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I'm Really Just An American:

The Archaeological Importance of the Black Towns in the American West and Late-Nineteenth Century Constructions of Blackness

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

Department of Anthropology

The College of William and Mary
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APPROVAL PAGE

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

Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT PAGE

African American archaeology has long focused on the material culture of enslaved plantation contexts as a means of understanding the development of African American culture and identity within the confines of slavery; focusing on ethnic markers that connect Black Americans to an African past. Though the work in this area of study had done much in understanding the life and culture of enslaved African Americans, many practitioners of the field are advocating for exploring post emancipation sites and developing frameworks that help explore these contexts. In this paper, I agree with these practitioners and advocate for African American archaeology to explore the Black towns of the American West late emerged during the late nineteenth century. Furthermore, I propose that one way to understand these sites by engaging in discussions on race and class through the frameworks of Black feminist archaeology, consumerism and the Black intellectual framework of W.E.B Du Bois's notion of *double consciousness,* to understand how late-nineteenth century African Americans constructed ideas of Blackness in freedom. For this paper I will be using the ghost town of Blackdom, the first Black town in New Mexico in as a case study.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to those who sought freedom on the Pecos Valley, the original town members of Blackdom and their descendants.

My Mom who is always there for me, my Dad and the rest of my family who never understands what I'm doing but always will listen, and friend Ashley Atkins.

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Chapter One
Introduction

Since the 1960's African American life has become an increasingly essential part of historical archaeology (Agbe-Davies 2007:414; Little 2007: 107); a discipline that focuses on the emergence and transformation of the modern world (Agbe-Davies 2007; Orser and Fagan 1995). As a part of this focus, research within African American archaeology has centered on the forced migration of millions of Africans across the Atlantic (Agbe-Davies 2007: 414). Moreover, most archaeological projects have singularly focused on the plantation context and enslavement period of African American life (Singleton 1999, 2006; Wilkie 2004; Agbe-Davies 2007; Franklin and McKee 2004: 3).

Theresa Singleton, suggests that lack of site diversity within African American archaeology is the result of plantation sites affording archaeologists with "the opportunity to observe material manifestations of social relations within discrete components of a well-defined cultural landscape." (1999: 15). The need for such well- defined landscapes is due to the prominent trend of approaching African diaspora archaeology from a diachronic orientation (Yelvington 2006; Orser 1998). In this orientation, plantation sites have been preferred, allowing archaeologists to investigate the question, "What has Africa given America?" (Yelvington 2006: 3; Herskovits 1941). Implicit within this investigative focus on African American contribution lies the Herskovits/Frazier debate (Singleton 1999). Some archaeologists answer the above question by aligning themselves with anthropologist Melville Herskovits' thesis, that African Americans retained cultural

survivals from Africa, and approach artifacts in search of cultural survivals, retentions, syncretism, etc (1941). Other archaeologists align with sociologist E. Franklin Frazier's thesis, which states the Middle Passage was so horrendous that Africans arrived in America a blank slate; therefore today's African descendant people have fully acculturated or assimilated to Euro-American culture, and reference a lack of artifacts that do not clearly resemble African cultural retentions as proof of such erasure (Frazier 1939; Singleton 2006: 252-253).

Though these approaches within the diachronic orientation are limiting, the research within plantation studies, which uses these orientation, has illuminated our understanding of the lives that enslaved Africans and African Americans created, lives that have often been excluded from historical narratives. Moreover, archaeological exploration of plantation sites has helped us to understand the broader socio-political context of antebellum America (Wilkie 2004:110). Yet, by working almost exclusively on such sites, African American archaeology is reinforcing rather "popular" ideas that the African American past "occurs only on plantations and only under the conditions of enslavement" (Wilkie 2004:110).

Beyond the "search for the exact mix of Old World cultural origins and New World cultural inventions" is an alternative approach within African Diaspora archaeology that focuses instead "upon the cultural construction of identity occurring in a *dialectical* relationship with class, nations, region and language" (Yelvington 2006:3). In this approach, mechanisms of oppression and the development of identity within the context of race, ethnicity or even blackness are viewed in relationship with one another

(Yelvington 2006). The dialectical approach provides a more encompassing way of understanding African American identity without essentializing African Americans (Orser 2001, 2004, 2007; Singleton 1999, 2006; Mullins 1999, 2008). Unfortunately, as with previous approaches, much of the research that positions itself within this orientation focuses on the enslavement period and plantation context.

Agbe-Davies posits that the synonymous association of African American archaeology with plantation studies is evident of theory being, "inextricably bound up to research themes" (2007: 417). Therefore, if practitioners of African American archaeology move to increase site diversity, then themes, methodology and theoretical interest should also increase to interpret sites which, "produce more inclusive and representative histories of the African Diaspora from an archaeological perspective" (Franklin and McKee 2004: 3). One such marginalized history within African Diaspora archaeology is the migration of Black Americans to the western United States and the planned communities forged through this movement. Exploring this area of African American life would not only reveal the complex processes in the emergence of Black towns in the American West after the Civil War, but it would produce more representative and inclusive histories of the African American experience beyond the plantation focus.

Studying post emancipation, western Black towns offers three solutions to the problems and concerns within African American archaeology discussed above. First, the study of western Black towns allows African American archaeology to move from the enslavement period, a period often understudied (Barnes 2011: 6). Second, because

Black towns were usually limited in terms of location and community members, they offer a relatively bounded context in which to explore themes, such as identity construction, and the intersections of class, race, gender, etc., similar to the context of plantations. Lastly, archaeologists in the discipline will have to expand and use various theoretical and methodological frameworks to understand the complexity of this time period for African Americans.

African American archaeology has made inroads in exploring organized communities of African American freedom including Parting Way, Fort Moses, Buxton, Brooklyn and New Philadelphia- the first town in the United States that was planned in advanced and legally registered by an African American (Deagan and MacMahon 1995; Fennell et al 2010, 2011; Gradwohl and Osborn 1984, Deetz 1996); and has illuminated other sites of freedom surrounding, family homes, neighborhoods, and businesses all over the United States (Baumann 2008; Cox 2007; Crockett 2005; Davidson 2004; Dixon 2006; Geismar 1982; McDavid 2006; Pratzellis 1992; Springate 2010). It is obvious that post emancipation archaeology is becoming a subject of increasing interest (i.e. Barnes 2011). However, few of these explorations have focused specifically on the Black presence in the West or the Black town movement to the West (Dixon 2006, 2011). These towns emerged during the period defined by historian Rayford W. Logan as the Nadir, 1877-1901, at the end of Reconstruction. The Nadir period was witness to the practice of domestic terrorism by white southerners, determined to maintain white supremacy. White supremacists efforts systematically stripped African Americans of legal and civil rights acquired during Reconstruction (Logan 1954). With land available, many southern

African Americans headed west to create thriving communities seeking social, economic and political freedom.

In this paper, I seek to prove that increasing the number of post emancipation sites investigated can expand African American archaeology's understanding of African American constructions of Blackness in the late nineteenth century. Using the case study of Blackdom, the first Black town in New Mexico, I seek to follow the dialectical orientation and incorporate Yelvington's (2006) dialogical approach, by using three theoretical perspectives, Black feminist archaeology, consumption and W.E.B Du Bois' notion of *double consciousness,* to understand analyzing race and class intersect to create constructions of social race identity (Orser 2001, 2004, 2007; Singleton 1999, 2006; Mullins 1999, 2008; Franklin 2001; Battle-Baptiste 2011). Combing these theoretical frames allows one to consider how late nineteenth century African Americans, like the residents of Blackdom, constructed their ideas of Blackness. Moreover, examining the western movement of African Americans and the establishment of important places like Blackdom provides historical contexts that help understand the ways in which African Americans have found themselves from slavery to the present (Barnes 2011: 2).

Chapter Two
Historical Overview: Reconstruction and the Nadir

The Black town movement emerged as a response to the decline of civil rights in the American South during Reconstruction (1867-1877) and following its demise. Historian Rayford W. Logan defines the end of Reconstruction and the rise of Jim Crow legislation as the Nadir (1877-1901), the lowest point of African American life in the United States. However, the systematic stripping of African American civil rights began before 1877, during President Johnson's reconstruction plan, reaching an apex in 1877 when various political maneuvers from the Republican and Democratic parties dissolved any hope African Americans had of attaining citizenship in the United States.

Throughout Reconstruction and afterwards, white southern Democrats, determined to maintain white supremacy in the southern states, used intimidation tactics, unethical legal maneuvers and violence to keep freed African Americans from exercising their right to vote, own land, and obtain fair labor contracts (Logan 1954; Baton 1996). This chapter will situate this period as the catalyst that caused many African Americans to migrate to the West and form sovereign communities. Furthermore, this chapter will explore the legal rights gained by African Americans following the end of the Civil War and into Reconstruction and white Southerners' violent response to these legal victories.

Reconstruction

Reconstruction efforts began as early as 1863, when President Abraham Lincoln, no longer able to ignore the centrality of African Americans to the outcome of the Civil War, issued the Emancipation Proclamation (Robinson 1978: 108, Ayers 2006). On

January, 1 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation declared, "that all persons held as slaves" within the rebellious states "are and henceforward shall be free" (Blight 2001:25). The Proclamation was an effective wartime strategy which crippled Confederate forces, without losing the slaving-holding border states of Delaware, Kentucky, Missouri, Maryland, and Tennessee (which had returned to the United States but were still evenly split with loyalties to the Union and the Confederacy) (Du Bois 1976).

Lincoln's reconstruction plan did not encompass the immediate freedom of millions of African Americans, include federal assistance, or offer universal suffrage. The Emancipation Proclamation was a wartime measure that would be inoperative for the future as soon as the war ceased. Many radical Republicans in Congress, however, wanted Lincoln to take decisive measures in ending slavery and incorporating African Americans into the fabric of American society. Lincoln, however, was reluctant (Klarman 2007: 51). Lincoln had hoped for gradual emancipation and possible immigration of African Americans to places like Liberia (Du Bois 1976). However, despite his reluctancy, two important legislations passed during his presidency: the Thirteenth Amendment and the establishment of the Freedman's Bureau (Painter 2006; Du Bois 1976; Trefousse 1971, 1999).

The Thirteenth Amendment

A proposed Thirteenth Amendment was passed in the Senate in April 1864. In the House of Representatives, the amendment was approved in June 1863, but the vote was less than the necessary two-thirds majority to pass (Du Bois 1976: 207). Though Lincoln believed it was best for the country if African Americans were gradually

emancipated, he fully supported the proposed new amendment (Du Bois 1976). With his urging, both the House of Representatives and the Senate passed the Thirteenth Amendment on January 31, 1865 (Du Bois 1976: 207). The Thirteenth Amendment declared that "Neither slavery no involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction" (Smith 1996: 17). The amendment formally abolished slavery and was ratified by states in December 1865.

The Freedman's Bureau

In March of 1865, while working on the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment, Congress created, within the War Department, the Bureau of Refuges, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, commonly referred to as the Freedmen's Bureau (Miller 1999; Parker 1954: 9; Trefousse 1999: 29). The Freedmen's Bureau was a temporary institution, established to work for no more than one year after the end of the war (Stampp 1967). The purpose of the Bureau was the "supervision and management of all abandoned lands, and the control of all subjects relating to refugees and freedmen from rebel States, or from any district of country within the territory embraced in the operations of the army, under rules approved by the President" (Trefousse 1999:29). The Bureau was authorized to issue provisions, clothing, fuel, as well as, temporary shelter for loyal refugees and freed people.

The most difficult task of the Freedman's Bureau was the acquisition of land for freed people. The United States Congress recognized that easing freed African Americans into landownership would lead to economic success and social integration

(Painter 1976: 6; Parker 1954: 18). The Bureau was to set apart abandoned lands within states under reconstruction, or lands that the government had title to through confiscation. Loyal refugees and freed people could receive plots no more than forty acres at an annual rent at 6 % of the plot's value for three years (Trefousse 1999:30). After three years the occupants had the opportunity to purchase the land. Unfortunately, many African Americans were not able to receive their "forty acres and a mule [1]". Furthermore, under President Johnson's reconstruction plan, white southern Democrats immediately established the Black Codes, laws governing what freed people could and could not do. The Black Codes made it nearly impossible for freed African Americans to purchase land (Trefousse 1971).

The Freedman's Bureau's most successful contribution, however, was towards education. After the Freedman's Bureau bill was extended in 1866, the general policy of the Bureau was to "erect school houses and provide the various missionary societies with funds for the salaries of teachers" (Frazier 1949: 422). The Bureau established a "widespread system of public education" for African Americans and also help educate poor whites (Frazier 1949: 121). By 1871 over $5 million dollars of Bureau funds was spent on education (Frazier 1949: 121). Though the Bureau did impressive work in establishing public schools, it is best known for its efforts in creating higher education institutions for African Americans (Parker 1954). In association with other benevolent and missionary societies, the Freedman's Bureau helped to establish some of the most well known Black colleges and universities in the United States, including Howard

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[1] Forty acres and a mule is a saying among African Americans which is based in the idea that the Bureau and government promised 40 acres of arable land and a mule to work that land, which, they never received.

University named after the Bureau's commissioner, General Oliver O. Howard, Fisk University, and Hampton University (formerly Hampton Institute) (Parker 1954: 12; Levine 1996: 99).

Along with education, the Bureau was successful in handling grievances brought by Black people against whites, setting up fair hearings in court for African Americans, and negotiating fair labor contracts between freed people and planters. The success of the Bureau and its attempt to acquire land for freed African Americans became the proverbial 'thorn in the side' for President Johnson and fellow Democrats. During his time in office, Johnson would do everything in his power to limit the positive effect of the Freedman's Bureau and other efforts in general that attempted social, political or economic uplift of African Americans (Levine 1996: 99).

Presidential Reconstruction: Johnson's Fight Against Civil Rights

Andrew Johnson became President of the United States following Lincoln's assassination in April 1865. Johnson was a pro-Union Democrat from Tennessee. Therefore, he was against secession of the southern states, but he was not for the rights of African Americans and was determined to have the United States remain a country for white men (Trefousse 1999; Stampp 1967; Bowen 1989). Johnson intended reconstruction to be a quick remedy to get the Union back in working order. On May 29, 1865, Johnson announced his reconstruction plan, defined by historians as Presidential Reconstruction (Stampp 1967; Trefousse 1971, 1999; Smith 1996). The first phase of Presidential Reconstruction was clearing southern dissenters of treason. He did this by prescribing an oath of allegiance that the mass of southern people would be permitted to

take. Those who took the oath would be given amnesty, pardoned, and have all rights restored including all property except slaves (Stampp 1967: 62). The restoration of property to former Confederates unhinged the Freedman's Bureau's efforts to give land to freed African Americans.

The second aspect of Johnson's reconstruction plan was the formation of loyal state governments. According to Stampp,

> in each southern state, the President would appoint a provisional governor whose duty it would be to call a state convention and supervise the election of delegates to it. Only those who could qualify under the state laws in effect in 1860 and who had taken the amnesty oath would be entitled to vote or stand for election. The convention could then prescribe permanent voting and office-holding requirements after which an election would be held for regular governor, state legislature and members of Congress. Less formally, Johnson demanded that the southern states proclaim the illegality of their ordinances of secession, repudiate all Confederate debts and ratify the Thirteenth Amendment" (Stampp 1967: 63)

By December 1865, President Johnson declared the process of reconstruction complete. Johnson's idea of reconstruction upset radical Republicans as it became clear that Johnson would not enforce a stricter repentance for former Confederate leaders. Radical Republicans also saw that Johnson's reconstruction plan would do nothing for African Americans.

The "loyal" state governments Johnson established in 1866 created space for the development of the Black Codes (Foner 2005). The Black Codes were laws established to fix African Americans "social, economic, and political position as inferior" and resembled the antebellum Slave Codes (Trefousse 1971: 14). The codes varied from state

to state in restrictiveness and harshness but overall, the codes were designed to limit the civil liberties of free people.

The Black Codes regulated African Americans' status as free laborers. Black Americans could only testify in court cases involving members of their own race. The laws limited where African Americans could rent or purchase property. They allowed for harsh working conditions and heavy penalties for unemployed African Americans including children, who could be taken away to "apprentice" for white employers without any compensation. Furthermore, Blacks could be arrested for a myriad of perceived offenses including seditious speech perceived as threatening to whites, insulting gestures or acts, violation of curfew, and possession of firearms (Levine 1996: 95; Klarman 2007: 52, Painter 2006: 131). Most disturbing, the codes denied Black Americans the right to vote, therefore preventing them for changing the laws (Trefousse 1971).

Republicans, both radical and moderate, were against the Black Codes. It was clear to Congress that specific legal measures were needed to ensure African Americans were treated as United States citizens. In February 1866, Congress drafted a revised and expanded bill for the Freedman's Bureau, extending its powers and time frame (Smith 1996). Johnson vetoed the bill, arguing that the Bureau was a wartime effort and peace had already been established (Trefousse 1971: 29; Miller 1999: xvii). Congress also drafted the Civil Rights Act of 1866. This bill declared that all persons born in the United States (excluding Indians not taxed) were citizens of the United States, and granted equal rights to all regardless of race. The bill also spelled out penalties for violation of the law (Trefousse 1971: 30). Johnson vetoed this bill as well, explaining that, "relations

between the races were matters of concern for the individual states and not for the federal government" (Trefousse 1971: 30). He further questioned the right of Congress to extend to Black Americans help which was not given to whites (Trefousse 1971: 30). Johnson balked at the idea of African American citizenship by arguing that the act showed discrimination against foreigners who had waited for five years and had to pass character tests to be admitted as citizens of the United States (Trefousse 1971: 30; Bowen 1989; 137).

Republicans, knew that they had to takes matters into their own hands without the President's "aid, and even against his machinations" (Douglass 1866). Throughout 1866, Congress took several major steps to attempt to ameliorate the declining social conditions of Black Americans in the southern states.

Congressional Reconstruction

Congress passed the Civil Rights Act on April 9 over Johnson's veto and did the same for the extended Freedman's Bureau bill on July 16 of 1866. In that same year, Congress passed the Fifteenth Amendment, which was ratified in 1868 (Smith 1996). The amendment states that "all persons born or naturalized in the United States... are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside" (Smith 1996: 17). The amendment prohibited state laws that abridged the civil rights of citizens or denied citizens equal protection of the law (Klarman 2007; Levine 1996; Painter 2006). Though many African American activists were hoping for immediate suffrage, the Fourteenth Amendment was a step in the right direction in securing a place for African Americans in American society.

Official congressional reconstruction began in 1867 with passage of three reconstruction acts. The First Reconstruction Act was passed over President Johnson's veto on March 2. This act divided the rebel southern states into five military districts to be run by an officer of the Army and sufficient military force to support the officer in his duties. The duties of the military included protection of personal rights and property, suppression of insurrections, disorder and violence, and the ability to punish all violators of peace. Furthermore, the Reconstruction act of 1867 made clear that each rebel state needed to form state constitutions that were aligned with the United States Constitution. These state constitutions were to be designed by a convention of delegates, elected by male citizens 21 years of age and older no matter the "race color, or previous condition of servitude, who have been resident in said State for one year previous to the day of such elections" (Trefousse 1971: 104). Moreover, southern states would not be admitted to representation in Congress until the governments of the southern states followed the guidelines of the act. Furthermore, any state governments in place (the governments approved of by Johnson) would be considered provisional and subject to the authority of the federal government (Trefousse 1971: 105).

In the following months, Congress would pass two more Reconstruction Acts in an attempt to clarify and ground the first. The Second Reconstruction Act, passed over Johnson's veto on March 22, 1867, clarified the procedures for elections of new state governments. In addition, it set up the process for registration and voting in an attempt to secure more Republican votes (Trefousse 1971: 106; Smith 1996). The Third Reconstruction Act, passed once again over Johnson's veto on July 19, 1867, was another

supplementary measure that detailed the intentions of the lawmakers in passing the previous two acts. Moreover, the act declared the civilian administrations existing in the South illegal and subjected the state governments strictly to military command, making way for a Republican majority in the southern states (Trefousse 1971: 110; Smith 1996).

President Johnson did everything in his power to curtail the success of Congressional Reconstruction. As the military districts were under the orders of the president, Johnson purposely limited military power within those districts and strengthened the positions of the civil governments he had previously created. He removed district commanders who showed sympathy for the Republican program. Furthermore, in his annual address to Congress, he metaphorically declared war on Congress by boldly stating that he "would be compelled to stand on his rights and maintain them, regardless of consequences" (Stampp 1967: 149). The threats and the sabotage were enough. In 1868, Congress impeached Johnson, though he was later acquitted (DeGregorio 2001: 254). Johnson's term was over that same year and Republican candidate, Civil War general, Ulysses S. Grant became president. In 1869, Congress passed the Fifteenth Amendment (the amendment was ratified in 1870) guaranteeing suffrage to all citizens of the United States regardless of race, color and previous condition of servitude (DeGregorio 2001: 272). With a Republican president in office and amendments and laws passed to protect citizens rights, full social, economic and political freedom seemed assured to African Americans.

The Nadir

Bitter over losing the war, former Confederates, as early as 1866, began to form social groups whose mission it was to enforce white supremacy. These groups used violence to create a culture of terror in the South, which prevented African Americans from social advancement, economic growth and political freedom. Most notorious of these groups was the Ku Klux Klan. Similar organizations included the Regulators, Jayhawkers, the Black Horse Calvary, the Knights of the White Camellia, Constitutional Union Guards, the 76' Association, and the Rifle Club of South Carolina (Du Bois 1976: 474; Logan 1954: 10). These domestic terrorist organizations emerged all over the South in an effort to abridge the lifespan of Republican Reconstruction.

White Response to Reconstruction : Violence and The Ku Klux Klan

Congressional reconstruction, by 1868, had created a United States in which for the first time, African American males were able to vote in state and federal elections (Smith 1966). By 1870, African Americans were running for and winning seats in the House of Representatives and the Senate (Smith 1966: 43). In total, nearly 2,000 Black men held political office during Reconstruction, with South Carolina having the largest number of Black officeholders at the state and federal levels (Smith 1996: 109; Smith 1966: 42). However, as political success was mounting for African Americans, some white southerners tried their best to prevent it (Spiller 2009). By 1870 the Ku Klux Klan and similar organizations "had become deeply entrenched in nearly every southern state" (Foner 1988: 425)

The Ku Klux Klan (KKK) was formed in Pulaski, Tennessee in 1866 (Trelease 1971; Spiller 2009; Rable 2007: 69). The group's mission was "to destroy the Republican party's infrastructure, undermine the Reconstruction state, reestablish control of the black labor force, and restore racial subordination in every aspect of Southern life" (Foner 1988: 426). Early in the Klan's career, Klan members used pranks and intimidations tactics to deter Republican voters both African American and white. Republicans in Congress thought the actions of the Klan were only in response to the 1868 elections. However, intimidation tactics continued long after the elections, and rapidly spread to other former Confederate states becoming increasingly more violent in nature (Trelease 1971; Foner 1988; DuBois 1976).

African Americans in their new role as American citizens "became a symbol of failure and humiliation" for white southern Democrats (Chunchang 2000: 120). According to Trelease,

> Bullying Negroes was an established pastime with a sizable portion of Southern white manhood, and the inclination increased with Emancipation. It is also true that many Negroes took their new freedom literally and began to act more like white people: choosing their own employers, working or not working as the spirit moved them, expressing their opinions more freely, and not always giving up the sidewalk. Not only were they less servile, but many of them, poverty-stricken to the last degree and victims of generations of exploitation, engaged in petty thievery at the expense of those more favored than they. White men confronted by these trials had the precedent of the ante-bellum slave patrol before them. This institution was no longer possible on an open or official basis, but the need for it was apparently greater than ever (1971: 11).

White people, in order to justify their hatred and their need to control the freedom and existence of Black Americans, created a warped reality out of imagined fears: fears of

uprising, fears of miscegenation through the rape of white women, and fears of Black assault on white bodies. Based on the perceived reality of these fears whites justified the existence of and sought relief in the Klan's violent attacks on African Americans (Chunchang 2000: 130-131, Rable 2007).

The Klan waged war against "churches, schools, homes, farmsteads and the bodies of black citizens and their white Republican allies" (Blight 2001: 110). Through "whippings, rapes, the burning of houses, schools, and churches, and hundreds of murders and lynchings" the Klan, created a reign of terror in the South (Blight 2001: 112). Klan members were known for having night raids against Black homes. These raids included threats and whippings (Rable 2007: 96). Murder was also an effective technique in frightening Black voters from the polls. For example, as many as 150 people died in political or racial violence in Jackson County, Florida alone between 1868 and 1871 (Rable 2007: 96). African Americans who managed to acquire land became targets of whippings and murder as well (Foner 2005: 172). Laborers, "who stood up for their rights on plantations were whipped, beaten or lynched (Foner 2005: 172). Education was also attacked by Klan members. Not only were schoolhouses burned down, but teachers, including whites from the north, were threaten at night to leave the area and occasionally whipped (Rable 2007: 97). Each state's den of Klan members rained down violence in a different manner, but in total, the violent acts were too horrendous and numerous to be considered a prank or to be ignored.

The activities of the Ku Klux Klan were so violent that Congress passed three acts in an attempt to end the reign of terror. The first two were the Enforcement Acts of 1870

and 1871 (Blight 2001: 116). These acts were measures to protect American voters against intimidation, by making bribery and acts of terror a federal offense (Blight 2001: 116; Trelease 1971: 385). The third act was the Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871, also known as the Third Enforcement Act (Trelease 1971). This act "made private acts of violence, as well as, any offenses against the political rights of individuals and their right to equal protection of the law, punishable under federal law and enforceable by federal troops" (Blight 2001: 116). Unfortunately, this legislation did little to quell the violence in the South. In a further effort, Congress, in the summer of 1871, launched one of the largest congressional investigations at that time into the actions of the Ku Klux Klan (Trelease 1971: 391-392). However, after a scandal and accusations of corruption, President Grant became apprehensive about enforcing the Ku Klux Klan Act. In 1872, the government dropped 203 of the 225 cases pending in Tennessee alone. By 1874, they dropped almost all of them in all the southern states (Chunchang 2000: 252). Political violence in the South did not lessen until the presidential election and compromise of 1877 (Logan 1954: 10).

The End of Reconstruction

The official end of Reconstruction began in 1877, when Rutherford B. Hayes became President of the United States. However, the dream of Reconstruction began to decline during President Grant's second term (Foner 2005). In 1872, President Grant signed legislation dismantling the Freedmen's Bureau which, since 1866, had assisted freed people in enforcing fair labor contracts, attaining education, providing legal protection from the violence of whites transitioning, and into independence overall (DeGregorio 2001: 271).

The official political switch away from reconstruction efforts began in 1873, when the United States economy went into a severe recession (Foner 2005: 190). The country experienced factory closings, business bankruptcies, falling prices for agriculture products, and widespread unemployment (Foner 2005: 190; Spiller 2009). The North rallied for government unemployment relief; the West cried for regulations of railroads, whose high rates and monopolistic practices the farmers blamed for their plight; and in the South, the price of cotton fell by half, forcing small white farmers to forfeit their land and become sharecroppers, undermining the progress African Americans made toward landownership (Foner 2005: 190). The popularity of Reconstruction efforts declined significantly, especially in the North. According to Foner, white northerners became more sympathetic to white southern complaints about Reconstruction (2005: 191). Former allies in the North began to place the blame of the failure of Reconstruction and the downturn of the economy on the supposed inferiority and incapacity of southern Black voters (Foner 2005).

The recession shifted political opinion in favor of the Democrats. In the Congressional elections of 1875, for the first time since the Civil War, Democrats won control of the House of Representatives (Foner 2005: 190). It became clear to the Republican party that in order to win the next presidential election, the banner of Reconstruction would have to be eliminated. The North was no longer interested "with the wore-out cry of southern outrages" and reminded the Republican party that the Civil War was not waged to free Black Americans (Chunchang 2000: 247).

Despite Democrats holding the majority, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1875. The act assured African Americans "full and equal enjoyment of the accommodations, advantages, facilities, and privileges of inns, public conveyances on land or water, theaters and other places of public amusement" (DeGregorio 2001: 272). However, in 1876, the Supreme Court gave a dismaying ruling in the *U.S. v. Cruikshank* case. The indictments in this case "were brought under the Enforcement Act of 1870, alleging a conspiracy conducted by Louisiana whites to attack a black meeting and deprive the victims of their civil rights" (Foner 1988: 530; Chunchang 2000: 248). The court rejected the case on the grounds that the legislation went against the Fourteenth Amendment. Furthermore, the court stated that the "postwar amendments only empowered the federal government to prohibit violations of black rights by states; the responsibility of punishing crimes committed by individuals were the responsibility of the state" itself, not the federal government (Foner 1988: 531). Through this ruling, it was clear that the federal government would no longer take notice of social crimes in the southern states.

In the presidential campaign of 1876, Republicans continued to lambast Southern violence to hold those voters who were truly disturbed by violence and poor social conditions in the South. At the same time, the party made no serious efforts to interfere as the violence increased in anticipation of the upcoming election (Chunchang 2000: 254). On election day, strong Democratic candidate, Samuel J. Tilden received 184 of the 369 Electoral College votes; Republican candidate, Rutherford B. Hayes received 165 (Chunchang 2000: 255). There were 20 votes that were controversial. Nineteen of those

20 votes came from the Klan-run, terror stricken states of Louisiana, Florida, and South Carolina, where both parties claimed victory. To break the deadlock, Hayes promised that if elected he would cease interference in southern affairs, which meant that Democrats would be allowed to take over (Chunchang 2000: 255). Democrats accepted the verdict of the congressional joint committee and Hayes won the election with a one vote majority (Chunchang 2000: 255). By April 1877, Hayes had pulled the last federal troops out of the south. Reconstruction was officially over and white rule had been restored (Smith 1996; Spiller 2009).

Hope Lost: the Years After Reconstruction

Following the Compromise of 1877, African American voters were systematically disenfranchised and placed under laws similar to the Black codes that would limit their social, political and economic progress (Woodward 2002: 6; Spiller 2009) Though southern Blacks faced these trials in years before, during those times there was the Ku Klux Klan Act being enforced; there was the Freedmen's Bureau to provided some buffer against injustice; and there were federal troops to protect them against violence. After 1877, all of these ceased to exist.

In the years between 1877 and 1890, nine of eleven southern states adopted new state constitutions (Bartley 1982). These new constitutions allowed for the "legal" disenfranchisement of thousands of African Americans males. In 1877, the state of Georgia introduced a poll tax of up to $2, which many Black Americans could not afford (Spiller 2009). Other southern states would have voters pass a literacy test in order to vote. Some states issued the "grandfather clause", a law stating that a person could only

vote if that person's grandfather had the right to vote (Spiller 2009). This excluded thousands of Black Americans, who only freed in 1863, had parents and grandparents who were formerly enslaved, and therefore could not vote. Education also suffered. Southern states segregated public schools and specifically decreased funding for African American schools. All of these measures became legal when the Supreme Court, in 1883, declared the Civil Rights Act of 1875 unconstitutional, making segregation legal and justified (Logan 1954: 37).

The legal maneuvers of the southern states and the federal government in the immediate years following the Compromise of 1877 were the beginnings of the Jim Crow era; an era in which whites once again controlled African Americans access to education, job security and employment choice, land access, economic advancement, and political expression (Woodward 2002; Ritterhouse 2006). Many African Americans, without land for economic advancement, without voting rights, and without legal protection, became trapped in unfair labor contracts within the sharecropping system that left them permanently indebted to white land owners. Moreover, African Americans were unable to break these contracts out of fear of the violent repercussions from the Ku Klux Klan. Seeing no hope in the South for advancement, some Black political figures, former abolitionists and others, advocated leaving the United States. However, this was not an options for many African Americans who considered the United States home (Foner 2005: 198). In the years after the end of Reconstruction, many decided to migrate westward, in hopes of claiming their American rights on the western frontier.

Chapter Three
Blackdom and the Black Town Movement

Many Black towns emerged all over the American West during the period of the Nadir (1877-1901), such as, Boley, Oklahoma, Nicodemus, Kansas, and Allensworth, California. One such town and the focus of this case study was Blackdom, the first Black town in Chaves County, New Mexico. This chapter will give a brief overview of the Black town movement before exploring the historical and material life of Blackdom.

The Black Town Movement

The Black towns that emerged in the American West following the end of Reconstruction were apart of a broader social movement of Black separatism within the socio-political framework of Black nationalism (Hall 1978; Robinson 2001). Black separatism began in the early 1800's, and continued into the late 20th century, as a solution to mitigate the social injustice African Americans faced. A central tenet within Black nationalism is the idea that African Americans are a "nation within a nation"(Robinson 2001: 15). Furthermore, as a separate nation, African Americans in favor of separatist ideas follow different social, political and economic agendas that emphasize migration away from the South or emigration out of the United States and social and political activism that encourage self-determination and overall racial uplift (Hall 1978; Crockett 1979).

American leaders such as Thomas Jefferson, were early advocates of removing people of African descent from America and colonizing them in Africa or the Caribbean, believing it impossible for African Americans and European Americans to coexist

(Lincoln would echo this sentiment during the Civil War) (Sherwood 1917: 210; Robinson 2001:10). However, the first serious colonization effort back to Africa was lead by an African American. In 1815, businessman and sailor, Paul Cuffe, using one of his own ships, lead thirty-eight free African Americans to Sierra Leone (Sherwood 1917, 1923; Hall 1978). Following Cuffe's example, in 1817, white statesmen and philanthropists formed the *American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Color of the United States*, also referred to as the *American Colonization Society* (Boyd 1962:108; Sherwood 1917: 226).

The American Colonization Society soon received backing from the United States government under President James Monroe. In the initial years of the Society, the United States government and President Monroe worked closely together to search for a settlement site (Boyd 1962: 109). In 1822, the country of Liberia was established for the colonization efforts (Boyd 1962: 109; Hall 1978: 24). The concerted efforts of the American Colonization Society transported nearly 11,000 African Americans back Africa by the start of the Civil War (Hall 1978: 24; Boyd 1962: 108).

During the Civil War and through Reconstruction, migration and emigration efforts decreased. However, following the end of Reconstruction, there was a resurgence in separatist ideas and migration efforts. Emigration movements sprang up all across the South, encouraging exodus to Africa, many organized by Black people. One such group, the Liberia Exodus Association of Pinesville, Florida, lead the largest African American movement to Liberia between 1877-1878 (Tindall 1952: 136; Foner 2005: 199). Though some African Americans did choose to return to Africa, most were opposed to the idea

and preferred to stay in the United States to acquire the citizenship they were entitled to as Americans (Foner 2005: 200). Seeking self determination, these African Americans chose an alternative to complete emigration; they created separate autonomous communities within the United States- Black towns.

Black towns are defined by Crockett as, "a separate community containing a population of at least 90% Black in which residents attempted to determine their own political destiny" (Crockett 1979). The idea is that a Black town is a space for African Americans to live and prosper economically, politically and socially. All Black towns and communities were created in the South for free African Americans before and after Emancipation. Some of the most well known are: Fort Mosé, Florida established in 1738, Mound Bayou, Mississippi, established in 1887, Rosewood, Florida established in 1870 and Africatown, Alabama established roughly around 1860 (Deagan and Landers 1995; Baton 1996, D'Orso 1996).

In 1862, the federal government passed the Homestead Act, which applied to the lands in Kansas and all other western states and territories (Taylor 1998: 136). The act "provided 160 acres of free land to any settler regardless of race or sex, who paid a small filing fee and resided on and improved the land for five years" (Taylor 1998: 136). Settlers could also choose to purchase the land outright for $1.25 per acre after living on the land for six months (Taylor 1998: 136). The act fueled a fire within many Americans, including African Americans, to try their fortuned out west. Between 1865 and 1915, the concept of Black towns reached its peak (Baton 1996). The first state to become highly populated by African Americans as a result of this movement was Kansas.

To African Americans, Kansas was a state that represented freedom (Katz 2005; Taylor 1998). Kansas had three positive points for African Americans. First, it had entered into the Union as a free state. Second, it was a Republican stronghold, the party of the Lincoln, the "Great Emancipator." Finally, it was the place of John Brown's raid against slavery (Katz 2005: 171; Taylor 1998: 136). In an effort to escape the South, Black Americans responded to numerous newspaper advertisements that read "Ho for Kansas" (Painter 1976). Out of these ads emerged the first Black town in Kansas, Nicodemus, established in 1877. The initial success of Nicodemus encouraged thousands of African Americans, called Exodusters, to migrate to Kansas in 1879 (Katz 2005; Painter 1976).

The Great Exodus of 1879 was a leaderless movement but the formation of it has often been contributed to two former slaves, Benjamin "Pap" Singleton and Henry Adams (Painter 1976). The Exodus, by 1880, resulted in nearly 15,000 Africans Americans settling and creating all-Black settlements similar to Nicodemus (Katz 2005: 178; Woods 1998). Though African Americans were trying to escape the violence of the South, their migration created more violence as white southerners refused to be parted with their cheap labor force. The Democrat-majority Congress, thinking the exodus was a Republican plot to secure votes, held witness testimonies to find who was luring Blacks away from the South (Katz 2005: 179). The testimonies proved however that the flight to Kansas was not rooted in politics, but in a sincere desire to escape the political suppression, social injustice and violence African Americans received at the hands of white southerners (Woods 1998: 132).

While the exodus to Kansas had the highest number of Black migrants, the Black town movement in total resulted in the creation of at least sixty autonomous towns in western states and territories including California, Colorado, Oklahoma, Kansas and New Mexico[2] (Hamilton 1991: 153; Baton 1996: 4). The towns were unique in that the they were created against the normal pattern of development, which according to Baton, starts with farmers and ends with the settlement of professionals. At these towns, all members of the intended community came at once; entire families moved together (Baton 1996: 4). Though Blackdom was established nearly twenty years after Nicodemus, it was born out of the same desperation of Black Americans to have the opportunity, "to live with people of their own race," which provided a safe haven from the Ku Klux Klan and most importantly, the opportunity "to control their own destiny, politically and economically without interference from whites" (Carney 1998: 151).

[2] Baton in her 1996 paper includes Mound Bayou, Mississippi as apart of the Black town movement. It was founded in 1887. Though it was an all Black community, this paper focuses the West in which the majority of the results of the Black town movement can be found.

Blackdom: History

The information on Blackdom comes from primary and secondary sources. The primary sources consist of land deeds, the articles of incorporation for the town, the town plat, newspaper articles, and an interview conducted by archivist Elvis Fleming with former Blackdom resident Lillian Collins Westfield, who moved to Blackdom with her parents when she was a young girl. The secondary sources include modern newspaper articles from the Chaves County area, a conference paper by Elvis Fleming, a two-page biographical interview of Helena Wagoner Collins about her grandfather, former resident Loney Kiestler (L.K.) Wagoner, a report about Blackdom which includes a history and preliminary archaeological survey presented to the Historical Preservation Division, Office of Cultural Affairs, and a book that includes a few chapters about the contract archaeological work performed at the site, with some interpretation of the artifacts.

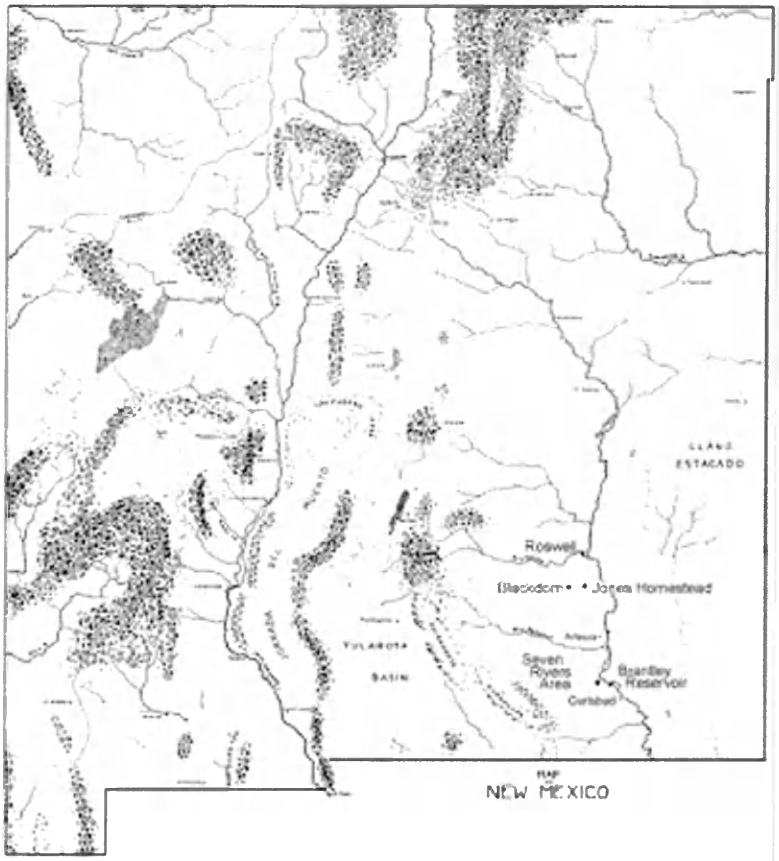

Figure 1. Map of New Mexico with Blackdom located. (Archaeology and History of Blackdom and Seven Rivers 2001: 2)

Located eighteen miles due south of Roswell existed New Mexico's first Black town, Blackdom. Blackdom's founder was Francis "Frank" Boyer, but the idea for an all "Negro colony" began originally with Boyer's father. William Henry Boyer was born in Sparta, Georgia, in 1820 out of the rape of an enslaved Black woman by her white owner, a Georgia planter named Colonel George Bowyer (Walton 1995). Around age nine, Boyer was taken by his owner to Missouri. After this point, little is known about Boyer's life until age twenty-six, when in 1846, Boyer joined the military. Boyer served in the Missouri volunteers under Colonel Alexander Doniphan as a wagoner (Gibson 1986). While in the military, the spelling of Henry's last named changed from Bowyer to its current spelling without the *-w* (apparently Boyer might have been literate as well) (Gibson 1986, Walton 1995). Also, by the time Boyer served in the military he had been freed, though it is not clear how he gained his freedom. Perhaps his name change was an indicator of that acquired freedom. Boyer's service brought him to the New Mexico territory. Here he fell in love with the "wild, desert region" and the seeds for a Black settlement in New Mexico were planted

Figure 2. Frank and Ella Boyer (Southern New Mexico Historical Review 1995: 19)

(Walton 1995: 17). Henry Boyer would return to the beautiful region when his son Frank established the settlement of Blackdom.

Frank Boyer was born in 1871 in Macon, Georgia. Boyer graduated from Morehouse College in Atlanta and became a teacher following his graduation. At a teacher's summer school session, he met Ella McGruder. Born in 1873, in Louisville, Georgia, Ella graduated from Haines Institute for Women (known today as Spelman College). The two were married in 1894 (Walton 1995: 19). Frank Boyer often spoke to influence other African Americans to protest racial injustice and on several occasions, Boyer's life was threaten by the Ku Klux Klan (Walton 1995: 19). In attempts to create safe spaces for African Americans, Boyer had established several southern township ventures: Afro, Florida; Camps, Alabama; and Ham City, Georgia, all of which failed (Walton 1995: 19). In 1899, tired of the decayed social conditions in the South, Boyer, along with former student Daniel Keyes, walked nearly 2,000 miles to the Pecos Valley in New Mexico with hopes that the idea of an all Black township would take root (Fleming 1984).

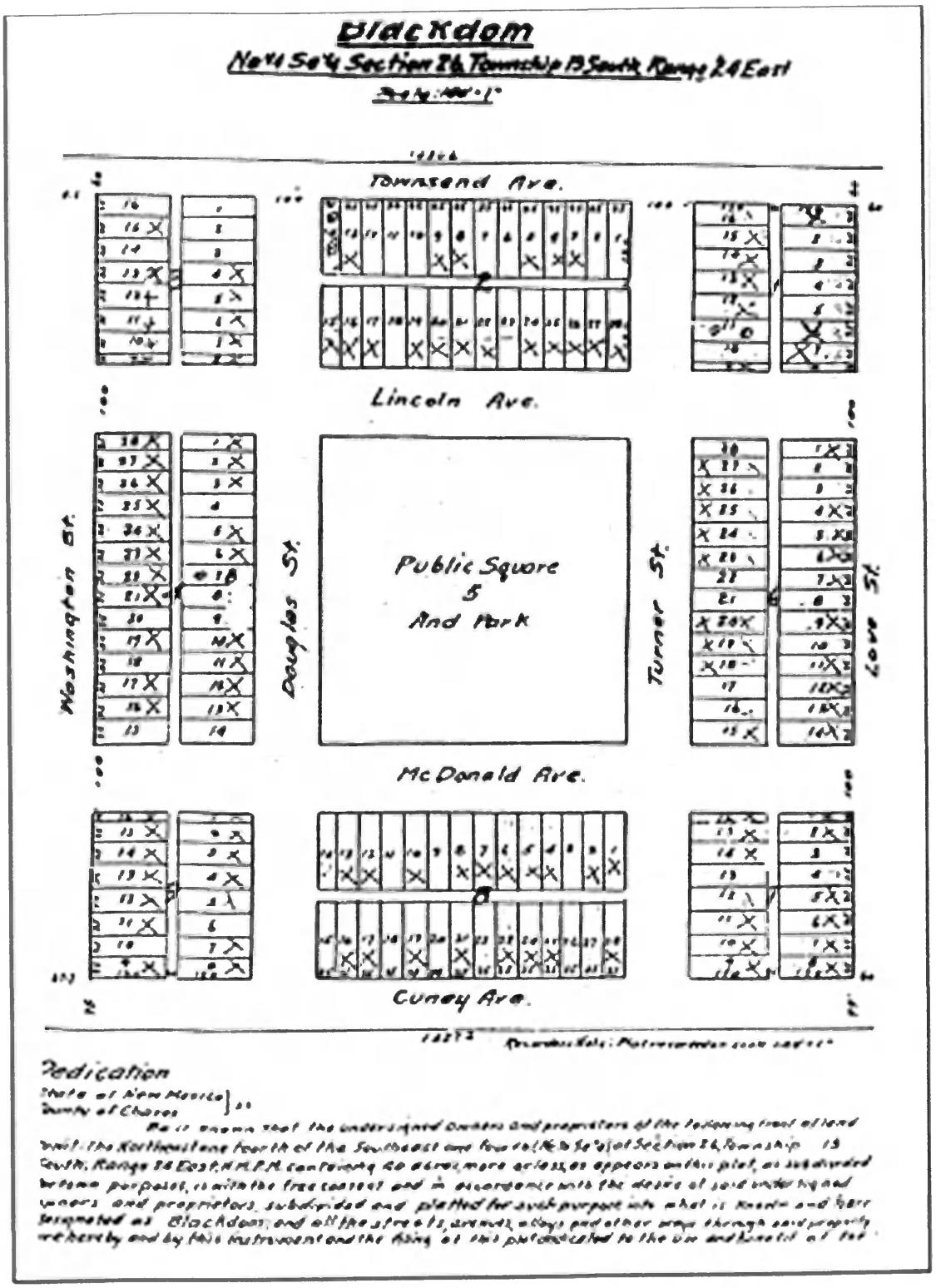

Figure 3. The Blackdom Townsite (Baton 1996)

For several years Boyer worked in odd jobs on the farms and ranches of whites in the area and as a bellboy in a Roswell hotel. In 1901, Boyer sent for his family and they settled on a homestead in Dexter, New Mexico (near Roswell). Boyer originally chose Dexter to make his homestead because of the artesian water discovered there in 1890 by prominent merchant and Secretary of New Mexico, Nathan Jaffa (Spivey 2001: 21). Acquiring a loan through the Pacific Mutual Company, Boyer was able to build his own artesian well on his property. This well afforded Boyer the opportunity to prosper financially. He grew alfalfa, cantaloupe, tomatoes and beans, all of which he sold in the local Dexter markets. His most prosperous business endeavor was the hay he harvested. His business would be the largest hay harvest business in Dexter (Baton 1996). In addition to farming, Boyer began a financial assistance business that provided small loans to farmers and ranchers. Boyer, as well as his partner Keyes, also mortgaged parcels of their land to incoming homesteaders (Baton 1996).

Figure 4. David Profitt house, a typical house in Blackdom, New Mexico (The Archaeology and History of Blackdom and Seven Rivers 2001: 30).

In 1903, the Blackdom Townsite Company formed the Articles of Incorporation. This document stated that the objective of the corporation was,

> to establish a Negro colony and to found and erect the town of Blackdom, and to lay off lands covered by said town into a townsite under the laws of the Territory of New Mexico, to maintain a colony of Negroes by means of the cultivation of crops, the growing of town and settlements and the

> general improvements of the colony, to build, erect and equip school houses, colleges, churches and various educational and religious institutions for the improvement and upbuilding of the moral and mental conditions of the colony (Baton 1996: 5; Articles of Incorporation of the Blackdom Townsite Company)

Thirteen men signed the Articles of Incorporation, forming a board of directors: Frank Boyer, Issac Jones, Daniel G. Keyes, Burrel Dickerson, Charles C. Childres, John T. Boyer, James Jackson, Charles W. Clifton, Charles Thompson, Albert Hubert, Benjamin Harrison, George White, and Joseph Cook (Baton 1996: 5). Boyer would serve as president of the corporation. By 1904, the company was sending out letters with its own letterhead, encouraging African Americans to move to New Mexico. The letterhead read, "Blackdom Townsite Co., Roswell, New Mexico. The only exclusive Negro settlement in New Mexico," (Spivey 2001: 28).

Word of a town exclusively for "Negroes" reached many places in the South. White newspapers of the time : *Charlotte Daily Observer* (Charlotte, NC), *The Columbus Enquirer-Sun* (Columbus, GA), the *Dallas Morning News* (Dallas, TX), *The State* (Columbia, SC), and *The Idaho Daily Statesman* (Boise, ID) all had notices, published between September 10, 1903 to September 11, 1903, mentioning the incorporation of the Blackdom Townsite Company. Each notice reads the same, therefore it is possible that the Blackdom Townsite Company sent out multiple advertisements seeking to inform more than just African Americans about the settlement. The notices read as follows though in each paper, the each notice has a different title:

> The Blackdom Townsite Company was incorporated today with a capital stock of $10,000. The purpose is to establish a colony of negroes, from

> the Southern States in Chaves county, the name of the town to be Blackdom.

Though the actual townsite had not been incorporated and platted, but Black families responded to the letters and advertisements forming the Blackdom community.

The Blackdom community was a collective of some 300 residents within 25 families spread over 15,000 acres. These homesteads were scattered 4 miles north-south and 2 miles east-west of the actual townsite. The townsite was the parcel of land that would be platted for incorporation. It was a 40 acre plot divided into 166 lots, with those who signed the articles of incorporation owning deeded plots (Baton 1996: 5). Part of the Blackdom townsite was founded through Ella Boyer's 1909 desert claim.

Incorporation and Abandonment

At the time of the signing of the Articles of Incorporation, the Boyer's lived in Dexter. Bankruptcy forced Boyer to sell his hay business and caused the family to move to the actual Blackdom townsite in 1913 (Baton 1996). Despite the apparent success of the homesteaders, by the time the Boyers moved to the townsite, residents were beginning to leave the community to live in the local areas of Dexter, Roswell and even as far as Albuquerque. What caused these people to leave their dream?

Blackdom's gradual abandonment was due to natural causes. High levels of alkali in the soil lead to worms, which destroyed the apple crops in 1916 (Spivey 2001: 29). The high alkali levels were a result of the over production of water wells in the Chaves County area, which reduced the underground water table significantly by the 1920's. Furthermore, county laws were passed preventing the excavation of future wells (Spivey

Figure 5. Sunday school class at Blackdom Baptist Church, ca. 1925. Standing, back row: Johnnie Taylor, Mosley, Ruth (Taylor) Sherman, Mary Ragsdale, Ira Taylor, Clinton Ragsdale, Oscar Oliver; middle row: Evelyn Taylor Plousha, Susette Ragsdale, Vera Taylor Revere, Hazel Taylor Parker, Ulyses Ragsdale, Isaac Ragsdale; front row: Alice Taylor Jackson, Cynthia Ragsdale Brown. (Archaeology and History of Blackdom and Seven Rivers 2001: 31)

2001: 29). Though the residents of Blackdom were experienced farmers, they were not familiar with the dry farming techniques necessary to survive in the Pecos Valley. With water nearly unavailable and the chances of digging a well illegal, families began to leave the area in earnest in 1916 (Fleming 1984; Baton 1996). The town of Blackdom was officially platted and incorporated in 1920, but by 1928 Blackdom was completely abandoned.

Life at Blackdom

The members of Blackdom worked hard and lived fugally, as most homesteaders did both Black and white. The most consuming work for Blackdom homesteaders was the task of coping with the lack of natural resources, such as frequent rainfall and free flowing water (Fleming 1984; Williams 1999). The solution to these problems was to dig a well. However, most Blackdom residents were poor and could not afford the cost of digging a well. Boyer was the only Blackdom member to have an artesian well, which

cost him $4,000. A standard, shallow well had a price of $180 (Gibson 1986). To obtain water, homesteaders mainly carried it from neighboring windmills (Williams 1999). Since water was a precious commodity, Blackdom residents could not grow cash crops to sell in local markets for profit. Yet, from the accounts of Lillian Collins Westfield and Helena Wagoner Collins, the residents during the early years of the community supported their families very well through small gardens.

Westfield, who lived her childhood at Blackdom, recalled that in their gardens, homesteaders grew "peaches, plums, apples, pears" and "raised chickens, ducks, geese, hogs, turkeys and even a few jersey cows for milk" (interview with Elvis Fleming March18, 1975). Westfield also remembered her father harvesting alfalfa and corn. Wagoner Collins (interview with Michael McGee, June 2005) recalled that her grandfather L.K. Wagoner had "vegetable gardens, chickens, eggs, and cows, not an awful lot, but they had enough cows to have milk for the children." Blackdom residents also had community orchards for which all members shared the labor and equally partook of the results (Williams 1999). Though they had their own gardens, Blackdom residents were not self-employed, and mainly took jobs on the farms of whites in neighboring areas such as Roswell, Dexter and Hagerman (Williams 1999). The gardens and community orchards are not the only

Figure 6. Lillian Collins Westfield

Figure 7. The Blackdom Schoolhouse (The Archaeology of History and Blackdom and Seven Rivers 2001: 30)

examples of Blackdom residents helping one another to maintain a successful Black community; the schoolhouse and the annual Juneteenth celebration are also examples

The Blackdom Schoolhouse/ Church

The Blackdom schoolhouse is the most discussed aspect of the town because it is the last standing remnant of a time gone by. Today, the school is located in Cottonwood, N.M. The school building was a multi-functional building that was for education, church services and other social events until a Baptist church was built some years later (Gibson 1986). The school began as a result of the Greenfield School District buying building material for Blackdom residents to build their own school rather than integrate (Fleming 1984). The school district also wired $30 to have Blackdom residents send for a man named James Eubanks to be the first teacher. Using the materials given, Blackdom residents built the schoolhouse themselves and supplied educational materials, such as books with their own money. The school served children up to eighth grade; with all teachers, after

A Colony for Southern Negroes.

Santa Fe, N. M., Sept. 9—The Blackdom Town Site Company was incorporated to-day, with a capital stock of $10 000. The purpose is to establish a colony of negroes from the Southern States in Chaves county, the name of the town to be Blackdom.

Figure 8. Advertisement in Charlotte Daily Observer (1903).

Eubanks tenure, coming from within the community including: Lloyd Allen, Ester Herron and L.K. Wagoner, the last teacher of the Blackdom school (Fleming 1984; Williams 1999). The schoolhouse is recorded within the Chaves County school records as being in operation from 1915 to 1920. The school was functional before and after this time period but there are no known records of those years (Williams 1999). The schoolhouse still served as the social meeting place for ice cream socials, sewing circles and Christmas pageants until the town's abandonment (Fleming 1984; Williams 1999).

The Blackdom Juneteenth Celebration

The activity most noted in interviews and newspaper articles was the annual Juneteenth celebration. Enslaved African Americans all over the south heard of their freedom in April of 1865 when General Robert E. Lee surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant (Flamming 2009: 58). However, enslaved persons in Texas did not. These people would not realize the actuality of their freedom until June 19, 1865. This day would be marked as "Juneteenth" and became a day celebrated by Black Texans, the way that July 4th is appreciated and celebrated by white Americans (Flamming 2009: 58).

There were few Texans within Blackdom's population, however, Blackdom residents celebrated this day with much fanfare and as Westfield states, "everybody wanted a celebration in it [Juneteenth] (Interview with Elvis Fleming, March 15, 1975). Westfield (interview with Elvis Fleming, March 18, 1975) describes the event as having lots of food, barrels of lemonade, a barbecue and towns people from Roswell with cowboys stopping by to donate beef for the occasion (Gibson 1986). The celebration also included a baseball game. Blackdom residents invited not only other Black people from the area to attend the game, but local whites as well. W. E. Utterback, a white man from the wider Roswell area, remembers Blackdom residents inviting,

> white folks out to a big feed...After the feed, the Negros challenged the white men to a baseball game. We got up a team from Dexter and Greenfield. I caught in that game, and we played on the open prairie with no backstop...By the way we lost the game (Gibson 1986: 50)

The Archaeology

Blackdom has not been extensively explored archeologically, but there have been archaeological surveys, mapping, and limited excavations performed in order to mark the site with a historical marker. Today the Blackdom townsite is located some miles off a highway truck stop with a highway that cuts through the historic Blackdom community area (Wiseman 2001: 9). Two archeological projects took place at Blackdom. The first was a survey/mapping project of the actual townsite, which took place from May 25-May 27, 1996 (Walt 1996). The project was based on a proposal submitted by Dr. Maisha Baton (1938-2009), a writer, therapist and teacher in Albuquerque, NM (interview with author July 13, 2009). The actual archaeological work was performed by Henry Walt and John Roney.

Walt and Roney surveyed the 40 acres that made up the Blackdom townsite as well as three homesteads within the bounds of the townsite: Ella Boyer's residence, Monroe Collins homestead and Nick Gates homestead. The survey also encompassed the southern edge of a desert claim directly north of the townsite, making the total acreage surveyed 60 acres (Walt 1996). Features and artifact concentrations were mapped and recorded using a plane table and an alidade. Survey points and some features were located with a GPS unit. All concentrations and features were placed on an overall townsite map. Small feature maps were made in the field[3]. As stated, there were no excavations or shovel test pits dug but artifacts were recorded by type and frequencies were noted (Walt 1996: 2). [4]

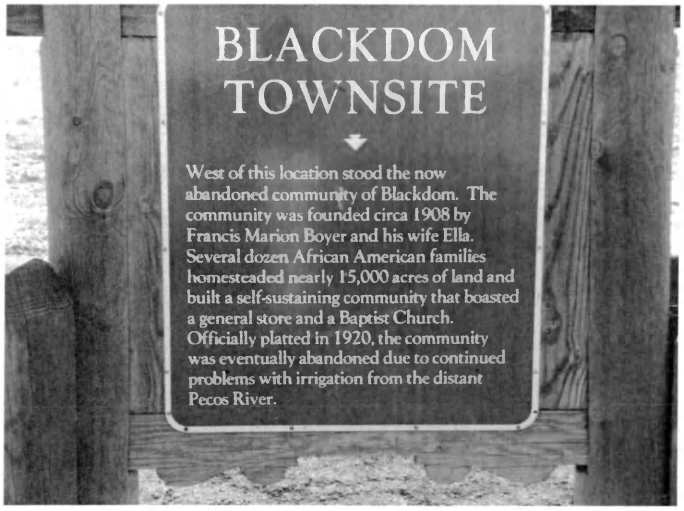

Figure 9. Blackdom Historical Marker. Photo by Shea Winsett.

The field project conducted by Walt and Roney uncovered a wealth of artifacts that were a part of Blackdom resident's everyday life, particularly at the three homestead sites. These everyday items included baking cans, dishes, glass vessels and material for roofing. Walt describes Ella Boyer's desert claim, the site where the Boyer family

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[3] During field work I was not able to find these maps. I hope to find the proper channels for which to located them.

[4] The full description of the features are located in the appendix.

moved to after financial failure in Dexter, as being recognizable by a prominent large masonry cellar (1996: 4). He further states,

> Documents of her claim not the presence of an 8 room frame dwelling, 30 by 30' with a basement. That is the approximate dimensions of the masonry cellar which is also over a meter in depth. There is a step down entrance to the cellar from the north. To the south of the cellar is a scattered rock alignment that may have once been the footing for a wall. Sixty meters to the north is a small depression that may mark an outhouse (1996: 4).

He further describes the vast amounts of artifacts that were found, stating,

> Heavy concentrations of artifacts are found to the east and north of the Boyer cellar. Artifacts number in the hundred. Most common is purple bottle glass, aqua bottle glass, white-glazed earthenware, flow-blue decorated ironstone, various shades of glazed stoneware, blue stripped ironstone, and brown bottle glass (1996: 4).

The homestead of Monroe Collins, the father of Lillian Collins Westfield, is not as large as the Boyer homestead (his was 24 by14') but Walt discovered a cache of artifacts here as well. According to Walt,

> The scatter of artifacts is dense. These include bed springs, barbed wire, short brown bottles with pontil marks, solder-topped, crimped-sided cans, early crimped cans, tobacco cans, wire handles, barrel hoops, KC Baking Powder cans (10¢), cobalt blue glass, an early crown cap, a car fender, tin nail plugs for roofing, flow-blue decorated ironstone, white-glazed ironstone, a markers mark for ironstone with a lion, brown-glazed stoneware, plain porcelain, Mexican green-glazed Majolica, blue-glazed stoneware, yellow earthenware, and fire-place bricks. There are several small piles of rocks near the depression (1996: 4).

The last site that Walt describes is the Nick Gates homestead which is located "close to the Collins homestead". The homestead where Gates lived with his wife and child, is a small box house measuring 12 by 14', the smallest homestead of the three surveyed (Walt

1996: 5). Despite its size, "a heavy concentration of artifacts surround the house depression" (Walt 1996: 5). These include,

> many small, short brown-glazed stoneware, and coal. In lesser numbers is cobalt blue glass, KC Baking Powder cans (10¢ & 15¢), mason jar rims, purple glass mason jar fragments, dark green glass, Kerr self-sealing jar lids, green glass insulators (Patented May 2, 1898), purple glass wine bottle, porcelain decalware, aqua glass medicine bottle, Bliss Pure Food can lid, barbed wire, cast iron stove parts, elaborately pressed and decorated tin plate, hinged tin frame for a purse, hand-painted green and red white earthenware, and porcelain, gold applique figurine fragments. (Walt 1996: 5).

The survey performed by Walt and Roney shows that the homesteads at Blackdom, no matter what the size, have large scatters of artifacts that in the future need to be intensely analyzed and interpreted.

The second archaeological exploration of Blackdom was a part of cultural resource management work conducted by the Office of Archaeological Studies of New Mexico, that took place in the summers of 1996 and 1997 as a part of investigations along U.S. 285, a highway between Roswell and Carlsbad for the New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department (Wiseman 2001:9). The project uncovered the homestead of Isaac W. Jones (LA 89153) approximately 3.5 miles east of the Blackdom townsite (Wiseman 2001:9; Baton et al 2001: 17).

Issac Jones, his wife Mollie and their only son were from Texas (though there are some census records that state that he was from North Carolina) (Spivey 2001: 29). The Jones homestead application was signed in 1905, but Jones was living in Blackdom long before, as his signature is second following Frank Boyer's on the 1903 Articles of Incorporation (Spivey 2001: 29). The Jones homestead project recorded about 4,000

artifacts of which 1,962 were analyzed (Williamson 2001: 33). The analysis covered hundreds of artifacts of glass, metal, faunal remains and others that were used to understand such categories as domestic routine, indulgences, subsistence, transportation, entertainment and leisure, construction and maintenance, and personal effects (Williamson 2001)[5]. The table of the artifacts is on the following pages.

[5] In further research I hope to locate these artifacts for analysis.

Table 1. Inventory of Excavated Artifacts, Issac W. and Mollie Jones Homestead, LA 89153 (Williamson 2001:33)

Artifact Class/Type	No.	Pct.
Glass:	**589**	**16**
Clear, from unknown	562	
Clear, bottle	1	
Clear, thin	1	
Clear, thick	1	
Clear, vial	6	
Purple, from unknown	9	
Purple, bottle	1	
Purple, bottle, thin	1	
Purple, thin	1	
Aqua	1	
Blue	1	
Brown	2	
Green (melted)	1	
Milk glass	1	
Dishes, Etc:	**55**	**1**
White ware, unspecified form	48	
White ware, plate rim	3	
White ware, cup rim	1	
Porcelain	2	
Terracotta (?) ware	1	
Cartridges, Etc.	**28**	**1**
Shotgun shell base	8	
.22 caliber	8	
.22 caliber, short, misfired	1	
.22 caliber, long, live round	1	
.38 caliber	4	
.38 caliber, bullet	1	
Large caliber rifle	2	
Unspecified cartridge	4	
Metal Items and Fragments	**168**	**4**
Baking powder lid	1	
Bolt	1	
Bolt and nut (rusted together)	1	
Bolt, carriage	4	

Artifact Class/Type	No.	Pct.
Boot eyelet	1	
Boot rivet	1	
Bottle cap, small	1	
Brass item	2	
Bucket bail	1	
Buckle, belt	1	
Buckle, garter belt	1	
Can fragments	71	
Can hole-in-top	1	
Can, sardine	1	
Canning jar, lid and mouth	1	
"Grill work" fragments (unknown)	7	
Horseshoe	1	
Miscellaneous, unidentified	7	
Grommet, tent	1	
Kerosene lamp burner (flat)	1	
Lid, pushtop can	1	
Lid, unspecified container	1	
Nut, square	1	
Ornament	2	
Part, machine?	1	
Screw, wood	1	
Spike	1	
Spring, equipment	1	
Staples (fence) 1.75 inch	7	
Staples (fence) small	2	
Stove parts and fragments	10	
Strip, metal segment	3	
Strip, metal with nail	1	
Strip, metal ornamental with pin nails	1	
Strip metal clip	3	
Tack	1	
Toy part	1	
Washer	1	
Wire, segment	18	
Wire, segment, heavy gauge	3	
Wire, clip	1	
Wire tie	1	
Miscellaneous Materials	**31**	**1**

Artifact Class/Type	No.	Pct.
Buttons	2	
Buttons, overall	4	
Connector, electrical(?)	1	
Doll fragment, porcelain	2	
Leather	2	
Leather rubberized (coated)	1	
"Mystery objects"	2	
Unknown rubber/plastic	3	
Unknown, black	1	
Unknown, white	1	
Paper fragment	1	
Pencil, ferrule	2	
Pencil, lead	1	
Slate "blackboard"	8	
Building Materials	**311**	**8**
Nails (n = 292)		
Unspecified size	276	
Square	6	
1.75 inch	5	
1.875 inch	1	
2.125 inch	1	
2.5 inch	2	
4 inch	1	
Paint "skin" fragment	1	
Paper, tar (roofing)	1	
Plaster fragments	1	
Window	3	
Wood fragments	9	
Wood fragment, painted	2	
Wood house shingle	2	
Animal Materials	**285+**	**8**
Bone fragments	228	
Tooth fragment	1	
Hair (swatch)	1	
Dung	55+	
Fuel	**2293**	**61**
Coal, small pieces, unburned	32	
Clinkers (burned coal waste)	2261	

Artifact Class/Type	No.	Pct.
Other	**2**	**<1**
Macrobotanical sample	1	1
Miscellany	1	
Totals	**3762+**	**100**

Each of these archaeological projects discovered numerous late nineteenth century consumer goods. All of the homesteads had numerous amounts of glass vessels ranging in type from clear, milk, purple, aqua and cobalt blue glass. All of these are distinct markers of the time period (Horn 2005: 1) and could be indicative of Blackdom residents purchasing the latest in food and other household products. The Jones homestead, compared to the Boyer, Collins and Gates, had more consumer artifacts related to subsistence such as gun cartridges. For example, though classified in the metals category, but associated with the use of gun cartridges, was the discovery of a lid with an embossed label reading "xxHIGAN" or "xxRICAN POWDER MILx". According to Williamson, "this is about the size of the last metal cans produced by Du Pont" (2001: 35). It appears that the Jones family purchased this powder in order to reload shot gun shells, a common practice until about 1920 (Williamson 2001: 35). The sites in Walt's report, however, had an abundance of ceramics. Most of these ceramics are ironstone as well as some glazed earthenware such as whiteware. The Collins homestead, however, is unique in that it includes Mexican green-glazed Majolica fragments. What meaning did the Collins family place on this type of ceramic? How did the Majolica ware end up in

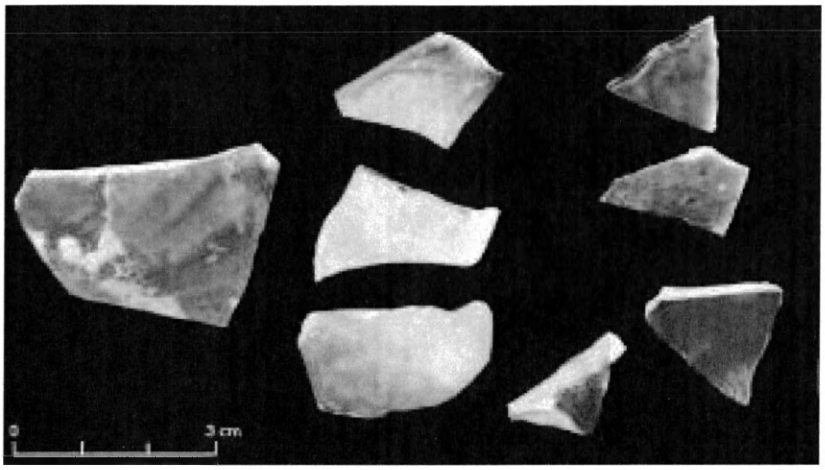

Figure 10. Porcelain fragments, Jones Homestead. (Williamson 2001: 42).

the Collins homestead? Was it purchase or was it a gift? There are many questions that arise that need answers not only from the presence of the Majolica ware but of all the artifacts surveyed and mentioned in Walt and Roney's study.

Though there are some differences in the artifacts collected at the varying homestead sites, there are similarities in that both studies mention that the homesteads have a number of ornate items such as the porcelain figurines called bric-a-brac. Walt notes that the homesteads he observed, "include a number of relatively expensive and exclusive items that are not the standard for homesteaders in the Southwest" (Walt 1996: 5). He further states that the porcelain figurines, found at the Gates and Boyer homesteads, along with other ornate items like an "elaborately pressed and decorated tin plate," were not common homesteader items. Similarly, Williamson, in her analysis of the Jones family homestead, states that, "there was a surprising amount of bric-a-brac (n=13), much of it porcelain" (Williamson 2001: 42). She further states that several dishes and bric-a-brac objects also had gilding (Williamson 2001: 42).

These homesteads provide a window into the material world and consumer practices of Blackdom residents. From these site reports, one can see that Blackdom residents had many late-nineteenth century consumer objects like glass vessels, gun cartridge powder and, most interestingly, porcelain bric-a-brac. How can one interpret a site like Blackdom? The next chapter provides a framework in which practitioners of African American archaeology can use to understand late nineteenth century consumer practices and identity construction in Blackdom and other Black towns of the American West.

Chapter Four
A Dialogical Approach to Constructing Blackness

In, "Practicing African American Archaeology in the Atlantic World," Anna Agabe-Davies, wrote, "the abrupt introduction of "plantation archaeology" as a synonym for "African American archaeology" at the end of the previous section should signal the way in which theory is inextricably bound with research themes" (Davies 2007: 417). This statement explains that in order for the field of African American archaeology to continue to develop theoretically and methodologically, it must explore contexts and themes outside of plantation archaeology. Therefore, it is clear that exploring the construction of Blackness during the late nineteenth century within the context of western Black towns is a necessary pursuit for the continued advancement of the field of African American archaeology.

This chapter will explore how to approach the town of Blackdom and other western towns dialogically. Yelvington states that the dialogical approach encompasses the diachronic and dialectical research traditions (Yelvington 2006: 4). However, the dialogical approach goes further. To be dialogic is to have different concepts engage in a dialogue with each other. Yelvington suggests the use of a dialogical approach in understanding the African diaspora in the New World, because the approaches within a dialogical framework, "entail a critical concern with the historical fashioning of anthropology's categories simultaneous with an insistence on viewing processes of multiparty interaction in the creation and transformation through history of determined material social relationships and myriad symbolic media," (Yelvington 2006: 4).

Moreover, the subjects of anthropology, "are seen through the lenses of power inequities," (Yelvington 2006: 5).

I suggest that in order to have a successful dialogical approach that helps understand how Blackness was envisioned and constructed in the late nineteenth century, practitioners in the discipline should not only analyze the material culture from an archaeological perspective but also understand the artifacts as African Americans might have understood them within the historical particularities of the social, political and economic conditions of the time. Using the three theoretical frameworks of Black Feminist archaeology, consumption and W.E.B. Du Bois' notion of *double consciousness* (Franklin 2001, Battle-Baptiste 2011, Mullins 1999, Du Bois 1998) in a dialogue together can help illuminate how the intersection of race and class were manifested in consumer practices and that the act of consuming was integral in shaping late nineteenth century African Americans identity.

Construction of Blackness: Identity

The goal of historical archaeological inquiry can be said to be the "construction of knowledge about ourselves, our social and historical contexts, and the material shape and direction of our world" (Mrozowski et al., 2000: xiv). Race and class are social categories that historical archaeologists have used to illuminate our understanding of the knowledge of our identity construction (Mrozowski et al. 2000: xii).

Identity has many aspects. One aspect that is particularly important to archaeology is social identity. Social identity is "about the relationship between the individual and the environment" and refers to the identity "that a person shares with

others" (Verkuyten 2005: 42). Membership in a social category, such as race or class, is a part of a person's social identity. Social identity is layered and complicated because people usually have multiple social identities (Verkuyten 2005: 51). Furthermore, social identity is complicated not only because it is multifaceted but also because there are two levels of operation in understanding social identity: "one is the broader social level in which identities are defined by formal association or more; the other is the individual or personal level where a person's experience many aspects of identity within a single subjectivity, fluid over the trajectories of life" (Meskell 2007: 24). Moreover, as people move through life, their social identity continually shifts and material culture employed in certain social affiliations shifts as well (Casella and Fowler 2005: 1-2). Social identity tells what groups a person is a part of and what groups they do not belong to. According to Smedley, "some groups define themselves in terms that appear rigid and unyielding and in opposition always to "the other" (1999: 690). As well, social identity can also be ascribed by others outside the group, with group members accepting the definitions of that identity (Insoll 2007:4)

An archaeology of identity and the process of "social belonging requires an appreciation of the multiple meanings invested in material culture" (Casella and Fowler 2005: 4). In analyzing the construction of Blackness in the late nineteenth century within the context of Black towns, one must keep in mind that the analysis goes beyond understanding a label (Insoll 2007: 9). The term "Blackness" goes beyond racial/ethnic identifiers of Black or African American; it deals with the social and political

significance of being a person of African descent in America throughout history (Gwaltney 1980; Yelvington 2006).

Using the term, "construction of Blackness" I am agreeing with McGhee who cites Eric Wolf in accepting, as Wolf states, that identity is the " process of identity-making and -unmaking referring to the creation and abrogation of the cultural markers and culturally informed activities by which populations define themselves and are defined by others in the process of incorporation" (McGhee 2007: 384; Wolf 2001). Therefore, I am trying to understand how African Americans, in creating these Black towns, identify themselves as Black American citizens, how they comprehend how whites understand and see them, and how they view their place in American society. Moreover, I understand that identity is not only a social phenomenon but historically influenced and seek to incorporate the history of Reconstruction and the Nadir as the context that African Americans of the late nineteenth century constructed ideas of Blackness and American-ness (McGhee 2007: 385).

Race and Racialization

Race is a social concept that has been a sensitive subject in anthropology (Mrozowski et al 2000: xxi). Mrozowski et al, explained that the discomfort in dealing with the concept of race arises from the intertwined history of the global expansion of European and Euro-American colonialism that coincided with the development of anthropology (Mrozowski et al 2000: xxi). Moreover, because of this discomfort, "the legacies of the concept of race and the material manifestation of racism have long haunted the theories and practices of historical archaeology" Mrozowski et al 2000: xxi).

Yet, theorizing about race and racism within the context of African American archaeology is the approach that archaeologists as of the 1990's have consistently advocated for in order to understand the dialectical complexities of the African American material past (Orser 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007; LaRoche and Blakey 1997; Singleton 1999, 2006; Leone 2005; Mullins 1999; Harrison 1998, 2002; Shanklin 1998; Mukhopadhyay and Moses 1997).

In *Race and the Archaeology of Identity,* Orser argues for archaeologists to avoid the discomfort of discussing of race and include the issues of race in their archaeological investigations because race intersects other topics such as class and gender (2001). Furthermore, Orser argues for *racialization* to be the specific analytical tool that archaeologists use to understand identity in material culture (Orser 2007). Race is a label that asserts the identification of individuals based upon real or perceived physical differences (Orser 2007: 8). However, race alone as a label is not enough to understand assemblages on archaeological sites, therefore Orser states race cannot be discussed without also discussing racialization (Orser 2004; 2007).

Racialization is "the conscious labeling of individuals and groups as members of a "race" based upon specific criteria. Racialization is a process that seeks to define and compartmentalize the human community on the basis of outward characteristics" (Orser 2007: 3). Racialization recognizes that race, though not a biological reality, is a social one and therefore takes into account racism and other social structures that impact the construction of Blackness for African American identity in the past (Singleton 2005: 320;

Sarich and Miele 2004). Furthermore, the process of racialization has material outcomes (Orser 2007: 13).

According to Orser, the focus on race was forced to the forefront of archaeological work with the New York African Burial Ground (Orser 2007: 23; La Roche and Blakey 1997). In recent years, the incorporation of race within historical archaeology has increased with more archaeologists considering the relationship between racial identity, ethnicity and material culture (Orser 2007: 28). Archaeologists have found that using race as an analytical tool is useful in "elucidating the mechanics of oppression relevant to archaeological sites" (Leone et.a 2005: 580). Leone et al, quotes Du Bois as stating that race is not in the blood but race is a shared history of oppression (2005: 580). Since African Americans have endured centuries of oppression it only makes sense that archaeologists should attempt to understand the complexity of the construction of Blackness through racialization.

Class

Modern class construction is a product of capitalism (Marx 1983: 204, 382, 409; Johnson 1996). Class as a topic has long been of interest to archaeologists, but according to Mrozowski was supplanted in the 1970's and 1980's, by interest in gender, race, ethnicity and their role in shaping identity (Mrozowski 2006: 12; Orser 1995). Today, most archaeologists acknowledge the necessity of analyzing these social categories together (Mullins 2010). In the United States, class is very connected to race (Orser 2007: 45; Smedly 2007). Orser states that in a racialized system with a doctrine of white superiority, assigning people to the category of nonwhite would carry practical

implications. He further states that it is reasonable that a resulting implication would be economic (Orser 2007: 45).

Though race and class are connected, in the early years of African American archaeology, class was not an aspect considered in understanding African American social identity. The first to consider enslaved Africans as a class was John Otto (1980). In his research at Cannon's Point Plantation in Georgia, Otto studied the social position and artifacts of plantation residents (Orser 2007: 16). Otto framed the plantation as a complex society with the archaeological record reflecting differences in status, including, age, sex, race, ethnicity, linguistic, occupations, legal and political (Otto 1980:3). Otto created three social status groups to understand the social relationships on the plantation: racial/legal status, social status and elite/subordinate status (Otto 1980: 6). These statuses are distinct but also intertwined and cannot be interpreted from the archaeological record alone (Orser 2007: 16). Though his formulation has problems, it was the first to associate race with a particular legal position: blacks were slaves (Otto 1980: 6; Orser 2007: 17). In recent years, a much advocated approach in analyzing race and class in African American archaeology is analyzing consumption (Mullins 1999, 2011).

Construction of Blackness: Creating a Dialogical Approach

The key to understanding the intersection of race, and class in constructions of Blackness is for archaeologists approaching sites of African American freedom, such as Black towns, to interconnect the theoretical frameworks of Black Feminist archaeology, consumption and *double* consciousness.

Black Feminist Archaeology

Influenced by Black-feminist anthropology, advocated by McClaurin (2001), Franklin's (2001) article called for a Black feminist-inspired archaeology. Black feminist inspired archaeology "would involve the simultaneous analysis of different vectors of oppression, including gender," (Franklin 2001: 112). Furthermore, a Black-feminist approach to historical archaeology offers a different perspective to archaeology through the work of "Black feminists, who speak from their own experiences as a means for working towards their own liberty," (Franklin 2001: 111). Though this viewpoint is inspired by pioneering African American women who have been the predecessors in early Black feminism (i.e. Ida B. Wells, Anna Julia Cooper, Sojourner Truth, etc), the Black-feminists inspired approach is also concerned with the structural hierarchies that not only affect Black women but other marginalized groups (Scott 2004: 3).

In her book *Black Feminist Archaeology,* Whitney Battle-Baptiste defines the concept as "a methodology that combines aspects of anthropological theory, ethnohistory, the narrative tradition, oral history, material culture studies" as well as "Black and African descendant feminism, critical race and African Diaspora theories" (2011: 29). The Black feminist archaeological approach "allows for a larger dialogue of how these theoretical approaches can be combined and used as lenses through which to understand the intersectionality of race, gender and class in the past," (Battle-Baptiste 2011: 29) and allows for archaeologists to talk honestly and critically of the African American past and how that past influences the present (Battle-Baptiste 2011: 45).

This approach is critical in understanding the western Black town movement because within Black Feminist archaeology there is an "emphasis on the cultural

landscape and the importance of how the use and meaning of space is directly connected to culture and people" (Battle Baptiste 2011: 71). It attempts to understand the Black domestic sphere as a "source of information, strength and cultural capitol" (Battle-Baptiste 2011:72). Moreover, this approach is not heavily influenced by the constraints of material analysis but seeks to create research agendas that "work within the communities associated with historic sites," and engage the community in a way that makes the archaeology relevant to these contemporary African descendant communities and their contemporary struggles (Battle-Baptiste 2011: 70-71). Black feminist archaeology also aligns well with Mullins conceptualization of consumerism. Battle-Baptiste states, "the consumer choices made by people of African descent is an interesting way to understand a little of what life was like in a racialized nineteenth-century world" (2011: 72).

Franklin and Battle-Baptiste's framework approaches the African diaspora through a Black feminist lens. This paper has not used a gendered lens.[6] Yet, this framework allows for creating a perspective that is best for unraveling the complexity of being Black in America in the late nineteenth century, and moreover, how Black Americans during that time might have perceived their Blackness. For the purposes of this paper, I advocate linking the frameworks of class, by way of consumerism, and race and racialization with Du Bois's political concept of *double consciousness* (1998).

Consumption

[6] In future research at Blackdom and other projects, I hope to fully engage with the entire framework of Black Feminist archaeology.

Consumption theory is based in the idea that race and material culture in the modern capitalistic world rest upon a "foundation of consumption" (Orser 2007: 13; Johnson 1996). The theory is based in the idea that people "consume what is meaningful to them within the universe of what they can afford" (Orser 2007: 13). Therefore, symbolic meaning, such as class or race, is applied to the objects one consumes. Consumption, like identity construction, can be seen "as a process that attempts to mediate social contradictions and express social and personal desires" (Mullins 1999: 221). Furthermore, viewing consumption in tandem with racialization envisions consumption,

> as a social negotiation focused on desire, rather than a static reflection of essential identity, the result of imposed conditions or a utilitarian need for material objects...This approach to consumption requires rethinking any sort of essential identity that precedes material symbolism, a status often granted to cultural identity (Mullins 1999: 21).

Mullins views consumption as a way to understand how people socialize goods so that the acquisition of things has the ability to "confirm, display, accent, mask and imagine who we are and who we wish to be" (Mullins 2011: 135).

Ensconced in consumption theory are ideas of materiality (Mullins 2011: 142). Materiality is a complex theory of things. It encompasses both colloquial and philosophical uses of material culture while encompassing ideas of objectification, agency, power and immateriality (Miller 2005). Objectification in materiality deals with understanding the process of the objectifying items (Miller 2005: 8). A key idea in studies of materiality is that one must deal with the dialectical nature of artifacts; we both produce objects and are products of our use of certain objects. Moreover, Miller states

that the end product of objectification is autonomous subjects and autonomous objects (Miller 2005: 10). Agency as a part of materiality deals with objects as agents that are behind events that occur and are encased in a network of agents. The role of the anthropologists is to investigate the network of agents and draw "analytical and theoretical conclusions from the particular places" that objects hold in the world (Miller 2005: 15).

Power within materiality recognizes that objects carry human attempts at monumentality. It also recognizes the role of power in society and that "materiality is relative to specific regimes, each of which attempts to command our apprehension of this relative materiality" (Miller 2005: 19). Furthermore, power according to Miller is a property of materiality (Miller 2005: 20). Immateriality is very key to materiality. Immateriality is the absence of material culture (Miller 2005: 21). It is the failure of creating producers and consumers through the process of objectification. This absence though is only evident when one considers what might have happened in the process of objectification. Notions of immateriality are central to understanding materiality because an aspect of immateriality is the process of going beyond the processes of objectification which becomes expressed through material forms (Miller 2005: 21).

Class analysis through consumerism allows archaeologists to examine the materiality of how race and racism influenced the items that African Americans consumed and, furthermore, allows the opportunity to analyze, "how racial subjectivity was fashioned in material consumption or how systemic racializing processes impacted even the most prosaic everyday details of life" (Mullins 2010: 363).

Double Consciousness

Few historical archaeologists actively use the concept of *double consciousness* in their work (i.e. Mullins 1999; Paynter 1997; Battle-Baptiste 2011). Double consciousness is a concept that was presented by Du Bois in an 1897 article, later republished in his acclaimed 1902 book, *The Souls of Black Folk.* In his presentation of the concept Du Bois states,

> After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world,-a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eye soft hers, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness,-an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder (Du Bois 1998: 9).

Du Bois continues this passage by stating that the history of Black America is the struggle to attain "self-consciousness" and to merge the two selves into one. In this process, Du Bois explains that the Black person does not seek to "Africanize America" nor does he seek to, "bleach his Negro soul," but to find a means to be both Black and American without hatred (Du Bois 1998: 9-10). This concept was developed after the failure of Reconstruction and during the height of Jim Crow, a period of time that was integral in shaping Black American culture (Blauner 1970: 113). The essence of the concept of *double consciousness* is the desire to establish a homeland by accepting America as that homeland and seeking acceptance within it. It is Du Bois' recognition and poignant summation of the Black struggle in the United States that has permeated the

literature on the Black American experience but only recently is the concept working its way into archaeological literature (Mullins 1999).

Black towns of the late nineteenth century are perfect for allowing practitioners of African American archaeology to engage in a dialogical analysis of the construction of Blackness with race, class and consumerism, because these sites emerged during the general period in which DuBois formulated his thesis. Using the *double consciousness* model allows an archaeologist at a Black town site to examine how racism influenced the products consumed. Moreover, how those artifacts were a means of mediating the process of attaining "self consciousness", of merging Blackness and American-ness into one seamless whole. Furthermore, *double consciousness* encompasses not only the interpretation of the material artifacts but also an understanding of the historic significance of Reconstruction and the Nadir on identity construction within the Black town context.

Discussion

In "Race and the Genteel Consumer: Class and African American Consumption, 1850-1930," author Paul Mullins states,

> consumer goods displayed late-19th century American investment in national affluence, showcased their gentility and provided the symbolic means to entertain myriad individual desires and aspirations. Among the flood of new consumers were many African Americans who were eager to demonstrate their American identity, celebrate their freedom from servitude and test the possibilities of an ostensibly equitable consumer marketplace (Mullins 1999: 33).

At Blackdom, the archaeological surveys showed an abundance of consumer items from baking cans to glass vessels to commercial gun powder. Though there were numerous

artifacts that can be used to apply the model presented in this chapter, one artifact that stood out in the reports was the archaeologists' surprise in finding bric-a-brac. Bric-a-brac are ceramic statuettes, fashioned to resemble notable historic figures or bucolic scenes, and these statuettes, commonly found in the archaeological record of African American homes, were symbolic representations of economic and class aspirations and the social realities of the challenges of racism in the consumer market and wider world (Orser 2004: 173).

In Paul Mullins' work in *Race and Affluence: an Archaeology of African Americans and Consumer Culture* (1999), Mullins analyzed the interconnectedness of bric-a-brac, race and consumption. Mullins' study of African American consumerism focused on how racism of the early twentieth and the late nineteenth centuries bracketed African Americans into roles that enforced the ideals of white supremacy. Furthermore, he explored how African Americans navigated through social, political and economic boundaries through consumer practices. Mullins' understood that African American consumption, "harbored the concrete and symbolic privileges of citizenship and fueled a complex swath of aspirations," (Mullins 1999: 3). At Blackdom, one can observe the same themes presented in Mullins's work as Blackdom homesteaders are in possession of similar objects, even if their were homes were considered simple and humble; Blackdom residents had a "surprisingly high amount of bric-a-brac, much of it made from porcelain" (Williamson 2001: 42). Why did Blackdom residents have these items? What was so strange about finding the bric-a-brac statuettes in these southwestern homesteads?

During the late nineteenth century, the act of consuming allowed people to attempt to break down social barriers. Bric-a-brac, though massed produced and cheap, was highly imbued with complex symbolism (Mullins 1999: 164). These objects on the one hand, "celebrated White supremacy, imperialism and industrial affluence," with motifs including, "Japanese fans, Biblical figurines, Boar hunt statues, casts of Lincoln's death mask," and on other hand had motifs that "simply depicted consumer culture's fanciful and xenophobic visions of other peoples, places, and subjects" (Mullins 1999: 165-166). Bric-a-brac, with all its ambiguous meanings, functioned as a vehicle in which consumers could place themselves within an idealized society and world (Mullins 1991: 166). Beyond the meaning of the images depicted, the act of purchasing bric-a-brac and other knick knacks for the home became visible markers of a genteel lifestyle. This outward portrayal of a genteel lifestyle became the standard definition for how a true American behaved (Mullins 1999: 168). This lifestyle was to be exclusively available to white Americans, however, African Americans violated this idea of "White materialism" by actively consuming bric-a-brac and other knick knacks that had meaning for them as Black people and as American citizens (Mullins 1999): 168). But what does the act of violating "White materialism" mean for Blackdom residents? To understand the materiality of the bric-a-brac at Blackdom one must discuss African American consumption with Du Bois's notion of *double consciousness.*

Du Bois's notion of *double consciousness* states that the social constraints of the late nineteenth century divided African Americans into "two selves", with African Americans desiring to merge the two halves into one whole. The notion of *double*

consciousness is neither negative nor positive but a social reality for African Americans of that time period and a focal point for which many constructed their identity. Though African Americans had just as many generations that had lived and died on American soil as white Americans, they were not afforded the same rights and opportunities as citizens of this country because of the color of their skin and their family heritage of enslaved people. The Emancipation Proclamation and the amendments that followed were suppose to open the path for African Americans to enjoy the benefits of freedom and exercise their American rights, however, freedom and equality were never achieved (Du Bois 1999: 12). What African Americans were deny was the ability to simply exist. To vote, dine, shop, live, and so forth, without facing hostility from whites and without having the doors of opportunity closed in their face (Du Bois 1999). The goal was not to "act white" or become white, but to take the ideas of Americana that whites had constructed and reformulate them to show to all, both Black and white that American was just as much Red, Black and White as it was Red, White and Blue. African Americans wanted to simply be given the space to be American and develop and American identity because for late nineteenth century African Americans, Black and American were not mutually exclusive.

Consumption was one way in which African Americans attempted to tear down the veil that Du Bois's describes. Blackdom residents purchased the latest in gun powder and other household tinctures as each of the homesteads describes has aqua, purple and milk glass fragments, all of which are material markers of the period. However, all of these items were most likely purchased for necessity, for survival in the Pecos Valley,

bric-a-brac was not. Materiality helps to further understand how bric-a-brac was a material expression of Blackdom residents, like other late nineteenth century African Americans, attempt to create a synthesis between Black and American identities. The framework of materiality explains that as an object bric-a-brac transcends being a porcelain object to becoming a tangible form of agency and power. Materiality reminds one of the role that objects play in shaping our worldview and how that worldview is reflected in the objects that are created or purchased. Furthermore, materiality within the framework of consumption helps to understand that bric-a-brac objects have agency by recognizing that as a seemingly simple object, it has the power to validate one's home as being American (Mullins 1999: 166). As agents themselves, African Americans purposefully used their purchasing power by consuming items that are not necessary for the maintenance of home. Through purchasing novelty items such as bric-a-brac African Americans gave themselves consumer power and forced others to acknowledge their active participation in the market, which was middle class behavior (hooks 2000). Since the middle class was considered true Americans by purchasing, owning and displaying bric-a-brac African Americans were acting out an American identity and showing to all that they were in fact just as American as whites. As Mullins states, the act of consuming allowed African Americans to, "demonstrate their American identity, celebrate their freedom from servitude and test the possibilities of an ostensibly equitable consumer marketplace" (Mullins 1999: 33).

Mullins' work focused on an urban site in Annapolis, Maryland that predates Blackdom by over 40 years, yet one can suggest that Blackdom resident, similar to the

Maynard house of Mullins study, recognized bric-a-brac objects as monuments to American identity, as even the most simple homestead had these porcelain figurines. The theory of *double consciousness* as a framework allows for one to see this consumer practice as the physical embodiment of African Americans attempting to be both African and American, as Du Bois states. The notion of double consciousness also encourages one to ask more questions of Blackdom residents consumer practices. Who was purchasing the bric-a-brac? Certainly, women ran the household but at Blackdom women also worked outside farming. Women would have most likely purchased the bric-a-brac, but the motifs of bric-a-brac often dealt with emancipation, freedom even images of President Lincoln. These concepts could be viewed as gender neutral, appealing to both males and females. Therefore, could men have had a significant input in the type of of bric-a-brac consumed if they did not purchase the items themselves? Was the bric-a-brac purchased from a catalog? Was it purchased in a storefront? If it was purchased in a store front in New Mexico what does that say about southwestern race relations? Was the bric-a-brac displayed and where? If it was not displayed was it kept hidden because it was no longer needed as a marker of American identity?

In addition to the previous question, when was the bric-a-brac purchased? Did the owners of the bric-a-brac purchase the bric-a-brac before or after moving to Blackdom. Does the time frame of purchase change the consumer importance of the bric-a-brac? Within the context of the South, the purchase of bric-a-brac and the display of it might serve better to show white Americans that Blacks were also American. However, in an all-Black town does purchasing bric-a-brac mean the same thing? Based on the

frameworks present it could. Though the Blackdom was formulate for African Americans to live out the "American Dream", the bric-a-brac might have displayed the message of arrival. This means that the purchase of knick knack items was done because Blackdom residents could do it. The town was designed for them to be American and Black without contradiction so there for the display of bric-a-brac within the new context of a western all Black town could mean "we have done it", not only are we American through the act of purchasing but we are American in the owning of land our house is built on, the house itself and all of the items inside of the house, from the extravagant to the mundane. Moreover, perhaps the bric-a-brac serves as a talking piece when teaching the children of Blackdom. With images of emancipation and of Lincoln and other motifs important to late nineteenth century African Americans, the bric-a-brac could serve as a reference point to explain to little Black children where their ancestors came from, where African Americans were in the present and the possibilities of their future.

As a frame or reference, *double consciousness* helps to strengthen these interpretations within the consumerism framework. Moreover, when placed in a conversation with Black feminist archaeology encourages not only the exploration and interpretation of the material culture as presented above, but a deeper understanding and appreciation of the historical and social importance of the Black town itself.

Double Consciousness and Black Towns

In Lillian Collins Westfield's interview with archivist Elvis Fleming, she states, "I'll say Negro and yet, that isn't really true because we are not really Negroes, we're an amalgamated nation here, we have, I have my grandmother on my mother's and father's

side were Indians so therefore I'm just an American". What stands out from this quote is Westfield's summation that she, as well as many other Black people, were 'just Americans'. This sentence is interesting because Westfield was possibly stating the general ethos of other African Americans of the late 19th century and early 20th century. That ethos was echoed most elegantly by W. E. B Du Bois in his book *The Souls of Black Folk* (1998), where he presented the *double consciousness* framework. He states that the desire of African Americans was, "the desire to be Black and be American without being cursed and spit upon ... without having the doors of opportunity closed roughly in his face" (Du Bois 1998: 10). Historians analyzing African American desires to move to the West echo the same idea; African Americans during the late 19th century desired to be full American citizens (Taylor 1998). Although they were Black, in their minds this did not diminish their views of themselves as American. The residents of Blackdom were examples of how African Americans were constructing Blackness that was both American and African.

Martinot states that in the late nineteenth century Black Americans were not able to be Black people as "Black" as a race and culture was rejected, as well they are not considered Americans because they are Black (2000: xvi). Furthermore, Martinot states that Du Bois considered heroism to be the able to survive the contradictions and psychic violence of American society (2000: xvi). The members of Blackdom chose to fight, withstand and survive against that psychic violence by creating their town (Martinot 2000: xvi).

Black feminist archaeology not only encourages the use of Black intellectual thought which as been done in this paper by using Du Bois's notion of *double consciousness* as an interpretive framework, but also the importance of the site itself as well as emphasizing the importance of the use of landscape and the domestic sphere as a "source of information, strength and cultural capitol" (Battle-Baptiste 2011: 72). This framework allows the archaeologist to see that in order to have a strong interpretation of the artifacts, one must deal with the social significance of African Americans moving westward and creating these Black towns.

The act of moving west was a way that Blackdom's residents, and those of other towns like Blackdom, insisted upon acknowledgment of Black identity as American identity. The western frontier as described by Frederick Jackson Turner represented American ideals of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness (Flamming 2009). The western frontier was considered by white Americans as a 'wild' and 'untamed' land, full of opportunity. Blackdom residents ventured west for the same opportunities as white Americans. The were in search of financial opportunity, land, and overall unadulterated freedom.

Yet, for these Black people moving westward and acquiring land was embedded in a broader understanding of their Black American identity. The acquisition of land was an important goal for African Americans following emancipation. African Americans understood the American cultural value of land. In slavery, if a plantation owner gave a small plot of land to an enslaved African American, that land could be used to grow produce or raise chickens, all of which could be sold in market or back to the owner for

profit (Health 2004). That profit could then be used to purchase one's freedom, or the freedom of a loved one. After emancipation, land to African Americans meant the possibility of being economically stable which could then lead to social advancement and security.

After emancipation freed people were promised by the United States government forty acres of arable land and a mule to work that land; however, most African Americans did not receive this (Du Bois 1976). Therefore, the ability to own one's own plot of land under the Homestead Act afforded African Americans the opportunity to seize upon a dream deferred. This idea is evident at Blackdom. According to Westfield, "Most of the people came because for once they would have their own land. Most had been sharecroppers, like their parents before them. When they heard of this, they got on a train or horse and came," (Gibson 1986: 46). At Blackdom all the residents had their own homestead and some, in addition, had lots in the townsite (Interview with Elvis Fleming). Some, such as Helena Wagoner Collins' grandfather L.K Wagoner, insisted that the property remain in the family even if no one lived there (Interview with Michael McGee 2005). Thus, for Black Americans the acquisition of land lead to economic independence which was and is today a cornerstone of the broader American experience, which they desired to claim as their own (hooks 2000, 1992).

Blackdom residents did see themselves as American, but there is no doubt that in their opinion Black and American should ever be in contradiction. In her book, *Black Looks*, bell hooks explains that "to love blackness is dangerous in a white supremacist culture- so threatening, so serious a breach in the fabric of the social order, that death is

the punishment" (hooks 1992: 9). Indeed, African Americans during this time faced extreme violence because they viewed their Black identity as a viable way to exist. But, in the Black town, Blackness could be embraced and loved openly without fear of repudiation. Members of Blackdom loved their Blackness. Moreover, by loving their Blackness they moved beyond the contradictions that white supremacist ideals placed on them, to understanding their Blackness as American and vice versa; therefore, embracing their past, present and future. This is evident in the annual celebration of Juneteenth. Though Juneteenth is an informal holiday specific to the condition of Black Texans, Blackdom residents, celebrated the day, with whites, as a commemoration of overall Black independence.

Another example of Blackdom residents loving their Blackness is in the name of the town itself. The name of Blackdom has two parts: *black* and *-dom.* The term *Black,* represents the people. Blackdom residents considered themselves to be Black Americans-people of both African, European and Native ancestry, an amalgamated nation. The suffix *-dom,* by definition denotes a realm, dignity or a state or fact of being, similar to the term kingdom (The American Heritage College Dictionary 2004). Therefore, the name of the town signifies to all, that Blackdom was a realm specifically where Black people could seek and maintain dignity as humans, as Black people, and as Americans.

In conclusion, in understanding how race and class influenced how Black Americans in post emancipation America constructed their identity as both Black and American , one should look to the frameworks Black feminist archaeology, consumerism

and the Black intellectual framework of *double consciousness*. These frameworks together allow one to accept and understand that during the late nineteenth century African American constructions of Blackness was to view themselves as being both African and American. Furthermore, these frameworks allows one to understand that not only is the material culture important for interpretation but to strengthen that interpretation one must fully engage with the social importance of the Black town itself during the time the artifacts were in use. In exploring this framework, I used bric-a-brac as the material example. However, the homesteads of Blackdom are full of consumer items that need to be systematically studied to further illuminate archaeology's understanding of how late nineteenth century African Americans used consumer practices to constructed their idea of a Black and American identity.

Chapter Five
Conclusion

> I'll say Negro , and yet, that isn't really true because we are not really Negroes, we're an amalgamated nation here, we have, I have my grandmother on my mother's and father's side were Indians, so therefore, I'm just an American (Lillian Collins Westfield interview with Elvis Fleming March 18, 1975).

The late nineteenth century was a tumultuous period in American history, both politically and socially. The social and the political upheaval that resulted from the end of the Civil War and the creation and demise of Reconstruction had significant effects on African Americans. In response to the upheaval, African Americans create Black towns in the American West in order to escape the horrors of the KKK and the rise of Jim Crow legislation in the southern states. These towns allowed African Americans to be both Black and American. By moving west, African Americans had the opportunity to express their identity in whole through the exercising of social, political and economic rights.

Arguing that African Americans of the late nineteenth century were seeking to express their American identity might be controversial in a discipline that has a long history of framing African American identity in terms of ethnic boundaries and markers. Yet, I would argue that though they sought to be considered American citizens, African Americans never forgot their African heritage. They recognized that they were a mixed group of people; stemming from cross-cultural interactions of Africans, Native Americans and Europeans. It is this mixed identity, as Lillian Collins Westfield stated, that makes Black Americans not just Black but inherently American and therefore deserving of first-class citizenship.

Decades earlier, Harlem Renaissance poet Langston Hughes writes a sentiment similar to Westfield thoughts. He states,

> This is my land, America. Naturally, I love it-it is home- and I am vitally concerned about its *more*, its democracy and its well-being. I try now to look at it with clear, un prejudiced eyes. My ancestry goes back at least four generations on American soil, and, through Indian blood, many centuries more. My background and training is purely American-the schools of Kansas, Ohio and the East. I am old stock as opposed to recent immigrant blood. (Hughes 1944: 299)

In this quote Hughes conveys the message that Black *is* American and American *is* Black. Though the Hughes and Westfield quotes occur years after the end of Reconstruction, each embodies the DuBois notion of *double consciousness*. Hughes and Westfield quotes express the idea that African Americans want to be considered Americans because this country is in fact their home. They do not want to sacrifice their African identity for a white American model or vice versa. Black towns like Blackdom, were physical embodiments of African Americans attempting to negotiate this identity. These towns provided the protection necessary to survive and thrive against American racism.

Archaeology has the tools to understand how African Americans constructed their identity in freedom. Focusing on the post emancipation period in the African American experience allows for practitioners in the field to engage with identity construction and its intersectionality with racism, race and class (Barnes 2011). Studies of African American freedom creates an opportunity for practitioners of African American archaeology to ask questions concerning how African Americans in the late nineteenth century used class through consumerism to construct a Black identity that was both Black and American. Moreover, by asking these questions, scholarship in this area engages with the political

nature of American race relations, past and present. Furthermore, by focusing on post emancipation sites, such as the Black towns of the American West, archaeologists break the African American archaeology/plantation synonym and add a wealth of information to the history of the African American experience. By, examining identity and its intersectionality with class and consumerism, race and racialization, then filtering these traditional archaeological frameworks through the Black intellectual-minded approach of *double consciousness*, practitioners of African American archaeology can truly begin to explore the complexity and nuances of African American identity.

Appendix A

Adopted from *Black Towns in the Trans-Appalachian West* (Hamilton 1991) and *In Search of the Racial Frontier* (Taylor 1998)

California
Abila
Allensworth
Bowles
Victorville

Colorado
Dearfield

Kansas
Nicodemus

New Mexico
Blackdom
Vado

Oklahoma
Arkansas Colored
Bailey
Boley
Bookertee
Canadian Colored
Chase
Clearview
Ferguson
Forman
Gibson Station
Grayson
Langston City
Lewisville
Liberty
Lima
Lincoln City
Mantu
Marshalltown
North Fork Colored
Overton
Porter
Redbird
Rentiesville
Summit
Taft
Tatum
Tullahassee
Vernon
Wellston Colony
Wybark
Two unknown towns in the Seminole Nation

Texas
Andy
Board House
Booker
Independence Heights
Kendleton
Mill City
Oldham
Union City

Appendix B

An Archaeological Survey of the Blackdom Townsite and nearby Homesteads, Chaves County, New Mexico, Henry Walt, 1996.

LA 114157 The Blackdom Townsite and Ella Boyer residence

The Blackdom Townsite is a 40 acre plot homestead by Francis Boyer for the purpose of creating an all-Black town. The townsite itself is noticeably lacking in structural remnants, there being only three clear features recorded during our survey, Features 1, 2, and 3. Feature 4 is a concentration of cinders and artifacts that may or may not have included a structure. Feature 5 and 6 are on the Ella Boyer desert claim adjacent to the townsite and to the north.

The townsite is criss-crossed by a number of roads at odd angles, several of which pass through or by Feature 1 which is close to the center of the 40 acre site. It remains unclear what purpose Feature 1 served. It consists of a shallow depression within which are four tall cornered cement walls that may have served as a foundation for a public building. The cement corners are quite tall however, over a two meters in height, making their use as foundations uncertain (see attached photography). Surrounding the depression and cement structures is a fairly dense scatter of cans and glass. These consist primarily of purple and brown bottle glass, solder-topped and crimped-sided cans, as well as a few items of aqua bottle glass and white-glazed earthenware. All date to the Blackdom period

Feature 2 is a depression with associated artifacts. The depression appears to be what remains of a structure in a mode that seems typical for Blackdom. All structural remains, that is lumber for walls, floor, and roof, have been removed, perhaps salvaged by Blackdom residents as they abandoned the town. The depression is roughly circular, 5m in diameter and approximately 25cm deep. there is an artifact scatter directly associated wit the depression and another 10m to the south. A road bisects the southern scatter. As noted, no structural materials remain. Artifacts include many solder-topped, crimped-sided cans, purple glass, salt and brown-glazed stoneware, and white-glazed ironstone. In lesser numbers are paint cans, sardine cans, KC Baking cans (10¢), wire handles, lantern parts, and milk glass canning lids. Also here is a safety pin, and an Anheiser-Busch aqua glass beer bottle. I counted over 100 artifacts.

Feature 3 really contains no clear structural feature, but consists of many fragments of heavy cement pipe that probably carried water. This area also has a varied scatter of artifacts that include coal fragments, horeseshoing nails, evaporated milk cans, window glass, sardine cans, large solder topped cans, a large wood bolt, fragments of a heavy dark pulp glass stemmed vase, gray embossed ironstone, a boot heal, and a 1" buckle. There may have once been a structure here that perhaps lacked an excavated cellar, and is thus

more difficult to delineate. The cement pipe fragments and associated artifacts cover an area 30 by 50m in area.

Feature 4 also lacks noticeable structural remains although there was likely one here. This feature is marked by two concentrations of cinders, several large stone cobbles in a pile, and three small artifact scatters. These cover an area 80 by 60m. There is abundant tan-glazed stoneware and purple glass here. Also there is aqua glass, white glazed ironstone, milk glass canning lids, solder topped cans, lard buckets, meat cans and a Shillings vacuum-packed coffee can. Artifacts included a white ironstone sherd with a makers mark (KT&K, s-v, China 10g), a hand-made spike, and a can lid with an embossed label (3 lbs 6oz, Net Weight,Cottolene, Contains No, Hog Fat). There are over 100 artifacts here.

The most prominent structural element in Feature 5 is a large masonry cellar on the Ella Boyer desert claim. Documents of her claim note the presence of an 8 room frame dwelling, 30 by 30' with a basement. That is the approximate dimensions of the masonry cellar which is also over a meter in depth. There is a step down entrance to the cellar from the north. To the south of the cellar is a scattered rock alignment that may have once been the footing for a wall. Sixty meters to the north is a small depression that may mark an outhouse. Heavy concentrations of artifacts are found to the east and north of the Boyer cellar. Artifacts number in the hundred. Most common is purple bottle glass, aqua bottle glass, white-glazed earthenware, flow-blue decorated ironstone, various shades of glazed stoneware, blue stripped ironstone, and brown bottle glass.

Feature 6 is centered around a well-head pipe which is set on the edge of a raised area and close to a low cement block. The raised area is flanked by several wooden posts as are surrounding depressions. Feature 6 is also the Boyer desert claim and may have to do with the pumping plant and pump house described in the Ella Boyer desert claim. In a 1915 affidavit the following structures listed may relate to feature 6: a compressor, a 14 by 16' pump house, a reservoir, and two miles of irrigation ditches. Although the ditches are not evident, feature 6 is likely the Boyer pumping plant and house. A small scatter of artifacts include several solder-topped cans, numerous battery cores, several cast metal gears, and 2 trunk locks (?).

LA114158 The Monroe Collins homestead

To the west of Blackdom are many of the homesteads associated with the community. One of these is the Monroe Collins homestead identified and located with the homestead documents in his name. The primary feature at this location is a rectangular depression surrounded by a u-shaped backdirt pile open to the south. Within the backdirt pile are two cobble alignments. The Collins homestead records describe a frame structure, 24 by

14 feet in size with a dirt cellar. These measurements approximate the dimensions of the depression. The backdirt is surrounded by a scatter of artifacts to the east and north. A contemporaneous road is approximately 30m to the west. The scatter of artifacts is dense. These include bed springs, barbed wire, short brown bottles with pontil marks, solder-topped, crimped-sided cans, early crimped cans, tobacco cans, wire handles, barrel hoops, KC Baking Powder cans (10¢), cobalt blue glass, an early crown cap, a car fender, tin nail plugs for roofing, flow-blue decorated ironstone, white-glazed ironstone, a markers mark for ironstone with a lion, brown-glazed stoneware, plain porcelain, Mexican green-glazed Majolica, blue-glazed stoneware, yellow earthenware, and fire-place bricks. There are several small piles of rocks near the depression.

LA114159 The Nick Gates homestead

Close to the Collins homestead and to the northeast is the Nick Gates homestead, again identified through homestead documents. The primary feature is again a depression surrounded by a u-shaped mound of backdirt. In this case, the depression is smaller and almost square. The Gates homestead documents described a small box house, 12 by 14 feet in size, much like the depression that remains. It is further described as being one room with shingle roof and wooden floor. The wooden floor structures, no structural materials remain, but were likely salvaged soon after abandonment. A heavy concentration of artifacts surround the house depression. These include many small, short brown-glazed stoneware, and coal. In lesser numbers is colbalt blue glass, KC Baking Powder cans (10¢ & 15¢), mason jar rims, purple glass mason jar fragments, dark green glass, Kerr self-sealing jar lids, green glass insulators (Patented May 2, 1898), purple glass wine bottle, porcelain decalware, aqua glass medicine bottle, Bliss Pure Food can lid, barbed wire, cast iron stove parts, elaborately pressed and decorated tin plate, hinged tin frame for a purse, hand-painted green and red white earthenware, and porcelain, gold applique figurine fragments.

In all, this and the assemblage at the Boyer house (LA 114157, Feature 5) include a number of relatively expensive and exclusive items that are not the standard for homesteads in the Southwest. Porcelain figurines and ornate tin-plate are not common homesteader items. Some Blackdom residents seem to have had a costlier collection of possessions than was evident by their humble homesteading surroundings. The Gates homestead, as small as it was, was home to Nick Gates, his wife, and child.

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