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The Past in the Present: Archaeology and Identity in a Historic African American Church

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THE PAST IN THE PRESENT: ARCHAEOLOGY AND IDENTITY IN A HISTORIC
AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCH

by

JOHN ROBY

Under the Direction of John Kantner

ABSTRACT

All across the world, people struggle daily to create and enhance their sense of identity. Such struggles are waged in many ways, including through the process of rediscovering and re-interpreting history. Mt. Sinai Baptist Church, an African American congregation in a suburb of Atlanta, is engaged in a search for its church cemetery, lost when the land was sold to the military during the nation's mobilization for World War II. The church's efforts are analyzed in the context of identity creation -- a search for links to a mythic and self-sufficient past. Archaeological methods reveal compelling evidence that the cemetery lies in a location previously unknown to the community. Through a collaborative process, the church community and the investigator identify the possible cemetery location and develop plans to institute reforms that are sustainable and agreeable to all parties.

INDEX WORDS: Identity, Archaeology, African American, Slavery, Geophysics, Critical Hermeneutics, Anthropology, Cemetery

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

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AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCH

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Raised and sustained on the narratives of the powerful, people can perhaps be forgiven for seeing history as an inevitable, one- or (maybe) two-dimensional process. "The winners write the history books" encapsulates perfectly the view that what exists now grew out of a noble struggle that, in an almost preordained way, tilted in favor of the great (almost invariably) men of the past.

But in every narrative of history, the popular story isn't the whole story. The losers may read what the winners write, but they don't have to take it as gospel. A complete telling of history must take into account the actions and motivations of past actors on all sides, as well as a recognition that the relating of history is an action in the present day, subject to influence by present-day power and political structures. Such a full understanding of history reveals that what we often view as static "fact" is in reality a constructed process.

In the "melting pot" of America, the multicultural present has roots in a multicultural past, one that is contested and renegotiated all over the country practically every day. Historically marginalized groups are moving to reclaim their share of the past, to say, in effect, "we were here, too, and here's what we did." Staking a claim on the past is one way such groups enhance their sense of identity in the present. My research examines the efforts of Mt. Sinai Baptist Church, an African American religious community in suburban Atlanta, to locate and bound its historical cemetery, with the goal of understanding what its struggle to identify and illuminate its past reveals about its negotiation of identity in the present.

A brief history is in order. The Mt. Sinai community has existed since the late 19th century, when it was founded by freed slaves. Much of its past is bound up with that of an all-

black town called Jonesville that existed between Atlanta and Marietta, its suburban neighbor to the north, and that the church served. In 1942, during the nation's mobilization for World War II, the government bought the land where Mt. Sinai and Jonesville stood to build an aircraft factory and air base. The church moved, going so far as to have its physical building uprooted and placed in its current location in downtown Marietta. In the 1990s, personnel on the air base began making inquiries about a cemetery on the grounds. The graves were believed to represent the old Mt. Sinai cemetery. Within the church and the wider community, however, the graves were thought to represent only a fraction of what was actually there, and for years, people in Mt. Sinai have been hoping to determine the true extent of the burials.

I became aware of the church's project through a report in the Marietta newspaper. Several church members were visiting the supposed site of the cemetery, on the grounds of Dobbins Air Base. The article quoted Douglas Martin of the church's history committee, whom I contacted and expressed my desire to learn more about the church's efforts. After several meetings with Martin, I suggested a collaboration: I could bring to the table several pieces of geophysical surveying equipment and, combined with the oral history research that the church was undertaking, together we might be able to pinpoint the location of the lost graves. After meeting with the pastor and other members of the history committee, we began our investigations.

My understanding of the details of this project evolved with time. When the project began, I thought it was a simple matter of locating the graves, and that the difficult part would be narrowing the search area. Upon further investigation, I learned that the site on Dobbins was believed to be the actual Mt. Sinai cemetery, and I believed the problem would be to discover whether the bounds of that cemetery actually reflected the bounds of the burials. But after conducting more interviews, I began to suspect that the graves on the Dobbins grounds were not

part of Mt. Sinai's historical cemetery. That belief led me back to the archives and inspired further interviews, which led me to the conclusion that Mt. Sinai's cemetery was indeed in a different place entirely. With that understanding, I began the archaeological investigations.

I conducted geophysical and field surveys around an existing cemetery north of the one on the air base. Two geophysical tools were used: a cesium magnetometer, which detects magnetic anomalies below the surface, and an OhmMapper, which measures electrical resistivity. Results were interpreted with MagMapper software, and visual results were created with Surfer. In addition, walking surveys were conducted on the area where my research led me to believe the Mt. Sinai cemetery was located. Three surveyors walked a straight line with 5 meter separation, and artifacts were noted, logged with a GPS unit, and photographed. The GPS coordinates were graphed according to UTM to provide a visual depiction of their spatial arrangement. I also used ArcView GIS to create a map of relevant features of the study area. All the figures created from these processes are included in forthcoming chapters of this paper.

I then conducted five in-depth, semistructured ethnographic interviews, with both older church members and people outside the church who have connections to Jonesville. The interviews focused on their recollections of the church before the move, as well as the sociopolitical history surrounding the Mt. Sinai community. I probed the informants for details about the houses people in Jonesville lived in, the types of work they did, what foods they ate, how they clothed themselves, how they attained medical care, how much education they had, their feelings about the church community and the wider community of Jonesville, the importance of the church and the community in daily life, the effects of the church and Jonesville's dispersal, and their memories about the cemetery. As an additional part of the ethnographic component, I surveyed 100 church members, aiming to develop a deeper understanding of the church membership and the importance the community attached to its own

history. Questions included which members of their families attended Mt. Sinai, what types of work they did, their age and income, and their hopes for publicizing any results we achieved from the cemetery project. I made audio and video recordings of the interviews, and used those to prepare transcripts. The transcripts were imported into TAMS Analyzer, an open-source text-analysis program for Mac OS X, and then those data were mined for themes that emerged through the informants' discourse.

The overall question structuring my research was: How is the Mt. Sinai community using evidence of its material past to aid in the construction of identity in the present day? In the remaining chapters, I detail the results of my investigation.

Chapter 2 presents a brief overview of recent developments in the field of African American archaeology. My research is part of a similar and much broader effort among historical archaeologists grappling in different ways with what a study of the material past can reveal about the African American experience.

In Chapter 3, I present the theoretical underpinnings of my work. The construction of identity structures my understanding of the forces at play, along with related issues of structuration, power and agency. Furthermore, my research affords opportunities missing for many types of archaeological inquiry. The events I am concerned with existed not in murky prehistory but within the memory of living people. Many of my informants were alive and active in the church community in the early 1940s. While this means I have access to primary ethnographic data, it also raises challenging questions regarding the creation of knowledge, as well as its interpretation and use. Therefore I shall also discuss archaeology as a critical hermeneutic, a framework of understanding the processes by which co-subjects create and justify present-day meanings that they construct around material culture. Finally, I shall outline current thinking about the rights, roles, and duties of an archaeologist who works with living populations that

have a connection to material culture being studied.

Chapter 3 contains an overview and analysis of the sociopolitical history of Cobb County, Georgia, from its founding to the present. Mt. Sinai church and the people who worshiped there are embedded in the fabric of the larger community, and an understanding of the former requires comprehension of the latter.

In Chapter 4, I discuss the findings from the ethnographic component of my research, and Chapter 5 presents the results of the geophysical and field surveys. Finally, Chapter 6 contains my conclusions, as well as a plan for ensuring that any reforms that arise from the project are sustainable and acceptable to all parties involved.

Before beginning the bulk of this work, I wish to make a point about nomenclature. The changing usage of terms to describe Americans of African ancestry is well-known, and a thorough discussion is outside the scope of this research (but see, for example, Collier-Thomas and Turner 1994 for an overview of relevant literature and discussion of the politics of language and black identity). Yet because I will be citing texts created over a span of more than a century, as well as interviews with people who themselves use different terms, I need to develop a system of usage. Ideally, the system would be simple, unobtrusive and consistent, yet also sensitive both to the integrity of the source and to the sensibilities of the present-day reader. Questions I asked myself included "Does the word 'colored' seem dated and possibly offensive? Doesn't the value of relating the historical use of, say, 'octoroon' in the context of a government document trump its dissonance to the modern ear? Why should I record, and thus in a way, preserve, flawed 19th century ideas about human biological 'races'?"

Two competing issues weighed on my decision. First was the fact that some words ("quadroon;" "colored") once had quite painstaking legal definitions that evolved over time. For example, instructions to enumerators of the 1870 U.S. census included this note under the

heading "color":

It must not be assumed that, where nothing is written in this column, "White" is to be understood. The column is always to be filled. Be particularly careful in reporting the class *Mulatto* (ital. in original). The word is here generic, and includes quadroons, octoroons, and all persons having any perceptible trace of African blood. Important scientific results depend upon the correct determination of this class in schedules 1 and 2 (Gauthier 2002: 14)

Instructions in the 1890 census included this section on recording race:

Write *white, black, mulatto, quadroon, octoroon, Chinese, Japanese, or Indian* (ital. in original), according to the color or race of the person enumerated. Be particularly careful to distinguish between blacks, mulattos, quadroons, and octoroons. The word "black" should be used to describe those persons who have three-fourths or more black blood; "mulatto," those persons who have from three-eighths to five-eighths black blood; "quadroon," those persons who have one-fourth black blood, and "octoroon," those persons who have one-eighth or any trace of black blood (Gauthier 2002: 27)

But by the 1910 form, the process had simplified again:

Write "W" for white; "B" for black; "Mu" for mulatto; "Ch" for Chinese; "Jp" for Japanese; "In" for Indian. For all persons not falling within one of these classes, write "Ot" (for other), and write on the left-hand margin of the schedule the race of the person so indicated.

For census purposes, the term "black" (B) includes all persons who are evidently full-blooded negroes, while the term "mulatto" (Mu) includes all other persons having some proportion or perceptible trace of negro blood (Gauthier 2002: 48)

The previous passages point to the evolution of "mulatto" in two decades from a blanket term to describe anyone who appeared to be non-white into a subdivision of those who appeared to have "black blood." Two decades later, the process had largely reversed, and a new term, "negro" appeared. The note in 1870 that the term mulatto "is here generic" indicates an acknowledgment that definitions varied across time and space. Moreover, determinations of biological race were considered worthy of recording by the government, and might yield

"important scientific results." In the cases above, using the actual historical terms reveals shades of meaning and implies larger-scale social dynamics that would be missing were I to strike such words in accordance with present thinking.

The second issue weighing on my system of word choice is the fact that labels have almost always been applied to, rather than chosen by, Americans of African ancestry. I did not wish to play into that historical fact through my choice of words. Yet choosing a blanket term seems inappropriate as well, and whatever I chose would no doubt seem antiquated at some time in the future.

In the end, I decided to preserve historical uses of such words as "negro," "colored," and "mulatto" whenever possible, and to define now-obscure terms when they are introduced. In places where sources used more overtly derogatory terms, I changed them without mercy. I hope the reader finds the results to be clear and sensitive, yet also infused with the flavor of a (thankfully) bygone time.

Chapter 2: Recent Developments in African American Archaeology

That science is part of wider culture has been said so many times that it approaches a truism, rather than an assertion. What is happening in the social world at large shapes the questions we ask and the ways we try to answer them. To anthropologists, that is self-evident. Science, even positivistic science, is practiced within a larger social context. On at least some level, our experiences within that context guide our interests. A defining experience of American culture since the 1960s has been the contestation and (often quite) gradual acceptance of civil rights, particularly for Americans of African descent. This emergent dialogue within society has inspired scientific study. Within the discipline of archaeology, the study of the African American experience is an emerging specialization, and slavery and freedom is a significant focus. The rise of black activism, a growing interest in ethnic archaeology and the increasing role of archaeology in historic interpretation have driven that rise (Singleton 1995). As the field matures, archaeologists are moving beyond simple documentation of an African American past, and are beginning to ask deeper questions that begin with "why," "how" and "to what extent." They are also doing so in greater numbers: Since the late 1960s, slavery has become one of the fastest-growing subfields of historical archaeology (Singleton 1995). Related to the new questions is a focus on "freedmen" communities, as well as a search for evidence of agency in the context of slavery. I shall examine how archaeologists of African-Americans study freedom and freedmen, with special attention to the roles played by descendant groups in archaeological investigations.

Considering resistance

Freedmen, which for the purposes of this work should be considered a gender-inclusive term, were former slaves who became emancipated through proclamation, outside force or their

own agency. The term doesn't imply any specific mode of living; just as there were many ways one could become free, there were many ways that a freedman could go about daily life. Two loci of freedman life illustrate the poles between which most fell: camps set up by the U.S. government; and runaway, or "maroon," communities. Freedmen's Village is an example of the former. Established at the former home of Robert E. Lee in Arlington, Virginia, outside Washington, Freedmen's Village was by far the most prominent of the many camps for escaped and emancipated slaves set up during the Civil War. It was the longest-lived, and its history gives perspective to the ways freedmen and the government coped with the social changes of emancipation (Reidy 1987). The village had a school, chapels, 50 homes, and shops where trades were taught and practiced. It was set up as a stepping-stone to self-sufficiency, but many ex-slaves remained even after the war, making the temporary village a permanent establishment for nearly five decades (Reidy 1987). The government also helped legitimize the village -- the symbolic value of former slaves living at the former home of the Confederacy's top general was too good an opportunity to pass up. Thus, Freedmen's Village provided the backdrop for celebrations of freedom advancing in the South, even after the war, with former slaves speaking publicly about their gratitude at emancipation (Reidy 1987).

In a way, life in the village was a metaphor for emancipation itself. Freedom began with flight from slavery, then continued through the development of self-sufficiency (Reidy 1987). This mode of living was also an attempt to socialize the freedmen into capitalist society. Wages from the trades practiced in the village represented the first that some of the former slaves ever earned, and they were further supplemented by selling food the freedmen grew or caught. And when the village was dispersed in the early 20th century, the residents were "freed" to fend for themselves (Reidy 1987).

Maroon societies were as far from the officially sanctioned Freedman's Village as a mode

of living could be. Maroons -- slaves who escaped from bondage and lived independently -- were outlaws by definition. The term "maroon" is linked to the Spanish *cimarron*, which referred to pigs that escaped into the mountains (Weik 1997). Whereas American freedmen came into being near the end of state-sanctioned slavery, maroons existed from the institution's beginnings, and in all parts of the slave-holding world. As Weik (1997) notes, maroonage existed wherever slavery did. Slaves escaped to avoid forced labor, but also to heal from abuse, to find food, to visit family, and to interact with friends and potential mates (Weik 1997). Thus, maroonage was usually an ephemeral condition. One might become a maroon for a period of time, and then return to slavery after the visit or healing was finished, for example. Also, documentary and other evidence shows that most maroon societies existed less than two years, though some in Brazil and Jamaica lasted more than a century (Weik 1997).

Maroons fit into the larger sociopolitical structure in various ways. They would raid colonial settlements for food and recruits, and would also conduct trade. Europeans would try to destroy their settlements, or failing that, would make peace (Weik 1997). Maroon studies are thus complex, and the ephemeral nature of maroon settlements leads to difficulties finding and studying them archaeologically. They are also subject to unknowing destruction through development.

A dialectic view of slavery aids in the analysis of resistive practices to it. Rather than reifying the concept of freedmen, it is most useful to conceptualize the condition as a type of resistance to slavery. Doing so allows a more nuanced understanding of what it means to be free by taking into account the facts of slavery. Freedmen existed because slavery existed before; without slavery, there could be no freedmen. The same holds true for maroons. Becoming a maroon was a form of resistance, on the same end of the spectrum as revolt and flight (Weik 1997). It was also possible for a maroon to become a freedman, by escaping to a freedman

community. Freedmen were revolting in that they were living free lives despite being raised in bondage. A dialectic view necessarily puts the conditions of slavery in an important place, because without understanding what happened under slavery, one cannot understand the motivation to leave it. Archaeology is discovering that even in the context of slavery, resistance occurred often, and in a number of subtle ways. The dialectic knits forms of resistance under slavery to forms of escape such as becoming a freedman or maroon. Thus, considering archaeological evidence from the context of slavery fits into a consideration of freedmen, who existed outside slavery. Put another way, research into slavery is necessarily research into freedmen, and vice versa.

Motivations for research

Two interrelated goals of archaeological research into slavery are to problematize the master-slave relationship, and to demonstrate that African influences persisted in slave populations. Both of those agendas can create knowledge that demonstrates the agency of enslaved people. Studies of maroon societies provides a counterpoint to a top-down emphasis on the master-slave relationship in that they show plantation society could be undermined by slaves (Weik 1997). Furthermore, Jamieson (1995) notes that "African influences cannot be ignored, and should be celebrated" (: 41; but see Singleton 1996 for a discussion of problems associated with identifying ethnicity in the archaeological record). Such influences are shown most readily in burial practices and in evidence of magic use. Both living black communities and the archaeological record show African influence on mortuary practices (Jamieson 1995). African-inspired burial practices are notable for their variety, as shown through present-day ethnographic research. In some societies, those who die natural deaths are distinguished from those who die in childbirth, from disease, from suicide, etc., in where they are buried. In some places, people are buried in common. In some places, people are buried within rooms; in others, outside dwellings

(Jamieson 1995). Grave goods are occasionally not related to the dead, but are property of the living, placed in burials as protection against living souls being trapped in the grave (Jamieson 1995). Such rich variation in ethnographic African burial practices are of relevance to the study of African-inspired burial practices in the Americas, though Jamieson (1995) notes that similar practices may be reported in slave contexts because they are not recognized by the archaeologist. The obvious solution is further study of ethnography, and more robust efforts at interpretation.

Several studies have shown the important role of magic in slave societies. Kenneth L. Brown (2004) describes an example from Frogmore Manor Plantation in South Carolina. A chicken was found buried standing upright, facing east, with its wings outstretched, in the floor of a house identified with a conjurer. Brown asked the elders of the Gullah Nation about it, who noted that chickens are considered to have the power to protect the living from spirits. The animal's placement in the conjurer's house, they said, indicated she had not been able to cure a person, who had later died. Thus the chicken bones were seen as a charm against the wrath of the spirit. Brown (2004) notes that this interpretation provides a richer picture of black life on the plantation.

Oftentimes, material recovered in slave contexts has puzzled archaeologists. Items from the Jordan Plantation in Brazoria County, Texas, have been interpreted as having a ritual function, mainly for that reason (Singleton 1995). The site was occupied by both slaves and freedmen after emancipation. The materials in question include bottles, an animal's paw, seashells and samples of medicine. Ethnographic examples from Cuba have shown ritual conjuring uses for similar items (Singleton 1995). In Annapolis, Maryland, crystals, beads and a painted bowl cached in the basement of a wealthy slave-owning house have been interpreted through consultation with Africanists as possibly being associated with African divination rituals (Singleton 1995).

African-inspired influences in burial practices and supernatural beliefs both serve to undermine a top-down view of master-slave relationships. To be sure, this does not mean that slavery can in any way be considered a harmless condition of living. The evidence of brutality far, far outweighs evidence of successful slave resistance practices. That fact is well-known. What is less well-known is that slaves resisted, and in ways less obvious (and thus, perhaps more successful) than outright rebellion. Archaeological evidence of African influences in daily life shows that slaves possessed a certain amount of control over their own worldview. They did not always bury their dead as the masters did, and they retained folk beliefs to sustain themselves in adverse conditions. Recognition of that agency has been a motivation for archaeological research into the African American past.

Descendant communities

The examples above highlight the role of descendant groups in interpreting archaeological evidence by showing how present-day ethnography can inform archaeological findings. Another famous example is the New York African Burial Ground Project. There, the black community forced a significant revision of the excavation of an African cemetery that was discovered during a construction project in the early 1990s. The project developed into far more than a straightforward removal of remains. The community demanded the remains be handled with respect, the bones be given rigorous study, and the findings be reported as they become available (Mack and Blakey 2004). Community interest was widespread. Artists, religious leaders and others took responsibility for relevant aspects of the site. Study of the archaeological evidence has led to new knowledge about the living conditions of African slaves in the late 18th century, and collaboration with communities from New York to Nigeria has led to new understandings of the role of archaeology in contemporary society (Leone, LaRoche and Babiarz 2005).

By and large, archaeologists recognize that modern-day people can point to sophisticated

interpretations of the African American archaeological record. Franklin (1997) observes that "the general consensus among critical archaeologists is that control of archaeological resources and knowledge must be shared with descendant groups" (: 39). Doing so helps ensure our research is not used to further racist interests, which is likely when descendant groups are not included (Franklin 1997). What is less well-understood is the political necessity of involving descendent communities in all aspects of archaeological investigation. Citing Parker B. Potter, Jamieson (1995) notes that archaeologists have a responsibility to ask African Americans about their interests in their cultural past, and how that can figure in to research. As noted many times before, archaeology is destructive. That fact takes on additional salience when the past being investigated is that of living people. Although many would not go so far as Jamieson (1995) did when he asserted that "wholesale excavation of cemeteries merely to answer the research questions of archaeologists can validly be classified as desecration" (: 39), the anger over the initial plans for the New York African Burial Ground shows that living people sometimes would agree with him. Part of the problem lies in modern-day power structures. Archaeologists tend to be white and broadly middle-class, unlike the descendants of African American populations we study. Power creates constraints on dialogue between classes, but as Mack and Blakey (2004) note, "such constraints and/or opportunities can be denied, or recognized and negotiated" (: 14). Their point is that we should work with descendent groups, not assume an artificial separation between academic interest and personal interest.

Use of knowledge

As an emerging field of inquiry, the archaeology of slavery is still coming to grips with how to use the knowledge it reveals. Use of knowledge has taken three related forms: public presentation, bridge-building and political action. Public presentation occurs in museums of African American history and in related work at historic sites. Leone, Potter and Shackel (1987),

for example, highlight findings of slave resistance in their guide to historic Annapolis. Such presentations bring the nuanced view of slave agency that archaeologists have revealed to the broader public. Doing so also serves a political agenda. The African American past is often viewed as ancillary to the European-American past. In part this is because of the long and dark shadow cast by slavery. Also, slavery is increasingly being addressed within historical archaeology as an outgrowth of the spread of capitalism (Leone, LaRoche and Babiarz 2005; Little 1996; McGuire 1992; Leone, Potter and Shackel 1987; Wolf 1982). Yet more and more, African American history is being seen as worthy of study and respect in its own right, and is being examined through a lens that focuses on acquiescence and resistance to the capitalist mode of production. Such views are revolutionary in that they challenge the dominance of what is presented in traditional history books.

Finally, African American archaeological practice has the potential to build bridges between the discipline and descendent black communities. Archaeology is additive, in that research done in the past forms a foundation for future study. Similarly, the more we practice nuanced, relevant, politically responsible archaeology, the more legitimate we appear when we seek to involve descendent communities. By showing the results of the African Burial Ground project, for example, archaeologists can legitimately say that we value the input of black communities. Collaboration serves both their interests and ours. In fact, they overlap to a large extent.

Chapter 3: Theory

The concept of identity structures my research. Specifically, I intend to demonstrate how actions taken by agents within the present-day Mt. Sinai church community serve to construct and maintain an identity that is at once explicitly African American and yet also part of the broader communities of Marietta and Cobb County. Identity is best considered as a metacategory rather than a bounded theory. It is fluid and inclusive, capable of subsuming diverse bodies of theory. To that end, I shall deploy concepts from a number of theoretical schools to support my statement above. I shall begin this chapter with a deeper discussion of identity, including how it can be approached archaeologically and how it is manipulated by people. The latter point leads into a discussion of agency and Giddens' theory of structuration, followed by the neo-Marxist concepts of power, ideology and the dialectic. Finally, I shall examine critical hermeneutics as an epistemology that views the past as problematic yet potentially useful to the present, and consider the roles and obligations of the researcher who works with living people. Although these concepts might appear wildly divergent, even contradictory, the structuring principle of identity serves to unite them. Similar threads run through each, namely, culture viewed as conflict, a privileging of the use of knowledge, and a focus on everyday lives of people.

Identity

Popular discourse on what it means to be black in the United States trends toward extremes of celebration or essentialization. On the one hand, government endorses a "black history month," during which schoolchildren learn about and celebrate the achievements of notable black men and women. Cities put on special events. Yet as some have noted, what about the rest of the year? Is it any more equitable to ghettoize part of our past into a month than it is

to ignore it completely? Official holidays are also set aside on dates historically important to African Americans, both nationally, for the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, and regionally, as in the Juneteenth celebration in Texas, which honors the day news of emancipation reached the state. These officially sanctioned events show a willingness to acknowledge the presence and contributions of black Americans. Yet in doing so, they inevitably point out differences between black and mainstream white, and also uncritically reinforce the myth of a single, unified black culture that can be understood in discrete chunks, markable on your calendar.

The other extreme, essentialization, is evident both in overt racism and in everyday media portrayals. Many studies show that news reports on generalized crime are more likely to depict black people than whites as perpetrators, even though the vast majority of crimes are committed by whites. Poverty coverage, as well, skews toward black sources, though most African Americans are firmly in the middle class. Hip-hop music, performed mainly by black musicians, often deals with themes of drugs, crime, and sex. It is considered "black music," though again, most of its buyers are white. The overall effect is to reinforce the ideas that all black people are poor, that all black people are criminals, that all black people are obsessed with drugs, crime, and sex. Racism is still a fact of life, both in subtle forms as mentioned above, and in the (thankfully quite rare) criminal acts, as in the incident of a black man in Texas who was chained to a pickup truck and dragged to his death by neo-Nazis in 1998. Less violent, yet still revealing of racial attitudes, was the decision of voters in Alabama in November 2004 to reject amending the state's constitution to remove vestigial references to segregation and poll taxes that were used to disenfranchise blacks before the Civil Rights era (Roig-Franzia 2004).

America as a colorblind society is a popular myth. Color and physical features have long been considered relevant parts of life in the United States (Wilkinson 1990). As we shall see, those and other features, which are often collectively mislabeled as "race," are used both to

exclude and to include. African Americans are unique in that they "were the only people brought ... unwillingly in large numbers, subsequently enslaved for two hundred years, and then subjected to a state-imposed system of racial apartheid that ... set up a racial caste system that still affects American society today" (Susan Love Brown 2003: 159-160). Race is a relevant factor of American life both in informal discourse and in official dealings with the government. Wilkinson (1990) points out that government, health care and business entities demand people identify themselves by race in contexts of medical charts, the census, military records, insurance forms, "ad infinitum" (: 16). Yet marking the "African American" circle on a census form generalizes what is in reality a complicated question of identity. The black population in the United States is large and diverse. For example, many people in this country today who phenotypically resemble those whose ancestors were enslaved are actually more recent immigrants from the Caribbean or Africa. Although the colorblind society is less real than it is imagined, the multicultural American society is a fact, and it applies just as much to the "black" segment as it does to society as a whole.

Popular portrayals of "black identity" tend to be facile and flawed in the sense that they are often uncritical, essentializing generalizations. To get at the question of what black identity is and how it is created, it is useful to consider how and why such obvious facts as color and the notion of "race" have been politicized, i.e., what "identity politics" means in the context of African American co-cultures. The academy sees identity politics as an outgrowth of modernity, as a method of contesting status, and as an inevitable result of historic domination. Kottak and Kozaitis (2003) cite Robert Kaplan as noting that "social and political identities based on the sharing of a common culture, religion, language or 'race' are becoming the basis of prime allegiance, rather than citizenship in a nation-state, which contains diverse social groups" (: 33). Identity politics is thus seen as a way for a group to form or maintain a community of choice.

Any discussion of the politics of black identity in the United States must also consider history. Collier-Thomas and Turner (1994), in an article on the labeling of black Americans, refer to "the peculiar psychological dimensions of the Black experience in America."

For almost 200 years, the question of identity ... has caused troubling psychological ramifications for African descendants from their inception in America as a dominated people to the present. Slavery denied Africans their original identity, leaving them with a sense that they were lacking a fundamental wholeness as human beings. Africans were confronted ... with the repudiation of the very legitimacy of their culture and human identification.

Nearly another hundred years of official and unofficial violence and discrimination followed the centuries of legal slavery in this country. Such a legacy cannot be overcome overnight, but it might also serve as a rallying point. The formation of collective identity can be based not only on victory but also on tragedy (Eyerman 2004). The memory of shared struggle, even if it occurred before one's lifetime, can lead to shared community.

Wilkie (2000) defines identity as "the ways that individuals define and present themselves" (: 4; cf. Meskell 2002: 279-280). The plural illustrates a key point about identity: It varies both temporally and spatially. During childhood, one's identity is bound up with one's family. As an adult, one might assume such identities as "husband," "mother," "employer," or "worker," while maintaining the previous identity of "son" or "daughter." Wilkie's definition minimizes an important fact: that identities are also imposed on people by others. Examples might include "black man," "redneck," "liberal," "fundamentalist," *et cetera*. She acknowledges, though, that imposed identity may be manipulated to one's advantage (Wilkie 2000: 5). Thus the recursive nature of identity raises the possibility of conflict, as people fight to construct and reconstruct those identities they define as most important, while others attempt to maintain the identities they impose. Such conflicts happened in the past, and are happening in the present. In the context of the post-emancipation period, Wilkie (2000) notes that:

Identity ... is crucial to an understanding of how African American individuals, families and communities coped with racist power structures in the southern United States. It was the manipulation of racist stereotypes, combined with the construction of African American identities, that enabled individuals to navigate a landscape of racism and violence (: 4).

Because identity is contested in the present as well, Meskell (2002) notes that identity studies are one way that archaeology, which has much to say about such issues as class inequities, gender and the historical construction of the present, can be made relevant to living populations. Yet Wilkie (2000) is critical of much archaeological work on identity, dismissing it as consisting too often of "a single monolithic history that incorporates the experiences of all" (: 225). She argues that past societies, being made up of individuals, cannot be thought of as pursuing or constructing a single identity, for the very fact that people do not, and indeed cannot, maintain single identities. Individual identities are distinct and changing, thus the question of the "identity" of communities or societies must be problematized. One must examine the motivations and actions of individuals at some conceptual level.

Agency, structure and structuration

Agency, or the practices undertaken by social actors, offers a framework for considering such motivations and actions. It raises questions that strike at the heart of the social sciences: What is the relationship between the individual and society? Does one shape the other, and to what extent? What constrains people from accomplishing their will? For all its centrality, though, agency theory, at least as applied by archaeologists, suffers from a crisis of identity. It tends to be deployed more on paper than in practice (Johnson 2000), or in unique and often contradictory ways (Dobres 2000; Dornan 2002; Johnson 2000). Some archaeologists see agency in the actions of what Hodder (2000) calls "individual lived lives" -- literally the actions of single historical people -- while others identify agentive actions of collective groups or agency as the largely

unintended consequences of actors responding to social structures (Dornan 2002). Yet disagreement over how agency is knowable archaeologically does not make it useless as a concept. On the contrary, a diversity of viewpoints indicates an active engagement with theory. Dobres and Robb (2000) argue for a cautious embrace of potentially contradictory definitions. Agency, they say, can work in many ways, even at once, and contradiction is potentially more interesting than concordance. Archaeologists interested in agency, they say, should explicitly state their definition, and restrict their interpretations under that definition to the situation at hand. In other words, raise and answer the question of why agency is most useful in a particular instance, and be explicit about why a certain approach is the best.

Following that guidance, I find that a collective agency approach *sensu* Shanks and Tilley (1987) represents the best use of the agency concept for my particular research problem. Though critical of Shanks and Tilley's particular application of collective agency in understanding the comparative design strategies of beer cans in Britain and Sweden, Dornan (2002) notes that such an approach "based on intrasocial variation ... [is] used by many archaeologists who seek to understand how class or gender systems affect the collective decision-making or identity constructions of different social groups, particularly in relation to resistance to structural inequalities" (: 310). I see agency in the actions of the Mt. Sinai community's effort to construct an identity that is both separate from and part of the larger social fabric of their neighborhood. Their efforts are a form of resistance to narratives forged in the social and economic milieu of Cobb County, Georgia. Agentive actions of individuals, though sometimes possible to discern archaeologically (Hodder 2000; Johnson 2000), are not an appropriate framework in this case because, though individuals are certainly leading the church's effort, any outcomes will affect the collective more than the individual. As shall be shown, individuals are not pursuing reforms for self-aggrandizement. The goal of the church's efforts are to build a sense of identity linked to the

efforts and actions of people in the past. The collective sense of identity is meant to lift all, not just those who are most directly pursuing its construction. Johnson (2000) writes that social groupings "may act on a level over and above the individual but still operate as active entities within the social structure as a whole" (: 226). The church can be viewed as a social unit that forms a dialectic, both part of and opposed to the larger community. Dornan (2002) suggests a methodological contradiction exists when one considers "the individual" as a collective in that agency exists in only those actions taken by a majority of individuals within that collective (: 315). But I see no contradiction in extending the unit of analysis to a group when the people within that group are positioned similarly in regard to larger structures, and thus will experience any outcomes in a similar fashion. This is not an example of group essentialization. Admittedly, it was an *a priori* assumption of mine, but one that my research in the community largely bears out, as shall be discussed in later chapters.

Structure, then, must be considered along with agency. Classical structuralism grew out of the linguistic theory that the rules that govern language are hidden deep inside the brain. To explain different forms of language, you must learn their hidden cognitive rules (Johnson 1999: 91). In the context of culture, the thinking goes that learning the hidden rules will reveal truths about the culture. As Johnson (1999) says, "The structuralist will ask, 'What are the underlying rules governing this structure? And what do these hidden rules tell us about the way this culture sees the world?' " (: 92). A structuralist interpretation of, say, a rainmaking ceremony would focus on the deeply hidden meaning of "rain" to a culture. Archaeologists influenced by structuralism see artifacts as generated by hidden cognitive rules (Johnson 1999: 91). Structuralism is rightly viewed as giving too much emphasis on hidden rules at the expense of human agency, treating people as automatons responding to structures that they cannot grasp. Yet tension remains: Surely forces in society exert some sort of influence over action. The fact

that people do not act randomly implies the existence of overarching rules and meanings. More recent engagements with structuralism attempt to unify structure and agency in a way that accounts for the existence of structures while granting agency to human actors. Perhaps the best expression of such a synthesis is Giddens' theory of structuration. Structuration views the structural properties of social systems as both the medium and the outcome of the practices they recursively organize (Giddens 1984: 25). Structure and agency are thus united in a recursive relationship. Agentive practice occurs within the bounds of structures set up by previous practice, and acts back on structure productively and reproductively. Structures must thus be considered as part of the social totality, rather than as unknowable, nondiscursive, pre-existing features of society. Structuration returns parity to the question of structure-agency primacy. Neither determines the other. Rather, both are enjoined in a recursive relationship. Inspired by structuration, Shanks and Tilley (1987) articulate a more useful definition of structures, writing that they are:

1. Atemporal, aspatial yet subject to change in time and space. Present only through their effects, at points of constitution via agency and practices that arise from that
2. Constituted by principles and resources orientating social practices and which are, in turn, orientated by those practices
3. Dynamic entities that embrace contradictions and non-correspondences (: 127).

The above definition clarifies structure's dependence upon agentive practice. Crucially, such a definition acknowledges the fluid nature of structures. Rather than enduring, they are open to manipulation. Structure envisioned as constituted by practice implies the possibility of change through changes in practice. At the same time, structures orientate practices, forming a template of normative practice. Such templates, though, do not prohibit non-normative practice, but rather define whether a certain practice is considered normative or revolutionary.

According to Giddens, much everyday practice occurs without active thought. A person

stopping her car at a red light generally does not mentally peruse driving rules, weigh the risks of not stopping, and arrive at a normative decision. Rather, such an action usually occurs at the level of what Giddens (1984) calls "practical consciousness," or what actors know or believe about social conditions, especially the conditions of their own action, but cannot express discursively. Red means stop. Reproduced practices give the social world symbolic structure and meaning. Agents' knowledge of their role in that reproduction is largely implicit (Hodder 1995: 17; Shanks and Tilley 1987). Although much action is habituated, people can consciously -- or discursively -- access, consider and change their actions. Much as the boundaries of structures are always shifting -- consider the current debate over the legal definition of marriage -- the bounds between practical and discursive consciousness shifts according to time, place and the actors involved (Giddens 1984: 7; Shanks and Tilley 1987). It seems likely that a shift from practical to discursive consciousness heralds a wider structural change, much as awareness precedes action. Looking at how rules are followed, as well as creatively manipulated, by social actors, requires a bottom-up rather than top-down view of society, as well as a notion of the social as conflict-driven rather than consensus-based (Johnson 1999). When people view practices discursively, i.e., when conflict becomes a conscious possibility, they can begin to alter their actions. Archaeology, with its uniquely long temporal view, can identify such shifts in practice, and posit reasons that the consciousnesses that produced them became discursive. To identify shifts, one must have an idea of the existing social, political and economic situation. Society exists before and after the populations in question. It is overdetermined: always preconstituted as a symbolic field. To explain an action, reference must be made to the social positioning of agency and to the context of practice (Shanks and Tilley 1987). Agency thus can be found in "the temporal intersection of individual intention with resistance to or incorporation of particular social

structures" (Dornan 2002: 324). Understanding of an action must include an understanding of the historical social situation in which it occurred.

Power, ideology and the dialectic

A Marxist analysis allows such a critical consideration of elements of politics and history in understanding social processes. Classical Marxism was preoccupied by a focus on the economic base of society. Though useful, such an approach is somewhat deterministic, and tends to diminish noneconomic factors as well as human agency. More recent engagements with Marxism have resulted in a sophisticated view of the roles of meaning, power and ideology in influencing social production and reproduction.

Meaning and symbol do not passively assist groups, in a Marxist view, but are creatively negotiated through daily practices (Preucel and Hodder 1996: 302). This is not an overly relativist idea: Things cannot mean anything that a group (or an archaeologist) wishes. The practice of social agents negotiates meaning. Thus meaning is "embedded in relations of power and enacted in discourse" (Preucel and Hodder 1996: 302). People have the ability to contest meaning, and to assign meaning to things that previously had none.

Broadly, power can be defined as the ability to cause or prevent action. In a neo-Marxist view, power thus permeates agency, structure and culture (McGuire 1992). Power theorized as a force that influences agency, and through that, structure, shifts the concept from something natural and essential into the social arena. It is a tool of human agents, one that can be deployed, manipulated, resisted or subverted. Power is not something that is held only by a dominant class or established by an unchanging structure. As Saitta (2005) notes approvingly, "power is everywhere in the social archaeologies," (: 29). That statement works on two levels. First, it implies that social archaeologies, even those that are not explicitly Marxist, are preoccupied with power. Read literally, it also demonstrates that power is everywhere in the sense of in everything

and everyone. Power lies in human action, thus it is held by all actors in one form or another. It allows the production and reproduction of daily life. Yet that is not to imply that power is everywhere equal. Unequal power places constraints on human action. Yet those constraints are seen as both limiting and enabling. And in that ambiguity, McGuire (1992) writes, "we may find the dynamic of history" (: 143).

Ideology is more problematic. Munck (2000) defines ideology as "a contested terrain, a key arena for political struggle" (: 109). Although such a definition acknowledges the political nature of ideology, it plays down the role of human agents in creating and resisting ideology. Leone, Potter and Shackel (1987) move closer when they write of ideology as "the givens of everyday life, unnoticed, taken for granted, and activated and reproduced in use. It is the means by which inequality, bondage, frustration, etc., are made acceptable, rationalized or hidden" (: 284). Ideology, they write, reproduces inequality while acting against resistance, violence or revolution. Their definition is still rather functionalist, focusing on what ideology does rather than on how it is enacted. Shanks and Tilley (1987) articulate a view of ideology as explicitly practice-based rather than an uncorporeal mass of ideas, beliefs and views. Ideological practice, they write,

Misrepresents contradiction in the interests of the dominant group,
[through]:

1. Representing as universal that which is partial
2. Representing as coherent that which is contradictory
3. Representing as permanent that which is in flux
4. Representing as natural and necessary that which is cultural and contingent (: 130).

Such a definition makes explicit both the nature and function of ideology. Ideology is something that is enacted, not natural; contested, not all-powerful. It is fundamentally conservative in that it works to maintain the status quo. It is "a strategy of containment and social closure" (1987: 130). Ideological practice embraces contradiction and mediates it, transforming or masking fundamental social conflicts. An analysis of ideology can show how

contradiction and conflict are hidden or smoothed over (Leone and Shackel 1987). To do so requires ideology to be conceptualized in a way that allows for resistance, as Shanks and Tilley do.

Ideology as an embodiment of social practice opens it to the influence of human agency (Johnson 2000). Agentive practice enacts and sustains ideology, and action also can resist it. Ideological domination does not imply total control over the thoughts of subordinated groups; it merely refers to practices that are situated more powerfully than resistive practices. People are not blinded by ideology; contradictions can be revealed. Shanks and Tilley (1987) view social change as arising when contradiction is translated into antagonistic interests and social conflict (: 130). When people become conscious of contradictions, they can act to upset the social order that sustains them. Such change is thus viewed as an upsetting of ideology, the force that hides or naturalizes contradiction. But importantly, upsetting ideology is also viewed as the result of a network of social practices arrayed against ideological practice. Changing ideological practices requires a repositioning of agents and the redeployment of social power.

A vital component of Marxist thinking is the concept of the dialectic. G.W.F. Hegel articulated the concept of the dialectic in several of his writings, including "The Phenomenology of Spirit." Hegel was concerned with demonstrating the falsehood of a conflict between realist and relativist, or social, theories of knowledge (Westphal 2003: 2). The conflict is false, he said, because if you don't accept that things such as knowledge exist, then you cannot develop social theory. That belief led Hegel to reject the dichotomy between realism and "social or historical accounts of human knowledge" (Westphal 2003: 72). Yet if there is no dichotomy, there at least is a tension between the two. That tension -- the dialectic -- allows the possibility of productive knowledge. In considering an object, Hegel distinguishes the object itself from our conception of it, as well as "ourselves as actual cognitive subjects in our actual cognitive engagements from our

self-conception as engaged cognitive subjects" -- in other words, our experience of an object results both from our attempt to know the object as well as through the object itself (Westphal 2003: 40). Both an object's true nature and our attempt to comprehend that true nature create knowledge of the object. Similarly, there is a tension between our actual selves and our conception of our actual selves. Thus Hegel's dialectic can be applied to both nature and humanity. A clear statement of the Hegelian dialectic is difficult to fashion, but essentially it involved juxtaposing principles and the practices they purport to guide (Westphal 2003: 7).

Westphal (2003) notes that the dialectic's roots lie not with Hegel but in the beginnings of Western philosophy. Hegel expressed the dialectic, and placed it in the world of the ideal. Marx and Engels "stood Hegel on his head," shifting the dialectic to the material world from the ideal, and bringing it to bear on social transformations (Erickson and Murphy 2003: 44). The Marxist dialectic, like the Hegelian, resists attempts at definition. Indeed, it is easier to say what it is not. The dialectic "explains nothing, proves nothing, predicts nothing, and causes nothing to happen" (Ollman 2003: 12). McGuire (1992) writes that there is

No simple, single, unambiguous definition of the dialectic. The logic of the approach, its own internal logic, does not allow for the reduction of complex ideas to facile, staid definitions. To grasp the dialectic, the student must examine it as a fluid whole, the same way it bids us to look at the social world as an ever-changing totality (: 92).

McGuire's statement raises three points about the dialectic: It is a holistic way of thinking, it implies change and movement, and it differs radically from traditional Western, logical thought. It is holistic in that it encourages viewing all parts of society as interrelated. A change in one aspect of society will necessarily create changes in all other parts. Yet it is not a functional approach. Marx viewed social change as driven by contradiction and class conflict. Because of its holistic view, the dialectic treats contradictions as relational -- existing in categories defined by and requiring the existence of their opposite. For example, dialectic thinking recognizes that two

opposed social classes (such as master and slave, to use McGuire's example), are unified in that they are the outward, visible manifestations of an underlying relation, slavery. Conflict arises between the classes because they have, and act to realize, different class interests (McGuire 1992: 12; 96). The eventual result of the conflict is a new relation and attendant set of oppositions, all based on elements of what came before.

The dialectic requires the observer to take into consideration both the opposed classes and the relation that unites them in opposition. As Ollman (2003) puts it, the "dialectical method of inquiry is best described as research into the manifold ways in which entities are internally related" (: 127). In the above example, slavery depends on the existence of both master and slave, just as both categories depend on the existence of slavery. Because of that mutual interdependence, considering "slavery" alone, or "master" alone or "slave" alone, is fruitless, according to dialectics. It is "a different way of thinking from the common analytical way of the Western world" (McGuire 1992: 91). It doesn't privilege one category or relation over another; it doesn't allow one to directly cause another. Dialectic thinking cannot be linear.

The difficulty lies in how to think about events in a systemic context without distorting them. The dialectic solution is to "[expand] our notion of anything to include, as aspects of what it is, both the process by which it has become that and the broader interactive context in which it is found" (Ollman 2003: 13). In this way, dialectic thinking emphasizes both the present and the past that shaped it. The dialectic traces logical connections among the basic categories that shape the thoughts of a point in time. The tracing "moves from the most abstract and simple categories to the most complex and concrete. Dialectical logic is the method that allows us to move systematically from one thought determination to another" (Smith 1993: 36). A theory follows dialectic logic if simple, abstract social structures are articulated before more complex and concrete ones, and each category fixes a structure taken from structures in previous categories,

and is used in structures in subsequent categories (Smith 1993: 115). Shanks and Tilley (1987) note that the process of dialectic understanding requires construction, not simply receiving and arranging "facts." A dialectic explanation or understanding, they write, consists of showing coherent links between theoretical objects, and how such links can be generated by underlying principles related to the past life-world. The measure of the plausibility of a dialectic explanation thus resides not necessarily in objective "fact" but in the logical links established through the theoretical appropriation of the past (Shanks and Tilley 1987: 112).

The relational nature of dialectic thinking implies uncertainty, another way that it differs from Western analytical thinking. It can never lead to "a single true, correct or necessarily best account of history" (McGuire 1992: 96). Rather, accounts depend on the perspective from which we view the unity. It is also particularistic. Its goal is not generalization, as conflict and contradiction, broadly considered, are treated as fundamental facts of all human societies. Dialectic thinking is not a useful way to study, say, slavery writ large. But it would allow a holistic, nuanced view of a particular instance of slavery at a point in time and space.

In accordance with postmodern thinking, the dialectic "obliges us to put aside absolutes, both absolute truth and absolute relativism" (McGuire 1992: 93). In their work in the U.S. Southwest, McGuire and Saitta use dialectics to argue that, contrary to traditional assertions, the social organization of western Pueblos contained elements of both stratification and egalitarianism. The strength of the dialectic, they say, is that it allows one to consider both paradigms in theorizing social change (McGuire and Saitta 1996: 198). Epistemically, the dialectic complements empiricism. Empiricism teaches us about the world, but dialectic thinking is required to situate the assumptions and theories we bring to bear, and the lived experiences of past people (McGuire and Saitta 1996: 199). The dialectic allows a unification of thinking about the material and social worlds.

Finally, the dialectic contains an element of praxis. Because it takes into account the manifold connections and interdependencies of all aspects of a society, the dialectic allows the construction of a unified story. Last (1995) writes that narrative is necessary to give form and coherence to history, which has a beginning, middle and end but cannot be grasped in its entirety by temporal individuals (cf. Hodder 1995). Marx and Engels used dialectics to posit a history (and future) of all humanity. On a smaller scale, a dialectic narrative could be constructed with the goal of education and emancipation. A narrative based on dialectic study can be grasped by an audience of people who do not think dialectically (Ollman 2003: 12). Education and emancipation could apply to the investigator as well. Applied specifically to archaeology, McGuire (1992) writes that though there is no last word according to dialectic thinking, it does allow "an ongoing process of dialogue between ourselves and the archaeological record" (: 12). Among the potential lessons is "that our own utilitarian conception of the world is not a 'natural' feature of humanity but a culturally and historically situated phenomenon" (Johnsen and Olsen 1992: 433).

Several themes unite the above discussions of identity, structure and agency, and Marxist thought. They include a focus on how and why social change occurs, society viewed as conflicted rather than consensus-based, and attention to practical use of knowledge. Another, less apparent theme is the fundamental connection between the past and the present. Identity politics deals with altering the social present that has been structured by the past. Structuration implies constant, rather than incremental or revolutionary, change. Marxism deals with how change is prevented or enacted through ideological practice, and the dialectic provides a means of understanding the interplay of past and present. The two are connected, but the connection is problematic. How can we in the present know the past? What limits our interpretation; moreover, is interpretation even possible? What roles do agency, ideology and identity play in

our engagements with past material culture, and *vice versa*? The questions must be theorized in the context of present-day archaeological practice.

The problem of the past: Archaeology as a critical hermeneutic

The questions above are questions of epistemology, or the nature, foundations and extent of knowledge. Much archaeological theorizing has been based on a positivist epistemology, which Johnson (1999) summarizes by these tenets:

1. Theory and method should be separate, i.e., a method should not be predicated on a theory it is testing being true
2. The separation of the context of an idea from the context of its evaluation
3. Generalizability of ideas
4. A privileging of testable statements
5. A separation of scientific thought from value judgments

Positivism in this sense is linked to the hypothetico-deductive-nomological model -- science proceeds by taking a specific hypothesis and testing it. The resulting deductions are then used to produce nomothetic, or generalizing, explanations (Johnson 1999). The goal is objectivity.

Positivism and objectivity have suffered numerous and far-ranging criticism. In archaeology, the postprocessual critique has seized on positivism as minimizing the role of human agency, privileging observation over interpretation and ignoring the social construction of knowledge (Johnson 1999). In addition, the positivist definition of scientific objectivity is widely considered to be futile. Shanks and Tilley (1987) write that "there can be no objective link between patterning perceived in material culture and the processes which produced that patterning" (14). Their point is not that such patterns don't exist, but that our perception of patterns is influenced by our preconceptions, our values, our theories. Objectivity, in the sense of an atheoretical, values-free construction of reality, cannot exist.

The critique of positivist notions of objectivity implies a *tacit* acceptance of relativism. A

distasteful notion among the more "scientifically" minded, relativism nonetheless is more akin to positivism than might be expected. Lucas (1995) notes that epistemology structures both relativism and positivism; the former simply places greater emphasis on the situated nature of knowledge and interpretation, and the latter on the scientific method as arbiter between truth and belief. But if we recognize that method is contaminated by belief, positivism is flawed in the same way as the familiar split between subject and object: We cannot remove ourselves from the world (Lucas 1995). The scientific method cannot reveal truth that is free from belief because what we believe cannot help but influence what we see as true. But if we accept a relativist epistemology, then relativism must be problematized. Things cannot mean just anything that we might wish. Put another way, there is relativism, and then there is relativism. Hodder and Shanks (1995) raise a useful distinction in their conception of two kinds of relativism: epistemic and judgmental. Epistemic relativism accepts that knowledge is rooted in a particular time and culture. Facts and objectivity are constructed differently according to the values and paradigms of the time and place. This definition acknowledges that epistemology is in flux, and what is considered true and meaningful can vary. It places the burden of constructing objective interpretations on the interpreter, rejecting the existence of a universal objectivity. Judgmental relativism, on the other hand, takes the above as given, and adds that all forms of knowledge are equally valid. Judgmental relativism is flawed because the latter does not logically flow from the former (Hodder and Shanks 1995: 19). There is no way to judge different interpretations because such extreme relativism is not predicated on careful consideration of the social whole, logical construction of facts or attempts to incorporate resistances in data.

An example from the history of anthropology highlights the difference between epistemic and judgmental relativism. Anthropologists used to be complicit in creating a racist understanding of different human populations. We once found "evidence" that Africans were inferior to

Europeans by analyzing cranial measurements and examining their achievements toward "civilization" (always viewed from a Eurocentric perspective). Epistemic relativism reveals that past for what it was: a politicized effort to justify exploitative colonial interests. White, European anthropologists "knew" that there were several races of humanity, and that some were more "advanced" than others. But as times changed and we developed more sophisticated understandings of biology and the cultural construction of racial differences, that old way of thinking faded. The "facts" changed as our understandings changed. We can look back at the past understanding of human race and see why we used to think as we did, and dismiss that knowledge, rooted in past epistemic values that we no longer accept, as fundamentally flawed. A view rooted in judgmental relativism, though, would still allow for the flawed knowledge of the past to gain a voice. It would accept knowledge rooted in racist power structures as equally valid as the knowledge based in contemporary understandings of the cultural construction of race. Epistemic relativism thus introduces a necessary critical element to the idea that knowledge is situated and contingent. It also raises a thorny problem, in that we also must accept that our current ideas about truth might in turn someday be seen as outdated. Despite all our advances, we do not have a better grasp of a fundamental truth than did people in the past, for the simple reason that truth is relative. But a critical epistemic relativism attempts to acknowledge our biases and situate our interpretations, thus giving context to statements we construct as fact.

On one level, archaeology must be realist -- Hadrian's Wall, a turtle pendant carved from jet, and a human burial are all *things*. They are demonstrably real; they exist. Yet noting the fact of their existence and reporting their empirical attributes are insufficient because such simple description ignores the meanings that people give to things. Archaeologists cannot know meaning in a positivist, objective sense for the reasons elucidated above. A different paradigm of interpretation is needed.

Hermeneutics allows the privileging of meaning and the historical consciousness necessary for interpreting meanings in material culture. The rationale for hermeneutic interpretation is perhaps best articulated by H.G. Gadamer in "Truth and Method". Hermeneutics' roots lie in interpreting Scripture, and it has a long history of application in aesthetics as well, so Gadamer's points are tailored to textual interpretation. But material culture can be thought of as textual as well, for the same principle of excess meaning applies to human material creations as applies to the written word. The parts of Gadamer's thesis that are of most concern to archaeology are twofold: that temporal distance benefits understanding, and that meaning always goes beyond the intentions of a text's author. The following quotation sums up those points succinctly:

Every age has to understand a transmitted text in its own way, for the text belongs to the whole tradition whose content interests the age and in which it seeks to understand itself. The real meaning of a text, as it speaks to the interpreter, does not depend on the contingencies of the author and his [*sic*] original audience. It certainly is not identical with them, for it is always co-determined also by the historical situation of the interpreter and hence by the totality of the objective course of history ... not just occasionally but always, the meaning of a text goes beyond its author. That is why understanding is not merely a reproductive but always a productive activity as well (Gadamer 1999: 296).

Gadamer's point regarding temporal distance is intriguing because it seems so counterintuitive. How could an object from the deep past created by someone heir to a totally different tradition represent the ideal interpretive situation? The answer requires an understanding of one's historical situatedness as well as a clarification of the goal of interpretation. Interpreters are historical beings, bound up in their own traditions. Those traditions create prejudices, in the original sense of "pre-judgments" or "expectations." Interpreters bring along those expectations whenever they engage with a text. And being part of a historical tradition, prejudices are not fixed. Rather, they evolve with the historical situation of the interpreter. That is what Gadamer is saying when he writes that new times necessitate new

expectations. Hermeneutics highlights the fallacy that an interpretation can ever be final, as the march of history will always engender new prejudices that foreground interpretation. Yet that very fact of tradition is what creates the productive conditions that allow an interpretation of past material culture. Temporal distance "is not a yawning abyss but is filled with the continuity of custom and tradition, in the light of which everything handed down presents itself to us" (Gadamer 1999: 297). Understanding is an aspect of tradition; in interpreting, one is adding to one's tradition. Understanding viewed that way is conceptualized not as an act or a condition, but as an event mediating past and present (Gadamer 1999). As one engages with a text, prior expectations are substantiated or destroyed, and replaced with new expectations. The process never ends, as each point in time potentially can create new expectations. Thus, searching for the "right" interpretation is futile; but how is one to judge the strength of one's interpretation? Interpretation swings back and forth between the parts of a text and the whole, with the strongest interpretation being the one in which parts and whole are in harmony (Gadamer 1999: 291). The hermeneutic circle:

Describes understanding as the interplay of the movement of tradition and the movement of the interpreter. The anticipation of meaning that governs our understanding of a text is not an act of subjectivity, but proceeds from the commonality that binds us to the tradition. But this commonality is constantly being formed in our relation to tradition. Tradition is not simply a permanent precondition; rather, we produce it ourselves inasmuch as we understand, participate in the evolution of tradition, and hence further determine it ourselves. Thus the circle of understanding is not a 'methodological' circle, but describes an element of the ontological structure of understanding (Gadamer 1999: 293).

A hermeneutic epistemology is suspicious of causal relations, embraces thick description as a way to integrate the specific and the general, and involves working to fit data into the dialectical relationship between a constructed part and whole (Preucel and Hodder 1996: 10). A legitimate hermeneutic understanding requires the investigator to take a series of interpretive

steps. Preucel and Hodder (1996) outline the process, which can be summarized this way:

Hard data reveal similarities and differences surrounding symbolic meanings. Hermeneutics involves searching for themes that tie similarities and/or differences together in the abstract. An idea, or "whole," is hypothesized that makes sense of the findings. The "testing" occurs by reasoning whether the "whole" makes sense of how people acted, according to their material culture. The strength of the interpretation is judged by how well different types of data cohere in an interpretation (: 305-306).

A hermeneutic approach does not seek a final answer, but recognizes that each moment in time brings a new set of questions worth asking and new tools of investigation (Johnsen and Olsen 1992). No one gets the last word.

Acknowledging both that epistemology is in flux according to time and place and the situated nature of hermeneutic interpretation raises a further question: In what time and place do our interpretations of the past occur? Archaeology is unique among the social sciences in that its task of constructing meaning occurs both in the present and in the past. Like sociology, for example, archaeology deals with frames of meaning set up by the scientist and with those of the people being studied. But archaeology's double hermeneutic differs in that the researcher does not have direct access to those who created the material culture in question. Meaning must be postulated from the archaeological record.

Social practices transform matter into material objects. Thus, objectified material culture bears the stamp of the positioned subject, positioned in relation to social structures and strategies. Material culture is structured by agency, and once objectified, acts back to structure practices (Shanks and Tilley 1987). Viewed in this way, material culture cannot be seen as existing in a certain social context, but rather as a part of the context. McGuire (1992) writes that it "is not just a backdrop; it is, instead, the stage and props for human action" (: 104). The theatrical metaphor is particularly effective at illustrating the recursive effect on structure and

agency played by objectified material culture. The stage's limits define where actors can and cannot go, and the props represent what they can use in their interactions, but actors can use the space and the objects in novel ways that then influence the options open to other actors. Material culture is also imbued with meaning, whether it operated to intervene in the natural and social world as technology, provided a medium for symbolic communication, or acted as a channel for social domination as an expression of power or ideology (Shanks and Tilley 1987). The interpretive problem lies in deciphering the meaning in material culture. Meaning cannot be removed from context, as material culture is part of social context. But that is exactly what archaeology often attempts, through "inserting a surgical knife into monuments which are constituents of many indigenous peoples' identities, parts of themselves" (Preucel and Hodder 1996: 604). Such use of archaeology is alienating, write Preucel and Hodder, because lifting material culture from context purports to view the past as an objective representation, but does not account for indigenous meaning. We cannot look at material culture as directly, passively reflecting social relations. As a medium for reinforcing and/or restructuring practices, it is in reality dialectically related to the social. Shanks and Tilley (1987) write that its very materiality makes it particularly effective as a structured and structuring sign system, with "its fixation of the practice embodied in it allowing a relative permanence and efficacy in the structuring of subsequent practice" (: 133). They suggest looking at material culture as as embodiment of power and ideology, and analyzing it by looking at how fixed relations of meaning are produced in a symbolic field for, in and by positioned subjects.

So archaeologists are forced to overcome two hermeneutic hurdles: the problematic use of the material culture record to get at past meaning; and the often un-self-conscious fact that frameworks of meaning are also established by the archaeologist him- or herself. But the picture is not complete. There is a third hermeneutic at work in archaeology, which Preucel and Hodder

(1996) call the "critical hermeneutic." Briefly, it represents "a turning away from knowing the past on its own terms toward a focus on the way the past is constructed in the present" (Preucel and Hodder 1996: 10). A critical approach is best considered metadiscourse, as it does not contain a theory of subject-object relations. Whereas a positivist epistemology recognizes a relation between a subject (the scientist) and object, and hermeneutics deals with interactions between a subject and co-subject, critical discourse is detached, interested in the relationship between the context of discovery and the context of justification (Preucel and Hodder 1996: 11). Critical hermeneutics in archaeology, then, envisions a web of co-subjects positioned differently according to the material culture in question, whose interactions are based on creating and justifying meanings in the present.

This epistemology carries a number of implications for present-day archaeological practice. Above all, it clarifies archaeology's political and temporal position. Although we deal with the past, we live, work and write in the present. As such, our practice as archaeologists is embedded in the social fabric of postmodern, Western, late-capitalist society (Shanks and Tilley 1987). The meanings we produce exist in the political present, so our interpretation is always a political act (Johnson 1999). Critical hermeneutics also provides a structure for overcoming traditional dualisms that can interfere with archaeological interpretation (See Table 3.1). Finally, because critical hermeneutics does not contain a body of theory *per se*, using such an approach requires an overt and self-conscious deployment of theory. I agree with those who argue that theoretical diversity is necessary and contingent on desired social or political outcomes, rather than seeing diversity as damaging to the discipline or as merely something to be welcomed (Lucas 1995: 41, 44; Preucel and Hodder 1996: 13-14; Shanks and Tilley 1987). To that end, I have noted my use of identity, structuration, agency and neo-Marxist ideas to inform this particular work.

The critical hermeneutic epistemology guides my research. It is particularly appropriate for three reasons. First, I am working with a living population that has a claim on the material culture in question: the Mt. Sinai cemetery. Critical hermeneutics expressly considers the active and multivocal creation of meaning in the present day. With a living population dealing with contested ground, my work has direct social and political implications. Second, my research involves a number of co-subjects with different relations to the cemetery. The groups include myself as the researcher, the church community, the air base on whose grounds the cemetery is thought to lie, and the greater community of Cobb County. Finally, critical hermeneutics fits well with my personal beliefs about the practice of archaeology, which emphasize the use of knowledge, work with descendent groups, and political action.

The role of the researcher

In the following chapters, I shall address the hermeneutic frames of meaning at work among the church community, the larger Cobb community and the air base. But first I shall foreground the remaining frame of meaning, the one constructed by me as a researcher. This hermeneutic subsumes two dimensions: myself as a white student working within an African American community, and myself as a fledgling academic. Research among African American communities requires self-consciousness of issues of power and politics. I wish to ensure that my work does not reinforce racist power structures, or turn out to resemble a throwback to the days of modernist, colonialist anthropology. My solution is to involve the community throughout the research process, depending on its guidance for what outcomes will be valued. Van Willigen (2002) outlines a useful framework for including communities under study as co-partners through the method of participatory action research (PAR). He defines PAR as "a method of research and social action that occurs when people within a community join a researcher to study and transform their community in mutually meaningful ways" (: 77). The

process begins when someone within a community recognizes some problem that s/he wants to change. The researcher then enters the picture, talking with people in the community and researching relevant literature to get a sense of the context of the community, its political organization, whether it will community allow a PAR project, *et cetera*. Moving forward, the problem and any constraints upon it are identified and defined collaboratively. A plan for the community's participation is devised. Then data is collected, often with community participation, which leads to greater self-awareness within the community. The co-partners reflect on the data, then plan and carry out action (van Willigen 2002: 79-82). Such an approach encourages community participation, workability and local control, and also minimizes the authoritative power of the researcher while granting legitimacy to local knowledge (van Willigen 2002: 79, 78). Ceding power and authority to the community helps overcome the potential for inequities raised by the imbalance of power between the academy and those we research. Doing so requires a researcher to recognize that one's authority might be obvious when dealing with, say, the method and theory of archaeology, but when it comes to the wants and needs of a specific present-day population, the community itself contains the experts. Laurie Wilkie, an archaeologist who has worked extensively with descendants of slaves on Louisiana plantations, notes the potential for discomfort when partnering with communities, but also the potential for gain:

To relinquish control over the issues and questions that become the focus or at least part of archaeological inquiry is not to lose our authority as experts in our discipline but to open ourselves to different and more meaningful directions" (Wilkie 2004: 117)

An example of successful partnering that radically altered the direction of archaeological research is that of the African Burial Ground project in New York City. Briefly, a construction project in Manhattan during the 1990s unearthed a cemetery that was identified as an 18th

century burial ground for enslaved Africans. The black community in New York forced a significant revision of the excavation, demanding that the remains be handled with respect, the bones be given rigorous study, and the findings be reported as they become available. Those demands touched off a careful archaeological study that has come to encompass questions of geographic origins, quality of life, identity and resistance to slavery (Mack and Blakey 2004).

But a hard fact of the present must be taken into account. Archaeologists tend to be white, privileged and middle-class, descriptors I would apply to myself. Can someone from such a background address issues that are important to a localized African American community? Wilkie, who is white, writes that her authority to speak on such issues "derives from the authority invested in me by the descendent communities who have asked me to share their histories and experiences" (: 117). In other words, yes, a white archaeologist can have authority, but only if and to the extent that the community desires. Again, participatory methods are key to gaining that authority because of their focus on collaborative work and their validation of local knowledge.

So community partnering is not just ethical practice, but also a way of doing better archaeology. In addition to involving the public, especially those who have an affinity, real or mythic, to the materials being studied, archaeological practice helps fight a monolithic view of African American culture (Franklin 1997; Wilkie 2004: 114). Countless studies have revealed great diversity among populations often subsumed under the label of "black" or "slave." This potential for political action does not fit a value-free view of archaeological practice, but it is appropriate for a critical view such as mine. Nader (2002) argues that despite academia's historic disengagement (in the United States at least), public-interest matters should be a way of thinking, not something separate from an anthropologist's professional behavior (: 21-22). Archaeology leads to a better understanding of a constellation of concepts -- human behavior, culture,

ideology, change, myth-making, conflict, agency -- so we have an obligation to use that knowledge. We also have an obligation to use it with care, which raises the question of how one defines the "public interest." I believe that what Shanks and Tilley call "breaking ideological coherence" -- or the denial of ambiguity and difference, and the filling of the past with coherent, consoling narrative -- serves the public interest by revealing manipulation and incongruity, leading to education and self-awareness. That is my goal.

Conclusion

At the most basic level, the concept of identity informs my research. It is a fluid concept, open to construction and reconstruction as social circumstances change. In the next chapter, I shall outline a sociopolitical history of Cobb County, which is necessary to foreground my work. In its efforts surrounding the historic cemetery, the Mt. Sinai community is, in effect, saying, "we were here, too." The dominant ideology, rooted in a mythic construction of the county's past as an idyllic plantation setting and in selective recollection of the situatedness of its major industry, denies the true complexity of the social past. As I shall discuss, Cobb County was home to a great deal of slavery, violence and racial discrimination, and a remarkably diversified industrial core. At least in the beginning, African Americans were a fairly significant population, number-wise, and plantations were practically nonexistent. This ideology is largely masked by practices that reinforce the role of the military and a mythic plantation system, while minimizing the roles played by African Americans in Cobb's development. Structuration theory lays the grounds for my belief in the liberating power of altering practices. Changing ideological practices requires a repositioning of agents and the redeployment of social power, both of which I believe are at work in the Mt. Sinai community. Our project, if successful, could resurrect a visible symbol of Cobb's "slaveholding prehistory," challenging consoling narratives and buoying the identity politics of African Americans in the county. Finally, my research depends on a view of

archaeology as engendering knowledge that should be put to critical use, aimed at challenging and, perhaps, ultimately upsetting constructions of the past in the present.

Table 3.1: Dualisms overcome by a critical hermeneutic

subject	object
past	present
myth	history
theory	data
structure	practice
fact	interpretation

Chapter 4: A Sociopolitical History of Cobb County, Georgia, 1832-2005

A full understanding of the present sociopolitical climate of an area requires an examination of the particular political, social and economic structures that helped shape that present. The climate in Cobb County, Georgia, the location of my research, has changed in numerous ways during its more than 150-year history as a political entity. Until well into the 20th century, Cobb County's economy was largely based on agriculture, though with a significant manufacturing sector, and it had a relatively small population. By the beginning of the 21st century, it was an economic powerhouse as well as a kingmaker in Georgia politics. The evolution began with the arrival of a single industry. That moment is popularly considered the beginning not only of Cobb's rise to prominence but also the beginning of its past. But in fact, Cobb's history began well before its explosive growth, and the structures and institutions in place at its founding helped contribute to its later development.

The first decades

Cobb County was organized 3 December 1832 from Cherokee lands that the Georgia Legislature purchased 26 December 1831 (Temple 1935). Georgia organized the purchase into 10 counties. Over time, boundaries have changed, and the purchased lands now make up all or part of 24 counties in the northern part of the state. What became Cobb County was not a particularly desirable part of the Cherokee purchase: Of the 10 original counties, Cobb ranked seventh in area as well as in land rated first-quality for agriculture (Temple 1935).

A look at the 1840 U.S. census figures, the first available after Cobb's organization, clarifies the picture. Cobb's population was 7,539, of which 6,630 were white, 5 were classified as free colored, and 904 were slaves. Georgia's population at the time was 691,392, comprising

407,695 whites, 2,753 free coloreds, and 280,944 slaves. Cobb County thus made up slightly more than 1 percent of the state population, and its population of slaves represented only 0.3 percent of the enslaved population of Georgia.

Perhaps ironically, slavery was originally illegal in Georgia. The colony was founded to give English debtors a chance to resolve their debts through their own labor. By 1749, however, "public sentiment forced a removal of the ban on slaveholding" ("Georgia: The WPA Guide to its Towns and Countryside" 1940: 82).

As long as slavery existed in the United States, the number of slaves in Cobb County never exceeded a third of the white population (see Table 4.1). "Cobb was never a large slaveholding county," which "bespeaks a different order of living and of agriculture" from southern and middle Georgia (Temple 1935: 198-199). Because of its dearth of high-quality agricultural land and its rolling terrain, Cobb County was unsuitable for cotton or peanut farming, which required large labor forces and was characterized elsewhere in the South by the plantation system. Consequently, the relationship in the county between whites and enslaved Africans was usually a direct one of master-to-slave, without an intervening overseer (Temple 1935).

Despite the limits on farming, Cobb County was largely agricultural: 1,971 citizens were employed in farming in the 1840 census, while 291 worked in manufacturing, a 6-to-1 ratio. Yet that ratio is much lower than that of Georgia as a whole. Statewide, agriculture employed 209,383 in the same census, while 7,984 worked in manufacturing, a 26-to-1 ratio. Thus, in the decade of its founding, Cobb County was largely dependent on farming, though industry made up a significant part of its economic base. Slavery existed in the county from the beginning, yet not to the degree that it did elsewhere in the state.

Some things changed rapidly, especially in what was then and now the county's largest city, Marietta. By 1860, 1,175 slaves were owned in Marietta, with a white population of 1,492

and 13 free blacks. Cobb was the third-wealthiest county in the former Cherokee land, and third in number of slaves owned (Temple 1935).

To conclude from the data presented above that Cobb County was an idyllic backwater in its early decades is to ignore its manifold connections to the southern United States and, indeed, to the rest of the world. Cobb, like Georgia as a whole, was fully integrated into the world system through the institution of slavery as well as through its burgeoning industrial base. In fact, the two topics themselves share further interconnections.

Slavery

From its beginnings, slavery was a global enterprise. It did not begin in the Americas, nor did it always break down along color lines. In the past millennium, Europeans supplied slaves to Byzantium and the Islamic world; slaves worked in mines and cane fields in Sicily and Cyprus as early as the 12th century. As time went on, however, slaves were mainly drawn from Africa and sent to the Americas (Wolf 1982).

The numbers are staggering. Between 1701 and 1810, more than 6 million slaves were drawn from Africa (Wolf 1982). Britain outlawed the slave trade in 1807, but slaving was not just a British venture, and that law did not stop the flow of human traffic. Between 1810 and 1870, another 2 million slaves were shipped from Africa, mainly to Cuba. Eighty percent of the slaves who reached the New World arrived between 1701 and 1850 (Wolf 1982). Those totals do not account for the countless more who died in Africa while awaiting transshipment, or those who perished in the Middle Passage.

The slave trade required cooperation between buyers and the sellers. Africans largely performed the capture, delivery and control until sale (Wolf 1982), at which point European or American slave traders took over. Some African states benefited from the trade by selling their enemies, while in other cases, slaving inspired state-formation (Wolf 1982). The key motivation

for Europeans and Americans, however, was simply financial.

The slave trade created two forms of wealth: profit and capital. One could think of the profits earned through slaving as a kudzu vine, twisting through the landscape and eventually poking into practically every nook and cranny. Money exchanged hands at every step in the process. Slavers paid fees and taxes to local African authorities, hired local labor, paid for delays, and absorbed losses in the Middle Passage (Wolf 1982). All of those costs, plus a little more, were passed on to buyers. In 1700, the (British) Royal Africa Company expected to earn four times the value of trade goods paid for each slave; private traders expected a 6-to-1 return (Wolf 1982). The thread of profit doesn't begin with the slave traders. Goods exchanged for humans tended to come from the trader's home country, in the form of beads, textiles, weapons or other manufactured goods. Between 1730 and 1775, the value of British exports to Africa rose 400 percent (Wolf 1982). Thus the slave trade created new markets for the home country's goods, which in turn fueled its economy at a time when Western Europe was rapidly industrializing. In addition, insurers, dockworkers, provisioners, shipyards, cannonmakers, lumber mills, distillers, soldiers and sailors all came into greater demand. Finally, plantations returned much of their profits to the home country, in the form of import and export goods (Wolf 1982). And plantations earned great profits. Growing cotton, especially, with slave labor was profitable: Owners earned about a 10 percent return on the value of their slaves (Wolf 1982, citing Fogel and Engerman 1974).

That point requires a look at the second way that slaving created wealth: through the capital that slaves themselves represented. An examination of probate records from Cobb County both illuminates that question and provides a localized look at the global slave trade. Appraisals of the estates of three Cobb County slaveholders shows a wide range in the valuation of slaves. Landowner Edward Allgood, whose estate was appraised after his death in 1845, owned two

slaves: "one Negro woman name Lucy: \$300," and "one Negro girl name of Bey: \$250." By way of comparison, Allgood had a "pine chest" valued at 50 cents, and "21 head of hogs" valued at \$27 ("Cobb County Probate Court Unbound Estate Records 1837-1877"). The same records show William Ballenger owned, at the time of his appraisal in 1846, "one Negro girl named Nancy: \$450" and "one Negro Boy: \$300." Appraisal values of slaves, though, did not always match the price for which they were eventually sold. Appraised in 1855, the Francis Burt estate included "Stephen and Milly," a couple who were valued at \$900 and sold for \$430; "Archy," appraised at \$500 and sold for \$671; and "Sam," appraised at \$850 and sold for \$797.

These three records show that slaves represented a significant amount of capital, and also that in Cobb County, slaveholders tended to own few people. An example from Temple (1935) provides an exception to the latter rule, but support for the former:

Dr. Sydney Smith, upon whose monument in the Episcopal Cemetery in Marietta there is listed, among his other virtues, that he was 'a kind master,' owned 60 slaves whose valuation was \$36,150 when his estate was appraised in August 1856. The prices ranged from \$1,400, \$1,200 and \$1,000 for the men slaves; \$900, \$800 and \$700 for the women, down to \$100 (: 202).

Slaves generated further profits for their owners through their labor. Though most slaves worked in agriculture, industrial slavery was also prevalent. In 1850, 5 percent of slaves in the United States worked in industry, meaning 30,000 toiled at such labors as sugar refining, and rice, textile or grist milling. But by mid-century, white southerners were reconsidering the use of slaves in industry, blaming uprisings on that type of work (Shackel and Larson 2000; see also Singleton 2001). As mentioned before, Cobb County lacked the large cotton, rice or peanut plantations that existed elsewhere in Georgia. So slaves often worked in the county's small but growing manufacturing industries. In the mid 20th century, writers of the Works Progress Administration noted that in Georgia, slaves who possessed the required skills practiced such

trades as ironworking, wagon-making, carpentry or masonry, and sometimes even bought their freedom through their work. "Skilled Negro labor reached such proportions that the white mechanics of Georgia protested, saying that the practice of trades made the blacks restless and unhappy. As a result, the state in 1845 passed an act forbidding all Negro mechanics, slave or free, to make contracts under penalty of a \$200 fine" (1940).

Slaves in Cobb County grew food that sustained people both near and far, crafted goods that entered local and global trade networks, and helped build the infrastructure that linked their neighborhoods with Georgia, the United States and the world. Far from a backwater county, even in its early days, Cobb was connected, and that connection was based on slavery and industry. The tendency to view it as largely empty and its people as free from care back in the good old days is a modern myth, perhaps fueled in part by the county's explosive development in recent decades. Yet Temple (1935) writes -- disapprovingly -- of similar feelings in the 1930s, before that growth began:

It is unfortunate that this period has been so overcast with sentimentality. We are apt to look back on it with that exaggerated romanticism which has so distorted the viewpoints of many writers who have told of times before the war. It has all become a somewhat confused medley of enormous white columned houses ... washed with sunlight by day and moonlight by night, endless boxwood hedges, flowers always blooming, beautiful and charming women composed almost entirely of curls and ruffles, gallant men, mahogany furniture, and numberless slaves. It has become legendary (: 209).

If that idyllic picture were accurate, the ending of slavery would not have inflicted such significant and far-reaching changes on Cobb County's economic and social fabric.

Postbellum economy

The end of the Civil War brought freedom to the more than 450,000 slaves in Georgia, an act that had profound consequences on nearly all aspects of life for white and black alike.

Emancipation did not occur first in the American South, however, nor was it particularly more or

less revolutionary there than elsewhere in the world. Robust debate surrounded the prospect of freeing slaves everywhere that the institution existed, and it is informative to compare the expectations of abolitionists and pro-slavery forces with what followed the end of the Civil War in April 1865.

Abolitionists argued that the end of slavery would bring about a new flowering of industry that would trickle down to landowners and ordinary workers. Incentives for free workers would make them work harder, thus increasing manufacturing and agricultural output, raising land values, and spurring reinvestment (Engerman 2000). The opposing forces were motivated mainly by the belief that the plantation system required hard labor that could come about only through coercion, as well as the belief that ex-slaves could not become productive, disciplined workers (Engerman 2000). The latter pro-slavery belief is fundamentally racist, and thus of little consequence. But the first, that plantations required coercion, carries further implications. If plantations required a level and intensity of labor that could not exist without bondage, then plantations could not exist in conditions of freedom. The expectation is that emancipation would end the plantation system in its then-current form, which goes a long way toward explaining the resistance to freedom of the planter class.

Interestingly, Engerman (2000) notes that few abolitionists called for the end of slavery on strictly moral grounds. "Few willingly argued that, even with a fall in output, emancipation could be regarded as a success, albeit now on moral, not economic, grounds" (: 290-291; cf. Temperley 2000: 1). He argues further that emancipation can be seen as fundamentally conservative. Only in Haiti did a complete political upheaval follow freedom, and though in some places former owners were compensated, former slaves never were (Engerman 2000). The issue of compensation aside, his provocative point ignores the extent of the social and economic effects of emancipation, at least in the American South. The upheavals that followed were revolutionary,

even if they were largely unintended.

Temperley (2000) notes that, everywhere it happened, emancipation was opposed not only by planters but also by any who saw their interests threatened. Because slavery indirectly influenced the entire local economic base, interested parties included even those who had no direct connection to slave-ownership or the trade in humans. As shown in the previous section, slaves, being property, represented investment capital. Freeing slaves dissolved that capital overnight. The accumulated wealth they represented, which could be used as collateral for loans and other purposes, vanished (Temperley 2000). Slave owners suffered the most direct financial loss, but banks were hit, too, as were free plantation employees and free workers in industries that had used slave labor, and any person or institution to which planters owed financial obligations. At another remove, merchants would have to adjust for a drop in spending among their customers, which would have affected their payrolls as well. The cycle would repeat in smaller form for any free worker who lost his or her job because of the downturn. In the American South, "the result [of emancipation] was to create an acute shortage of investment capital that retarded the economic development of the entire region. This, in turn, affected the fortunes of free workers, already unhappy at the prospect of having to compete with the newly emancipated for employment" (Temperley 2000: 3). The expectations of the abolitionists, that freedom would lead to a rise in productivity, proved false in the near-term. Worldwide, emancipation generally led to declines in the number and sizes of plantations, along with a drop in agricultural output, particularly for export crops, and little immediate expansion of manufacturing (Engerman 2000).

An examination of census data for Georgia and Cobb County largely supports that thesis (see Table 4.2). Between 1860 and 1870, acres of improved farmland statewide declined 15 percent, while in Cobb the drop was 14 percent. Between 1870 and 1880, the number of

manufacturing establishments in Georgia fell 6 percent despite rising investment. In Cobb County, more manufacturing plants were built in that decade, yet the amount of investment increased only slightly. One would expect changes in the manufacturing sector to trail those in the agriculture sector. Simply put, harvests fail (through depredation or labor abandonment, for example) and land goes fallow more quickly than declining cash flows force factories out of business.

A look at wages and factory output further highlights the damage done to the manufacturing sector in Georgia and Cobb County. Statewide, factory wages fell between 1860 and 1880, and even by the latter decade, they had not returned to prewar levels. By 1880, factory output was only marginally greater than in 1860. Cobb County's data is skewed by the relatively small number of factories in 1860, which artificially inflates average output and wages per establishment, but the trend throughout the latter part of the 19th century is downward.

After emancipation, former slaves in Cobb County faced a decision: stay in the employ of former masters, leave entirely, or seek work elsewhere in their neighborhood. Some undoubtedly left entirely. Many slaves abandoned their homes when Gen. William Sherman passed through Cobb County during his Atlanta campaign (O'Donovan 2003). Others remained on farms or in domestic servitude. Yet Cobb County's growing industrial sector also employed former slaves. Table 4.2 shows that by 1870, Cobb County's industrial output exceeded its agricultural output, a point not reached in Georgia as a whole until 1900. More money was being made in the county by factories than by farms, and as Reconstruction progressed, barriers to black employment began to fall.

By the 1880s, at least three industries in Marietta -- the Brumby Chair Co., the McNeel Marble Co., which made monuments for cemeteries and Civil War memorials, and the Glover Machine Works, which made parts for locomotives -- employed black workers (Lassiter 1999).

Former slaves had secured both craft jobs (making chairs and sculpting stone) and skilled machine jobs. Lassiter (1999) includes a photograph circa 1892 of 17 McNeel workers, four of whom are black, and one from 1896 in which 11 black workers are pictured among 30 (: 51).

Emancipation caused upheavals in the economic and social fabric of Cobb County, as it did elsewhere in the South. Freeing slaves erased capital they represented, and ended forced labor conditions that helped support both industry and agriculture before the war. Furthermore, emancipation created a free work force that began to compete with whites for jobs in the already devastated economy. Former slaves found work, contributing to the growth of industry in Cobb County. But as time passed, the integration of ex-slaves into social life in the county became more problematic.

Race relations after emancipation

Emancipation did little to resolve the question of what citizenship would mean for ex-slaves. In a way, freedom was largely theoretical, especially considering that at least half of the formerly enslaved adult population, as women, could not vote. The white population often did what it could to maintain the former status quo, legally, economically and socially. Naragon (2000) states: "Begrudging acceptance of emancipation by former slaveholders and other whites did not imply a willingness to countenance any significant shift in African Americans' legal subordination" (: 94).

When Reconstruction officially ended in 1876 with the withdrawal of federal troops and military governors from the South, political, legal and economic rights that had been granted former slaves by Reconstruction legislatures slowly declined. The "black codes" of the postwar period returned in the form of "Jim Crow" legislation, which segregated blacks into poorly funded schools, kept them out of public businesses that served whites, and made them use separate public water fountains and bathrooms (Scott 2003).

Despite a brief time during Reconstruction when African Americans had worked in Cobb

County's factories, as the 19th century wore into the 20th, blacks were increasingly kept out of higher-paying jobs in industry. Writing on the condition of African Americans in the early 20th century, Scott (2003) notes, "as a rule, African Americans lacked political power and were relegated economically into traditional service and laboring roles" (24). Based on data gathered during the Depression years, writers affiliated with the WPA noted in 1940 that "Low wages and restrictive practices of one sort or another force almost all [African Americans] to segregate in the least desirable sections of cities and towns" (: 83). The WPA guide described the condition of black labor in even bleaker terms:

The position of Negroes in industry has always been a submarginal one, whites being given preferences in both jobs and wages. In recent years group competition along racial lines has been intensified by the collapse of market farming, which has forced both white and black agricultural workers to seek industrial employment at a time of low production. In this situation the Negroes have suffered greatly, and in many cases they have been replaced by white workers even in the most menial tasks (: 84).

Political fortunes of African Americans in Georgia followed a similar path. Between 1867 and 1872, 69 African Americans served as constitutional delegates or state legislators (Drago 2002). But Democratic victories in 1870 began a steady decline of black political power, which culminated in the effective disenfranchisement of African Americans through poll taxes and literacy tests enshrined in the state constitution in 1908. The effects of that constitution on the black vote were far-reaching. In 1935, there were only 65,792 black poll-tax payers on the voting lists, compared with 337,992 white poll-tax payers (1940). To put that in perspective, the 1930 U.S. census recorded 1,071,125 African Americans in Georgia, the highest total among the states. Georgia had a white population the same year of 1,836,974. Furthermore, literacy tests were conducted at the whim of local vote registrars. The WPA Guide (1940) had this to say about the situation nearly four decades later:

Negroes have no direct influence and virtually no part in Georgia politics.

Most of them are virtually disenfranchised by the white primary system and discriminatory party rules ... Consequently Negroes hold no office in Georgia, although they are sometimes called for jury service (: 84).

Moreover, violence against African Americans was common. Between 1880 and 1930, 42 lynchings occurred in North Georgia (Scott 2003). The case of John Bailey is one example of what occasionally passed for justice. In March 1900, Bailey, a black man, stood accused of threatening and assaulting a teenage white girl. A white mob dragged him to Marietta's town square, tried to hang him with a wire noose, and when that failed, shot him several times. Bailey died three days later (Scott 2003).

Even more destructive were the events of 1938. A black construction worker named Willie Drew Russell was charged with killing his foreman and the foreman's daughter in Smyrna, a town just south of Marietta in Cobb County. After Russell's arrest, 500 white protesters marched through Smyrna, attacking black people in streetcars and in their vehicles, and burning a black elementary school. The next night, 700 marched. National Guard troops eventually broke up the riot with tear gas. All told, the mob destroyed 25 homes in the area, more than General Sherman did in 1864 (Scott 2003). Justice in this case came through the courts, though perhaps in this case, "justice" is a misnomer. One rioter of the dozens arrested served time, and Russell was executed less than two months after his arrest (Scott 2003).

It is important to note, however, that in the midst of discrimination, persecution and violence, African Americans in Cobb County were not passive victims waiting for the next outrage. They were landowners, grocers, preachers, scholars, farmers and businessmen, too. As communities, they developed strategies to cope with discrimination. Much more will be said on that topic later, but for now, two points are worth mentioning. First is the role that churches played (and in fact, continue to play) in black communities. Lassiter (1999) goes so far as to call the church the "center" of black life in Kennesaw and Marietta, and traces the evolution of all-

black congregations out of segregated churches that existed before the Civil War (: 25). Churches provided emotional and financial support, as well as hope for a better future, even if it is in the next world. They were also places of political expression: Black churches backed black politicians, and ministers often took up public service (Drago 2002). The second point is the existence of discrete black communities, one of which, Jonesville, is a subject of the present study. Although it shows up on only one known map, Scott's history of Cobb County mentions it, and members of Mt. Sinai church remember it. Scott (2003) describes a cooperative community complete with a school, where noon meals on Fridays were festive group events. In addition, the community operated a garden, whose proceeds bought heating fuel and other supplies for the school. Such a community would have been a place of refuge, both figuratively, as a place to be surrounded by similar people, and literally, as when the residents of Jonesville hid in the nearby woods in 1938 during the Smyrna riots (Scott 2003).

The decades after emancipation brought initial improvement to the condition of former slaves in Georgia and Cobb County, but the respite from discrimination and persecution was short-lived. Ex-slaves and their descendants struggled politically, economically and socially. Yet through it all, they developed ways of dealing with the pressures of a discriminatory society. By the middle of the 20th century, though, changes were brewing that, in their own way, were almost as revolutionary as those that followed the Civil War.

Growth and change in the 20th century

The morning of 30 March 1942, readers of the *Marietta Journal* awoke to long-awaited news on their paper's front page. After months of haggling and delays, construction had begun on a Bell Aircraft Co. factory southeast of town. The newspaper described the scene this way:

Work started at a point about half a mile east of the Marietta-Atlanta highway on *Jonesville* road (emphasis mine). Huge scrapers, bulldozers, grading machines started clearing an enormous space on the site of the plant and work will be pushed forward with every possible speed until the

plant is finished (: 1).

The extent of the construction made an impression on those who witnessed it. Decades later, a local lawyer who helped negotiate the arrival of the plant in Cobb County related it this way: "Huge machines swept along, churning up trees, stumps, rocks and earth, machines that never tired. Sunset did not still the wheels. By night, under the glare of brilliant floodlights, new crews urged on their earth-moving equipment" (Yates 1973: 57). Simply put, Cobb County had never seen anything like it.

Before, the county had never had an industry that employed more than a few hundred workers (Scott 2003). In February 1945, the plant reached its peak labor force of 28,158. All told, it built 663 B-29 bombers, as many as three a day off the assembly line (Scott 2003). The Army spent more than \$2 million on runways and other improvements, and all the structures together totaled 4,173,083 square feet, making it the "largest business facility ever built in the Deep South" (Scott 2003: 148).

By and large, those workers came from Cobb County. Yates (1973) recorded the reminiscences of one of them:

We were not going to find [the plant workers] elsewhere. Simply, within ourselves, we had to generate the skills and build these planes with the people we already had -- people from drug stores, farms, from the school room, sales clerks from the counters, people from almost every walk of life (: 57).

The people of Cobb County were prepared for the plant's arrival, in part because of the attention given the project by politicians and the media. Indeed, in the weeks before the groundbreaking, speculation about the plant managed to push the war in Europe and the Pacific into the secondary news columns of the *Journal* and the *Cobb County Times*. Enthusiastic backers of the plant, both newspapers saw that long-term changes were coming. The *Times* opined in an unsigned editorial dated 29 January 1942, "Work will start in a matter of weeks.

And our quiet, peaceful 'aristocratic' little city will suffer a change. It will be unpleasing to some of us. But it will mean great things to many who never expected anything much out of life" (1942b: 8). Otis A. Brumby, the publisher of the *Times*, echoed that sentiment in his weekly front-page column on 26 February 1942. He further realized that even before the promised tens of thousands got to work at the plant, thousands more would be hired to build it, as well as to train the work force and build housing for the employees. Now that the plant is coming, he wrote,

Let's walk around [the issue] a couple of times -- look at it in a sensible way -- think about it some more and try to grasp the far-reaching influences it will have upon our community. Let's not become hysterical, either from possibilities of sudden riches or from possible disruption of a quiet community life (: 1).

Any disruption of "a quiet community life" seemed to be something the plant's boosters were willing to live with. The United States had entered World War II barely three months before, and the plant was seen as both an economic boon and an outlet for patriotic energy. Brumby wrote further:

From all I hear about it and from authoritative sources it's the plant that is going to win the war for us. ... We of Cobb County have before us a golden opportunity. We not only have an opportunity for development and expansion and progress, but we have an opportunity to play a vital and all-important role in helping our country win the war (1942: 5).

As a group, African Americans were largely excluded from the benefits of the industry. The plant wiped out Jonesville, as alluded to but never directly addressed in the media reports from the time. Economically, they enjoyed little gain from the aircraft industry. Scott (2003) notes that "The Bell factory conformed to local traditions by concentrating black laborers in menial jobs and doing little to address the numerous complaints of discrimination filed with the Fair Employment Practices Commission" (: 169). Although Atlanta received federal grants to

train aircraft workers, and the FEPC required nondiscrimination in awarding defense contracts, black applicants were at first excluded from the training schools. Even after black workers were trained, Bell at first refused to hire them for higher-paying, skilled positions, then capped their numbers at 800 and housed them in separate buildings (Scott 2003). In January 1945, the plant employed 2,069 black workers, skilled and unskilled, or 8 percent of its labor force at the time. African Americans made up 16 percent of the county's population (Scott 2003).

It is tempting to judge those numbers by the standards of our times. Tempting, but facile. While certainly discriminatory, such practices were common in the South. Scott (2003) argues that Bell should be seen as no better or worse than any such industry of the 1940s: "The uniqueness of the Bell plant was not that it discriminated against blacks, but that it offered African Americans the highest wages they had ever had a chance to earn" (: 171). Higher wages allowed African Americans to pay debts, buy high-value goods and set aside money, certainly in some cases for the first time. While acknowledging that, the fact remains that African Americans did not share in the economic benefits of the plant to the same extent that whites did. That fact takes on added resonance when one considers the importance attached to the plant in local mythology.

The arrival of the aircraft industry in Cobb County set in motion changes that are widely considered to have made it what it is today. In 1940, the U.S. census recorded a population of 38,272 in Cobb County. In 2000, it had risen to 607,751, an increase of nearly 1,500 percent. In 1999, Cobb was home to 17,564 businesses, employing more than 300,000 people. It is also the home or regional headquarters for 117 companies on the Fortune 500 list (Scott 2003). Politicians elected by Cobb County have influenced state and national affairs. It was the home district of Newt Gingrich, former speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, and the home county of former Georgia Gov. Roy Barnes and current U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson.

Scott (2003) traces the South's postwar rise in economics and politics to the arrival of the war industry. It created a trained work force, helping raise wages in a region that had been economically depressed for 75 years. As people in the South made more money, industries moved in to be closer to their consumers, with the cycle repeating into the present (Scott 2003). Scott could go a step further by noting that not only related industry but also service-sector jobs followed defense dollars into the South. That is what happened in Cobb County. According to figures from the Cobb Chamber of Commerce, defense contractor Lockheed Martin, which now occupies part of the space of the Bell Aircraft plant, is the county's third-largest employer, with a payroll of about 7,800. The county's two largest employers -- the public schools, with more than 13,000 employees, and a health care company that employs 9,900 -- and its fifth-largest -- the county government, with 5,000 -- exist in large part because of the defense business.

A museum under construction next to the air base aims to "document the many consequences of the establishment of an aircraft plant in Cobb County in the early 1940s" (2005a), but a close reading of the museum's Web site shows that it is preoccupied with technology and the county's mythic past. The site's main page states that a main goal of the museum is "to develop K-12 interest in science, mathematics and engineering ... to impart the concept that technology is knowledge of the physical world and how to use it to improve any aspect of one's life." While that is certainly a laudable goal, the technological aspect is only one aspect of the profound social changes wrought on Cobb County from the 1940s to the present. Moreover, a section of the site with historic photos includes one image of four apparently white men picking cotton, and another showing women building an airplane, which the site hastens to note is not "a concession to political correctness." The museum's founders and directors are all prominent area citizens, including the publisher of the Marietta newspaper (still in the hands of the Brumby family), several former Lockheed executives, a state senator who is grandson of the

general who brought the plant to Marietta, and the president of the county board of commissioners. Time will tell, of course, how much of the area's past the museum is really interested in publicizing, regardless of its stated mission. What seems certain is that it will reflect in large part what the elites of Marietta deem important.

I have traced numerous threads that, woven together, help form the sociopolitical present of Cobb County, Georgia. Slavery, emancipation, industry, agriculture, racism, triumph and tragedy all lie in its past. But present-day myths of both an idyllic past and explosive development that began with the coming of the war industry act to cover up much of those themes in popular memory. Cobb County had a past long before the coming of the Bell aircraft plant, a past that included a struggle by African Americans to fit into the dominant culture. As I shall show, in many ways, that struggle is continuing today.

Table 4.1: Selected population figures for Georgia and Cobb County

	1860	1870	1880	1890		1940	1950	1960		2000
Georgia										
total population	1,057,286	1,184,109	1,542,180	1,837,353		3,123,723	3,444,578	3,943,116		8,186,453
white	591,550	638,926	816,906	9,78,357		2,038,278	2,380,577	2,817,223		5,327,281
free black/ African American	3,500	545,142	725,133	858,815		1,084,927	1,062,762	1,122,596		2,349,542
slave	462,198	-	-	-		-	-	-		-
Black/ African American as % of population	44	46	47	47		35	31	28		29
	1860	1870	1880	1890		1940	1950	1960		2000
Cobb County										
total population	14,242	13,814	20,748	22,286		38,272	61,830	114,174		607,751
white	10,410	10,593	14,734	15,510		31,990	55,606	106,096		439,991
free black/ African American	13	3217	6,012	6,774		6,280	6,214	8,032		114,233
slave	3,819	-	-	-		-	-	-		-
Black/ African American as % of population	27	23	29	30		16	10	7		19

Source: U.S. census

Table 4.2: Selected economic data for Georgia and Cobb County, 1860-1900

	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900
Georgia					
acres improved farmland	8,062,758	6,831,856	8,204,720	9,582,866	10,615,644
est. value farm products	-	\$80,390,228	\$67,028,929	\$83,371,482	\$92,145,676
manufacturing establishments	1,890	3,836	3,593	4,285	7,504
capital invested in manufacturing	\$10,890,875	\$13,930,125	\$20,627,410	\$56,922,000*	\$89,790,000*
wages paid in manufacturing	\$2,925,148	\$4,844,508	\$5,266,152	\$17,312,196	\$20,290,071
value of manufacturing products	\$16,925,564	\$31,196,115	\$36,441,000*	\$68,917,000*	\$106,655,000*
industrial output factor**	-	0.39	0.54	0.83	1.16
average wage per factory	\$1,548	\$1,263	\$1,466	\$4,040	\$2,704
average value of output per factory	\$8,955	\$8,132	\$10,142	\$16,083	\$14,213
	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900
Cobb County					
acres improved farmland	63,385	54,438	91,261	98,240	98,468
est. value farm products	-	\$811,810	\$1,088,879	\$753,550	\$1,013,151
manufacturing establishments	16	60	93	60	109
capital invested in manufacturing	\$468,453	\$535,400	\$537,133	\$893,070	\$1,197,706
wages paid in manufacturing	\$97,188	\$99,140	\$120,778	\$178,744	\$267,027
value of manufacturing products	\$676,609	\$846,220	\$1,383,322	\$834,549	\$1,372,759
industrial output factor**	-	1.04	1.27	1.11	1.35
average wage per factory	\$6,074	\$1,652	\$1,299	\$2,979	\$2,450
average value of output per factory	\$42,288	\$14,104	\$14,874	\$13,939	\$12,594

Source: U.S. census

* approximate

** industrial output factor = value of manufacturing products divided by value of farm products

Chapter 5: Ethnographic Interviews

My research in the Mt. Sinai and Jonesville communities occurred on two fronts. The archaeological component, which involved searching for the cemetery site, will be discussed in chapter 5. To develop an understanding of why people in the present consider their church history, expressed primarily through its material culture, worthy of attention required the emic cultural understanding that only ethnographic research can provide. To that end, I prepared and distributed surveys to the entire Mt. Sinai church membership, and conducted in-depth, semistructured interviews with five key informants who had firsthand experience in the church and Jonesville. The surveys consisted of socioeconomic questions, as well as questions about each member's family history in the church, and what each would consider an appropriate way of documenting the church's history. Unfortunately, despite repeated attempts and the help of the pastor, only two survey forms out of the 100 distributed were returned. As a result, I can draw few conclusions about the current church membership at this time, aside from the repeated references of my informants to Mt. Sinai being "small" and its congregation being "older."

The ethnographic interviews were fruitful, however, and in this chapter I shall present the results and begin to draw conclusions. The five informants I interviewed represent a sample of the typical Mt. Sinai membership of the early and middle 20th century. The church drew membership from Jonesville and the surrounding area. "Karla," a woman in her early 80s, was raised in Jonesville and attended Mt. Sinai. Her husband was buried in the Mt. Sinai cemetery, and she is still a member of the church. "Sally," also in her 80s, lived in Marietta but went to Jonesville to attend Mt. Sinai, of which she is still a member. One of her grandfathers helped found Mt. Sinai, and she also has relatives buried in the cemetery. "Kurt," 85, was born in

Jonesville but moved to Marietta when he was young. His mother is buried in the Mt. Sinai cemetery, and he is no longer part of the church. "Faye," 96 years old, grew up in Marietta and was never a member of Mt. Sinai, but she played piano in the church for several years in Jonesville and taught school there as well. Finally, "Simon," in his 90s and married to "Faye," often visited Jonesville as a youth, though he was never a church member either.

Through their discourse, the five informants outlined a picture of Jonesville as a largely self-sufficient African American community that only occasionally articulated with the institutions of white Marietta. That all changed with the 1942 land sale, which forced the residents to integrate more fully with the mainstream by altering many of the economic and social practices that allowed separation. Despite that, the former residents of Jonesville and the African American community of Marietta enacted strategies to maintain a sense of distinctiveness within the larger whole, with the church being a main site of such practices. Such strategies hint at the reasons behind the church's search for its history, which will be examined more fully in later chapters.

Jonesville contained about two dozen families living in shotgun-style houses with no electricity, gas or water service, or telephone service. Water came from wells, often placed near porches behind the houses, and lamps provided lighting. The informants recall that the houses had as few as two rooms -- a kitchen and a front room -- or as many as four, with the former as well as separate sleeping rooms for parents and children. The houses were made of wood, often with tin roofs, and, as Kurt recalls, "You could count the chickens under the house, just look through the floor." In addition to the family houses, Jonesville contained Mt. Sinai church and a one-room schoolhouse. Faye taught school there for several years, and recalled that many of the educational materials were hand-me-downs from white classrooms:

The books [from the white schools] were set aside for the black schools, so the black schools never got new books unless it was something that just

came out and you didn't have it, but I got a box of books that was so full of chinchies (bedbugs) that you had to set it out the door. That was in '35. I set it out and the chinchies run outside. We didn't have chinchies in the house then very much because the parents believed in scalding and scrubbing and cleaning and carrying on. If you had it you were a disgrace, and none of the house people wanted to be a disgrace, but in the public places, like if you had a public rooming houses, they had anything there, but in individual houses, they was disgraceful if you had anything in there like that. So we know that those books didn't come out of a black house. But I set 'em out the door, because I couldn't bring 'em up (laughs) ... I think the blacks came out of slavery with a lot of things they had been taught in slavery, and that was to be very, very clean. And they were excessive about that. I can remember my mother, everything went out the door for washing and scalding and everything, make sure there ain't no chinchies in here. We're worried about roaches now, but we didn't have roaches then. It was the end of the world war -- that's when we got introduced to roaches. We didn't know a thing about roaches before then, but we had a lot of chinchies (laughs).

Jonesville was a line of racial demarcation. To the west and northwest, families were white, beginning with the Gardiner plantation next to the community. East and southeast, toward Rottenwood Creek and a place known as Trail's End, were black families. This spatial position allowed Jonesville residents to interact economically and socially with white Marietta, though always within the bounds of the time.

Despite the period's legal segregation and social prejudices, the informants recall relations with white Marietta as generally good. In Kurt's words:

We never had no trouble. We always was friendly, and we'd help each other, and I like that. Kids would get in a fight, and you'd get your butt whipped [by an adult], and made to go back and play right.

Faye expanded on the type of help that would pass between white and black:

Of course we had a very good relationship here in Marietta, all the time, between the older [white] Marietta pioneers and the blacks, all of them worked together, and my mother being a widow was helped a good bit by the business people here. Main one was W.P. Stephens, who owned the lumber company at that time, and he was a deacon at the First Baptist

Church on Church Street, and he would help my mother a lot, advising now ... No money was passed between them, but he felt that the Bible said for him to honor and support widows and orphans, and of course my mother was the widow, and we were the orphans. So he came in, and there were three of us: my brother, my sister and I. And W.P. Stephens, being a deacon of First Baptist Church, would help her with advising her on what to do and how to do, and anything. By that I mean -- we didn't have any legal affairs. In those days, it was -- maybe you need some assistance with building or something. Then he was -- he built in all six houses for my momma. Here's how she came by the property: It was a pasture across from where the YWCA is now, and all of that was occupied by -- lower end was blacks, other end was whites, but they all worked together, as I say, a very good relationship. So he would advise her as to money, use, how to use your money, how to buy and what was worth buying, and how to make decisions. And of course a great decision was to have me to go to school, because he was an assistant in helping to make the contacts, because people didn't know all of those things, ourselves. And they did, so he would make the contacts, and you would go see so-and-so, you know, that's the way we did it in those days. They'd advise you to go and talk to so-and-so, and I already talked to so-and-so, and she'll look for you. That's the way business was done in those days.

Significantly, "help" seems to have flown one-way: from white to black. When the flow was reversed, it seems to have always been mediated by money. Many of the informants or their close family members worked in the white-owned industries that employed black workers at the time: the railroad, Stephens lumber company, Brumby chair factory and Glover foundry. Women were an additional or, in some cases, the sole source of income, but they largely worked in home industries such as washing and cleaning house for nearby white families. Karla's story is typical:

Up on the end of Jonesville, they were mostly white people, but they had more than we had, because we was -- my mom used to wash for everybody -- every white person on that -- in that -- out there on that road. That's how we made most of our living, you know. And she didn't get much money, but every little bit would help, and I remember this, we'd get a little dollar's worth of bacon, and it'd last for a month (laughs). I remember that. I never will forget that. ... And everybody wanted her to do their washing because she done a good job ... She did the washing for Miss Glover, you might remember the Glovers, of the Glover factory. She did

some for, I think, Miss Hicks, and she did wash for Miss Kelly ... Well I seen her taking in a bit on laundry for a dollar and a half, and when they brought them clothes back, they'd give her a dollar and a half. I think about that a lot.

Sally recalls her mother doing washing and ironing as well. Kurt, who was raised by his aunt, says she'd make 15 cents a day doing domestic work. Faye and Simon, who lived in Marietta and worked as a teacher and at the Brumby factory, respectively, earned somewhat more money than those who took in washing. Faye made \$6 a week teaching school, and Simon recalls making 10 cents an hour, plus overtime, totaling \$9.60 a week, before wage laws went into effect in the 1930s. Of course, prices were lower, as Faye recalls:

Well that was good money. Sugar was, at that time, sugar was 10 cents a pound, milk was 5 cents a can, bacon was about 10 cents a pound, you could get a steak for 35 cents, the choice steak. Everything was very cheap, so you see, we didn't have too much to deal with in financials, so it was good it was cheap, 'cause we couldn't have lived had it been a little higher. Everything was very low-key at that time.

To supplement their incomes, black families in Jonesville would grow food in gardens, which the informants recall every house in the community having. Kurt recalls his garden as being about a half-acre, and Karla says her family had a lot of land, on which they grew strawberries and fruit trees. The informants remember people growing turnips, collards, peas, cabbage and sweet potatoes, and neighbors collaborating to buy hogs or sides of beef, and smoking and storing the meat to stretch it out. Such strategies were possible because of the amount of open land in and near Jonesville. Karla's father lost an eye in an accident at Glover, at which point he began farming, illustrating that farming became more important the further people were removed from the higher-paying industrial economy. Growing one's own food meant one had less time for wage labor, but in a way resulted in greater self-sufficiency, as the only products one had to buy were clothes and shoes. When the land sale forced people out of Jonesville, that strategy was uprooted

as people were forced away from their productive land and settled (in the case of most of the informants) in the city proper. Karla described the difference:

[In Jonesville] we had a lot of land, we had a big strawberry patch. Our house up there, we had a great big strawberry patch, and sometimes we had lots of strawberries, we had peach trees, we had apple trees, we had plums, we had muscadines, and we had blackberries, we had everything. [When we moved], we didn't have about a third of an acre of land. Our house and the next were on one lot.

The informants thus remember daily life in Jonesville somewhat idyllically -- not luxuriously by any means, but at a slower pace, characterized by good relations with the white population and a close-knit, largely self-sufficient black population. The church functioned as the main institution of community life.

Mt. Sinai church occupied a dual role in Jonesville. It was both a place of spiritual salvation and a site of building and reinforcing community ties. Kurt, Sally and Karla were all baptized in the church -- Sally was one of the last two people baptized before the church moved. Other activities at the church functioned on both a spiritual and a community level. Sally recalls going to church with neighbors, and religion combining with other aspects of family life:

We would walk to Mt. Sinai church in Jonesville for Sunday school, church service, and they also had church service at night, which I enjoyed going back at night, and we and some of the neighbors would join in together and you know, go back at night to night service ... I had family, aunts and uncles and all, they were, you know, Christian people and they loved going to church, and I guess a part of it just fell on me. ... I had a lot of aunts and uncles and relatives, and I enjoyed them telling me about different things, about the Bible, reading the Bible, so I just enjoyed church, because it became a part of me at an early age, and I still enjoy going ... Like I said, I enjoyed, because we feel it was a little country church out there, and we just had a good time, not only myself but people just enjoyed going out there ... I am still proud and all the others in the family are still proud to know that we did have someone who was part of the Mt. Sinai Baptist Church.

Often, church events would draw people from the surrounding area, even those who were

not members. "Homecoming" celebrations involved picnic dinners, and often were attended by people from Marietta and Atlanta. The church as an institution symbolized the self-sufficiency and separation of Jonesville -- it was paid for and maintained by people in the community; Karla's father worked as sexton, lighting lamps, carrying things around and ringing the bell -- and offering a way to maintain contacts with other African American communities. Yet the effects of the church's move in 1942 were not as devastating as might be imagined. Some informants recall the time as traumatic: Karla remembers the children crying as a truck carried away the building, and the adults being reluctant to leave, though the younger ones were excited about moving somewhere with electricity. But the fact that the church still existed was a source of comfort. Indeed, many of the families from Jonesville settled near each other and near the new church location. The church as an institution thus acted to mediate the changes that followed the dispersal of people from Jonesville. The African American community had developed ways of subsisting that incorporated working relations with white Marietta as well as a measure of self-sufficiency -- growing food and preserving meat, education and worship within the community. When the move occurred, those strategies had to change. People moved into Marietta, thus forcing more direct relations with the white-dominated economy, educational system, infrastructure and government. Yet the church remained an organizing feature of life, by spatially structuring where people settled as well as remaining a tangible reminder of the past sense of community. Despite the significant changes that had occurred, largely outside the control (or, as some informants told me, the understanding) of the people affected, one thing remained constant: Mt. Sinai church.

Chapter 6: Surveys of Suspected Mt. Sinai Cemetery Sites

My ethnographic research among people in the Mt. Sinai church community and others with firsthand knowledge of Jonesville led me to question the long-held belief about the location of the historic cemetery. Within about a quarter-mile radius of the area in question lie two known cemeteries. The first lies in Cobb County Land Lot 499 on the grounds of Dobbins Air Reserve Base (see Figure 6.1). This cemetery is marked on USGS topographic maps as "Mt. Sinai Cemetery," and has been designated as such by the air base. When people in the church refer to their cemetery, they almost invariably say it is "on Dobbins." Yet I believe it is not Mt. Sinai's cemetery. First of all, one of the headstones there marks the burying place of a woman named Ophelia Jackson. In the early part of the 20th century, Ms. Jackson worked as a cook for the Gardner family, prosperous white landowners in the area whose house still stands on the grounds of the Dobbins complex. It is believed that she would not have been buried among other people from Jonesville, but in a "white graveyard," perhaps along with other Gardiners. Furthermore, headstones in the Dobbins cemetery go back well into the 19th century. Mt. Sinai did not purchase its cemetery land until 1909. The deed transferring the land for the cemetery, dated 16 November 1909, describes it as "one acre immediately south of the Jonesville graveyard, about 2 1/2 miles southeast of Marietta." Measuring from the center of the city, the town square, 2 1/2 miles southeast points to Land Lots 501 or 500; lot 499 would be much too far away. Finally, a map made in 1913 by a Marietta civil engineer named W. W. McCullouch has "Jonesville" labeled on Land Lot 501, well to the north of the lot containing the Dobbins cemetery (see Figure 6.1).

The other known cemetery in the area lies in Wildwood Park, owned by the city of Marietta, in the northwestern corner of Land Lot 500. This cemetery is quite small, with only

two visible headstones, but also several depressions, in a fenced-off area (see figure 6.2). This seems a much more likely candidate for the "Jonesville graveyard" mentioned in the 1909 deed, both for the reasons listed above and for several points that arose during the interviews. One informant, Sally, recalls that her brother, who worked for Bell and later Lockheed, said he once saw piles of hair and clothes that had been dug up during construction work, with the implication that they were from unmarked graves. The defense contractor Lockheed has space on the Dobbins complex that begins immediately north of the cemetery. If what her brother told her is true, then it points to burials from a cemetery in Land Lot 500, not 499. In addition, several informants mentioned stories of a man named George Evans, a former slave who was the only person not forced to move after the government built the plant and air base. Simon used to take groceries to Mr. Evans, paid for by his former employer:

I worked at the Brumby Chair Factory. They had a man up there named Tom Brumby. ... Uncle George [Evans] was one of the slaves up at the Brumby Chair Factory, and I was one of the mail carriers at the Brumby Chair Factory. Every week after [Evans] got old and retired, back in those days there wasn't no thing as retirement, it was so-and-so would take care of that man because he worked for me for so long. Well that's what Brumby did with George Evans, he'd take care of him. Well when they got Jonesville and Lockheed wanted to build down there, I was working in the chair factory, and Uncle George was one of the Brumbys' black men who lived down there in the woods. But he got old and sick, and they said "No, they ain't going to move him" ... I had to get a permit every week to go down there, because they wouldn't let me in the gate just to go see Uncle George. I think they didn't want to see that man in there anyway, it was all airfield, and his house in just that one gate.

Mr. Evans is thought to have lived in what is now Wildwood Park. Significantly, then, both documentary evidence and community beliefs put people connected to Jonesville in areas to the north of the Dobbins cemetery, but nothing indicates they were living south of there. Because so much has changed since the building of the Bell plant and the expansion of Marietta, no one,

even among those who lived in Jonesville, can describe exactly where the buildings there would lie today. They are adamant, though, that the church, school and cemetery were all in the community. In other words, they did not lie outside the bounds of what the informants consider to be Jonesville proper.

Older members of Mt. Sinai and people who knew Jonesville firsthand have visited both the Wildwood Park and Dobbins sites, but in all cases among the informants I spoke to, none recognized either area. Of course, they all added that development had changed the land so much that it was hard to match their memories with the current places. Still, Sally's recollection is typical:

We went out last year to look around for the cemetery and I didn't see ... That wasn't the location, in my estimation. It wasn't the location where we went to church. They didn't find anything I don't think, they didn't find the cemetery. We saw some names but we, you know, couldn't identify who they were. Some names on the headstones ... No, to me it was farther down, but the church to me was on the other side. And you know it makes a difference too when things are redeveloped and everything. Where the cemetery was located, to me it wasn't in that location -- it was across on, further over. I don't think we found anything like what we was looking for -- our cemetery.

Based on the evidence presented, I decided to shift the search for the Mt. Sinai cemetery northward, into Land Lot 500, reasoning that the "Jonesville graveyard" referred to in the 1909 deed was in fact the cemetery in Wildwood Park. A group from the Georgia State University Department of Anthropology and Geography conducted traditional field and geophysical surveys over two days in October 2005 in the park, immediately south of the cemetery.

A brief outline of geophysics is now necessary. Archaeological geophysics is the application of ground-based geophysical methods to reveal buried features (Schmidt). Although the methods have been around for decades, application of geophysics is still in its infancy, at least in this country. Estimates are that in the 20th century, 550 archaeological projects in North

America used geophysical methods, while in Europe the number was closer to 10,000, with 500 being undertaken *per year* (Kvamme 2003, emphasis in original). Yet King, Bevan and Hurry noted in 1993 that the use is on the rise in the United States. Benefits of geophysics include its lower cost relative to excavation and its nondestructive nature, which allows investigation of culturally sensitive contexts such as burials (King, Bevan and Hurry 1993; Kvamme 2003).

Geophysics has benefitted from developments in computer graphics, to the extent that specialists and nonspecialists alike can interpret the results of a survey. One's data, as Kvamme writes, "can look like the buried archaeology" (2003: 437). That last point deserves elaboration. For archaeology to have a benefit to the living public, archaeologists and "real people" must speak the same language. Most people don't read academic journals or seek out site reports from the grey literature of cultural resource management firms. Even if they did, the language used might prove daunting. Academics tend to write for other academics; a discipline's jargon can be indecipherable to those not in the know. "Graves" become "human interments," fireplaces become "hearth structures," and "walls" become "core and veneer masonry." That's fine for a scholarly context, but archaeology that involves people outside the academy demands simpler presentation. In contrast to dense journal jargon, a computer graphic that clearly shows rectangles that represent graves, for example, is almost instantly interpretable by anyone. Geophysics thus has the potential to make some of archaeology's findings accessible and interpretable to the general public. Clear, open presentation of data fits into ethical praxis, especially when the archaeologist's clients are not academics.

Three geophysics tools commonly used in archaeology are magnetometers and electrical resistivity. Each one works according to a different principle and is best suited to a different type of investigation. Electrical resistivity measurements rely on the ability of the ground to conduct an electrical current. That ability is largely related to the amount and distribution of moisture in

the ground. Buried objects change this distribution and are thus detectable (Clark 1996: 27). Different types of objects are detected as areas of higher or lower resistance than the surrounding ground, and those differences are what is mapped.

Because of its efficacy and ease of use, the magnetometer is by far the most widely used geophysical tool in archaeology (Hasek 1999: 7). Magnetometry works on the principle that human action inadvertently rearranges iron that is naturally dispersed in the ground, creating detectable anomalies (Clark 1996; see also Davenport 2001). High temperatures in a hearth or kiln, for example, can realign a local magnetic field, and the fill in a ditch differs magnetically from the undisturbed earth around it (Clark 1996: 65). Most important for my research, graves are also amenable to magnetic survey (Davenport 2001; Hasek 1999; King, Bevan and Hurry 1993). Of course, that is not to imply that people do things with the intention of creating magnetic anomalies. In each case, the anomalies are created by actions people take in pursuit of their ends.

King, Bevan and Hurry (1993) outlined the value of geophysical survey to cemetery investigations in an article on their work in St. Mary's County, Maryland. Cemeteries, they write, are often not very visible, and grave markers are often missing or never placed to begin with. Both of those factors were true in their study, which consisted of an attempt to determine the true extent of a historic cemetery. They believed from hints in documentary sources that some of the graves were never marked, and some markers had been moved (King and Hurry 1993). The team used ground-penetrating radar and a magnetometer, reasoning the methods could complement each other, and then excavated according to both the geophysical predictions and evidence from traditional archaeological field surveying. The geophysical tools correctly predicted seven out of 10 brick foundation pads and 12 of 20 grave shafts that were found, along with a number of false positives. The archaeologists concluded that both tools can assist excavation, but that more research needs to be done.

Like any archaeological method, geophysics has its limits. Davenport (2001) identifies several, chief of which are caused by contrast, signal-to-noise ratio and size/depth relationships. Contrast has to do with how similar the materials being sought are to the surrounding earth, according to whichever property (radar signature, magnetic properties, electrical resistivity) is being tested. A piece of iron-rich building stone would contrast greatly with iron-poor soil, for example, but the same stone in iron-rich soil would not show up as well. Signal-to-noise ratio as a limiting factor acknowledges that many things in the environment can interfere with geophysics. High-voltage power lines, radio transmitters and buried pipelines can play havoc with sensitive survey tools. Size and depth have a relationship because in general, the deeper an object is buried, the larger it must be to be detected by geophysical means. A final limitation worth mentioning involves the process of conducting the survey. Geophysical surveys are done by walking transects and pulling, carrying or pushing the instrument along with you. Operator fatigue can be a real problem. Additionally, the space one chooses to establish between transects can mean the difference between usable results and nothing. A balance is required: transects placed too far apart do not give sufficient resolution in interpreting results, but placing transects too close together results in a time-consuming survey (Clark 1996: 81). The spacing depends on the artifact or feature being sought. Davenport (2001) suggests a spacing of 1-2 times the size of the target, and notes that even the most sensitive equipment "cannot find a needle in a haystack if the survey data are not spatially representative of the target size" (: 93). In other words, geophysical surveys work best when you have a clear idea of what you are seeking.

We first conducted magnetic and electrical resistivity surveys in an 8-meter-by-5-meter section about 10 meters south-southeast of the Wildwood cemetery. Our grid was constrained by sloping land to the west and a park path to the east, and by dense undergrowth to the south. Figures 6.3 and 6.4 graphically display the results of those surveys. What is striking about the

maps is the relative homogeneity of the subsurface soil. The magnetic maps show anomalies in the northeastern quadrant of the survey area, but I interpret them as buried pieces of small ferrous metal, such as individual nails. They are obviously small, because larger pieces should show up as areas of low electrical resistivity, but they do not. I conclude from those results that there is little buried beneath the ground in the area immediately south of the cemetery. The large anomaly in the resistivity map is interpreted as an artifact of the terrain. The geometry of the instrument used to collect that data -- an electrical transmitter and receiver that trailed the operator by many meters, means the tool extended into the area of dense underbrush, and likely lost contact with the ground during some points of the survey. That would yield highly resistive recordings, because the flow of electricity would have been interrupted as the tool was dragged over bushes and branches, likely resulting in the anomaly at the southern part of the map.

My research thus identified another limitation of geophysics, one not mentioned by Davenport. The method is impractical in areas of dense undergrowth. Unfortunately, that characterizes the remainder of the park south of the cemetery. So for the second survey, we were forced to use the traditional technique of field-walking. Our second survey revealed eight distinct scatters of bricks, glass, ceramic and iron over a range of about 30 meters north-south and 10 meters east-west (see figures 6.5-6.11). The bottle base shown in figure 6.9 was sufficiently intact to allow tentative dating and typing. The lack of a seam running through the base indicates machine manufacture in a cup mold, which was prevalent between 1870 and 1920. The clear color of the glass became prevalent after 1905. Furthermore, the circular mark on the base further indicates machine manufacture, and is most often seen on wide-mouth jars and food containers (BLM "Historic Glass Bottle Identification and Information Website" 2005). Thus the glass was likely made between 1905 and 1920, roughly consistent with the time period of the cemetery's use.

The type of artifact scatter we found resembles what several informants recall about how graves were marked in the Mt. Sinai cemetery, though their memories do conflict somewhat. Sally, who did not live in Jonesville but went to church there, said graves were always marked with traditional headstones, but the others all said that was an exception. Typical of their memories are these, from Kurt, who lived a few years in Jonesville as a child:

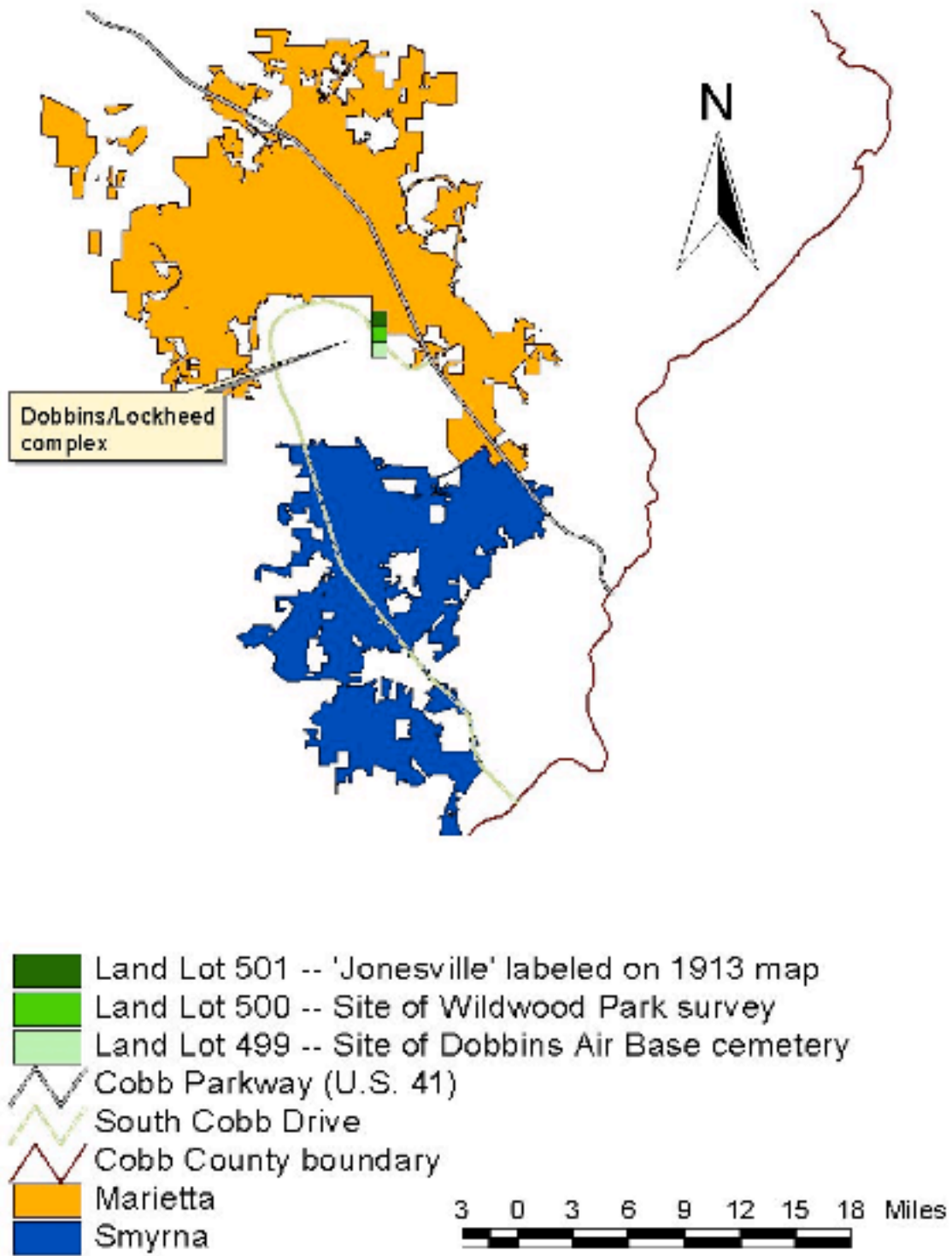
They just used markers, a pile of bricks or rocks or something like, you know. Some of 'em had names up there carved in wood. They'd write 'em down and when they'd go away, you wouldn't know who was buried where.

and from Karla, who grew up in Jonesville:

They had boards. They had a white board, they put a board up with his name. But you know after it faded away I guess it looks like a board. I guess I've seen a few tombstones, the people who had a little bit more, you know, had stones.

The makeup of the scatters -- bricks, rocks, concrete -- as well as their linear arrangement, their positions in space of no more than 70-80 meters, or reasonably close to one acre's extent, south from the Wildwood Park cemetery, the presence of glass and ceramics that might have held flowers or offerings placed by the deceased's relatives, and the absence of other scatters nearby offer strong evidence that what we found represents the remains of grave markers from the Mt. Sinai cemetery. One other possibility -- that the artifacts are the remains of a building foundation -- is less compelling. We surveyed 10 meters on either side of the rough line of bricks and did not find any other piles indicating a symmetrical foundation. In addition, the amount of ceramics and glass, though greater than the surrounding area, does not seem dense enough to indicate intensive occupation. The cemetery explanation seems strongest, as it fits with both the material culture discovered and the documentary evidence in existence.

Figure 6.1: Selected features of central Cobb County, Georgia



Spatial data courtesy of Cobb County GIS.

Figure 6.2: Wildwood Park cemetery



Standing tombstones not visible in this view. Note undergrowth. Photo by John Roby.

Figure 6.3: Contour maps of results of resistivity and magnetic surveys in Wildwood Park

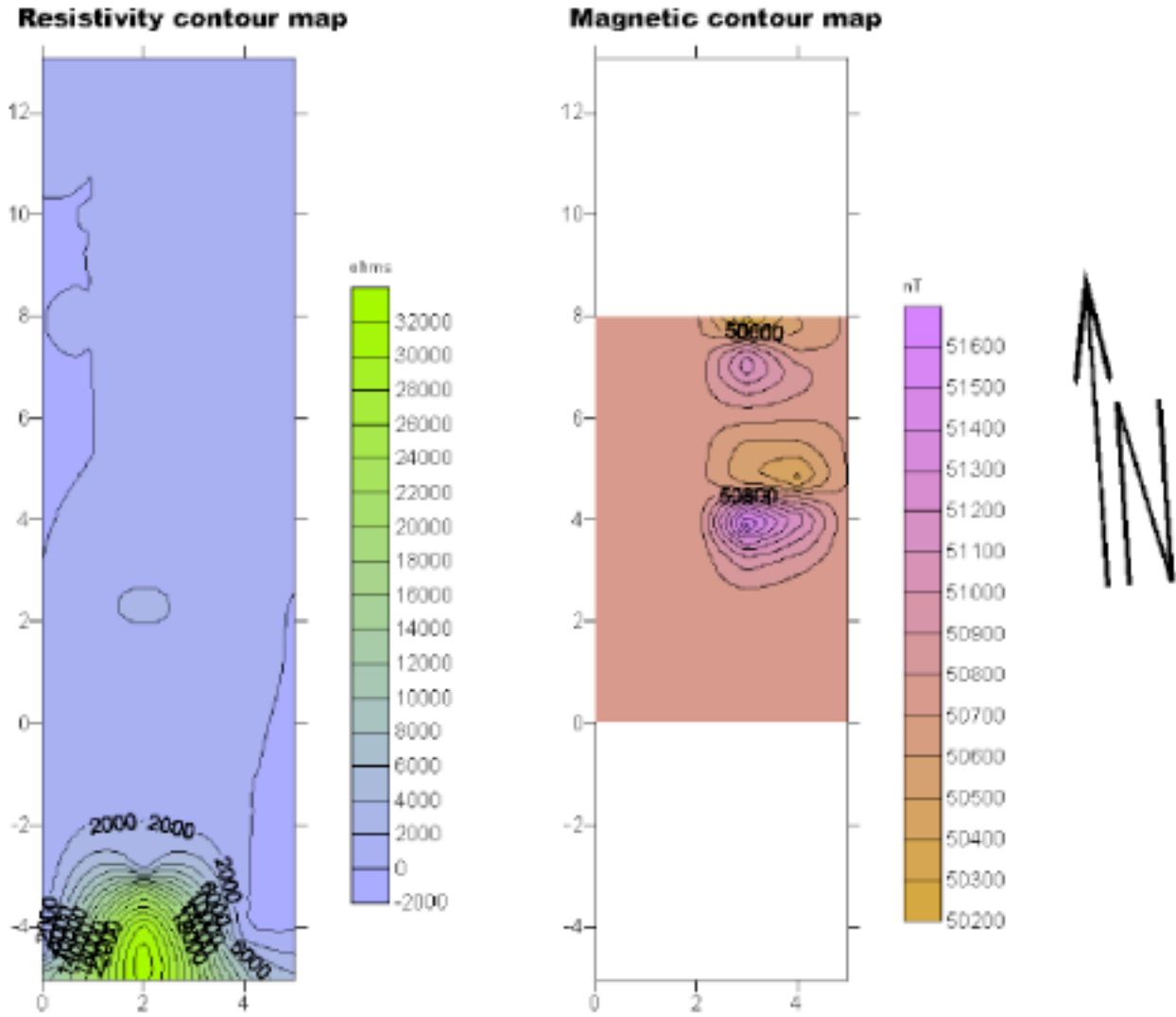


Figure 6.4: Wireframe map of magnetic survey in Wildwood Park

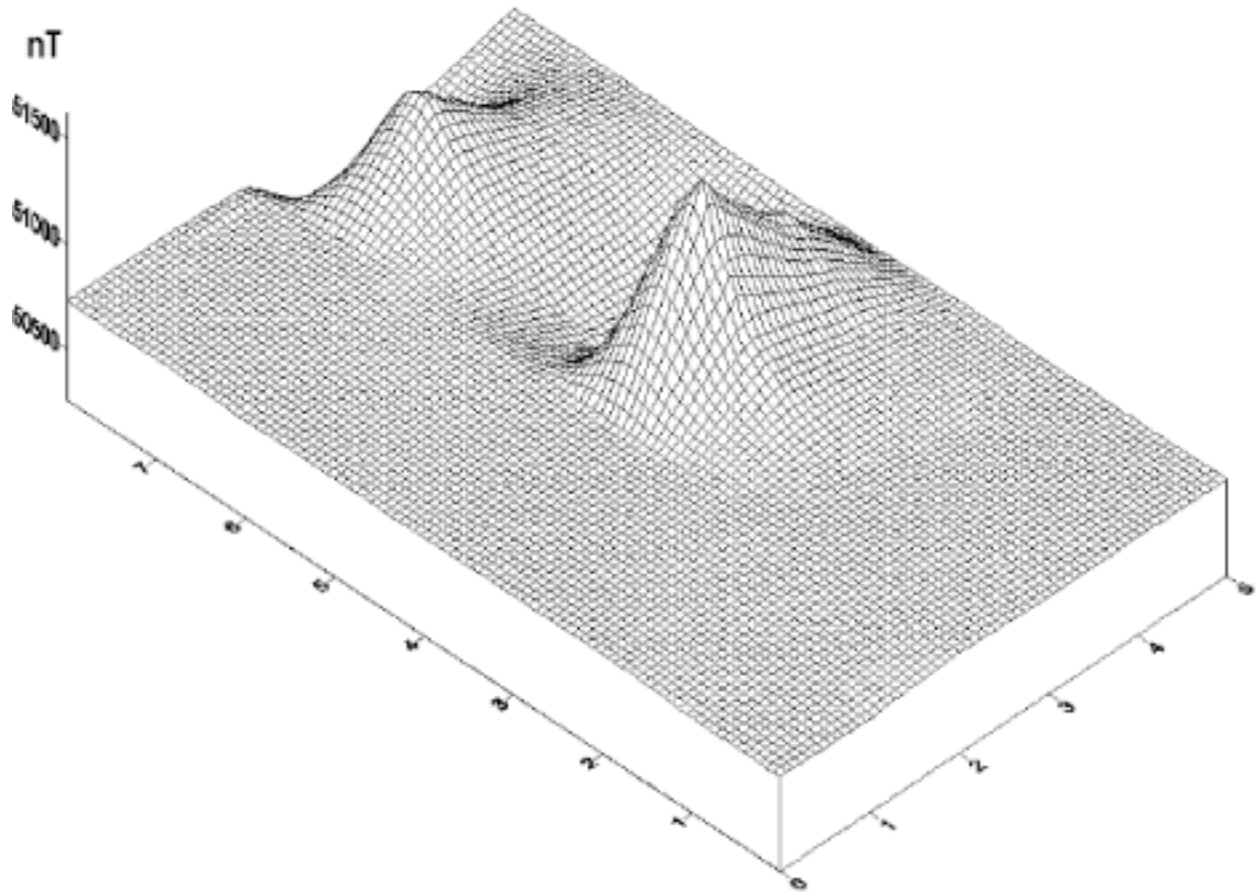


Figure 6.5: Scatter plot of features found on Wildwood Park field survey, by UTM coordinates

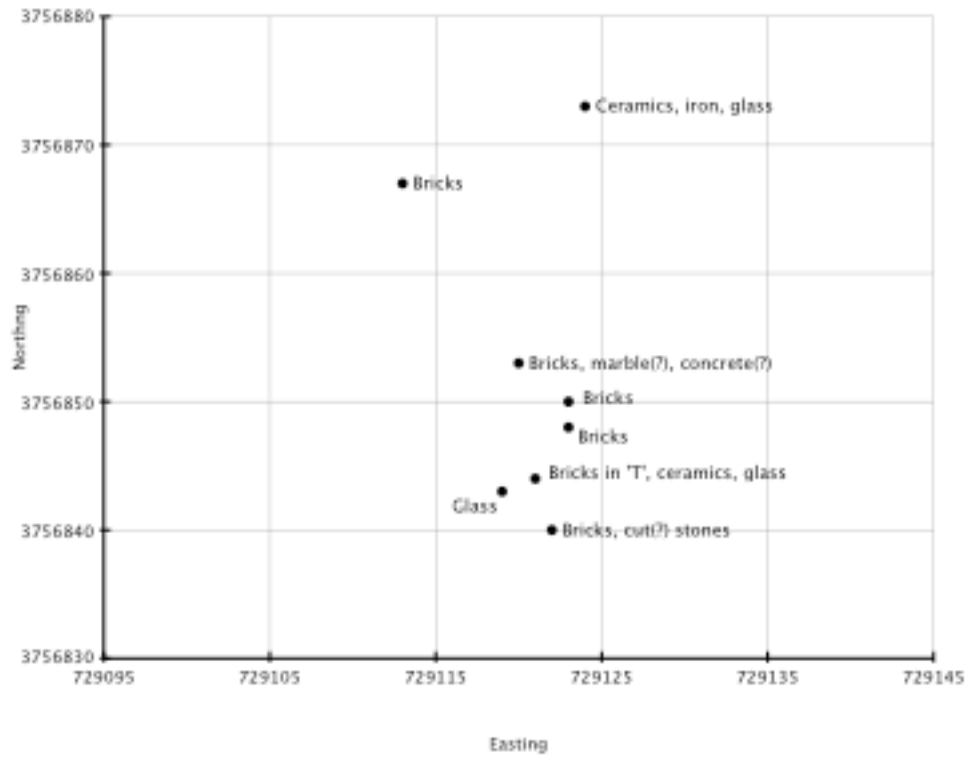


Figure 6.6: Artifact scatter No. 1



Note piece of apparent marble in upper-right and concrete in center. Photo by John Roby.

Figure 6.7: Artifact scatter No. 2



Note arrangement of bricks. Photo by John Roby.

Figure 6.8: Artifact scatter No. 3



Photo by John Roby.

Figure 6.9: Glass base found during Wildwood Park survey



Photo by John Roby.

Figure 6.10: Ceramics and iron found during Wildwood Park survey



Photo by John Roby.

Figure 6.11: Stone found near brick scatter in Wildwood Park



Note possible evidence of shaping on bottom edge. Photo by John Roby.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and the Future

The efforts of members of Mt. Sinai represent an attempt to bring attention to the role played by the church community in a more idyllic time. Jonesville was literally and figuratively a separate place; a town apart. The residents had the power to operate in two worlds: the white world, the world of the city, with its jobs and stores; and the black world, the world of the community, where people could get by through their own labor and the help of their neighbors. The church itself represents an enduring symbolic link to that past because it straddles both worlds. It moved with the community, serving as a visible reminder of Jonesville in the midst of the upheaval, and has endured to the present. Today, it is a tangible link to the mythic past -- mythic, because as has been discussed, life in Jonesville had its share of hardships and inequities along with the very real benefits that came with being in a place apart. It also serves to illuminate the actions of the church's founders, many of whose descendants are still active in Mt. Sinai. The memory of creating a church from the ashes of slavery, and the church's position as the social center of life in an African American community remembered as largely independent and self-sufficient, are the crucibles in which the present-day community's sense of identity is forged.

Considering identity forces a confrontation with agency, as the two are often considered to work at different conceptual levels. I am conceptualizing identity in the case of Mt. Sinai as a form of group consciousness, but actions in identity struggles are taken by individuals. Yet as previously mentioned, a collective agency approach is most fruitful in this case because the community in question is made of individuals who are similarly positioned in regard to the larger social whole. They would share similarly in any gains won through their identity struggle. People in Mt. Sinai church are working to establish themselves as distinct from the greater community,

with a unique past that reaches back into a time largely considered to be Cobb County's "prehistory." Agency is evident in the practices of socially positioned actors within a clearly defined context of practice. In the case of Mt. Sinai, the social positioning of the actors is clear, but the reasons for their actions are more problematic. Why are they doing what they are doing now? I believe those leading the efforts in the church have recognized the value of working with people who have living memories of Jonesville, and are acting before they lose those valuable voices that can say what things were really like back then. The context of their practice is the community, broadly defined. Church members are collecting oral histories from people both inside and outside the church, focusing on those with memories of Jonesville regardless of church membership. Significantly, those efforts are still structured around the Jonesville community, echoing the idea of self-sufficiency that repeatedly arose through the informants' discourse.

The church's efforts face formidable obstacles in the form of ideological practices shaping the construction of Marietta and Cobb County's past. What is popularly considered to be a coherent narrative of development, in which a major industry enters a quiet town, disrupting a simple life but bringing jobs that lift all boats equally, is one example. As I have shown, life was never so quiet or simple. Cobb County and Marietta always had industry, and were always connected to the larger world. There was violence and hardship as well, and the arrival of the aircraft industry uprooted many lives, not only those of Jonesville residents but also of white families such as the Gardiners. Moreover, copious evidence exists that all segments of society, particularly the African American residents of the area, did not enjoy the same economic benefits of rapid industrialization, and in fact, had to adjust their modes of living when they were forced out of Jonesville. Yet such nuances of history are largely ignored -- the very definition of ideological practice. Such consoling narratives must be overcome before Mt. Sinai will make true progress in recognizing and popularizing its past.

The dialectic nature of the version of the past that is being created by Mt. Sinai's efforts could go a long way toward overcoming such ideological practices. The Jonesville community is remembered as both part of and separated from the larger Cobb County community. It shared ties with African American communities in Marietta and Atlanta, and supplied workers for burgeoning industry in the city. Yet its people also worked within their own self-sufficient world, schooling their own children, worshiping in their own church, growing their own food. The fact that moving into town is remembered with conflicting emotions challenges the idea of progress and development bringing across-the-board benefits. Leaving the country and coming into the city, with its cars, streets and electricity, is not remembered uncritically. What was lost is considered to be in some ways more important, which in turn drives the efforts to remember the past. History is thus constructed not as a natural outcome but as culturally contingent, challenging the narrative of Marietta's development.

The critical hermeneutic view positions the cemetery as the medium for restructuring social practice, through the negotiations of meaning being undertaken by the various co-subjects with a stake in the material culture. For the dominant culture of Marietta, interpreted through museums that focus on the city's Civil War, antebellum and aviation past, historical writings such as newspaper accounts and Temple's county history, and the general lack of references to Jonesville in documents and place names, the Mt. Sinai cemetery might as well be entirely fictional. The framework of meaning constructed by the dominant city culture has no place for, or at the very least no awareness of, the Jonesville connection. It is preoccupied with a largely white history and with the romantic sides of the past: war, gracious living, the benefits of technology. My interactions with Dobbins Air Base, another co-subject, show that it is anxious to protect and preserve the past, as evidenced by an openness to my research that I did not expect. Personnel on the base told me that, at least on paper, anyone who comes to the gate and asks to

visit the cemetery is allowed in. The informants disputed that, but it was not clear how often they had actually tried to do so. Dobbins has put up signs on the base grounds marking the land as the "Mt. Sinai Cemetery," and placed park benches along a "nature trail" next to the cemetery. Part of the reason it is so open to resolving the question of whether the cemetery is in fact Mt. Sinai's seems to be tied up in stewardship of the site: The base cannot spend public money to maintain what might be private land. There is also a sense that the community has no interest in visiting the site, which informants on the base told me stalled efforts in the 1990s to further develop the site. I believe that any reluctance from the community exists in part because of the difficulty in accessing the site -- as mentioned, people in the church believe, rightly or not, that they would not be allowed to visit, even if they wanted to. Additionally, those who have visited, as shown in previous chapters, do not recognize the site as the community's burial place. Moreover, I believe that actually visiting the site is not considered particularly important to the community. Those people with relatives buried there are advanced in age, and traveling is difficult. Regardless, though, I have shown evidence that the cemetery on Dobbins is not Mt. Sinai's. Once informed of my results, Dobbins' position toward the cemetery is likely to change. For the third co-subject, the Mt. Sinai community, the cemetery represents the ultimate medium for restructuring practices. It would be another tangible link to the past, similar to the church building itself but with the added features of being rooted in the physical site of Jonesville as well as symbolically representing the toil and sacrifices of those who lived and died there. Thus the material culture is given meaning because of its potential role in boosting the church community's efforts to build an identity that is linked to an independent past, built by former slaves and existing quite well outside the structures of white Marietta.

The question at the heart of my research -- how is the church using its material past to construct identity in the present -- changed over time. As noted, when the project began, I

thought it was a simple matter of locating lost graves. Later, I believed the problem would be to discover whether the bounds of that cemetery actually reflected the bounds of the burials. Both of those problems led me to conceptualize my question much differently: It was more about the "what" at work in the community than the "why." Early in the project, I did not see much of a role for reform, or ethnographic research.

As I began probing more deeply, however, I realized that my understanding of the church's goals, and even the simple facts of the project, was shaky. For example, I did not realize at first that the Mt. Sinai church building was moved after the land sale, and that the congregation was still worshipping in the actual historical building. Also, there was little community interest in bounding the cemetery, as I had thought. In fact, those in the church who were taking charge of the cemetery project were themselves struggling with whether the Dobbins cemetery was in fact Mt. Sinai's cemetery; evidence that I have presented above indicating it was not was played down by some, and emphasized by others. Moreover, in the past few years, little work had been done on either identifying the correct cemetery or ensuring access to the one on Dobbins. The church members were focusing instead on collecting oral histories.

When I figuratively stepped back and took stock of my understanding of the material culture, the community and its goals, I realized that I would need to broaden my involvement with Mt. Sinai if I wanted to complete this project. So I asked to take part in the oral history collection, and use the results to further my archaeological investigations. In other words, I enlisted members of the church as research partners, and the project became more collaborative. As a largely unforeseen consequence, my research question shifted from where the burials were located to why the church was interested in the cemetery in the first place. The research question I ended up with is both more complex, addressing larger issues of the situatedness of capitalism, the construction of African American identity, and the political role of present-day archaeological

practice. It is also potentially more fruitful in terms of possible reforms.

At its heart, my research is a form of applied archaeology. The explicit goal is to generate knowledge that could be used for reform. I believe the church's goals and efforts are valid. I have used ethnographic and documentary research to interpret the community's motivations, and archaeological methods to reveal possible new avenues of evidence. What still must be clarified is what the community wishes to do with this knowledge. Further research is needed on the suspected site of the cemetery. Ideally, the City of Marietta would be enlisted to clear some of the undergrowth in Wildwood Park to allow a geophysical survey of the area where we found artifact scatters. My ethnographic research will be put to more immediate use, as the audio and video transcripts will be prepared and delivered to Mt. Sinai for incorporation into its oral history project. Several church members have approached me about continuing our collaboration in collecting oral histories and eventually publishing a church history, compiled not only from those histories but also from documentary and archaeological evidence. Finally, I wish to pursue the question of how the community wants its history commemorated, and work toward achieving that. Thus, there is both a potential and a mutual desire for ongoing engagement. And that is perhaps the best possible outcome of my research.

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