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## We Are Gullah: A Community Approach To Preserving Gullah Geechee Historical Sites of Significance

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WE ARE GULLAH:  
A COMMUNITY APPROACH TO PRESERVING  
GULLAH GEECHEE HISTORICAL SITES OF SIGNIFICANCE

A Thesis

Presented to  
the Graduate School of  
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Science  
Historic Preservation

by

Peter Gaytan

May 2023

Accepted by:

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## ABSTRACT

The National Register of Historic Places is an inventory established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 that identifies architectural and archaeological sites significant to American history. The National Register was created to encourage the documentation, evaluation, and protection of America's historic resources. Over 96,000 historic properties, sites, and structures are currently listed on the National Register. Despite the number of historic places listed on the National Register there is still an overwhelmingly low number of sites listed on the National Register relating to underrepresented communities. This thesis assessed the definition of significance laid out in the National Register nomination for and process of eligibility to the ways historic Gullah Geechee communities define significance. An assessment of 805 sites listed significant by the stakeholders of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Management Plan compared how historic Gullah Geechee sites are defined significant by their respected communities. Out of the 805 sites listed as significant, only 92 sites are listed on the National Register. This thesis also compares the way the National Register defines significance versus how Gullah Geechee communities define significance. Applications of previously submitted Gullah Geechee sites have favored becoming listed on to the National Register relating to Criteria C, which correlated to being connected to high architecture also known as "Big House" or plantation homes. This thesis explains how the need for a broader definition of significance should be formulated by the National Register to become more inclusive when addressing historic Gullah Geechee sites of significance.

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Stephanie, Michelle, Marcus,  
and Raylan Gaytan

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I first want to thank my committee Chair, Dr. Jon Marcoux, for your support, patience, and direction. Thank you for the support and pushing me to do more. I also want to thank Emily Pigott, Barry Stiefel, and William Cook for making this thesis possible through guidance and ideas.

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Most importantly, I want to thank my family for their support. Stephanie, my amazing wife, this thesis could not have happened without your support. To my kids, Michelle, Marcus, and Raylan, thank you for your endless love, support, and understanding. I would not have been able to do this without you all in my corner.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AASCHC- African American Settlement Community Historic Commission

CCHRS- Charleston County Historic Resource Survey

CLG- Certified Local Government

GGCHC- Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor

GGCHCMP- Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Management Plan

GGCHCRI- Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Resource Inventory

GGSC- Gullah Geechee Settlement Communities

IRB- Institutional Review Board

MCA- Multiple Correspondence Analysis

NHA- National Heritage Area

NHPA- National Historic Preservation Act

NPA- National Programmatic Agreement

NPS- National Park Service

NR- National Register

NRHP- National Register of Historic Places

SCAAHC- South Carolina African American Heritage Commission

SCDAH- South Carolina Department of Archives and History

SCIAA- South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology

SHPO- State Historic Preservation Office

TCP- Traditional Cultural Property

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

The National Register of Historic Places has established a criterion for evaluation, criteria considerations, and seven aspects of integrity. The criterion for elevation is measured by the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture being present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

- a. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- b. That are associated with the lives of significant persons in our past; or
- c. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- d. That has yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.

To meet the criteria considerations and qualify for eligibility for the National Register must fall within the following categories:

- e. A religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance; or
- f. A building or structure removed from its original location, but which is primarily significant for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event; or

- g. A birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no appropriate site or building associated with his or her productive life; or
- h. A cemetery that derives its primary importance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events; or
- i. A reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived; or
- j. A property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own exceptional significance; or
- k. A property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance.<sup>1</sup>

Properties must also retain integrity. Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. To be listed in the National Register of Historic Places, a property must not only be shown to be significant under the National Register criteria, but it also must have integrity. The evaluation of integrity is sometimes a subjective judgment, but it must always be grounded in an understanding of a property's physical features and how they relate to its significance. Historic properties either retain integrity (this is, convey their significance) or they do not. Within the concept of integrity, the National Register criteria recognizes seven aspects or qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity. To retain historic integrity a property will always possess several, and usually most, of the aspects. The retention of specific aspects of integrity is paramount for a property to convey its significance. Determining which of these aspects are most

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<sup>1</sup> "National Register Bulletin 18," n.d., 14.

important to a particular property requires knowing why, where, and when the property is significant. The following sections define the seven aspects and explain how they combine to produce integrity. The seven aspects of integrity are: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.<sup>2</sup>

Historically African American sites and places have been unable to meet this established criterion to become listed as a National Historic site. The argument of this thesis and question this thesis will address is, How do Gullah Geechee community members define cultural and historical significance, and how does this differ from the traditional National Register of Historic Places definition and process?

First, this thesis outlines the history of how Black communities have been dealt with as part of the NRHP process. Particular attention will be paid to a number of case studies of historic Black communities in and near Charleston County South Carolina, that have either obtained or failed to obtain listing status on the National Register of Historic Places. The reasons for these particular outcomes will be further explored in the following chapters. Lastly, this thesis will consider the sites that are listed in the GGCHC Resource Index Appendix C as representing sites identified by Gullah Geechee community stakeholders and residents as historically and culturally significant. The thesis will explore how and why these sites were chosen by the Gullah Geechee people as sites that hold significance and how Gullah Geechee people define significance of their historical and cultural sites.

This thesis will cross examine three sources of information regarding already listed African American sites in Charleston County, potentially eligible sites compiled by the 2016

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<sup>2</sup> "National Register Bulletin 18," n.d., 14.

Charleston County Historic Resources Survey Update, and sites of historic significance listed on the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Management Plan.

There are several African American sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places, this thesis will investigate what criteria and aspects of integrity were met to establish being listed. There are several African American sites listed on the National Register including buildings and districts. The focus of the investigation will be on the Mosquito Beach Nomination Form, Phillips Community Nomination Form, and the Ashley River Historic District.

The investigation into the 2016 Charleston County Historic Resources Survey Update will answer what led to certain African American sites to be deemed potentially eligible for the National Register but failed to gain National Register status. The 2016 Charleston County Historic Resources Survey Update surveyed 1,319 properties through the entire county with a concentration on resources in unincorporated Charleston County. The total area of unincorporated Charleston County is 878 square miles and of those 110 square miles was surveyed. The project was conducted between November 24, 2015, and was completed on April 7, 2016. During the fieldwork, meetings were held with leaders and community members of the Snowden and Scanlonville communities. During the public workshop in February 2016, leaders and members from Charleston County's historic African American communities sought to have their communities documented during the survey. Their interest in the project arose from growing concerns over rapid development and increasing property taxes, which reduced the communities' size, eroding their culture. A new project objective was created out of their desire to preserve and protect their communities, giving the project a second focus on Charleston County's African American communities, their history, culture, and significance. There are two Gullah Geechee Settlement Communities that were surveyed and deemed eligible by the State

Historic Preservation Office of South Carolina, Snowden and Scanlonville. This thesis will address what led to these two communities becoming eligible and reasons the communities failed to become listed on the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>3</sup>

Lastly, the thesis will examine the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Resource Inventory. The inventory includes historical, cultural, and natural resources of the Heritage Corridor that should be preserved, restored, managed, developed, or maintained. There are five resource categories listed in the inventory: Historic Structures or Districts, Cultural Landscapes, Archeological Resources, Ethnographic Resources, and Museum Collections. This thesis will examine Historic Structure or Districts and Cultural Landscapes. The Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Resource Inventory defines historic structures or districts as resources that are constructed works that are primarily significant for their architecture or engineering, and which represent the Gullah Geechee history and culture. Examples might include churches, slave cabins, roads, statuary, boundary markers; or groupings of these resources unified by aesthetics or history. Built resources foremost significant for their association with historic events, cultural heritage, or important persons/groups, rather than their architecture or engineering, might be better placed under the ethnographic resources or cultural landscape categories.

The Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Resource Inventory defines cultural landscapes as areas that reflect how people adapt and use natural resources, as expressed by the land organization or use, settlement patterns, circulation, or types of structures, and how the area reflects cultural values and traditions. The National Park Service categorizes cultural landscapes into four types: historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes, historic sites, and ethnographic landscapes. Cultural landscapes associated with the Gullah Geechee corridor may

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<sup>3</sup> Charleston County Historic Resources Survey Update. 2016.



not be previously identified as “cultural landscapes,” but can include sites that fulfill the above definition of a cultural landscape. Examples might include plantations, village sites, or other important places with ties to long-established groups identified with Gullah Geechee cultural history.<sup>4</sup>

The Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Resource Inventory created a matrix identifying themes and resource types for individual historic structures, districts, and cultural landscapes. The list of themes is:

- Origins and Early Development
- Quest for Freedom, Equality, Education and Recognition
- Global Connections
- Connection with the Land
- Cultural and Spiritual Expression
- Gullah Language

The list of resource types is the following:

- Historic Structure or District
- Cultural Landscape
- Archeological Resource
- Ethnographic Resource
- Museum Collection
- Other

The thesis will answer the question of what classifies these sites as historically significant pertaining to the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor. The thesis’ big picture is

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<sup>4</sup> “Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor (U.S. National Park Service),” July 18, 2022, <https://www.nps.gov/places/gullah-geechee-cultural-heritage-corridor.htm>.

to compare the NRHP with the GGCHC Resource Inventory of sites that are listed on both. This comparison will be answered in Chapter 3, the Methodology and Chapter 4, the Data Analysis. Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 will explain how these two lists are similar as to what matches and what sites are listed on the GGCHCRI and not on the NRHP.

This cross examination into the National Register listed sites, the potentially eligible historic sites, and the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor's historically significant sites, will reveal what classifies an African American site in Charleston County as historically significant through the National Register of Historic Places. This thesis will document how African American sites are connected through historical significance and their differences pertaining to what the National Register criteria denotes is historically significant. This thesis will also answer how the Gullah Geechee community classifies historical significance.

This thesis will cross examine and identify the commonalty and differences between the three resources of African American historical sites of significance that are already on the National Register, deemed eligible by SHPO on the 2016 Charleston County Historic Resource Survey Update, and the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Resource Inventory. Chapter 2 will outline the history of how underrepresented communities; specifically historic Black communities have been dealt with as part of the NRHP application process. Chapter 2 will also examine the issues pertaining to the NRHP application process and the NRHP definition of significance. Followed by an examination of how Gullah Geechee stakeholders and community leaders define significance and how their definition compares to the NRHP definition of significance. Lastly Chapter 2 will explain how the GGCHC Management Plan was created, and other ways federal, state, and local governments have taken to preserve and protect Gullah Geechee historical/cultural sites of significance. Chapter Three will address how the three

resources used to compile African American historically significant sites constructed and formulated the definition of what is historically significant. Chapter three will investigate how each resource conducted the historic surveys and documentation processes. Chapter Four will present the data collected from the three resources and my observation and analysis of how each African American site is classified and defined as being historically significant. Chapter Five will connect all three sources of information used to calculate why African American sites have, thus far, failed to be listed and steps to take to become National Register eligible for future listing. Through cross examination and analysis, defining African American historical significance, and understanding the role the National Register plays to establish eligibility, this thesis concludes that African American historically significant sites are interconnected and share a cultural and historical connection allowing these sites to gain national recognition by the National Register of Historic Places.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholars and practitioners agree that African American historic sites are underrepresented and are a minority with respects to being listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Below I outline the history of underrepresented sites and the failed inclusion onto the National Register. I review some compelling reasons why African American and Gullah Geechee sites are underrepresented on the NRHP. I then focus on Gullah Geechee Settlement Communities and whether or not they are listed on the NRHP and how they became listed on the NRHP. I also describe how GGSC are threatened, and I present recent preservation efforts at the Federal, state, county, and local levels.

There are significant issues with the NRHP eligibility standards and Integrity definition within the NRHP application process. There is a strict set of guidelines places, sites, buildings, and districts must follow to become listed as a National Register property. This is demonstrated by the fact that in Charleston County, South Carolina many properties dealing with African American history and Gullah Geechee Settlement Communities (GGSC) have failed to meet the standards to become listed on to the NRHP.

Defining what makes a GGSC historically significant has been a reoccurring issue, and recently there have been numerous community-based efforts to define what makes a GGSC historically significant within the context of historic preservation designations at the county, state, and federal levels. The approaches include federal efforts with the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Plan, state efforts with the Gullah Geechee Heritage Corridor Resource Inventory, and local efforts by Charleston County local government and the Town of Mount Pleasant. Lastly Gullah Geechee Settlement communities and other underrepresented

communities face ongoing threats of urbanism, transportation routes, and even complete deconstruction of sites and landscapes.

The literature review addresses the history of how underrepresented communities have been dealt with in the NRHP process, how underrepresented communities are dealt with by the integrity process, the efforts Gullah Geechee Settlement Communities are taking to define historical significance, and the treats underrepresented communities face and how becoming listed as a National Register site can create protections for these vulnerable communities.

### **The History of Underrepresentation of African American Sites in the NRHP**

The United States has always been racially diverse. Yet historic preservation has not done enough to address this reality. Between the nation's history as presented at its historic sites and as lived by its people lies a significant diversity gap. In 2002, the NPS commissioned a cultural heritage needs assessment to answer questions on how historic preservation should present racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse historical experiences. The National Register of Historic Places states that the National Programmatic Agreement (NPA), "will present factual and balanced presentations of the many American cultures, heritages, and histories." Yet out of over 75,000 listings included in the NR in 2004, only about 1,300 were explicitly associated with African American heritage. This study failed to ask what the NPS is doing wrong, but simply asked what do people value and what would they like to conserve.<sup>5</sup>

By the 1980's, some preservation agencies and organizations were making efforts to incorporate African American heritage into mainstream preservation work. In 1984, Georgia's

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<sup>5</sup> Ned Kaufman, *Place, Race, and Story: Essays on the Past and Future of Historic Preservation* (New York: Routledge, 2009). Pg. 76.

State Historic Preservation Office published an important guide to historic black resources.<sup>6</sup>

Nationally, the issue of diversity in the NRHP reached a new level of recognition in 1992, when the National Trust for Historic Preservation held a conference around the theme of diversity.

Critics charge that the preservation movement largely serves high-income and white communities who use the designation process against changes that could undermine their housing investments.<sup>7</sup> College-educated, high-income residents may possess better knowledge of the planning process and greater access to the levers of city governance. With these resources, they are able to advocate for historic preservation since they recognize the financial or social benefits of doing so. If they are more politically active than previous residents, or have stronger social connections, they may also be more successful in securing a historic district designation.<sup>8</sup>

Preservation in low-income communities raises fundamental concerns about fairness, affordability, and inclusion. While the preservation community should continue to protect historic assets, this work must be done with a sensitivity to the way historic preservation can affect neighborhoods and shape the composition of residents in those communities.

Acknowledging the changes that result from historic preservation does not mean that such designation should be halted in neighborhoods with valuable historic assets; instead, it demands that advocates and policy leaders couple their preservation goals with efforts to preserve affordable housing and promote economic inclusivity.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Carole Merritt, *Historic Black Resources: A Handbook for the Identification, Documentation, and Evaluation of Historic African American Properties in Georgia* (Atlanta: Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 1984).

<sup>7</sup> Edward Glaeser, "Preservation Follies," *City Journal* (Spring 2010).

<sup>8</sup> Phillip Kasinitz, "The Gentrification of 'Boerum Hill': Neighborhood Change and Conflicts over Definitions," *Qualitative Sociology* 11, no. 3 (September 1988): 163-182.

<sup>9</sup> Erica Avrami, "Preservation and Social Inclusion". (2020.)

Currently the NRHP has slightly over 800 sites listed. The NPS maintains a website specifically about African American Heritage, but as stated previously of the 72,000 listed sites slightly over 800 relate to African American history denoting the underrepresentation on the NR.

Addressing issues of diversity, inclusion, and equity in federal and local preservation policies has usually been synonymous with the need to recognize the history of people with nondominant racial or ethnic identities. Since the establishment of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966 and its foundational regulations in the 1970s, historic preservation policy has been interchangeable with its mandate to implement rules and regulations in the areas of listing buildings, controlling interventions in the fabric of buildings, and administering financial incentives for preservation. Recently, preservationist Jeremy Wells offered ten reasons on how historic preservation supports racial bias.<sup>10</sup> Three reasons are most pertinent to my study.

*Reason 1. Most people who work, study, teach, or volunteer in activities created by preservation policy are white.*

The overwhelming percentage of White people with preservation degrees creates an argument that people holding preservation degrees can be viewed as underrepresented. This argument shows the connection between underrepresented communities and the NRHP, because of the lack of diversity in the field of preservation of non-dominant racial or ethnic identities may focus their attention on preserving or listing underrepresented places on the NRHP.

*Reason 2. Policy-enabled misrepresentation and historical erasure.*

Within a preservation policy framework, most historical research is completed for National Register (NR) or local register nominations. This kind of research is also extensively

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<sup>10</sup> Jeremy C Wells and Bob Barzan, "10 Ways Historic Preservation Policy Supports White Supremacy and 10 Ideas to End It," n.d., 44.

used for the interpretation and documentation of historical sites. The creation of an objective, fact-based history of buildings and places is a core principle of this work and is, indeed, enshrined in preservation policy, especially as it relates to designation. In the United States, the history of places associated with nondominant racial, or ethnic identities is all around us, but it often takes more effort to find it. Sometimes, preservation professionals and volunteers assume it is not there and do not bother to look or to talk to members of these communities, especially if this work takes too much time and resources or if it is not required by regulation.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Jeremy C Wells and Bob Barzan, "10 Ways Historic Preservation Policy Supports White Supremacy and 10 Ideas to End It," n.d., 44.



***Historical significance lacks representation in policy-led work***

- Depending on the source, less than 5% of the nominations on the National Register account for the histories of people with non-dominant racial or ethnic identities, women, or LGBTQ+ people; about 2% addresses African American history, specifically.
- Research by Vincent Michael (2018), Ned Kaufman (2004, 2009), Gail Dubrow (1998), and Casey Cep (2020), among many others, provide additional evidence of the lack of historical narratives focusing on people with non-dominant racial or ethnic identities in the field.
- Research on important historical figures by intra-disciplinary historic preservation scholars from 1978 to 2018 only focused on White people who were mostly male, such as architects, architectural critics, planners, developers, and business entrepreneurs (Wells 2020).

Figure 1. Historical significance lacks representation in policy-led work. Wells.

Figure 1. explains how historic places of non-dominant racial or ethnic identities became underrepresented through the policy framework of preservation and the lack of NRHP listings. Within a preservation policy framework, most historical research is completed for NR or local register nominations. This kind of research is also extensively used for the interpretation and documentation of historical sites. Since the conception of historic preservation as a professional

field of practice in the 1960s and 1970s, historical research in the field, including efforts related to nominations, has mostly focused on the material culture of rich White men.<sup>12</sup>

*Reason 3. Policy that privileged the written historical records.*

In historic preservation, we need to ask how our narratives support, or do not support, communities who have a stake in their own historical places. Wells argues that oral history is an effective way of collecting, understanding, and enabling this community-based narrative, yet it is often underutilized in practice. Preservationists, enabled through preservation policy, have ignored community stories by over-emphasizing the written record, which is a missed opportunity to help make such communities feel that they are important and valued. Because preservation policy emphasizes or requires integrity, objectivity, and overvalues the written record, oral history is consistently undervalued. The lack of accepted histories by the NPS created an ongoing cycle of underrepresented communities and historical places failing to become listed historic sites by the NRHP.

**Issues of Significance and Integrity for African American Sites in the NRHP Process**

The National Register Criteria for Evaluation define the scope of the National Register of Historic Places; they identify the range of resources and kinds of significance that will qualify properties for listing in the National Register. The Criteria are written broadly to recognize the wide variety of historic properties associated with our prehistory and history.<sup>13</sup> Decisions concerning the significance, historic integrity, documentation, and treatment of properties can be made reliably only when the resource is evaluated within its historic context.

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<sup>12</sup> Jeremy C Wells and Bob Barzan, “10 Ways Historic Preservation Policy Supports White Supremacy and 10 Ideas to End It,” n.d., 44.

<sup>13</sup> “How to List a Property - National Register of Historic Places (U.S. National Park Service),” July 18, 2022, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/how-to-list-a-property.htm>.

For a property to qualify for the National Register it must meet one of the National Register Criteria for Evaluation by, being associated with an important historic context and retaining historic integrity of those features necessary to convey its significance. As mentioned above, there are several issues with the structure laid out by the NRHP evaluation process of significance. The Criteria is written broadly to better recognize different historic properties, but the decision concerning significance can only be made on resources within its historic context. This is an issue with African American sites, specifically Gullah Geechee Settlement Communities due to their ever-changing landscape and use of structures. Although the community has been there for over 50 years, the buildings and landscapes have changed and fail to maintain a 50 year use.

The National Register of Historic Places includes significant properties, classified as buildings, sites, districts, structures, or objects. It is not used to list intangible values, except in so far as they are associated with or reflected by historic properties. The National Register does not list cultural events, or skilled or talented individuals, as is done in some countries. Rather, the National Register is oriented to recognizing physically concrete properties that are relatively fixed in location. For purposes of National Register nominations, small groups of properties are listed under a single category, using the primary resource. For example, a city hall and fountain would be categorized by the city hall (building), a farmhouse with two outbuildings would be categorized by the farmhouse (building), and a city park with a gazebo would be categorized by the park (site). Properties with large acreage or a number of resources are usually considered districts. Common sense and reason should dictate the selection of categories.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> "How to List a Property - National Register of Historic Places (U.S. National Park Service)," July 18, 2022, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/how-to-list-a-property.htm>.

This information also lays out another issue with the NRHP process and African American sites (GGSC). The boundaries are always changing in regards to GGSC due to gentrification or urbanism, so its is hard for GGSC to convey the fixed location definition by the NRHP. But to be characterized as a district, A district must be significant, as well as being an identifiable entity. It must be important for historical, architectural, archeological, engineering, or cultural values. Therefore, districts that are significant will usually meet the last portion of Criterion C plus Criterion A, Criterion B, other portions of Criterion C, or Criterion D. This is beneficial in dealing with GGSC in respects to cultural values. But the key issues with this process of determining eligibility as a significant site, the majority of African American sites are in disrepair or completely gone. Making it difficult for African American site to meet the strict eligibility process or definition of significance.

Historic significance is the importance of a property to the history, architecture, archeology, engineering, or culture of a community, State, or the nation. It is achieved in several ways: Association with events, activities, or patterns. Association with important people. Distinctive physical characteristics of design, construction, or form. Potential to yield valuable information. In addition to the above criteria, significance is defined by the area of history in which the property made important contributions and by the period when it was made.

Properties are significant within the context of prehistory or history. Historic context is information about historic trends and properties grouped by an important theme in the prehistory or history of a community, State, or the nation during a particular period. Because historic contexts are organized by theme, place, and time, they link historic properties to important historic trends. In this way they provide a framework for determining the significance of a property and its eligibility for National Register listing.

A knowledge of historic contexts allows applicants to understand a historic property as a product of its time and as an illustration of aspects of heritage that may be unique, representative, or pivotal. Themes often relate to the historic development of a community, such as commercial or industrial activities. They may relate to the occupation of a prehistoric group, the rise of an architectural movement, the work of a master architect, specific events or activities, or a pattern of physical development that influenced the character of a place at a particular time in history. It is within the larger picture of a community's history that local significance becomes apparent. Similarly State and national significance become clear only when the property is seen in relationship to trends and patterns of prehistory or history statewide or nationally.

The level of integrity expected in the National Register nomination is unrealistic. State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) enforce integrity in National Register (NR) nominations: all facts must be properly cited (and ideally based on primary, written sources), make a singularly powerful and cogent argument for significance above the ordinary. Although anyone can submit a NR nomination, in practice most are written by professional historians or people trained in this area. There are three steps in the process to apply for the NRHP. First is defining historical significance. Second is defining historical context. Third is defining historic integrity.

Historic integrity is the authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's prehistoric or historic period. Properties must also meet the level of integrity outlined in the application. The seven aspects of integrity are location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Standard application of this integrity process fails to recognize more complex and layered historic places that often comprise contested spaces with underrepresented histories.

In Melnick's work on cultural landscapes of underrepresented communities, Melnick argues that integrity evaluation fails to look at placemaking as an aspect of integrity, which is a critical process in establishing underrepresented historical places. The concept of integrity, driven by the structure and lens of the National Register of Historic Places, is defined as a relative measure of a place as it exists today in comparison to what it was during its recognized period of significance. Integrity as an idea, a filter, a screen, or a measure needs to be reimagined. Through this lens and bias, a property's integrity is "highest" when it has not changed.<sup>15</sup>

The understanding of integrity by the NRHP fails to address properties that have changed overtime. Most underrepresented communities are unable to maintain their historical fabric over time. This is due to the ever-changing landscape and lack of funding to preserve historic structures. All these changes compromise the integrity of the original structures of the historic landscape. This change in the historic integrity leads to judgment when applying for the property to be listed on the NR.

As one can see what has been done by the strict eligibility process of the NRHP and the underrepresentation of African American sites due to the struggles of fitting into the criteria bubble, there is still a gap in our knowledge as to how the NRHP fails to include more sites of African American history. My study will fill this gap. Based on work done before here is a list of the issues.

1. Sites associated with underrepresented communities are underrepresented in the NRHP.

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<sup>15</sup> Melnick, Robert Z., Andrea Roberts, and Julie McGilvray. "Integrity as Process and Feature: Cultural Landscapes of Underrepresented Communities." *Change Over Time* 10, no. 2 (2021): 122-140.

2. Most of the issues stem from applying NRHP significance and integrity evaluative schema.
3. The difficulty lies in the fact that the NRHP significance and integrity criteria were created with cultural stipulations.
4. One way to overcome these issues is through creating community based definitions of significance and integrity.
5. Lastly, Gullah Geechee Settlement Communities in the Lowcountry of South Carolina present a great example of how community-based definitions of significance and integrity led to representation in the NRHP.

### **Community approach to defining Gullah Geechee Settlement Community Historical Significance and Integrity**

If there is to be any involvement of the NPS in Gullah/Geechee society and culture, it must be in accordance with NPS standards and meet the criteria for national significance, suitability, and feasibility, as set forth in NPS Management Policies. If an area meets the standards of national significance, additional information is gathered about its suitability and feasibility as a potential addition to the National Park System and alternatives for management and protection.<sup>16</sup>

Gullah/Geechee people are the most African of African Americans in physical type, language, and culture; yet they are a uniquely American cultural type formed by the fusion of African cultural heritage and American experience. Through the diffusion and expansion of their

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<sup>16</sup> “Low Country Gullah Culture Special Resource Study - Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor.” Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor - Where Gullah Geechee Culture Lives, April 21, 2019. <https://gullahgeecheecorridor.org/resources/low-country-gullah-culture-special-resource-study/>.

population, the Gullah/Geechee people have become the source for many elements noted in other African American cultures. Of all African American cultures in the United States, the folk customs, oral history and literature, crafts, and arts of the Gullah/Geechee people show the strongest continuities with indigenous cultures of Africa. The Gullah/Geechee culture also bears strong similarities to creole and maroon cultures of the Caribbean.

Thus, Gullah/Geechee cultural heritage, culinary practices, music, language, and traditions have made significant contributions, not only to the lives of southerners but also to all Americans. Today, Gullah/Geechee lands, landmarks, structures, sacred sites, language, cultural identity, and their very existence as a distinct population are under extreme stress from rampant coastal development, population growth, lack of recognition, and lack of significant financial resources. Most Americans do not know of their existence or of the role they played in the formation of America. Today, there is a brief window of time in which there will be an opportunity to save this living people and their cultural landscape and to preserve a significant part of American heritage.

Recognizing the pivotal place that Gullah/Geechee people, language, folklore, and culture have occupied in African American scholarship, the NPS Special Resource Study team commissioned one of the most outstanding and erudite of African American scholars, Professor Richard A. Long, to prepare a statement on the national significance of Gullah/Geechee culture. Long holds the Atticus Good Chair at Emory University and was founder of the Center for African and African American Studies at Atlanta University.

There has been a recent movement to preserve African American historical sites throughout the country through federal programs, state initiatives, and local preservation ordinances. The current focus in South Carolina is to preserve Gullah Geechee Settlement



Communities. Below I discuss efforts at various levels from federal to local, pointing out how these efforts relate to the NRHP process.

Below is a review of case studies of Gullah Geechee Settlement Communities and sites of historical/cultural significance in the Charleston County area. I will cover federal, state, and local level efforts to listings sites on the NRHP. I will highlight whether the effort took a traditional NRHP criteria for eligibility approach or a community-based approach similar to the 2005 Low Country Gullah Cultural Resource Study cited before.

### *Federal*

The most well-known endeavor to preserve GGSC's federally is the designation of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor. The Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor (the Corridor) was designated by the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Act, passed by Congress on October 12, 2006 (Public Law 109- 338). The local coordinating entity legally responsible for management of the Corridor is a federal commission established by Congress and titled the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission. The Corridor's mission is to:

“Recognize, sustain, and celebrate the important contributions made to American culture and history by African Americans, known as the Gullah Geechee, who settled in the coastal counties of South Carolina, Georgia, North Carolina, and Florida. Assist state and local governments and public and private entities in South Carolina, Georgia, North Carolina, and Florida in interpreting the story of the Gullah Geechee and preserving Gullah Geechee folklore, arts, crafts, and music. Assist in identifying and preserving sites, historical data, artifacts, and objects associated with Gullah Geechee people and culture for the benefit and education of the public.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> “Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor (U.S. National Park Service),” accessed July 18, 2022, <https://www.nps.gov/places/gullah-geechee-cultural-heritage-corridor.htm>.

## **Development of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Management Plan**

The Commission has undertaken a comprehensive planning process to develop this management plan. It has continually engaged the public and potential partners in developing its approach for managing the Corridor over the next 10 years. The management approach outlined in this plan is based on the purpose, significance, and designating law of the Corridor.

The management plan was developed by the Commission to guide future implementation efforts in cooperation and collaboration with partners. The plan reflects and addresses the extensive public and stakeholder involvement undertaken by the Commission and provides a blueprint for how to address the issues and concerns identified throughout the planning process. The vision, mission, goals, and primary interpretive themes in the plan create the foundation for future implementation.

An evaluation of the potential for significant environmental impacts resulting from the proposed strategies and actions in this plan concluded that the appropriate National Environmental Policy Act pathway was a categorical exclusion under 3.3R, which is for the “adoption or approval of surveys, studies, reports, plans and similar documents which will result in recommendations or proposed actions which would cause no or only minimal environmental impacts.”

The management plan describes Gullah Geechee people and culture and a brief historical overview. In addition, the plan highlights examples of important cultural resources throughout the Corridor, summarizes the natural resources of the Corridor, discusses land ownership and land cover, and briefly touches on the socioeconomic conditions within the Corridor. This plan gives readers a basic level of information about the Corridor to better understand the direction for future implementation outlined in the management approach.

The management approach developed for the Corridor is the heart of the plan. It provides the basic building blocks for implementation. The management approach focuses on the following three interdependent pillars:

- education
- economic development
- documentation and preservation

By implementing the management approach, the Commission aims to increase understanding and awareness of Gullah Geechee people, culture, and history; support heritage-related economic development, primarily for the economic sustainability of Gullah Geechee people and communities; promote preservation of land and natural resources related to the culture; and preserve Gullah Geechee resources, primarily through documentation.<sup>18</sup>

### **Gullah Geechee Corridor Management Plan Appendix C**

Sec. 295F(a)(5) of the designating law specifies that the management plan for the Heritage Corridor shall “include an inventory of the historical, cultural, and natural resources of the Heritage Corridor related to the themes of the Heritage Corridor that should be preserved, restored, managed, developed, or maintained.” The resource inventory matrices on the following pages are organized in the following manner: each row represents a resource, the columns denote — the primary interpretive themes of the Corridor — the resource category (see definitions below) The resources in the following tables do not represent all resources in the Corridor, but rather those that have been identified at this time. Throughout implementation of the management plan, additional resources that are identified through surveys, research, etc. are to be added to the resource inventory. Therefore, the management plan meets Sec. 295F(a)(5) of the

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<sup>18</sup> “Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor (U.S. National Park Service),” accessed July 18, 2022, <https://www.nps.gov/places/gullah-geechee-cultural-heritage-corridor.htm>.

designating law by linking the primary interpretive themes to the resources and adds additional information about each resource. More detailed information about resources, particularly site-specific information, is to be gathered through the Partner Site and Partnership Application process.<sup>19</sup>

#### Resource Categories:

1. Historic Structures or Districts These resources are constructed works that are primarily significant for their architecture or engineering, and which represent the Gullah Geechee history and culture. Examples might include churches, slave cabins, roads, statuary, boundary markers; or groupings of these resources unified by aesthetics or history. Note: Built resources foremost significant for their association with historic events, cultural heritage, or important persons/groups, rather than their architecture or engineering, might be better placed under the ethnographic resources or cultural landscape categories.

2. Cultural Landscapes Cultural Landscapes are areas that reflect how people adapt and use natural resources, as expressed by the land organization or use, settlement patterns, circulation, or types of structures, and how the area reflects cultural values and traditions. The National Park Service categorizes cultural landscapes into four types: historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes, historic sites, and ethnographic landscapes. Cultural landscapes associated with the Gullah Geechee corridor may not be previously identified as “cultural landscapes,” but can include sites that fulfill the above definition of a cultural landscape. Examples might include plantations, village sites, or other important places with ties to long-established groups identified with Gullah Geechee cultural history.

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<sup>19</sup> “Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor (U.S. National Park Service),” accessed July 18, 2022, <https://www.nps.gov/places/gullah-geechee-cultural-heritage-corridor.htm>.

3. Archeological Resources Archeological resources are the material remains or physical evidence of past human life or activities that represent both prehistoric and historic time periods. They can be above-ground, below-ground, or underwater; or as artifacts housed in museum collections.

4. Ethnographic Resources Ethnographic resources are any site, structure, object, landscape, or natural resource feature assigned traditional legendary, religious, subsistence, or other significance in the cultural system of a group traditionally associated with it. These resources generally relate to folklife, religious traditions, foodways, anthropology, ethnomusicology, or the humanities.

5. Museum Collections Museum collections include objects, prehistoric or historic artifacts, works of art, natural history specimens, photographs, maps, or manuscripts. Examples of such collections may reside in state museums, historical site museums, or cultural centers, for example.

To effectively implement the management approach, the Commission developed primary interpretive themes and an interpretation framework to assist in “Tellin We Story.” The following six primary interpretive themes would be the focus of future interpretation efforts by the Commission and partners:

- I. Origins and Early Development
- II. The Quest for Freedom, Equality, Education, and Recognition
- III. Global Connections
- IV. Connection with the Land
- V. Cultural and Spiritual Expression
- VI. Gullah Geechee Language

In addition, the Commission developed a signage plan and a process to formally identify partners.

This management plan has been distributed to other agencies and interested organizations and individuals for their review and comment. Readers are encouraged to send written comments on this management plan. Please see the “How to Comment on this Plan” discussion for further information.<sup>20</sup>

The creation of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Management Plan and Appendix C of the Plan, takes on a community-based approach to preserving GGSC and sites of significance. But the plan fails to implement any agenda or plan towards working on NRHP application processes or working towards getting properties listed on the NRHP. So overall this framework has not been implemented, which is part of the key reasons for this thesis.

### *State*

The creation of the African American Settlement Community Historic Commission (AASCHC) is one effort to preserve and protect the existing characteristics of African American Settlement Communities. The AASCHC is a non-profit in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina. There are efforts to define what a settlement community is. The AASCHS took on a slight local community approach by focusing on settlement communities in Charleston County. The AASCHC defines a settlement community broadly. After the Civil War, formerly enslaved African American families settled on land close to the Plantation on which they had worked. These free people of color created their own self-sustaining communities, quite frequently close to waterways so that they could crab, fish, and shrimp for profit and/or to provide food for their families. The AASCHC also explains the inner workings of Gullah people stating that Gullah

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<sup>20</sup> “Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor (U.S. National Park Service),” accessed July 18, 2022, <https://www.nps.gov/places/gullah-geechee-cultural-heritage-corridor.htm>.

people created farms, built wood framed homes, and purchased land from former plantation owners for five to ten dollars per acre. The AASCHC discusses how each community is interconnected with the other communities in the areas, but each community has its own clear definition of what makes it historically significant.<sup>21</sup>

AASCHC mission states to protect and preserve the existing characteristics of African American Settlement Communities, to nurture and support the sense of community, and to support the traditions of land ownership. The mission and goals set out by the AASCHC are aligned well with supporting Settlement Communities, but they fail to address the goal of working towards nominate or helping with the NRHP application process to have these places listed on the NR.

The movement toward recognizing the importance of preserving this cultural richness led to the passage of a joint resolution of the General Assembly in 1993 that established the South Carolina African American Heritage Council and to its establishment as a commission in 2001 by executive order of Governor Jim Hodges. The mission of the South Carolina African American Heritage Commission (SCAAHC) is to identify and promote the preservation of historic sites, structures, buildings, and culture of the African American experience in South Carolina, and to assist and enhance the efforts of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History. The 15-member commission includes representatives from all regions of the state.

The SCAAHC also has a list of services which include Encouraging and supporting the listing of African American historic sites in the National Register of Historic Places and the placement of South Carolina Historical Markers to recognize and interpret places important in African American history. There are no sites in Charleston County or the State that have been

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.aaschc.com/>

listed due to a submission by the SCAAHC, but they have had several state historical markers placed at historic buildings and have had state recognition. But again, the Commission has not been involved on any application form for getting a site listed on the NR. As mentioned before, this shows the need for this research to better understand what government, non-profit, and/or local advocacy groups are working towards getting GGSC listed on the NR.

When defining what makes a GGSC historically and culturally significant, it is best to understand each community as its own entity and to step away from the broad definition of the communities as a collective whole. To understand each GGSC's individual history it is best to look at a local approach in defining historical significance.

#### *County and Local*

Charleston County Historic Resources Survey update in 2016 primary purpose of the project was to update Charleston County's historic resources inventory. The Historic Preservation Committee in the Charleston County Planning Commission was established in 2014 to better identify ways to preserve and enhance the history of Charleston County and carry out strategies identified in the cultural resources section of the county's comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan stipulated that the county's historic resources inventory needed to be updated, as the last countywide survey was completed in 1992. The survey update will also help guide future initiatives set forth by the Historic Preservation Commission and project planning within the county. In 2015, Charleston County was awarded a grant from the National Park Service (NPS), administered by the South Carolina Department of Archives and History (SCDAH), to conduct an intensive historic resources survey of 1,200 properties that focused on resources dating between 1940 and 1975 within the unincorporated areas of Charleston County. The data compiled by the project is intended to help identify individual properties or districts



eligible for local designation or listing in the NRHP. The historic context and subsequent survey also identify potential historic themes to pursue in future studies and provide Charleston County and SCDAH with information needed for planning and preservation initiatives.

During the public workshop in February, leaders, and members from Charleston County's historic African American communities sought to have their communities documented during the survey. Their interest in the project arose from growing concerns over rapid development and increasing property taxes, which reduced the communities' size, eroding their culture. A new project objective was created out of their desire to preserve and protect their communities, giving the project a second focus on Charleston County's African American communities, their history, culture, and significance.

The main goal of the resource survey was to document resources for their potential eligibility for listing on the NRHP. Surveys of the Village, Remley's Point/Scanlonville, Greenhill/Sparkhill, Snowden, Two Mile, Four Mile, Six Mile, Seven Mile/Hamlin, and Ten Mile. Fifteen Mile and Phillips communities participated in the study, but their communities were not surveyed. The survey concluded that Phillips, Snowden, Sol Legare, and Scanlonville were all eligible for NRHP listings and SHPO review. This led to the County to granting district nominations for each site.

#### *Charleston County Historic Preservation Commission*

The Charleston County Historic Preservation Commission consists of nine members appointed by County Council. The Commission has final decision-making authority on Certificates of Historic Appropriateness. In matters for which Commission is the authority, Commission's is the sole meeting required for resolution. The Historic Preservation Commission acts in a review and recommending capacity to County Council for Designations of Historic

Property and may also conduct first review and evaluation of all proposed nominations for the National Register of Historic Properties. For these matters, the Commission meeting and subsequent County Council meetings are necessary for Council's resolution.

The Commission has two types of applications for historic properties. One is applying to become designated as a historic property or as a historic district. The approval criteria must be demonstrated in order to be designated as a Historic District or Property on the Charleston County Historic Designation List. Approval Criteria:

1. Has significant inherent character, interest, history, or value as part of the rural county or heritage of the county, state, or nation.
2. Is of an event significant in history.
3. Is associated with a person or persons who contributed significantly to the culture and development of the county, state, or nation.
4. Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, ethnic, or historic heritage of the county, state or nation.
5. Individually or collectively embodies distinguishing characteristics of a type, style, or period in architecture or engineering.
6. Is the work of a designer whose work has significantly influenced the development of the county, state, or nation.
7. Contains elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation.
8. Is part of or related to a square or other distinctive element of community planning.
9. Represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood or community.

10. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history (potential archaeological site); and/or

11. Is deemed eligible for or already listed on the NRHP.<sup>22</sup>

Through this process there are currently six properties that are local designated a historic resources in Charleston County. They are Hebron Center, Phillips Community, St. Mark UME Church, Bethel AME Church, Beefield Historic District, and Ten Mile Historic District.

### *Local*

The City of Charleston adopted the Charleston City Plan 2021 on February 22, 2011. The Plan presents a roadmap to guide land-use planning, policy, and investment through 2030 with a focus on creating a more resilient and equitable future. The city outlines its plan to identify and preserve historical landmarks and manage cultural resources. In particular, the Plan focuses on protecting African-American settlement communities.

Through the implementation of the City Plan, and connection with Charleston County, and the Town of Mount Pleasant the three governments applied for the Underrepresented Communities Grant from the NPS and fortunately received a \$10,000 grant. The grant will be used to survey GGSC in the County and also will be used to nominate and list Scanlonville Cemetery, a historic black cemetery, on the NRHP.

Not only has there been a great push by the local governments in the Charleston Area, through the help of local advocacy groups in the area two African American historic sites have been listed on the NRHP. Through the help by The Preservation Society of Charleston, The Historic Charleston Foundation, and BVL Historic Preservation Research two sites have been listed on the NRHP. The work at Mosquito Beach Historic District and Phillips Community used

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.charlestoncounty.org/departments/zoning-planning/historic-preservation.php>

BVL Historic Preservation Research to compile the NRHP application form. Mosquito Beach took on a traditional NRHP process, while Phillips Community used a Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) Approach.

### **Traditional Cultural Properties**

First issued in 1990, the TCP Bulletin was developed to provide guidance on nominating buildings, structures, objects, sites, and districts believed to have traditional cultural significance for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The TCP Bulletin was updated in 1992 to address concerns that properties of importance to Tribes or Native Hawaiian Organizations (NHOs) were being excluded from listing by virtue of the fact that religious properties are not typically eligible for listing in the National Register. It was again updated in 1998 to re-state that TCPs are not a new property type nor an additional level of significance.

From 2011 to 2013, in response to ever-increasing requests for additional assistance on TCP identification and evaluation, NPS held listening sessions around the country to gather comments. NPS hosted webinars and participated in conferences and meetings with Federal and state agencies, Native Americans, Native Hawai'ians, Native Alaskans, and preservation organizations. Most comments received asked for clarification on just what is eligible as a TCP and just how the federal review process (Section 106 consultation) applies to TCPs.

From 2014 to 2017, NPS developed a revised draft that to include plain language and successful nominations as examples. In mid-2017, the update initiative was halted. The NPS is now relaunching that effort to revise the TCP Bulletin. The 2017 draft has been further revised to enhance plain language and include additional examples and images.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> <https://parkplanning.nps.gov>

A Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) is a property that is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) based on its associations with the cultural practices, traditions, beliefs, lifeways, arts, crafts, or social institutions of a living community. TCPs are rooted in a traditional community's history and are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of the community. The cultural practices or beliefs that give a TCP its significance is, in many cases, still observed at the time a TCP is considered for inclusion in the NRHP. Because of this, it is sometimes perceived that the practices or beliefs themselves, not the property, make up the TCP. While the beliefs or practices associated with a TCP are of central importance, the NRHP does not include intangible resources. The TCP must be a physical property or place--that is, a district, site, building, structure, or object.

What constitutes a "traditional" community? A "traditional" community is a one that has beliefs, customs, and practices that have continued over time, been passed down through the generations, are shared, and help to define the traditions of the community.

Are TCPs eligible for the NRHP under a special criterion? There are no special criteria for TCPs. To be eligible for listing in the NRHP a TCP must still meet one of the four basic Criteria for Evaluation, as outlined in 36 CFR Part 60.4 (a, b, c, d) and must retain integrity (see National Register Bulletin 15, Chapter VIII). A TCP is simply a different way of grouping or looking at historic resources, emphasizing a place's value and significance to a living community.

How are TCPs identified? TCPs are best identified by consulting directly with members of a traditional community. Members often have a special perspective on properties that play important roles in their historically rooted beliefs, customs, and practices. While certain properties may be documented in the historic literature or through previous ethnographic or

archeological studies, information on other properties may have only been passed down through generations by oral history or practice. For Indian tribes and Native Hawaiians, knowledge of TCP locations may reside with tribal elders or traditional practitioners who may retain specific confidential information regarding the location of properties and the special qualities associated with them. Sensitivity to these issues may be necessary during any identification and documentation process.

What types of properties might be eligible for listing as TCPs? Examples of TCPs might include: a location associated with the traditional beliefs of a Native American group about its origins, its cultural history, or the nature of the world; a rural community whose organization, buildings and structures, or patterns of land use reflect the cultural traditions valued by its long-term residents; a location where Native American religious practitioners have historically gone, and are known to go today, to perform ceremonial activities in accordance with traditional cultural rules of practice; an urban neighborhood that is the traditional home of a particular cultural group, and that reflects its continuing beliefs and practices; a location where a community has traditionally carried out economic, artistic, or other cultural practices important in maintaining its historic identity.<sup>24</sup>

Two listings pertaining to GGSC's are the nomination of Philips Community and Mosquito Beach. Out of the two properties listed on the NR, nineteen Gullah Geechee Settlement Communities are in Charleston County. Two of the three NR listed properties relating to GGSC history were listed recently. The two applications as mentioned before took two separate approaches to become listed.

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<sup>24</sup> "National Register of Historic Places - Traditional Cultural Properties ...," accessed April 4, 2023, [https://ctclusi.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/NPS\\_QuickGuide\\_TCP.pdf](https://ctclusi.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/NPS_QuickGuide_TCP.pdf).

## *Mosquito Beach*

The Mosquito Beach Historic District nomination form followed the traditional approach and defines the place or site as meeting Criteria A, as a property associated with the events that have made a significant contribution to history's broad patterns.<sup>25</sup> The nomination form also defines the area of significance as relating to Black ethnic heritage.

The statement of significance summary paragraph of the Mosquito Beach nomination form states; The Mosquito Beach Historic District is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A as a significant and well-preserved cultural, commercial, and recreational epicenter for the Charleston black community during the Jim Crow era. The survival of the structures, sites and overall ambiance of the strip embody the empowerment and entrepreneurship, as well as the sustainment of culture and tradition, displayed by African Americans during a time of deep oppression, and exists as tangible evidence of the vast recreational segregation of Charleston in the decades leading up to and during the Civil Rights era.<sup>26</sup>

Not only does the beach's establishment along an infamously mosquito-infested tidal marsh, hidden from major roadways and white-only gathering places in an historically black farming community, convey the story of racial discrimination in the built environment and inequality of recreational access to natural resources, but the overall ambiance of Mosquito Beach, supported by the extant structures and retained landscape, make it one of the best preserved "black beaches" that existed in Charleston County during the mid-century. Mosquito Beach was also the only gathering place for black citizens to socialize on James Island prior to

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<sup>25</sup> <https://schpr.sc.gov/index.php/Detail/properties/62145>

<sup>26</sup> <https://schpr.sc.gov/index.php/Detail/properties/62145>

the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and retains the high integrity to represent this era of the island's history.

This application form of Mosquito Beach helps create an understanding that there is no clear definition to what makes a GGSC historically significant, but it helps create a broad understanding of how GGSC's create a significant contribution to the broad patterns of American History. Due to the lack of representation of these communities, the failed education on how to list a property onto the NR, and the mistrust in local governments by GGSC residents, the GGSC's tend to go unlisted and fail to inherit the benefits from being nationally recognized. This ideal will be later explained in Chapter 5.

### *Phillips Community*

Phillips Community took the TCP approach to become eligibly for the NRHP and later being listed on the NR. The Mosquito beach nomination form approach as stated was the traditional method and received help through the local government to help draft the summary of significance and used already documented history to assist in the nomination form. As for Phillips Community this approach by using a TCP was the first of its kind in the state of South Carolina to use a TCP, and also the first to take a community-based approach in understanding and documenting the vast history of the community. Phillips Community lacks in traditional integrity, or architectural merit, so the TCP approach was best suited for the community. BVL Research clearly defines how the site is associated with traditional beliefs, and how Phillips is a rural community in which their organization, buildings, structures, and patterns of land use reflect the cultural traditions valued by its long-term residents.

The Phillips Community's National Register of Historic Places Registration Form selected Criteria A as their applicable National Register Criteria. Instead of using architecture as



the means for its area of significance criteria, like that of the Mosquito Beach application, Phillips chose several types of contributing resources such as roads, cemeteries, and churches. The path to use areas of settlement was taken to show the broad patterns of history, rather than choosing to go with Criteria C. The areas of significance Phillips Community selected were community planning and development, ethnic heritage: Black, and social history: traditional cultural history.

The statement of significance mentions how Phillips Community is a Traditional Cultural Property and is eligible for listing under Criteria A. The statement of significance states, “The district, which is associated with the distinct Gullah culture of the Lowcountry region, is significant in the areas of Community Planning and Development, Ethnic Heritage: Black, and Social History: Traditional Cultural History. The district is an exceptional example of a postbellum rural freedmen's community in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, retaining settlement patterns, historic landscape features, and original plat lines that have defined the community for over a century. Of all the nineteenth-century freedmen settlements established in Mount Pleasant after the Civil War, Phillips Community survives as the most intact, representing the self-sufficiency and self-reliance of Black rural communities in the wake of the Civil War and their efforts to maintain autonomy and freedom through agricultural practices. Today, approximately 85% of the residents within the Phillips Community descend from the original Black farmers who occupied and purchased the lots during the Reconstruction era and maintain core aspects of regional Gullah culture through agriculture, commerce, and social and religious customs. Preservation of this district and documentation of its historical and cultural significance not only

complements the sentiments of the community, but also supports larger scale planning efforts and community engagement already underway in this area by Charleston County.”<sup>27</sup>

By following the guidelines set by the NPS on what types of properties are eligible for listing as a TCP, BVL Historic Preservation Research was able to clearly define how Phillips checks off the criteria set by the NPS for being eligible for listing as a TCP. Although Mosquito Beach and Phillips Community took separate approaches, both were successful on becoming listed properties on the NRHP.

The difference between using the TCP approach rather than the traditional NRHP application approach is that the TCP approach not only includes being eligible for a certain criteria of eligibility, but it also takes into account the cultural history that is connected to the site. As for Phillips it looks at the broad patterns of history of the site and it also examines how the culture shaped the land. The traditional approach has a strict integrity section that a site must meet in order to become eligible for listing, but the TCP approach supports the argument that a site still holds integrity although the landscape has changed over time.

The TCP approach is beneficial for sites that have a long history of traditional associated people that occupy the landscape and builds a strong case that the site is important due to its cultural identity rather than its architecture, archeology, or association with significant persons.

### **Local Strategies to preserve, protect, and list Gullah Geechee Settlement Communities**

Their interest in the project arose from growing concerns over rapid development and increasing property taxes, which reduced the communities’ size, eroding their culture. A new project objective was created out of their desire to preserve and protect their communities, giving the project a second focus on Charleston County’s African American communities, their history,

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<sup>27</sup> Phillips Community NRHP Application Form. 2022. PDF.

culture, and significance. During the fieldwork, meetings were held with leaders and community members of the Phillips, Snowden, and Sol Legare communities.

There are two Certified Local Governments in Charleston County that are actively participating in preserving and protecting GGSC's. The City of Charleston Government, and the Town of Mount Pleasant Government. Both have created preservation ordinances and guidelines on how to protect vulnerable historic communities from development. Charleston County Government although is not an established CLG has an established Historic Preservation Commission, whose responsibilities include; educating the community about historic resources, maintain a system for the survey and inventory of historic properties, submit to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) an annual report of Commission activities, adopt By-Laws and Rules of Procedure, and lastly provide adequate public participation in the local historic preservation program, including the process of recommending properties for nomination to the NR.

The Historic Preservation Commission may first review and evaluate all proposed nominations for the NRHP for properties within its authority, prior to consideration by the State Board of Review. The Commission may send their recommendations to the State Historic Preservation Office for consideration at the meeting of the State Board of Review. The Commission shall not nominate properties directly to the National Register; only the State Board of Review shall have this final review authority unless expressly authorized by the Federal statute.

The Charleston County Government also clearly defines what they view as a historic district, historic object, historic property, historic site, and historic structure more broadly which allows for GGSC's an easier process to become locally recognized, then the strict standardized

process of the NRHP application. The Charleston County Government has designated six historically significant Gullah Geechee sites. The six sites are the Hebron Center, Phillips Community Historic District, St. Mark UME Church, Bethel AME Church, Beefield Community Historic District, and Ten Mile Community Historic District.<sup>28</sup>

The Charleston County Government also conducted a historic resource survey in 2016 with a concentration on resources located in unincorporated Charleston County. All the GGSC lies within sections of unincorporated Charleston County. There were 1,319 properties and about 110 square miles were surveyed.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> <https://www.charleston-sc.gov/891/Preservation-Plan>

<sup>29</sup> Charleston County Historic Resources Survey Update. 2016.

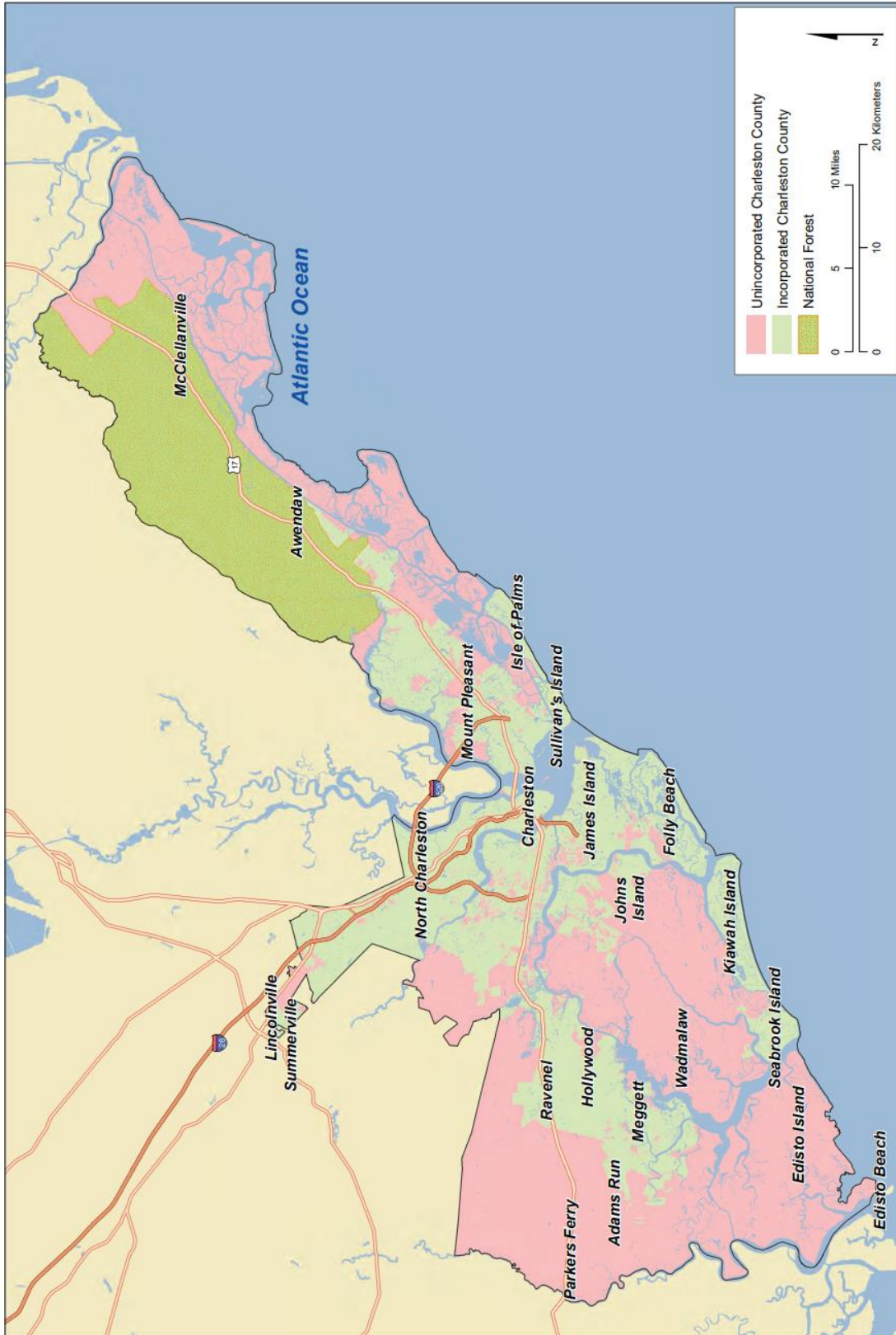


Figure 2. Map of Charleston County Showing Unincorporated Areas.

The project began with a kick-off meeting with the Charleston County planning department staff, South Carolina Department of Archives and History (SCDAH), and New South Associates on November 24, 2015, to discuss the survey's parameters and schedule. Attendees were Andrea Harris-Long and Andrea Pietras of the Charleston County Zoning and Planning Department, David Kent who is the chair of the Planning Commission Historic Preservation Committee, Brad Sauls from SCDAH, and Mary Beth Reed and Summer Ciomek of New South Associates. A public workshop was held on February 16, 2016, at the Lonnie Hamilton, III Public Services Building in North Charleston. During the public workshop in February, leaders and members from Charleston County's historic African American communities sought to have their communities documented during the survey.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Charleston County Historic Resources Survey Update. 2016.

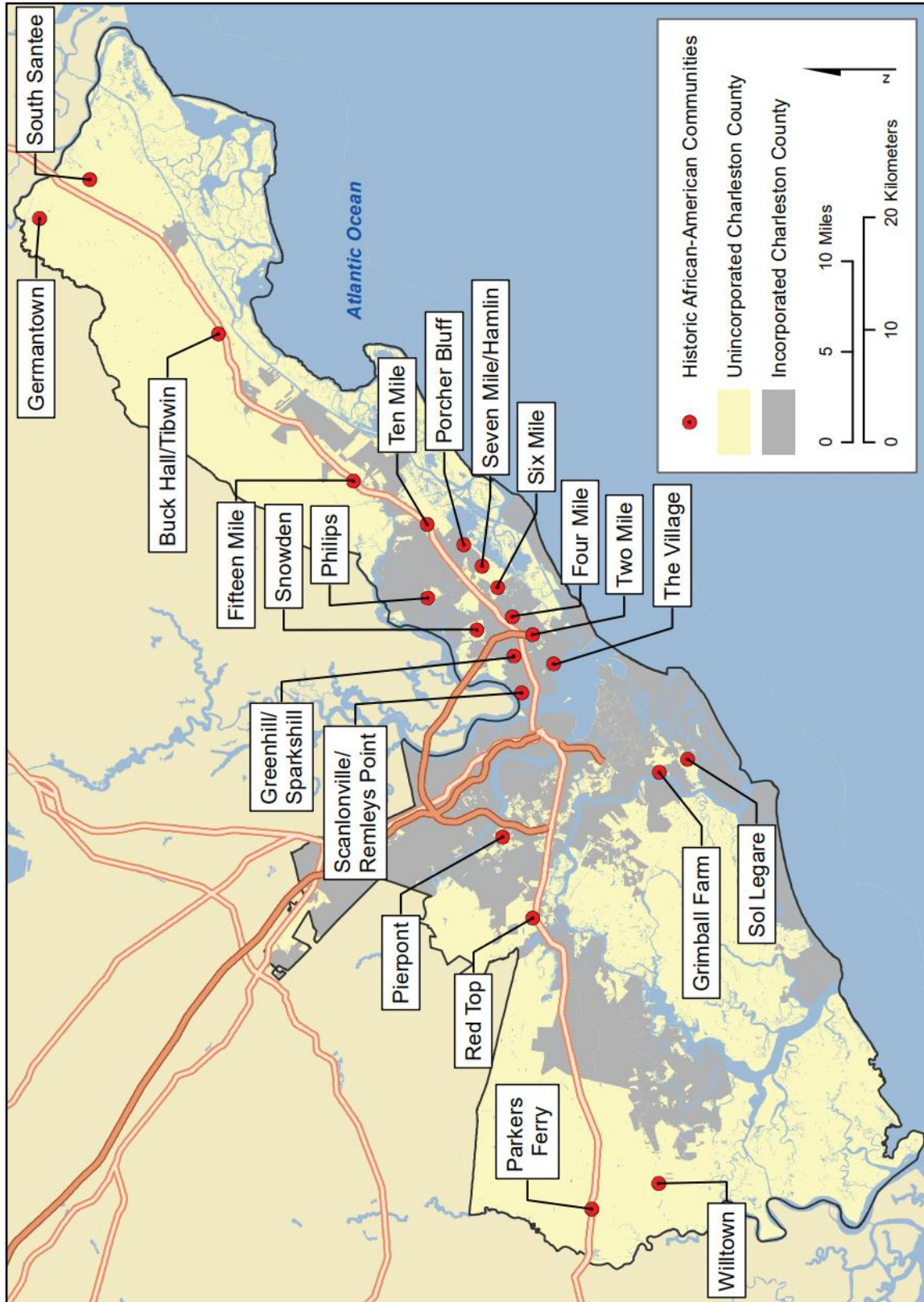


Figure 3. Historic African American Communities in Charleston County.

## *Conclusion*

The Mosquito Beach and Phillips Community case studies demonstrate the two types of approaches a place or site can take to become listed on the NRHP. One can take the traditional NRHP approach or to use the TCP approach. Phillips Community is especially important, as it represents a property that would often be deemed not eligible due to integrity. But efforts employing a community-based approach overcame this limitation. This approach can be employed more broadly, and a good starting point would be to explore what Gullah Geechee Settlement Communities and Community members define as being significant.

The GGCHC Management Plan Resource Index Appendix C, with its list of historically significant sites determined by Gullah Geechee stakeholders, allows us the opportunity to see what Gullah Geechee people conclude is culturally/historically important. These sites can then be compared to sites that are already listed on the NRHP to identify which property types and areas of significance that are important to Gullah Geechee people are missing in our culturally biased NRHP process. This comparison can serve as the basis for ways to make the NRHP process more inclusive towards underrepresented communities.

Chapter three, the methodology chapter of this thesis will include a section that delves into the details of the methods taken to understand what makes a GGSC historically significant. Chapter three will include a section that identifies and describes the statistical operations employed during the analysis of the literature pertaining to what makes a GGSC historically significant. This section will explain the statistical procedure taken to help understand the historical significance of GGSC. Chapter three will also include a section that describes the study sample and a description of the study setting. Lastly, chapter three will include a summary



section that tells how the methods used will produce a more complete understanding of GGSC historical significance and effective ways to preserve, protect, and apply to the NR.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Introduction to the Data**

The main question of this thesis is, how have Gullah Geechee communities defined the term significance for sites relating to Gullah Geechee history. To answer this question, in this chapter I used four datasets inform the basis and analysis of this thesis: the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Resource Inventory, Charleston County's Historic Resources 2016 Survey Update by New South Associates Inc., the National Register of Historic Places listings, and an interview with Mike Allen retired NPS Director, to help provide more context on how the GGCHCRI was established. I also used Archsite and the SCDAH historic state file to gather information on what sites within Charleston County South Carolina are deemed eligible or potentially eligible for the NR.

This chapter outlines the data collection process and the methods of analysis. The data collection and analysis of the GGCHC Resource Inventory creates an understanding of what properties relating to Gullah Geechee history within the GGCHC need to be preserved and protected. Because this appendix was formed by community members and stakeholders, the appendix lays out community-based determinations of what sites need to be preserved. This chapter also investigates how these Gullah Geechee sites compare to already listed sites within the GGCHC and sites within the Corridor that are deemed eligible for the NRHP.

Looking through the NRHP listings database I identified what properties on the GGCHRI are already listed and what criteria and area of significance the properties are listed as possessing. The data collected by the 2016 HRS by the County identifies what places in Charleston County are potentially eligible for listing. The interview with Mike Allen allowed for an understanding of how the GGCHCRI selected the resource types of Gullah Geechee properties. Lastly the interview with Richard Habersham allowed for an understanding of how Phillips Community became federally recognized and listed on the NRHP.

The main subset for this data is the database I have created using an Excel spreadsheet. I compiled a single database from the multiple sources of data listed above. The database contains 805 sites, along with multiple variable notation which include any GGCHC themes, property types, NRHP listings, areas of significance, year listed, national register determination, national register criteria, level of significance, and lastly ethnic heritage black connection. I listed sites of historical significance noted by the GGCHCRI, the potentially eligible properties listed by the 2016 Charleston County Historic Resource Survey Update, and the properties already listed on the NRHP. The spreadsheet will reveal how sites of significance were listed regarding criteria, level, and area of significance. The spreadsheet will allow me to calculate how Gullah Geechee historical sites have become listed by the NRHP and why certain sites have yet to be listed.

### **Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Resource Index**

To be an established NHA the management plan must include an inventory of historical, cultural, and natural resources of the Heritage Corridor related to the themes of the Heritage Corridor that should be preserved, restored, managed, developed, or maintained. The resource

inventory matrices of the GGCHC Plan meet the designating law by linking the primary interpretive themes to resources.<sup>31</sup>

The GGCHRI Appendix C within the GGCHC Management Plan, contains six themes and five resource types and has compiled a list of properties throughout the GHC that meet the resource matrices. The resource index explores each county within the Corridor and lists each property that meets the themes and resources defined in the index. The themes are as follows: Origins and Early Development, Quest for Freedom, Equality, Education and Recognition, Global Connections, Connection with the Land, Cultural and Spiritual Expression, Gullah Language. The Resource types are as follows: Historic Structure or District, Cultural Landscape, Archeological Resource, Ethnographic Resource, Museum Collection, Other.<sup>32</sup> Mike Allen who was part of the GGCHC Plan creation, explained that the reason for choosing these specific resource types and themes was to try to build a correlation with the National Register criteria for eligibility.<sup>33</sup> The themes were designed to correlate with the areas of significance labeled within the NRHP application process. Also, the selection of resource types was established to commensurate with the NRHP property types.

### **National Register of Historic Places Listings**

There are four significance criteria a site must meet to be eligible for listing on the NRHP, Criteria A: Properties that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, Criteria B: Properties that are associated with the lives of significant persons in or past; Criteria C: Properties that embody the distinctive

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<sup>31</sup> "National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Guidelines - Nps.gov," accessed March 11, 2023, [https://www.nps.gov/subjects/heritageareas/upload/NHA-Feasibility-Study-Guidelines\\_FINAL-Revisions-2019\\_508-compliant.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/heritageareas/upload/NHA-Feasibility-Study-Guidelines_FINAL-Revisions-2019_508-compliant.pdf).

<sup>32</sup> "Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor (U.S. National Park Service)," accessed July 18, 2022, <https://www.nps.gov/places/gullah-geechee-cultural-heritage-corridor.htm>.

<sup>33</sup> Mike Allen (retired NPS) in discussion with the author, December 2022.

characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; and Criteria D: Properties that have yielded or may be likely to yield information important in history or prehistory. There are forty-one areas of significance a site can meet to be eligible for NR status. Each site must also be at least 50 years old by the date of the application year. Lastly a site must meet the NRHP definition of integrity laid out in the National Register Bulletin 15.<sup>34</sup> The key area of significance that sites of Gullah Geechee historical significance typically meet are Ethnic Heritage: Black and Social History. Other areas include architecture, religion, social history, significant persons, agriculture, and exploration/settlement.

I used the National Register database to look up properties listed on the GGCHRI to see if any of them were already listed on the NR. There were several properties that were already listed for each state. In North Carolina four properties that met the GGCHCRI historical significance guidelines were listed. In South Carolina sixty-one sites were listed. In Georgia twenty-two sites were listed. In Florida five sites were listed. These will be discussed further in the next chapter.

### **Charleston County 2016 Historic Resources Survey Update**

I used the 2016 Charleston County Historic Resource Survey (CCHRS) to bring my thesis to a local focus of Gullah Geechee historically significant properties. The GGCHRI listed sites within Charleston County that the Plan identifies as being historically significant, but the CCHRS identifies Gullah Geechee properties that are potentially eligible for the NRHP. The CCHRS listed four Gullah Geechee Settlement Communities as eligible to be listed on the

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<sup>34</sup> "How to List a Property - National Register of Historic Places (U.S. National Park Service)," accessed July 18, 2022, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/how-to-list-a-property.htm>.

NRHP. The four communities were: Scanlonville, Sol Legare, Snowden, and Philips. These four communities were also identified on the GGCHCRI. I also added these properties onto my spreadsheet to denote the historical significance and potential to be listed on the NRHP.

Fortunately, during the drafting of my thesis, Phillips Community was listed on the NRHP. To understand how Phillips Community was listed, I looked at the nomination form to see what criteria were selected, the areas of significance chosen, and the level of significance that was chosen. Also, I spoke with Richard Habersham of Phillips Community to see what steps and procedures the community took to become listed on the NRHP.

### **Thesis Database Spreadsheet**

My spreadsheet has all the properties listed by the GGCHCRI and the themes and resources identified on the Inventory. The spreadsheet also includes a section to note if the property is already listed or not. The spreadsheet then has a section noting what criterion was met on the nomination form for listed properties, a section of what area of significance a property meets, the level of significance: Local, State, or Federal, and lastly the spreadsheet notes the type of determination that was given to each property.

### **Interview With Mike Allen**

Before beginning the interview collection and analysis, understanding how the research should adhere to Clemson University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) was necessary. Clemson's IRB does not require students to obtain approval for the collection of oral histories or interview with targeted individuals. The research for this thesis consisted of an interview with one targeted individual, Mike Allen, who retired from the National Park Service. I used this interview to provide additional context for how communities collaborated in established resource types and themes laid out in the GGCHCRI Appendix C.

There were two main purposes to this interview. The first was to ask questions that prompted responses outlining definitions of significance and integrity in the community's eyes. The second purpose was to understand how the community worked with preservationists, specifically within the NRHP process.

I scheduled a phone call with Mr. Allen that lasted 45 minutes. The answers to the questions I asked pertaining to community-based definitions of significance and integrity are analyzed in Chapter 4. The questions I asked about how the community worked with preservationists, and how the community completed the NRHP nomination form are also included in the analysis in Chapter 4.

### **Data Analysis Methods**

The goal of this thesis is to find the answer to how do Gullah Geechee people define historical and cultural significance pertaining to African American sites. Also how does the Gullah Geechee community-based definition of significance compared to the definition laid out by the NRHP eligibility process. Through data analysis these questions will be addressed. Through the use of empirical characterization of Gullah Geechee cultural and historical sites this thesis will cross analyze properties already listed on the NRHP to ones listed on the GGCHC Resource Index Appendix C.

A sample characterization of the data collected was obtained by breaking down the thesis database into sites by state, sites by county, sites by property type, sites by theme, and sites listed onto the NRHP. I will look for overall patterns of sites listed on the NRHP, and sites listed on the GGCHC Resource Index Appendix C. I will look for the dominant states, property types, and themes addressed on the GGCHC Resource Index Appendix C, to see the amount of each themes

and property type listed on the NRHP that are also listed by Gullah Geechee stakeholders as being significant.

The basic frequency breakdown then includes sites that are listed to the year listed, applicable national register criteria, area of significance, level of significance, national register determination, and lastly ethnic heritage black connection.

After breaking down all 805 sites throughout each state included in the GGHC, I focus specifically on sites located within South Carolina specifically within Charleston County. The Charleston County specialized analysis used the 2016 CCHRS, SCDAH website files<sup>35</sup>, and the SC Archsite online portal<sup>36</sup> to identify potentially eligible sites within Charleston County. The information collection will be demonstrated in chapter 4.

I will then perform a Charleston County specialized analysis using the 2016 Charleston County Historic Resource Survey Update, the SCDAH site file, and the SC Archsite to see what sites in Charleston County that are listed on the GGCHC Resource Index Appendix C are deemed eligible for the NRHP or deemed potentially eligible for the NRHP. Through the Charleston County specialized analysis using the 2016 County update, SCDAH State files, and SC Archsite to look for potentially eligible sites, the data presentation in Chapter 4 will list how many sites on the GGCHC Resource Index Appendix C are listed as potentially eligible for the NRHP and what criteria and area of significance to those sites meet.

This thesis will explore sites listed on the NRHP and the characteristics of the listed sites compared to characteristics recorded as resource themes on the GGCHC Resource Index Appendix C. Through exploring the NRHP listed sites, and the NRHP characteristics of listed sites compared to characteristics recorded in the GGCHCRI Appendix C, a strong connection

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<sup>35</sup> <http://schpr.sc.gov/>

<sup>36</sup> <https://scdah.sc.gov/historic-preservation/historic-properties-research/archsitegis>



with sites listed for plantation architecture becomes clear. This data collection will be demonstrated through graphs and charts in chapter 4.

Chapter 4 will present data of the NRHP listed sites by state and year they were listed. The presentation of data in Chapter 4 will also show the property type of sites listed on the NRHP, the criteria that the listed sites meet, and the Area of Significance each listed site meets. Then this thesis will present the level of significance for each listed site. The question, for the NRHP listed sites how do they compare to the GGCHC Resource Index Appendix C resource type and themes. The presentation of data in Chapter 4 will show how the listed sites compare to the resource themes and how they differ.

Lastly, the use of multiple correspondence analysis is conducted to explore geographic variations among states listed in the GGCHC Management Plan with respect to the cultural themes and property types defined in the GGCHCRI Appendix C. A Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) takes multiple categorical variables and seeks to identify associations between levels of those variables. MCA extends correspondence analysis from two variables to many. It can be thought of as analogous to principal component analysis for quantitative variables. Similar to other multivariate methods, it is a dimension reducing method; it represents the data as points in 2- or 3-dimensional space. Multiple correspondence analysis is frequently used in the social sciences. It can be used in survey analysis to identify question agreement. It is also used in consumer research to identify potential markets for products.<sup>37</sup>

Based on identification of significant sites by Gullah Geechee stakeholders, Gullah Geechee sites are significantly underrepresented in the NRHP (a presumably objective record of what Americans consider historically significant). The data presentation in Chapter 4 will

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<sup>37</sup> <https://www.jump.com/support/help/en/17.0/index.shtml#page/jmp/multiple-correspondence-analysis.shtml>

show that sites listed on the GGCHC Resource Index Appendix C that are also listed on the NRHP are listed for criteria and areas of significance that suggest some Black history themes and also architecture/plantation history themes, associated with White history not Black history. In order to achieve a more inclusive listing of significant historical sites, one needs to begin with a more nuanced exploration of what Gullah Geechee stakeholders and communities define as significant. As a example, this thesis will perform a multiple correspondence analysis on the database I created to identify geographic patterns in variation with respect to cultural resource themes and property types. The data presentation in Chapter 4 will show the patterns of the multiple correspondence analysis of the resource themes and property types through the four states within the GGCHC.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The main question of this thesis is, how have Gullah Geechee communities defined the term significance for sites relating to Gullah Geechee history. To answer this question, in this chapter I used four datasets inform the basis and analysis of this thesis: the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Resource Inventory, Charleston County's Historic Resources 2016 Survey Update by New South Associates Inc., the National Register of Historic Places listings, and an interview with Mike Allen retired NPS Director, to help provide more context on how the GGCHCRI was established.

This chapter presents the data collected using the methods described in Chapter Three, Methodology. 805 Gullah Geechee sites of significance outlined in the GGCHCRI were assessed between December 10 and December 23, 2022. The connection between the sites and resource categories was noted in a spreadsheet. A spreadsheet noted the number of sites listed on the NRHP. The year each site was listed onto the NRHP was listed in a spreadsheet. The applicable NR criteria, Area of Significance, and NR Determination were all noted in a spreadsheet. Lastly, the Ethnic Heritage: Black Connection was noted in a spreadsheet.

Sites identified by the GGCHCRI stakeholders as significant are unprecedentedly underrepresented in the NRHP listings. Furthermore, I suspect that sites noted in the GGCHCRI are listed on the NRHP for reasons of architectural merit, primarily associated with plantation houses, rather than association with Gullah Geechee heritage.

There is a significant variation among states in the GGCHC when applying community-based definitions of resource types and themes are considered. Each of the four states, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, and Georgia, have a distinct combination of resource types and themes. Again, this seems apparent, but the results suggest that there should not be one single set of Gullah Geechee significance criteria.

The data presentation is organized displaying a basic frequency breakdown of the thesis database into sites by individual state, property type of sites, resource theme of each site, and then what sites on the database are on the NRHP. I will investigate overall patterns, specifically the state with the most sites, what property type is more prevalent, and what resource themes is addressed the most.

The data presentation will then use the Charleston County Specialized analysis using the County Update, SCDAH Site Files, and SC Archsite to document sites in Charleston County that are potentially eligible for the NRHP. I will cross compare what sites on the database are also documented on the County Update, SCDAH State Files, and SC Archsite.

This chapter then explores just NRHP listed sites, and NRHP characteristics of listed sites compared to characteristics recorded in the GGCHC Resource Index Appendix C. This chapter will present findings of listed sites by state, what year sites were listed, property type of sites listed, criteria of each listed site, area of significance of each site, also the level of significance, lastly for the NRHP listed sites, I will demonstrate what the GGCHC Resource Index Appendix C resource types and themes are for listed sites, and how they are similar or different. This will be conducted using a Multiple Correspondence Analysis.

To better understand the empirical characterization of Gullah Geechee Cultural and Historical sites this thesis explored the GGCHC Resource Index Appedix C and the properties

that were listed in the Appendix. There is a total of 805 sites that were deemed significant by Gullah Geechee stakeholders and community members. Below this thesis will reveal the number of sites between each state, the property type listed, the resource theme each site meets, and also what site is listed on the NRHP that is also listed on the GGCHC Resource Index Appendix C.

### Sites by State

Figure 4 shows how many sites are listed on the GGCHC Resource Index Appendix C in each state within the GGCHC. Figure 4 demonstrates that South Carolina contains the most sites connected to the GGCHC Resource Index Appendix C resource themes and types. North Carolina having the least sites at 75. Figure 4 explains that there is a need for attention in South Carolina pertaining to Gullah Geechee historic and cultural sites of significance.

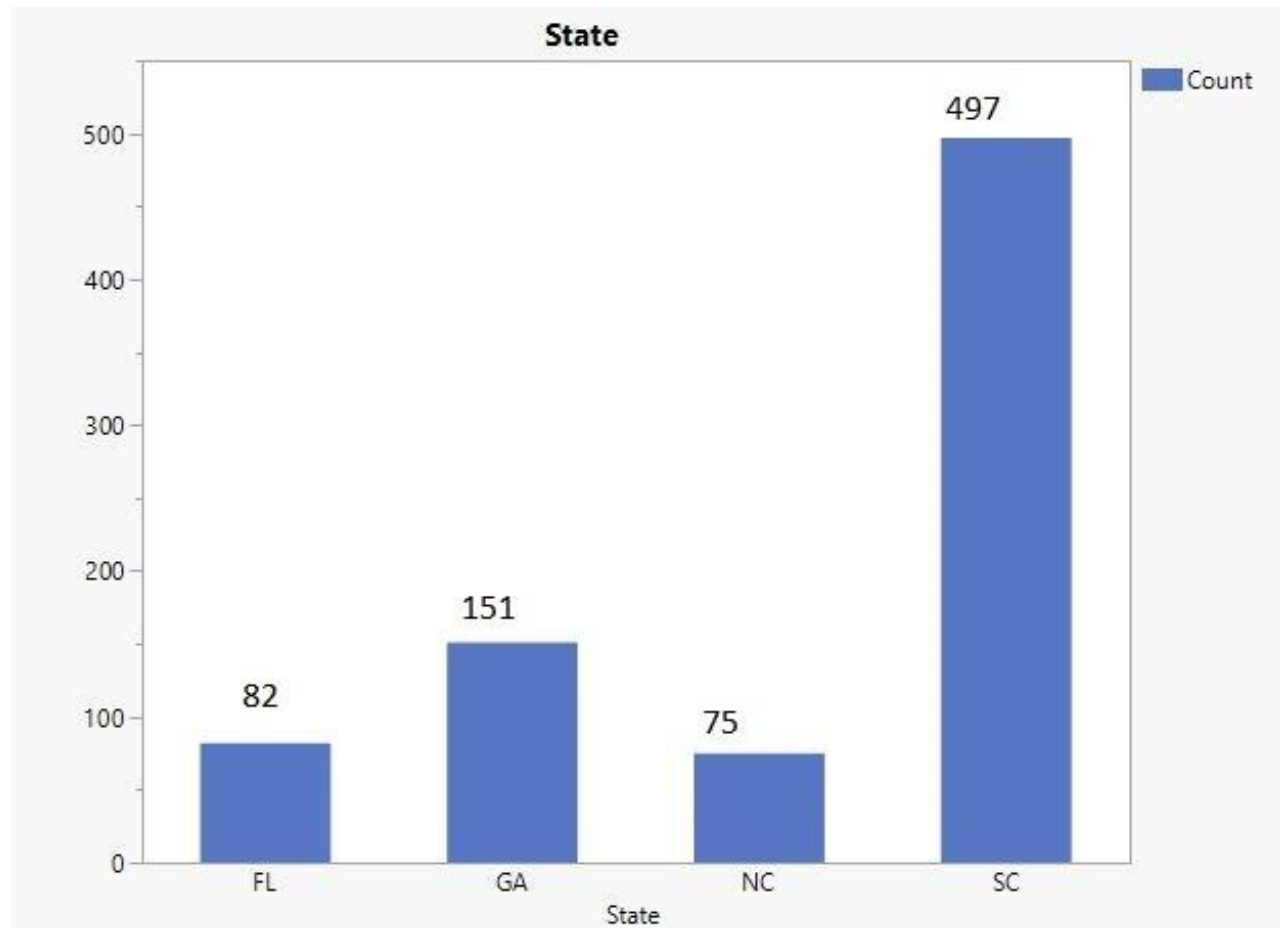


Figure 4. Sites listed by state.

### Property Type

There are five property types denoted on the GGCHC Resource Index Appendix C. The fifth property type is labeled as “Other”, for this reason I will be omitting this property type due to the lack of information on the GGCHC Management Plan as to the definition of “Other”. I will present four charts displaying the number of each property type by state. This is being used to reveal the diversity in property types through the GGCHC and how they relate to the NRHP guidelines and eligibility criteria. Figure 5 reveals the amount of historic structures per state denoted on the GGCHC Resource Index Appendix C. There is 46 historic structures in Florida, 68 in Georgia, 24 in North Carolina, and a total of 241 in South Carolina. Again, showing the high number of resources in South Carolina, this Chapter will further look into South Carolina’s resources in particularly the Lowcountry of South Carolina in Charleston County.

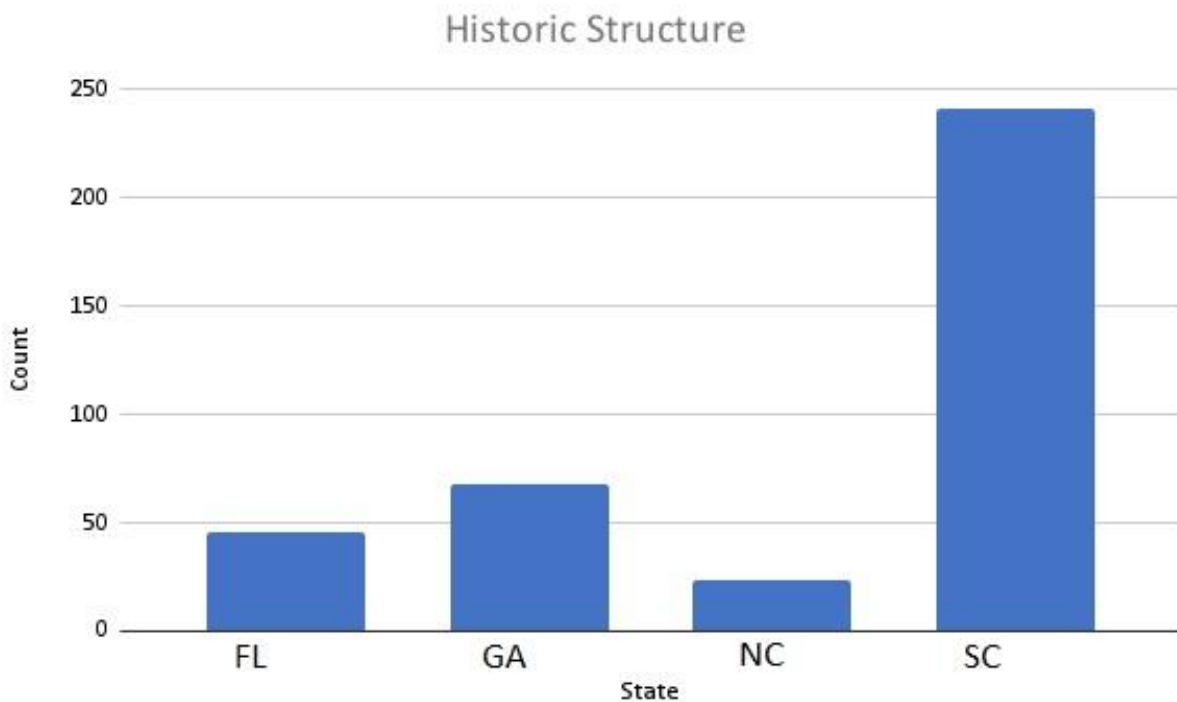


Figure 5. Historic Structure resource type by state.

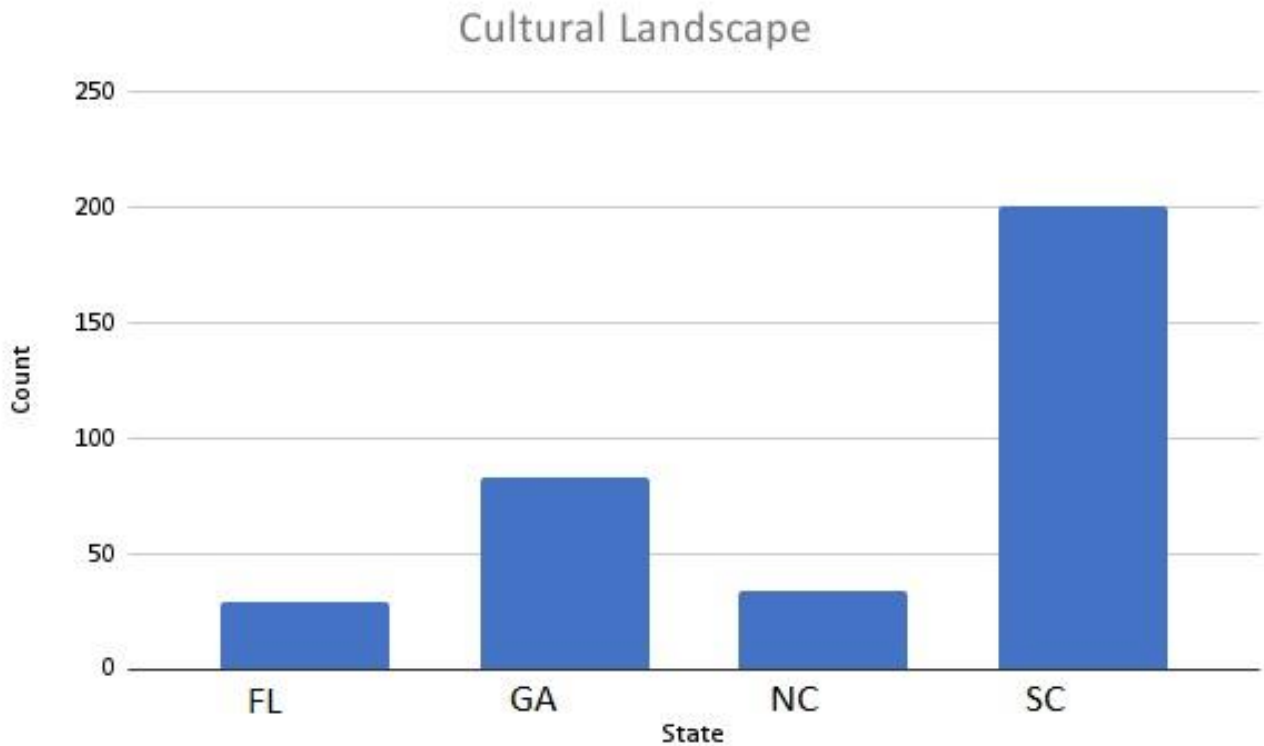


Figure 6. Cultural Landscape resource type by state.

Figure 6 reveals the number of resource type: Cultural Landscape per state. The chart displays 29 sites relating to cultural landscapes in the state of Florida, 83 in Georgia, 34 in North Carolina, and 201 in South Carolina. As mentioned before the state of South Carolina has the majority of resources and continues to display the abundance of diverse resource types. This diversity in resource types and themes will later be revealed using a Multiple Correspondence Analysis.

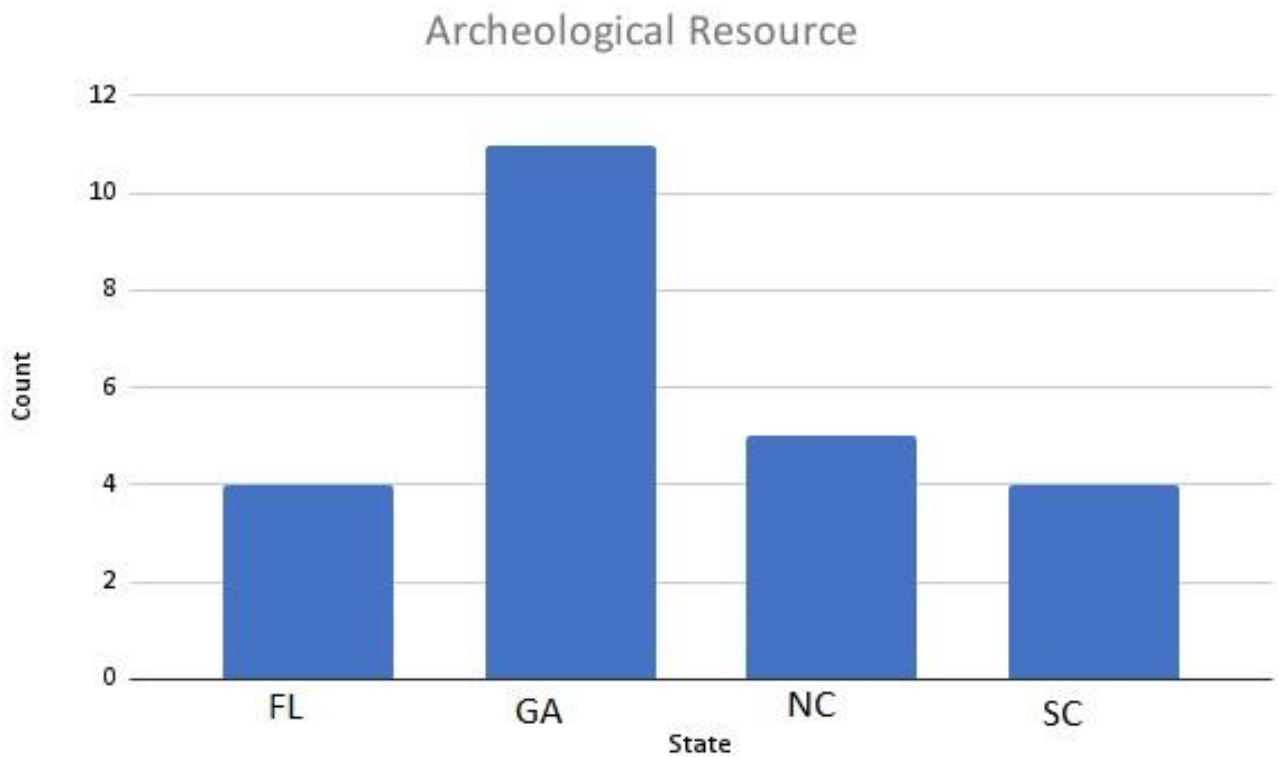


Figure 7. Archeological Resource type by state.

Figure 7 reveals to number of archeological resources in each state within the GGCHC. The difference seen here in the state with the most resource type: Archeological Resource, displays the state of Georgia not South Carolina. The chart shows that South Carolina has the least amount, along with Florida, of archeological resource types than the other three states. South Carolina and Florida having only 4 sites relating to archeological resources. Georgia with the highest amount at 11, and North Carolina with 5 sites. There is a vastly small number of sites relating to this resource type, but although small these sites are still considered significant by Gullah Geechee people and should be recognized as so.



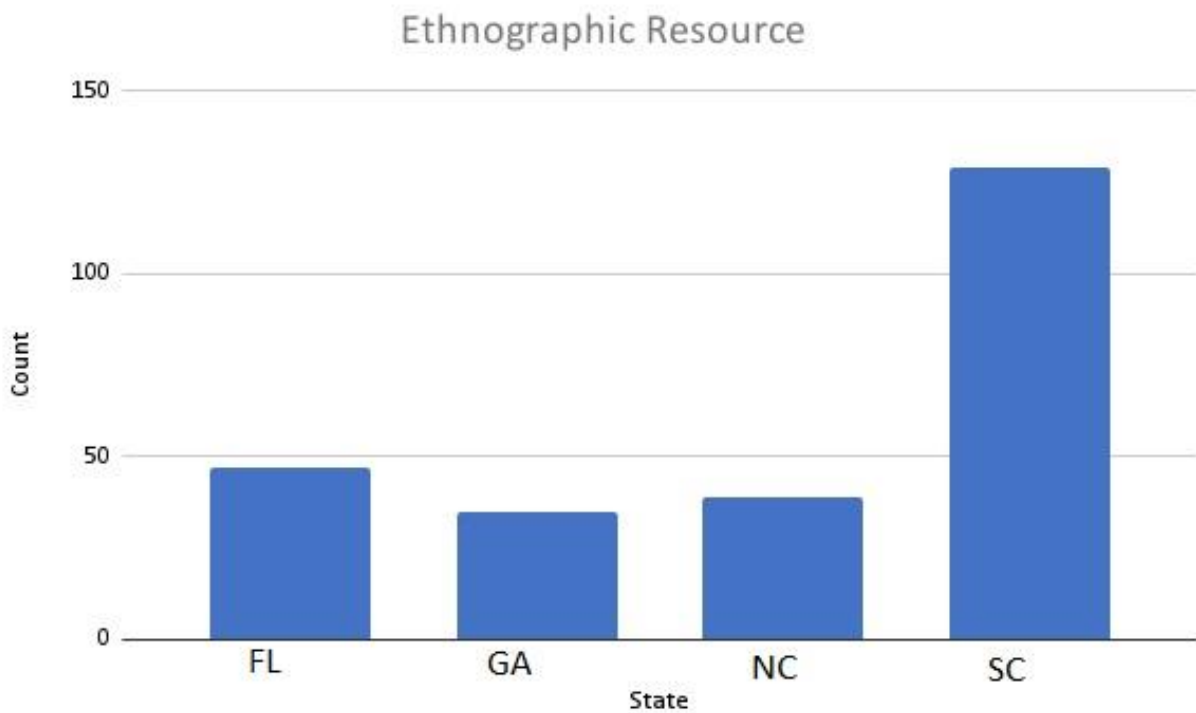


Figure 8. Ethnographic Resource type by state.

An ethnographic resource relates to the customs, habits, values, and ideas shared by a group of people. Figure 8 reveals the amount of ethnographic resource types per state. Again as seen in Figure 8 there is a higher amount of resource types in the state of South Carolina. There are a total of 129 sites relating to ethnographic resources. Florida has 47 sites, Georgia with 35 sites, and North Carolina has 39 sites. This data presents a clear understanding of the diversity between Gullah Geechee resource types in each state. Lastly, I will display the number of sites within the GGCHC that relate to the resource type: Museum Collection. This resource type is for all sites that hold artifacts on the property or display artifacts of Gullah Geechee history.

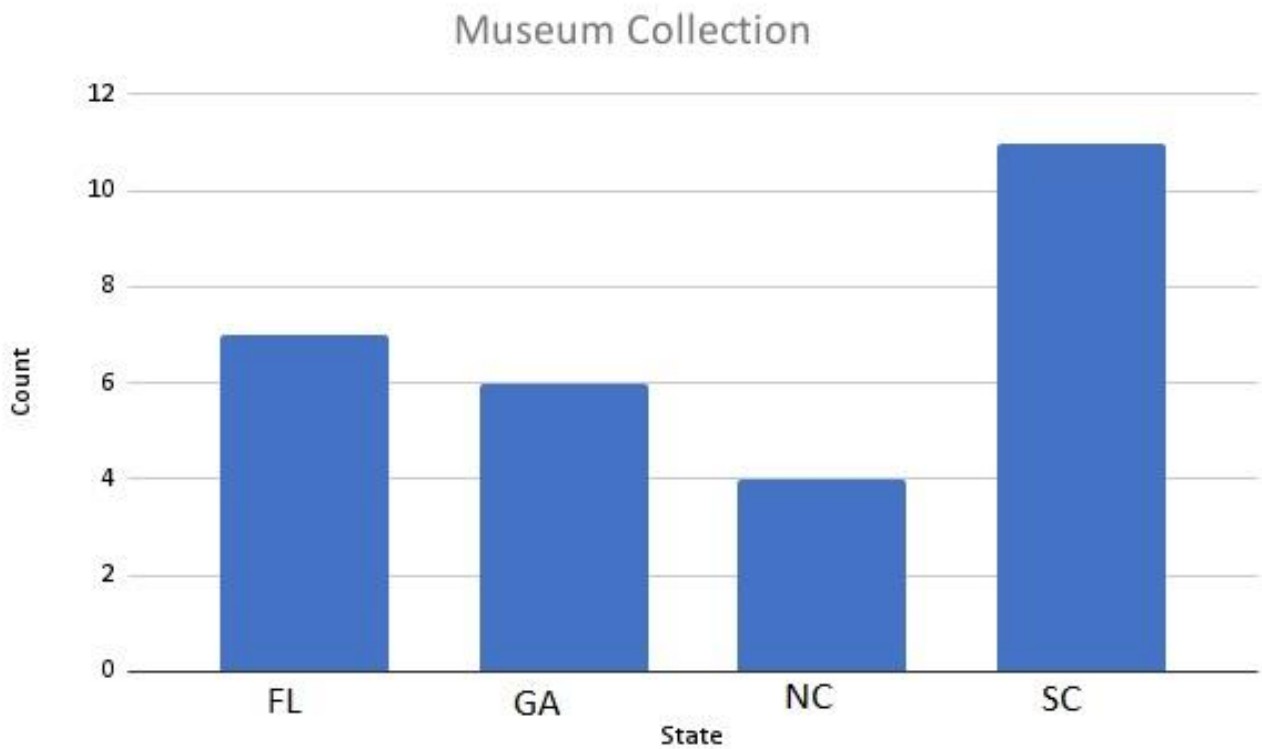


Figure 9. Museum Collection resource type by state.

This is the last resource type created by Gullah Geechee stakeholders. Although there are very few per state, similar to archeological resource types, the community members of Gullah Geechee cultural heritage define these sites as historically significant and therefore are listed in the GGCHC Resource Index Appendix C. Again South Carolina shows the highest number of resource type: Museum Collection. This is why I chose to look more into the state of South Carolina and the ways state and local governments are working towards preserving Gullah Geechee sites of significance. Figure 9 reveals a total of 28 sites deemed significant based on the resource type of Museum Collection. Florida having 7 sites, Georgia with 6 sites, North Carolina with 4, and South Carolina with the highest being 11.

The five general categories for NRHP properties are as follows:

1. Building

2. Structure
3. Object
4. Site
5. District

All five of the property types on the NRHP relate well with the property types created by Gullah Geechee stakeholders. The creation of the property types on the GGCHC Resource Index Appendix C correlate well with the NRHP standards. This correlation is beneficial when applying for eligibility status for the Gullah Geechee sites. Although the majority of the sites listed on the GGCHC Resource Index Appendix C are not listed, by creating a list of property types can improve the chances of meeting the five categories for NRHP listing. This thesis will now look at the sites that are already listed on the NRHP that are listed on the GGCHC Resource Index Appendix C.

### **Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Resource Themes**

The next set of figures looks into how each site within the GGCHC is connected to the resource themes created by the Gullah Geechee stakeholders. The figure will reveal how many sites per state are connection with each of the six themes.

1. Origins and Early Development
2. Quest for Freedom, Equality, Education and Recognition
3. Global Connections
4. Connection with the Land
5. Cultural and Spiritual Expression
6. Gullah Language

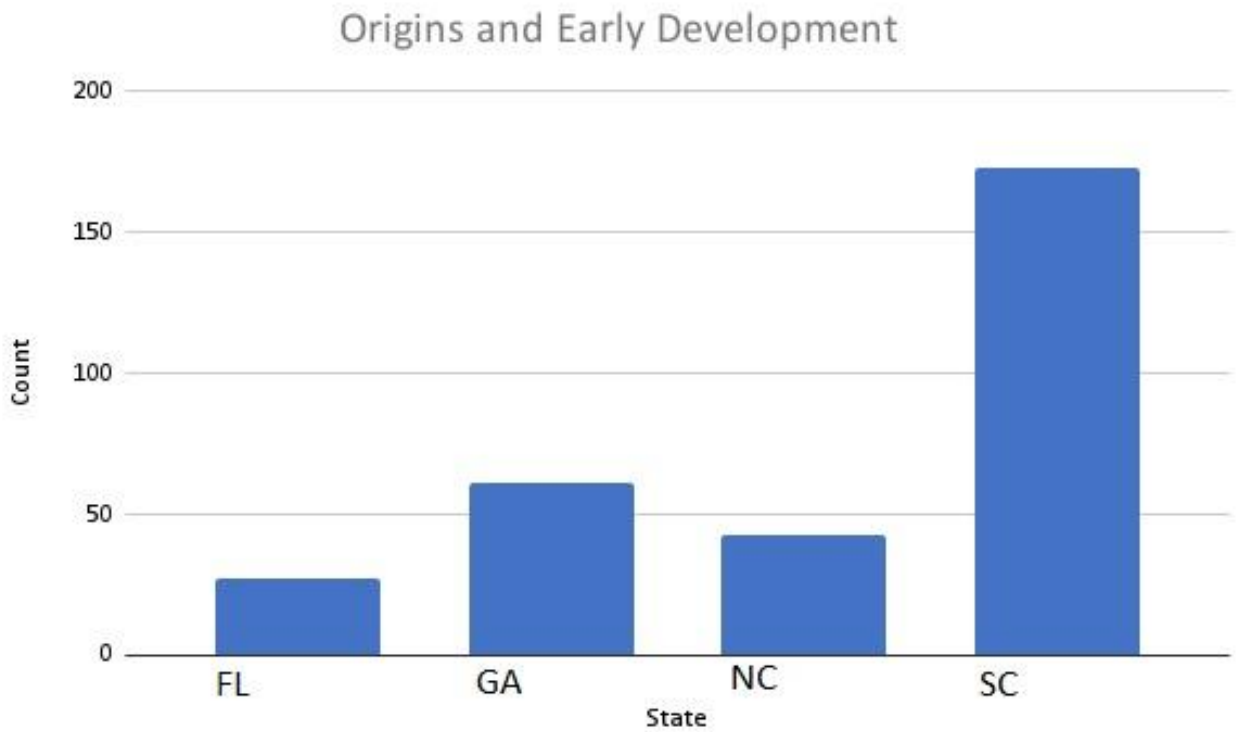


Figure 10. Sites associated with Origins and Early Development.

Figure 10 reveals the sites associated with Gullah Geechee Origins and Early Development. Figure 10 reveals that there are a large number of sites in South Carolina, a total of 173 sites associated with Gullah Geechee origins and early development. There are 61 sites in Georgia, 43 sites in North Carolina, and 27 sites in Florida. Again, this data reveals a great deal of sites located in South Carolina demonstrating the need for preservation advocacy in the state.

Figure 11 will reveal how many sites listed on the GGCHC Appendix C are associated with the resource type: Quests for Freedom, Equality, Education and Recognition.

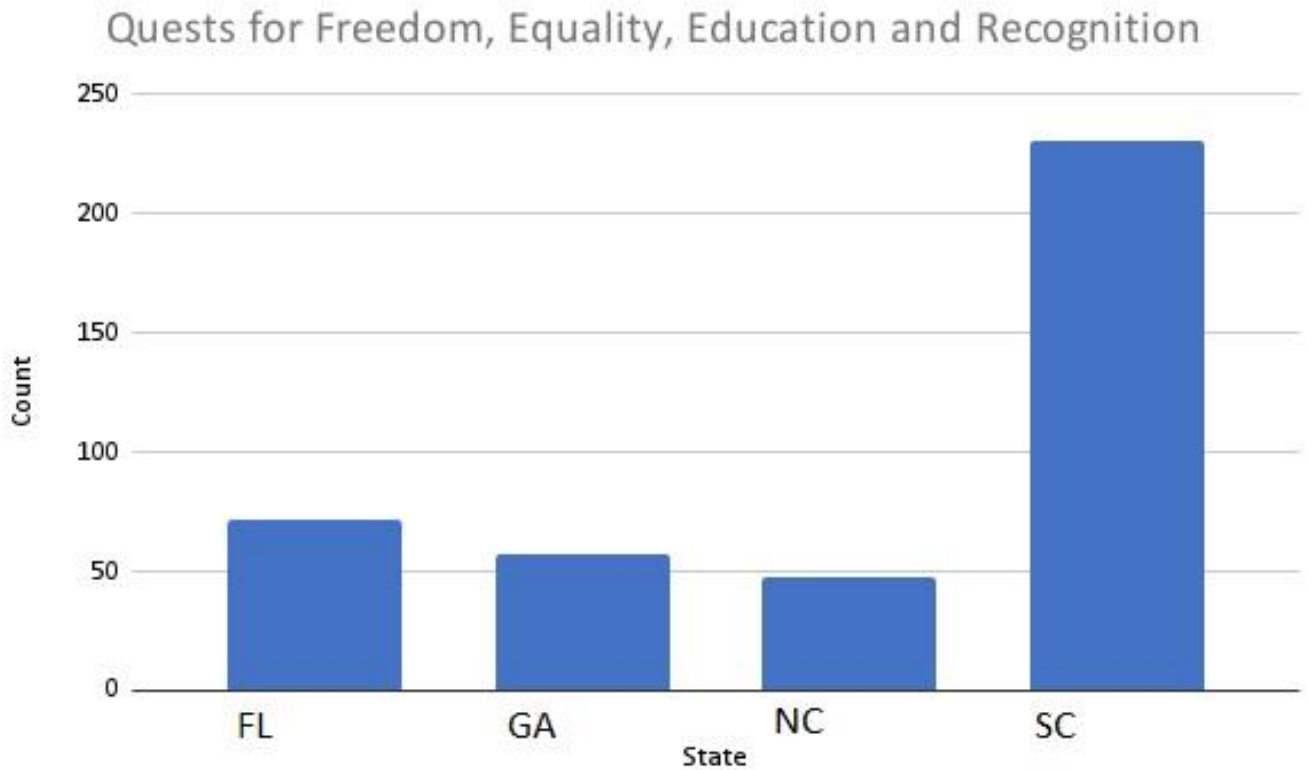


Figure 11. Sites associated with Quests for Freedom, Equality, Education and Recognition.

As demonstrated there is a noticeable pattern when it comes to the number of sites in South Carolina recognized for their significance by Gullah Geechee stakeholders. The chart reveals 231 sites in South Carolina associated with Quests for Freedom, Equality, Education and Recognition. There is a total of 72 sites in Florida, 57 sites in Gorgia, and 48 sites in North Carolina.

The next figure explores the number of sites that are associated with the global connections. Figure 12 reveals the same pattern observed before with the state of South Carolina having majority of properties identified as significant by Gullah Geechee stakeholders.

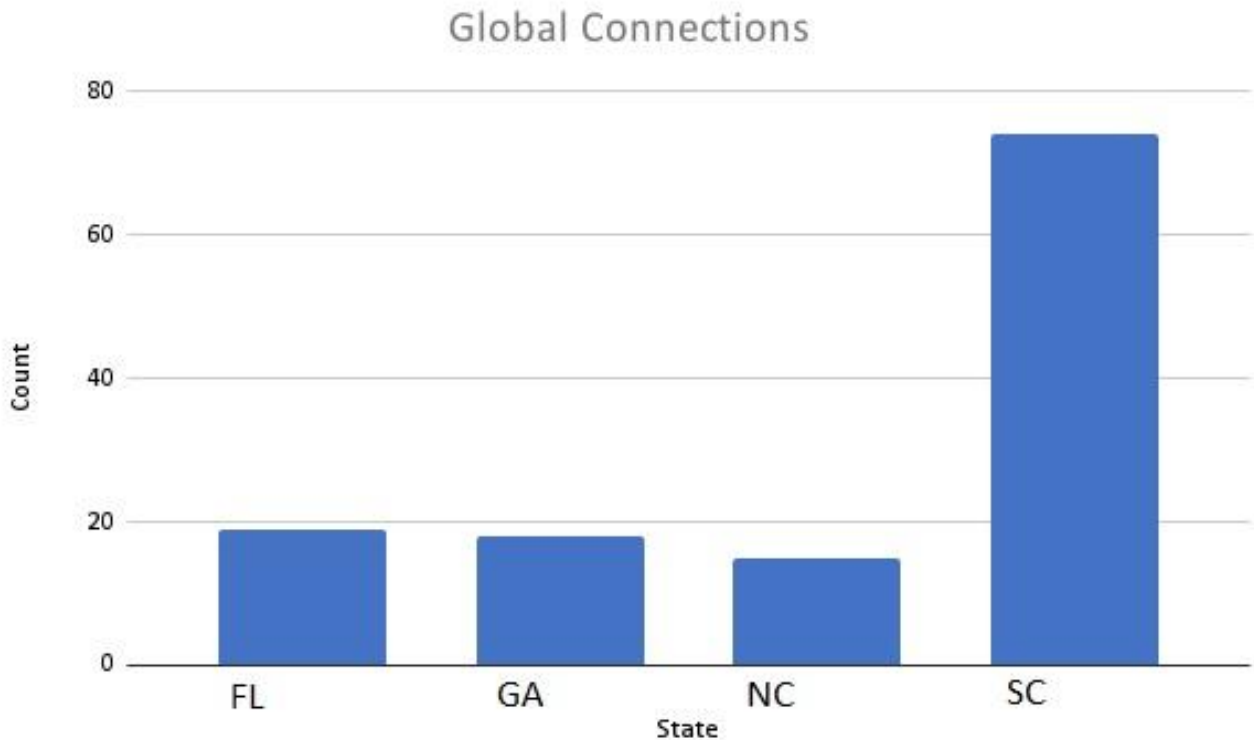


Figure 12. Sites associated with Global Connections.

Figure 12. reveals properties that are significant due to their Gullah Geechee heritage global connection, meaning the sites identify with having a connection outside of the United States of America, at most times the sites relate to the connection back to Africa. The pattern continues here as well with South Carolina holding the majority of sites at a total of 74 sites. Florida has 19 sites associated with Global Connections, Georgia has 18, and North Carolina has 15 sites.

The Gullah Geechee stakeholders also connected sites that have a connection to the land that they inhabit. Figure 13 reveals the number of sites with this association. One can see here that the pattern continues in regards to the majority of sites being located in South Carolina.

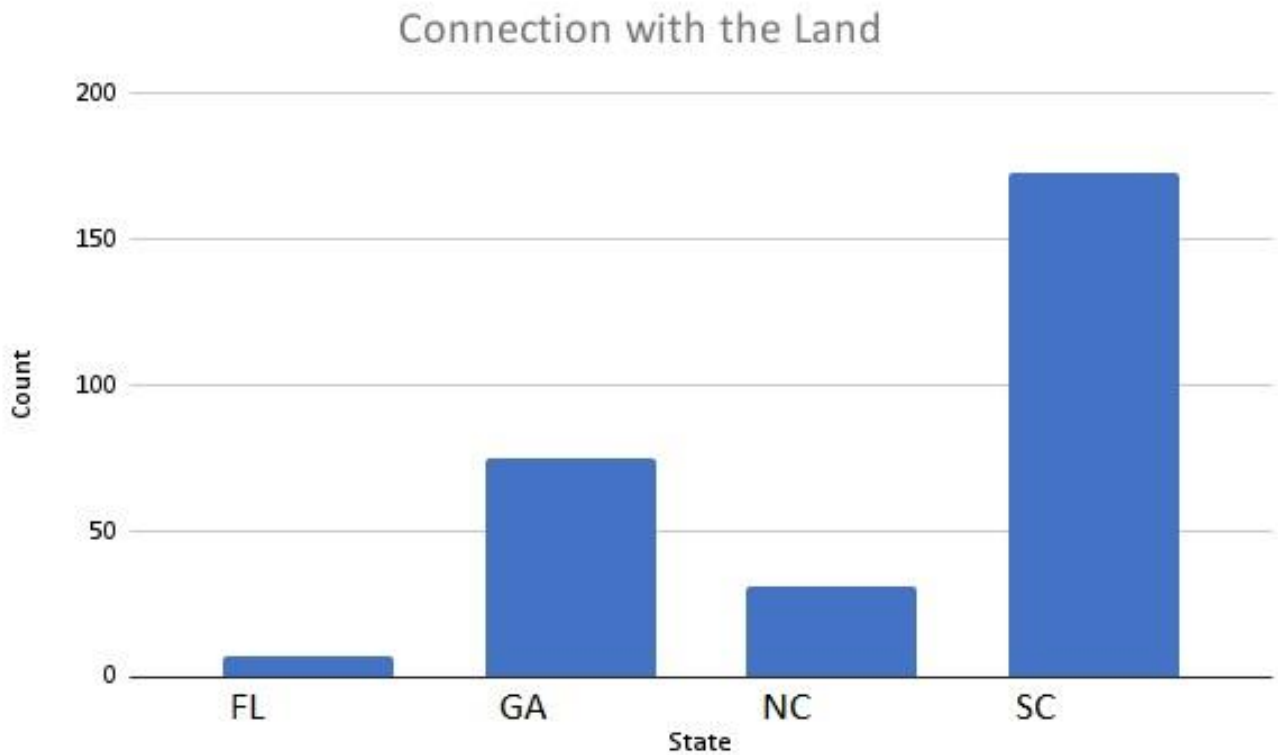


Figure 13. Sites associated with Connection with the Land.

Figure 13 is the first figure to reveal a small number of sites that are associated with the six resource types. Florida only has seven sites that fall under this association, but South Carolina has 173 explaining that the Connection to the Land resource theme is more prevalent in the State of South Carolina. This may be due to the number of Plantation sites in the state, but this needs to be further explored to make a clear consensus. Figure 13 also reveals 75 sites in Georgia and 31 sites in North Carolina are associated with this resource theme.

The next resource theme deals with cultural and spiritual expression that a site is associated with. There is a very large spiritual presence with the Gullah Geechee culture and the stakeholders explored how sites share this connection by listing the number of sites that express this presence.

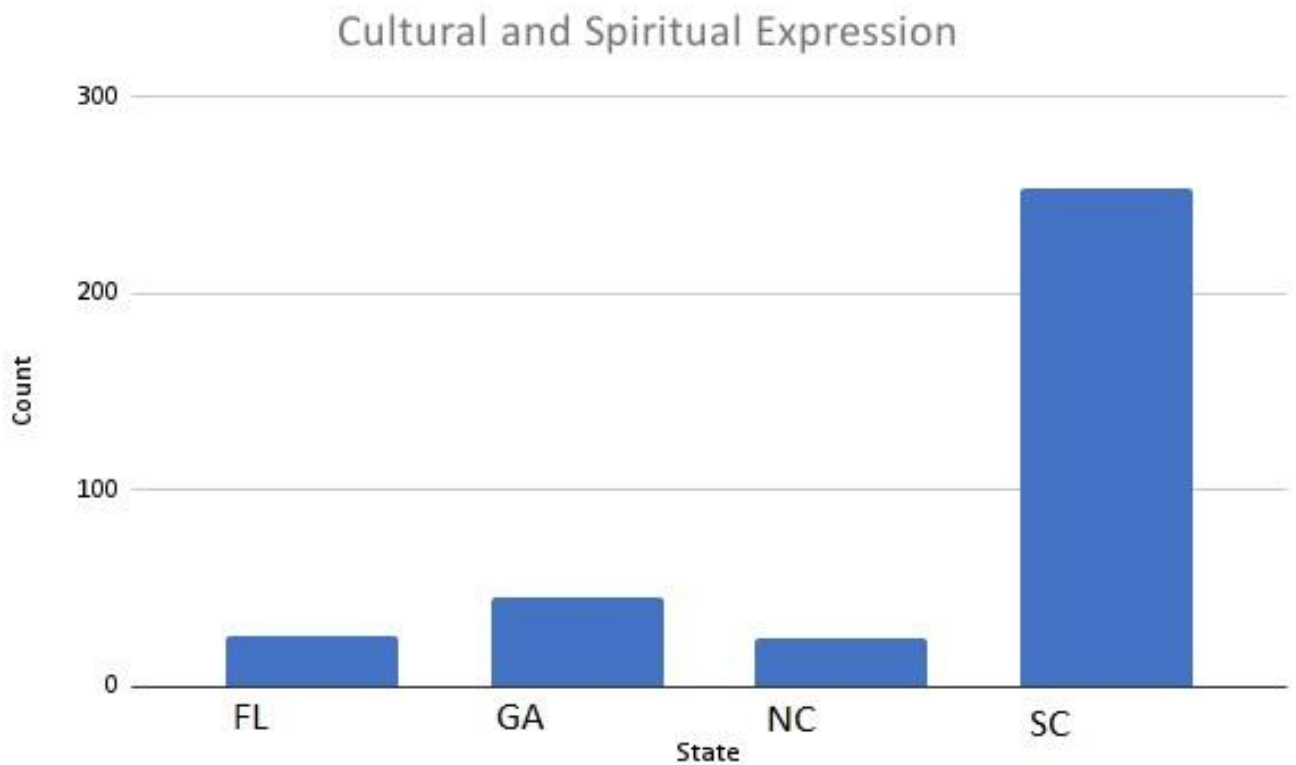


Figure 14. Sites associated with Cultural and Spiritual Expression.

Figure 14 reveals a large number of sites in South Carolina that express Gullah Geechee culture and spirit. This data also continues the pattern of South Carolina having most sites that are significant to Gullah Geechee stakeholders. Figure 14 reveals a total of 351 sites within the GGCHC that are associated with the Gullah Geechee Culture and Spiritual Expression resource theme. South Carolina having the highest again with a total of 254 sites, Florida having 26 sites, Georgia with 46 sites, and North Carolina having a total of 25 sites with this association.

The last resource themes created by Gullah Geechee stakeholder is Gullah Language. This resource themes demonstrates sites that are significant due to their connection with the Gullah language. This resource theme is the first to reveal a state that has no sites with this connection. The reason for this is unclear at this point and will take further researching to understand how this came to be.



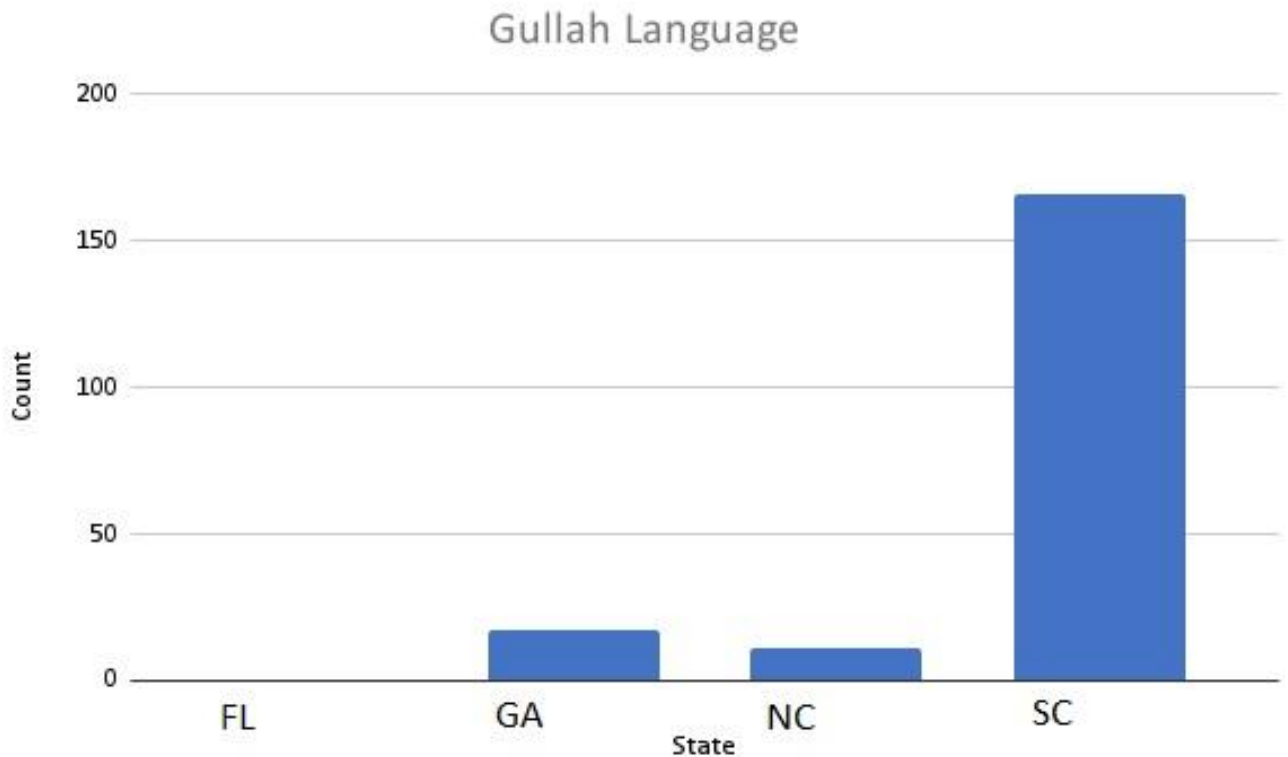


Figure 15. Sites associated with Gullah Language.

As noted in Figure 15 Florida has no sites associated with the resource theme Gullah Language. This reason is unclear at this time and further research is needed to uncover the reason for Florida having no sites associated with Gullah Language. As for the continuation of the pattern of South Carolina being the dominant state of having resource types and resource themes, Figure 15 provides information to support this conclusion. Figure 15 reveals a total of 194 sites associated with the resource theme Gullah Language. Out of the 194 sites 166 are in South Carolina. North Carolina has 11 sites and Georgia has 17 sites.

1. In conclusion, there is a total of 304 sites associated with Origins and Early Development, 408 sites associated with Quest for Freedom, Equality, Education and Recognition, 126 sites associated with Global Connections, 286 sites associated with the

resource theme Connection with the Land, 351 sites associated with Cultural and Spiritual Expression, and lastly , there are 194 sites out of the 805 total sites listed on the GGCHC Resource Index Appendix C associated with Gullah Language. Again, South Carolina is the dominant state having the majority of sites in each resource theme category. These numbers strengthen the argument for the need of preservation of Gullah Geechee sites.

### NRHP Listings

Figure 16 shows that out of the 805 culturally significant sites identified by the GGCHCRI stakeholders, only 92 (11%) of these sites are listed on the NRHP.

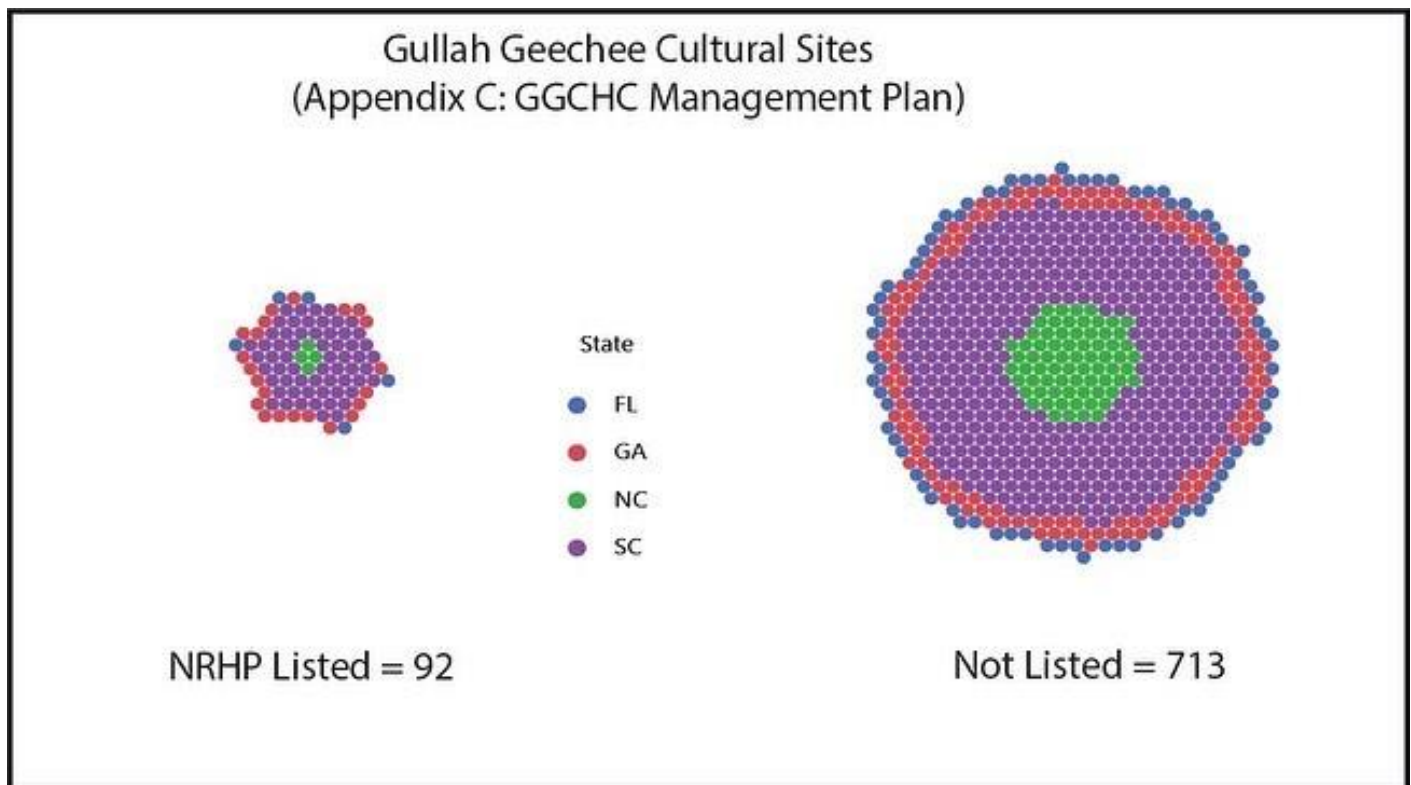


Figure 16. Sites listed versus not listed.

Figure 17 shows that out of the 805 culturally significant sites identified, each state has sites listed on the NRHP. Florida has five sites listed on the NRHP, Georgia has twenty-two sites listed, North Carolina has four sites listed, and South Carolina has the most sites listed with sixty-one sites on the NRHP.

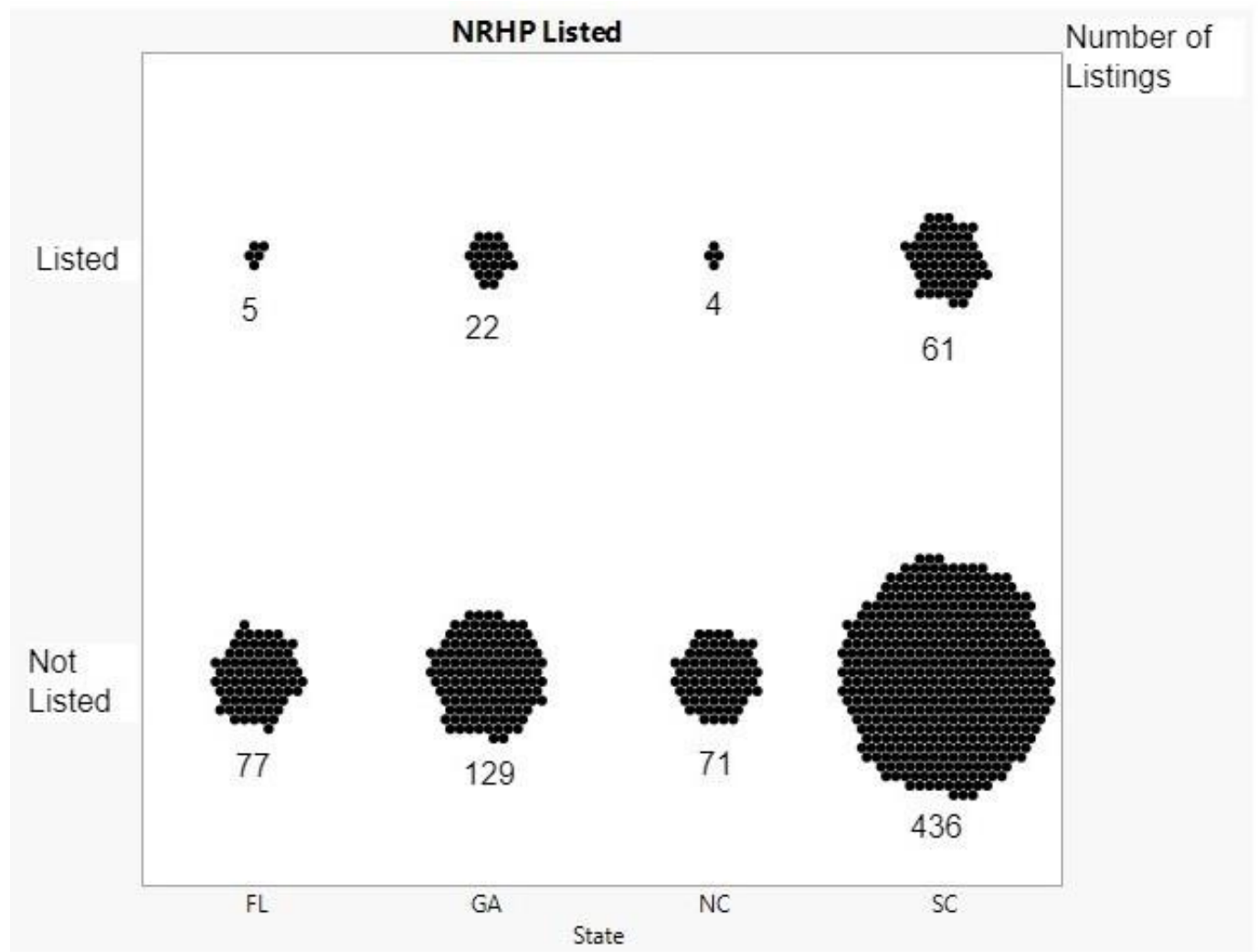


Figure 17. Listed versus not listed by state.

**Area of Significance**

The sites listed on the NRHP must meet at least one Area of Significance to be listed on the NR. The Areas of Significance are as follows.

1. Agriculture
2. Archeology: Prehistoric or Historic Non-Aboriginal
3. Architecture
4. Art
5. Commerce
6. Community Planning and Development
7. Conservation
8. Education
9. Engineering
10. Entertainment/Recreation
11. Ethnic Heritage: Black
12. Exploration/Settlement
13. Health/Medicine
14. Industry
15. Landscape Architecture
16. Literature
17. Military
18. Performing Arts
19. Politics/Government
20. Religion
21. Social History

Of the 92 sites listed, most Areas of Significance are Architecture and Ethnic Heritage: Black. The connection to Architecture is clear, with the suggestion that these sites relate to

planation homes or “The Big House.” When examining the sites listed with an Area of Significance of Ethnic Heritage: Black, I further investigated to identify what this association means. Within the Ethnic Heritage: Black association there are seven categories that will allow a site to select Ethnic Heritage: Black as an Area of Significance. The seven categories are Burial Aid Society, Civil Rights, Civil War, Reconstruction, Religion, Significant Persons, and Slavery. Figure 18 shows the number of sites listed with an Area of Significance pertaining to Ethnic Heritage: Black and their connection to each category.

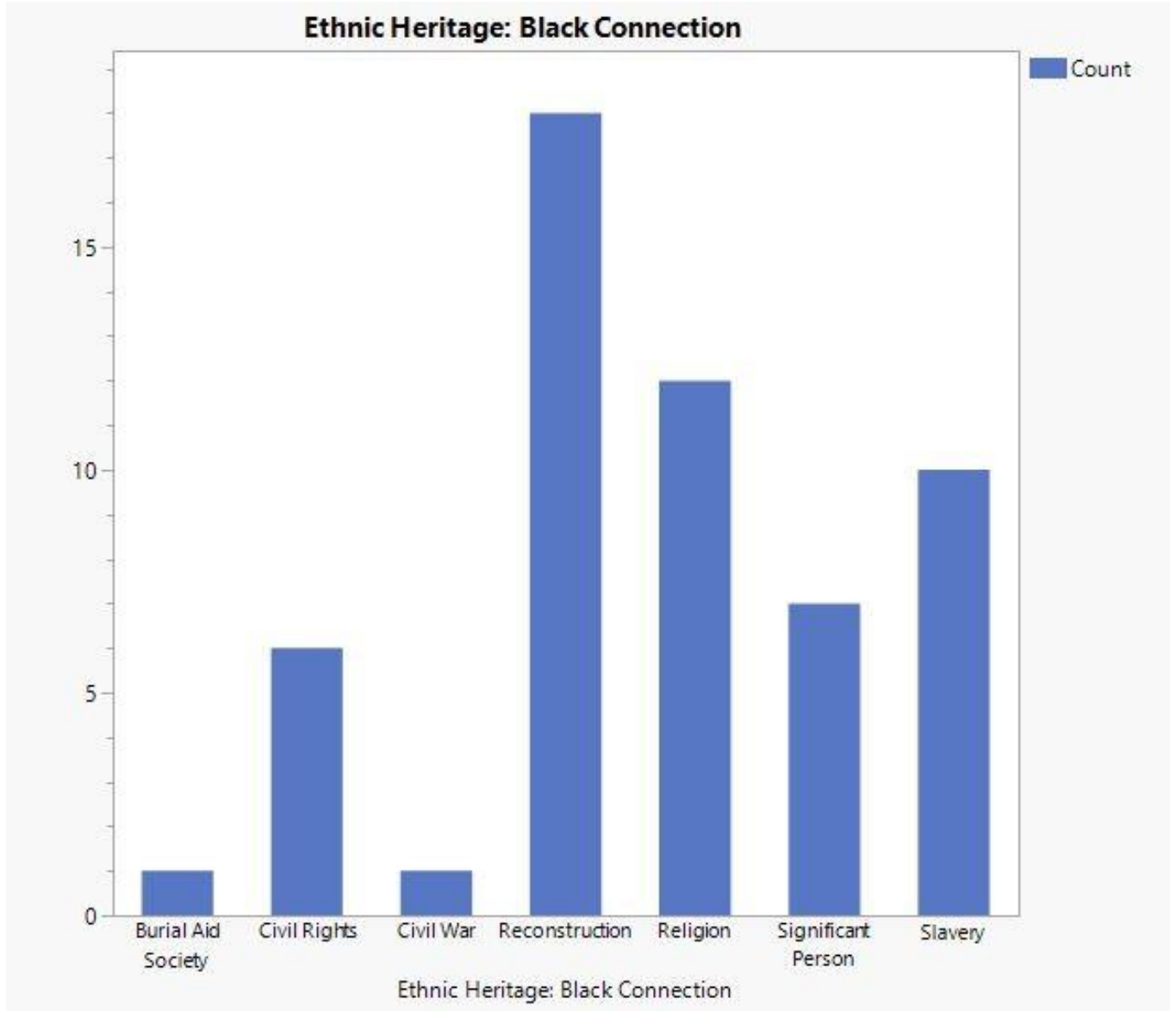


Figure 18. Ethnic Heritage: Black Connection types.

As noted on Figure 12, most listed sites have an Ethnic Heritage: Black connection with Reconstruction, with 18 sites having this identification. There are 55 sites on the NRHP associated with Ethnic Heritage: Black.

## Level Of Significance

Sites listed on the NRHP also meet a Level of Significance. There are three Levels of Significance each site can meet, also each site can not only meet one Level of Significance, but they can also have a combination of the three. The three Levels of Significance are National, State, and Local, corresponding the geographic reach of the site's significance. Figure 19 shows the distribution of the 92 sites listed as they pertain to what Level of Significance they meet.

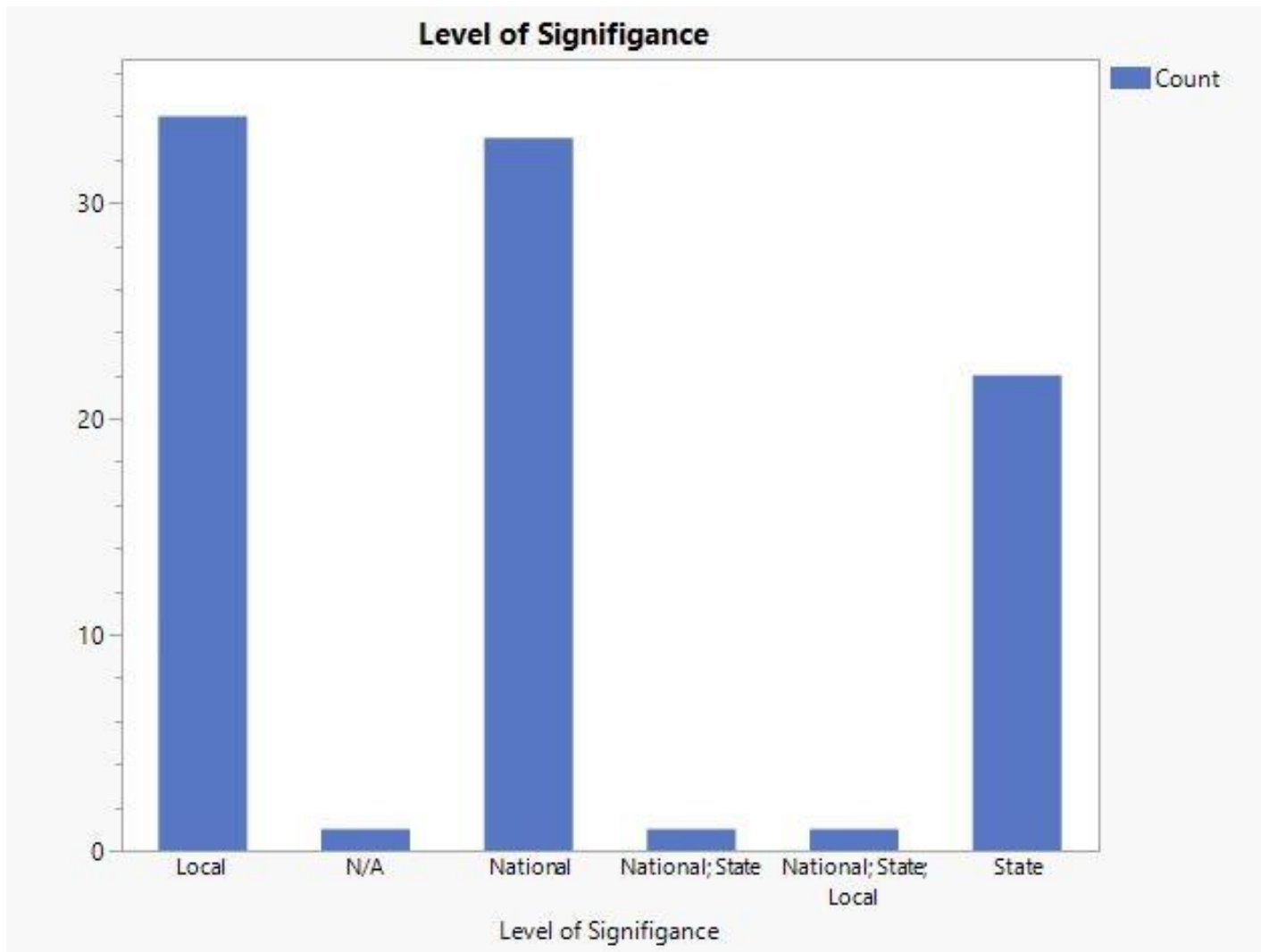


Figure 19. Level of Significance of listed sites.

As noted in Figure 19, most of the sites listed meet a Local Level of Significance, but also many sites are significant on a national level. This information shows that most sites are locally and federally recognized, which is beneficial when applying for grants and tax credits to preserve, restore, and rehabilitate sites.

### **National Register Criterion**

As stated earlier, I suspect that sites noted in the GGCHCRI are listed on the NRHP for reasons of architectural merit, primarily associated with plantation houses, rather than association with Gullah Geechee heritage. To answer these questions, I calculated of the 92 sites listed, what criterion type did each site meet to become listed on the NRHP. The four Criterion are as follows:

1. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
2. That are associated with the lives of significant persons in our past; or
3. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
4. That has yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.

Figure 20 shows the number of sites listed that identify with meeting Criterion C. The chart shows that for the 92 sites listed for NRHP inclusion are associated with Criterion C, which refers to high-style architecture. 33 sites are associated with Criterion C and 45 sites had no Criteria listed. The remaining 14 sites were associated with Criteria A, B, and D.



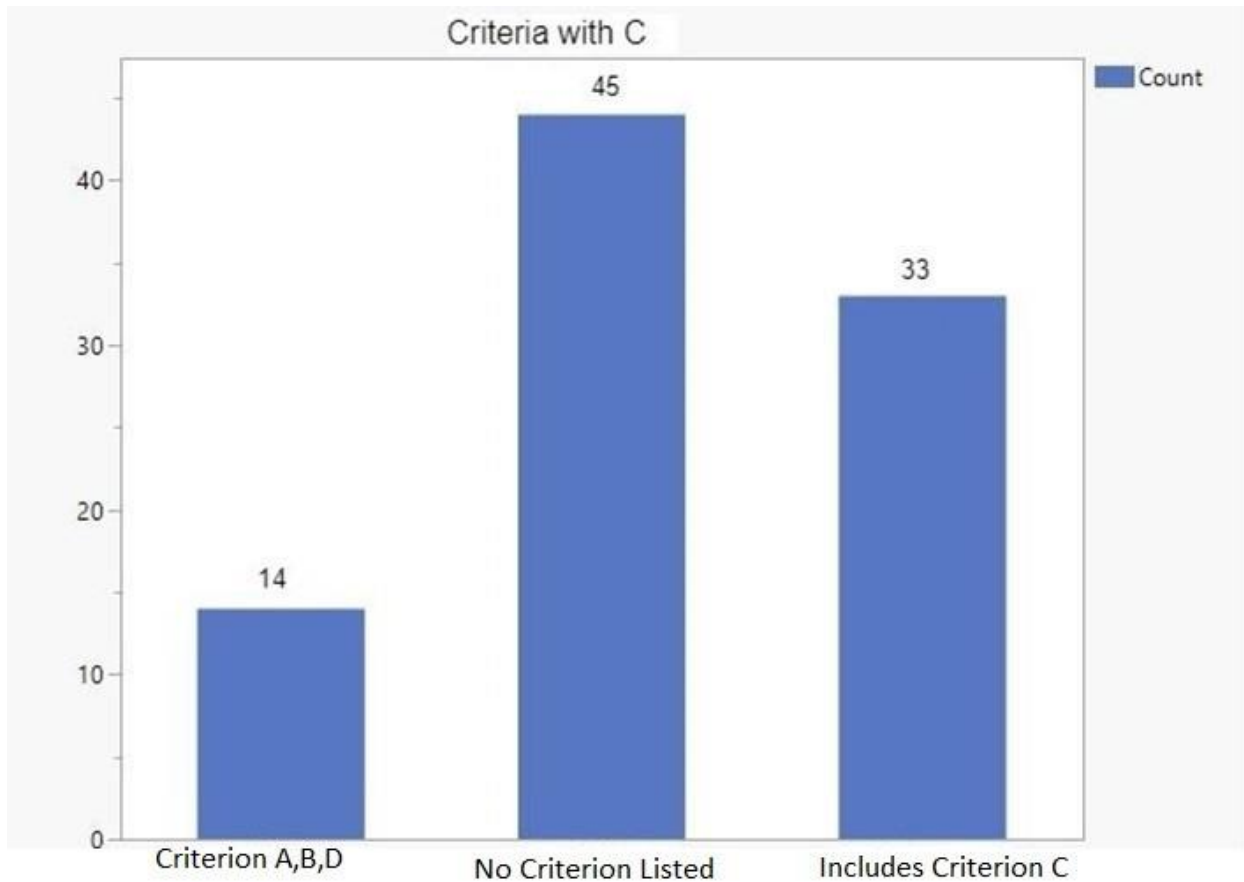


Figure 20. Sites listed as Criteria C.

### Charleston County Specialized Analysis

Through exploring the 2016 Charleston County Historic Resources Survey Update there are numerous properties in Charleston County that are eligible for NRHP listing. But only four sites that are deemed eligible for listing are denoted on the GGCHC Resource Index Appendix C. The four sites are Phillips, which is now in the process of being listed, Snowden, Sol Legare, and Scanlonville. The 2016 Update also has multiple sites that are deemed potentially eligible for the NRHP, but out of all the sites listed as potentially eligible none of the site are listed on the GGCHC Resource Index Appendix C. There are several sites that the County Update state as needing more research to be done in order to qualify as eligible or potentially eligible for the

NRHP. This quantifies the notion that Gullah Geechee sites of significance lack representation or support from local governments in regards to preserving their sites.

#### *SCDAH Site Files*

The South Carolina Department of Archives and History has a website where you can search for properties that are listed on the NRHP and also sites that are eligible or potentially eligible for the NRHP. After using the SC Historic Properties Searchable Database, I was unable to find any sites on the GGCHC Resource Index Appendix C. The searchable database has the option to search for eligible or potentially eligible sites, but due to the lack of updates of the database no properties are listed as potentially eligible or eligible. Not only were there no sites from the GGCHC Resource Index Appendix C, there were no sites at all listed. This searchable database was to no help and needs to be updated by SCDAH. Due to the lack of available information, I used a separate database to search for sites within the GGCHC that are deemed eligible or potentially eligible for the NRHP. The other database I used was a South Carolina archeological sites database known as SC Archsite.

#### *SC Archsite*

The South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology (SCIAA) and the South Carolina Department of Archives and History (SCDAH) are pleased to offer ArchSite, an online cultural resource information system for the state of South Carolina. ArchSite combines data from the state's archaeological and built heritage to provide researchers with an online source for cultural resource information. ArchSite includes two applications that have been designed for specific users: Public View and Subscription View.

Access to the archaeological sites database is restricted to Federal, state, local, government and private historic preservation consultants for the purposes of preserving and

protecting historic properties as defined by the National Historic Preservation Act, amended 2006. The exact location of historic properties owned by the Federal government and in this database are protected from public disclosure under the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 and misuse of this information is a violation of this act and subject to Federal prosecution.

Due to the subscription only viewing privileges and the access restrictions this site is specifically only good for cross analysis. Fortunately having Dr. Jon Marcoux as my thesis chair, I was able to use this database. Unfortunately I was only able to find one site listed in South Carolina on the GGCHC Resource Index Appendix C. The site listed as potentially eligible on Archsite was Caw Caw Interpretive Center. The reason for the lack of finding was because this site is only for archeological resources. The SCDAH database is for other resources, but as mentioned the database has no information on what sites are eligible or potentially eligible.

Between the three databases the 2016 County Update served as the best tool to find sites that are eligible or potentially eligible, but this update was done in 2016, so the need for a new update is needed as well as an update to the SCDAH searchable database. Of the four sites listed as eligible for the NRHP on the 2016 County Update, there is no information as to why the sites are deemed eligible. This information is crucial in creating pathways to being listed on the NRHP. As for Caw Caw Interpretive Center the reason for being potentially eligible is due to the Native American artifacts found on the property, and not for having a connection to Gullah Geechee history or culture.

As stated, before these databases need to be updated to include all sites in South Carolina that have been deemed eligible or potentially eligible for the NRHP. But due to the lack of information from these databases supports the argument that Gullah Geechee sites are significantly underrepresented in the NRHP.

### **Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Resource Index**

The Gullah Geechee sites identified in the GGCHCRI again are woefully underrepresented. The charts show that of the 92 listed sites out of 805 are majorly connected with high style architecture rather than Gullah Geechee cultural and historical connections. The NRHP having such stringent application criteria on what is defined as significant plays a huge role in why these sites have gone underrepresented.

The sites identified in the GGCHCRI indicate that cultural/historical significance is far from one-size-fits-all. Through Multiple Correspondence Analysis, I demonstrated how Gullah Geechee Sites of Significance have several types of significance not recognized by the NRHP. Figure 15 is based on a Correspondence Analysis of the 805 sites of significance identified by the GGCHRI stakeholders. Each of the site's significance was associated with one or more interpretive themes (up to six). The chart marks the presence and absence of the six themes at each site. The six themes are listed below:

1. Origins and Early Development
2. Quest for Freedom, Equality, Education, and Recognition
3. Global Connections
4. Connection with the Land

5. Cultural and Spiritual Expression
6. Gullah Language

### **Multiple Correspondence Analysis**

A Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) takes multiple categorical variables and seeks to identify associations between levels of those variables. MCA extends correspondence analysis from two variables to many. It can be thought of as analogous to principal component analysis for quantitative variables. Similar to other multivariate methods, it is a dimension reducing method; it represents the data as points in 2- or 3-dimensional space.

Multiple correspondence analysis is frequently used in the social sciences. It can be used in survey analysis to identify question agreement. It is also used in consumer research to identify potential markets for products.<sup>38</sup>

Figure 21 is a Correspondence Analysis used to look for associations between the themes listed on the GGCHCRI. I looked at how each of the six themes broke down across the four states associated with the GGCHC. Figure 15 demonstrates that there is a strong thematic association when a “present” symbol for a particular theme is located near a symbol for a particular state. Overall, the results show significant variations across each state. Many sites in South Carolina are deemed significant due to associations with Gullah Language and Cultural/Spiritual Expression. Sites in North Carolina have many sites associated with Origins and Early Development. The sites in Florida are strongly associated with Quests for Freedom, Equality, Education, and Recognition. Lastly Georgia’s sites are strongly associated with Connection with the Land.

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<sup>38</sup> <https://www.jmp.com/support/help/en/17.0/index.shtml#page/jmp/multiple-correspondence-analysis.shtml>

Legend

- Origins & Early Development
- Quest for Freedom, Equality, Education & Recognition
- Global Connections
- Connection with the Land
- ◆ Cultural & Spiritual Expression
- ▽ Gullah Language
- + State

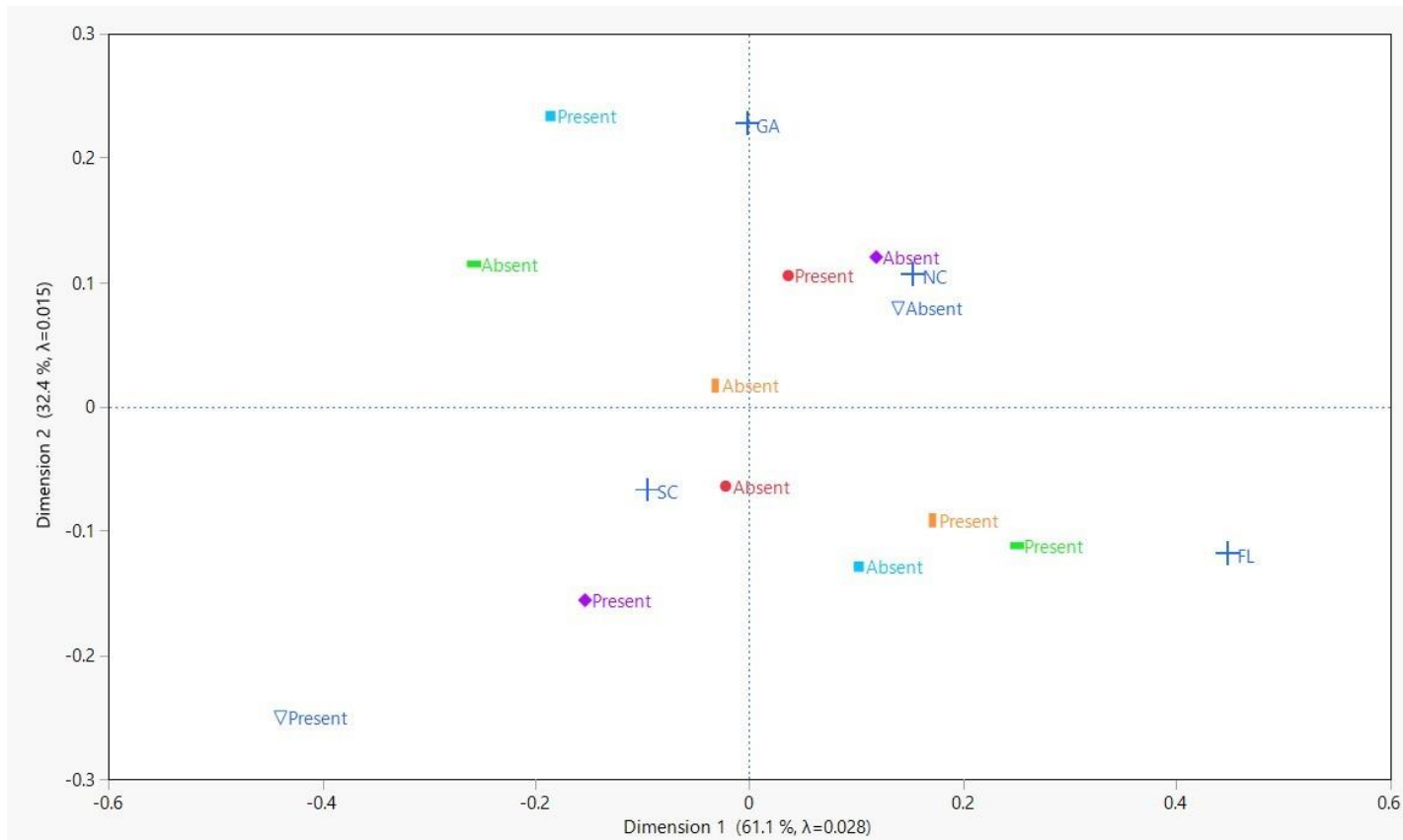


Figure 21. Multiple Correspondence Analysis showing connection of resource themes between states.

For Figure 22, I utilized a Correspondence Analysis to explore geographic variabilities in community-based definitions of cultural/historic resource types identified in the GGCHCRI. I

used the same dataset I created of the 805 Gullah Geechee Sites of Significance. Sites were characterized in the GGCHCRI as six types.

1. Historic Structure
2. Cultural Landscape
3. Ethnographic Resource
4. Museum Collection
5. Archeological Resource
6. Other

Legend

- Type:Historic Structure
- Type:Cultural Landscape
- Type:Ethnographic Resource
- Type:Museum Collection
- Type:Archeological Resource
- State

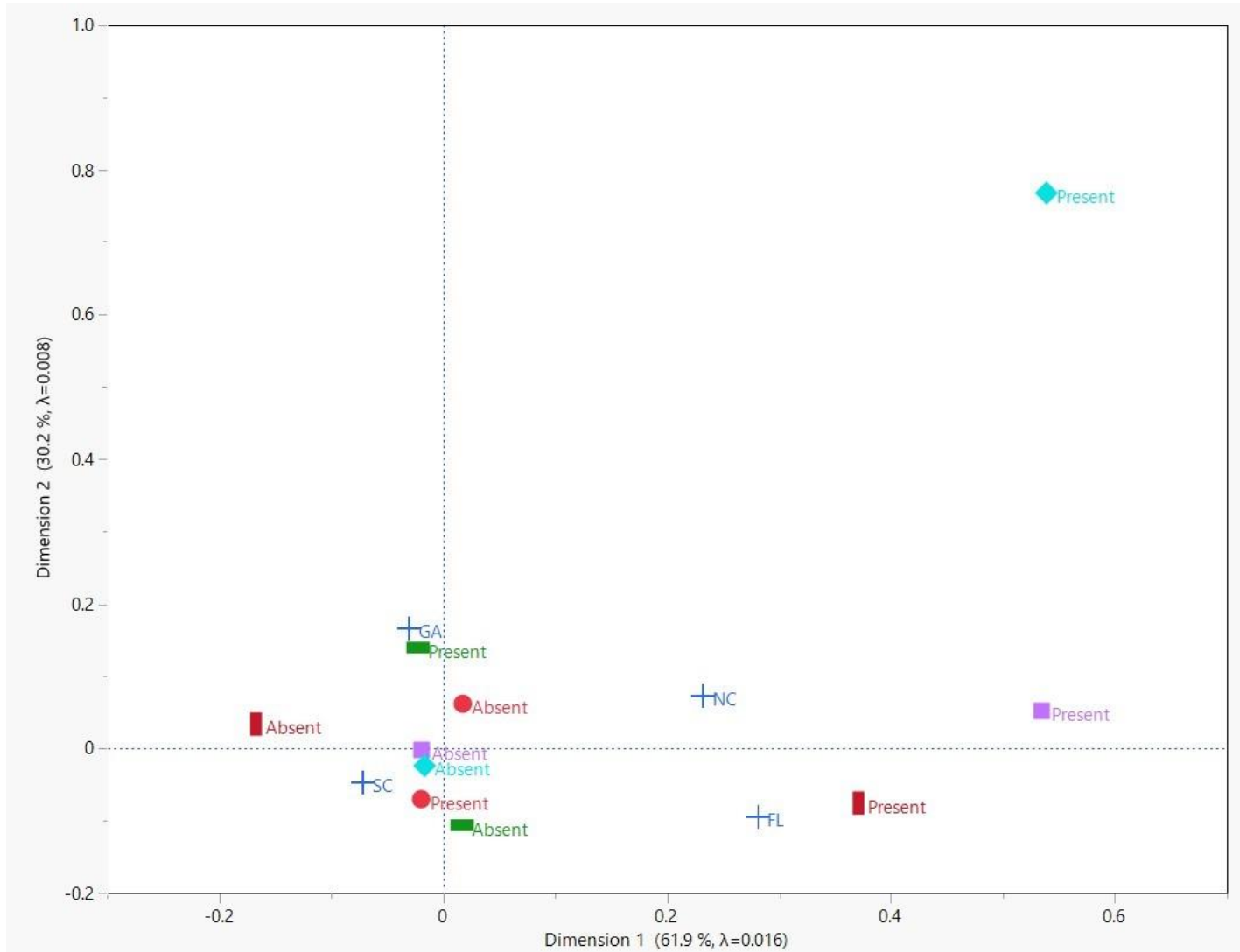


Figure 22. Multiple Correspondence Analysis showing connection between resource types between states.



As with the Correspondence Analysis demonstrated above, Figure twenty-two's Correspondence Analysis (omitting the "Other" category) indicates significant geographic variations with each state a part of the GGCHC. Sites in North Carolina and Florida are more commonly associated with Ethnographic Resources and Museum Collections. Sites in Georgia are associated with Cultural Landscapes. Lastly, the sites in South Carolina are mostly associated with Historic Structure. There is a small number of sites between each state associated with Archeological Resources, only 24 out of the 805 sites. Georgia has the most sites associated with Archeological Resources.

### **Interview with Mike Allen**

Mike Allen is a community partnership specialist and retired National Park Service employee. On December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022, I had the opportunity to interview Mike Allen to discuss the processes taken in the creation of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Management Plan as well as the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Resource Inventory. I wanted to know how the GGCHRI created the Resource Categories, Resource Themes, and Resource Types. Lastly, I wanted to know how the GGCHRI selected and formulated the community-based definitions of what is significant pertaining to Gullah Geechee Sites.

Mike Allen explained to me that in the Summer and Fall of 2000, the GGCHRI stakeholders met with individual community leaders in each county within the GGCHC to gain a public perspective on how cultural/historical Gullah Geechee Sites are viewed as significant places.<sup>39</sup> This process as mentioned by Mike Allen was exceptionally long and difficult. He mentioned that it took a lot of discussion and internal and external relationships eventually came

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<sup>39</sup> Allen, Mike, interview By Peter Gaytan, December 2, 2022.

to an agreement on how Gullah Geechee Sites should be defined pertaining to their significance. As stated above the GGHCRI stakeholders adopted six themes and six types of resources.

Mike Allen mentioned during the interview that this was the first step on getting Gullah Geechee Sites of Significance into the forefront of preservation discussions at a federal level. He mentioned that not only did this bring Gullah Geechee Sites attention Federally with the NPS, but it also began a process of establishing Gullah Geechee Sites with Local designations within their respective Counties.<sup>40</sup>

He went on to explain why this process was needed and how the NRHP definitions of significance and integrity need to be re drafted to better address underrepresented sites. He did explain how the use of TCP's Traditional Cultural Properties is one step underrepresented sites can take to become listed on the NR, but he explained that, of his 25 years with the NPS, he only knows of one site listed on the NRHP that used a TCP. This site is Phillips Community in Charleston County, South Carolina, which was just listed this year 2023.

At the end of the interview, we both concluded that the NRHP application process and the definitions set for integrity and significance need to be reformulated to include a broader definition of what makes a site significant pertaining to African American cultural and history. The Ethnic Heritage: Black Area of Significance needs to be readdressed to better serve underrepresented sites and allow for the opportunity to be eligible for the NRHP.

In conclusion the results from the multiple correspondence analysis indicate that there is significant variation among communities in each state of both themes and property types. This conclusion supports an argument that NRHP eligibility guidelines and evaluation of significance need to be more inclusive pertaining to Gullah Geechee historical sites and other

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<sup>40</sup> Allen, Mike, interview By Peter Gaytan, December 2, 2022.

underrepresented sites of cultural and historical significance. In chapter 5, I will address the need for the NRHP to update the criteria and area of significance guidelines. Chapter 5 will also explore ways for Gullah Geechee historical sites to become listed onto the National Register.

### **Conclusion of Data**

In conclusion, based on identification of Gullah Geechee cultural and historic sites of significance, Gullah Geechee sites are significantly underrepresented in the NRHP. This is displayed throughout the vast number of sites in each state in the GGCHC that are labeled as a historic resource property type and theme. As displayed only 92 sites on the GGCHC Resource Index Appendix C are listed in the NRHP, but 805 sites are significant to Gullah Geechee community members. The data shows the rich diversity in resource themes and property types explaining that the area of significance defined as Ethnic Heritage: Black is too niche. This area of significance needs to be addressed by the NPS or more areas of significance should be included to address Gullah Geechee history.

The sites that are on the GGCHC Resource Index Appendix C and the ones listed on the NRHP for different criteria and areas of significance suggest a connection to Black history themes. They also show a strong connection to architecture relating to plantation “Big House” significance, but this connection pertains to White history rather than Black history. The themes created by Gullah Geechee stakeholders are diverse and in turn fail to meet the strict standards of eligibility of the NRHP application process.

In order to achieve an inclusive listing of Gullah Geechee historical sites of significance, the NPS needs to explore how Gullah Geechee stakeholders and community members define significance. Criteria A is defined as a site associated with the broad patterns of American history, Gullah Geechee stakeholders define their significance as places shaped by captive Africans

brought to the United States.<sup>41</sup> The issue as noted in Chapter 2, is that the history of captive Africans is presumably objective of what Americans consider historically significant.

Chapter 5 will explore ways federal, state, and local governments are working towards listing Gullah Geechee sites of significance. How local nonprofits and advocacy groups are working towards preserving and listing historic Gullah Geechee sites of significance. Also, the struggles of using the traditional method of the NRHP application process versus the beneficial yet difficult process of applying as a TCP.

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<sup>41</sup> “Low Country Gullah Culture Special Resource Study - Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor.” Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor - Where Gullah Geechee Culture Lives, April 21, 2019.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

This chapter interprets the data collected between the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Resource Index Appendix C, the 2016 Charleston County Historic Resource Survey Update, the National Register of Historic Places listings, the SCDAH historic state file, and the Arch SITE files. The chapter compiles a conclusion to the research datasets and poses questions for future research opportunities. This research aimed to determine if the National Register's criteria for eligibility is inclusive enough to allow Gullah Geechee sites of significance to become eligible for National Register listing. This research also identifies how Gullah Geechee communities define significance of Gullah Geechee historical sites.

Briefly summarized, this assessment of the five datasets found that of the 805 sites determined to be significant by Gullah Geechee people in counties within the four states (Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina), only 92 sites are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Of the 92 listed sites there are consistent variables of area of significance and integrity. Overwhelmingly the sites listed favor Criteria C, rather than the other Criteria (Criteria A, B, or D) of eligibility laid out in the NRHP application process.

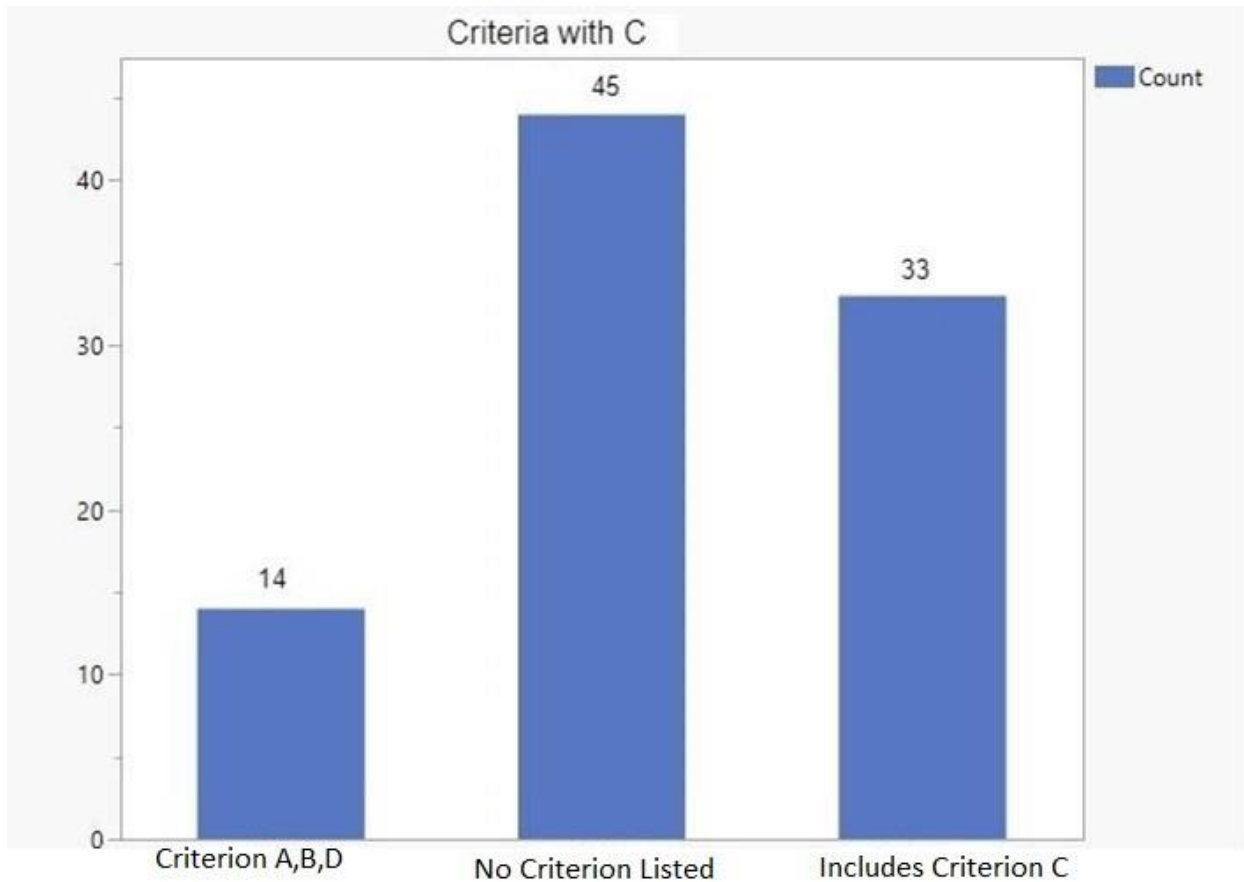


Figure 23. Sites listed as Criteria C.

As seen in Figure 17, 33 sites are relating to Criterion C, 14 sites are listed relating to Criteria A, B and D, and 45 sites due to the date of listing fail to include what Criteria they relate to. Criteria C is defined as, sites that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction. The 33 sites listed connected to Criteria C, are connected to architecture as the area of significance. Figure 17 shows that the high style architecture or “Big House” correlation outnumber sites nominated for other criteria 2 to 1. This pattern suggests that those sites may be listed because of plantation house architecture rather than for their cultural or historical association with Gullah Geechee people.

The reason for so many sites not having a Criteria listed is due to the year the site was listed. Before the newer application was created, applicants for the NRHP did not have to choose a box indicating what criteria is met. The application only needed to know the year of the site's establishment or construction date of building and what area of significance is met. Below in Figure 18 reveals the year that the sites were listed. This gives a better understanding as to why certain applications failed to have a Criteria listed. Also, this exploitation of year in which the site was listed helps to understand why so many sites were listed as Criterion C, due to the active involvement of the NPS after the Bicentennial to list American history relating to early colonialism and high style architecture.

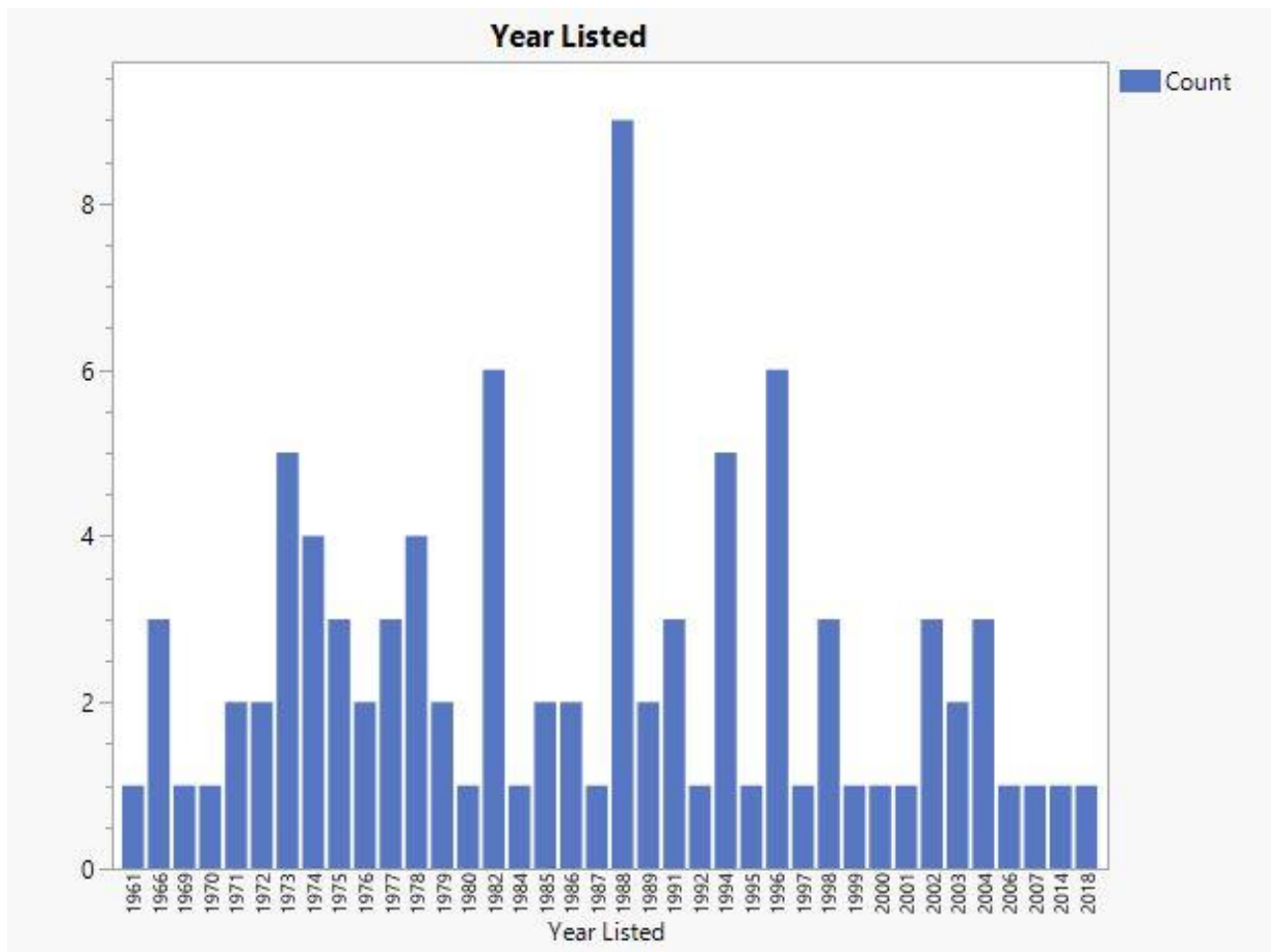


Figure 24. Year when site was listed on the NRHP.

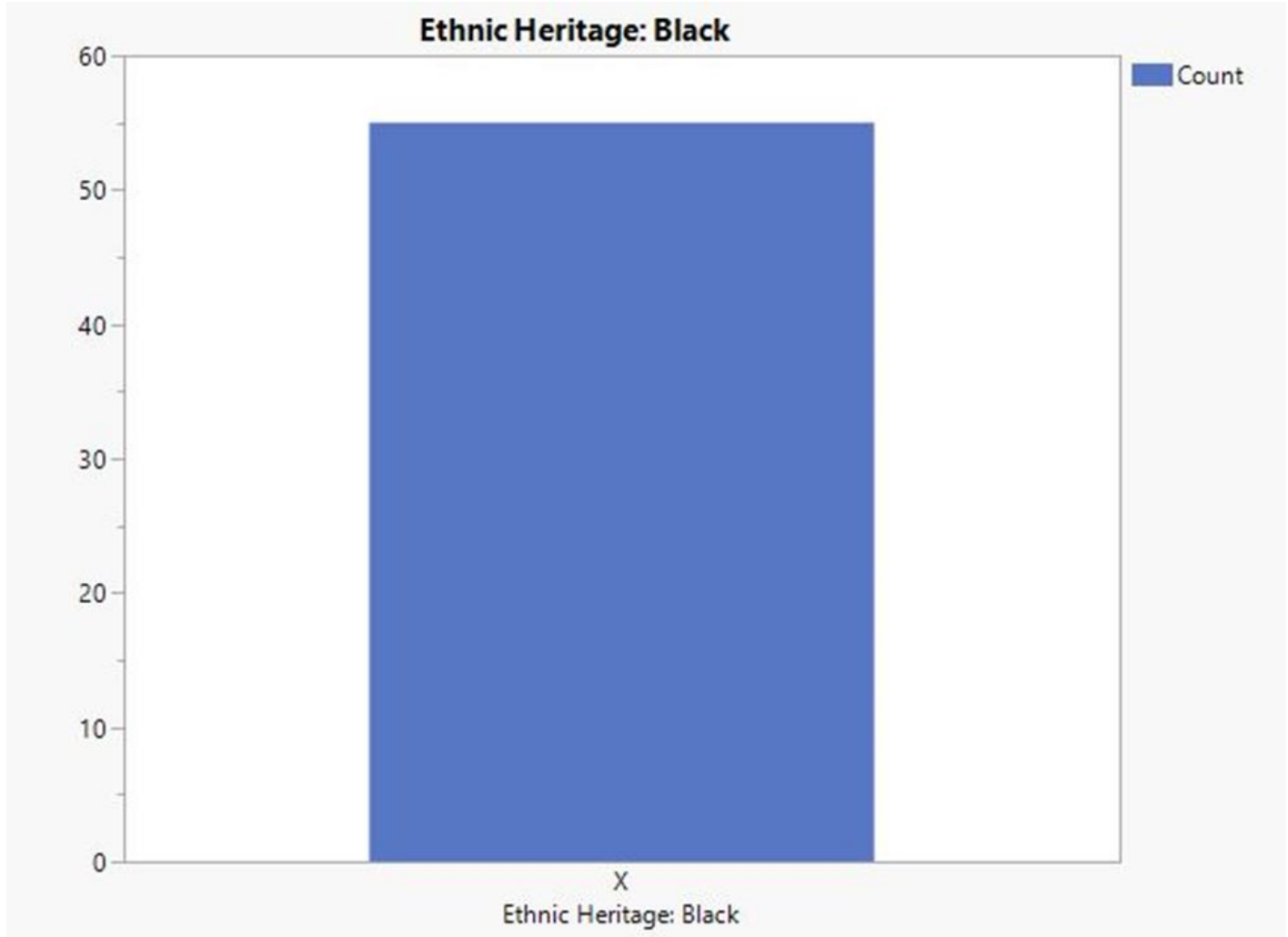


Figure 25. NRHP listings correlating with Ethnic Heritage: Black as an area of significance.

In assessing the data, the sites identified in the GGRI Appendix C indicate that cultural and historical significance is far from a one-size fits all approach to defining significance. Through the resource and property types listed on Appendix C, only one area of significance on the NRHP eligibility process and application correlate. Ethnic Heritage: Black. Figure 25 shows that 55 out of the 92 sites listed on the NRHP meet the area of significance of Ethnic Heritage: Black.



There are several connections relating to the area of significance Ethnic Heritage: Black further making the distinction that there is variation in the cultural and historical significance pertaining to Gullah Geechee historical sites. Figure 18 in Chapter 4 lays out the different types of connections there are with sites meeting Ethnic Heritage: Black as an area of significance. This also helps answer the question of how Gullah Geechee communities define significance. After assessing all the data gathered, I have concluded that there is not one set definition of what makes a Gullah Geechee historical site significant. There are multiple variations of what makes a Gullah Geechee site significant and there are also variations in how a site is connected to the NRHP Ethnic Heritage: Black area of significance.

The assessment of data also clearly identifies that the sites identified by Gullah Geechee people on the GGCHCRI Appendix C are woefully underrepresented in the NRHP list. Furthermore, the 92 sites that are listed on the NRHP are listed for reasons of architectural merit (plantation houses) rather than the association with Gullah Geechee heritage. By quantifying this argument laid out in Chapter 4, this helps support an argument to State Historic Preservation Offices that more consideration to community-based definitions of significance needs to be considered when reviewing NRHP applications of Gullah Geechee sites.

The results of this study lead to more questions. The data assessed in this thesis identifies the need for a more inclusive NRHP eligibility process, but it lacks information on how underrepresented sites can become listed with the current eligibility criteria. Certain questions arise such as, how can underrepresented sites fit into the four criteria listed on the NRHP application? How can underrepresented sites meet a limited area of significance criteria? Lastly, how can sites use the National Register Bulletin 38, Guidelines for Evaluation and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties, to become listed on to the National Register as a TCP

(Traditional Cultural Property).<sup>42</sup> There is currently only one Gullah Geechee historical site that has used the TCP approach, Phillips Community located in Charleston County South Carolina, but this site is still currently awaiting approval to be listed on the National Register. The Phillips Community NRHP application form can be found in the appendices.

The issue of the gap in listings relating to Gullah Geechee sites of significance is a key issue and clearly addresses the lack of representation of underrepresented communities in the NRHP. The biggest issue underrepresented sites face is the lack of help or representation from the federal, state, and local level of governments. Through the failed support by the government there is also the issue of funds in underrepresented communities. The need for proper funding in order to perform surveys and documentation of historic places is key to working towards becoming potentially eligible or eligible for the NRHP. At most times the lack of education of how to perform surveys, documentation, or even the NRHP application is prevalent with underrepresented communities.

These historical and cultural sites of significance in underrepresented communities often have to rely on third party advocacy groups to find ways to preserve and protect places of significance. As mentioned with the two case studies of Mosquito Beach and Phillips Community in Charleston County South Carolina, if it wasn't for third party advocacy groups and help within the communities, it is very possible these sites would have never been listed on the NRHP. There is a long ongoing distrust by underrepresented communities and the government, and fortunately with the help of third party advocacy groups this distrust can be nullified to bridge borders and can allow community members and local governments to work together on having sites designated as historic. Hopefully this thesis will help to serve as an

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<sup>42</sup> "National Register Bulletin 38," Guidelines for evaluating and documenting traditional cultural properties, accessed March 15, 2023, <https://hilo.hawaii.edu/maunakea/library/reference.php?view=582>.

approach to make local, state, and federal governmental entities realize the lack of representation of underrepresented sites on the NRHP. Also, this thesis can be used to help underrepresented communities, particularly Gullah Geechee Settlement Communities navigate the NRHP application process and to understand different approaches to become listed on the NRHP.

There is much more work to be done in finding new avenues and/or approaches to become listed on the NRHP regarding underrepresented communities, in particular Gullah Geechee sites of historical and cultural significance. This thesis presents clear evidence that the preservation and protection of Gullah Geechee historical and cultural sites is needed. Through the help of Gullah Geechee people and communities, a strong recognition by the National Register of the need to be more inclusive, and lastly, the consideration by local SHPO's, historical sites observed by underrepresented communities can become one day become included on to the National Register of Historic Places.

APPENDICES  
APPENDIX A  
NRHP Listed Sites

NRHP Listed Sites	Location
East Wilmington School	New Hanover County, NC
Fort Fisher	New Hanover County, NC
Masonboro School	New Hanover County, NC
Poplar Grove Plantation	Pender County, NC
Camp Saxton	Beaufort County, SC
Coffin Point Plantation	Beaufort County, SC
Daufuskie Island/Daufuskie Island Historic District	Beaufort County, SC
Dr. York Bailey House	Beaufort County, SC
Eddings Point Community Praise House	Beaufort County, SC
Knights of Wise Men Lodge Hall	Beaufort County, SC
Martin Luther King, Jr. Park/The Green	Beaufort County, SC
Mary Jenkins Community Praise House	Beaufort County, SC
Mitchelville (Fish Haul) Archaeological Site	Beaufort County, SC
Penn Center Historic District	Beaufort County, SC
Robert Simmons House	Beaufort County, SC
Robert Smalls House	Beaufort County, SC
Seaside Plantation	Beaufort County, SC
The Oaks	Beaufort County, SC
Cainhoy Historic District	Berkeley County, SC
Cooper River Historic District	Berkeley County, SC
Boone Hall Plantation	Charleston County, SC
Central Baptist Church	Charleston County, SC
Charles Pinckney National Historic Site	Charleston County, SC
Denmark Vesey House	Charleston County, SC
Drayton Hall Plantation	Charleston County, SC
Edisto Island Baptist Church	Charleston County, SC
Folly North Site	Charleston County, SC
Fort Moultrie	Charleston County, SC
Hampton Park	Charleston County, SC
Hampton Plantation State Historic Site	Charleston County, SC
Harrietta Plantation	Charleston County, SC
Hutchinson House	Charleston County, SC
King Cemetery	Charleston County, SC
Magnolia Plantation	Charleston County, SC
McClellanville	Charleston County, SC
McLeod Plantation	Charleston County, SC
Mosquito Beach	Charleston County, SC
Moving Star Hall	Charleston County, SC
Oakland Plantation	Charleston County, SC
Old Bethel United Methodist Church	Charleston County, SC
Old Marine Hospital/Jenkins Orphanage	Charleston County, SC
Point of Pines Plantation Slave Cabin	Charleston County, SC

Progressive Club	Charleston County, SC
Seaside School	Charleston County, SC
Stono River Slave Rebellion Site (1739)	Charleston County, SC
Sullivan's Island	Charleston County, SC
Middleton Place Plantation	Dorchester County, SC
St. George School	Dorchester County, SC
St. Paul Camp Ground	Dorchester County, SC
Brown's Ferry Vessel	Georgetown County, SC
Cedar Grove Plantation Chapel	Georgetown County, SC
Friendfield Plantation	Georgetown County, SC
Joseph H. Rainey House	Georgetown County, SC
Keithfield Plantation	Georgetown County, SC
Mansfield Plantation Slave Street	Georgetown County, SC
Murrells Inlet	Georgetown County, SC
Pawley's Island	Georgetown County, SC
Pee Dee River Rice Planters Historic District	Georgetown County, SC
Richmond Hill Plantation Archaeological Sites	Georgetown County, SC
Rivers Plantation	Georgetown County, SC
Winyah High School	Georgetown County, SC
Hampton Colored School	Hampton County, SC
Honey Hill/Boyd's Necks Battlefield	Jasper County, SC
Kingstree	Williamsburg County, SC
McCollum-Murray House	Williamsburg County, SC
High Point/Half Moon Bluff	Camden County, GA
Cuyler Brownsville Historic District	Chatham County, GA
First Bryan Baptist Church	Chatham County, GA
Fort Pulaski National Monument	Chatham County, GA
Laurel Grove-South Cemetery	Chatham County, GA
Nicholsonville/Nicholsonboro Baptist Church	Chatham County, GA
Ossabaw Island	Chatham County, GA
Tybee Island	Chatham County, GA
Fort Frederica National Monument	Glynn County, GA
Hamilton Plantation Slave Cabins	Glynn County, GA
Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation State Historic Site	Glynn County, GA
Needwood Baptist Church and School	Glynn County, GA
Risley High School/Colored Memorial School/Glynn CTS	Glynn County, GA
Dorchester Academy Boys Dormitory - NHL	Liberty County, GA
Eddie Bowen Farm	Liberty County, GA
Midway District	Liberty County, GA
Sam Ripley Farm	Liberty County, GA
St. Catherine's Island/St. Catherine's Sound	Liberty County, GA
Behavior Cemetery (Sapelo Island)	McIntosh County, GA
Hog Hammock Historic District (Sapelo Island)	McIntosh County, GA

Vernon Square-Columbus Square HD (Darien)	McIntosh County, GA
West Darien Historic District	McIntosh County, GA
Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve (Kingsley Plantation)	Duval County, FL
American Beach	Nassau County, FL
American Beach	Nassau County, FL
Fernandina Beach	Nassau County, FL
Lincolntonville Historic District	St. Johns County, FL

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