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Mothering on Maple Avenue: An Exploration of African American Women's Agency in Nineteenth Century Germantown, New York

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Mothering on Maple Avenue: An Exploration of African American Women's Agency in
Nineteenth Century Germantown, New York

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Social Studies
of Bard College

by
Cheyenne Cutter

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

May 2020

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Introduction

If you choose to bring me to a museum, anticipate to be there the entire day, because I will read everything that I can find that there is to know. I think this unending curiosity that pushes me through life is what drove me to archaeology, a discipline desiring to know the forgotten or unknown. In the summer of 2018, I uncovered a ceramic sherd that belonged to a Rockingham “Rebekah-at-the-Well” teapot. This sherd led me to Historical Archaeologist Laurie Wilkie’s (2003: 90) study, *The Archaeology of Mothering: An African American Midwife’s Tale*, which explains that the teapot had been manufactured, by chance, around the same year that the Odd Fellows Fraternity released the “Degree of Rebekah.” This degree was bestowed upon member’s wives, whose character and behavior exemplified the ideal values of womanhood as prescribed by the Cult of Domesticity in nineteenth century America. What was more, the Odd Fellows were an African American fraternity designed to support African American communities (Wilkie 2003: 91). In all of my education, I had never come across any of this information before, which led me to begin questioning how the Persons family, an African American family who occupied the Maple Avenue Parsonage in the nineteenth century, saw and performed womanhood.

The Maple Avenue Parsonage site is located a short drive up Maple Avenue, off of Main Street in Germantown. When approaching the site, the 1767 Parsonage emerges over the crest of the road, sitting atop her hill of bedrock outcropping, silently reflecting upon the people and days long gone. The land is presently owned by Germantown, and the Parsonage structure houses Germantown’s History Department and Garden Club. While the responsibility of maintaining and preserving the home rests upon the town of Germantown, this is largely a collaborative effort that includes Bard’s archaeology team, local community members, and decedents of the 1710

Palatine immigration. Germantown has a rich history that begins with the first Germans who immigrated to the new world. The community members of Germantown, especially the descendent families of the 1710 immigration, are proud of their town and her history, so it is no surprise that members of the community are personally invested in the archeological work being conducted by Bard College's Archaeologist in Residence, Christophe Lindner.

When walking across the Maple Avenue Parsonage site, it is not hard to stumble upon surface finds, nestled in the grass of the front and back yards. Ernst Edward and Friedl Ekert, the last residents to utilize the parsonage as a home until the 1990s, saw value in preserving the historic site of German and German-American heritage. Stories about the Ekerts' preservation efforts, as told by Germantown community member and invested archaeology supporter, Alvin Sheffer, include renovating the Parsonage structure, sifting the dirt floor of the parsonage cellar for coins before converting the floor to its current cement material, adding a layer of topsoil to protect the artifacts from disturbances caused by maintenance efforts on the lawn, and finally donating the Parsonage and associated property to the town so that their preservation efforts may be continued after their passing. Studies on the Germantown Parsonage, like this one, are conducted not only for the benefit of understanding past occupants of the site and their lifeways, but also to illustrate the importance of continuing this tradition of preservation on the site.

One of the greatest challenges faced by academics, investigating the lives of individuals whose histories are fraught with violence, is the desire to establish empathy. Over the course of the three years that I have been involved with the Parsonage, the Persons family history went from a few names in census records, to a web of familial connections that span generations and whose movements traverse the lower half of New York State. Each time more of these individuals' lives come into focus, the more I want to celebrate in the same ways that I would, if

I found an intact porcelain teapot from the eighteenth century in a test unit. As I dive deeper into the material remains and the archives, and as I invade further into the private daily doings of the Persons household, a sense of intimacy begins to develop between the complexly situated subjects and this equally complexly situated observer. This intimacy is entirely one-sided because the relationship is engaged from a present looking behind. Left unacknowledged and unchecked, this desire for empathy stands precariously at the edge of subjectivity. This, however, is not my story. I may possess the fingers and mind which formed the words and ideas encompassed in this study, but this is the Persons family's tale. I am only a mouthpiece through which to tell it.

I could not, however, stop the life-cycle events in my life from influencing the types of questions I asked of the choices the Persons women seemed to have been making according to census records. I too grew up in a household containing three generations of women, similar to the youngest generation of Persons women. I was also fortunate enough to know my Great Grandmother, an Irish immigrant who worked as a domestic servant in the Vanderbilt mansions in New York City and Newport, Rhode Island. The traditions she and some of her siblings carried over to the United States, even four generations later still inform the ways that my family members and I go about daily life. I wondered what types of traditions each generation of this family's lineage taught to the following generation, and how these traditions were maintained or transformed over time. When both of my maternal grandparents died in one year, my family's organization became disrupted as we lost the entire generation which structured all family gatherings. This event caused me to wonder what types of impacts the death of Henry and Mary Persons, may have had on their children. As Renato Rosaldo (1993: 170) explains in "Grief and

a Headhunter's Rage," sometimes the new life experiences of an observer gives greater insight into the behaviors of the People who are being studied.

Most archaeological work is done in conversation with others, and as a result this study takes on the qualities of a conversation. I know that I understand all that is included in this study, but my goal is to help you, the reader, understanding all that I am trying to communicate. As a result, I will rephrase several more complex ideas, in a few different ways, for clarification. I will also, at several points, pause in our conversation to address what we have already gone over in that particular chapter or in previous chapters so that we all stay together in our understandings throughout the project. In addition, I will float between using words such as "I," "we," "you," "us," and "our." These are specific conversational terms which indicate when an idea is specifically mine, or when an idea is a shared interpretation that comes from the collective efforts of the Bard archaeology team. When I reference you, and I incorporate you into this collective us, that is because your engagement with this study has entered you into this larger conversation. I urge you to come up with your own questions and interpretations of the ideas that I present in this study, because a plethora of perspectives can reveal new insight into unexplored options.

In chapter one, I begin with Joan M. Gero's (2000) feminist critiques on agency because her commentary resonated with every discomfort I found myself feeling with other archaeologist's application of the language of agency. These critiques highlight a flattened, universal, and masculine agency that characterize all agentic actions in the language of an independent capitalistic male "go-getter" attitude. We then move into Diana DiZerega Wall's (2010) contribution to this project, a distinction between active and passive agencies which focuses this study to understand if the Persons women are passively reacting to their reality or if

they are actively shaping their reality. This chapter will finish by diving into John Barrett's (2000, 2001) theory on an "archaeology of inhabitation," which argues that agency can only be objectively understood when material remains are complexly situated back within the historical matrix, which both informs and acts as a medium through which actions are carried out. We draw on Barrett's (2001) understandings of practical and discursive knowledges to evaluate whether the practices performed by the Persons women were passive or active representations of agency respectively.

Chapter 2 and chapter 3 move to construct the cultural matrix of the Persons' reality in nineteenth century America, in line with Barrett's archaeology of inhabitation. Chapter two focuses on national and northern American discourse. A focus on national discourse introduces the middle-class Anglo-American ideals known as the Cult of Domesticity, which governed proper American women's practices. A regionalized focus on the north highlights the specific social conditions of northern American society that made the Persons experiences different from African Americans in the South. Seeing that the Persons own the Parsonage 20 years after manumission in New York state, but ten years before the abolition of slavery in America, this regionalized difference is an important distinction to make. This second chapter specifically contextualizes the regionalized discourse within the fields of motherhood and domestic service, the occupations chosen by the Persons women.

Chapter three catalogs the history of the Parsonage and follows the Persons through the documentary record. While we explore the Persons family's history, we will begin to propose possible suggestions concerning the behaviors of these women as suggested by the documentary record. In this chapter, we will introduce the presence of evidence suggestive of the Persons women's involvement with West African religious traditions. In addition, we will also outline

evidence which indicated a hidden generation that precedes the Persons women's occupation of the site in the mid-nineteenth century. This chapter will conclude with a final possibility, which suggests that the Persons women were also practicing midwifery.

Chapter 3 relies heavily on census records, which are not always the most reliable sources for accurate information. The information included in the census records could have been purposefully manipulated by census collectors or the individuals giving the information. At other points the person giving the information to be recorded in the census, was not a member of the household being recorded. In some cases, census records are lost or damaged which leads to gaps in the information. Some of these issues will be addressed in chapter three. One such issue is the spelling of the Persons' last name. In other previous studies, the family has been referred to as the "Person" family. In my experiences this family referred to themselves as the Persons. This is the spelling recorded on their headstones and returned in Emma Persons' signature used to open a bank account in 1971 (Find a Grave 1889; Freedman's Bank Records 1871). Instead of rewriting their identity, I chose to call them by the name they seem to refer to themselves as. Perhaps there is more to understand behind the choice of identifying one's self as a group of persons, rather than as an individual person.

Before we move on I wish to address the specific ethnic that I used throughout these chapters and those that follow. The two main terms that I use are African American and Anglo-American. In literature of previous decades these two terms appear differently. Some may choose to use "white" and "black," and others may have chosen what is not considered more outdated language. I choose to use African American and Anglo-American to highlight specific ethnic groups of a particular place. Using terms such as "white" and "black" do not inherently guide an audience towards a particular perception of reality. In this study, we address three

different groups of people whose heritages stem from different countries and who all by modern standards of identification can be considered white: Germans, Anglo-Americans, and Irish immigrants. At various points in American history two of these three groups have been denied claims of “whiteness” by the other. In addition, I use African American to clarify that this study does not assume that all individuals of African descent whose ancestors traveled across the Middle Passage share a homogenous experience. I wish to reveal the Persons’ story without inflicting further violences through misguided language.

Chapter four outlines the archaeological methods employed for excavation and material analysis of the remains recovered from the Maple Avenue Parsonage site. In this section, I explain which area of the site produced the materials utilized in the analysis and how we recovered these materials. It is also in this chapter that I briefly discuss the original trajectory of this study and how that trajectory was altered due to limitations caused by the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. The final section of this chapter will then detail how a material density analysis, coupled with a stratigraphic analysis will produce dates viable for clarifying which material remains represent the Persons family’s activities.

All of the individual efforts from the first four chapters will culminate in the fifth and final chapter. In this chapter, we explore the analytical findings evidenced by situating the material remains within their historical complexity. The first section of this chapter will provide an example of what the material analysis detailed in chapter four looks like, to illustrate the difficulties in dating the material remains due to the limitations of the dataset. I will then propose my suggestions concerning the possible construction, which focused our excavation efforts in the northeastern area of the backyard of the Parsonage. Material analysis on agricultural materials, ceramics, and glass will inform a comprehensive exploration of the

possible practices performed by the Persons women. This comprehensive analysis, by the end of this chapter, aims to reveal whether the Persons women integrated into American society through passive agentic action or a more active agency. I now welcome you to turn the page, so that we may truly dive into this discussion together.

Chapter 1: How to Find the Persons' Agency

Why Define Agency in Archaeology

It is well known and fairly often joked about that archaeologists would rather be found covered in soils, trowel in hand, knee deep in a test unit, than with their nose in a study or a report trying to distill dense theory. This preference for excavation should not detract from attending to archaeological theory and concepts, or more specifically attending to expressing the way in which a theory is applied in shaping analysis so that the particular form of a theory is salient to the intended audience of a study. In text references are made and sources are cited, which allows the audience to trace the pathways through which the archaeologist constructed their framework and confronted the evidence. These references connect the network of intellectual material which informed a project, the standard approach to modern scholarship. It is the responsibility of the archaeologist, however, to attend to articulating all theory, even those abstract concepts that are seemingly assumed to be known by everyone.

Agency is one such abstracted theory that many archaeologists want to use, but do not want to define. The studies compiled to inform and shape this study fail to escape this critique. The archaeologists who crafted these studies, McQuinn (2015), Wilkie (2003), Bulgar (2015), Wall (2010), and Rotman (2019), are brilliant at articulating core theories such as racialization, social theory, and *habitus*, to name a few, and dive they deeply into each distillation of the nuances of each of these theories. Agency, though, is not given the same treatment in their projects. To zero in on McQuinn, Bulgar, and Wilkie for a moment, these archaeologists claim the individuals of their focus are agents, that these individual's actions are agency, and that these action actively engage with the realities in which these individuals lived, but never once is agency defined, or made clear whose theory of agency is being utilized.

McQuinn's (2015) article, "Construction of Identity in an African American Activist Community in Albany, New York," investigates how the individuals of the African American community on Livingston Avenue constructed their communal identity. To put it another way, he tries to discern how the "agents" of the community engaged in a dialectical relationship with Anglo-Americans to construct and communicate their identity informed by Charles E. Orser's theory of racialization (McQuinn 2015: 156). Despite using the language associated with theories of agency, McQuinn (2015) only finds it crucial to reference, define, and elaborate upon his use of racialization.

Bulgar (2015) explores the ways in which the women of the African American Boston family chose to reiterate or transform the ideologies and conditions of their world, for the purpose of finding which gender ideologies may have been embodied in the cultural material procured from the site. Much of Bulgar's (2015: 106) focus is on the strategies employed by these women for claiming American citizenship and equality with attention to collective community goals and "individual agency." She specifically characterizes the personal choices and actions of these women as agency. Bulgar (2015: 106) questions whether these actions "engaged with, ignored, manipulated, or redefined" conditions and ideals to attempt to achieve their desires. "'The Character of a Woman: Womanhood and Race in Nineteenth-Century Nantucket'" is saturated with the language and characteristics of structuralist articulations of agency, but at no point does she confirm or deny that that is the particular form of agency that she is engaging with. This structuralist articulation as an interpretation was only derived after this application of agency was put in reference with discourse concerning the evolution of agency in archaeological studies. One must be aware of the multiplicity of agencies to be able to parse out which agency Bulgar specifically speaks to.

Lastly, in Wilkie's (2003) exploration of African American midwifery and the concept of mothering in reference to the Perryman family, like McQuinn and Bulgar, she evokes the language of agency without stating its application to the study. Highlighting Wilkie's failure to define the use of agentic language may seem redundant to include with the previous two examples illustrating the same thing. Wilkie, however, implies an agentic binary in the language she chooses to employ, implying that she is engaging with a specific form of an agency that she does not clarify. She states that "the Perrymans were actively pursuing what came to be known as the 'American Dream,'" implying that on the other side of these individuals' "active" actions was the possibility of "passive" action (Wilkie 2003: 212). To allude to a binary of action within the concept of agency, while the two previous example fail to hint at this binary, is to imply that there exists at least two concepts of agency. The existence of more than one concept of agency demand the concept's definition when engaged with and applied.

Agency in Archaeology (2000) is the first archaeological volume to "scrutinize the concept of human agency and to examine in depth its potential to inform our understanding of the past." Not including the editors, sixteen different archaeologists share their interpretations and articulations of agency and its uses and applications to archaeological inquiry. The compilation of this book means that there exists at least sixteen different iterations of what agency is, iterations so diverse in character and application that it becomes difficult to construct a broad encompassing definition that can be assumed. These iterations vary not only in how agency is defined, but also in how the archaeologist proposes to approach and position the analysis of material culture. The plentiful and varied articulations of agency that have been engaged when conducting archaeological analysis since the middle of the twentieth-century illustrated that this concept cannot be left to broadly conceptualized abstractions. The many

researchers who employ agentic language within their studies nods to how valuable the concept is to archaeological analysis. A failure to articulate which iteration of agency is being engaged with makes more difficult the discipline's collective ability to discursively question and celebrate the many merits and pitfalls of each iteration, delaying the discipline's ability evolve.

The above section explores the lapses in historical archaeologist's attention to defining specific articulations of agency that are employed in the use of understanding African American lifeways in the past. What follows in the rest of this chapter, is an exploration of the speculative elements which combine to form the theoretical framework for this project. These elements include an inquiry into Joan M. Gero's feminist cautions concerning agency, a brief note on Diana DiZerega Wall's contribution of an agentic binary, an articulation of John C. Barrett's conceptions of agency, and how Barrett's particular concept of agency shapes this study's engagement with material culture. This study focuses on the intersection of race, gender, and class within the context of a rural African American household from the mid-nineteenth-century to the early twentieth-century. These specific intersecting elements demand that particular attention needs to be paid during the course of this study, in assuring that further violence is not inflicted upon narratives concerning African Americans. In addition, these elements help frame an understanding for why Barrett's particular iteration of agency is crucial to the scope of this project, particularly in reference to the concept's ability to help mediate the double hermeneutics of archaeological analysis.

A Feminist Caution of Agency

Examining historical sites occupied by African Americans can be particularly troublesome to the archaeologist due to the multiplicity of violences inflicted upon the subject's life, both during and afterward. The most visible manifestation of this violence is the lack of existing or surviving documentary sources concerning African Americans as opposed to the plethora of documentation available concerning their Anglo-American contemporaries. These violences are inflicted through dynamics of power which impacted or influenced the individual politically, economically, psychologically, and socially. These violences can be unintentionally replicated or exacerbated within academic endeavors depending on the particular framing of a study. Michel-Rolph Trouillot's (1995) well known investigations into the unintentional violences or "silences" that occur during processes of history production, speaks caution to this study. In order to avoid flattening, homogenizing, and victimizing the experiences and actions of the African American women who created a home in the Maple Avenue Parsonage, this study draws on the suggestions offered by Gero's (2001) three feminist cautions to select a theory of agency which attempts to capture individuals, their behaviors, and their motivations in their unique rich complexity.

In Gero's (2001) exploration of the complicated relationship between agency and feminism in "Troubled travels in agency and feminism," three main cautions become evident for anyone desirous of articulating an engendered agency. The first caution warns that the language used to articulate most iterations or manifestations of agency bestow the qualities of masculinity and independence as inherent upon the agent (Gero 2001: 34). While the "agent" is positioned as a term without gendered implication, the ways in which this language is employed makes reference to masculine activities (Gero 2001: 34). From this perspective, even the use of the word agent can be problematic as this word invokes reference to the American image of the

super-agent and all of the associated qualities. The Hollywood super-agent is generally male, acts alone, self-reliant, and impulsive. This unintentional association, as well as other problematic contextualizations of agentic language creates this impression of the agent in the first place as a solitary actor, devoid of the fundamental qualities that constitute a *social* being, and secondarily it valorizes actions which promote “self-interest,” “seizing the moment,” and “launching new undertakings” (Gero 2001: 34). As Gero (2001: 34) remarks, these are modern qualities of late capitalism, which are seemingly naturalized as universal human behavior. Iterations of agency which adhere to masculinist qualities assert agency as a force for change (Gero 2001: 35). Because archaeological studies have contextualized agentic language as masculinist and prioritized its ‘active’ change driving characteristic, little attention has been given alternative modes of agentic action that are not desirous of change. Thinking back to the Perryman’s asserted active actions, does Wilkie’s alluded agentic binary open up space for questioning how passive agency might manifest in material culture? Furthermore, what would a genderless or a women’s agency look like and how would this agency be articulated?

The second caution proposed by Gero (2001: 37) warns that agency should not be considered and studied as if it were something to be possessed, such as a characteristic or ability. Positioning agency as something to be had or to be lacked contextualizes the concept as an internal resource or a facilitator that can be engaged with and mobilized. Other than still implying an action desirous of change, positioning agency in such a way also leaves little room for the researcher to investigate external factors which contribute to the agent’s action, omitting options for investigating cognition (Gero 2001: 37). One solution proposed by Gero concerns Susan Hekman’s (1995 in 2001: 37) iteration of “discursive subject” which informs an assertion of agency positioned as an “*opportunity to act.*” While agency as an opportunity certainly allows

the researcher to attend to forces and other influences outside of the individual's abilities, and specifically implies a cognitive process for discerning a moment as an opportunity, this solution still treats agency as action desirous of change. Gero's (2001: 34) broader definition reveals that feminist agentic action "constitutes and is constituted by both the moment of action and her capabilities, the tools at hand." This broader definition lacks the implication that agentic action inherently desires change, and allows the researcher to attend to external influences that may be urging or empowering the agent's actions.

Gero's final caution calls for an agency which is not universalized and decontextualize. She specifically asks if agency has been applied as just another "homogenizing, meta-MA Neuver to fit nuanced and gendered human experience into pre-determined, categorical masculinist modes of thought," (Gero 2001: 37) and in light of the other two cautions, there is little room to disagree with the implications of this statement. A masculinist oriented agency that does not acknowledge cognitive discourse with external forces, be they material, social, or environmental simply cannot account for the heterogeneity of humanity. What Gero speaks to is an unintentional academic desire to find a "one-fits-all" theory, or to make evidence 'work' in a desired theory that may not actually be the best fit for judiciously investigating that particular subject. These two academic desires only flatten and silence the diverse variability of humanity across time and space, and are not unique to archaeology. Any discipline desirous of investigations into humanity must contend with this problem at least once during the discipline's evolution. More so, a universalizing theory of agency points to tensions in the double hermeneutics of a complexly situated subjective observer/interpreter researching an equally complexly situated subjective subject. In order to uncover the rich complexity of individuals, their societies, and their lives researchers must be aware of their own positionality, and by

extension be aware of the ways in which this positionality may skew perception of the subject. Gero's demand is not complex. She is asking for the subject to be richly contextualized in time and space.

All three of these cautions can be applied to McQuinn (2015), Bulgar (2015), and Wilkie (2003) and each study will violate at least one of these cautions. To focus on one, McQuinn's application of agentic language in light of Gero's cautions reveals a flattening of the women encompassed in his study. McQuinn (2015) suggests that the Butler and Harder houses, comprised mostly of women, were purchased by Thomas Elkins, a member of the African American community to settle their debts, and preserve the women's ability to live in the house. He follows this suggestion with the assertion that these women may have "provided irreplaceable help" in attending to the needs of families passing through this community along the Underground Railroad (McQuinn 2015: 164). While Elkin and the other men mentioned in the study are given agentic action, the women are positioned to passively respond to the consequences of the men's actions. The men help bring the families to Albany, and the women provide for the families brought. There is no inherent indication whether the women chose to participate actively or passively, and as a result, the women are largely used to explain and justify the actions of the men. In articulating the construction of a communal identity, all genders of the community need to be accounted for equally. This critique of McQuinn's study, as well as Gero's cautions, inspire questions which aim to focus in on a theory of agency which can be applied to the Maple Avenue Parsonage site, and which avoid the pitfalls highlighted above. These questions are as follows: What could a theory of agency look like that acknowledges diversity, a complex historical-situatedness, gender, and the relative active or passive engagement of the agents in their actions? How would evidence of a historically complex active

or passive women's agency manifest in material culture? And finally, how would such a theory be applied to the Persons family household?

An Agentic Binary

Diana Wall (2010) in "Separating the Spheres in Early 19th Century New York City: Redefining Gender among Middle Class," employs a passive-active agentic binary analysis to distill American women's degree of involvement in driving the transformation of American society from the eighteenth century into the nineteenth century. Wall (2010: 81) wanted to know if Anglo-American women actively engaged in activities, such as tea parties and family dinners, which came to shape the distinct division between the masculine and feminine spheres that characterize nineteenth century American society. Passive participation for Wall (2010: 81) reflects a reaction to larger social transformations. Marking 1830 as the definitive date for the completion of American society's transformation, Wall (2010) analyzed material remains from households deposited both before and after the completed change. This distinction between actions performed before, and actions performed after, aligns with actions actively driving change rather than actions passively responding to it.

Wall's successful application of this agentic binary in a study focused on women's activities illustrates that a gendered theory of agency which acknowledges active and passive action within a historically specific context is not only possible, but important. This particular study conducted by Wall has been hallmarked by Wilkie (2003: 7) as the first attempt to distinguish the separation of the engendered spheres of production and domesticity within the archaeological record. This study's success is due to Wall's attention to the variability in agentic action. While the conditions of Wall's (2010) study differ from the condition of this present

study, the active-passive binary established by Wall and the qualifications for distinguishing these two actions will be borrowed and applied to this study.

While both studies focus on women's actions and activities during the nineteenth century, Wall's study focuses on social transitions framed by a fixed point in time, which prevents a direct mapping of her approach to an agentic binary onto this study. Because Wall (2010) is looking at the transformation of a society that adheres to a "before" and "after" point from which to structure her analysis, the grouping of sites used in the analysis must be reflective of women's actions on both sides of that definitive point. This particular study does not have that flexibility as it's concern is with the women of the Persons family and their occupation of the Maple Avenue Parsonage site during the entirety of the nineteenth century. Members of the Persons household do occupy the Parsonage before and after 1830, but the material remains to be utilized in this study may not be able offer manufacturing dates narrow enough to clarify deposits of material remains to before and after this date. Instead, the information available may only be able to identify materials deposited in the eighteenth century as opposed to the nineteenth century, in which case both occupations straddling 1830 would be considered as one. A direct mapping of Wall's approach is also problematic, because the subjects of focus for the two studies differ in terms of in race and class, a problem for which she provides no solution.

What can be borrowed from Wall (2010) is a agentic binary that is reflective of an active engagement with conditions and values of society, or a passive reaction to or reproduction of those values and conditions. This binary manifests in the material culture as a codification and embodiment of the social conditions and values engaged with by the agents. What cannot be borrowed from Wall, in true fashion to this chapter's earliest assertion, is a definition for agency. How agency works, how agency manifests in material culture, and what exactly agency does has

yet to be addressed. To engage with a particular iteration of agency is to engage not only in the evolution of agency as a concept, but to also engage in the evolution of archaeological approaches to understanding human behavior and society through material culture as a whole. Perhaps this lends explanation towards agency's broad, ill-defined use. Archaeologist John Barrett (2000, 2001, 2012), not only engages with the evolution of agency within the trajectory of Archaeology's evolution, but he builds upon this evolution to articulate his own theory of agency. Barrett's (2000, 2001) earlier iteration for a theory of agency both satisfies the problems revealed by Gero's (2001) cautions, and further informs Wall's (2010) established agentic binary.

Archaeology of Inhabitation

John Barrett, in his critique from 2000 on Archaeology's brush with Structuralist and Functionalist approaches to the study of agency, "A thesis on agency," argues for an analytical approach which acknowledges the positionality of an agent's action within the complex inter-connecting web constructed from the by-products of space and time. This critical work is philosophical in nature, and therefore does little to support its assertion in reference to actual archaeological studies. Barrett's 2001 article in the first edition of *Archaeological Theory Today*, grounds these philosophical musings by situating them in conversation with Anthony Giddens. By re-contextualizing agency within the historical conditions that act as both medium and consequence, Barrett argues that archaeology will move away from an "archaeology of representations" (2000: 65), and toward an "archaeology of inhabitation" (2000: 67). The intention behind an archaeology of inhabitation is to distill the means by which agents inhabit the particular position within society that they recognize themselves in and are recognized by others as inhabiting. This study hopes to by apply Barrett's theory of agentic inhabitation to the

Women of the Maple Avenue Parsonage site, in order to discern the particular resources and knowledges negotiated with and viewed necessary to facilitate inhabitation. This approach should reveal the perspectives from which and means by which these women inhabited their reality.

Before the specifics of Barrett's theory of agency are delved into, it is important to note that this study is concerned with Barrett's particular iteration as expressed in the first edition (2001) of *Archaeological Theory Today* as opposed to his iteration expressed in the second edition (2012) which takes a far departure from this earlier concept. While Barrett's more recent iteration is valuable particularly in terms of ancient sites, in its current state, it is difficult to apply to historical sites in ways that do not flag Gero's cautions. Exactly how this iteration violates Gero's cautions and further criticisms, which make this iteration inapplicable to this particular study, do not fit within the limitations of this study, and must be left for further exploration and elaboration elsewhere.

At the concept's most basic fundamental principle, agency is the means by which an individual or a group of individuals achieve something. Theories concerning agency entered archaeological discourse, in part, as a reaction to processual archaeology's characterization of human behaviors as a response to changes in external conditions (Barrett 2012: 149). According to processual archaeology changes in human behavior were not characterized in terms of a society or individual's motivations or desires, but rather determined by factors external to the society or individual. In order to establish that humans act upon their world, agents are assumed to be knowledgeable of that world. To Barrett (2001: 141) this fundamental principle establishes that agents' actions "[operate] knowledgably and reflexively," and therefore agents are accepted as capable of monitoring their own actions and the actions of others. By monitoring others,

humans recognize normative behaviors and are recognized back for that ability to perform these normative behaviors. This discursive recognition allows individuals to construct their perception of the world and themselves both socially and culturally (Barrett 2001: 141). The historically specific social and cultural conditions of an individual's location in time and space shape the particular perception of reality constructed by that individual, lending to each human's historically situated complexity (Barrett 2001: 141). Agency's historical-situatedness finds its origins in Giddens' attempts to rework the fundamentals of social theory.

More specifically, Barrett (2001: 149) credits Giddens' articulation of the "duality of structure" as guiding this iteration of agency to transcend earlier approaches in archaeology which articulated a separation of the subjective experience of the social individual from the social totality. According to Barrett (2012: 150), the culmination of Giddens' critical reviews of social theory implied that only through the "recursive actions of human subjects" did social institutions, and more broadly, societies persist across time and space. The particular phrase borrowed from Giddens (1984: 2 in Barrett 2001: 150) is "practices ordered across time and space." As a result, archaeology had to transform the discipline's approach to understanding human behaviors of the past to acknowledge the new relationship between human practice and society. Barrett (2012: 144) notes that earlier theoretical assertions articulated by V. Gordon Childe which positioned the social totality, or a society in whole, as determinate of culture and, thus human behavior was socially determined. Giddens' articulation of recursive actions completely contradicts Childe's socially determined behaviors. Human behavior cannot be determined by society if human behavior is what constitutes society (Barrett 2012: 150). In other words, this reframing of archaeological thought posited that human behavior is not a product of society, but instead, society is a product of human behavior. If society is not structuring human

behavior, then what is? To begin to answer this question, agency's relationship with action, time, and space must be elaborated.

Barrett's (2000: 61) theory of agency is formed through the interpenetration of the elements of action, time, space, and agency. Unlike Structuralists and Functionalists who see agency as an object or a force to be studied, Barrett positions agency as one element that cannot reveal anything without being understood in relation to the other elements. Barrett (2000: 61) defines action as the "mobilization of resources to have an effect," which is situated in time at all three points. The action is born from the past and draws from resources produced by past action. The time during which the action occurs and is carried out spans the duration of the agent's present. The agent's desires and intentions which inspire the action, point to the future, the time in which the outcome of the action is revealed. Barrett (2000 61) argues that this interpenetration of action and time can reveal the ways in which the agent not only draws upon pre-existing resources to carry out the action, but also how in the process the agent "reproduces and transforms" these resources. With this understanding, archaeologists cannot treat the concept of time as action performed in linear succession, but rather actions that remember their pasts, with forethought to the future (Barrett 2000: 61). Action is also similarly situated in space. The space of an action is represented by the location in which the action is carried out. Resources are drawn in by the spatial location and become the location from which the consequences of an agent's action radiate outward to other locations (Barrett 2000: 61). To this point, agency can be understood as the mobilization of resources to achieve a desired effect. It has been established that agents are knowledgeable beings, not only aware of their reality, but actively constructing and participating in that reality. How, though, do these humans cultivate their knowledge and how does this knowledge inform agentic action?

An individual's knowledgeability of their world is cultivated through lived experience. Lived experience allows the individual to consciously or unconsciously engage in the cognitive development of an archive of "traditions of knowledgeability" which grows and transforms over the individual's lifetime (Barrett 2000: 66). Knowledge is "sustained or re-evaluated through interpretation" allowing for the addition of new knowledges and transformations of older knowledges (Barrett 2000: 66). To elaborate, lived experience allows the individual to practically apply their knowledges in everyday situations to discover 'what works'. These traditions of knowledgeability are the culmination of all the knowledges learned over a lifetime that are tried and true ways of engaging with structural conditions to move about the world successfully. While this process is conducted at the level of the individual, these traditions are shared by a collective of individuals who have all found a similar way of acting due to shared social conditions. Barrett argues that society is constituted by the practical engagement of structural conditions, and that the relationship between structural conditions and agents are the focus of archaeological study.

If Giddens (1981: 27 in Barrett 2012: 150) were to share his insight into the structural elements which govern social practice he would reply "rules" and "resources". Barrett (2012: 155) acknowledges that rules and resources are dualistic forces which both enable and constrain action, however, these two forces do not allow for the level of cultural competence necessary to maintain the "flexibility" or "originality" of social practices which can account for every possible contingency. Furthermore, simply memorizing rules does not allow for quick enough recollection "to cope with the subtly changing circumstances in which we [find] ourselves" (Barrett 2012: 155). "Structural conditions," according to Barrett (2001: 150), not only facilitate

general social practices, but a practical engagement with these structural conditions transforms these conditions into a medium through which agentic action works.

“Structural conditions” as established by Barrett (2000: 65) are either “those conditions which agency may be able to inhabit including the various distributions of material resources, the available technologies, and the systems of symbolic order” or as “the debris of history, which confronts the living”. The primary definition nods towards an understanding of structural conditions as an form of inhabitable space made up of every material and abstract quality by which humans construct and recognize their world. The latter definition acknowledges that these conditions are themselves a by-product of agency and time/space, which confronts individuals of a differing time/space. “Structuring principles,” on the other hand, are what allows for agents to practically engage with structural conditions.

“Structuring principles” are defined as “the means of inhabiting certain structural conditions...expressed in the agents’ abilities to work on those conditions in the reproduction and transformation of their own identities and conditions of existence” (Barrett 2000: 65). To word another way, structuring principles is the term given to the means through which traditions of knowledgeable are actively maintained by the mediation of experiences of an agent with reference to the opportunities or limitations of that agent’s actions as determined by structural conditions (Barrett 2000: 65). It is the ability of agents to inhabit structural conditions by means of structuring principles which gives name to Barrett’s “archaeology of inhabitation” (Barrett 2000: 66).

The inhabitation of structural conditions by agents desirous of a particular consequence can “reproduce” and “transform” those structural conditions, validating Giddens ‘duality of structure.’ When monitoring each other’s behaviors, an individual is evaluated for their ability to

effectively mobilize these structural conditions (Barrett 2001: 150). Barrett (2001: 150) expresses that this effectiveness depends upon “the degree of control and knowledgeability exercised by an agent,” “the power of the agent over those resources,” and “the agent’s expertise to communicate effectively” to others of their reality. In other words, how practically competent is the individual in engaging with their world to achieve a desired consequence? Because structural conditions facilitate social practice through inhabitation, they should be understood as “a field of possibilities within which the practices which occupy and maintain that field both draw from and reproduce” (Barrett 2001: 150). The ‘duality of structure,’ is a structural condition’s ability through agentic action to exist as both medium through which practice is carried out, and as by-product of time and space. Agency now, can be understood as a recursive relationship with structural conditions, by which the agent practically engages with and mobilizes these structural conditions with reference to previous experiences.

This continuous recursive relationship between structural conditions and agent allows the agent to grow their archive of collected experience and traditions of knowledgeability which result in practical knowledges and discursive knowledges for how to proceed in a given situation. Practical knowledge is knowing how to carry out normative behaviors or being able to recognize elements of one’s own world as “unremarkable” or naturalized (Barrett 2001: 151). Discursive knowledge is the ability to objectively examine one’s own world, from a place apart from that world (Barrett 2001: 151). To possess practical knowledge is to possess a sense of security when recognizing and reacting to the world. It is practical knowledge, as the “embodied ability to inhabit the world” that allows humans to recognize their own place in the world in relation to others.

Material culture falls under the umbrella of the resources offered by structural conditions, and therefore too can be understood as both medium and consequence of the practices which they recursively configure. As an active component of human practice, and therefore agency, material culture is not simply a record of human actions, but can be understood as an embodied, codified 'text' which aids in the referential process of recognizing and knowing how to act (Barrett 2001: 153). A ring on the left-most middle finger on the left hand in modern American society denotes to a bachelor that the wearer is already engaged in marriage relations and therefore no longer available for marriage pursuit. The ring alone communicates nothing. But the particular position of the ring speaks to the network of values which structure American society, and communicates which behavior is and is not appropriate from the bachelor during interactions with the ring wearer. It is the bachelor's experiences cultivated over a lifetime that provide him with the practical knowledge of knowing how to properly react when confronted with the ring in its particular context. As a result, the ring speaks to the values which it embodies, the practice which employed its use, and the intentions and expectations desired by the wearer. After abandoning material remains as a record, material culture can be understood as material conditions which enable a particular approach to understanding social practices. Furthermore, Barrett (2001: 157) asserts that the form of the material condition does not reflect the material's historical significance, for that significance can only be found by investigating the various contexts in which the practice which employed that material was located in time and space.

The archaeological record professes to be an objective, partial record of material residues, which are framed as representations of human behaviors. This approach to understanding material culture as representations results from attempts to identify and explain patterns which

arise in the archaeological record (Barrett 2012: 148). To identify a pattern in material remains, the knowledges which are employed to embody material conditions are objectified and regarded as evidential of the rules which structure behavior (Barrett 200: 158). An archaeological record of representations of objectified knowledges remove the practice from the complex situatedness of the practice's historical reality. Furthermore, an approach to representations enforces the separation between "agent" and "society" which the 'duality of structure' aims to transcend (Barrett 200: 158). Because knowledge is made through the embodiment of practices, material culture must be approached as a facilitator of those practices and by extension, as a facilitator of agency.

Barrett (2001: 159) outlines his approach to material analysis as requiring an understanding of "material structural conditions," "fields of social practice," and "the mechanisms of systematic integration." Material structural conditions are all of the material facilities which constitutes an agency's reality (Barrett 2001: 59). These material facilities are particular to the specific environment the agency is carried out in, and not the entirety of all material facilities contemporaneous to that particular time (Barrett 2001: 159). Remember that material conditions are the inhabited conditions which act as both medium and by-product of agency, and therefore material structural conditions are the "spaces and facilities once inhabited by particular fields of social practice" (Barrett 200: 159). Fields refer to regionalized contexts of agents participating in particular tasks (Barrett 200: 159). Through the engagement of these particular tasks within these fields, social actors participate in particular exchanges which can transform the "nature and values" of the material structural conditions employed. It is important to note that these fields are not constituted by the social actors or agents, but are a tool for analysis to be reconstructed through the archaeological investigation. Historical archaeology

may have an advantage to reconstructing these fields, if the particular region of time and space produced surviving documentary records.

Within a particular field, a multiplicity of time/space contexts exist, which are shaped by the movements of groups of actors and their perceptions (Barrett 2001: 160). Barrett (2001: 160) refers to this process as “regionalization,” and highlights that the inhabitants of a certain region reproduce the values particular to that region through their understanding of the values and the means by which those values are reproduced or transformed. For the purposes of this study, the three regions of focus are utilized to account for the variety of values and conditions that the Persons women may have engaged with at the national and more localized levels. The Persons family’s regionalized orientation will be investigated in terms of their engagement with American values, Values of the North, and Germantown values during the nineteenth century. Many of the members of the Persons family moved back and forth between the parsonage and other areas in New York, exposing them to conditions, values, and individuals that may have influenced the knowledges cultivated by the family. For this very reason, the study does not narrow its regionalized focus to one particular scale of region. In addition, the movement of individual members of the Persons family over the course of their occupation of the site, demands an approach to the family which does not try to identify any one particular member of the family through the material culture.

Because gendered activities performed by the Persons family are the focus of this study, the material culture will be treated as representing the Persons household. The movements of individual members of the Persons family are tracked by census records taken at five year intervals. Few documents have been recovered concerning the Persons outside of those census records, and only one of those additional documents convey movement outside of those five year

intervals. These documents evidence that these individuals moved away from and come back to the family home at various different times. As a result, this study cannot confidently assign evidence of women's activities to an particular woman in the family. According to historical archaeologist Mary C. Beaudry (2004: 254), households are an exceptional social unit for studying domestic practices, or the practices of everyday life conducted in and around the home. While households are great for investigating domestic practices, domestic arrangements manifest in various forms. To account for the variety of manifestations of domestic arrangements, there exists no "monolithic" definition for what constitutes a household (Beaudry 2004: 255). The household of the Persons' occupation will include the men of the family, but will not particularly investigate masculine activities.

Returning to Barrett (2001: 160), "framing devices" and "focal points" act as a "physical orientation" to a regionalized space which can be discerned through the material context. As this study focuses on women's activities practiced by a particular household on a particular site during a known time, the framing devices and focal points will be derived from regionalized discourse contemporaneous to the Persons' occupation. To establish if the actions performed by these women were passive or active, the material culture excavated from the Maple Avenue Parsonage will be analyzed in terms of its adherence to the framing devices and focal points which not only orient the values of a region, but also make reference to the variety of values and places external to a particular region (Barrett 200: 160). Passive agency can be characterized as an application of practical knowledge, or a 'knowing how to act,' in terms of practicing women's actions where the material culture which facilitates these practices embody the values oriented by the framing devices and focal points. Active agency, for the purposes of this study, can be characterized as an application of discursive knowledge, or a removed objectification of

conditions. Active agency in the field of women's activities manifest in the material culture as an embodiment of values not encompassed by the region's framing devices, or as a transformation of dominant values to reference values or places external to the regionalized space. In both modes of agency, structural conditions are inhabited, but the types of knowledge employed to facilitate this inhabitation are different. The knowledge employed determines whether the outcome of the action resulted in a reproduction of structural conditions, or a transformation of those conditions. In this way, archaeologists may be able to identify differences in the regionalized means for inhabiting conditions, when a change in practice is not inherently discernable.

The different ways in which gender, race, and class interpenetrate within a region results in variations to accessible structural conditions and the lived experiences which culminate into the knowledges necessary to recognize oneself in relation to others, and therefore influences the particular positions within their world that the individual recognizes herself as inhabiting. The members of the Persons family were all free by the time that they occupied Maple Avenue, but freedom does not negate racial marginalization. Racial marginalization point to agents who are differently empowered in their abilities to act. Racial marginalization is the by-products of applied discursive knowledge, in the case of nineteenth century America by the 'social elite,' in relation to mechanics of systemic integration. Mechanics of systemic integration "[involve] the transference and transformation of resources between fields where the resources could be conceived of as forms of 'capital' accumulated in one field of practice and re-invested in others" (Barrett 2001: 162). Racial marginalization is indicative of vertical integration. Within the particular context of racial marginalization, the "'vertical' differentiation" between fields and the agents who monitor those included or excluded from participating in the exchange are a result of

the monitoring agents' discursive application of their knowledges to "objectify the social system itself as a resource upon which to act" (Barrett 2001: 162). By acting on the objectified social system, the agent can monitor who can participate in the system, while excluding others from participation. In the process of investigating whether the Persons women's agency manifests as active or passive, this study will also attempt to discern whether these women's actions indicate a desire by the household to be recognized as American citizens.

At this point agency, in the form of Barrett's iteration, has been defined within the trajectory of this study. It has been established that this study investigates whether the material remains produced by the Maple Avenue Parsonage site, relating to the Persons household, present as facilitating passive or active agency, with the latent hope of discerning if their practices indicate a desire for American citizenship. In the process, the investigation is optimistic in uncovering the means by which these women came to inhabit their world, and by extension, which conditions they negotiated with in mobilizing their aims. Now that the theoretical framework for this study has been established and explored, the next step in the course of this study is to investigate the regionalized structural conditions available to the Persons women within their particular historically situated context of nineteenth century America.

To fully contextualize the Persons family and their complex situatedness, chapter 3 will trace the paths of their lives. Most of the women from this family move back and forth between the parsonage property and other cities in New York, so while this study focuses on the one family occupying one location, these women were also interacting with other individuals and agents from these other locations and possibly further. These interactions would have resulted in the Persons women bringing back knowledges gained through these encounters, which informed

their practices on the site. Lastly, the following chapter will also explore the two women's practices to establish the two particular categories of women's activities this study concerns itself with. By exploring these backgrounds, the hope is to distill the framing devices and focusing points which encapsulate regional conditions and values. The ability to distill these elements will orient this study in such a way to be prepared for the presence or absence of embodied material evidence, either suggesting the mobilization of conditions and values external to their historically situated region, or suggestive of the transformation of regional values with reference to external places.

Chapter 2: Nineteenth Century American Structural Conditions and Traditions of Knowledgeability

Situating the Persons in Time and Space

Historical change occurs through the collective actions of individuals desirous of a particular outcome. Whether the desired consequence is achieved is of little importance to the passage of time. Whatever outcome results becomes the cultural debris that the individuals of the next present time and place must confront, interpret, and act through. Though the actions which drive change are performed by the individual, it is these actions in their multiplicity which constitute a society recognizable to its social actors.

Agents drive change by employing practical or discursive knowledge to inform their actions. Practical knowledge gleaned through a lifetime of experience allows the individual to move through daily practices of life with a sense of knowing exactly what to do, how to do it, when to do it, and why it must be done and in those particular ways of doing. Discursive knowledge is the removed objectification of a region's conditions and traditions of knowledgeability for the purpose of transforming these conditions and traditions, or for the purpose of excluding some individuals from accessing them. John Barrett's (2000; 2001) theory of agency, that was explored in the previous chapter, suggests that applied practical and discursive knowledge evidences an individual's inhabitation of structural conditions and traditions of knowledgeability particular to a region or a specific location in time and space. An ability to understand the means by which individuals inhabit structural conditions, can lead to a further understanding of which knowledge was employed when recognizing their own positionality in relation to others.

The following two chapters aim to reconstruct the regional structural conditions and traditions of knowledgeability of nineteenth century America, elements which generate social capital for negotiating and articulating one's position within society. More specifically, this chapter aims to focus in on outlining and exploring the conditions and traditions available to the Persons women in their efforts to establish themselves as American women. By investigating which conditions and traditions were available to this household for interpretation, the conditions these women inhabited should be revealed, and by extension the structuring principles by which these women were able to inhabit them. An understanding of the means through which conditions are inhabited fosters an understanding of whether the knowledge employed to facilitate this inhabitation was discursive or practical, and thus whether the Persons' agency was passive or active respectively.

At the beginning of this telescopic exploration into nineteenth century America, our instrument of vision is set to the widest regionalized lens, and becomes gradually more focused to reveal the particulars of the Persons women's experiences. The metaphor of a telescope allowing the individual to gaze into space is representative of the efforts endeavored upon in these chapters. He who looks upon space through a telescope looks upon the past of a world or reality far removed from his own place and time. Through the mediation of a telescope the present observes and tries to make sense of the past and all of the elements which make up the subjects' complexity. The scale of measurement, which focuses the lens to a wider or more narrow view of the fields of study, contributes to what is seen and thus what can be understood.

To make sure that this study does not focus too narrowly and limit our understanding of available conditions and traditions, this study explores nineteenth century American life at three regionalized scales: the national view, the northern view, and the view of the upper New York

Hudson Valley region. These first two scales will be the focus of this chapter, while the following chapter will focus in on the particular experiences of the individual members of the Persons in the upper Hudson Valley area. The national scale is the largest and encompasses a broad view of the structural conditions of the United States of America. National and international public discourse swirling around nineteenth century America focused on distinguishing the “American” approach as opposed to the “European” approach to everyday tasks. Europeans visiting America at the time remarked on observing a distinct separation of gender and gendered activities that was not as prevalent across the Pond (Hall 1964: 156 in Wall 2010: 87). For this reason, the national view outlines the structural conditions associated in the American mind with facilitating practices of the true American woman.

The secondary view focuses on the structural conditions available in the Northern states, in order to highlight differences in available structural conditions and traditions of knowledgeability between the North and the South. Studies focusing on individuals whose life experiences may seem representative of the American ‘freedom’ narrative must be wary of conflating experiences of transitioning from enslavement to freedom as one homogenous experience. New York state abolished slavery 30 years before the end of the Civil War. Thirty years can encompass two additional generations of individuals enslaved in the South. In those same thirty years in the North, African Americans were articulating and organizing racial uplift programs. The Northern view accounts for regionalized historical social circumstances that made certain structural conditions available to only a portion of the African American population for a period of time.

The final and most narrow view, focuses on the upper Hudson Valley region of New York, to both explore the particular experiences of the members of the Persons household and to

illustrate the structural conditions and traditions most directly accessible to the household's immediate location. The upper Hudson Valley region was selected to encompass Germantown and its immediate neighboring towns and cities. The region is in close proximity to the three cities which the Persons women move to for periods of time to work. The traditions of knowledgeability and structural conditions made accessible to the household through these women's movements and communications with each other may have been incorporated as a medium into their lives. Due to the amount of detail this section requires, it is given its own chapter following this one.

These regionalized fields of view allow us to see what gendered structural conditions would have been available to the Persons household. As the scale of view narrows, the ways in which class, gender, and race intersect become revealed, and in the process insight is gained into the structural conditions that are made less accessible to marginalized individuals by elite members of a society. Throughout this chapter, we will see Barrett's articulation of reality construction play out, as the debris of past actions confront the individuals of nineteenth century America, spurring new actions, outcomes, and debris to be confronted by individuals in the future.

Before finally delving into the richly contextualized background, it is important to address the particular women's activities that will frame the analysis of material remains, and will frame this background. This study is desirous to uncover structural conditions and traditions of knowledgeability which can be utilized in women's activities pertaining to the fields of mothering and domestic labor. These two engendered practices fostered inter-generational discourse, and conversations regarding class and race. Highly debated across America, one's ability to 'correctly' perform these activities would allow that individual to accumulate 'social

capital,' whose value could be recognized as articulating social positionality. As such, these practices were heavily monitored and aggressively objectified by elites desirous of demarcating the qualities necessary to qualify and be recognized as a true American woman in the eyes of her peers. It is this study's hope that these two fields, positioned within these three scales of regionalized views, can create a framework in which the Maple Avenue Parsonage material residues can be situated. It is believed that this complex positioning will reveal the values embodied by the materials, and through which the Persons' agentic actions can be understood.

The Cult of True Womanhood

"The kitchen of a New England matron was her throne-room, her pride; it was the habit of her life to produce the greatest possible results there with the slightest possible discomposure; and what any woman could do, Mrs. Katy Scudder could do *par excellence*. Everything there seemed to be always done and never doing" describes Harriet Beecher Stowe (1999[1859], 12) of Mrs. Scudder, a fictitious character from *The Minister's Wooing* created to represent the ideal nineteenth century true woman placed in an eighteenth-century setting. If the kitchen is a true woman's throne room, then the home is her kingdom, where she wields her authority and power through the four virtues of a nineteenth century woman: piety, purity, domesticity, and submissiveness (Welter 1999).

Barbara Welter (1999), a Feminist Historian who first characterized "the Cult of True Womanhood" distilled these four virtues from nineteenth century literature concerning the duties of women and the management of the domestic sphere, which subsequently revealed the ideal form of true womanhood that each nineteenth century woman aspired to achieve. As the ideology which structured American gendered social relations of this time, scholars across disciplines compare all women living within nineteenth century America against this ideology of

true womanhood, in order to analyze these women's ability to negotiate with this dominant ideal through material culture (Rotman 2019; Bulgar 2015; Wall 1999, 2008, 2010; Wilkie 2003). For Anglo-Saxon Protestant women, such as Harriot Beecher Stowe and Catherine Beecher, this ideology defined who was and who was not considered a *true* American woman.

Nineteenth century America saw great social and economic transformations, as industrialization and American capitalism grew, and as more people moved about the country due to immigration and the manumission (Phillips 2013: 379). The US's family economy transitioned to a consumer economy, separating public and private spaces; the family and home could be found in the domestic sphere, while the workplace and professions could be found in the sphere of production (Rotman 2019: 346). Diana DiZerega Wall (1999: 103), who is credited by Laurie Wilkie (2003: 7) as being one of the first historical archaeologists to address the separation of public and private spheres in nineteenth century America, highlights the economic and social precarity of this transition when noting that journeymen who once could have expected to become master craftsmen, suddenly found themselves in the same labor pool as semi-skilled laborers. No longer did families labor together at the home for the collective's benefit. Instead, women remained in the house to care for the home and the raising of children, while men went out into the world of sin and temptation to labor for an income with which to support the family. This clearly distinct division of labor and the associated spheres of that labor, however, are not as judiciously upheld across nineteenth century American society as they seemed to be articulated by common public discourse.

In her comparative analysis of two middle-class households in Greenwich Village in New York City, Wall (1991), highlights the embodiment of the feminine ideals of true womanhood in ceramic tea and tableware. To Wall (1991: 69), "goods do not merely reflect various aspects of

culture; rather, they *constitute* the very fabric of culture itself,” and therefore can be utilized in revealing how a household negotiates with dominant ideals to stress some values over others. Drawing upon Pierre Bourdieu’s (1984 in Wall 1991: 69) theory concerning the creation and maintenance of socioeconomic power structures in part through consumer taste in goods, Wall (1991: 69) uses the ceramic assemblage as a grouping of codified texts to understand how divergent consumer preferences allow families of differing wealth to express their interpretation of reality. By analyzing the similarities and variances in the collective ceramic assemblage, Wall (1991: 69) is able to distill a pattern in tableware consumption representative of the feminine ideal of piety, despite the differences in how this tableware may have been used in the two different socio-economic households to represent the families to guests.

What is distinct about Wall’s (1991: 70) analysis, is her attention to the shift of purchasing power of goods for the domestic sphere to the woman of the household, and how this shift is reflected in the values embodied by these goods as demonstrative of domestic values of true womanhood. The differences in purchased tableware, from the sites of Wall’s analytical focus, reveal that the households which occupied them not only had socio-economically determined access to the material resources of their historical context, but also that the women of these households made informed decisions concerning their purchases by negotiating with their traditions of knowledgeability. The tableware that was purchased reflects these negotiations, and represents how these women wished to construct the identity of their family in ways that could be recognizable to others. For the households of Wall’s focus, these actions of identity construction can be read as mobilizations of interpretations concerning the knowledge of true womanhood for the effect of articulating a family’s social position and their adherence to the conventions of communicating this position.

Deborah L. Rotman's (2019) study of gendered social relations in the nineteenth century, through ceramic remains and architectural changes between occupants at the Moors House in Deerfield, Massachusetts, complicates the clear divide between the public and private spheres that appears in urban contexts. Technological advancements allowed rural areas to undergo transformations of social and gender relations similar to urban areas, yet Rotman (2019: 347) suggests that rural households may have been more flexible when adhering to domestic ideals. Though the head of house works as a minister, the members of the household communicated their pious identity through the gothic symbolism of the home's architecture (Rotman 2019: 348). After the Reverend Moore's first wife dies and he remarries, Rotman (2019: 349) suggests that the newly-wed family lacked the financial security to invest in tableware contemporaneous to the time of this latter occupation. These tablewares are styled in a pious form, but from a much earlier time. For Rotman (2019: 351), this site evidences the family's attempts to balance performances of domestic ideals with the realities of their financial circumstances.

This study reveals that nineteenth century sites are not homogenous. Archaeologists must be alert to finding evidence of "production *and* consumption," or "male *and* female" practices on rural sites which would indicate a blurring of the distinctive lines between the spheres (Rotman 2019: 347). She rejects the social binary in order to displace gender as the key aspect of social relation in a rural/agricultural context, so that the influence of race, class, and the natural life-cycle of a family on negotiations with structural conditions and traditions of knowledgeability can be understood in greater depth. The gender roles and relations on this site are determined both by the household's experienced economic realities, and their desire to still be recognized as performing domestic ideals.

The traditions of knowledgeability fostered by the Cult of Domesticity focused on maintaining order and hierarchy through gendered labor and social relations. These gendered roles were supported and naturalized as the order of God's universe. "Woman" was articulated by contemporary scholars and authors, as fragile and the weaker of the sexes in the material world, but stronger and wiser in the facets of religion, and she was suited well for piety where only she could redeem the sins of the world through her own suffering (Welter 1999: 44, 51). Catherine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe (2004[1864]), contemporary authors of literature and domestic manuals advocating for the education of women and elevation of domesticity as a respectable profession, endorse these sentiments in their domestic manual, *The American Woman's Home*, by comparing women to both Jesus and ministers, and her home, to a church. Like Jesus, a 'True Woman' was to be seen as the "chiefest among [us]" who through daily self-devotion and self-sacrifice was to "elevate and support the weaker members" of her household and society (Beecher and Beecher Stowe 2004[1869]: 25, 24). In other words, women were naturalized as being inclined to having a high moral standing, and therefore were in a greater position of shepherding her family through a moral life. Likewise, just as a minister calmly prays to God concerning the chaos unfolding outside of the sanctity of his church walls, 'woman' was to raise her concerns and frustrations in a similar manner up to God in acknowledgment of and submission to His divine plan (Beecher and Beecher Stowe 2004[1869]: 166). Piety and domesticity went hand in hand, because church work allowed women to pursue moral intellectual exploration from within the domestic sphere, without preventing her from fulfilling her role in society (Welter 1999: 45).

The separation of the spheres of domesticity and production may have limited women's political and economic powers, yet her power and influence increased within the home as she,

herself was elevated to the status of “Moral Guardian.” A woman’s moral influence over society and men was so powerful that men were suggested to find themselves a pious woman to marry, for a pious life would follow after her acquisition (Welter 1999: 44). To Anglo-Saxon Protestant America, the sphere of production was filled with the evils of sin and temptation, leading men astray as they cheated, lied, stole, and experienced the alienation of their labor in order to fulfill their economic obligations to their family. It was a woman’s duty then to cultivate, in her home, an atmosphere of cheer and solace from these evils, so that her family could find comfort and repose within her walls, lest they be tempted to find comfort elsewhere in sin (Welter 1999: 55). If a woman was not married, then she was to lead herself and men to a moral life by protecting her purity, and expected to aid in cultivating a moral life in children. A loss of innocence was likened to a fallen angel (Welter 1999: 46) shunned from the gates of Heaven and rejected from society. The ability to cultivate the characteristics and habits of a true woman was positioned as preparing oneself not only for her duties in this world, but also her place in the afterlife (Welter 1999: 46).

In order to truly fulfill her duties to the utmost, a woman had to understand her position beneath man in God’s heavenly hierarchy. Because ‘woman’ was articulated as the ‘naturally’ inferior of the sexes, man was positioned as her protector and provider. It was argued that a woman needed to *feel* her dependence upon a man, and in response her labor and effort was not employed out of desires for money or ambition, but instead out of gratitude (Welter 1999: 51). She was expected to convert all of her talents for use by and in aid of man and the advancement of his career (Welter 1999: 52). To question or deviate from this holy ordering was to question God and deny his plan, a social suicide (Welter 1999: 51). When looking at the expectations placed upon women, from supporting their men’s moral and economic lives and raising educated

moral children, to maintaining an entire household, it seems that the whole of America's fate was positioned to rest in the palms of women's hands. The power implied in this assertion may seem contrary to the confining nature of domestic ideology, and yet this assertion was directly in the minds of those who helped shape the Cult of Domesticity.

Returning one last time to the *American Woman's Home*, a glance at the dedication reveals the perceived vital interconnection between a woman's home and her country's success. From the onset, both authors instill in their audience the understanding that it is women "in whose hands rest the real destinies of the Republic, as moulded by the early training and preserved amid the mature influences of the home" (Beecher and Beecher Stowe 2004[1869]: 3). It is through the efforts of women that the United States would fail or succeed. The ideology presented in this manual for nineteenth century women should be understood as not only outlining the qualities and habits of a true woman, but a true American woman.

My frequent references to Harriot Beecher Stowe and Catherine Beecher's works are an attempt to characterize the ideal nineteenth century woman through contemporary words written by women who themselves are thought to represent this very ideal. Both women wrote for an audience that looked, and acted like them, Anglo-Saxon middle-class Protestant Americans. Under their authority and guide, women of their race and class could spend afternoons reading manuals, such as theirs'. Men of the working-class earned a limited wage that was unable to support a family, forcing working-class women to devote their labor to increase financial support through domestic services (Wall 1999: 104). As a result, these working-class women would not have been engaging in literature concerning the ideals of the Cult of Domesticity. A lack of engagement with literature concerning dominant ideologies does not restrict the effects that these ideologies may have had in shaping perceptions of non-dominant groups within this society. Nor

does it prevent their negotiations with these ideologies in crafting imaginings of themselves. The ideologies of the Cult of Domesticity were circulated as a set of expectations to be performed by women according to the dominant culture. Individuals' interpretations of these expectations led to actions whose effects not only helped agents to shape social understandings of gender, but also became a platform against which knowledges of racialized imaginings shaped in the colonial era became re-imagined and articulated to exclude marginalized people from equal consideration and recognition in dominant discourse.

Mothering

The end of the Civil War marked the abolition of slavery in the United States, but for New York the prospect of African American freedom arrived much earlier in the century. The gradual emancipation of the enslaved individuals of New York began in the year 1799. A new law dictated that African Americans born after July 4th, 1799 would be manumitted after 28 years of service to his mother's master if a man, and after 25 years, if a woman (McManus 1966: 178-9). In 1817 another law declared that by 1827 all enslaved individuals in New York would be manumitted (McManus 1966: 178-9). To clarify, these laws gave African American individuals legal freedom within the state of New York, not necessarily rights to citizenship or later protections from being captured and sold back into slavery in the south through the Fugitive Slave Laws of 1850 (Jones 2020). African American freedom after manumission was a limited freedom that did not translate equally to the freedoms of many of their white contemporaries. In order to craft and communicate an African American identity in nineteenth century America that confronted racialized stereotypes, African Americans would have to find an alternative means of inhabiting the structural conditions that communicated womanhood.

Phenotypes associated with individuals possessing ancestral heritage from the African continent have been used in the sociohistorical process of creating racialized categories of difference since Europeans began to engage with the African Slave Trade. Jennifer Morgan(1997), a historian who focuses on gender and racism in the Atlantic Slave Trade, presents a salient articulation of the profound transformation of female bodies in Africa under a European male gaze. The fragility of European knowledge and power is exposed through an initial inability to penetrate past the African coast. Terror becomes voyeurism when European men develop an obsession with observing and analyzing African childbirth, noting perceived differences from childbirth practiced back home in order to find ways to assert their superiority (Morgan 1997: 174). The plight of suffering in childbirth, as passed down by the biblical Eve appears absent from African childbirth creating an articulated un-natural divide between European women and African women (Morgan 1997: 189). There began the articulations of racialized difference to justify the theft of enslaved women's productive and reproductive labors. By highlighting differences of inferiority or otherness rooted in the biological, racialized articulations of difference could be employed to deny some bodies access to rights and privileges enjoyed by others.

Associations of African American Women's bodies with masculinity and masculine labor during enslavement, in addition to assertions of assumed promiscuity led to the development of the stereotypical archetypes of Mammy, Matriarch, and Jezebel. Laurie Wilkie (2003), a historical archaeologist whose works have helped pioneer the field of mothering as an archaeological focus, gives exceptional articulations of these stereotypes in *The Archaeology of Mothering: An African American Midwife's Tale*. These three stereotypes can be understood as being formed from sociohistorical processes during the slave trade, and re-imagined after

emancipation for the continued oppression of African American women far into the wake of slavery.

Patricia Hill Collins's (2000 in Wilkie 2003: 56) formulations of Mammy and Matriarch archetypes express Anglo-American imaginings of African American motherhood, which in the nineteenth century would stand in direct opposition to the proper Anglo-American mothering ideologies of "intensive mothering" (Hays 1999; Lewis 1997 in Wilkie 2003: 11). "Intensive mothering," or the Victorian form of mothering performed within the Anglo-American domestic sphere, was un-attainable by enslaved or working-class African American women. Working women had to work away from their homes and children, and thus could not manage their children's upbringing every second of the day.

The mammy figure is the asexual representation of "diverted mothering" created to justify the removal of African American women from their family, during and in the afterlife of slavery (Wilkie 2003: 57). "Diverted mothering" is the positioning of a stigmatized group as the ideal caregiver of the dominant population's offspring (Wong 1994 in Wilkie 2003: 57). Collins (2000: 74 in Wilkie 2003: 56) argues that the act of incorporating asexuality into the mammy figure's identity allows for the figure to be integrated into the family and the home as the ideal nanny figure, completely detached from fertility and sexual temptation and therefore "[buttressing] the ideology of the cult of true womanhood." The mammy figure stands in opposition to the Jezebel figure which was to be feared in the home for her sexual deviance. After emancipation, the mammy figure still shaped a narrative that positioned African American women's labor as an emotional exchange rather than a monetary exchange. The mammy figure "[reacts] with blind, protective instinct where her charges are concerned" rather than being seen as a rational person (Wilkie 2003: 56). Du Bois (1970: 101 in Wilkie 2003: 57) claims that the

Mammy figure should be understood as a subversion to attempts by African American women in “[reclaiming] maternal rights” and thus an active attempt by Anglo-Americans to maintain control over African American women’s identities.

I would argue that the matriarch is also a further subversion of African American claims to proper motherhood, as declarations of her asserted biological inferiority become the scapegoat for all perceived problems and failings within an African American household. This archetype positions African American women as biologically “aggressive” and “domineering” (Wilkie 2003, 58). Rather than running a household like Anglo-American housekeepers, this narrative asserts that African American women inverted patriarchal hierarchy and *ruled* the home, there by neglecting her children and subverting her husband’s masculinity (Collins 2000: 75 in Wilkie 2003, 59). By framing structural inequalities as natural biological inferiority, Anglo-Americans transformed mothering practices into a site of privilege.

Like the Mammy figure, Jezebel was used as a justification for exploiting African American’s reproductive labor. Unlike like asexuality of the Mammy archetype, the Jezebel Archetype was hyper-sexualized, stemming from the perceived promiscuity and polygamist tendencies of African women by Europeans during the Atlantic slave trade (Morgan 1997: 176). Central to controlling images of African American womanhood and therefore African American women’s oppression, the Jezebel archetype characterized African American women as sexual deviants who threatened to lead men to temptation (Wilkie 2003: 57). The Jezebel figure was employed by Anglo-American men not only to demand rights to her reproductive labor and fruits of that labor, but also to prevent these women from protecting themselves from sexual predation. The Jezebel archetype is articulated as the cause behind the “unstable nature” of the African American family (Wilkie 2003: 58). All three stereotypes are enacted as a complete binary

opposition to the virtues of the Cult of Domesticity, as an African American woman's body could only be objectified if she can be "othered" from her white counterparts (Wilkie 2003: 56). When employed, these stereotypes effectively attempt to exclude African American women from identifying as women. Furthermore, it becomes evident that despite African American women's attempts at transforming their identities post-slavery, these stereotypes were employed to counter their efforts and to de-value and delegitimize African American mothering.

Mothering ideals and mothers do not have the privilege of escaping social scrutiny and criticism due to their direct influence on a society's most valuable resource, future generations. The stressed importance of a society's successful continuation positions mothering as a "focus of cultural tensions and communal discourse" that is unceasingly contested and renegotiated in both private and public discourse, especially in circumstances of changing political, social, and economic realities (Wilkie 2003: 2). Mothering becomes an excellent framework for understanding how African American women navigated and negotiated with political and social dominant ideologies through their own perceptions of reality.

Re-imaginings of African American stereotypical archetypes are placed in direct opposition to Anglo-American *proper* mothering ideologies, because African American motherhood directly threatened the hegemony of Anglo-American motherhood. Wilkie (2003: 4) defines "mothering," as a category of socially constructed and engendered cross cultural activity through which archaeologists can examine how women recognize, perform, and transform care-giving acts. The ideologies of the Cult of True Womanhood resulted in "intensive mothering" which relied on the naturalization of the separation of gendered spheres to position Anglo-American women's restriction to the domestic sphere as the ideal social arrangement for optimal child rearing (Wilkie 2003: 12). A nineteenth century woman's duties,

social position, and identity were intertwined. Responsible for the protection of the home, maintaining her family's gentility, and the moral and intellectual education of the children, "'woman' became synonymous in the prevailing propaganda with 'mother' and 'housewife,' and both 'mother' and 'housewife' bore the fatal mark of inferiority. But among Black female slaves, this vocabulary was nowhere to be found" (Davis 1983: 27 in Wilkie 2003: 69). A lack of parallel vocabulary not only holds true for enslaved African American women, but also their freed sisters in the north.

For many, if not most African American women, freedom did not equate to a new life lived solely in the domestic sphere like their Anglo-American contemporaries. Whether it was to support themselves and their families, or due to other more personal and individualized reasons, many African American women blurred the lines of the division between public and private spaces by participating in the wage-earning economy (Wilkie 2003: 12). For Anglo-American women, mothering was raising your children within the private sphere to be the next generation of American patriots, whose upbringing would determine the future success of the country (Wilkie 2003: 2; Beecher and Beecher Stowe). As wage-earners, African American mothers had to leave their children to venture into the sphere of production, and were accused of neglecting the needs of their children as a result. The mothering ideologies determined by 'the Cult of True Womanhood' were dominant, and as such African American mothers were judged against the same standards as their Anglo-American contemporaries and, citing race, deemed bad mothers. It appears, however, that African American women recognized their straddling of the two spheres, and found empowerment in an American motherhood that blurred social lines.

To further clarify, "mothering" does not simply mean the actions and efforts performed by women in rearing children, but also includes Wilkie's (2003: 1, 12) understanding of

mothering as a “performative venture” of “[simultaneous] practice, image, and ideology.” The practices of proper mothering are just as important as the image a woman can craft of her mothering capabilities, all of which is built upon a foundation of the mothering ideology a woman subscribes to. As such, mothering is as much about performance as it was about labor, and requires women to know not only how to act as good mothers, but also how to show others that they are good mothers. They had to possess the knowledge to be able to perform recognizable acts of mothering, as well as be able to perform these act in such a way as to be recognized as mothering acts.

Harriot Beecher Stowe and Catharine Beecher (2004[1869]) exhibit this assertion in their domestic manual by always positioning their mothering suggestions as natural common sense supported by enlightened reasoning, while neglecting their suggestions, would lead to the child’s harm or death. In this way, a working-class mother who lives in a tenant house is positioned as an attempted murderer of her child for not paying the proper attention to her house’s ventilation for optimal oxygen flow, like a middle-class Anglo-American woman would (Beecher and Beecher Stowe 2004[1869]: 42). As a part of the working-class, African American mothers were condemned as bad mothers by their Anglo-American contemporaries on the basis of race and gender, forcing them to find alternate ways for constructing motherhood.

Looking to slavery revealed the stereotypes of African American women placed upon them by their Anglo-American enslavers, and will once more reveal African American women’s own understandings of motherhood in opposition to these enslavers. The characteristics of unloving, neglectful, and unnatural were applied to African American enslaved women by their Anglo-Saxon enslavers in order to justify the divisions and violence executed on mother and child. Informed by the restrictions implemented over enslaved women’s bodies, time, and labor,

the stereotypes developed out of an assumed reality that was very different from these women's lived realities. In actuality, enslaved African American women sought acts of autonomy over their children and family at a time and place where the stability of one's family was left to the circumstances and choices of slave owners.

Because African American enslaved women's productive and reproductive labors belonged to their owners, they had to create a form of mothering that could be adapted to the precarity of their and their families' circumstances. Plantation life demanded that most of an enslaved mother's time was spent away from her children, which created the space for owners to control their time and their identity as neglectful. In actuality, these mothers made sure that their child was cared for in their absence by practicing collective mothering (Wilkie 2003: 65). In the morning, these mothers would drop their children off with another enslaved woman on the plantation, who would care for and feed them with the help of the other female children. In at least one noted instance the woman who cared for the collective children of the plantation actually negotiated for more time in the day for a mother-child connection when she argued that the infant's cries of hunger impacted her ability to work efficiently (Wilkie 2003: 65).

Furthermore, Wilkie (2003: 67) refutes the assertion that enslaved children were weaned shortly after infancy, attributing the assertion to a privileging of documentary sources by Anglo-Saxon owners over archeological evidence. She reveals that there is a greater likelihood that enslaved mothers continued to nurse their children into early childhood in order to supplement a protein deficient diet (Wilkie 2003: 67). In these three instances, enslaved women on southern plantations sought to enact any amount of obtainable autonomy over their children's lives. These actions of nurturing, once taken out of the framework of the 'unnatural' cannot be articulated as neglectful.

Laurie Wilkie (2003) uses ex-slave interviews collected in the 1930s by the WAP Federal Writer's project to characterize enslaved mothering in the south. The interviews analyzed by Wilkie are saturated with narratives from those who were removed from their mothers to those who remember their mother's reactions when a sibling was sold (Wilkie 2003: 73). These narratives not only show the mothers' love for their children, they also hold evidence of enslaved mothers trying to teach their children how to prepare for the instability of enslaved life, which could change overnight. Wilkie (2003:68) recounts one narrative of an ex-slave who remembered babies and children wearing necklaces of beads which would have been a West-African ritual placed on them for protection. These beads could have been worn even after a child was removed from their mother, allowing enslaved women to seek supernatural protection for their children even when those children were physically out of reach.

In addition, Crystal L. Webster (2017: 425), a historian of African American women and children in early American history who explores the relationship between African American activism and motherhood in the north, points to evidence of similar spiritual preparation in Sojourner Truth's memories of her own mother. In order to prepare her children for disruptions in life, Truth's mother taught each to relinquish their fate to higher power (Webster 2017: 430). Truth's narrative illustrates that even in northern states, enslaved African American mothers used their knowledgeability of their world to seek ways to influence their children's lives with whatever autonomy they could find.

For Webster, Truth's own struggles with maintaining control of the lives of her children in the free state of New York becomes a form of origin story for exploring how these women used activism and the public sphere to articulate images and ideologies of free African American mothering in the North. After being denied empathy and acknowledgment as a mother by the

Anglo-American Mothers who once owned her, Truth sought legal measures to reunite with her son Peter who had been illegally sold into the slave states (Webster 2017: 425). Her battle for her son introduced into public discourse efforts of African American mothers trying to expand agency over their children's lives. Truth's engagement with legal recourse illiterates her efforts to practicing mothering behaviors through acceptable social language. In addition, the story of Truth and Peter illustrates that freedom in the north was at best "nominally free" (Webster 2017: 427). Between the precarity of their children's freed status and accusations of bad mothering, African American mothers began publishing their own articulations of mothering and motherhood, many of which are found in contemporary African American newspapers.

African American mothers of the north, recognizing the performative nature of motherhood, had to negotiate with the ideologies and stereotypes produced by their Anglo-American contemporaries, in order to agentially transform African American mothering into an identity that could be recognized by both communities. The African Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania chose to articulate African American motherhood through articulations of mothering that could be understood in parallel to the 'proper' ideologies depicted by the Cult of True Womanhood. In their newspaper, the *Christian Recorder*, they encouraged African American mothers to immerse themselves in "household chores, the education of their children, and [a] high moral standing as part of racial uplift ideology" (Webster 2017: 432). To these women, the Anglo-American ideal of piety could be mobilized to facilitate autonomous mothering practices over African American families, and by extension, communities. To elaborate further, these African American mothering activists transformed dominant values to facilitate a form of mothering that could be recognized as proper in both African American and Anglo-American communities. This Methodist church saw African American motherhood as an

opportunity to re-imagine the African American community. Instead of highlighting autonomy over the individual family unit, African American motherhood was positioned as practices which could result in the uplift of the entire race (Webster 2017: 432). This new articulation becomes an ideal identity to be strived for, similarly to the ideal identity of the true American woman.

In recognizing that these articulations of African American mothering and motherhood influence perceptions of the whole community, African American women were able to situate the naturalness of their motherhood in the blurring of public and private spaces. They asserted that domestic work and mothering was worth doing properly, not only for the sake of the home, but as this work reflected over the whole of their race (Wilkie 2003: 80). Unlike their Anglo-American contemporaries who saw motherhood as a private affair for the domestic sphere, African American motherhood was the business of the entire community. As motherhood, or the state of being a mother and actions of mothering were seen as representative of the entire community, African American women could engage with structural conditions which could further transform and assert their power and autonomy over their community in addition to their children.

When comparing constructions of African American mothering on plantations to articulations of African American mothering in the north the desire to wield authority over one's family appears to be of the greatest importance to a mother. Enslaved women did what they could to nourish, raise, and protect their children within the framework of having severely limited control over one's own life, let alone others'. They sought spaces within their lives to expand this authority, and found the opportunity once freed. In an effort to include myself in the initiative to move away from assumptions that African American individuals after freedom adopted and integrated themselves within the dominant culture, I agree with Webster's (2017:

437) assertion that African American articulations of motherhood in the north should be read as “a form of authority over the physical space of the home and of the children” rather than as “a reproduction of dominant ideals.” African American women and mothers in forming their identities and ideologies were very conscious of the lack of control and authority they had in the past, and their actions and articulations can be understood as an attempt to empower individuals, whose futures still appeared ambiguous, to regain that agency and autonomy over their lives, their families, and communities.

Domestic Labor

Manumission, whether in the south or the north, equated singularly to legal freedom, which did not guarantee African Americans the rights or status of an American citizen. African Americans now had individual autonomy, which Anglo-Americans saw as a threat to their privileged status as American citizens. In order to maintain the relationships of power that a new African American identity threatened to challenge, Anglo-Americans sought to maintain structural conditions that limited African American access to material resources and technologies. Anglo-Americans argued that supposed biological inferiorities hindered African Americans’ abilities to interpret and perform systems of symbolic order. To simplify, Anglo-Americans sought to limit African American access to the social conditions promised by American citizenship by constraining African Americans’ abilities in crafting an identity that could claim American citizenship.

For historian Danielle Taylor Phillips (2013: 379), a surge in immigration from Ireland, further complicated discourse on race and citizenship by “[challenging] the hegemony of white Anglo-Saxon Protestants” but in such a way that Anglo-Americans could not position biological inferiority singularly through skin color. Rights to citizenship became a national debate, when

individuals began questioning how to determine “which individuals deserved access to the material and ideological promises of American Citizenship,” that were once only held by Protestants (Phillips 2013: 379). As a result, Anglo-Americans had to re-imagine how to articulate similarities between Irish immigrants and African Americans in order to be differentiated from the two marginalized groups. Wall (1999: 104) remarks that in 1855 over 31,000 women were domestic servants in New York City, the majority of which were comprised of female Irish immigrants. Phillips (2013: 381) asserts that the ending of the Civil War marked the beginning of Irish woman losing this ethnic majority as southern African American women began migrating North in search of work.

It should be noted that neither author addresses how the migration of Irish immigrants and Southern African American women into the northern domestic sphere directly impacted free northern African American women both before and after the mid-nineteenth century. This raises questions as to how northern African American women were seen in regards to their southern sisters, as well as how they saw themselves within this same regard. What is clear is the domestic sphere became the site where new and old articulations of race were engaged with and re-imagined in order for employers and employees to perceive and negotiate their positions within their reality.

In order to establish and maintain a clear social and racial divide between Anglo-American employer and her employees that did not rely singularity on skin color, Anglo-Americans emphasized parallels between racialized articulations of Irish and African American women that emerged during the colonial era. Phillips (2013: 384) notes that parallels drawn between Irish and African American women during colonial occupations of Africa and Ireland inspired racialized discourse in the transatlantic debate on how middle-class women should

utilize and manage domestic workers. The English first drew racialized parallels between Africa and Ireland when they justified their acts of colonization by articulating a backwardness of both territories that England could 'fix' through acts of conversion and civilizing (Phillips 2013: 384). Articulations of a lack of civility and proper moral foundations informed depictions of Irish and African American domestic workers as lazy, unrefined, dirty, sexually deviant, and morally lacking (Phillips 2013: 383,386). These values came to characterize domestic workers on both sides of the Atlantic, and were mobilized to justify these workers' inferior treatment.

Transatlantic debates helped solidify in America the perceived parallels between African Americans and Irish immigrants expressed in England. A peek at Phillips's (2013: 401-4) cited research material, reveals an apparent shared obsession on the part of English and American middle-class women with their domestic employees, as evidenced by the sheer amount of documentary remains produced in order to discuss opinions and observations concerning domestic workers. These resource materials span from 1841 to 1923, and consist of manuals, personal letters, and advice columns and articles published in newspapers. Phillips's (2013: 384) analysis of these documents reveals that English middle-class women positioned characterizations of Irish immigrants in relation to African American enslaved individuals of the Americas in order to emphasize a hierarchical ethnic social distinction between English and Irish working-class individuals. This relational approach was echoed by Anglo-American middle class women who mirrored these articulations within their own discourse to establish a similar ethnic hierarchical distinction between Irish employees and those considered by Anglo Americans as naturally superior in social ordering—Anglo-American, English, French, German, and Swedish (Phillips 2013: 383). In order to maintain and reinforce this hierarchical social

structuring, Anglo-Americans engaged in specific practices that attempted to ethnically naturalize distinctions between employer and employee.

Anglo-American women's engagement with "maternalism" allowed them to reinforce the ordering of servants as subordinated to the housekeeper, but in a form that is recognizable within the domestic sphere and the duties of a true American woman. Within the context of the nineteenth century, "maternalism", as opposed to mothering, is a disrespectful unequal human to human relationship disguised as caring mothering behavior (Phillips 2013: 387). In practice, maternalism can manifest as the intentional treatment of an autonomous adult as a child, rationalized as caring guidance. Anglo-Americans argued that acts of maternalism were necessary to correct their servants' biological inferiority by "[guiding] them to [proper] domestic service" to protect them from their "innate sexual temptation" (Phillips 2013: 387). In this fashion, African American and Irish domestic servants referred to their employer as Miss or Mrs., but could expect to be called by her first name or "girl" in return, with only children receiving similar designations (Phillips 2013: 387). These actions and justifications asserted the superiority of middle-class Anglo-American women on the basis of both race and class, and therefore positioned her as the 'mothering' figure who could teach poor women civility and domestic duties. As an unintended consequence, class was seen as acting in parallel to race.

Part of the Anglo-American employer's obsession with her domestic worker was her struggle to distance herself from structural conditions which historically locate domestic service workers within society's lowest social position. Previous to the nineteenth century, domestic work was left to the poorest of the poor, as uncleanly work was associated with an uncleanly soul, but positioning domesticity as a celebrated social value aimed to re-contextualize domestic work as a source of social and spiritual elevation for middle-class women. As agents make and

understand themselves and their position within society in reference to the world and others (Barrett 2000: 66), Anglo-American employers had to distinguish their domesticity as recognizably different from their employees' work. Victorian dirt fetish and its alignment of cleanliness with godliness would have made this task extremely hard to accomplish (Phillips 2013: 389). Phillips (2013: 388) captures their divisive attempts in her characterization of the role of the middle-class housewife as “[depending] on the denigration of household tasks that were unbecoming a ‘true’ lady.” In other words, employers would dictate to their domestic servants those jobs that were most closely associated with dirt and uncleanness—floor scrubbing, inkwell filling, chamber pot emptying, etc.—allowing the housewife to perform her duties of maintaining the household, but without directly associating herself with dirt. This recognizable separation of the duties of employer and employee not only shaped the identity of the Anglo-American employer, but also influenced the ways in which domestic workers and society at large constructed their own interpretations of domestic service identities.

The constant performance of uncleanly tasks lead to an association of domestic workers with dirt, and subsequently with dirt's association with displacement. To elaborate further on a point made earlier, the Victorian dirt fetish repositioned dirt from the natural realm and into the realm of the sacred and the profane. The absence of dirt meant the presence of God, but the presence of dirt equated to disorder and thus displacement (Phillips 2013: 389, 393). Domestic workers were tasked with removing dirt, and as such they straddled the realms of private and production. Quite literally, as she would transfer the dirt that was collected from the household to the outside world, a domestic servant could leave one foot in the home and one outside allowing her to straddle the threshold in its most precise sense, and causing her to stand both within and outside of the moral realm (Phillips 2013: 389). Furthermore, despite earning a wage,

in most cases, domestic work was not credited as productive work because caring for the needs of others produced no valuable commodity (Phillips 2013: 392). By the very nature of the obligations of her occupation, the domestic worker blurs the boundaries between the spheres of domesticity and production at every level. Her identity is constructed for her in the precarity between the sacredness of the domestic world forced to play out through profane productive labor, inscribing her perceived existence with the disorder and displacement attributed to that which she removes. The domestic worker's inability to be fully categorized as 'domestic' or 'productive,' 'clean' or 'unclean,' and 'moral' or 'immoral' situates her identity as displaced from social recognition.

As I have previously illustrated, employers saw domestic workers as someone to be taught like children, however, these women were also seen as something to be feared because the quality of their labor reflected onto their employer's apparent social standing. The values of true womanhood placed the successful coordination and operation of the household upon the shoulders of the housewife, and thus the Anglo-American housewife's social value relied on her ability to achieve this success, regardless of whose labor performed the necessary tasks. As a result, the domestic worker was also seen as an extension of the housewife, and her work directly reflected back on the abilities of the housewife to be identified as a true woman (Phillips 2013: 397). An inability to perform or complete certain tasks in a manner specified by the housewife could challenge and denigrate the social perceptions of the household's gentility and morality (Phillips 2013: 387). A recognition of this dynamic by the domestic worker was seen as disastrous for the maintenance of the social hierarchy for "the domestic must remain ignorant and in poor material conditions; to do otherwise is to threaten the employer's basic belief about herself, the people around her, and her entire social world. (Rollins 1985: 198 in Phillips 2013:

393). The domestic worker was seen as not only shaping her own identity but also the identities of those around her through her ability to consciously and unconsciously engage in recognizable traditions of knowledgeability. At this time I have explored how Anglo-Americans have come to identify domestic workers and in relation have come to identify themselves. This exploration, however, leaves little to understand how Irish and African American domestic workers, shaped their own identities in relation to their employers and each other.

The problem with Phillips's approach to examining the racialized discourse on domestic workers, through an investigation of documentary remains produced by employers, is that we hardly see how domestic workers constructed their own identities through their own words. We can catch only glimpses of how they constructed themselves and others when investigating their employers' writings. When employers suggest to each other that it is not recommended to employ both African American and Irish domestic servants within the same household, we can infer that the women of these two groups saw themselves differently from each other (Phillips 2013: 381). The tension and physical violence that was cited for this suggestion further implies that the structural conditions of their world encouraged these two groups of women to form identities in competition with one another. How these women came to understand themselves and others, in addition to what traditions of knowledgeability they wielded to navigate their world and craft their constructions are left partial through simply these sources.

The above statement is not to say that there is a complete lack of documentary remains produced by the working-class that can give insight into the way that domestic workers constructed their world, nor is this to say that documentary evidence is the only source for discerning these social phenomena. Documentary sources simply allow for the investigator to enter into the mind of the writer during a particular point in time of that writer's perception of

their world, in a format with which humans constantly confront and create their world, discourse. Phillips draws upon an Irish woman's commentary on employers written to the *New York Times* in 1871 to reframe the domestic worker problem as a neglectful and "extravagant" housewife problem (1871 in Phillips 2013: 397). The woman comments, "Bad masters and bad mistresses are sure to make bad servants, although good servants never made good masters or mistresses," (*New York Times* 1871 in Phillips 2013: 397). This illustrates that domestic workers were not only utilizing their knowledgeability of domesticity in order to evaluate their employers within the same framework that they were evaluated against (Phillips 2013: 397), but that they were also actively participating in the discourse to change public perception. Unfortunately, most domestic workers did not have the time, and perhaps lacked the resources to record their thoughts and opinions in similar fashion to their employers, and so we must turn to other sources for evidence that will further our investigation. In the next chapter, we will explore our present understanding of the events of the Persons household, and begin making suggestions about what we hope to uncover about their lives.

Chapter 3: Reconstructing Archives of Experience

The Maple Avenue Parsonage



Figure 3.1 The Maple Avenue Parsonage. Courtesy of Alison Schukal.

Built into an outcrop of bedrock sits the former Reformed Parsonage, overlooking the western end of Maple Avenue in Germantown, New York. From the Parsonage today, Maple Avenue may seem like a quiet farm and residential road that can lead one into the heart of Germantown, where silences are interrupted only by the occasional sound of farm equipment, the passing of a car, or the neighbor's dog alerting the rest of the neighborhood that there are happenings on the farm. A glance towards the west, while on the Parsonage property, allows visitors a scenic Catskill Mountain view that still remains just as central in the hearts of Germantown's community today, as it may have been in the past.¹ As the road travels farther away from the Catskills and the farm, heading now towards the hamlet of Germantown, residential houses begin to cluster and the bucolic atmosphere cultivated by the Parsonage's distance from the hamlet begins to fall away. The serene atmosphere of the western portion of Maple Avenue today, belies the long history of generations and communities of families that made Maple Avenue and, more specifically, the Reformed Parsonage their home. What follows is the history not only of the Persons family, but also of the other families whose practices transformed the Parsonage property's landscape, and may have contributed to the Persons occupying the site.

At present, the Parsonage houses the Germantown History Department and Germantown Garden Club, however, the concept of a parsonage on Maple Avenue begins in the 1740s, when descendants of the Palatines who settled Germantown in 1711 sought land to house those who would shepherd the local congregations. In 1741, the Reformed Sanctity Church of Germantown received lot 154, and its boundaries have remained largely unchanged, except for the more recent addition of an eastern parcel (Dickerman 2019: 7). The original parsonage, revealed by archaeological excavations in the front yard of the extant building, may have housed Rev. Casper Ludwig Schnoor from 1746-51, the time when the Germantown Reformed congregation was in his charge (Miller 1978: 8). A pastoral call, offering the erection of a barn or stables, to be built upon the property of the original parsonage, leads to present speculation that Reverend Johannes Casparus Rubel resided in this original parsonage from 1755 to 1759 (Miller 1978: 10). If this speculation holds true, Reverend Rubel is the last minister to occupy this parsonage structure, before the extant building was constructed.

What is next known about lot 154, is that the German Reverend Gerhard Daniel Cock builds the next parsonage after arriving in Germantown in 1762 (Miller 1978: 11). This new parsonage is built in 1767, in the style of Palatine domestic architecture (Piwonka 1986: 31), by integrating his house within an outcrop of bedrock. This structure is now the stone cellar of the Parsonage. Reverend Cock is not only responsible for establishing our current structure, but census records concerning his household are our first insight into indications of slavery on Maple Avenue.

Drawing on information gathered from the 1755 census, slavery was certainly present within the townships surrounding Germantown (McDermott 1996), but there is limited documentation concerning the emergence of slavery within Germantown itself. It is known that

the Livingston family, who operated a manorial estate in the two townships surrounding Germantown, Clermont and Livingston, owned and imported slaves, who were at times sold to local residents (Singer 1986: 68). The study on slavery by William P. McDermott (1996: 11) looking at Rhinebeck, New York from 1714-1800, suggests that families of German origin were less likely to hold persons in bondage than their Dutch counterparts, due in part to religious convictions. It may be suggested that an additional reason behind the Palatine's and their descendants' reluctance (conceivably even refusal) to participate in slavery could be their own treatment as indentured servants by the Livingstons and Gov. Robert Hunter (1666-1734), despite their full naturalization as English subjects, during the naval stores project that brought the Palatine immigrants to New York (Otterness 2004: 73, 81, 98). As of 1790, it is recorded that four enslaved persons were living with Reverend Cock, his wife Christina TenBroeck Cock, and their children (United States Bureau of the Census 1790). This would seem to contradict McDermott's suggestion; yet, it is known that Dutch families often gifted slaves as part of a dowry. Therefore, it is likely that these enslaved individuals became a part of Rev. Cock's household through his marriage into the TenBroecks, a prominent slave owning Dutch family (Dickerman 2019: 10). Contrasting German hesitations in participating in slavery, and Cock's role as a religious leader to the Germantown Reformed congregation, this specific family's ownership of enslaved individuals may have contributed to changes in the Palatine descendants' attitudes towards slavery. Some of these slaves would later appear on Maple Avenue.

Rev. Cock and his family resided in the Parsonage until his death in 1791. His son, Garritt Cock, on the map of 1798, lived across the street. Widow Christina TenBroeck Cock, may have lived with her son after Rev. Cock's passing. It is presently unknown if the individuals enslaved by Reverend Cock and his family remained with Widow Cock. The next

two residents of the Parsonage where Reformed ministers as well. Rev. John Daniel Schieffer, appointed after Cock's death, occupied the structure from 1793-99 (Dickerman 2019: 8). In 1802, Rev. Valentine Rudiger Fox and his wife Marin Charlotte, moved into the Parsonage, but they only stayed for three years before they sold the property in 1805 to Maria TenBroeck Delamater (Dickerman 2019: 8). After this sale, the Reformed Parsonage became a residential home, and was no longer used as a parsonage. This sale also marked a suggested origin for the family that is the focus of this study.

The Persons

The arrival of Maria TenBroeck Delamater at the parsonage in 1805, may have also brought with her the origins of the Persons family on Maple Avenue. According to the 1810 Federal Census, recorded living with Maria, are two enslaved individuals and three free persons (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1810). An enslaved woman, Tian, who was owned by both Maria and her daughter Catherine "Caty" Delamater TenBroeck, was recorded with the town clerk as having given birth to a girl on September 29th of 1805 (Ellis 1878: 268).² Maria and Caty do not "abandon" the child, so it is likely that the enslaved persons recorded in 1810 are Tian and her "unnamed" daughter.³ In a recent genealogical study of Maple Avenue's African American community, Ethan Dickerman suggests that due to phonetic similarities between the German "t" and "d", combined with the likelihood that Tian's name was spoke when the census was taken, suggests that her name could have been inadvertently altered to the name Dian, and subsequently Dianne (Dickerman 2019: 9). This assertion posits that Tian may have become the later listed resident of the Parsonage in the 1860 Germantown Census, Diannah Barber, presumably the mother of Mary Persons. Mary Persons was born between 1804-05, according to her age at death, 85 years and three days, listed on her gravestone in the Germantown Reformed Cemetery

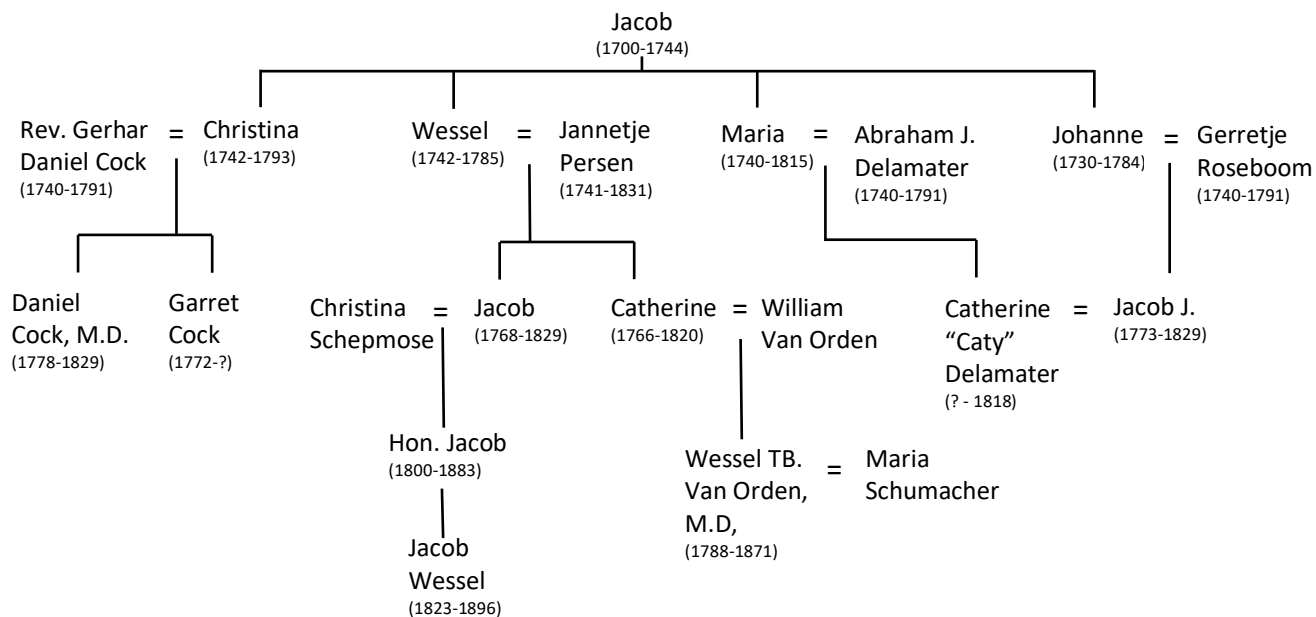
(Find a Grave 1889). Dickerman's linguistic assertion, in concert with Mary's birth date, means that it is highly probable that Mary Barber Persons was the daughter of Tian recorded in the birth record by Maria and Caty. It can thus be suggested that Diannah and Mary lived and worked in the Parsonage for Maria and Caty for as long as the TenBroeck women remained owners of the Parsonage. During this time, Diannah and Mary would have been expected to conduct household chores, such as cooking, cleaning, sewing and mending, among other daily living tasks.

Maria TenBroeck Delamater (1730-1815), probably due in part to older age, sold the parsonage to Caty in 1809, though she remained living in the house until her death on May 21st, 1815 (Dickerman 2019: 8). Mary and Diannah would have taken care of all of Maria's needs during the end of her life, and would have offered a source of constant companionship for the aging widow. Caty died shortly afterwards on October 31st, 1818, from which it can be surmised that ownership of the Parsonage property is transferred to her husband, Jacob J. TenBroeck (Find a Grave 1818). The next known person, according to census records, to inhabit the Parsonage is Caty's second cousin, Dr. Wessel TenBroeck Van Orden (Dickerman 2019: 8), son of Catherine TenBroeck Van Orden and William Van Orden. No records exist to detail how or if ownership was completely transferred from Caty Delamater TenBroeck to Dr. Van Orden, although it can be inferred that the property by 1820 may have been rented, gifted, or sold to the relative. Dr. Van Orden, his wife Maria Schumacher, and their three children are listed on the 1820 census record, but there are neither free nor enslaved African Americans in that record, implying that both Mary and Diannah are living elsewhere at the time (Dickerman 2019: 8). As it is suggested that the ownership of the Parsonage property was transferred to Caty and subsequently her husband, it can also be inferred that ownership of Diannah and Mary could have followed a

similar path. If they were granted freedom there would be a document of manumission, but at present one has not been recovered. Without a will or probate from Caty's passing, this is currently the strongest suggestion for where Diannah and Mary could have gone after leaving the Parsonage.

At this point I would also like to suggest the possibility that Tian occupied the parsonage site during Reverend Cock's occupation. After Cock dies, his widow moves across the street to live with her son. The individuals enslaved by Reverend Cock and his wife may have moved with the widow, or may have been sold to other members within the TenBroeck family. Maria Delamater is the only surviving sibling of the Widow TenBroeck, and after the widow's death any possessions her son did not desire to keep may have been given to Maria, including the enslaved individuals of the Cock family. Tian's birth year would have been approximately 1777 which coincides with Reverend Cock's occupation of the site. Furthermore oral traditions recorded by former Germantown and Columbia County Historian Walter Miller (1867: 12), recalls that the Persons were descended from enslaved individuals who "served the White families of this area at one time." This comment indicates that the family descends from individuals who served more than just Maria Delamater and Caty Ten Broeck. There exists a good possibility that Tian was born to enslaved parents, who were owned by the Cock family. If found true, this suggestion would indicate that Mary's children are the fourth generation of this family to occupy the site.

Though the parsonage property passes out of the TenBroeck family after Dr. Wessel TenBroeck Van Orden sells the property, a connection between the TenBroecks and Persons family remains. Before the fragments concerning the Persons family are stitched together in an attempt to explore their history, I wish to clarify the relations (see Figure 3.2) between the TenBroeck siblings and their children, whose hands the Parsonage passed through. Christina

Figure 3.2 Ten Broeck Family Tree

TenBroeck Cock is the first TenBroeck to live in the Parsonage, after it is built by her husband, Rev. Cock. Christina's sister, Maria TenBroeck Delamater purchases the parsonage in 1805, completing the parsonage's history as a home for religious leaders. In 1809, Maria will sell the Parsonage to her daughter Catherine "Caty" Delamater TenBroeck, and in 1818, after Caty's death, the property is inherited by her husband Jacob J. TenBroeck.

The next TenBroeck who plays a part in the Parsonage's history is Christina and Maria's brother, Wessel TenBroeck. Wessel's estate stood less than a mile north of the Parsonage, where he lived with his wife, Jannetje Persen and their children. The TenBroeck estate was inherited, after Wessel's death in 1785, by his son Jacob TenBroeck, who married Christina Schepmose. Wessel TenBroeck Van Orden was born in 1788 to Jacob's older sister, Catherine, and her husband William Van Orden of Greene County. Around age 32, Dr. Wessel TenBroeck Van Orden will obtain the Parsonage from Jacob J. TenBroeck (his second cousin). With the TenBroeck family outlined more clearly, hopefully, the suggestions behind the origins and movements of the Persons and Barber families, detailed below, will be more intelligible.

By 1830, Mary returns to the Parsonage, listed as sharing the home with her husband, Henry Persons, and Dr. Van Orden. By now Mary and her husband are free persons (Dickerman 2019: 8). Mary was born just around a half decade after New York passed their first emancipation laws in 1799. Mary's return to the Parsonage in 1830 begs the question, why would she want to remain close, no less, share a house with a relative of the family who enslaved her, her mother, and possibly earlier generations of her lineage. To fully address this question, we must first understand the possible history of her husband's birth.

Henry Person's birth is just as difficult to trace through documentary records as Mary's and thus similar levels of speculation by Dickerman have been used in reconstructing his biography. In his genealogical investigation done on Maple Avenue's residents, Dickerman asserts that Henry was born to an enslaved woman owned by Dr. Van Orden's grandparents, Wessel TenBroeck (1741-1785) and his wife Jannetje Persen TenBroeck (1741-1831), based on phonetic similarities between Jannetje's maiden surname and Henry's last name (Dickerman 2019: 10). After Wessel's death in 1785, his estate was passed to his son Jacob J. TenBroeck, husband of Caty (not to be confused with Jacob, husband of Christina S.). It is likely that this estate included Henry, if Dickerman's assertion holds true. As stated earlier, Mary may also have been owned by Jacob J. after Caty's death, and therefore both Henry and Mary's connections to the TenBroeck family may have contributed to their meeting and marriage. Perhaps, after both had obtained freedom around 1830, the newly married couple sought a freedom that separated them from the direct family who owned them. By moving into the parsonage with a relative of that family the Persons increased distance from their immediate enslavers, while also maintaining a source for more options of secure employment, a great source of worry for newly freed individuals.

Germantown, from its conception and through the 1800s had always been a rural agricultural town that was supported by farming hay and orchards. The quality of Germantown's soil supported the production of apples, which in the early to mid-1800s became one of Germantown's most lucrative exports. After the 1860s, exports would include other fruits such as grapes, pears, plums, and peaches (Stott 2007: 128). Three docks built in Germantown by 1810, for export by sloop, could allow local farmers to transport their produce to external markets (Stott 2007: 128). By the time the Persons moved onto the property in 1830, freight barges, including those owned by the Hudson River Tow Boat Company, were being towed up and down the Hudson river allowing produce to be sold anywhere from Albany to New York City (Stott 2007: 127). This increase in the movement of produce allowed for the organization of the Germantown Transportation Company by the 1850s, which operated *Harvest Home* from Lasher's landing (Stott 2007: 127). An increased ability to transport fresh produce to a larger consumer base also meant a greater opportunity for increased produce production, and thus a higher demand for workers who could tend to the fruit fields and trees.

Though the occupations of Henry and Mary are unknown until 1850, the above developments of Germantown may shed light into their possible lives since 1830. It is known that during the 27 years that Dr. Van Orden was living at the Parsonage, his wife was raising their three children while also keeping house. It is also probable that Dr. Van Orden was running his physician's practice out of his home. In both circumstances, Mary may have helped with the obligations and responsibilities of her house mates, by helping with the house and the children, as well as possibly Dr. Van Orden's work.⁴ In addition to helping out with the Van Orden children, Mary would have been raising her own children. The parsonage may or may not have been Elizabeth, the oldest Persons child's first home as she was born October 19, 1829. One of

the frustrations of working with census records from the nineteenth century to reconstruct a household's life experiences is that the census only allows one a glimpse of everyone's movements in five-year increments. We know that the Persons lived on the parsonage property by 1830, but we do not know for sure when they moved onto the property or the exact year when they may have left. After Elizabeth came William Henry in 1831, Jeremiah in December of 1833, Mary Ann in March of 1836, and Emma Jane in October 1839 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1850, 1900; State of New York 1865). Mary and Maria Schumacher Van Orden would have had their hands full taking care of all eight children on the property. In total twelve individuals would have been living on the parsonage property between the 1830 and 1840 censuses. One of the pressing questions that continuously presents itself when examining this period of the Persons occupation of the site concerns the organization of the two families while they lived together. Did both families share the house, and by extension was the house divided? Did one family occupy the house, and the other reside in a structure yet to be uncovered?

In the 1850 census, the first census to list occupations, Henry is listed as a farm laborer, and it is highly likely that he was also laboring on farms for the previous two decades before that census was taken (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1850). Due to an absence of documents on where exactly Henry worked, it cannot be discerned whether his location of employment was steady or varied. Henry and Mary are living in the Parsonage as of 1830, but they are missing from the Germantown census records in 1840. Many previously enslaved persons, after receiving their newly freed status "continued to remain dependent on former owners" in order to navigate the economy that they were suddenly thrust into (McDermott 1996: 16). The Persons family's disappearance from the 1840 Germantown census could be the result of inconsistent work or better working opportunities closer to Jacob TenBroeck's homestead, the property that he

inherited from his father, Wessel, less than a mile north of the Parsonage. Following this lead, Henry and family were discovered in the 1840 census for Clermont, New York (State of New York 1840). This census in particular contains the least amount of details concerning family members in a household, recording only the name of the head of house, and the number of individuals living in the house of particular gender and age ranges. As a result, Henry's occupation in Clermont is unknown. During this time, Mary and Henry welcome into the world, and later their faith, the final member of their immediate family. On May 17, 1846 George Washington Persons emerged into his nineteenth century home, and two years later, on December 6, his mother and father had him baptized at the German Reformed Church (FamilySearch 1848). George Washington Persons must have been a big child for his age. By the 1850 census, George Washington would have been four years old, but for one reason or another the census taker recorded him as aged ten years. Many children's ages can be mistaken when estimated by their size.

The transfer in ownership of the Parsonage to Henry Persons was not directly from Dr. Van Orden. After residing in the house for roughly 27 years, Dr. Van Orden passed ownership of the Parsonage property through sale to Henry Moore, an African American. Despite owning the house in 1850, Moore is not listed as living in the house, and the Persons family was shown as sole residents. Even though he owns the Parsonage, Henry Moore is listed as living at Bastian Moore's house on Cemetery Road, just over the southern border of Germantown, in Clermont. While the relationship between Moore and the Persons concerning their living arrangements in the Parsonage are unknown, it can be inferred that Moore most likely rented the house to the family. Tragedy struck the family early on in their homeownership, which appears to have affected the family deeply. George Washington never made it to the next census year in 1855.

Table 3.1 Occupation of Parsonage by Persons Through Time

Census Year	Age according to Census	Known Occupants
1850	48	Henry Persons
	46	Mary Persons
	19	William Henry Persons
	17	Jeremiah Persons
	14	Mary Ann Persons
	12	Emma Jane Persons
	10	George Washington Persons
1855	52	Henry Persons
	50	Mary Persons
	25	Elizabeth Dianna Persons
	23	William Henry Persons
	21	Jeremiah Persons
	19	Mary Ann Persons
	16	Emma Jane Persons
1860	58	Henry Persons
	55	Mary Persons
	26	Jeremiah Persons
	83	Dianna Barber
	36	George W. Barber
	25	Louiesa Barber
	8	Mary Barber
	6	John W. Barber
	3	William Henry Barber
	10 months	Jane E. Barber
1865	28	Jeremiah Persons
	52	Mary Persons
	36	Elizabeth Dianna Persons
	26	Mary Ann Persons
	24	Emma Jane Persons
1870	52	Mary Persons
	36	Jeremiah Persons
	16	John W. Barber
1875	71	Mary Persons
	49	Elizabeth Dianna Persons
	39	Jeremiah Persons
1880	37	Mary Persons
	76	Mary Persons
	43	Jeremiah Persons
1900	41	Mary Ann Persons
	65	Jeremiah Persons
	45	Mary Ann Persons
1905	42	Emma Persons
	75	Jeremiah Persons
	68	Mary Ann Persons
	65	Emma Persons
	70	Emma Persons

Neither the circumstances nor even date for his death have been recovered and after 1850, the family drops him from mention in any future other records. In 1871, when Emma opens up a bank account, she notes all deceased relatives including her father and one brother, William

Henry, but George Washington is left absent from mention (FamilySearch 1871). From this point forward until the death of its last member, Emma (1838-1911), the Persons family was a part of the African American community on Maple Avenue that began to decline in 1875 (see Table 3.1).

Gothic Revival style cottages, built in the 1850s, closer to the Germantown hamlet, attest to Germantown's participation in forms of nineteenth century domestic ideology (Stott 2007: 127). The architectural style of Gothic Revival incorporated church architecture, including trim styles and steep gables, which communicated spirituality and morality (Rotman 2019: 342). The codification of ideals in Germantown through architectural significance may also give insight into the Persons family's return to the Parsonage. Although documentary evidence surrounding the complete history of the Persons family's religious expressions are sparse, what is available allows one to glean enough information to express the importance of religion in their lives. Records show that Henry participated in the Methodist Episcopal Church at least from 1849 to his death on March 26, 1863 between the ages of 59 and 60 (Dickerman 2019: 11). Mary was a member of the Reformed church as of 1841, and was most likely a part of the congregation upon her death (Dickerman 2019: 10). Both, husband and wife, are buried in the rear of the Reformed Cemetery, each receiving a religious epitaph chosen by their family, after passing. Henry's epitaph is Revelations 21:4 from the King James Bible, and Mary's, a verse from Margaret Mackay's hymn, "Asleep in Jesus! Blessed Sleep,"; both communicate hardship and difficult toiling during life, and an eternal restful peace after death (Dickerman 2019: 11). These epitaphs illustrate an interpretation of life's movement, communicating the significance of religious thought throughout everyday life in this family. The Parsonage's history of providing a home to religious leaders is well documented in the minds of community members of Germantown (Ellis

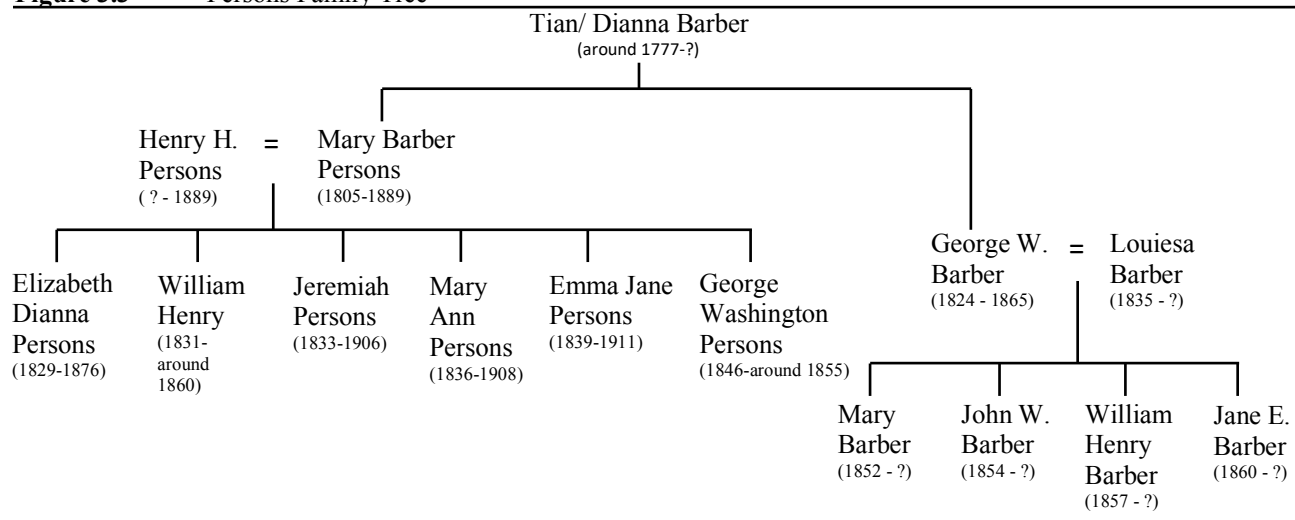
1878: 274; Miller 1978: 11). To build themselves a home in the style of Gothic Revival like those near the hamlet may have been outside of their financial abilities, unlike their white middle and upper-class counterparts. Instead of building a new shelter, the family may have seen the Reformed Parsonage as an opportunity to utilize a familiar structure that exuded religious significance within the township.

The occupations of the Persons family in the 1850s resonate with the powerful social forces of gender ideologies as well as shifts in Germantown's economy. As mentioned above, Henry Persons worked as a farm laborer in 1850, responding to the increased need during Germantown's period of agricultural intensification. His son, William Henry, at age 18, worked as boatmen out of Hudson where he lived in what appears to be a large tenant style house with several other boatman (State of New York 1855). As a boatman, William Henry may have been working on the barges transporting fruit, such as *Harvest Home*. It makes one wonder if any of the family members ever watched a boat float down the Hudson, waving at their son or brother as he passed on by. By 1855, Henry had now become a shoemaker. A cobblers bench currently resides in the Parsonage, and is believed to be Henry's bench. While the shoes may not have been sold from the house, the presence of the bench implies that the shoes may have been manufactured by Henry at the parsonage, transforming the domestic space of the house into a space of production. Henry's occupation blurs the distinct divide between domestic and productive spheres, characteristic of nineteenth century American culture.

Mary, and her daughters are listed without occupations in the 1855 census, but they were mostly likely engaged in domestic labors, performed for the immediate family and as well as the Germantown community. In 1855, all of the female Persons children and Jeremiah still lived at home. More than likely Elizabeth, Emma, and Mary Ann would have been helping Mary with

keeping house, or performing other domestic wage labor activities such as laundering the clothing of local households. Each child, though no longer the age of children, can read and write unlike their parents, who are listed as illiterate (State of New York 1855). At present it is still unknown how the Persons children learned their letters as Germantown had no school for African American children. It also appears that no other African American individual of the Maple Avenue community of Henry and Mary's generation had learned these skills either. It can be suggested that the children may have learned through the Germantown Reformed Church, or possibly during the time that the Persons lived alongside the Van Orden family. Either way, the children of Henry and Mary Persons would have been able to access the public discourse contained by periodicals. This may have included African American newspapers such as *The North Star*, *Freedom's Journal*, or *The Christian Recorder*.

Being able to access public discourse outside of the Germantown, or Upper Hudson Valley communities would have exposed them to the ways in which other African Americans in the North were constructing their worlds and confronting their new social realities of nominal freedom. One can only imagine the fear Mary might have had for her son, if she had learned of African American boatman being kidnaped from their boats and sold into the South under the authority of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. Could Mary have stayed up late at night, worried and fussing over a pot of food, or anxiously swept the floor or yard wondering if William Henry may suffer a similar fate? Despite having more control over the fates of her children's early lives as a free African American mother, as her children entered adulthood, obtained their own occupations, and possibly left home, her direct control would have diminished, though her concern for their well-being most likely did not.

Figure 3.3 Persons Family Tree

The “household”, for African American families on Maple Ave, did not always mean the abode of an immediate, nuclear family, but rather sometimes a collection of relatives intent on mutual support and survival. The 1860s saw more shuffling of family members in and out of the Parsonage home that would have affected the financial stability of the family. William Henry dies in February of 1860, and Henry passes away in 1863 leaving the Persons without two of the three men largely responsible for the family’s income (Dickerman 2019: 11). While Emma, Mary Ann, and Elizabeth worked in domestic service for a wage, there is no documentation to suggest how much if any money from their earnings actually made it back to the parsonage household. The addition to the Parsonage of George W. Barber’s family, that of Mary’s brother (see Figure 3.3), in 1860 does not necessarily denote a solution to the financial effects that the loss of husband and son may have had on the immediate family, because in 1865, Mary’s son Jeremiah is the only employed family member listed as residing in the house (State of New York 1865).

In 1860, while Mary stayed home and kept house, Elizabeth, Mary Ann, and Emma branched out to work in cities located in the lower half of New York state, performing domestic activities in middle-class white households. Emma, aged 21, worked as a domestic servant in the

3rd Ward of the City of Hudson for physician Charles A. Stevens (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1860). Perhaps Emma's family's earlier residency with Dr. Van Orden imparted upon the women of the family, experiences, and therefore knowledge, that would prove useful in aiding another physician. The census lists her return to the Parsonage by 1865, only to leave once more before the 1870 census (State of New York 1865; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1870). Emma's older sisters, Elizabeth, aged 31 and Mary Ann, aged 24 are listed as living in the Germantown household, but working in Hudson and Albany respectively. Elizabeth had become a domestic servant in the city of Hudson, working first for Sarah Miller and Julia Whitiker in 1860, and then for the merchant W. B. Skinner, and his wife and four children, from at least 1865 to 1870 (State of New York 1865; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1860, 1870). It is interesting to note that Elizabeth is recorded in the 1860 census as being aged four years younger than she truly is in 1860 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1860). While this may not seem like a significant age difference in modern standards, a younger woman may have been preferred over older women in positions of domestic labor. The four year difference may be just another error inherent in censuses, or this could be a purposeful act performed by Elizabeth to secure wages. The age difference followed her to her employment at W.B. Skinner's house, as noted by the 1865 census (State of New York 1865). Elizabeth's age reflects her actual age in the 1870 census the last census year of her employment. A return to her birth age, may reflect of a sense of security of maintaining employment in the Skinner household. To find Mary Ann, one has to search the census records of Albany, New York to find her working as a cook in 1865 for Mrs. Susan Bennadsell and family (State of New York 1865). Mary and her daughters managed domestic spheres, as the men were working in areas of production that were completely separated from the

family household. Just based on observations of their engendered occupations, the Persons seem to be engaging American structural conditions of the nineteenth century to conduct daily living.

As illustrated in the previous chapter, living in a middle-class Anglo-American household as a domestic worker, was not easy task, nor did it carry a high degree of respectability in middle-class Anglo-American minds. Residing within the family's home gave the men of the household many opportunities to sexually harass their wife's employees. While traditionally domestic servants may have lived with their employers, Elizabeth and Mary Ann may be exhibiting the mid-nineteenth century shift by domestic workers to live in a location removed from their employees direct home that is noted by Rotman (2019: 349). Their work within these homes would, however, provide them exposure to urban Anglo-American middle-class practices and values. In addition, it is striking that many Anglo-American Germantown households employed domestic servants, even on Maple Avenue, and yet not one of the Persons women are employed in those Germantown households. Each woman had to travel to a city to find employment. Their travelling to find employment may reflect a lack of opportunity in Germantown, or the change of greater opportunity in urban areas. Emma's, Mary Ann's, and Elizabeth's choice to engage in work that paid little, forced them to move away from their family, and which could subject them to harassment by their male employers, illustrates their agency in realizing less rigid conceptions of gendered spaces and performing acts of pride and defiance as working African American women (Rotman 2019: 346; Bulger 2015: 112). In other words, these women, like their father, found ways to blur the lines between the domestic sphere of women and the male sphere of production, by earning a wage through domestic work.

Emma, Mary Ann, and Jeremiah's work after their father's passing may be considered "*kinscription*." *Kinscription* is the term created by Carol Stack and Linda Burton (1994 in

Wilkie 2003: 38) to explain the act of being conscripted into performing duties on behalf of or for the betterment of the family. Mary may have been performing domestic chores such as child care or laundry for income, but largely this burden would have fallen on the shoulders of her children, after Henry's death. While it is unknown what kind of effect the brief inclusion of the Barber family within the Parsonage had on the household as a whole, the trend of family relatives in separate families sharing a single household was not foreign to the Maple Avenue African American community. Dickerman's genealogy reveals that of its five African American families in the mid-nineteenth-century—Clow, Robinson, Barber, Persons, and Sharp—each at some time shared their homes with relatives (Dickerman 2019: 2-12). As noted above, even during a period of increased agricultural production, like what Germantown experienced in the mid-1800s, work for both African American women and men was hard to come by, supporting the earlier interpretation of the Persons family's choice to remain in contact with their previous owners. Combining families into a single household may have increased the household's ability to maintain a continuous income.

In 1871, Emma Persons opens up a Bank account at Freedman's Bank in New York city, listing her address as "8 West 9th Street," not far from Washington Square Park (Family Search 1871). This address is located close to one of the nineteenth century upper-middle class sites featured in Wall's 1999 article, "Examining Gender, Class, and Ethnicity in Nineteenth-Century New York City," suggesting that Emma was possibly working for an upper-middle class family around that time. Emma's opening of a bank account is significant as this implies that she was able to save some of her wages, possibly to bring back to Germantown. Furthermore, she must have made personal connections with individuals who remained in New York City, for the *The New York Age* (1908), an African American newspaper, reported on August 20, 1908 that "Mr.

and Mrs. Wm. C. Jackson, of 328 West 53rd street, accompanied by their daughters, Gwendolyn and Antionette, [were] spending their vacation in Germantown, N. Y., at the home of Miss Emma Persons.” While she was establishing personal connections, or more plainly put, having conversations and friends, Emma was engaging in local discourse, and more than likely learning new means to live by and to bring back home. As the women keep house or find work as domestic servants, the men rotate between working as farm laborers and general physical laborers, gaining employment where it can be found. This becomes most evident towards the end of the 19th century as the population of Germantown sees significant growth.

Increased agricultural demands result in the growth of economic opportunities for community members, yet Germantown’s economic prosperity also spurred population growth, which may have made occupational opportunities for African American families less available when their new white counterparts were also seeking these same opportunities. Between 1860-1870 most of Germantown’s acreage was devoted to the production of either hay or fruit (Stott 2007: 126). The development of ice as an export after the end of the Civil War, allowed two large-scale storage operations to develop in Germantown by 1885, permitting farmers to store their produce until times of favorable market prices (Stott 2007: 128). At the same time, the Germantown population also grew from 1,393 residents in 1870, to 1,686 in 1900 (D.G. Beers & Co. 1873; Stott 2007: 128). Despite the population growth, members of the African American community on Maple Avenue seem to move elsewhere, or pass away.

By the latter half of the 19th century it appears that economic opportunities for African American families in Germantown are declining. As of 1870, Jeremiah Persons and Theodore Robinson are working as boatmen, perhaps on a barge that utilizes the new steam boat dock in North Germantown installed in 1866 to aid in transporting the town’s increased agricultural

production (Dickerman 2019: 11, 2, 4; Stott 2007: 128). Mary's nephew, John W. Barber, like neighbors Suydam, William, and Samuel Clow, as well as Horrace Robinson, are farm laborers (Dickerman 2019: 11). Germantown is noted as "the only town in the county that did not lose farms between 1875 and 1930, implying that the need for farm laborers was fairly consistent (Stott 2007: 128). By 1875 Jeremiah is listed as a physical laborer, and all other boatmen or farm laborers have moved elsewhere from the Parsonage and Maple Avenue (State of New York 1875). With the availability of work seeming to be as constant at this time as in the previous decade, it seems that the growth in the white population of Germantown may have contributed to the decline of employment opportunities for members in Maple Ave's black community.

In the early 20th century, the Persons family, as well as the rest of the African American community have either died or moved away. In 1880, Mary, Jeremiah, and Mary Ann are the only Persons at the parsonage, as Elizabeth had passed away on June 10th, 1876 (Dickerman 2019: 11-12). In 1889 on July 3rd Mary passed away and perhaps due to her passing, Emma returns to the Parsonage some time before 1900. In the 1900 Census, the Parsonage property is listed as a farm rather than a house (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1900). It is unclear whether the property was converted into a farm for subsistence or financial purposes during this time, or if the property had always been a farm. The latter is more likely, but 1900 is the only confirmed timeframe for this information. There seems to be some stability for the next sixteen years until Jeremiah dies in 1906, followed by Mary A. in 1908 (Dickerman 2019: 12). By 1910 Emma is the only family member of the Persons family left living in the Parsonage (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1910). According to her obituary, she becomes ill in 1911, and passes away unexpectedly while living in the home of a friend, John R. Tucker, in order to receive treatment in Hudson (Dickerman 2019: 12). This same John Tucker is left as the executor of her estate by

Emma's will, in which she requests that her belongings and property are to be sold in order to convert her estate into monies that were distributed between two cousins, Rachel Hardy and Jennie TenBroeck (Dickerman 2019: 12). The sale of this property marks the end of the Parsonage as a home for the Persons family, but not the end of the Parsonage's history.

After They Departed

Just as the rest of the Parsonage's and its residents' histories have been nearly filled with silences created by gaps in the archival records, documentary evidence available for information as to what happened on the property after the Persons family's departure is just as inconsistent. According to Miller (1967: 21), it is likely that Tucker sells the property to the neighbor who lived across the street, Henry Fingar. Tom Shannon, the current Germantown Historian, in conversation with the eldest member of the Fingar family, revealed that someone was living there until its sale to Ernst Edward and Friedl Ekert in 1942 (Dickerman 2019: 12).

The couple, of German descent, were desirous of preserving this property, so after its purchase, they began the renovations that transformed the structure's façade into its current look. Upon their deaths just before the 1990s, the Ekerts left the Parsonage property in their will to the Town of Germantown, in the hopes that the town would continue their preservation work (Dickerman 2019: 12). Since becoming a property of the town, the History Department and Garden Club have made the Parsonage their home. In 2009, Bard College's Archaeologist in Residence, Christophe Lindner, began to conduct excavations across the lawn, and inside the building, in hopes that the rich history of the people of this site can be uncovered.

Mothering Work

Now a days, to enter the cellar visitors must make their way to the staircase located between the main entrance and the parlor room. During the Persons occupation the family would have entered through the front door that was later converted into a window to protect the Ekert family's collectables in the late 1900s. The door would have opened into a room housing a large eighteenth century hearth on the western wall, complete with bread oven in the northern most back corner. If one were to face the hearth, and peek at the right-hand side of the wooden frame, passing over nail holes, hook holes, and the other marks from time, one would come across a series of stippled holes that appear far different from those other marks of daily life. A punctuated circle and cross inhabits the wood. Where the cross meets the right-most edge of the circle, the hole is much more pronounced, almost emphasized. On the Bakongo cosmogram, this would be the point of birth.

The Bakongo cosmogram originates from the Congo-Angola region of West Africa and embodies West African cosmological perceptions of circularity and continuity. In Bakongo religion, the land of the living is characterized as a mountain over a barrier of water which divides the land of the living from the land of the ancestors. The land of the ancestors is made of white clay. Each day, the sun rises above the barrier in the east and makes its way high in the sky, until its decent into the land of the dead in the west, mimicking the path of the sun in the lower-hemisphere (MacGaffery 1986: 43). The sun will complete the clockwise rotation through the land of the dead, until the sun reaches the point of the birth of a new day once again in the east. And so the circle continues, representing the cycle of birth, life, death, and rebirth (MacGaffery 1986: 45). While the Persons went along conducting their daily lives, the cosmogram inhabited the western most wall of the Parsonage. If a family member were to look at the hearth, and if that wall became transparent, that member would have seen the Catskills

above the Hudson river. How many times, looking out at those mountains above that river, may they have made that connection?

It is the largest hole, at the point of birth, which draws a connection between the symbol on the hearth, and the women of the Persons family. Individuals who sought to harness the powers of the almighty Bakongo god, the Supreme Being, made sacred medicines called a *minkisi*. Midwives were individuals who utilized *nikisi* (plural: *minkisi*) and the cosmogram during birthing and childcare practices. Laurie Wilkie (2003: 138) recorded in her study of Mrs. Perryman, an African American midwife who practiced in nineteenth century Alabama, a story from Florida where enslaved mothers would physically reenact a cosmogram the first day she could leave the bed after birth. The new mother would take the infant, walk around the house in a clock-wise direction, while stopping at each of the four corners “which were said to symbolize the four directions of the wind” (Wilkie 2003: 138). If a circle is drawn around the house, and lines drawn from north to south, and east to west to mark the wind’s directions, a cosmogram is drawn. Wilkie notes that archaeologists are guilty of wanting to see this icon on sites of enslavement, which poses the risk of accidentally creating something out of nothing. In the case of the Parsonage, the cosmogram is clearly there. What demands explanation is why the point of birth seems so pronounced. The answer may be that a Persons woman was a midwife.

Wilkie (2003) understood African American Midwifery as a vocation of intergenerational mothering work. Drawing upon the definition of mothering, as outlined in the previous chapter, and Patricia Hill Collins’s (1994 in Wilkie 2003: 46) definition of “mother work” mothering work, is practices of mothering, but extending to areas and individuals outside of the immediate family. Midwives aid in the transition of one generation bringing in a new generation. Not only was she there for the birth, but she advised the mother throughout the pregnancy and for several

days afterwards (Wilkie 2003: 139). She imparted her knowledge of mothering to a new generation of mothers, assisted experienced mothers, and trained the next generation of midwives, often their daughter or niece (Wilkie 2003: 125). Midwives were also extremely religious, as they not only attended to their patients' physical needs and concerns, but also the metaphysical concerns. They were the mediators between generations of the living, but also between the generations of the living and the generations of the dead. In these circumstances an ancestor may be called upon to aid in birth. But in other circumstances, when a midwife imparted her "motherwit," or other mothering knowledges passed down or collected through experience, she passed on traditions or generational archives of experiences from the past, maintaining cultural practices of mothering from ancestral mothers, and the knowledge of how to act as an African American woman (Wilkie 2003: 121). Midwives mothered not just her family, but her community.

At two separate moments above, Persons women were residing in the household of a physician. In the first instance the entire household lived with Dr. Van Orden, and in the second Emma worked in the home of Dr. Charles A. Stevens. It was also noted that these women may have aided the physicians in their medical tasks, be it mixing medicines or possibly caring for ill patients. If Mary possessed knowledge in midwifery, then those skills may be a part of the reason why the family moved back to the Parsonage, for the particular purpose of aiding Dr. Van Orden. Similarly, Emma's possible exposure and experience through her mother may have made her particular skill set favorable to working in a physician's household such as Dr. Stevens. What is particularly striking about Dr. Stevens, is that he joined the American Institute of Homeopathy in 1867, five years after he left Hudson where he had employed Emma (Homeopathic Medical Society 1881: 43). Members of the institute are required to incorporate

homeopathic methods into their medical practice. The views of a midwife who sees little separation between physical, psychological, and spiritual healing may have contributed to Dr. Steven's perspective of healing.

One way that Emma could have established a connection with the above mentioned Jackson Family who visits her in 1908 is through midwifery work she could have performed during her time in New York City. Wilkie (2003: 140) notes that while rural midwives additionally supported themselves with farms, urban midwives would work as domestic servants or laundresses. In this case, Emma's choice to work as a domestic servant may have actually been a secondary occupation. The 1910 census lists William Jackson as 36 years old, which would mean his birth year is 1874 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1910). We know that Emma does not return to the parsonage until sometime after 1880 and we believe that she would still be remaining in New York City in 1874. This means that if Emma had been a midwife during this time, she more than likely delivered William, acting as a generational mediator. This would have established a connection between his family and her that appears to have lasted into William's adulthood. His visit to her home in 1908 may have been to show the woman who helped bring him into the world his budding family of a wife and two children.

In addition to the two instances of living with physicians, there exists an additional opportunity for the Persons women two have been exposed to medical discourse. Reverend Cock's older son, Daniel, becomes a physician at some point in his adulthood (Dickerman 2019: 10). Daniel's decision to join this profession may have been inspired by the healing work performed by his father. Before widespread medicinal healing was available, many would turn to spiritual healers to care for physical ailments in addition to spiritual ailments. If Tian was in fact a part of Reverend Cock's household during her childhood, then she could have been

exposed to the healing practices of both Reverend Cock and his son. Tian, could have then passed this knowledge onto Mary. Furthermore, there are similarities between the material remains discussed in Wilkie's study and material remains found at the Parsonage discussed by former Germantown Historian, Walter Miller (1967) in his history of the Parsonage, *Pfarrhaus*.

Many of the material remains utilized for midwifery and the focus of Wilkie's (2003) study were glass bottles found in a well, a similar phenomenon discovered during the Ekert's restoration of the Parsonage property. Wilkie (2003: 41) discovered on the Perryman site a back filled well with well over 150 identifiable bottles, many of which proved to be associated with Lucrecia's work as a midwife. When the Ekerts were renovating the property, they cleaned out an old well which contained glass bottles which disintegrated shortly after being removed from the well (Miller 1967: 20). Miller (1967: 20) suggests that the bottles are medicine bottles, and attributes them to Dr. Van Orden's medical practices, but an additional artifact recovered with the bottles makes me pause. Alongside the bottle, was found a photo who locals claimed to be Henry "Yellow Harry" Moore, the African American who sold the Parsonage to Henry Persons. Wells may have been seen as pathways to ancestors, as the round mouth represents circularity and continuity, while the water's surface separates the land of the living from the land of the dead. It seems more likely that the Persons would have placed the photo in the well, or that the "old-timers" who identified the man in the disintegrating photo to Miller were mistaken, and the man was in fact Henry, William Henry, or Jeremiah. If that be the case, then the lost glass bottle from that well may have been used in midwifery practices similar to those found in Lucretia Perryman's well.

Much of the evidence presented above may appear circumstantial, and I do not mean to completely dissuade skepticism upon this addition to the story. There exists, however, too much

circumstantial evidence to completely discount it all as coincidence. This study also concerns itself particularity with practices performed by women, and midwifery as a form of mothering and mothering work deserves to be considered in light of the above evidence. Evidence of midwifery would definitely indicate the Persons women's agency as active, as they utilize American material conditions to carry out west African mothering practices.

Cultural anthropologists have to their advantage, a field site that allows them to observe human behaviors situated directly in these practices' rich historical contextualization. Archaeologists, who study practices performed in contexts which now sit in human memory's past must reconstruct that sense of richly contextualized situatedness in order understand these practices in relation to the complex interconnected web of actions, knowledges, and resources which facilitate a particular practice of a particular culture in a particular time. Material conditions employed to facilitate a particular practice embody the social values which communicate the particular positionality of the agent carrying out that practice. By situating the material remains of this study within their complex situatedness in time and space, and in relation to the particular practices these materials were employed to carry out, the values embodied by the materials, and thus attempts to communicate with others can be revealed. Because the archaeologist is not an individual belonging to the world being investigated, but rather a social being from a distinctly different time and place, the contextualized framework crafted in this chapter is necessary to reveal these values.

The behaviors of the Persons family through documentary records alone do not shed light onto whether their collective actions indicate the application of practical or discursive knowledge in their practices, and therefore it is unknown whether their agency was active or passive

respectively without turning to an analysis of cultural material remains. Mary stays home to keep house, an Anglo-American quality which identifies a woman as a ‘True American Woman,’ however this is during a time in which Anglo-American women assert that African American women’s identities should include wage labor. Her daughters, do participate in wage labor, but yet this wage labor inherently blurs the lines between the domestic sphere, and the production sphere. The Parsonage is classified as a farm, which may have required Persons of all genders to participate in maintenance, thus furthering the potential for blurred lines and active agency. Furthermore, if the Persons women participated in midwifery, then their agentic actions would inherently be active. The next chapter intends to outline the methodology crafted and enacted to reveal which values were imbued in the material remains recovered from the parsonage, in an attempt to clarify the Persons’ means of inhabiting their structural conditions.

Chapter 4: Excavation and Artifact Analysis Methodology

Directed Aims



Figure 4.1 “Rebekah-at-the-Well” teapot sherd recovered from test unit 76.

The conceptualization of this study began in the summer of 2018, in response to the materials recovered during excavations of the 74 trench and test unit 76. Test unit 76 produced a ceramic sherd that once made up a Rockingham “Rebekah-at-the-Well” teapot (see Figure 4.1). This sherd led me to Laurie Wilkie’s (2003) *The Archaeology of Mothering: An African American Midwife’s Tale*, which in turn inspired my research into the ways in which women constructed their identities, with a much greater focus on African American women of the nineteenth century. During the same summer of the sherd’s discovery, test unit 74’s northern and southern walls were expanded. Unit 74 had produced large quantities of ceramics, glass, and bone, the three primary materials of Wilkie’s (2003) focus for her study. The first few levels of these extensions promised similar results. These encounters caused me to wonder if these units held evidence of women’s activities, and so I sought to construct an investigation of the materials of these test units to see if the materials evidenced female action. While Wilkie’s analysis guides my interpretation of some of the material remains included in this study, her study focuses on a deposit of material remains dated to a singular date, which differs from our dating aims here.

This study seeks to explore the ways in which the women of the Persons family recognized their world and their position in that world. More specifically, this study aims to

clarify whether the Persons women were active or passive agents in their transformation and articulation of their identity as African American women and American citizens, by identifying the means by which they interpreted their traditions of knowledgeability to inhabit the structural conditions of their reality. In order to investigate this clarification, this study pays particular attention to the ways in which the material culture recovered from the Maple Avenue Parsonage site embody the historically specific conditions and knowledges with which these women negotiated with in articulating their identity to others of their world.

The grounds for distinguishing passive agency from active agency relies on the archaeologist's ability to discern whether these women's actions reflect a reaction or adaptation to larger social changes, or an active interpretation and integration of non-dominant ideologies into the lexicon of their codified worlds. For the purposes of this study, gendered passive agency manifests in the material culture as embodied representations of the values of true womanhood and the separation of gendered spheres. In terms of Barrett's (2001: 155) theory of agency, passive agentic action is empirically informed, or "constituted through non-discursively ordered forms of knowledge." The agents of passive action do not question or challenge the order of their world or their traditions of knowledge. Instead, "practical knowledge was validated not by critical enquiry but by the simple fact that it worked" (Barrett 2001: 155). Examples of passive agency in material culture are evidence of participating in middle-class Anglo-American practices of social tea events, or family dinners with multiple courses of meals (Wall 2010: 81). Gendered active agency, on the other hand, manifests as material remains which embody multi-valent meanings that can be recognized as communicating within a variety of traditions of knowledgeability, and not singularly the dominant ideologies. For Barrett (2001: 155), active agency illustrates that the agent or agents discursively engaged with their historically specific

structural conditions and knowledges by “objectifying certain conditions as a strategy for acting upon them.” Active agents do not just act within their inhabited structural conditions, but act upon them to transform the ways in which they recognized their world and are recognized back. To distill whether the Persons women’s actions engaged with the conditions and knowledges of their world empirically or discursively, it much first be determined which material deposits pertain to the time of their occupation of the Maple Avenue Parsonage.

The contextual reorganization of archaeological excavation cautions the archaeologist to take special care and consideration when choosing which methodology is most appropriate to preserve the most amount of data. James Deetz (1988: 219) argues that the archaeological record holds “the promise of being more democratic and less self-conscious in its creation than any other body of historical material.” This begs the question, how do archaeologists preserve the democratic nature of archaeological deposits? Archaeological deposits are the by-product of human actions that make reference to the socio-historically constituted reality in which the material was utilized. These materials recovered from excavations are not intentionally placed within the ground in anticipation of archaeological study, and so we rely on methods for collecting stratigraphic information, that allows for materials to be spatially and temporally analyzed in reference to each other.

Stratigraphic analysis relies on the law of superposition, which dictates that materials found further from the surface of the ground were deposited earlier than materials with a provenience closer to the ground’s surface. The law of superposition allows archaeologists to look at artifacts in reference to each other vertically to view their temporal relations. Stratigraphic analysis also attends to the horizontal spatial relations of materials, both in a test unit and across the site. Employing an excavation methodology which attempts to collect and

preserve stratigraphic data requires an approach which records the exact position of the material within the three-dimensional space of the test unit, with reference to the entire excavation site.

When the Maple Avenue Parsonage project began, there was no anticipation of what could and would be uncovered on the property. As a result, there existed no guiding feature, other than the standing parsonage structure to directly influence the spatial, or horizontal, organization of the site. It was decided upon that test units would be organized on a grid of ten foot intervals, which allows stratigraphic profiles of test units to be compared relationally where unit walls intersect on this grid. Comparing these profiles relationally across a vertical plane also generates insight into how the topography of a site developed in relation to environmental factors and human modification. To accurately collect stratigraphic information across the site, the field crew excavated with attention to changes in levels and stratum.

Excavation Methods

The test units were excavated by trowel, and measuring tape at arbitrary intervals of two inches (5.08 centimeters) per level. Because strata vary in thickness, arbitrarily incremented levels allow for a higher degree of control over collecting stratigraphic information, as it standardizes how much soil and associated materials are removed at a given time, thus preserving temporal relations. The size of test units vary across the site depending upon what factors influenced the opening of or expanding of a particular test unit. The units utilized in this study, units 74, 74N, 74 S½, 75, and 76 were organized on a north-south axis projected from the south wall of the Parsonage, and located on the north-western edge of the backyard (see Figure 4.2). The imperial system was chosen as the appropriate system for spatial measurements, because the structures on the site were built using this system. Measurements of weight utilize the standard metric system.

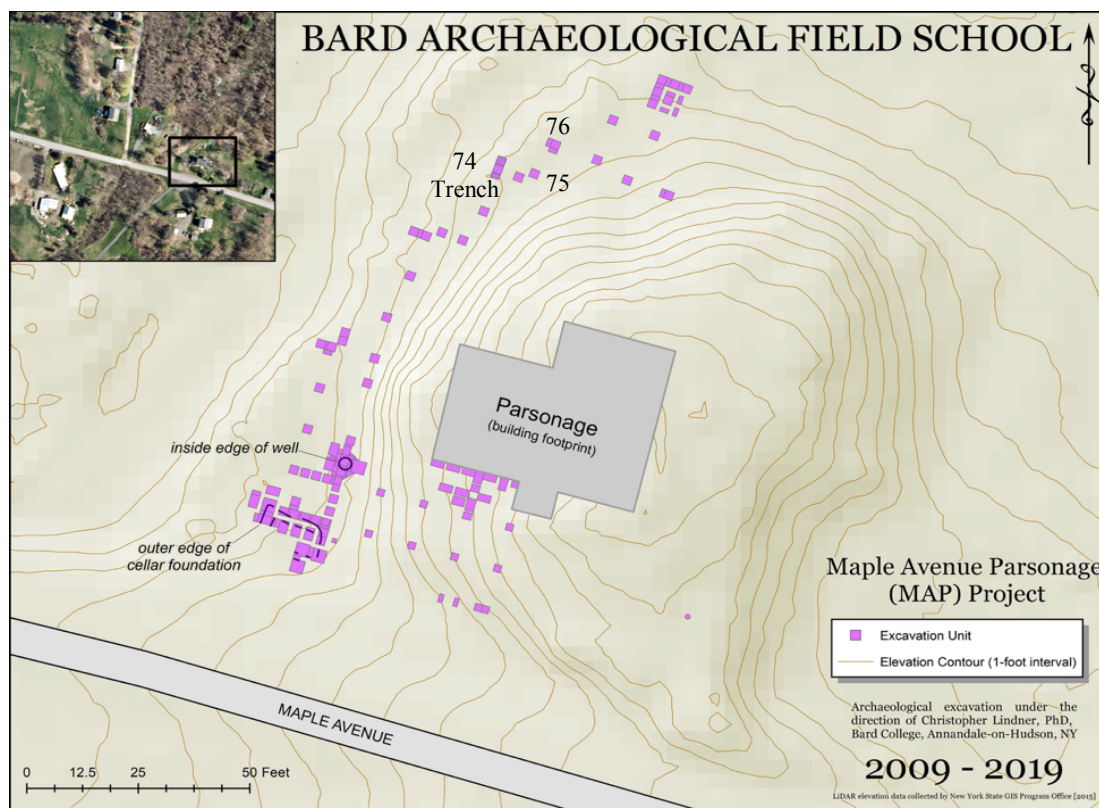


Figure 4.2 Layout of the test unit grid for the Maple Avenue Parsonage site.

The establishment of a new stratum is typically demarcated by changes in soil color or texture, but the presence of gravel and large stone slabs were also taken into account when determining the stratum changes for test units included in this study. This means that while strata thickness may vary between test units, level thickness remains largely consistent, unless a new strata occurred mid-level. Artifacts and ecofacts that were directly recovered *in situ* were provenienced and placed in a zip-lock bag. The provenience of these materials were recorded on both the bag and the field notes. All other artifacts, ecofacts, and biofacts were placed in a bag labeled “artifacts,” “ecofacts,” or “coal and brick.” These materials were either plucked from loose soil, or discovered in one of the one-quarter inch mesh screens used to sift through excavated soils. Findings and observations were recorded on both field notes, and a daily journal recorded by each field crew member beginning in the summer of 2018.

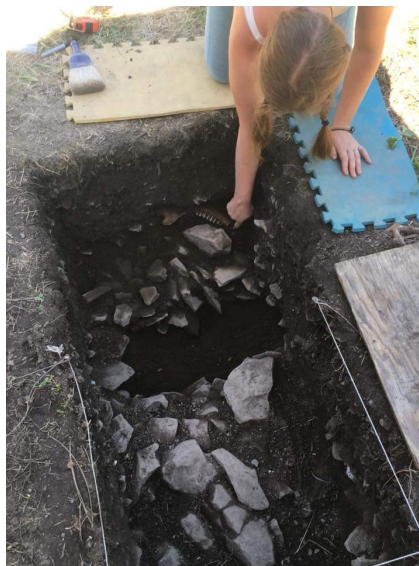


Figure 4.3 Photograph of the 74 trench before the addition of TU 74 S½ for the removal of the cattle jaw. Courtesy of Alison Schukal.

The soil stratigraphy of the test units included in this study can be characterized by five distinctive descriptions, labeled I-V (see Appendix A). Stratum I is characterized as brown silt, and occurs on average to a depth of four inches. Stratum two is a continuation of this brown silt, but includes significant quantities of gravel. The exact qualities of this gravel are inaccessible at this time, but can be confidently characterized as multiple handfuls per level. Stratum II occurs on average at depths up to 12 inches. Stratum III's thickness and description vary greatly in the notes of these units. Stratum III in the 74 trench can be characterized as brown silt with large rock slabs (see Figure 4.3). These slabs are what indicated a stratum change between II and III, and III and IV. These slabs can be found between 12-24 inches. Stratum IV for the 74 trench is a return to brown silt possibly a buried topsoil of stratum I, while Stratum V is the dark yellow-brown clay of the local glacial subsoil. Stratum IV for the 74 trench occurs until 30 inches below surface. The relative absence of these stone slabs from test units 75 and 76 (see Figure 4.4), and the horizontal nature of these slabs indicate that the slabs are representational of the feature referred to above.

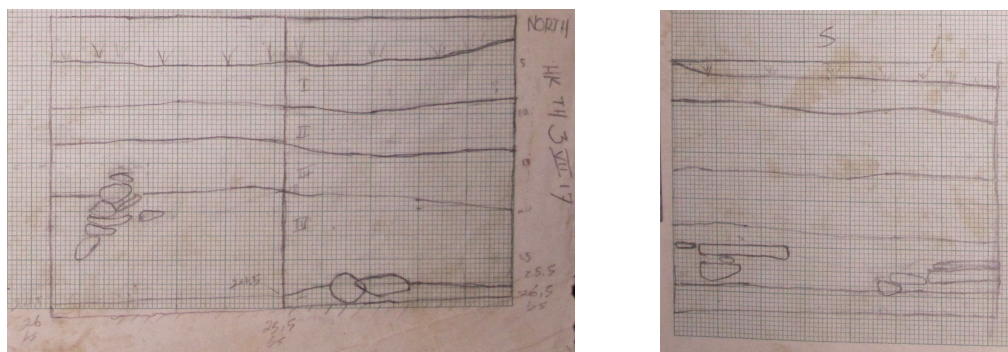


Figure 4.4 Images of stratigraphic profiles of the north wall (left) and south wall (right) of test unit 76.

Stratum III for test units 75 and 76 are described as yellow-brown clay-silt with gravel. This stratum's greatest depth occurs at 22 inches. Stratum IV for test units 75 and 76 occurs until 24 inches as a mottling of color and soil types from stratum III and V. Stratum records for units 75 and 76 are off by one level for strata III-V, which may be explained by the units' positionality in relation to the hill that slopes up towards the Parsonage, raising from the south-eastern sides of these units.

This method has uncovered several notable features on the Maple Avenue Parsonage site, some of which are visibly standing through preservation or reconstruction, and others of which are still being investigated, or where covered over after excavation was completed. Presently standing is the original 1767 parsonage structure, and her subsequent additions and modifications, placed adjacent to the sub-surface remnants of the circa 1746 parsonage and a German-style well. Both the ruins and well are located in the front yard and are not currently believed to be associated with the Persons family. Photographic evidence recovered from the Germantown History Department's records of their renovative efforts of the property in the late 1990s reveals that an outhouse and barn were located on and around the northern most cluster of test units opened in the backyard. There is no record to indicate exactly when these two structures were built, however material evidence investigated by Ethan Dickerman (2019) in his

undergraduate thesis at Bard College suggests an association with or interaction with that area by the Persons. The gravel is being investigated as a driveway, although the exact location and dimensions of this driveway have not been determined at present. The large quantities of gravel present in stratum II from units on the western and northern edges of the property indicate that the driveway may have wrapped around the western side of the house, going towards the back yard.

The 74 trench contains evidence suggestive of an additional feature. This test unit continued to produce artifacts at much lower depths than other test units on the site. The north and south extensions added to unit 74 in 2018 were opened with the intention of investigating the possibility of this new feature. Presently there is not enough evidence to definitively discern what this feature is, however, the following chapter will explore possibilities suggested by the material remains recovered from these units, which are included in the scope of this study. Because of the presence of bone, shell, and ceramics in the unit, one possible suggestion for this feature is open air kitchen dating to the time of the Persons. Many African Americans would conduct daily life chores in an open yard area, including food preparation. To look for evidence of an open air kitchen, the construction will first need to be identified as being built in the location of where the stones were found, and secondarily if there is evidence of food preparation practices.

Analysis Methods

To illustrate what methods were followed to accomplish dating material remains utilized in the study, and the limitations of available data which informed this methodology, we must briefly digress into the conditions which shaped the trajectory of this study. The original scope of this study was to focus on ceramic analysis. While the test units produced glass and bone in

addition to ceramic sherds, the diversity of styles of the ceramic sherds recovered proved to be the most promising avenue for dating the test units. An analysis of ceramic diversity promises to account for multifunctional use, or particular choices in consumer taste that may have gone against popular trends. In addition, many other archeologists whose works helped guide this study, including Wall (2010, 1999, 2008, 1991), Rotman (2019), and Bulgar (2015), chose ceramics as their material for analytical support. For these archaeologists, changes in the social meaning of the context in which the ceramic good was utilized can be reflected in the style and decoration of the ceramic vessel (Wall 2010: 84). These changes to distinctions in style would have been valuable in determining which traditions of knowledgeability and structural conditions the Persons women may have negotiated with. This, coupled with my background in ceramic production caused me to developed a methodology which anticipated identifying ceramic typology and function to calculate ceramic vessel counts and mean ceramic dates.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused Bard College to shut down student facilities on the campus that included the archaeology lab, forcing me to reevaluate the trajectory of this study under these new conditions. The closing of the lab created limitations on the archaeological data that was available to me during the completion of this study. Physical access to the materials that were excavated from the units included in this study disappeared over night. What remained accessible was the field and lab notes rescued right before the lab was sealed, and the Maple Avenue Parsonage catalog that is compiled on Google sheets. The identification of the ceramic artifacts included in this study were not completed to a sufficient enough degree before this event, to allow the analysis of this one material to sufficiently support this study. To allow this study to continue, the approach to artifact analysis was transformed into a methodology that would allow those materials possessing a seriated typology to be included in reference to each

other stratigraphically. A seriated typology refers to material styles that have a known date range for when that particular style was manufactured.

Ceramic sherds, vessel glass, and nails are the materials of focus for dating the stratum of the test units utilized in this study because the seriation of their typologies can be compared relationally across stratigraphic profiles with other non-seriated materials, or those materials whose seriation are harder to distinguish. The category of coal, a material whose use to heat American homes is time period specific, will be utilized to further inform comparisons of artifacts across the stratigraphic profile. Coal is an important material to consider for the purposes of this study, as coal burning stoves would have been utilized and drifted out of use shortly after the time of the Persons occupation (approximately 1850-1920), and therefore materials which were found in proximity to coal implies a possible association with the Persons' activities.

The materials analyzed for this study were identified by the author of this study and Bard College graduate Ethan Dickerman beginning in March of 2019. While analysis may have been conducted earlier on other artifacts collected from the Maple Avenue Parsonage site, the "MAP catalog" version with which this study engages with finds its origins within this time frame. Preliminary identifications given to ceramic sherds during the cataloging process were informed by the digital type collections offered by the Florida Museum of Natural History (2020), and the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory (2008; Samford and Miller 2012), as well as Lynsey Bates and Leslie Copper's "DAACS cataloging manual" (2014), and Millersville University's "Quick & Dirty Field Guide to Historic Artifacts" (2011). Secondary identifications performed on vessel glass and nail entries listed in the catalog were informed by Bill Lindsey's (2020) "Historic Glass Bottle Identification and Information Website," and

William Hampton Adams' (2002) study "Machine Cut Nails and Wire Nails: American Production and Use for Dating 19th-Century and Early-20th-Century Sites" respectively.

Both archaeologists who compiled the MAP catalog constructed their categories for identification independently of one another, as reflected in the ways in which catalog data was organized between each test unit. I make note of this difference both as an explanation for why the test unit data varies in organization, and to make note of one of the ways in which the archaeologist's subjective positionality as a knowledgeable being-in-the-world influences this study. As Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995: 51) argues, "silences are inherent" during the production of sources, archives, and documents as we position the primacy of some categories of information over others. Because ceramic identification held this position of primacy concerning material analysis for both Dickerman and me, there exists a great breadth of detail to the descriptive elements, such as paste or glaze description which are utilized in identifying ceramic artifacts. Glass and nails did not hold this same primacy of position. As a result, color categories for glass vessel identifications and dating conflate the green and olive-green vessel glass categories distinguished by the Lindsey (2020) into a singular category. Though Wall (2010, 1999, 2008, 1991), Rotman (2019), and Bulgar (2015) focus primarily on ceramic analysis, the richness in interpretive detail that Wilkie's focus on a variety of materials from the Perryman site is able to synthesize illustrates that positioning one material over another during the identification process can be a dangerously subjective perspective that can be applied by the identifiers before knowing which material possesses more insight into their historically situated use. Focusing on a singular material can greatly limit the potential of a study.

To look at the materials relationally, the raw data counts will be organized and viewed on a chart specifically designed to visually represent the totals of each of the ten categories of

materials by the volumes of each level and stratum. Each test unit's raw counts will be included on a single chart that displays each of the ten categories. This chart helps reveal which materials are most numerous or scarce in each level and stratum and aids in clarifying which materials should be the focus for assigning the most accurate date range. Further charts of similar structure, but with categories applying to secondary categories, of these materials are created to continue clarifying which date-ranges more accurately apply levels and strata. These secondary categories are applied to ceramics, glass, and nails. The purpose behind separating vessel glass from flat glass was to narrow the focus onto material evidencing women's activities. Flat glass can be attributed to architectural or building materials, which for the time period with which this study makes its focus would evidence men's activities due to the separation of gendered activities. Vessel glass and ceramics, are further divided into a final category based on color and style respectively to help narrow down the broad date ranges that the typology categories proved. Ceramic sherds whose exact style and typology was fully identified and therefore hold exact date ranges are noted separately from the charts with their stratigraphic provenience.

This process of 'lumping' and 'splitting' the raw counts into larger and smaller categories provides a multiplicity of visual avenues by which the site can be analyzed in reference to each test units' specific location on the site. An analysis of each test unit analyzed in relation to its location of the site can provide insight into what activities took place in the locations of those test units. Through this approach to analysis, date ranges for levels and strata will be revealed, and more specifically evidence suggestive of activities performed by women will also be revealed.

Concluding Remarks

While an analysis of ceramics would have been the preferred choice for the specific focus of this study, as ceramic remains were found in large quantities on this site, this new approach may shed light on aspects of the site that would have been lost through a method which focused singularly on one material. For example, it was noted that flat glass and vessel glass may represent specifically gendered activities. In a study which looks for evidence of the separation of gendered activities, focusing solely on a material which is engendered to one sphere or the other limits the possibilities of discovering blurring of these gendered lines. This is especially important to take into consideration when the separation of these gendered boundaries can appear differently on rural and urban sites. For this very reason, the categories of secondary and tertiary analysis are left broad to allow for some of the unexpected or unanticipated roles that these materials may have played in the Person's lives. This study focuses on a broad stratigraphic and seriated analysis of multiple materials. While ceramics is the preferred choice for the material analysis of many nineteenth century domestic sites, hopefully the inclusion of other materials in this study may contribute insight into the ways that materials other than ceramics were employed in the lives of nineteenth-century African American women.

Chapter 5: Results of Material Analysis

Introduction

This chapter is a comprehensive report of the material assemblage of five test units on the northwestern side of the Maple Avenue Parsonage site. The raw count dataset compiled and considered for the purposes of this study consists of 6,487 material remains (see Table 5.1). Because this site was occupied by various individuals and households over a period of approximately 275 years, from this primary dataset, a secondary dataset was established for material remains identified as offering a viable manufacturing date range for discerning which stratum or level may represent a particular occupation or range of occupations. This secondary dataset, encompassing nails, ceramic sherds, and glass, is comprised of 318 items, or elements.

While emphasis is placed on the debris density analysis of this subsection of the dataset for the purpose of dating the test units, a more detailed consideration of raw counts of the entire assemblage will be included to aid in determining what social values could be embodied in the material remains. This chapter is a focused analysis aimed at revealing evidence of women's activities on the Maple Avenue Parsonage site. The assemblage as a whole is considered for their embodiment of structural conditions after re-situating them back within their historical complexity upon completion of the stratigraphic dating. While this study focuses on women's activities, materials associated with the activities of both genders will be included in this analysis as both agricultural activity and midwifery practices blur nineteenth century values of gender separation. This chapter will address whether the material assemblage evidences practices of mothering, domestic service, and midwifery, and the final section of this chapter will reveal what these practices suggest of the Persons' agency.

Table 5.1 Material Totals and Percentages

	Totals	TU 74N	TU 74	TU 74S 1/2	TU 75 & 75 S1/2	TU 76	Percentage based on dataset count total
Brick	1,621 / 1,810g.	447	159 / 1,060g.	464	397 / 100g.	154 / 650g.	25.0%
Coal	1,713 / 3,895g.	524	124 / 2,435g.	900	133 / 650g.	32 / 810g.	26.4%
Bone	902	177	270	228	174	53	13.9%
Nail	172	40	48	32	27	25	2.7%
Ceramic	1,136	259	181	260	265	171	17.5%
Glass	303	85	75	44	67	32	4.8%
Shell	444	93	69	136	110	36	6.8%
Metal	66	10	20	12	13	11	1.0%
Pipe	64	7	5	36	7	9	1.0%
Tooth	66	11	27	8	16	4	1.0%
Totals	6,487	1,653	978 / 3,495g.	2,120	1,209 / 750g.	527 / 1,460g.	100%

Stratigraphic Dating

The Persons household occupied the Parsonage for the greatest length of time out of all households who occupied the property, beginning in 1746. Even if we only include the census years after Mary and Henry move in as husband and wife (1830), the Persons occupy the site for 81 years. In Chapter 3, I articulated the possibility of Tian being born to a third preceding generation of the Persons lineage back from the last cohort, that of Emma Jane and her siblings, during Reverend Cock's occupation of the site. If this is the case, there is the potential for discovering four generations worth of actions, which inhabit the structural conditions of these actions' particular location within time and space. In other words, these practices may be similar but carried out through differing means of inhabitation, and it is these means which differentiate historical and regionalized practices. For this very reason, identifying which material residues

evidence activities during a particular occupation on the site is crucial for understanding which structural conditions would have been known and available to a particular household.

To understand which households produced the various depositional layers uncovered during excavations of the 74 trench and test units 75 and 76, the 318 nail, glass, and ceramic materials identified with narrow production dates (see Table 5.2) were analyzed in terms of debris density and their stratigraphic relationships within the ground. Working with data to produce production date ranges suitable for clarifying materials deposited by a particular household proves difficult under normal circumstances. Many date ranges, such as American grey salt-glazed stoneware, which was produced 1787-1920, are extremely broad at 133 years of production, and therefore clarify little. In addition, materials such as ceramic utilitarian and tablewares, and eighteenth century glass bottles may have remained in use by a household long after the date of that material's procurement. Bill Lindsey (2020), author and compiler of the *Historic Glass Bottle Identification & Information Website*, notes that glass bottles utilized during and before the eighteenth century in America were continuously reused because glass bottles were imported from European nations. Many of these bottles would be included in probate records as limited quantities with high demand gave these materials considerable value, and would have been passed on to others after death (Linsley 2020). Ceramics can similarly be passed on as heirlooms. Dating analysis for this project was further complicated by the limited details included in the individual descriptions of each MAP catalog material entry.

The 318 nail, ceramic, and glass artifacts that were chosen for the purpose of dating each unit's strata, are what remain from several initial attempts at clarifying the broad date ranges produced by the inclusion of all materials with dates of production identifiable. Traditional techniques for identifying materials were employed during the cataloging process. Some entry

Table 5.2 Material Production Dates

Material Category	Date Range
Wrought Nail	1710—1830 (Adams 2002: 67)
Cut Nail	1830—1883 (Adams 2002: 70)
Wire Nail	1883—Present (Adams 202: 70)
Stoneware— White Salt-glazed	1720—1770 (Millersville University 2011: 44)
Porcelain— English Soft Paste	1742—1800 (Millersville University 2011: 55)
Albany Slip	1825—1920 (Maryland Archaeological Conservation Lab 2002)
Pearlware	1775—1840 (Millersville University 2011: 11)
Pearlware— Sponge Painted	1770-1830 (Florida Museum 2020)
Pearlware—Hand Painted	1780—1890 (Florida Museum 2020)
Pearlware—Shell- edged	1780—1895 (Florida Museum 2020)
Creamware	1762—1820 (Millersville University 2011: 10)
Creamware— Cauliflower	1760-1775 (Bates and Cooper 2014: 7)
Slipware	1675—1770 (Millersville University 2011: 7)
Whiteware— Transfer Print	1830—1990 (Florida Museum 2020)
Gothic Panel— Transfer Print	1830—1990 (Florida Museum 2020)
Rockingham Ware	1850—1950 (Florida Museum 2020)
Aqua Vessel Glass	1800—1930 (Lindsey 2020)
Colorless Vessel Glass	1870—1990 (Lindsey 2020)
Magenta Glass	1840—1880 (Lindsey 2020)
Milk Glass	1890—1950 (Lindsey 2020)
Manganese Dioxide Glass	1880—1930 (Lindsey 2020)

descriptions simply contain the type of ware or utility purpose (i.e. stoneware, refined earthenware, redware; vessel or flat glass) while others have more specific detailed information such as ceramic paste type, glass or glaze color, and even descriptions of decorative techniques. Materials with elaborate descriptive entries, or typologies identified with narrow production ranges, such as hand painted Pearlware, Rockingham-ware, manganese dioxide glass, or cut and wire nails were singled out for debris density analysis and stratigraphic analysis. As a result, many of the materials singled out from the dataset initially considered for their utility of dating had to be excluded from the final production date dataset.

To exemplify this process of simplification, at the earliest stages of this analysis all stoneware was considered as an entire category, but only white salt-glazed stoneware is considered in the final analysis of this study's stratigraphic dating. After the initial category of stoneware, these ceramic materials were able to be further divided into American and European produced stonewares. The former, dates to before the earliest occupation of the site, but the latter dates to that 133 year period mentioned above. Pertaining to the European category, there were found several sherds of brown salt-glazed stoneware. The catalog did not distinguish between the Rhenish type, or the English type, which attained popularity over the former. For this reason, European stoneware could not be further narrowed. The wide production ranges of European and American stoneware categories also conceal the narrow date range for stoneware specifically produced with white salt-glaze. This particular type of stoneware was produced during the transition from European to American stonewares, and is typically found on American sites dating to the mid-eighteenth century or transitioning into the nineteenth century. Because no other stoneware was able to be simplified into narrow date ranges, only white salt-glazed

stoneware was included in the final simplified ceramic date range dataset. Similar processes of inclusion and exclusion were applied to glass and nails.

The process of stratigraphic dating compares the spatial location of the production date ranges offered by the simplified material dataset with regard to the stratigraphic profiles of the 74 trench and test units 75 and 76. This comparative process offers suggestions for possible explanations of the feature in the 74 trench, as well as practices which resulted in a transformation of the Parsonage landscape. The previous chapter began a detailed explanation into the characteristics of each test unit's strata (see Appendix A). In the process of revealing the dates associated with each test unit's stratum, we will need to explore suggestions for the possible feature in the 74 trench.

A quick glance over of the different strata reveals that many of the layers in the cluster of units excavated on the northwestern edge of the property share a similar history of landscape transformation. More specifically, strata above the interface between stratum IV and stratum III share the same transitional boundary depths. The depth of the interface between stratum I and II in test unit 74 S½ may seem contradictory to this statement, however, experience with this particular trench of units indicates to me that this anomaly is actually attributable to the natural sloping of the ground as one travels towards the south of the property in this area. The sediment composition of the 74 trench is different in stratum III and IV than the composition of sediments found in the same strata for test units 75 and 76, and they appear to transition at different times too. This difference in transition and sediment characterization is part of the reason why this trench is being investigated as a possible feature, and will be discussed further below. Stratum V is the easiest to date because the characteristics of this stratum, yellow brown clay, and its

general absence of materials indicates that the excavator has reached sterile glacial subsoil, dating to several thousand years in our geological past.

Stratum I, characterized as a brown silt topsoil, reflects the most recent activities on the site that took place between the mid-twentieth century and the present day archaeological and gardening activities on the site. In conversations with Alvin Sheffer, descendent of the 1710 Palatines, history enthusiast, and a human archive of local Germantown stories, he remarked that Mr. Ekert, during his ownership of the property through the second half of the twentieth century, filled his lawn with a layer of topsoil in an attempt to protect all of the material remains found on the surface and his lawnmower while he was going about yard work. Despite his efforts, some materials such as teeth, nails, and ceramic sherds are still making their way to the surface. These materials, also found in the first four inches below the ground surface, mostly date to the twentieth century or the transition from the previous century. This date range can be further narrowed by comparing the materials found in this stratum to those found in stratum II.

Stratum II is characterized as the same brown silt of the first stratum, only now copious amounts of gravel are mixed in with the soil and material remains. The presence of this gravel is suggestive of the driveway feature of unclarified size and destination mentioned in the previous chapter. Stratum II, across all units comprising this study's dataset, has a thickness of approximately eight inches, beginning four inches below surface. Stratum II is two inches thicker at the bottom in test unit 75, but this difference may be better understood after explaining the phenomenon seen in the different compositions of strata III and IV. The majority of material remains found in the upper two levels of stratum II date to the late nineteenth century. Some of the materials found between two and six inches below surface, or the transitional levels of stratum I and II, contain materials that could have been procured and utilized by the final

generation of the Persons family, or the unknown individuals who rented the parsonage from Henry Fingar after Emma's death in 1911. In particular I am referring to the manganese dioxide glass and the "milk" white glass, whose dates of manufacture span from 1905 to 1920, encompass less than ten years before or after Emma's passing. To clarify whether the materials of these levels more accurately reflected activities by the Persons, or later occupants, I looked at whether cut or wire nails were predominant in these upper levels.

America in the nineteenth century used three types of nails with particular date ranges for their popular use and production. When considering the production date differences between wire, cut, and wrought nails, cut nails (1830-1883) and wire nails (1883-present) are the most useful for distinguishing deposits near structures dating to the early to mid-nineteenth century from those emplaced during the late nineteenth to early twentieth century (Adams 2002: 67, 70). Only one wire nail was identified in the entire assemblage considered for this dataset, while 34 cut nails were primarily recovered from the upper three levels of stratum II. The majority of these cut nails were found in test units 75 and 76, numbering at 27. After comparing the glass, ceramic, and cut nail production dates for the upper level of stratum II, it can be comfortably asserted that these materials most likely belonged to members of the Persons family. The levels which transition from I into II contain a significant array of materials used in a variety of daily life, from architectural materials, to subsistence and food preparation materials, to storage materials. This mixing of materials utilized for various practices located in levels where the production date ranges of these materials may indicate a transition from one household to the next household, suggests that this depositional layer may be the result of cleaning out the Parsonage of the Persons family's remaining belongings after Emma's death or a few decades

previously. Anything that could not be sold for her estate, would have been removed, and potentially left in a midden on the property.

The lower levels of stratum II contain materials with production date ranges which reflect activities performed either in the latter two decades of the eighteenth century, or the first half of the nineteenth century. Aqua glass vessels that only began being produced in America during the nineteenth century and colorless glass that only achieved wide circulation in the mid nineteenth century are found in these lower levels (Lindsey 2020). Sherds of Rockingham and Albany slip ceramics wares, whose earliest production dates date to the mid-to-late nineteenth century, are found in the level right above the transition into stratum III. For these reasons, stratum II seems to represent the activities performed by the Persons family during the nineteenth century. Because Maria Delamater owned the parsonage by 1805, stratum II is also considered to hold materials representing Dianna's and Mary's activities while a part of that household and through the rest of the nineteenth century.

The foot of densely packed, primarily horizontal large stone slabs which characterize stratum III in the 74 trench was initially suggested to be a feature. While this is still a possibility, there is also evidence that this pile of stones may have been discarded extras or materials rejected during the building of the extant parsonage. Stratum III for test unit 75 and 76, however, contained little to no stone slabs. To fully understand the 74 trench's stratum III we must simultaneously look at its stratum IV.

Stratum IV within the 74 trench is characterized as a residual topsoil similar to the brown silt topsoil which comprises stratum I across the site. This secondary topsoil indicates that the stones were placed on top of the ground rather than placed within the ground. It was initially postulated that the horizontal nature of the stone's stacking indicates the presence of a

construction in ruins, though the nature of this feature could not be discerned. What is striking about these stacked stones is the presence of large amounts of additional materials that were scattered throughout the stacking. It is actually this stratum which caused me to fondly refer to this trench as “the units of glass, bones, and stones” due to the unusually large quantities of large mammal bones, stone slabs, stoneware sherds, and olive glass bottle fragments that kept being encountered the further down we dug. Most of the material recovered from stratum III produced production dates reflective of the earlier occupants of the site. One of the more striking finds were fragments of olive-green glass Dutch wine bottles. While Dutch wine bottles were being imported into the Americas from the beginning of colonization, the particular shape of the foot curving up to the body (see Figure 5.1) resembles the same shape as the Dutch wine bottles, which archaeologist Ivor Noel Hume (2011: 1) contained in his collection of artifacts, and which he suggests may have come from the Flag or Fort Island close by Guyana. This fort dates to the eighteenth century and as such the bottles date to that period.

Figure 5.1 Images of a Dutch wine bottle ca. 1750 recovered from the 74 trench.



The only materials that do not date to the eighteenth century in stratum III of the 74 trench are Albany slip and sponge painted pearlware found in unit 74N, which reflect early-to-mid-nineteenth century dates. While this might indicate that the stones were deposited in the nineteenth century, there is also a large chance that these materials could have fallen between the stones over time, or that the materials were displaced due to weather exposure or burrowing animals. This phenomenon only occurs in test unit 74N of the 74 trench. In addition, test unit 74N and test unit 74 contained a large rodent burrow through stratum II and III of the western wall. Both of these factors incline me to disregard this anomaly, and consider stratum III's materials as representative of eighteenth century activities.

The stones are not fitted together in such a way to imply that they were left undisturbed if this feature is in fact a construction. What this means is that if the stones were once a part of a structure, then there is a good chance that the structure was built and resided in a different location before it was taken down. As mentioned in the previous chapter, archaeological excavation in the western front yard of the Parsonage revealed a stone structure and well. This structure was attributed to being the original 1746 Reformed minister's parsonage on the property (Lindner 2013). While many of the stones for that building and well have been recovered, it is not known if all remains of those ruins have been found on the site. Reverend Cock has the extant parsonage built in 1767, during which time he was most likely residing in the front yard parsonage. I suggest two possibilities for the backyard stones.

The first possibility is that after the extant parsonage was completed, the Cock family chose to dismantle the structure in the front yard and some of the structure's stone was moved to the back yard for purposes unknown. This would explain why very little architectural materials other than a layer of brick in level 12 of the 74 trench exist in stratum III's material assemblage.

However, little else supports this idea without understanding why some stone would be left in the front yard while others were moved to a new location. At another point, these stones were considered for the possibility of evidencing an open air kitchen. An open air kitchen would explain the presence of subsistence materials such as shell and bone, but would not be able to account for why this shell and bone is scattered primarily throughout all twelve inches of the stone stratum. Furthermore, an open air kitchen would suggest that the feature was built *in situ*, which has been already established as unlikely due to the stones' current disposition.

The more likely possibility is that this pile of stone is the remnants of building the extant parsonage. The largest amount of architectural material unearthed from stratum III in the 74 trench is brick. Brick is utilized in the chimney of the hearth for the extant parsonage. It can be assumed that not all building material brought to a site or found on a site for constructing a structure would be utilized in the structure. Rock are variable in size and shape and when creating a stone structure, it can be assumed that some rocks would be altered or discarded during the process of construction. Perhaps, while the parsonage was being constructed at the top of the inclined slope on the property, workers, or more than likely the enslaved individuals owned by Reverend Cock, would alter a rock to fit and discard the excess debris by tossing it down the slope to the growing pile down below. Building a structure takes time, and if this pile of stones was being used as an area for discarded architectural materials, it may have also been used as a general refuse area. This may explain the presence of the bones of barnyard animals strewn within the pile, as well as broken ceramic and glass materials. Furthermore, as the stone constituents would have been emplaced, detailed additions such as windows and doors, which would have required the use of wrought nails, would have been added towards the completion of

the structure. This final detail may explain the small presence of wrought nails right at the transitional level from stratum III into Stratum II.

Stratum III and IV in test units 75 and 76 also suggest that the rocks in the 74 trench were piled in place rather than set in place as a structure. Stratum IV for these two units is characterized as a dark yellow-brown mottled silty clay. To characterize it in another way, as the archaeologist excavates a unit at the Maple Avenue Parsonage, the soil generally gradually transitions from brown silt, to brown silty-clay, to dark yellow-brown silty-clay, and finally to yellow-brown glacial clay. Test units 75 and 76 contain the dark yellow brown silty-clay of stratum IV, but lack the brown silty-clay which characterizes stratum III in some other areas of the site. The brown silt topsoil characterizing stratum IV in the 74 trench may not have become the dark yellow-brown silty-clay because the clay and rock surrounding the area acted as a preservative barrier. Furthermore, stratum III for test units 75 and 76 contain materials that date anywhere between the early eighteenth and mid-to-late nineteenth century, indicating this stratum's materials have been mixed and are thus fill. The fill would have been used to level off the difference in elevation between the ground surface, and the top of the rock pile. This is why the strata build evenly after the transition from stratum III into stratum II.

I am tentatively suggesting here that Reverend Cock's desires for a new parsonage are responsible for the differences between strata III and IV in the 74 trench and test units 75 and 76. There is the possibility that this deposit is the result of activities that came before or after the Cock family, however, the Cock family was the longest occupation by a minister on the site and his enslavement of individuals on his property would have provided him with the labor power to produce a foot worth of stone as a by-product of construction activities. For these reasons I attribute stratum III in trench 74 to the mid-late eighteenth century. While we may have found

evidence of landscape manipulation on the site, these activities are largely masculine in nature. Now that we have a greater understanding of which strata represent the Persons household's activity, let us determine which of these materials reflect women's activities.

Materials of the Women

The rest of this study's material analysis will focus primarily on stratum II, with attention to stratum III, as these strata are the most likely to hold evidence of the Persons family's activities. It has been illustrated above that stratum II primarily dates to the Persons we have found in the documentary record. Stratum III, however, may hold evidence of activities performed by the possible fourth generation which precedes Tian in Cock's household. These strata will be looked at for evidence of women's activities, with particular attention to subsistence materials, glass, and ceramics, for the purpose of discerning what values these materials may have embodied. Materials associated with masculine activities will also be given attention, as practices of African American midwifery incorporated both masculine and feminine elements into their craft. To ignore material due to their seemingly masculine qualities would be a dangerous assumption on the part of this author. Lastly, we will look at a variety of individual artifacts singled out for the particular values they appear to embody, and which are suggestive of revealing the means by which the Persons women inhabited their structural conditions. By the conclusion of this chapter, the particular form of agency enacted by the Persons may be clear.

Materials Subsistence Conditions

Many subsistence practices are attributed to women's work, but this cannot be outright assumed. We know from the 1865 census that Mary Ann Persons was being employed as a cook in Albany, New York (State of New York). It should be safe to assume that the other women of the household could cook or at least aid in the preparation of meals as well. The 1900 census

record reveals that the parsonage is a farm (U.S. Bureau of the Census). Rather than one of the commercial farms which produced the fruit being exported from Germantown by barge on the Hudson, the Parsonage farm would more likely have been for subsistence purposes. While the first recorded mention of the Parsonage property being utilized as a farm comes from the early twentieth century, faunal analysis conducted in the front yard of the Parsonage by zooarchaeologist Marie-Lorraine Pipes ca. 2015 caused her to suggest to Professor Christophe Lindner that the Parsonage may have been a farm for supplementing the various ministers' subsistence needs. As a farm, many activities for maintaining daily life may have crossed the boundaries between spheres of production and domesticity (Rotman 2015: 347). While men were selling their labor on commercial farms, urban working class women would have needed to take over daily farming duties to maintain their subsistence function. Activities that turned raw materials produced by farms, such as milk, into finished products, such as butter, directly implant activities of production into the domestic sphere of the home property. The preparation of food may be one particular field of practice which evidences the Persons crossing boundaries.

Three of the original ten categories for identifying material remains found on the Maple Avenue Parsonage site, bone, tooth, and shell are now separated from the larger dataset to be considered in terms of subsistence practices (see Table 5.3). The category of teeth was reintegrated within the category of bone for the purposes of this section. Subsistence materials comprise 21.7% of the entire dataset utilized for material analysis in this study and 72% of these materials for the northwest cluster of units are found in the 74 trench alone. Many of these materials were found as fragments, particularly those found between the rocks of stratum III.

Table 5.3 Subsistence Materials Totals and Percentages

Levels	TU 74N Shell	TU 74N Bone	TU 74 Shell	TU 74 Bone	TU 74 S1/2 Shell	TU 74 S1/2 Bone	TU 75 & 75 S1/2 Shell	TU 75 & 75 S1/2 Bone	TU 76 Shell	TU 76 Bone	Totals
1	7	3	2		4						16
2	16	1	7	1	8		4		1		38
3	5	1	8	6	4		16	4	7		51
4	3	7	17	56	28	32	26	24	7	13	213
5	7	6	7	59	28	60	12	18	3	6	206
6	7	6	6	8	4	24	20	28	8	5	116
7	8	8	4	9	16	40	14	56	5	9	169
8	7	21	2	19	44	80	6	8		3	190
9	4	14	4	12			4	20	3	18	79
10	18	14	2	38			4	30	1	1	108
11	4	36		47			4	4			95
12	6	63	2	25							96
13		2	1	9							12
14		2	7	2							11
15											
16											
Totals	92	184	69	291	136	236	110	192	35	55	1,400

Despite the fragmentary condition that many of these bones and shells were recovered in, some of the bones were identifiable and suggestions were put forth by the cataloguers as to the possible species represented in the assemblage. Of the 442 shell fragments, 33 were identified as clam shells, while 23 were identified as oyster shells. There is a general absence of shell identification in the data compiled from test units 74N and 74 S $\frac{1}{2}$, with only one oyster shell being identified.

A total of 900 bones and bone fragments were recovered from the northwestern cluster of test units. Of these bones, 770 fragments can be attributed to a large mammal. This animal was

Table 5.4 Zooarchaeological Remains

Species	Element	MNE*
Bos taurus (cow)	Teeth	66
	Mandible	4
Bos Taurus (cow) or Sus scrofa (pig)	Scapula	4
	Palate	1
	Unspecified Long Bone	17
	Condyle	4
	Phalange	1
	Unspecified Foot Bone	1
Unspecified Bird	Unclear	32

likely a barnyard animal. Only 130 of these bones were identifiable enough for the purposes of this study (see Table 5.4). Of the 98 large mammal bones, 28 bones were suggested to be either cow or pig, but not clarified further, while 32 bones were included in the catalog under one entry of “bird bones.” The remaining 38 bones were attributed as cattle bones, though most of these bones are teeth.

The oyster and clam shells recovered on the site more than likely originated in the Hudson River. The shell found in this section of the site is not very plentiful compared to the bone fragments, and only one oyster shell is recorded as remaining whole. There are a few occurrences in stratum III and IV in the 74 trench where the frequency of shell fragments spike in a given level, but this may be the result of whole shells fracturing or disintegrating over time. The ground conditions do not appear conducive for preserving shell as most fragments would begin disintegrating once removed during excavation. The greatest number of shell fragments were found in test unit 75 and relate to the Persons occupation. The shell produced on this site may have been prepared by Mary or one of her daughters, but stories recorded by the former

Germantown and Columbia County Historian, Walter Miller (1967: 12), suggest that these shell may be the residue of activities performed by one of the men in the house.

We know that the shell fragments most like originated in the Hudson River and the Persons were among numerous individuals who were subsisting off this estuary. Miller (1967: 12) records in his pamphlet *Pfarrhaus* that “Jerry [Jeremiah], was always in demand to act as cook for the divers gangs of river fishermen.” These fisherman may have been catching any number of fish from the Hudson River including sturgeon, or they could have been raking for clams, and oysters south of Poughkeepsie. Regardless of the uncertainty of oral history, this tale illustrates that Jeremiah not only knew how to cook, but that his skill set with preparing food produced from the river was proficient enough to be desired by others. While we do not know if Jeremiah would have been preparing this food on the Parsonage property or elsewhere, it feels safe to assume that his talents were enjoyed by the family at least on occasion.

Additionally, while these oysters and clams may have initially been procured for subsistence purposes, their shells may have been utilized for ritualistic purposes. Shell, as a material component of the upper Hudson Valley area, embodies many values drawn upon in West African religious practices. In the previous chapter the significance of water as a barrier between the land of the living and the land of ancestors was highlighted. In addition, the land of the ancestors is made of white clay. Shells are white and come from the water. Archaeologist Patricia M. Samford (2007: 125) found that some of the West African descendants who were enslaved on Virginia plantations utilized shell as a shrine good while seeking ancestral blessings. The ancestral blessings were either sought out for individual health and success, or for communal well-being (Samford 2007: 125). Samford (2007: 158) uncovered a West-African style shrine in a subfloor pit that was once below one of the slave quarters on the Utopia

plantation. Included in this shrine offering were seven fossil scallop shells, 2 tobacco pipes, several cow bones, and a pipe stem (Samford 2007: 125). Water, invoked by the presence of the shells, is not just an element which divides the living from the dead, but is a temporary place of enjoyment, until the ancestor is reborn again. Water carries the notion that ancestors are never gone, they are just waiting to rejoin the living, and therefore can still be reached. Likewise, the color white is associated with the land of the dead, and represents values of purity and morality, but also the Supreme Being (Samford 2007: 160). The shells found on the Maple Avenue Parsonage site may have been viewed similarly by the Persons family.

What is striking about the assemblage found by Samford is the presence of 2 pipe stems and 3 cattle bones in addition to the 7 white shell fossils. Between the 74 trench and test units 75 and 76, pipe stems were only found in stratum II. Unfortunately, information was not recorded to indicate whether shell was found in association with cattle bones or pipe stems within these test units. We have, however, found white shells underneath the southeastern most hearthstone in the Parsonage. By itself, this white shell is not significant within a cooking area, however this hearth is the same hearth containing the cosmogram. Excavations are ongoing in the hearth, and the future may provide more insight to the possibility that these shells were used in West African ritual traditions.

Figure 5.2 Image of one of the cattle mandibles found in the 74 trench. Courtesy of Alison Schukal.



Bone was found in large quantities in both stratum II and III in the 74 trench and test unit 75. A total of 382 bones and bone fragments were recovered from stratum II, and approximately 500 bones and bone fragments were recovered from stratum III. The majority of the large identifiable mammal bones were cattle bones. Bones which come from the head (see Figure 5.2) or the lower limbs generally offer little meat. If the bones found at the Parsonage site primarily consisted of these particular bones, Wilkie (2003: 129) might propose that the Persons were boiling these cattle heads, in a fashion similar to processes for making head cheese, while the footbones of calves could be boiled down to make calf's foot jelly (Wilkie 2003: 129). Preparing calves foot jelly was a long process. It was considered an "invalid's food" but also allowed for food to be made of cheaper cuts of meat (Wilkie 2003: 129). Foods such as these were considered food medicines, or foods regarded particularly suitable for improving or sustaining health. "Beef tea" or boiled beef soaked water, is one food medicine that was touted as being a protein rich source for infants by pediatricians (Wilkie 2003: 129). While "beef tea" required only a bit of soaking and boiling, the jelly would have been time and labor intensive as the boiling bones would continuously need to be attended to. Jobs that allowed women to stay at home, such as keeping house or doing laundry, would have been more conducive to preparing this meal.

These two food medicines had multiple uses ranging from practices of mothering, to practices of healing and midwifery. Both the jelly and this "beef tea" could have been offered to a patient preparing for or recovering from birth (Wilkie 2003: 129). Wilkie (2003: 129) remarks that midwife Lucrecia Perryman may have made the jelly for herself, citing that she was aged 70 years at the point of Perryman's deposit. It appears that Diannah, Mary, Mary Ann, and Emma aged and passed away while inhabiting the Parsonage. If any one of these women were

practicing midwives, they may have prepared this jelly for themselves as well as for patients. The preparation of these foods, whether for oneself or another, is a practice of healing and care giving.

The giving of care is a mothering quality emphasized in nineteenth century women's practices. The Beecher sisters' (2002[1869]) domestic manual, *The American Woman's Home*, alone contains five chapters dedicated to practices of care expected to be known by nineteenth century women. These chapters include caring for health, infants, servants, the aged, and the sick (Beecher and Beecher Stowe 2002[1869]: 8-14). If the Persons had been making any of these food medicines, then they would have been practicing a form of nineteenth century women's practices, by performing mothering work. We know from chapter 2, however, that African American women were considered poor mothers by their Anglo-American contemporaries. To perform mothering practices, particularly practices of healing or mothering work in a community, is to publicly articulate one's mothering abilities and therefore, one's claim to ideal womanhood.

At present, faunal analysis does not provide enough evidence to suggest that the cattle remains found on the Maple Avenue site are suggestive of food medicines. While parts of the head, such as the palate bone, mandibles, and teeth, and parts of the feet are included among the identifiable bones, there are also unidentified long bones and other bones suggestive of larger cuts of meat. Furthermore, the amount of each type of cattle bones suggests that these cattle were not procured off site, but were rather butchered at the Parsonage farm. As mentioned above, pipes suggested that the Parsonage may have supported farm animals. Her suggestion is not without support, as Miller (1967: 8) notes that the Germantown Reformed congregation made an offer to build a barn that could stable one horse and cow, in an effort to entice a new minister to

guide their flock in 1755. Miller (1967: 20) remarks that this barn was located under the utility building built by the Ekerts, which photos stored in the Germantown History Department reveal was taken down in 1998. These photos reveal that the utility building stood northeast of the test units utilized in this study, and therefore the barn was located not far from where these bones were disposed of. When looking at the counts for the identified cattle bones, the ratio of 2:4 stands out. There are four mandibles, two for each half of the jaw, four scapula, two for each side of the cow's body, and at least two sets of four of long bones. This consistent ratio of 2:4 implies that these bones are not butcher cuts from a random assortment of cows, but instead are representative of two whole cattle. Because these findings represent whole cattle, there is presently no way of definitively concluding if the Persons women made any of the abovementioned food medicines.

The final problem with the identifiable cattle bones, relating to this particular study, is that these were found primarily in stratum III of the 74 trench. According to the suggestion proposed above, these cattle would not pertain to the Persons occupation anyway. Future finding may refute my earlier assertions about the 74 trench and may find that stratum representing Persons activity. There also exists the possibility that these cattle remains could reflect activities performed during Tian's childhood by her mother or relatives, if they were a part of the individuals enslaved by Reverend Cock. In conclusion, this lack of definitive evidence regarding the use of these cattle bones in women's practices does not mean that they were not used in women's practices. It simply means that more excavation is necessary in that area, and further faunal analysis needs to be conducted to clarify our understanding of that location, the practices that may have been performed there, and the material conditions utilized in those practices.

Ceramic Analysis

When analyzing a ceramic ware to reveal the possible social values that it embodies in the minds of those who employ its use, it is crucial to know not only the vessel form, but also the style. The vessel form allows us to understand the intended use of the vessel by the producer, however, an archaeology of inhabitation which searches for the means by which individuals inhabited their structural conditions must be aware of the chance that a vessel form is not always utilized in the way of its intended purpose. As mentioned above, some individuals employed consumer goods such as smoking pipes in ritual practices of ancestral worship because the white body of the clay pipe embodies values of purity and morality associated with the ancestral world and the Supreme Being. Style is important to identify for the purposes of this study, to evaluate whether or not the Persons participated in family dinners and hosting social tea events, two practices which developed in the nineteenth century American home (Wall 2010: 83). At this time, tea events became a feminized arena where the hostess could convey and negotiate her social position with her guests. This was done in part through the domestic values embodied in the styles and decorations of the tea service wares (Wall 2010: 84). A family dinner on the other hand, was a new practice which places focus on the individual family members returning to the domestic realm to participate in a familial ritual (Wall 2010: 83). Rather than share one course from one serving dish with the entire family, a nineteenth century American dinner table required individual place settings, and several courses “which were specialized in their content” (Wall 2010: 83).

Ceramic materials comprise another 17.5% of the dataset considered in this study. Table 5.5 illustrates the breakdown of ceramic sherds by specific ware type based on the minimum number of elements present. Refined white earthenware and redware comprise over half of the entire ceramic assemblage at 27% and 26.8% respectively. After these two types, utilitarian

	Totals	TU 74N	TU 74	TU 74S 1/2	TU 75 & 75 S1/2	TU 76	Percentage based on dataset count total
Gray Salt-Glazed Stoneware	75	23	18	12	17	5	6.6%
White Salt-glazed Stoneware	24	3	5		12	4	2.1%
Salt-Glazed Stoneware	125	19	20	48	27	11	11.0%
Brown Salt-glazed Stoneware	3				2	1	0.2%
Stoneware	4		2		1	1	0.3%
Earthenware	24	2	3		10	9	2.0%
Redware	305	32	54	52	61	106	26.8%
Refined White Earthenware	307	102	61	24	99	21	27.0%
Creamware	85	47	3	28	5	2	7.5%
Pearlware	42	6	2	16	18		3.7%
Porcelain	32	4	2	12	6	8	2.8%
Albany Slip	6	2	4				0.5%
Slipware	18	6	1	8	3		1.6%
Whiteware	8	3	5				0.7%
Gothic Paneled	8			8			0.7%
Delft	27	5	1	20		1	2.4%
Rockingham	6			4		2	0.5%
Misc.	37	5		28	4		3.3%
Totals	1136	259	181	260	265	171	100%

salt-glazed stoneware, a combination of gray salt-glazed and generic salt-glazed stonewares, comprise the third largest percentage of the ceramic assemblage at 17.6%. It is worthwhile to note that ceramic ware-fabrics, or variations in body, typically associated with nineteenth century domestic ideals, pearlware, whiteware, gothic panel, and Rockingham only comprise 5.7% of the entire assemblage, independent from the refined white earthenwares of un-identified ware-fabric.

Ware type forms associated with food preparation and consumption, and storage dominate the assemblage. These ceramic forms are primarily composed of refined white earthenware, redware, and stoneware. Refined white earthenware is fired between 1100-1200° C, creating a firm and compact body which is only “slightly porous” (Florida Museum 2020). Refined white earthenwares are typically found in forms such as bowls, tea wares, plates, and other table service forms (Stelle 2001). While the clay body of refined white earthenware is firm and compact, it is not as durable as some other ware types such as stoneware or porcelain. The clay body varies in color from cream to white (Florida Museum 2020).

Redware is typically made from surface clays and these vessels are the most brittle of all earthenwares because they are fired at low temperatures (Stelle 2001). Redware can be found in a variety of vessel forms including but not limited to bowls, plates, bottles, pitchers, funnels, colanders, teapots, mugs, and pudding pans (Delle 2017: 96). Redwares are typically found in chunks with either a clear or brown lead glaze over an orange to brick-red clay body (Delle 2017: 96). Stoneware is fired at temperatures of 1200-1350° C making these vessels compact and non-porous (Florida Museum 2020). As a result, these vessels are generally found in utilitarian forms such as jugs, mugs, chamber pots, bottles, jars, pitchers, and churns (Maryland Archaeological Conservation Lab 2008[2003]).

Of the entire ceramic assemblage, only 64 (5.7%) sherds were able to be identified first as refined white earthen ware, and have their ware-fabric identified secondarily. These ware-fabrics include pearlware, whiteware, gothic panel, and Rockingham styles. These styles had a variety of decorative techniques from transfer print, to hand painted, to molded designs such as shell-edged pearlware. Unfortunately the specific motifs of these decorations were largely left unrecorded, and only three catalog entries out of the entire ceramic assemblage identified the

sherd's vessel form. One is a redware teapot, another, a Staffordshire slipware pie dish, and the last is a Rockingham "Rebekah-at-the-Well" teapot. By working with a dataset which contains limited identification of specific forms, styles, or decorative imagery, it is difficult to conclusively discern which values the Persons may have seen embodied by these materials. At present, it appears that they procured some ceramic wares which embody values of domesticity, but also utilized many wares that do not seem to inherently embody those values.

Archaeologist James, A. Delle (2017: 96), commenting on the "disparity in the frequency of redware versus stoneware vessels" on an African American site in Christiana, Pennsylvania, argued that the reason why more redware was recovered from the site than stoneware was due to the durability of the latter type. He claims that the redware, as vessels of preparation and consumption, would have been handled more regularly than stoneware vessels primarily used for storage purposes (Delle 2017: 96). Since these wares were more regularly used, there may have been more chance for breaking these vessels. At least two of the stoneware sherds have handles such as those on stoneware jugs or pitchers, indicating that storage vessels did not comprise the entirety of stoneware forms utilized on the site. It is also important to note that while there are more redware elements represented in the assemblage, the lack of durability of the clay body could indicate relative to stoneware that there are fewer redware vessels present than stoneware vessels. To elaborate, the individual redware elements recovered were much smaller chunks than the elements of stoneware uncovered. Because redware is less durable than stoneware, redware vessels are more likely to break into smaller and more numerous pieces. When a minimum vessel count is able to be conducted, it may be revealed that there are greater numbers of individual stoneware vessel present, than redware. This may also be found in the future to be the case with the refined white earthenware, as many of the sherds found in unit 74N were no

larger than a pinky finger nail. It is difficult to definitively state that the minimum number of elements represented in the total counts is also representative of the minimum number of vessels present for each ware and ware-fabric.

At present, it appears that refined white earthenwares dominate the assemblage with a total of 363 sherds, including those sherds identified further by ware-fabric. Present in this assemblage are ware-fabrics which are found in middle-class Anglo-American households. These styles include shell-edged pearlware, which could be purchased in a set and individually replaced as needed, or the gothic paneled transfer print sherds, which embody values of purity and piety through their reference to church architecture. At present, there are not enough sherds identified past their ware type to indicate whether the Persons were purchasing sets of table services, or procuring differing ceramic styles over time. The large amount of redware sherds also complicates the issue of discerning the Persons' consumer preferences or practices. Delle (2017: 96), explains that redware vessels were relatively inexpensive, especially compared to other ware types such as porcelain or the more heavily decorated refined white earthenware. Rockingham ware is also an inexpensive ceramic ware that is present in the assemblage. Rockingham ware, particularly by the 1870s, was associated with Americans of a lower social status because these goods did not financially strain those who consumed them (Galke 2009: 316). Much of the ceramic assemblage utilized by the Persons appears to be more on the side of inexpensive, with the occasional addition of more expensive and more expressive goods. This may reflect efforts taken by the Persons to include in their tablewares elements which communicated aspects of domesticity, without putting the household under financial duress.

Let us take into consideration the three vessel forms which we identified to see if they embody values of domesticity. Two of these forms are teapots, and the other is a pie dish that

could be used for dessert pies or savory pies. The presence of teapots suggests that the Persons were participating in social tea events. The “Rebekah-at-the-Well” Rockingham teapot embodies values of mothering and domesticity invoked by the imagery of the biblical story of Rebekah (Wilkie 2003: 90). Through Rebekah’s story she not only represents feminine sacrifice by aiding her future husband’s servant and camels of her own volition, but she also protects her family and her community by preventing her sons from replaying the murder of Able by Cain. Rebekah’s actions represent every domestic value which characterizes ‘the woman’ as the “Moral Guardian” of the household (Wilkie 2003: 91). By employing this teapot during social events, the women of the Parsonage would have been communicating to their guests their ability to care for their family. Likewise, by employing a biblical figure, the household would have been emphasizing their piety. The redware teapot is represented only by a spout strainer, and therefore little can be understood about the values it may have embodied. What is evident, is that the Persons women were participating in tea events.

The Staffordshire pie dish actually dates to the eighteenth century in terms of production, but these sherds were among those representing the Persons activities. This pie dish may have been passed down by family members, or may have once belonged to the family’s previous enslavers. As mentioned above, meals served during nineteenth century American family dinners were now being served in courses. According to archaeologist Diana DiZerega Wall (2010: 83), the first course would have consisted of meats and vegetables, the second could include pies or puddings, and the third would include a dessert food. The presence of a pie dish in the Persons assemblage could be evidence that the family was attempting to practice family dinners by incorporating either a savory pie or a dessert pie course into their evening meal. By incorporating a dish that many have been owned by a previous generation in the family, the

Persons would have been subtly highlighting the significance and continuity of family. The presence of the teapots and the pie dish further support the assertion that the Persons were negotiating with the material conditions available to them to articulate their adherence to dominant social women's practices. Allow me to complicate this narrative a bit.

Chapter 2 explored how Anglo-American women applied discursive knowledge to the nineteenth century American system in attempts to limit African American women from claiming womanhood or motherhood. When the "Rebekah-at-the-Well" teapot is situated within this historical context, the values of womanhood and mothering invoked by the story of Rebekah can take on an additional meaning when employed by an African American woman. Laurie Wilkie (2003: 90) notes that later versions of this teapot were produced without the phrase "Rebekah-at-the-Well" as the image became more familiar within American homes. The sherd recovered at the Parsonage contains "EBEKAH," but even only as a partial representation of this phrase, it is safe to say that this particular teapot was produced closer to 1850. This suggests that the teapot probably belonged to Mary Persons as she was the longest female resident to mother children in that household. There is, however, a chance that the teapot could have belonged to Dianna or Louiesia Barber, Mary's sister-in-law, who were also mothers during their brief stay at the parsonage. These women, utilizing a teapot depicting imagery which represents good mothering and a knowledge of true womanhood could also be read as discursive efforts to assert in the first place that African American women are in fact women, and secondarily that they are proper mothers with autonomy over their families. By situating the teapot within its historic contextualization the Persons women appear to transform the values embodied by the teapot to speak towards, not just an American means for inhabiting their structural conditions, but a particularly African American means for inhabitation.

The large amount of stoneware sherds could also be suggestive of mothering practices, though not of the sort generally performed by Anglo-Americans. Wilkie (2003: 126) found at the Perryman site a number of one-gallon or larger stoneware “whiskey jugs” and stoneware gin bottles that were attributed to Perryman’s vocation as a midwife. It is believed that Perryman was producing homemade pharmaceuticals that had an alcohol base (Wilkie 2003: 126). Delle (2017:96) claims that the hard and compact body of stoneware vessels makes them less likely to break than redware or refined white earthenware. It was suggested above that the minimum number of elements represented may not accurately represent the minimum number of vessels present for either of these three types. As a result, there may actually be a closer similarity in the number of stoneware vessels to the other two vessel wares. This reasoning, coupled with the suggestion that two sherds with attached handles could be stoneware jugs, warns me to not overlook the possibility that these stoneware sherds could be evidence of similar practices performed by the Persons women. Further investigations into this possibility, once artifacts are accessible again, need to be conducted before a definitive answer can be provided.

Collectively, the ceramic evidence offered by this analysis suggests that the Persons family could be drawing on Anglo-American structural conditions and traditions of knowledgeability, but in such a way that the values embodied by the material conditions available to them are transformed. Through this transformation, the values which Anglo-Americans discursively claim are not attainable by African American women are made over to be recognized as communicating that African American womanhood and motherhood are practices of familial and communal caring. Women who can exemplify proper women’s and mothering practices can claim publicly a sense of feminine pride and respect.

Vessel Glass Analysis

(See Appendix B)

Aqua vessel glass, opaque white or milk glass, and glass made with manganese dioxide are the only glass elements to be included in this section of analysis due in part to the relative limitations placed on a glass analysis which cannot identify elements past their color. Out of the entire assemblage only two such vessels were identified. The 2 milk glass elements are a lid of a cold cream cosmetic jar. The manganese dioxide shards are fragments of a patent or proprietary medicinal bottle. These material remains will be evaluated for their potential of embodying values associated with mothering practices, and practices of domestic servitude.

Aqua Vessel glass comprises 6% of the vessel glass elements included in the material assemblage. The aquamarine pigment, that gives aqua glass its name, is the result of iron in the sand used to make the glass (Linsey 2020). Glass that is made with a “reducing” flame, or one which feeds off of little oxygen, would tint the glass blue by making the bluer iron oxides more predominant (Linsey 2020). The production of aqua vessel glass emerged in America around 1800 and was utilized to make vessels of a variety of forms and purposes (Linsey 2020). Some of these forms include medicine and bitters bottles, soda and mineral water bottles, and fruit jars (Linsey 2020). It is currently unclear which of these various forms are present in the assemblage and so this glass will be examined only in terms of its identifying color characteristic.

Blue is another spiritually charged color in West African religious practices. According to Wilkie (2003: 122) blue, most often associated with the Yoruba deity of motherhood, water, and love, *orisha* Yemalia, is a color used in spells intending to draw or repel love. Aqua vessel glass is not only blue, but claims the transparent properties of water as well, almost seeming to be frozen water. West African associations of the color blue with love, motherhood, and water

would suggest that blue glass would be a valuable material for ritual practices performed to beseech the ancestors to aid in mothering practices and events.

We know from Leland Ferguson (1992: xxii) that enslaved mothers would hang a blue glass bead or beads around the neck of an child or infant for protective purposes. He chooses to include this blue glass bead element in his hypothetical narrative of an enslaved women trying to care for her ailing infant, which is based on the material remains found on his excavation site. In the story, the child coughs, and the woman briefly touches the single blue bead and from a string around the child's neck (Ferguson 1992: xxii). This story highlights the ways in which spiritual beliefs and traditions of knowledgeability are incorporated almost unconsciously into every day moments and actions of mothering. These sherds of aqua vessel glass may have been incorporated similarly into mothering practices performed at the Parsonage site.

Wilkie (2003) presents two suggestions for ways in which aqua vessel glass could have been incorporated in the mothering practices of midwifery. The first suggestion would have required the glass bottles to have been utilized while still whole. Some midwives believed that the process of passing the afterbirth was more dangerous than the birth itself (Wilkie 2003: 135). Many practices were performed to hasten the afterbirth, but in cases of a retained placenta, one remedy known to be used by African American midwives was blowing into a blue glass bottle (Wilkie 2003: 136). The blue of the bottle draws upon Yamalia to aid the new mother through the completion of labor.

Wilkie's second suggestion considers one way in which broken aqua glass could be utilized in mothering practices. In the previous section when talking about stoneware, it was touched upon that midwives made their own medicines. Many times these medicines were herbal remedies which required the practitioner to cultivate a vast knowledge of the medicinal

properties of a variety of herbs and natural recourses (Wilkie 2003: 126). In an interview with Liza Peters and Molly Givens, two practicing African American midwives during the 1930s, Hazel Neuman (1937 in Wilkie 2003: 173) records Mrs. Peters stating that “a midwife built her reputation with her medicines.” Mrs. Peter’s statement hints at both the medical knowledge that these women possessed, and the variety of different remedies that were employed by different midwives.

Wilkie (2003: 127) claims that knapped glass scrapers could have been used in the process of making homemade herbal remedies. Traditionally associated with masculine activities of crafting agricultural implements, many of these glass scrapers have been found on sites with households consisting primarily of women as well (Wilkie 2003: 127). Wilkie (2003: 127) proposes that these knapped glass scrapers could have been used for processing ingredients used in medicines that could have been given by a midwife to her patient, or even a mother to her child. Utilizing blue glass scrapers could have added an additional element of mothering protection to the practice of creating these remedies. The glass sherds collected at the Parsonage were cataloged before the possibility of glass scrapers was added to our considerations. As a result, no work has yet been undertaken to examine either the aqua or clear vessel glass for knapping or other tooling marks.

What leads me to believe that blue glass was utilized in ways that represent an engagement with and interpretation of West African traditions of knowledgeability on the part of the Persons household is the presence of aqua flat glass recovered from the northeastern-most hearthstone in the Parsonage. The northeastern-most hearth stone is the stone next to the hearth frame with the punctated cosmogram. Clustered along with the aqua flat glass was a fist sized lump of unused coal, and a shank or pipe stem with partial bowl. Individually these materials

may seem like debris that were accidentally swept between the stones, but clustered together they begin to appear as a potential *minkisi*, or ritually charged spirit bundle. The aqua flat glass, may be associated with masculine architectural activities, but could be seen as embodying the values associated with the color blue. The shank, just like the pipe stems referenced earlier, embody the values associated with the color white. The coal may have been interpreted as representing the blacksmith god *Ogun*. While offerings to *Ogun* traditionally appear as iron (Samford 2007:172), coal could have been seen as representing the fires of his ironworks. The values possibly embodied in the blue glass, the white shank, and the coal all draw from West African symbolic knowledge concerning protection. Placed beside the cosmogram, the possible *minkisi* can be understood as a request for protection. Perhaps this *minkisi* was put in the hearth to invoke protection of the household. When these objects are interpreted from a perspective outside of the nineteenth century American purposes for which they were produced, a different perspective for how to interpret the world and move through that world becomes revealed. The possible *minkisi* suggests that members of the Persons household were in fact interpreting their world through an alternative perspective to their Anglo-American contemporaries.

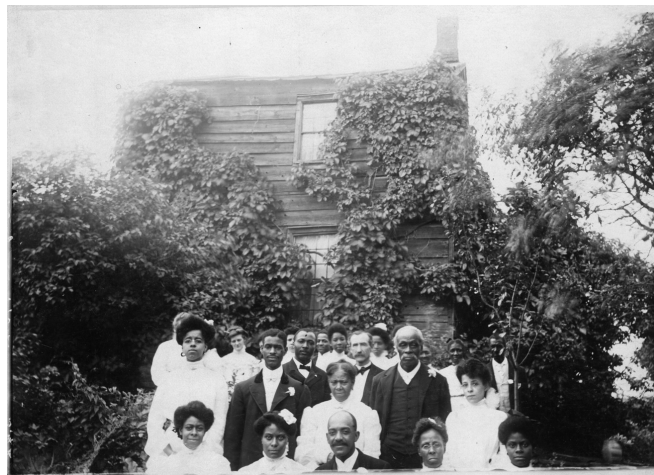
The manganese dioxide glass is also related to medicinal practices. Noted above, the manganese dioxide bottle is identified as a proprietary medicine bottle manufactured for The Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company. Manganese dioxide is added to the sand to create colorless glass, but once exposed to UV light the colorless glass begins to turn varying shades of pink to purple (Lindsey 2020). This paneled bottle normally would have had an additional paper label expressing information as to the bottle's contents, but conditions proved unsuitable for preserving this label (Lindsey 2020). Despite not knowing what the bottle held, the presence of this bottle suggests that the Persons were actively utilizing commercial medicines.

The Persons family's continuous involvement with medical professionals throughout the various individual's lives would have exposed them to numerous medical remedies that could have been incorporated into general mothering practices or practices of mothering work. Discourse professing African American mothers as partaking in poor mothering practices caused many of these mothers to go through great pains to keep their children healthy. A knowledge of herbal remedies would have been valuable in a community that may not have had access to or been able to afford commercially available medicines. Even if the Persons women were not practicing midwives, and even if they were not directly taught by any of the physicians they interacted with, the experience of being around these physicians would have exposed the Persons women to medicinal practices that could have aided mothers in their endeavors to protect and care for their families. At the very least, the Persons would have been exposed to dominant medical discourse of the time, which could have been incorporated in traditional knowledges of healing and healthful living. The presence of the medicine bottle suggests that the Persons were partaking in this discourse themselves.

The final object to be discussed in this section is the milk glass cold cream jar lid which may evidence practices of domestic service work and ideals of hygiene, or practices of midwifery. Milk glass is the by-product of including a variety of additives into the sand during the glass making process. Some of these additives include tin or zinc oxide, phosphates, bone, or bat guano (Lindsey 2020). Milk glass was used for the production of some bottles, but during the late nineteenth to early twentieth century, this type of glass was primarily used for cream jars, and toiletry or cosmetic bottles (Lindsey 2020). When first encountering this cold cream jar lid in the catalog, I associated its cosmetic properties with beauty standards and ideals. The use of cold creams could evidence the participation of the Persons women in standards of respectability.

Teresa Bulger (2015: 114) argues that the use of personal hygiene products, such as hair-care products, by the African American domestic servant Eliza Berry, evidences Eliza's efforts to engage in performances of respectability. Eliza Berry belonged to a shrinking African American community, in Nantucket, not so different from the situation of Mary Persons' daughters towards the end of the nineteenth century, around when the jar would have been manufactured (Bulgar 2015: 113). If you remember from chapter 2, actions undertaken by an African American individual reflects directly on the entire African American community. Attention to physical appearance and personal hygiene would have been understood as a performance of respectability in both African American and Anglo-American communities (Bulgar 2015: 113). The traditions of knowledgeability for being able to communicate respectability through appearance would have been particularly valuable for women desirous of employment in Anglo-American household. The ability to perform these types of practices may have made the difference between an northern African American woman being hired instead of an Irish immigrant or southern African American women who migrated north. The presence of the cold cream jar lid may indicate that the Persons women were partaking in these performances.

Figure 5.3 Photograph of a wedding on Maple Avenue in Germantown ca. 1900. Courtesy of Germantown History department.



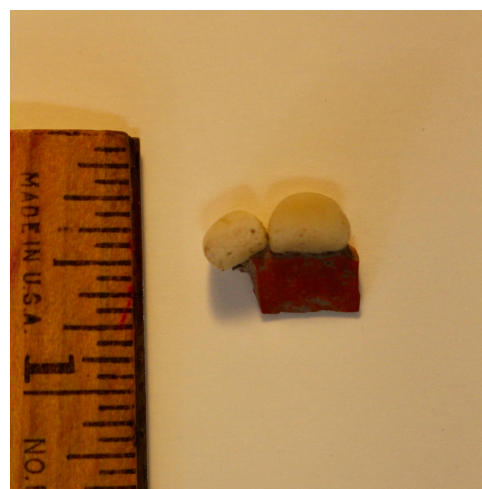
Many of the ages listed for the Persons sisters during their wage laboring years were much younger than the these women truly were. This age discrepancy may be the result of typical census inaccuracies and mistakes, or this discrepancy could evidence the Persons sisters' attempts of making themselves more marketable in the field of domestic service. This is a strategy employed by Jean Muir, the governess who figures prominently in Louisa May Alcott's (2004) *Behind a Mask*. While the position of a governess was seated somewhere between the female head of house and the domestic servants, her behaviors were still being monitored by both for her ability to present respectably. Despite truly being aged around thirty years, Miss Muir assumes the physical appearance and identity of a nineteen year old woman through the application of beauty products and false teeth implants to make herself more employable by social elites (Alcott 2004: 12). What she cannot adjust with cosmetics, she communicates through the performance of other respectable social behaviors (Alcott 2004: 12). The presence of the cold cream jar suggests that the Persons women were engaging in a similar performance.

In addition to the cold cream jar, a photograph of members of the Maple Avenue African American community and a pair of false teeth further suggest that the Persons women were engaging in nineteenth century performances of respectability. The photograph (see Figure 5.3) is suggested to represent the marriage of one of the Robinson men, most likely Rutherford, and contains the appearances of many of the women of this community. In the photograph, these women are wearing high-collared dresses, and turn of the century Anglo-American hair styles. The dresses in particular communicate purity through the high neck line, but the hair styles illustrate that the women of this community were also partaking in national hair-care discourses. While we are unable to identify whether any of these women in the picture are the Persons, a pair of false teeth dentures (see Figure 5.4) found near to two women's rings, recovered from two of

the test units among the northern-most cluster confirm that the Persons were in fact engaging in this national discourse. There also is the possibility, however, that this cold cream jar could have also been employed during practices of midwifery.

According to Wilkie (2003: 131), a midwife would care for a laboring women's body through practices that would later be labeled by medical professionals as "fussing." Practices of "fussing" include the application and massaging of oils and creams into the woman's skin, sprinkling her with sweet-water or rose-water, and even acts of caring for the mother-to-be's hair (Wilkie 2003: 131). The cream that was contained in the jar that the milk glass lid once belonged to may have been incorporated in these "fussing" practices. In addition to being a topical product that could be used for massaging or other bodily cares, the container itself is white, once again reflecting an embodiment of the West African value of purity and a connection to the ancestral world. These two interpretations suggest that the cold cream jar could have been used to facilitate practices drawing from both American and West African traditions of knowledgeability.

Figure 5.4 Images of the dentures recovered from the northern cluster of backyard test units. Courtesy of Ethan Dickerman.



Collectively, the interpretations of the glass elements presented above make room to explore the potential that the Persons family was performing idealized women's activities by not only negotiating with the structural conditions available to them, but inhabiting these conditions in ways which transformed the conditions to communicate a message of African American respectability. Regardless of whether these materials are determined to evidence practices of mothering, midwifery, or domestic service, they appear to be employed in such a way that both the practices and the materials which facilitate those practices can be recognized and understood within both African American and Anglo-American communities. Their actions can be understood as attempts to discursively make claims that African American women's practices are proper American practices.

Discursive Actions

Gendered ideals of the nineteenth century were interpreted, negotiated with, and reinterpreted by African American women who used these ideals to inform their performance of women's practices. Discourse on these gendered ideals and practices aimed to alienate African American women's actions from being socially recognizable as actions performed by 'true' American women. More plainly stated, discursive engagement with American structural conditions by middle-class Anglo-Americans sought to limit the ways in which African Americans accessed these conditions. Rather than truly limiting African American women's abilities to perform acts of American womanhood and motherhood, these women found alternative means for facilitating these practices. By drawing on practical knowledge of how to go about daily life that is informed by traditions of knowledgeability derived from experiences cultivated in both American society and enslavement, African American women transformed the values embodied by the material and other structural conditions facilitating their agency. As a

result, their means of inhabiting these conditions, or articulating their place within society, could be recognized by both African American and Anglo-American communities as respectable performances of women's and mothering practices.

An analysis of the material remains recovered from the Maple Avenue Parsonage site, which situated these material conditions back within their historical context, reveals that the Persons were in fact drawing from values and traditions of knowledgeability alternative to those communicated in dominant social discourse. While the exact practices that these material conditions helped facilitate were not able to be conclusively determined with the amount of information available in the present dataset, the range of possibilities suggested by this analysis indicates that the Persons women were trying to establish their means of inhabiting the world through forms of womanhood and motherhood that could be recognized as respectable. Even though the last generation of Persons women were not themselves enslaved, traditions of knowledgeability cultivated from experiences of enslavement and from experiences before enslavement informed their mother's actions, and her mother's before her. The knowledge gained from these experiences would have been transferred to Elizabeth, Mary Ann, and Emma through their own experiences of watching their elders move through the world and listening to their conversations and recollections about the past. For the Persons women becoming a social being in nineteenth century America is learning how to negotiate between two contrasting interpretations of reality, and transforming the structural conditions of both to facilitate practices that could be recognized by both the community they saw themselves as belonging to, as well as larger American society.

To the Persons, their actions are an application of practical knowledges learned over lifetimes of confronting oppressive dominant discourse by negotiating between two or more

society's interpretations of reality. From the perspective of the objective observer, these women's negotiations with structural conditions and traditions of knowledgeability belonging to more than one social reality signifies the ability of these women to objectify nineteenth century American conditions and traditions to engage with them discursively. Instead of simply integrating these conditions and traditions through assimilation, the Persons women actively transformed these mediums through which they could act to accommodate West African religious perspectives. The actions carried out by the Persons women are not passive reactions to being thrust into American social discourse, but should instead be understood as active agentic attempts to define an African American approach to practices of womanhood and motherhood that could also be recognized as respectable through the social language of their Anglo-American contemporaries.

Conclusion

In National American discourse, during the nineteenth century, on respectable gendered behaviors, only actions adhering to the middle-class Anglo-American values of the Cult of Domesticity would be guaranteed social recognition as performances of true womanhood. By identifying practices of womanhood with social language accessible and attainable only by women of a select race and class, fields of women's practices, such as mothering, were transformed into locations of privilege and exclusion. In the early nineteenth century, rather than alienate African American women from claims of womanhood and motherhood, northern African American activists began incorporating aspects of domesticity into their efforts to combat national stereotypes in which the African American woman's behaviors were positioned as the root of family instability. Promoting an African American motherhood which incorporated values of domesticity was as much a political act as a social act. Combatting stereotypes desirous of limiting African Americans' equal participation in society, by incorporating the same values employed for exclusion in their daily practices, allowed these women to make claims not only to womanhood and mothering, but to the social and political rights and privileges afforded to women and mothers as well. The ways in which these women and their families participated in political action is not homogenous, as some chose to speak up in public debate, while others sought homeownership as an avenue for the right to vote. A society that presents a variety of means to accomplish the same end must be treated as a society which manifests a variety of agencies.

Laurie Wilkie (2003: 209) notes that earlier attempts to investigate a multidimensional social identity that is aware of the intersection of gender, race, and class varied in success. She highlights a specific feminist tendency to centrally privilege middle-class Anglo-American

values (Wilkie 2003: 209). This tendency flattens social experience and pushes the experiences and practices of minority groups to the fringe of interpretation. More recent works have acknowledged the differences in social practice and perceptions with attention to race and class (Wilkie 2003; Rotman 2015; Wall 2008), however, the language used in some of these works to express the actions undertaken by women, reduce these acts to that of passive reactions to male actions, rather than as acts performed by an active participant in the construction of their world (McQuinn 2015). This reduces the experiences of women to that of victims, always acted upon and defined through patriarchal domination. In the case of this study, an approach such as that would once more give primacy to middle-class Anglo-American values, specifically that of submissiveness. An approach which focuses on victimization, would see African American women's decisions to "keep house" as a reaction to their husband reclaiming authority over the women in the household. The approach I take in this study, informed by Joan M. Gero's (2000) feminist critiques, recognizes hypothetically that the Rockingham Rebecka teapot at the Maple Avenue Germantown Parsonage represents Mary Persons' desire to extend her autonomous authority over her family, a form of mothering control unattainable during enslavement.

Furthermore, a masculine assuming agency assumes an action performed by an isolated individual, which removes this action from the network of communication and social interaction that informed and motivated the agent. It is well known that many African Americans performed daily activities in yard spaces that fostered conversation between neighbors and friends (Ferguson 1992: 68). Social tea events would have provided an additional forum for conversing about daily life and sharing in other social discourse during the nineteenth century. By drawing on John Barrett's (2000: 66) "archaeology of inhabitation" to situate the actions performed by the Persons women within the complex historical context in which they were carried out, I hoped

to counter these propensities. By complexly situating the material conditions through which the Persons women facilitated their actions, the cultural values revealed to be embodied in these materials, point to generational discourse drawing from social values external to nineteenth century America. By taking this approach, material evidence suggests that the Persons women perceived their world through a hybridized perspective that drew from structural conditions and traditions of knowledgeability cultivated through generations of experiences on both the North American and African continents.

The ability to negotiate between multiple systems of social language, in a way which transforms those languages into practices which can be recognized by individuals from different social positions engaging in either social system, is not the product of a single lifetime. Instead, these negotiations and reinterpretations are a strategic means of inhabiting the world, learned and passed down by generations of women enslaved in the United States. As mother teaches daughter, and as daughter learns from mother, traditional knowledges of how to move through the world are maintained and carried forward. We strongly suspect that Mary and her daughters were born on the Parsonage property so the presence of West African religious symbolism can be interpreted as an active maintenance of traditional ethnic forms of perceiving the world that were carried over the Middle Passage and passed down from that first enslaved generation. The possible *minkisi* underneath the northeastern-most hearthstone illustrates a continued preservation of this particular interpretation of reality. The fact that this *minkisi* contains material conditions of nineteenth century America illustrates the Persons women's incorporation and transformation of available conditions to facilitate traditional practices.

This study reveals that African American practices performed in the nineteenth century cannot be assumed to represent an assimilated integration into American society. The Persons

women likely chose to incorporate aspects of dominant American culture such as social tea events and family dinners, which highlight the importance of family and community. They did not uphold the strict barriers separating gendered values and practices, nor the focus on individuality which guided middle-class Anglo-American families. Particularly through the movements of Emma Persons we see a continuous effort from her to return to the Parsonage and to the family each time she leaves. Despite the fact that many members of the Maple Avenue African American community leave Germantown beginning shortly after 1870, the Persons remain at the Parsonage until Emma, the last member of the family and the community, passes away in 1911. Our new understanding of the Persons' perspective of reality, coupled with Emma's persistence to return home to her family, shines new insight into an alternative reason why Mary and Henry chose the Parsonage as the location to make their home.

It was originally suggested that the Parsonage was selected by the Persons because the home embodied values of purity and piety influenced by the community's memory of when the Parsonage functioned as a home for ministers. This is still a possible explanation, but an approach to this question of "why?" which considers the Persons' West African perspective, offers a more convincing possibility that also adds more to the Persons' story. It was suggested in Chapter 3 that Tian could have been born at the Parsonage site around 1777 to an enslaved individual in Reverend Cock's household. It was then revealed in chapter 5, that after a family member dies in West African Religious belief the member's 'soul' or 'spirit' goes to the world of the Ancestors but can still be communicated with by those occupying the land of the living. It is believed that these deceased members reside in and can be reached from physical locations within the world of the living.



Figure 6.1 Photograph of the photograph hanging in the Maple Avenue Parsonage of the Parsonage ca. 1940. Note the white planks of wood in the front yard. Courtesy of Alison Schukal.

A photographic technique in which the transparent image of an old photograph is viewed through an open-shuttered camera, and layered over the landscape captured in the old image allows archaeologists to determine the location of objects appearing in the photograph, but absent in the present. This technique was employed to determine the location of several seemingly scattered white planks of wood vertically wedged into the ground of the Parsonage's front yard, and dating to a time previous to the Ekert's ownership. The planks were found to mark the location of the old (now reconstructed) German well that had provided water to the Cock household and occupants previous. Knowing the color white's association with the ancestral world, the planks could be understood as marking the location of a place of ancestral importance. This well has no known association with the Persons directly, but the planks appear to be the result of the Persons activities, according to the age of the photograph. These actions suggest that the Persons saw an ancestor as inhabiting that well.

To establish such an association within the minds of descendants, the ancestor occupying the well most likely also used that well during a previous time. The Persons' engagement with West African perspectives of reality, present the possibility that the Persons chose to return to the Parsonage because it offered the ability to connect with and draw aid from their ancestors. This new suggestion might also explain why Henry Moore purchased the property before the Persons. It was common practice for African Americans in the nineteenth century to purchase properties belonging to other African Americans of their community who risked losing that property for financial reasons (McQuinn 2015: 164). This new insight suggests that Moore may have purchased the property to prevent others from obtaining the Parsonage before the Persons could obtain the funds necessary to buy it themselves. This adaptation to an earlier belief would not have been possible without understanding the particular ethnic perspective through which the Persons family understands their own reality. And as a result of this new understanding, I have opened up avenues for alternative ways of investigating the Persons' activities performed at the Parsonage that were not as available before the completion of this study. In addition, this new understanding has also permitted me to present further evidence to support the possibility of an additional earlier generation of the Persons' lineage.

What I am trying to say, is that the completion of this study is not synonymous with the completion of our efforts to understand the Persons or the Parsonage site. Rather, this study should be viewed and used as a preliminary study setting up for a larger and more detailed investigation. At various different points throughout the study there were moments where the data was just short of offering enough evidence to better support a claim. Faunal analysis shows a plethora of bone and bone fragments, but the manufacturing date ranges of the other material remains were too broad to definitively clarify which occupation that stratum pertains to. Further

material analysis, hopefully unobstructed by a national emergency, can clarify these date ranges and aid in a better understanding of how the Parsonage's landscape changed over time, and whose actions are represented in those changes.

In addition, if time had permitted, I would have engaged more directly with John Barrett's 2012 iteration of agency. This iteration positions itself as an attempt at empathetic agency and is the next stage in the evolution of Barrett's (2012) theory of inhabitation. This new articulation of the theory attempts to resituate humans within nature to position agency as an evolutionary adaptation for survival within reality (Barrett 2012: 158). I chose to use his earlier theory (2000; 2001) in the scope of this study because the most recent theory in its current design needed more methodological alterations that were not possible within the time and physical limitations of this study before it could be applied to the material analysis of a historical site. The incorporation of this newer theory into a future iteration of this study could draw out the emotional components, which can incline agents to pursue particular ethnic avenues of performing an activity.

While this study could not definitively state if the Persons women were participating in practice of midwifery, it also did not find contradictory evidence to negate this possibility. This fact begs for future investigations into this possibility. The story of the Persons offers a unique opportunity for investigating the transmission of traditional forms of knowledge across generations, a key aspect of midwifery. Furthermore, if future investigations reveal that the Persons household did contain midwives, this would open the possibility for comparing this site to the findings of Wilkie (2003) on the midwife site in Mobile, Alabama. If Mary Ann or Emma are found to have partaken in this vocation, the similarities between their birth and death ages and the same life events of Lucrecia Perryman would allow for an investigation into regionalized

differences in midwife practices. More specifically, this comparison could highlight how the different life experiences of African American women in the North and South informed their practices. For this and many more reasons, the aims of this study will continue on, even though this particular project has finished. By better understanding the actions of the community members of our past, we may gain a better understanding of ourselves and others of our present times, which can inform the ways in which we choose to act in our futures.

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Notes

¹ There is currently much political tension surrounding the importance of the view of the Catskills from Germantown to the members of the Germantown community. Dollar General wishes to build one of their stores in the historic district of the town. The exact location of the planned store overlaps the site where the Mountain View Hotel was located close to the intersection of Route 8 (Main St.) and State Route 9G. Originally built as the Riverside Seminary in 1864, by Phillip W. Rockefeller, around the same time as the establishment of Bard College and Vassar College, the view from the school windows was supposedly an enhancement to the boy's religious education (Ellis 1878: 272). Due to the community's lack of support towards the school, the Rockefeller family converted the building into a Hotel. [Stott, Peter H. 2007. Germantown. In *Looking for Work: Industrial archeology in Columbia County, New York*, pp. 125-133. Kinderhook, New York; Ellis, Franklin. 1878. "Germantown" In *History of Columbia County, New York*, pp. 264-277. Philadelphia.] The community of Germantown has won a lawsuit against the Town Board members who have agreed to go along with building the Dollar General store. The community is planning to continue their fight on the basis of the location as a historic scenic view that the new store would disrupt, if allowed to be built.

² Ellis records the name of Tian as Zian. It is currently believed that this is a misreading of the primary documentation, however the phonetic sounds of German "t" and "z" are extremely similar, so we will not fully treat the change in spelling as a mistake. [Ellis, Franklin. 1878. Germantown. In *History of Columbia County, New York*, pp. 264-277. Philadelphia].

³ Peter Sharp, recorded with the Germantown Clerk, Philip W. Rockefeller between 1810-1818 the births of three children to his slaves. The records of two of the children state "which I do hereby abandon" meaning that the child was not claimed as property of the slave's owner, and

therefore he had no responsibility in caring or providing for the child by the owner's means. Tian's child is not listed as abandoned and therefore can be read as being owned by Caty Delamater TenBroeck and her mother Maria TenBroeck Delamater. [Town of Germantown, New York: January, 1st 1808-1815. Slave Birth Records. Courtesy of the Germantown History Department, Germantown, Columbia County, New York.]

⁴ Mary may have been helping Dr. Van Orden with his work as a physician. The location of his practice is currently unknown, but it is suspected that he operated out of the Parsonage, possibly in the room that now functions as the Germantown History Department's office. Evidence to support this assertion is currently sparse, however, it was noted by Walt Miller, Germantown's historian at the time, that medicinal bottles and a picture of an African American man known as "Yellow Harry" were excavated from a well on the property during the time of the Eckert's occupation. Miller suggests that the artifacts belonged to Dr. Van Orden, however Laurie Willkie's study of an African American Midwife post-emancipation in the south, complicates this assertion. Willkie's artifacts were also found in the bottom of a well, indicating that Miller may have assumed that the bottles belonged to Dr. Van Orden [Willkie, Laurie A. 2003. *The Archaeology of Mothering: An African American Midwife's Tale*. Routledge, New York]. The inclusion of the picture of "Yellow Harry" may indicate that the bottles were an intentional emplacement, similar in purpose to other emplacements found within the hearth and back yard of the Parsonage. Furthermore, Walt Miller suggests that "Yellow Harry" is Henry Moore, the African American man who sold the Parsonage to Henry Person [Miller, Walt V. 1967. History of the 1746 "PFARHAUS": Home of the Early Day Pastors of the Germantown Reformed Sanctity Church in the East Camp, West Section, East Section].

Appendix A

Stratum Characteristics of 74 Cluster

Stratum Number	Levels Compiling Stratum	Description of Stratum
I	Levels 1 and 2*	Brown Slit Topsoil
II	Levels 3, 4, 5, and 6*	Brown Silt with Gravel- possible driveway
III	Levels 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12	Large Horizontal Stone Slabs with Brown Silt
IV	Levels 13, 14, and 15	Large Horizontal Stone Slabs with Brown Silt
V	Level 16	Dark Yellow Brown Clay- glacial subsoil

*Test Unit 74 S½ changes from stratum I into stratum II between levels 3 and 4.

Stratum Characteristics of Test Unit 75

Stratum Number	Levels Compiling Stratum	Description of Stratum
I	Levels 1 and 2	Brown Slit Topsoil
II	Levels 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7	Brown Silt with Gravel- possible driveway
III	Levels 8, 9, and 10	Yellow Brown Silty-Clay with Gravel
IV	Level 11	Yellow Brown Clay Mottling
V	Levels 12 and 13	Dark Yellow Brown Clay- glacial subsoil

Stratum Characteristics of Test Unit 76

Stratum Number	Levels Compiling Stratum	Description of Stratum
I	Levels 1 and 2	Brown Slit Topsoil
II	Levels 3, 4, 5, and 6	Brown Silt with Gravel- possible driveway
III	Levels 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11	Yellow Brown Silty-Clay with Gravel
IV	Levels 12 and 13	Yellow Brown Clay Mottling
V	Level 14	Dark Yellow Brown Clay- glacial subsoil

Appendix B

Aqua Vessel Glass Counts (Shortened)						
Level	Test Unit 74N	Test Unit 74	Test Unit 74 S1/2*	Test Unit 75 & 75 S1/2**	Test Unit 76	Totals
1						
2	1	1				2
3				2	1	3
4				3	1	4
5			4	1		5
6					2	2
7		1		1	1	3
8					1	1
Totals	1	2	4	7	6	20
Colorless Vessel Glass Counts						
Level	Test Unit 74N	Test Unit 74	Test Unit 74 S1/2*	Test Unit 75 & 75 S1/2**	Test Unit 76	Totals
1	3	3				6
2		1			4	5
3	2	2		1	1	6
4		2	4			6
5	2			1		3
6		1		1		2
7		1				1
8						
9					1	1
10				1		1
11				2		2
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						
Totals	7	10	4	6	6	33

Manganese Dioxide Glass Counts						
Level	Test Unit 74N	Test Unit 74	Test Unit 74 S1/2*	Test Unit 75 & 75 S1/2**	Test Unit 76	Totals
1						
2	5	2				7
3	6	3				9
4			4			4
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						
Totals	11	5	4			20