, Syracuse University, Deans Grant for Dissertation Research
- 2011 Anthropology Department, Syracuse University Graduate School, Research Grant
- 2010 Roscoe Martin Fund, Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant