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Beyond Preservation: Reconstructing Sites Of Slavery, Reconstruction, And Segregation

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BEYOND PRESERVATION: RECONSTRUCTING SITES OF SLAVERY,
RECONSTRUCTION, AND SEGREGATION

by

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Abstract

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties define reconstruction as "the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location."¹ Reconstruction is a controversial treatment method among historic preservationists, so this thesis seeks to answer the question of why stewards of historic sites still choose to reconstruct nonextant buildings. It explores three case studies: (1) the slave buildings of Mulberry Row at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, (2) the Cyrus Garvin House, a Reconstruction-era freedman's cottage, and (3) the Mann-Simons Site, a group of domestic and commercial buildings belonging to a black family during segregation. With the public history field emphasizing the interpretation of sites associated with underrepresented groups or understudied time periods, preserving historic resources pertaining to slavery, Reconstruction, and segregation is imperative and timely. In these case studies, it was necessary and appropriate to go beyond preservation to reconstruct vanished buildings that convey histories "essential to the public understanding."²

¹ U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service Technical Preservation Services, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guides for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings*, revised by Anne E. Grimmer, 2017, 225. Hereafter cited as *Secretary's Standards*, revised 2017.

² *Secretary's Standards*, revised 2017, 226.

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Chapter One

Introduction and Historiography

Purpose

This thesis seeks to answer the question of why historic sites utilize reconstruction as an historic treatment option for no-longer-extant historic buildings. According to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Reconstruction, decision-makers at historic sites must determine that it is "essential to the public understanding" to rebuild and replicate an historic building, structure, or object that no longer exists.³ This thesis treats three historic sites in the Southeast that utilized reconstruction to preserve and interpret African-American history in three controversial chapters of the American past: slavery (Mulberry Row at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello), Reconstruction (Cyrus Garvin House), and segregation (Mann-Simons Site). While the reasons for reconstructing vary, these case studies showed that each site determined that using reconstruction was indeed essential to the public understanding. Not only is it imperative to preserve and protect historic resources associated with slavery, reconstruction, and segregation, but in these three cases, it was appropriate to reconstruct buildings that were no longer extant to encourage the public to come to terms with difficult chapters of the American past.

³ *Secretary's Standards*, revised 2017, 225.

Origins of Study

Paradoxically, this thesis, which explores sites of African-American history in the South, originated at the New York home of a white painter. In the summer of 2017, the author firmly believed reconstructions were inappropriate and falling out of favor in the field of historic preservation. Historic preservation texts exploring the four historic treatment options— rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, and reconstruction—taught the specifications of each treatment method, and the instances when people choose to utilize them. According to this literature, reconstruction is the most drastic of the four treatments, and the most difficult to do accurately. Too often, reconstructions are poorly done and rely on speculation, or the historic site’s employees do not clearly communicate that a building is not original. Because of these common pitfalls, it seemed logical that stewards of historic sites would use reconstruction less frequently to present an accurate depiction of an historic resource to a public audience.

Historic preservation (as a blanket term encompassing the four types of treatment) has many motivations, including education, economics, tourism, community pride and sense of place, and the motivation often determines the type of historic treatment. For example, economic motivations often manifest in rehabilitation projects, which maintain a building’s character defining features while updating it for a new, modern use. When promoting heritage tourism, many professionals choose restoration—returning a resource to its appearance at a specific point in time—as they wish to attract visitors by representing a space as it would have looked during its “period of significance,” the time when the most important historic events associated with the space took place. This method places the responsibility on the restorer to decide which time period is more

significant than another, a principle inherently linked with privilege. In this age of dedication to a sense of historic honesty and transparency within the field of historic preservation, many students and professionals argue that choosing any other treatment option than preservation is elitist. The argument for preservation—the stabilization and maintenance of a resource, leaving a building exactly as-is, additions, renovations, and all—is that this method does not privilege one era of history over another. Preservation keeps all layers of history extant and intact, lending equal importance to all people, events, and stories that contributed to the complex history of a space. For this reason, many historic institutions with the goal of interpretation and public education choose true preservation.

Historic house museums also comprise the groups that choose to reconstruct no-longer-extant resources for use as an interpretive and interactive tool. But if reconstruction is a fabrication, both literally and figuratively, why have historic sites continued to utilize this method? Rebuilding vanished resources without stating they are not original can obscure the period that resulted in the erasure of these resources, and it is important for stewards of historic sites to be transparent.

A visit to the Thomas Cole National Historic Site in the summer of 2017 inspired this thesis topic by calling into question why a respected historic site had recently completed a reconstruction of Thomas Cole's New Studio when preservationists seemed to disdain this treatment option. This reconstruction project caused the author to reevaluate the motivations for and usefulness and appropriateness of reconstruction.

Thomas Cole was a painter and founder of the early nineteenth-century Hudson River School, an artistic movement that spanned to literature as well.⁴ Cole was an architect as well as a painter, and he designed the New Studio, an additional painting studio, when he needed to expand his artistic space. The New Studio was no longer extant, but the Thomas Cole National Historic Site possessed archaeological evidence, historic photos, and architectural drawings and blueprints that made accurately replicating this building feasible.⁵

The Thomas Cole National Historic Site chose to reconstruct the New Studio to demonstrate Cole's architectural style and to present the space he dedicated to his artwork, and also to create a new space for visitor programming to showcase the work of local artists. The materials owned by the Thomas Cole National Historic Site allowed a faithful reconstruction of the building's exterior, but they had no knowledge of the space's interior. So rather than speculate and risk presenting an inaccurate portrayal of the past, the site stewards chose to utilize the interior of the reconstructed studio as a gallery to showcase the work of local artists. In doing so, the Thomas Cole National Historic Site allowed the New Studio to serve a similar, but not equal, purpose to its original as a space for artistic expression.⁶

The architectural evidence was sound, so the reconstruction was faithful to the original New Studio. It was the interior, however, that was most captivating and that complicated the classification of the studio's historic treatment method. The New Studio was clearly a reconstruction as it was new construction replicating a non-extant historical

⁴ "Biography of Thomas Cole," Thomas Cole National Historic Site, Website.

⁵ Author's site visit, July 2017.

⁶ Author's site visit, July 2017.

building. Yet the interior had elements of rehabilitation; it preserved character defining features yet served a purpose different than its original.

The New Studio encouraged the author to formulate a fresh outlook on reconstruction at historic sites, and highlighted three key considerations that historic sites make when reconstructing a resource: evidence, funding, and use. The Thomas Cole National Historic Site possessed sufficient archaeological, photographic, and documentary evidence to avoid the pitfall of poor research, and the site staff emphasized transparency about the recreated nature of the building. Funding new construction using historic building materials and techniques can be a challenge, making donations and grants vital to reconstructing. In this case, the Thomas Cole National Historic Site gained enough funds to reconstruct the space fully. Finally, an important factor in the decision to reconstruct is use: for what would the Thomas Cole National Historic Site *use* the space? The New Studio reconstruction provided increased space for special programming and for showcasing art. In many reconstruction cases, the use is interpretation and education; this was true for the New Studio as well as the three case studies in this thesis.

The New Studio reconstruction was appropriate and useful, so the author was forced to reevaluate her convictions about reconstruction, and inspired to research other recent reconstructions that were unique—that is, reconstructions that did not align exactly with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for reconstruction.⁷

⁷ When selecting the “unique” reconstructions for the case studies of this thesis, the author chose to only include corporeal, tangible reconstructions. Digital reconstructions are a frontier in historic preservation and with historic sites, and virtual reality is becoming increasingly popular for interpreting nonextant resources as well. However, because these methods do not produce physical, tangible structures, this thesis does not explore examples of digital reconstruction or virtual reality. Chapter Two briefly mentions digital reconstruction and virtual reality, but the author leaves these methods for future scholars to research.

Considering unique reconstructions, a local example, the Mann-Simons Site in Columbia, South Carolina, came to mind. This site of African-American history embodied changing priorities in the field to tell stories of previously underrepresented groups and understudied time periods. The site also featured recently reconstructed structures that were atypical because they consisted of steel-frames rather than using full brick and mortar construction. The research focus shifted to reconstructions with atypical elements that interpreted and educated about previously understudied and controversial chapters of African-American history: slavery, Reconstruction, and segregation. Mulberry Row at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, the Cyrus Garvin Freedman's Cottage, and the Mann-Simons Site, provided relevant and geographically convenient case studies for this thesis.

Sources and Methodology

This thesis utilized three case studies of historic institutions that chose to employ reconstruction as a means to educate the public about the difficult history and legacy of slavery, Reconstruction, and segregation and to celebrate the resilience of African-Americans in the face of these circumstances. First, this thesis explored the Mountaintop Project, the reconstruction of two buildings on Mulberry Row at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, to study the reconstruction of sites of enslaved workers on a plantation in Virginia's piedmont region. Next, the Cyrus Garvin House exemplified the Reconstruction era and new opportunities for freedmen in Bluffton, South Carolina, following the Civil War. Finally, the Mann-Simons Site in Columbia, South Carolina, demonstrated the use of steel-frame ghost structure reconstruction to communicate the

history of a family living in a racially segregated Columbia. The Mann-Simons Site also linked all three eras together because the Mann-Simons family lived on this site throughout slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction, and segregation.

It is imperative to clarify that although slavery and segregation were difficult pasts, this thesis does not portray the Reconstruction era as *dark* past. Rather, Reconstruction in the South, especially in Beaufort County, South Carolina, was a brief moment of opportunity for equality and unprecedented power for African-Americans that ended with the removal of Union troops and “redemption.” This thesis celebrates rather than laments Reconstruction. In fact, each case study demonstrates the resilience of African Americans rather than their victimization.

When researching the three case studies that form this thesis, the author conducted site visits and interviewed employees associated with the projects in order to glean information about the motivations for, challenges to, and processes of each project. Site visits, interviews, and materials from the files of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, the Town of Bluffton, and Historic Columbia informed thesis research. Each case study varied in extent of reconstruction. The Mulberry Row reconstructions were log cabins rebuilt from archaeological footprints, Thomas Jefferson’s architectural records, and knowledge of regional vernacular architecture. The Garvin House combined elements of reconstruction, restoration, and rehabilitation (the house was still extant, but almost completely in ruins). Finally, the Mann-Simons Site relied on archaeological evidence and Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps but employed frames depicting the outline of vanished buildings rather than full brick-and-mortar reconstruction.

For the Mulberry Row case study, the author visited Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, took a "Slavery at Monticello" tour and installed the corresponding mobile application, stepped inside the Hemings Cabin and Storehouse for Iron reconstructions, and interviewed Katelyn Coughlan, Monticello's Senior Archaeological Analyst, to gain insight into the project process. Blog posts written by Monticello staff members that tracked the progress of the Mountaintop Project as well as an article detailing the project written by Director of Restoration Gardiner Hallock, supplemented the research for this case study.

When examining the Garvin House, the author toured the recently completed house, watched an available-on-site video detailing the process from start to finish, and interviewed two Bluffton town planners, Erin Schumacher and Katie Peterson. Erin Schumacher, in fact, presented on the Garvin House at the 2018 South Carolina Statewide Historic Preservation Conference in her session titled "It Takes a Village." This presentation resulted in the decision to use Garvin House as a case study and informed the research of this case study. Historic maps and census records as well as a 2009 Historic Structure Assessment and Preservation Plan strengthened this research.

Finally, for the Mann-Simons Site case study, the thesis relied on multiple site visits and three house tours, interviews of Historic Columbia Director of Cultural Resources John Sherrer and Executive Director Robin Waites, and Jakob S. Crockett's archaeological research. Equally vital to thesis research were Historic Columbia's Mann-Simons files, including records, newspaper articles, and the proposal for the grant which funded the project.

Combining these sources and case studies, the author analyzed each reconstruction project and determined that each of these sites believed reconstructing was *essential to the public understanding* of the place and period they depicted. Physically experiencing—seeing, touching, standing inside—these reconstructed spaces was necessary to bring slavery, Reconstruction, and segregation to life for visitors to Mulberry Row, the Garvin House, and the Mann-Simons Site. Reconstruction made possible the interpretation of these difficult pasts that the public must understand.

Historiography of Reconstructing and Interpreting Sites of African-American History

This thesis fits into the larger historiography of treating sites of African-American history and of examining the motivations behind reconstruction on historic sites. For stewards of historic sites that choose to reconstruct, the importance of spotlighting the histories of previously underrepresented peoples or previously understudied time periods trumps the reluctance deterring some preservationists from replicating vanished resources. Telling histories of marginalized groups or ignored events is timely in historical literature and in public history. This is true with authors and public historians treating African-American history. Academics contributing to this historiography have included Annette Gordon-Reed and Robert Weyeneth, and public history endeavors aligning with this historiographical trend have included reconstructions of slave quarters at various southern plantations. Historic sites and scholars have also considered the implications of and motivations for reconstructing resources.

In literature, historiographical trends have shown increased attention to telling African-American histories of slavery, Reconstruction, and segregation. This literature has included works both from academic historians and public historians. Historian Annette Gordon-Reed's 2008 monograph *The Hemingses of Monticello* told the story of four generations of the Hemings family, focusing on the lives of the family members themselves rather than their status as Thomas Jefferson's slaves.⁸ The reconstructed slave dwelling and storehouse on Mulberry Row aligned with this push to emphasize enslaved stories at Monticello. In public history literature, the National Park Service published a theme study on the Reconstruction era, "The Era of Reconstruction: 1861-1900" in 2017.⁹ This comprehensive report detailed the history of the Reconstruction era, the time period following the Civil War, in which federal troops occupied the southern states and attempted to reunify the country and assimilate newly-emancipated blacks into society and the economy. The report also included a survey of sites with potential for interpretation in relation to Reconstruction, a topic about which many Americans have been ignorant. The release of a National Park Service theme study just one year ago evidenced the timeliness of this subject. Another public history publication that treated the importance of African-American history was Robert Weyeneth's article "The Architecture of Racial Segregation."¹⁰ This article discussed the importance of preserving the "problematical past": chapters of history that could be difficult for many people to

⁸ Annette Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2008).

⁹ Gregory P. Downs and Kate Masur, "The Era of Reconstruction 1861-1900: A National Historic Landmarks Theme Study," National Historic Landmarks Program National Park Service U.S. Department of the Interior, 2017.

¹⁰ "The Architecture of Racial Segregation: The Challenges of Preserving the Problematical Past," *The Public Historian* 27, no. 4 (Fall 2005): 11-44.

confront. Weyeneth asserted that we should preserve the problematical past because of the importance of maintaining and learning from these resources.

In the past decade, historic sites and museum organizations have also increased interpretation of African-American history. James Oliver and Lois E. Horton's *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American History* discussed the marginalization of African-American stories, namely those of slavery and what Robert Weyeneth called the "problematical past," in historic sites and museums.¹¹ Historic sites have striven to overcome this marginalization, however. Monticello was one of many plantations to reconstruct or interpret extant slave quarters; James Madison's Montpelier is currently reconstructing slave quarters, and Magnolia Plantation in Charleston, South Carolina, has increased interpretation of its preserved slave cabins.¹² Carter's Grove, near Williamsburg, Virginia, also recently reconstructed slave quarters.¹³ Joseph McGill's Slave Dwelling Project and Jobie Hill's Saving Slave Houses website are further examples of public history endeavors documenting and advocating for the preservation of extant slave quarters.¹⁴

Public history treatment of Reconstruction and segregation has also increased. President Obama's January 2017 Presidential Proclamation to create a National Monument to Reconstruction in Beaufort, South Carolina, evidenced the prevalence of studying the importance of the Reconstruction era.¹⁵ This was one of Obama's last acts as

¹¹ James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, eds, *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

¹² "Slave Quarters Rebuilt at Madison's Montpelier," *Richmond Times Dispatch*, April 30, 2017; "Slavery to Freedom: The Magnolia Cabin Project Tour," *Magnolia Plantation*, Website.

¹³ "Carter's Grove," *Colonial Williamsburg Foundation*, Website.

¹⁴ Joseph McGill, "The Slave Dwelling project," *The Slave Dwelling Project*, Website; Jobie Hill, "Saving Slave Houses," *Saving Slave Houses*, Website.

¹⁵ Barack Obama, "Establishment of the Reconstruction Era National Monument," A Proclamation by the President of the United States of America, January 12, 2017.

president. Earlier, in 2014, Historic Columbia opened the nation's first and only Museum of Reconstruction at the Woodrow Wilson Family Home in Columbia, South Carolina.¹⁶ Museums and sites interpreting segregation are too many to list, but reconstructions of Jim Crow sites are scarce. With sites of segregation and civil rights belonging to a more recent past, more of these resources remained extant, making their preservation and interpretation prevalent and vital. For example, the International Civil Rights Center & Museum in Greensboro, North Carolina opened in one of the W.F. Woolworth Department Store locations, the site of the nation's first sit-in.¹⁷

This thesis also fits into the larger historiography of reconstruction at historic sites. Reconstruction is not a new treatment option; historic sites and organizations have utilized this method for longer than the Secretary of the Interior has defined and regulated it. Virginia's Colonial Williamsburg, an oft-cited forerunner in American historic preservation, reconstructed the Governor's Palace in the 1920s after fire had destroyed it over a century before.¹⁸ Colonial Williamsburg felt reconstructing this building was the best way to portray the colonial landscape and distribution of government, although it is noncompliant by today's reconstruction standards. Following suit, in the 1950s Old Salem in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, began restoring and later reconstructing buildings that comprised the historic Moravian town.¹⁹ Outside of the United States, London, England, utilized this treatment option to reconstruct the seventeenth-century Globe Theater in the 1990s. This project recreated Shakespeare's famous theater and was

¹⁶ "Woodrow Wilson Family Home," *Historic Columbia*, Website.

¹⁷ "The Museum," *International Civil Rights Center & Museum*, Website.

¹⁸ "The History of Colonial Williamsburg," *Colonial Williamsburg: That the Future May Learn from the Past*, Website.

¹⁹ "Old Salem, Inc.," *Old Salem Museums & Gardens*, Website.

completed in 1996.²⁰ The Globe reconstruction aligns more closely with the Secretary's Standards than do the earlier American reconstructions: it utilized historic images and descriptions, archaeology, and similar extant building types to create a faithful reconstruction.²¹

Theses prior to this work have also treated reconstruction. Michael James Keller's 1998 M.S. thesis "Making History: Reconstructing Historic Structures in the National Park System" investigated the use of reconstruction at National Park Service sites since the 1960s.²² He unpacked the conflicting opinions about this treatment method among professionals, asking if reconstruction was inappropriate and dishonest or necessary and the norm. Keller used four historic forts as case studies, and argued that National Park Service sites should be "valued more for their interpretive potential than for the resources they contain."²³ Alyssa Holland's 2011 M.A. thesis "The Reconstruction of Historical Buildings: A Visitor and Historic Site Study" took a more ambitious approach to reconstructions at historic sites by accumulating an exhaustive list of reconstructions on the East Coast and surveying guests at one national park.²⁴ Holland asked the questions "Is reconstruction ethical?" and "Is reconstruction worthwhile?"²⁵ She argued that when historic organizations followed the "rules" for reconstruction and were transparent with the public, reconstruction was indeed ethical and worthwhile. This thesis fills a gap in this historiography because rather than studying national parks and forts as Keller did, it

²⁰ "Rebuilding the Globe," *Shakespeare's Globe*, Website.

²¹ "Rebuilding the Globe."

²² Michael James Keller, "Making History: Reconstructing Historic Structures in the National Park System," Master's Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1998.

²³ Keller, "Making History," 3.

²⁴ Alyssa Holland, "The Reconstruction of Historical Buildings: A Visitor and Historic Site Study," Master's Thesis, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2011.

²⁵ Holland, "The Reconstruction of Historical Buildings," 5.

focuses on sites of African-American history that are owned by smaller organizations. And, while Holland analyzed visitor responses to and employee perceptions of reconstructions at historic sites, this thesis looks at the decision makers at organizations who chose to reconstruct and determines why they chose to do so. Additionally, the three case studies used in this thesis all date to the past five years, while Keller and Holland treated older reconstructions.

Above all, this thesis differs from earlier works because it treats reconstructions that pushed the boundaries of what reconstruction as a treatment method means. The Mann-Simons Site employed ephemeral ghost structures and the Garvin House straddled the line between reconstruction, restoration, and rehabilitation. However, in spite of this, this thesis argues they were both appropriate and faithfully-executed reconstructions. Keller and Holland did not stray from the Secretary's provisions for full brick-and-mortar reconstructions.

Many more authors and historic sites have written about and interpreted African-American history and the Reconstruction era, and many other sites and scholars have carried out and investigated reconstruction as a treatment option. The works and sites this historiography referenced were particularly useful in writing this thesis and largely centered in the Southeast. This thesis is situated in this historiography, and adds to it by investigating more recent reconstruction projects and by arguing the necessity of unconventional reconstructions in instances when African-American historic sites have been lost to time or demolition.

Organization

The body of this thesis is organized into three chapters, with each chapter treating a specific case study. The chapters follow the chronology of the time periods their sites depict. Chapter Two studies reconstructions that interpret slavery at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello in the Virginia piedmont region. Chapter Three studies a reconstruction project that educates the public about the Reconstruction era: the Cyrus Garvin Freedman's Cottage in Bluffton, South Carolina. Chapter Four studies the Mann-Simons Site in Columbia, South Carolina, which represents the era of racial segregation in this thesis. However, the Mann-Simons family lived on the site throughout all three periods of study, so this final chapter links all three eras. (*Figure 1.1*)

Chapter One: Corresponding Figures



Figure 1.1 Map of Sites

Image shows three case study sites. Red denotes Monticello, Green denotes Garvin-Garvey House, Blue denotes Mann-Simons Site.

Image courtesy of Imagesnesde.com

Chapter Two

Case Study A: The Mountaintop Project at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello

Introduction

Chapter Two treats the Mountaintop Project at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello and seeks to answer the question of why the Thomas Jefferson Foundation chose to excavate and reconstruct former slave dwellings and work spaces on Mulberry Row, the "main street" of Monticello. This case study examines the complete reconstruction, using historic materials and building technologies, of one road and two buildings that shed light on the lived experiences of enslaved and hired workers at Monticello during Thomas Jefferson's lifetime. The reconstruction of these sites of slavery created a more complete interpretation of life at Monticello by highlighting the lives of enslaved workers and their spaces just two hundred feet south of the Jefferson family in the extant "main house."²⁶

The reconstructed buildings on Mulberry Row enhanced visitor experience by (1) offering a more complete depiction of the landscape of Monticello during Thomas Jefferson's lifetime and (2) providing a physical setting in which to better tell the stories of the enslaved people who lived and worked there. This chapter will analyze both of these important points, each in its own separate section.

²⁶ Gardiner Hallock, "Object Lesson: 'Build the Negro Houses Close Together': Thomas Jefferson and the Evolution of Mulberry Row's Vernacular Landscape," *Buildings and Landscapes: Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum*, Vol. 24, No. 2, (Fall 2017), 22.

While the Mountaintop Project had various facets and phases, this case study focuses on the processes leading to and resulting in the restoration of the road and the reconstruction of the Hemings Cabin and Storehouse for Iron. The Mountaintop Project officially commenced in 2014 as an extensive archaeology project that expanded upon the 2011 “Picturing Mulberry Row” project’s digital renderings of the landscape of Mulberry Row, evolving into a physical restoration and reconstruction.²⁷ Although the Thomas Jefferson Foundation announced the Mountaintop Project in January 2014, archaeological excavations and historical research had been well underway since 2011. Through these extensive excavations and historical research, Monticello restored the original road, created a web application that shared the stories of life on Mulberry Row and depicted thirty-two buildings that once lined the road, and then physically recreated two of these buildings.²⁸ Following these steps, the Department of Restoration continued by restoring the two extant Jefferson-era structures, the stone stable and stone workmen’s house, and then shifted its focus to excavations and restorations on the wings or pavilions of the main house. The Cabin and Iron Storehouse recreations were expensive and laborious, but added to the experience of Mulberry Row by inviting visitors to physically walk the road enslaved and hired workers walked daily and to step into the places where they lived and worked. The interpretation of Mulberry Row through the “Slavery at Monticello” application and tours was an integral component of the experience, but the tangible buildings provided a backdrop for this interpretation.

²⁷ Leslie Greene Bowman, “Introducing the Mountaintop Project: Revealing Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello!” The Mountaintop Project (blog), *Thomas Jefferson Foundation*, January 31, 2014.

²⁸ Hallock, “Build the Negro Houses Close Together,” 22.

The overarching project goal was to restore the Mountaintop to its 1809 appearance—when Jefferson retired to Monticello—by not only restoring and recreating Jefferson-era buildings and landscapes, but also by removing ahistorical elements.²⁹ The David M. Rubenstein Visitor’s Center was the catalyst for the changes made on the Mountaintop. Namely, it consolidated operations that had been housed on the Mountaintop and relocated them, a catalyst to removing anything that was not part of the landscape during Jefferson’s lifetime. With operations removed to different locations, restoration was possible because the buildings could serve their historic functions rather than doubling as offices or gift shops.

The Thomas Jefferson Foundation considered the Mountaintop Project a restoration to 1809 with elements of reconstruction, yet the Foundation used the word “recreation” to describe the rebuilt Hemings Cabin and Iron Storehouse.³⁰ This diction highlighted an important detail of the historic treatment of these two buildings. The cabin and storehouse reconstructions were not technically compliant with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Reconstruction because they did not rely on exact architectural drawings or plans from the original buildings.³¹ The “recreations” were constructed using documentary evidence and considerable archaeological excavations that revealed

²⁹ Katelyn Coughlan, Senior Archaeological Analyst at Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello, interview by Charlotte Adams, Charlottesville, VA, March 13, 2018.

³⁰ Gardiner Hallock, “Recreated Slave Quarter Rises from the Past,” *The Mountaintop Project* (blog), *Thomas Jefferson Foundation*, February 2, 2015; Gardiner Hallock, “Recreation of Jefferson’s ‘Storehouse for Iron’ to Start this Spring!” *The Mountaintop Project* (blog), *Thomas Jefferson Foundation*, March 14, 2014.

³¹ *Secretary’s Standards*, revised 2017, 226; Katelyn Coughlan interview; The Mulberry Row “recreations” specifically violate Standard 6 which states “Designs that were never executed historically will not be constructed.” Thomas Jefferson’s papers include his architectural drawings for Mulberry Row; however, these buildings were renovated and replaced over time. Furthermore, some of the buildings Jefferson planned were never constructed, so it is not possible to definitively rely on the drawings and plans.

building footprints, uses, and materials. However, the reconstructions were not true replicas by the Secretary's Standards, but rather combinations of evidence and knowledge of vernacular Virginia architecture in the early nineteenth century.³²

The Mountaintop Project utilized private donations to fund the archaeology, research, and construction necessary to this project. A ten million dollar donation from David Rubenstein, for whom the new Visitor Center was named, as well as substantial gifts from other families and foundations, made the project a reality.³³ With private donations, the project did not need to comply strictly with the Secretary's Standards for reconstruction, as they might have needed to if funding came from a government-sponsored grant.

Although the "recreated" cabin and storehouse were not carbon copies of their predecessors, they were as historically accurate as possible and helped visitors to Monticello to better imagine and empathize with the experiences of enslaved people who lived and worked on Mulberry Row. The restored road and building recreations brought history to life by presenting a more complete depiction of both the physical environment of Jefferson's Monticello and of the living and working environment for the enslaved people he owned.

Completing the Landscape of the Mountaintop

By reconstructing the road and buildings that comprised Mulberry Row, the Thomas Jefferson Foundation presented a more complete and accurate landscape of the

³² Katelyn Coughlan interview.

³³ Monticello, "\$10 Million Gift Announcement- Monticello Cabinet Retreat," The Mountaintop Project (blog), *Thomas Jefferson Foundation*, April 20, 2013.

Mountaintop as enslaved workers and Jefferson would have seen it in 1809. The predecessor to the Mountaintop Project was the Picturing Mulberry Row project, which created a digital model of Mulberry Row and its changing appearance over time. The project divided the evolution of Mulberry Row into three phases: (1) the beginning of construction until Jefferson departed for France in 1784 (2) an intermediate industrial period, and (3) the period after Jefferson's retirement, beginning in 1809. The thirty-two total buildings that comprised Mulberry Row were demolished, replaced, or renovated during the three phases.³⁴

Jefferson controlled Mulberry Row, aesthetically as well as socially and economically, and this landscape, Mulberry Row, like the entire Monticello plantation, constantly evolved to fit Jefferson's architectural vision.³⁵ The road around which the Mulberry Row hub centered was twelve-hundred feet long and contained twenty-three buildings at its peak.³⁶ Director of Restoration Gardiner Hallock wrote, "Since it is not possible—or desirable—to physically reconstruct all of these buildings, digital reconstructions were found to be an ideal strategy to recreate and interpret the lost landscapes."³⁷ Historic Preservation Architect Jobie Hill worked with RenderSphere LLC to create the digital reconstructions of the landscape (*Figure 2.1*).³⁸ Hill served as the Project Assistant for Picturing Mulberry Row, and then served as Architect of Record for the physical reconstruction of the Hemings Cabin and Iron Storehouse as well as the later stone stable and stone workmen's house restorations.³⁹

³⁴ "View Places," *Landscape of Slavery: Mulberry Row at Monticello, Thomas Jefferson's Monticello Explore Plantation and Slavery Companion Websites*.

³⁵ Hallock, "Build the Negro Houses Close Together," 26.

³⁶ Hallock, "Build the Negro Houses Close Together," 22.

³⁷ Hallock, "Build the Negro Houses Close Together," 23.

³⁸ Jobie Hill, "Jobie Hill CV," *Saving Slave Houses*.

³⁹ Hill, "Jobie Hill CV."

Jobie Hill worked closely with the Departments of Archaeology and Restoration, to produce the digital renderings, and Jefferson's papers, especially his 1796 Mutual Assurance Plat, were invaluable in the eventual reconstruction process. The plat was a document that recorded all of Jefferson's property, both real and human, to insure against fire.⁴⁰ Jefferson included detailed drawings of the buildings on the Mountaintop, including Mulberry Row, in this plat. The paper trail that the Thomas Jefferson Foundation possessed was an anomaly because Thomas Jefferson documented slave dwellings and commercial and industrial spaces far more than his contemporaries. However, Jefferson constantly amended these drawings or designed structures that were never actually built.⁴¹ For this reason, the drawings, although numerous, were not sufficient evidence for the reconstructions. The Secretary's Standards prohibit the construction of buildings that were planned but never actually built, and the constantly changing nature of Mulberry Row and Jefferson's drawings made it impossible to determine which structures had actually been constructed in the past. Because the Department of Restoration could not rely solely on Jefferson's drawings, they combined this documentary evidence with archaeology and knowledge of regional architecture. The digital renderings that Hill created portrayed the size and spatial relationships of the buildings that lined Mulberry Row. The subsequent physical reconstructions took this one step further in bringing Mulberry Row to life for visitors.

From the beginning of construction at Monticello in 1768 to the sale of the property in 1831, the "main street" of Monticello was a bustling center of commerce,

⁴⁰ Thomas Jefferson, "Monticello: building insurance, recto, 1796;" Thomas Jefferson, "Monticello: outbuildings and garden (study), circa 1776–1778," Thomas Jefferson Papers: An Electronic Archive (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 2003).

⁴¹ Jefferson, "Monticello."

production, and domestic life in the Jefferson era. Enslaved workers who lived on the Mountaintop rather than in the fields manufactured nails, spun thread, forged and joined metal, and produced other goods for export—either to the main house or to neighbors. Enslaved workers also grew their own food and made goods for themselves, and they conducted trade on Mulberry Row. The remains of Mulberry Row did not convey the historic importance and dynamism of this space. Archaeology was integral to bringing Mulberry Row to life in a tangible way.

Monticello has been a site of near-constant archaeological work since the 1970s and 1980s, but work on Mulberry Row, specifically discovering and restoring historic roads and later buildings, launched in 2011. Prior to the initiation of the Mountaintop Project, the once-busy hub of Mulberry Row only featured two extant Jefferson-era buildings and did not follow the original footprint of the road. Part of Mulberry Row functioned as a visitor parking lot since the 1920s (*Figure 2.2*).⁴² Excavating the Mulberry Row road and the kitchen road, which ran between the south pavilion and Mulberry Row, was an early step in restoring the Jefferson-era landscape (*Figure 2.3*). The first physical reconstruction involved in the Mountaintop Project was this road, which gave visitors the ability to walk down the road enslaved workers walked and rode down (*Figure 2.4*).

The archaeologists excavated the land along Mulberry Row to find foundations, chimneys, and subfloor pits that evidenced the existence of each building. Excavations

⁴² Craig Kelley and Derek Wheeler, “Roads and Landscape Dynamics on Monticello’s Mountaintop” (PowerPoint presented at Annual Meeting of the Middle Atlantic Archaeology Conference, Ocean City, MD, March 2015).

even uncovered clay daub fragments (daub is the substance that filled the gaps between logs in cabin walls) which revealed log size and shapes.⁴³

The Mountaintop Project led to the “recreation” of two buildings and one road, as well as the ongoing restorations of other buildings. The first recreated building was the “Storehouse for Iron,” which served various industrial purposes over time pertaining to metalwork.⁴⁴ The second recreated building was the Hemings Cabin, a log cabin that John and Priscilla, married members of the Hemings family, might have occupied.⁴⁵ Log construction accounted for almost seventy percent of buildings on Mulberry Row, including the Hemings Cabin and the Storehouse for Iron.⁴⁶

The recreated buildings added to the Mountaintop landscape and facilitated increased interpretation of the site. Senior Archaeological Analyst Katelyn Coughlan argued that although the Mulberry Row recreations were not replicas of the buildings they represented, with slave quarters it was not necessary for the recreations to satisfy the burden of proof required by the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards.⁴⁷ She argued that because Thomas Jefferson documented considerably more than other slave owners did regarding slave quarters, the research was comparatively complete. Coughlan maintained that in this case, even with the 1796 plat and Jefferson’s architectural drawings, there was

⁴³ Hallock, “Build the Negro Houses Close Together,” 24; The daubing provided an opportunity for public education: children who attend summer camp at Monticello re-daub the reconstructed log cabins, learning about historic building technologies and having hands-on experiences.

⁴⁴ Monticello, “Mountaintop Project Commemoration,” The Mountaintop Project (blog), *Thomas Jefferson Foundation*, May 3, 2015.

⁴⁵ Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Inc., “Slavery at Monticello: Life and Work on Mulberry Row,” Apple App Store, Vers. 1.1.1 (2016).

⁴⁶ Hallock, “Build the Negro Houses Close Together,” 30.

⁴⁷ Katelyn Coughlan interview.

less need for a paper trail because archaeological evidence and knowledge of vernacular architecture filled any gaps in knowledge needed to rebuild the structures.⁴⁸

This thesis supports Coughlan's assertion that the reconstructions were appropriate and grounded in sufficient evidence to be faithful representations of the cabin and storehouse. The archaeology and documentary evidence served as the principal resources for the recreations. The Foundation made maximum effort to eliminate guesswork and only used knowledge of vernacular architecture in cases when they needed to fill minimal gaps in evidence. And, the Foundation did not need to strictly comply with the Secretary's Standards as their funding came from private donations. This divergence is what makes the Mulberry Row reconstructions *unique* and fitting for this thesis.

Interpretation and public education took precedence over strict adherence to the Secretary's Standards and reluctance to reconstruct vanished resources. Restoring and reconstructing the landscape of Thomas Jefferson's Monticello allowed visitors to not just picture Mulberry Row, but experience it, and by doing so more easily connect with the people who lived and worked there.

Telling the Narrative of Slavery Through the Landscape

The reconstruction of buildings on Mulberry Row enhanced visitor programming by educating the public about the lived experiences of enslaved people at Monticello as people with their own identities rather than as mere property of Jefferson. Mulberry Row shifted the educational emphasis of Monticello from the Jefferson family in the main

⁴⁸Katelyn Coughlan interview.

house to the plantation's main street and the enslaved (and free) people who lived there. The Mulberry Row restoration and reconstructions also encouraged visitors to confront the contradictions in Thomas Jefferson's ideologies and practices regarding liberty and slavery.

The reconstructed road, slave dwelling, and iron storehouse added depth to visitor experience by further elucidating the lived experiences of enslaved workers that the popular "Slavery at Monticello" tour and the "Slavery at Monticello" app—a product of the Mountaintop Project—conveyed. Seeing and experiencing the recreated buildings invited visitors to learn more about enslaved people by immersion in these spaces.⁴⁹

The physical representations of vanished buildings provided vessels for interpreting enslaved experiences, and the "Slavery at Monticello" app and tour educated guests about these experiences through stories of individuals. This interpretation shared the stories of Buck, Wormley Hughes, Phil and James Hubbard, and many others who worked on Mulberry Row or in the main house as carpenters, blacksmiths, joiners, seamstresses, nurses, cooks and maids.⁵⁰ The recreated Hemings Cabin and Storehouse for Iron gave a setting to the stories of these people.

The Hemings Cabin allowed visitors to connect with the stories of specific enslaved people who lived and worked on Mulberry Row: John and Priscilla Hemings.⁵¹ While the Thomas Jefferson Foundation was unsure which enslaved workers actually lived in the reconstructed cabin, they chose to interpret the cabin as the "Hemings Cabin"

⁴⁹ Hallock, "Reuniting Monticello's Landscape of Slavery;" "Recreation of Jefferson's 'Storehouse for Iron' to Start this Spring!;" "Recreated Slave Quarter Rises from the Past."

⁵⁰ "Discover Work," Landscape of Slavery: Mulberry Row at Monticello, *Thomas Jefferson's Monticello Explore Plantation and Slavery Companion Websites*.

⁵¹ Hallock, "Build the Negro Houses Close Together," 33.

in order to present the most complete narrative through a physical space.⁵² Records showed that John and Priscilla Hemings lived together in a cabin on Mulberry Row, however, no evidence proved they lived in the specific reconstructed cabin.⁵³ Despite this, the Foundation used this cabin to tell the story of the Hemings family, the best-documented family at Monticello, because they would have lived in a similar structure and because visitors could connect better to stories of specific people (*Figure 2.5*). Documentary evidence about the Hemings family replaced the anonymity of attributing this cabin to unspecified enslaved workers, further humanizing the residents. Additionally, relative Sally Hemings was the most well-known of Jefferson's slaves (and the mother to his children), so the Hemings name made the cabin recognizable to a public audience.⁵⁴

With the interpretation focused on specific people, it created a connection between the visitor and the story; this held true with the recreated Storehouse for Iron as well. The space that represented the storehouse contained tools to make visitor experience interactive.⁵⁵ Guests could see the size and conditions in which people worked, bringing the stories of storehouse workers to life. They could hold the tools to experience their weight and feel. This space functioned as a tinsmith shop, blacksmith shop and nailery, and a dwelling.⁵⁶ These crafts and their practitioners became more accessible when they were given a visible backdrop and space that welcomed visitors (*Figure 2.6*).

⁵² Katelyn Coughlan interview.

⁵³ Edwin Betts, ed., *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002).

⁵⁴ "Elizabeth Hemings Family," *Getting Word: African-American Families of Monticello*, *Thomas Jefferson's Monticello Explore Plantation and Slavery Companion Websites*.

⁵⁵ Katelyn Coughlan interview; Author's site visit, March 13, 2018.

⁵⁶ Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Inc., "Slavery at Monticello: Life and Work on Mulberry Row," Website.

The importance of the Mulberry Row restoration was the attention it gave to the lives and experiences of enslaved people as people, not property. A secondary consequence of the project was confronting visitors with the difficulty of reconciling Thomas Jefferson, the founding father who wrote that “all men are created equal” and vocally opposed slavery, with Thomas Jefferson the prolific slaveholder.⁵⁷ Eighty enslaved people lived and worked on Mulberry Row while the Jefferson family owned Monticello, between 1768 and 1831, and far more than that lived and worked in the plantation fields.⁵⁸ Thomas Jefferson publicly supported the gradual freeing and education of slaves, yet he was among the Virginia planters that owned the most slaves, he used corporal punishment, and he separated families through sale.⁵⁹ This juxtaposition of Jefferson’s public values and the reality of his plantation is clear and visible to Monticello visitors because Mulberry Row is clear and visible from the main house. That being said, enslaved people were not just blots on Jefferson’s legacy—they were human beings with their own lives, families, and stories. Thomas Jefferson imposed control over their lives just as he imposed control over the landscape where they lived. The interpretation of slavery at Monticello added complexity to Thomas Jefferson’s image, but presenting enslaved people as people rather than mere property was of higher importance.

⁵⁷ “Thomas Jefferson’s Attitudes Toward Slavery,” *Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello*, Website.

⁵⁸ Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Inc., “Slavery at Monticello: Life and Work on Mulberry Row.”

⁵⁹ Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Inc., “Slavery at Monticello: Life and Work on Mulberry Row.”

Takeaways, Challenges, and Next Steps

The tangibility of the “recreated” road, cabin, and iron storehouse on Mulberry Row added dimension to the Monticello visitor experience and educational programming.

Visitors can now connect to the history of slavery on the plantation when stepping inside reconstructed buildings where enslaved people lived and worked. It was difficult to grasp the stories of enslaved and free people at Monticello without a physical, visual aid, and the recreated buildings filled this void.

While the Mountaintop Project technically concluded in 2015, it has continued into new phases involving the restoration of the stone stable and the wings or pavilions of the main house. There is still work to be done in interpreting slavery at Monticello.⁶⁰ Senior Archaeological Analyst Katelyn Coughlan remarked that in the future, she expects the Foundation to shift their efforts to restoring parts of the plantation field landscape in addition to the work already done on the Mountaintop.⁶¹ The fields and cabins that housed enslaved field workers were integral parts of Monticello, and the modern landscape—tree-covered mountains—does not convey the sheer size of the fields and their importance to the plantation. The Mountaintop Project has helped visitors grasp a more complete understanding and image of life and the landscape of the main street of Monticello, but without visual representation it is still nearly impossible to imagine how vast the five-thousand-acre plantation was.⁶²

⁶⁰ Crystal Ptacek, “Archaeological Excavations at the North Dependency,” The Mountaintop Project (blog), *Thomas Jefferson Foundation*, March 26, 2015; Monticello, “Stone Stable Restoration,” The Mountaintop Project (blog), *Thomas Jefferson Foundation*, June 1, 2016.

⁶¹ Katelyn Coughlan interview.

⁶² Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Inc., “Slavery at Monticello: Life and Work on Mulberry Row.”

Restoring that landscape in part and reconstructing the slave quarters that were in the fields would give visitors more of a sense of where people lived in relation to their working spaces. Virtual reality could also be a frontier for Monticello as James Monroe's neighboring plantation Highland Ash-Lawn has long-term plans to employ this technology to interpret archaeological discoveries of the original Monroe house.⁶³ Jobie Hill's digital renderings of the thirty-two buildings would make this virtual reality endeavor attainable.

Finally, the Mountaintop Project has been successful in portraying the physicality of the landscape of Thomas Jefferson's Monticello and in providing a setting to tell the stories of the enslaved and hired workers that lived and worked there, yet there is room for improvement in communicating to the public that these structures are not surviving buildings from the Jefferson era. With reconstructions or "recreations," transparency is essential: visitors should know the buildings they see are not actually original. Katelyn Coughlan asserted that while the Mulberry Row reconstructions and restorations are communicated verbally on slavery tours, the signage is unclear.⁶⁴ The reconstructions are an effective interpretive tool, but the public should know they are not original. In spite of this, the Mulberry Row reconstructions convey *history that is essential to the public understanding* by giving enslaved people a voice and a setting for their stories to be told.

⁶³ "Science Rewrites History at the Home of President James Monroe," *James Monroe's Highland*, August 10, 2016, Website.

⁶⁴ Katelyn Coughlan interview.

Chapter Two: Corresponding Figures

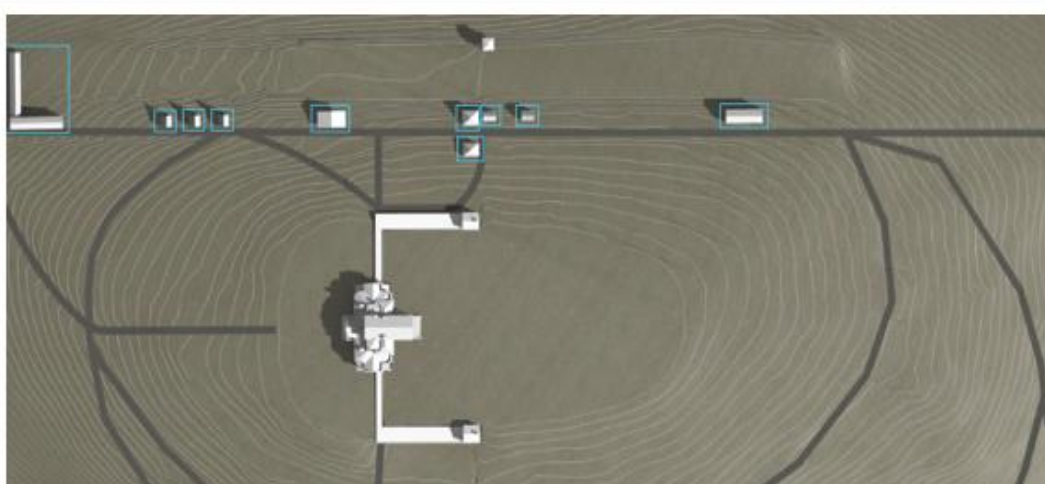


Figure 2.1 Mulberry Row Digital Rendering

This image shows the digital reconstruction of Mulberry Row, Phase 3.
Image courtesy of Rendersphere, LLC.



Figure 2.2 Visitor Parking Lot

This image shows the visitor parking lot on Mulberry Row, c. 1980.
Image courtesy of Derek Wheeler and Craig Kelley



Figure 2.3 Kitchen Road Excavation
This image shows the excavation of the Kitchen Road.
Image courtesy of Derek Wheeler and Craig Kelley



Figure 2.4 Mulberry Row Restored
This image shows the restored Mulberry Row road.
Image courtesy of Derek Wheeler and Craig Kelley

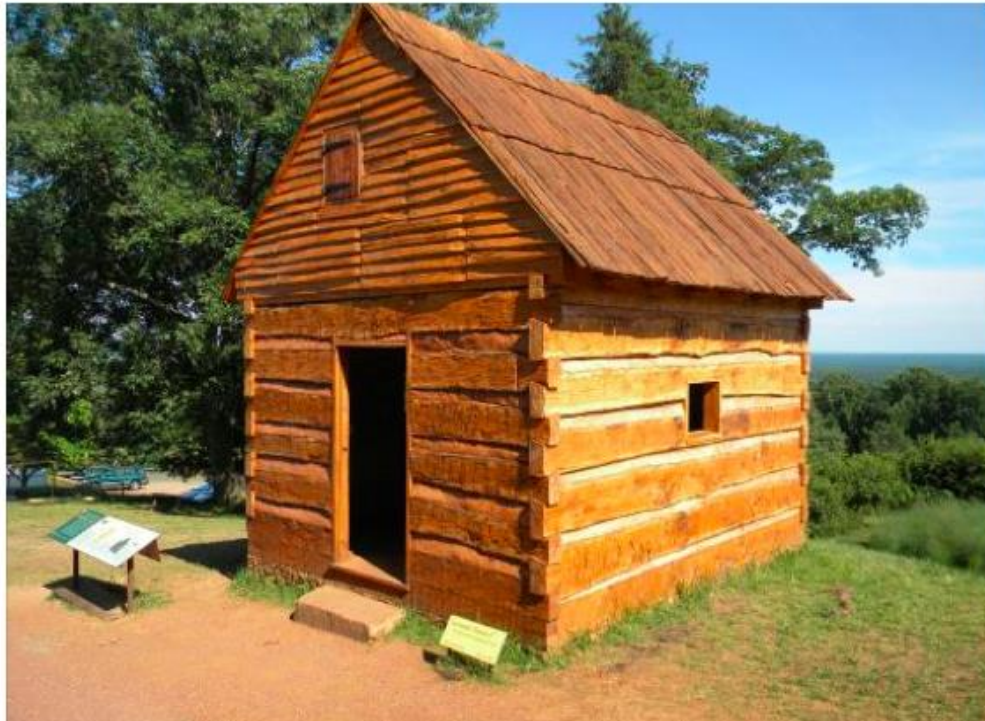


Figure 2.5 Hemings Cabin
This image shows the reconstructed Hemings Cabin.
Image courtesy of Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Inc.



Figure 2.6 Storehouse for Iron
This image shows the reconstructed Storehouse for Iron.
Image courtesy of Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Inc.

Chapter Three

Case Study B: The Cyrus Garvin House

Introduction

Chapter Three analyzes the Cyrus Garvin House, a freedman's cottage in Bluffton, South Carolina, and seeks to answer the question of why the Town of Bluffton elected to reconstruct this almost completely demolished-by-neglect structure. The Garvin House is one of the few examples of extant freedman's cottages in the state of South Carolina and the only surviving freedman's cottage in Beaufort County.⁶⁵ This structure is a part of the small town of Bluffton's local lore and is a testament to the lives of African-Americans in South Carolina during the Reconstruction era, an exceptionally prosperous time for blacks in Beaufort County.

The Town of Bluffton chose to reconstruct the Garvin House (1) to interpret local African-American history, (2) to attract heritage tourism to the rapidly growing town, and (3) to preserve a rare site of Reconstruction-era architecture in South Carolina. This chapter will analyze all three of these factors, each in its own section.

This thesis calls the house the Cyrus Garvin House or the Cyrus Garvin Freedman's Cottage, although the Town of Bluffton refers to the house as the Garvin-Garvey House.⁶⁶ This freedman's cottage belonged to Cyrus Garvin and remained in his

⁶⁵ "Garvin-Garvey Freedman's Cottage," *Town of Bluffton*, Website.

⁶⁶ Bluffton Property Map, 1913, *Town of Bluffton*, Website.

family for almost one hundred years (*Figure 3.1*), but because of a past clerical error, Bluffton residents knew it as the Garvey House.⁶⁷ However, property maps and census records proved the family name was in fact Garvin, so the house should be known as such. Calling the house “Garvin-Garvey” may maintain familiarity for Bluffton residents, but hyphenated monikers for house museum generally denote the names of two families that lived in the house. In this case, Garvey merely recalls an historical error, not a separate family. It is more historically accurate and respectful to use the family’s proper surname and refer to this property as the Garvin House.

Cyrus Garvin was most likely an enslaved man owned by Joseph Baynard, a planter upon whose land Garvin would later build his house. Baynard owned a summer cottage on the land where the house currently sits, and this cottage burnt during the Union Army’s burning of Bluffton in 1863.⁶⁸ Cyrus Garvin most likely constructed his house from materials from this house and other buildings on the property in 1870. Garvin lived on the property with his wife, Ellie, and their son Isaac. Isaac married a woman named Jenny, and the couple had one son, Paul. Jenny was the last person to live in the house—she lived there until her death in the 1950s—and her son Paul inherited the property, although he constructed a second house on the land in 1930 and lived there instead.⁶⁹ The 1870 house stayed in the Garvin family until 1961, when Paul Garvin sold it to another Bluffton resident. From this point, it changed ownership and was assimilated into Oyster Factory Park until the Beaufort County Land Trust acquired the park and Garvin House

⁶⁷ Erin Schumacher, “It Takes a Village: The Garvin-Garvey House” (PowerPoint presented at the South Carolina Statewide Historic Preservation Conference, Columbia, SC, April 2018).

⁶⁸ The Living History Group, “The Garvin House: A Preservation & Interpretation Plan for an 1870 Freedman’s Home,” Prepared for the Town of Bluffton (Summerville, South Carolina, July 15, 2009), 4.

⁶⁹ Erin Schumacher, Senior Planner, Town of Bluffton, SC, interview by Charlotte Adams, Bluffton, SC, May 8, 2018.

in 2001. In 2004 the Town of Bluffton and the Beaufort County Land Trust entered a partnership to maintain the park, and with it, the house.⁷⁰

Unlike the reconstruction of structures on Mulberry Row that Chapter Two explored, the Garvin House project did not stem from private donations or a private foundation, but rather from the town government working with many individuals and organizations. At the 2018 South Carolina Statewide Historic Preservation Conference Meeting in Columbia, South Carolina, Bluffton town planner Erin Schumacher detailed the treatment of the Garvin house in her presentation titled “It Takes a Village.”⁷¹ Schumacher so titled the presentation because of the amount of moving parts that needed to come together in order to realize the project: preservation organizations, preservation consultants, state agencies, architects and engineers, contractors, elected officials, universities, historians and genealogists, town staff, and owners of historic sites.⁷² Despite economic issues and termite-induced setbacks, these groups came together to ensure that this freedman’s cottage would recover from years of deterioration and have new life as a site for interpreting and educating Bluffton residents and tourists about African-American history.

This thesis treats the Garvin House as a reconstruction although the Town of Bluffton called it both a restoration and rehabilitation, because in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for reconstruction, the project “identified, protected, and preserved extant features,” used new materials, returned the house to a set time, and was transparent in informing the public that entire portions of the house, like lean-to

⁷⁰ “Garvin-Garvey Freedman’s Cottage.”

⁷¹ Schumacher, “It Takes a Village.”

⁷² Schumacher, “It Takes a Village.”

porches, were modern recreations.⁷³ The Garvin House was a ruin and deteriorating rapidly, and the town's initiative to reconstruct it guaranteed its survival for the benefit of Bluffton residents and tourists interested in the postbellum Reconstruction era and in African-American heritage.

Interpreting African American-History

The Town of Bluffton undertook the reconstruction of the Garvin House to interpret and share African-American history and culture with residents and visitors. Bluffton lies within the Gullah Geechee Heritage Corridor, the area associated with the prevailing culture of descendants of enslaved people from West Africa. Beaufort County also had an exceptional Reconstruction experience.⁷⁴ As such, this house had potential to serve as a site for interpretation and educating the public not only about the Garvin family, but about Beaufort County's rich black history.

The survival of Gullah Geechee culture in the face of generations of enslavement and interaction with outside European cultures has been a source of pride, and the Garvin House presented a venue to showcase that culture through the former home of a freed slave. The Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor extends along the East Coast from North Carolina to Florida and has been home to generations of enslaved African-Americans and their descendants who maintained their ancestors' distinct culture.⁷⁵ The term Gullah Geechee likely stemmed from an abbreviation of the West African nation "Angola" and the Georgia "Ogeechee" river through which many enslaved people arrived

⁷³ *Secretary's Standards*, revised 2017, 225; Schumacher, "It Takes a Village."

⁷⁴ Barack Obama, "Establishment of the Reconstruction Era National Monument," A Proclamation by the President of the United States of America, January 12, 2017.

⁷⁵ "Garvin-Garvey Freedman's Cottage."

to the corridor.⁷⁶ Gullah Geechee people remained in the South Carolina Lowcountry and Sea Islands rather than migrating west or north following emancipation, and because of this and the relative insulation of their community, their culture remained intact.⁷⁷ The African-Creole language, Baptist and African inspired religion, crafts, folklore, and foodways of Gullah Geechee people are unique and pervasive in Lowcountry culture.⁷⁸ Bluffton residents considered making the Garvin- Garvey house a community center for Gullah Geechee heritage: they deliberated its use as a bookstore, art gallery, or a stand-alone gift shop.⁷⁹ Ultimately, the town planners and preservation consultants involved in the project determined that the house would tell the story of a Gullah Geechee family and operate as an educational and interpretive, rather than solely commercial, space.

The Cyrus Garvin Freedman's Cottage had the potential to teach the public about the Beaufort County Reconstruction experience because former slave Cyrus Garvin constructed and navigated his newfound freedom within its walls. While history textbooks have often painted postbellum Reconstruction of the former Confederate states as a failure, it was a time of unprecedented opportunity for previously enslaved and free blacks.⁸⁰ Reconstruction in South Carolina saw the largest number of blacks elected to the State legislature of any other southern state, and Beaufort County's experience of Reconstruction—specifically in the Town of Beaufort—was the most remarkable.

⁷⁶ National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, "Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Management Plan," *Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor*, 2012, 5.

⁷⁷ National Park Service, "Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Management Plan," 6.

⁷⁸ Carolyn M. Coppola, "Preserving Culture by Rewriting History: Interpreting Sites in the Lowcountry Antebellum Planters' Summer Cottage Community of Bluffton, South Carolina," Master's Thesis, Savannah College of Art and Design, 2013, 26.

⁷⁹ Erin Schumacher interview.

⁸⁰ Gregory P. Downs and Kate Masur, "The Era of Reconstruction 1861-1900: A National Historic Landmarks Theme Study," National Historic Landmarks Program National Park Service U.S. Department of the Interior, 2017.

Enslaved people in Beaufort were among the first to gain their freedom in November of 1861, over a year before President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation liberating slaves in the Confederate States.⁸¹ Beaufort planters and other whites fled at the approach of Union troops during the Civil War, and with their owners absent and Union troops occupying the town, blacks had the opportunity to create a free community complete with churches and praise houses, an active Freedman's Bureau, and compulsory public schools.⁸² Notable African-American South Carolinian Robert Smalls hailed from Beaufort and returned there after his service for the Union during the Civil War. Smalls was an enslaved wheelman on the *C.S.S. Planter* who organized other enslaved workers on the ship to commandeer and deliver it to the Union Army.⁸³ Smalls escaped slavery and joined the Union Army, then after the war went on to serve in the South Carolina General Assembly and then the United States House of Representatives for five terms. The people of Beaufort preserved Smalls's house, which he bought from his former owner following Emancipation, and popular national history podcasts and shows have given increasing attention to his story.⁸⁴ With Smalls's legacy proliferating and the Reconstruction era receiving different treatment by historians and in schools, the Town of Bluffton followed this trend and utilized the Garvin House to tell a more local Reconstruction history.

Additionally, President Obama's January 2017 Presidential Proclamation to create a National Monument of Reconstruction in Beaufort drew national attention to African-

⁸¹ Obama, "Establishment of the Reconstruction Era National Monument."

⁸² Downs and Masur, "The Era of Reconstruction 1861-1900: A National Historic Landmarks Theme Study," 32.

⁸³ Obama, "Establishment of the Reconstruction Era National Monument."

⁸⁴ "Charleston: Robert Smalls Steals the C.S.S. Planter," Drunk History, *Comedy Central*, June 29, 2014.

American history in the Lowcountry.⁸⁵ This Proclamation provided for the protection and interpretation on a large scale of Reconstruction sites in Beaufort.⁸⁶ The Garvin House in Bluffton added another story to the interpretation of Reconstruction and black history in Beaufort County.

Attracting Heritage Tourism

A major goal for the reconstruction of the Garvin House was to attract heritage tourism: to draw visitors from other parts of the state and country to visit an historic house and learn about the Reconstruction era in Beaufort County. The Town of Bluffton applied for and received the Undiscovered SC Grant from the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism, which funded projects that would increase tourism to an area.⁸⁷ With Bluffton booming in terms of population and tourists, this project created a destination to draw in newcomers and tourists.

Bluffton is a small town experiencing rapid growth in population, tourism, and retiree relocation. It originated in the mid-nineteenth century as a summer cottage community for Lowcountry planters, and remained a small community after the Civil War and throughout the twentieth century.⁸⁸ The “Old Town” of Bluffton only spanned one square mile, but recent annexes in the past have added over 35,000 acres to the town and grown the town population with it.⁸⁹ Bluffton has also become a major tourist and retirement destination because of its warm weather, slow pace, southern charm and

⁸⁵ Obama, “Establishment of the Reconstruction Era National Monument.”

⁸⁶ Obama, “Establishment of the Reconstruction Era National Monument.”

⁸⁷ Schumacher, “It Takes a Village.”

⁸⁸ Coppola, “Preserving Culture by Rewriting History,” 3.

⁸⁹ Schumacher, “It Takes a Village.”

architecture, location in the Lowcountry, and proximity to Hilton Head Island and Beaufort.⁹⁰

The Town of Bluffton staff thought the Garvin House could perhaps draw a different heritage tourist audience to Bluffton: one wanting to learn about the area's African-American history and culture. The Bluffton Historical Preservation Society would operate the Garvin house and all public tours therein, and also manage the Cole-Heyward House, an historic summer cottage of wealthy white planters.⁹¹ Although the slave quarters at the Cole-Heyward House were part of the interpretation, the addition of the Garvin House diversified the stories the Society told the public.

The Bluffton Historical Preservation Society was able to use the reconstructed house as a teaching tool for visitors. The property featured educational signage, and a docent offered tours of the house.⁹² The first story of the house also featured a video detailing the reconstruction process and the efforts and community support that made it possible.⁹³ In this way, the tour pulled back the metaphorical curtain to invite the public to learn about the interpretation and preservation of an historic resource rather than simply presenting the final product. This method has become increasingly prevalent in the public history field. Public historians strive for transparency.⁹⁴

The Garvin House's location was also a draw for heritage tourists as Oyster Factory Park sits on a bluff overlooking the May River and is home to the only remaining

⁹⁰ Katie Peterson, Town Planner, Town of Bluffton, SC, interview by Charlotte Adams, Bluffton, SC, May 8, 2018.

⁹¹ PRESCON Preservation Consulting Services, "Cole-Heyward House Historic Structures Report and Restoration Report," Bluffton Historical Preservation Society, Bluffton, 2001, 6.

⁹² "Garvin-Garvey Freedman's Cottage."

⁹³ Author's site visit, May 8, 2018.

⁹⁴ Robert Weyeneth, "What I've Learned Along the Way: A Public Historian's Odyssey," *The Public Historian*, Vol. 6, No. 2, (May 2014), 9-25.

hand-shucking oyster factory in South Carolina, thus attracting residents and tourists alike.⁹⁵ For years, however, the Garvin house was an eyesore and a safety hazard. While the house was still technically extant, it was in ruins. A chain-link fence kept the public away from the unstable and unsightly building (*Figure 3.2*).⁹⁶ The decision to reconstruct this mid-nineteenth-century home resulted in an interpretive center and focal point for park visitors. The reconstruction, restoration, and rehabilitation of the Garvin House into a museum welcomed tourists and residents to learn about the freedman's cottage and the family that built and occupied it.

Preserving a Freedman's Cottage

Because the Cyrus Garvin House was the only surviving freedman's cottage in Beaufort County, it was vital to save this rare architectural form from complete demolition-by-neglect. Reconstruction-era vernacular architecture did not utilize permanent materials (those were too expensive), so few such freedman's cottages have stood the test of time.⁹⁷ And, although Bluffton residents did not know much about the history of the Garvin family, the "Garvey House" on the May River existed in local lore.⁹⁸ The town recognized the importance of this rare historic resource, and despite challenges, successfully rescued the house.

The Garvin Freedman's Cottage was a typical example of nineteenth-century vernacular Lowcountry architecture, and this was the state to which the house was

⁹⁵ Erin Schumacher interview.

⁹⁶ Schumacher, "It Takes a Village."

⁹⁷ The Living History Group, "The Garvin House: A Preservation & Interpretation Plan for an 1870 Freedman's Home," 12.

⁹⁸ Schumacher, "It Takes a Village."

reconstructed. The walls were hand-hewn and notched timber and the house featured a central hall plan.⁹⁹ It also received shed porch additions, and a remodel introduced a Georgian I-shaped floor plan.¹⁰⁰ Before the project initiation, the house also featured a large chimney that was demolished during the reconstruction process as it was not from the determined period of significance.¹⁰¹

The process of reconstructing the house took almost a decade from start to finish, but challenges caused a halt during the first five years. The Town used steel I-beams and wooden cribbing to stabilize the house in 2008, and in 2009, the Living History Group, a consulting firm from Charleston, South Carolina, prepared a preservation plan for the Garvin House (*Figure 3.3*).¹⁰²

When the Great Recession hit soon after, a lack of funding put the project on hold. After economic recovery, the Town listed the project as high priority in 2013, but a year prior, a termite infestation had caused the wooden cribbing used for the original stabilization to fail, completely undoing the previous work (*Figure 3.4*).¹⁰³

The Town collaborated with university students, local historians, and preservation organizations to restart the project, and Meadors, Inc. to reassess the condition of the structure and prepare a new preservation plan (*Figure 3.5*).¹⁰⁴ Town planners also applied for and received a Federal Historic Preservation Grant from the South Carolina Department of Archives and History (in addition to the Discover SC Grant) which helped pay for the project.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁹ "The Garvin House: A Preservation & Interpretation Plan for an 1870 Freedman's Home," 14.

¹⁰⁰ "The Garvin House: A Preservation & Interpretation Plan for an 1870 Freedman's Home," 12.

¹⁰¹ "The Garvin House: A Preservation & Interpretation Plan for an 1870 Freedman's Home," 6.

¹⁰² "The Garvin House: A Preservation & Interpretation Plan for an 1870 Freedman's Home."

¹⁰³ Erin Schumacher interview.

¹⁰⁴ Schumacher, "It Takes a Village."

¹⁰⁵ Schumacher, "It Takes a Village."

The Garvin House project was a reconstruction, despite the Town of Bluffton's consideration that the historic treatment Meadors, Inc. utilized was a restoration or rehabilitation. This is because the project entailed the disassembly and complete rebuilding of an almost completely demolished resource. Before the Town of Bluffton made the Garvin House a priority, it was a ruin. The "village" that executed the reconstruction rebuilt it from foundation to roof, and the Live Oak Engineering, Project Management, and Construction Consulting Firm also reconstructed totally non-extant historic lean-to additions for the house (*Figure 3.6*).¹⁰⁶ Yet fortunately, unlike in a traditional reconstruction, enough materials remained intact in the ruins for Meadors to analyze building materials, keep the floor plan intact, and use paint analysis.¹⁰⁷

The rarity of the freedman's cottage building type and the broad patterns of history it represented made its reconstruction worth the challenges. The Garvin House sheltered three generations of Cyrus Garvin's family as they experienced Reconstruction and early segregation. It was vital to protect this building because it survived from a period of extreme social and political upheaval and evidenced the changes experienced by newly-emancipated blacks.

Takeaways, Challenges, and Next Steps

The Cyrus Garvin House reconstruction exemplified the importance of community support and partnerships in public history. This project did indeed "take a village," and it resulted in the transformation of an unsafe eyesore into a local historic treasure. The Freedman's Cottage is now accessible and inviting. It welcomes residents and heritage

¹⁰⁶ Schumacher, "It Takes a Village."

¹⁰⁷ Schumacher, "It Takes a Village."

tourists to learn about Gullah Geechee heritage, African-American history, and the era of Reconstruction, during which the black population of Beaufort County experienced prosperity.

Town planners Erin Schumacher and Katie Peterson concurred that despite challenges and some future uncertainty, the project was a success.¹⁰⁸ The house is once again intact and the Bluffton Historical Preservation Society offers regular tours and interpretation to visitors.

The Great Recession and subsequent termite damage posed major challenges to the Garvin-Garvey House reconstruction project, but Bluffton Town planners and community members recognized the value of reconstructing, restoring, and rehabilitating the house. Frequently house museums face funding issues, for once a valuable resource has been saved, it still must be financially viable. Now that town planners have stabilized and rebuilt the house, they must generate sufficient funds to maintain it. Additionally, the Bluffton Historical Preservation Society will need to determine a source of funds to pay the interpreters that work at the house. There is also the question of paying hospitality and accommodation taxes on the land.¹⁰⁹

Despite this, the decade-long process is complete and the Garvin House has added another site to the cultural landscape of the Reconstruction era in Beaufort County (*Figure 3.8*).

¹⁰⁸ Erin Schumacher interview; Katie Peterson Interview.

¹⁰⁹ Erin Schumacher interview.

Chapter Three: Corresponding Figures



Figure 3.1 Bluffton Property Map, 1913
This image shows the 1913 property map of Bluffton.
Image courtesy of Town of Bluffton



Figure 3.2 Garvin House Ruins
This image shows the Garvin House, c. 2005.
Image courtesy of Erin Schumacher



Figure 3.3 Garvin House Stabilization
This image shows the Garvin House after initial stabilization, c. 2008.
Image courtesy of Erin Schumacher



Figure 3.4 Failed Stabilization at Garvin House
This image shows the Garvin House after the cribbing failed, c. 2012.
Image courtesy of Erin Schumacher



Figure 3.5 Restabilized Garvin House
 This image shows the Garvin House after restabilization, c. 2014.
Image courtesy of Erin Schumacher



Figure 3.6 Rear Lean-to Reconstruction
 This image shows the reconstruction of the Garvin House rear lean-to, c. 2016.
Image courtesy of Erin Schumacher



Figure 3.7 Completed First-Story Interior of Garvin House
 Image shows completed interior of Garvin House first story, c. 2017.
 Image courtesy of Meadors, Inc. and Joshua Drake



Figure 3.8 Completed Exterior of Garvin House
 Image shows completed exterior of Garvin House, c. 2017.
 Image courtesy of Meadors, Inc. and Joshua Drake

Chapter Four

Case Study C: The Mann-Simons Site

Introduction

Chapter Four focuses on the Mann-Simons Site in Columbia, South Carolina, and seeks to answer the question of why Historic Columbia elected to reconstruct five demolished buildings using steel-frame “ghost structures” on the site in spring 2012. This case study showcases the importance of conveying history *essential to the public understanding* through the steel-frame reconstruction of one African-American family’s domestic and commercial buildings. The Mann-Simons Site links the three eras of African-American history this thesis explores: slavery, Reconstruction, and segregation. Therefore, it is an ideal example of the necessity of preserving—and in some cases reconstructing—sites that encourage visitors to reckon with these challenging chapters of the American past. Furthermore, this site also shows one family’s triumph over racism and legal segregation. In the steel-frame reconstruction of five ghost structures at the Mann-Simons Site, Historic Columbia’s objectives were (1) to interpret an important site of African-American history and (2) to promote access to this site among a broad spectrum of visitors (*Figure 4.1*) This chapter will analyze both objectives, each in its own separate section.

The domestic and commercial spaces that once comprised the Mann-Simons Site tell important stories about Columbia's African-American heritage and offer the non-profit Historic Columbia valuable opportunities to interpret and engage with Columbia's black heritage and community. The Mann-Simons Site was once home to the same African-American family for over two hundred years. During the family's unbroken ownership between 1843 and 1970, family members witnessed the Civil War, Reconstruction, and segregation.¹¹⁰ The Mann-Simons family skillfully navigated these tumultuous eras as entrepreneurs and gained prominence as community members. Before arriving in Columbia, enslaved Charleston boatman Ben Delane purchased his freedom and purchased his wife Celia Mann, an enslaved midwife. The couple left their lives in Charleston and relocated to Columbia, where Ben built the original cottage on the site by 1843, prior to the Civil War.¹¹¹ Descendants of Mann and Delane occupied the land over two centuries, playing significant roles in Columbia's free black community through their entrepreneurial endeavors and church activity.¹¹² The site itself developed from a single residence to a compound of buildings and structures, reflecting the family's growing household, work, and civic activities.

The preservation of the Mann-Simons cottage in the 1970s allowed Columbia residents to learn about a free black family that negotiated their identity within first a slaveholding society, then a postbellum Reconstruction society, and finally a segregated society.

¹¹⁰ Robin Waites, Executive Director, Historic Columbia, interview by Charlotte Adams, Columbia, SC, April 2, 2018.

¹¹¹ "Mann-Simons Site," *Historic Columbia*, 2018, Website.

¹¹² "Mann-Simons Site."

The residence located at 1403 Richland Street was the only structure from the Mann-Simons property to remain extant.¹¹³ By 1872, this cottage was the second home the family built on this site (*Figure 4.2*).¹¹⁴ Over time, the family constructed other buildings on property including a grocery, a lunch counter, a privy, and three additional residences. However, most of these structures fell victim to the wrecking ball in 1970 as part of urban renewal demolition that transformed downtown Columbia. Grassroots preservationists saved the cottage from demolition, and in 1978, the cottage opened as a museum of African-American history and culture.¹¹⁵ In 1990, Historic Columbia acquired the property and began to interpret the house and tell the story of the family who lived and worked there.

In the 2000s, Historic Columbia undertook a major archaeological initiative to learn more about the family, their enterprises, and the spaces in which they lived and worked. Between 2005 and 2012, archaeologist Jakob Crockett, initially a graduate student at the University of South Carolina and later Director of Archaeology at Historic Columbia, conducted excavations and research on the Mann-Simons Site. Through his work, Historic Columbia acquired material culture elucidating the family history and discovered the archaeological footprints of the buildings that once stood on the site.¹¹⁶

In order to incorporate Crockett's findings into the historic site interpretation, Historic Columbia erected steel-frame ghost structures on the foundations of the other buildings scattered throughout the property in 2012. In 2015, Historic Columbia utilized

¹¹³ "Mann-Simons Site."

¹¹⁴ C.N. Drie, "Bird's Eye View of the City of Columbia, 1872," Image (Baltimore, 1872), Library of Congress Geography and Map Division.

¹¹⁵ "Mann-Simons Site."

¹¹⁶ Jakob D. Crockett, PhD., *Archaeology at the Mann-Simons Site (38RD1083): Report of Findings, Vol. 1*, (Columbia: Historic Columbia Foundation, 2013), Historic Columbia Mann-Simons Files.

\$2,500 awarded by the National Trust for Historic Preservation through the Terrence Mills Fund for North and South Carolina Grant, as well as \$19,000 in matching funds donations, to finance wayside signage and other construction elements necessary to complete this project.¹¹⁷ Combining Jake Crockett’s archaeological evidence with family histories, Historic Columbia enacted major changes on the physicality of the site and the story that it told to the public.¹¹⁸ Through the Mann-Simons project, Historic Columbia also expanded the definition of the *public* by reaching out to a broader audience.

Framing an Interpretation “Essential to the Public Understanding”

The first objective of “Re-imagining the Mann-Simons Site” was to create an interpretive tool that provided a physical representation of the site’s evolution over time. According to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for reconstruction, this treatment option is appropriate only when it is *essential to the public understanding*. In the case of the Mann-Simons Site, Historic Columbia believed reconstructing the five vanished buildings on the site using steel-frame ghost structures would allow audiences to “get it” in a way that imagining them simply could not.¹¹⁹ It would be far easier for people to understand a space they could physically experience than it would be for them to try to visualize one that no longer existed.

In building and interpreting the ghost structures, Historic Columbia filled an “interpretive void” on this site that held tremendous importance and educational potential

¹¹⁷ “Project Budget,” *National Trust Preservation Funds Final Report: “Re-Imagining the Mann-Simons Site: Interpretation and Access,”* Prepared by Robin Waites, Historic Columbia, April 30, 2013, Historic Columbia Mann-Simons Files.

¹¹⁸ Robin Waites interview.

¹¹⁹ John Sherrer, Director of Cultural Resources, Historic Columbia, interview by Charlotte Adams, Columbia, SC, March 20, 2018.

for African-American history and Columbia history at large.¹²⁰ The impetus for this increased interpretation of and access to the site was to emphasize “the role that Jim Crow [segregation] had in shaping the experiences of blacks and whites [and] the architecture of segregation and why preserving this link to our shared past is important.”¹²¹ The new, grant-funded interpretation of the site utilized material culture and family histories to understand the lived experiences of the Mann-Simons family and to convey it to the public through new signage and the ghost structures.¹²² While Historic Columbia’s interpretation of the Mann-Simons family was previously isolated to the cottage itself, they now had a platform to discuss entrepreneurship and development of the site over time. Jakob Crockett’s seven years of archaeological research unearthed a wealth of information that Historic Columbia could interpret and communicate to the public. The literal breaking of ground at Mann-Simons was figuratively ground-breaking as well; this was the first African-American site excavated in Columbia, and the only free African-American excavation site in South Carolina at the time.¹²³

Historic Columbia decided to reconstruct five ghost structures to “convey the spatial relationships that other family-owned buildings once had with the extant cottage, meanwhile challenging visitors to consider how [subsequent] ‘urban renewal’ has altered our city landscape” through demolition.¹²⁴ Seeking to share the stories of the family and the site, Historic Columbia utilized the funds from the National Trust grant to produce

¹²⁰ “Project Outcome,” *National Trust Preservation Funds Final Report: “Re-Imagining the Mann-Simons Site: Interpretation and Access.”*

¹²¹ “Reimagining the Mann-Simons Site: Interpretation and Access,” 7.

¹²² John Sherrer interview.

¹²³ Christopher Ohm Clement, Ramona M. Grunden, and John K. Peterson, “History and Archaeology at the Mann-Simons Cottage: A Free Black Site in Columbia, South Carolina” (Columbia: South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, 1999), Historic Columbia Mann-Simons Files; Crockett, *Archaeology at the Mann-Simons Site*.

¹²⁴ “Reimagining the Mann-Simons Site: Interpretation and Access,” 4.

nine wayside signs to accompany the ghost structures. These included text, artifact photos, and historic images that expanded on the history of the family.¹²⁵ The reconstruction project created ghost structures representing two residences (built 1870s), a lunch counter (1890s), a grocery store (1890s), and a privy (1840s) that stood on the property.¹²⁶ These ghost structures served as frameworks through which Historic Columbia could interpret and communicate the story of the Mann-Simons family that occupied and transformed the site for over two hundred years.¹²⁷

Historic Columbia elected to use steel frames rather than to fully reconstruct the vanished buildings from brick and mortar for several reasons. The structures were visually interesting, they demonstrated the negative effects of racially-fueled urban renewal, they were more practical and financially viable, and lastly, constructing the ghost structures did not require as much photographic and architectural evidence as full reconstructions would. Historic Columbia possessed sufficient archaeological, photographic, and Sanborn Fire Insurance map evidence to recreate the skeletons of the vanished buildings, but not enough to mimic the building materials and technologies that a full reconstruction compliant with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards would require (*Figure 4.3*).¹²⁸

Visually, the steel frame ghost structures were eye-catching art installations in addition to modes of conveying history. They were sculptural rather than simply structural. Director of Cultural Resources John Sherrer had seen ghost structures

¹²⁵ "Project Outcome," *National Trust Preservation Funds Final Report: "Re-Imagining the Mann-Simons Site: Interpretation and Access."*

¹²⁶ Jakob D. Crockett, "A Democracy of Goods: an Archaeology of Commodity Landscapes in Columbia, South Carolina, 1870-1930," Master's Thesis, University of South Carolina, 2011.

¹²⁷ John Sherrer interview.

¹²⁸ Crockett, *Archaeology at the Mann-Simons Site*.

previously at Tredegar Iron Works, a unit of the Richmond National Battlefield Park in Virginia, and Sherrer elected to use them at the Mann-Simons Site because they were an aesthetically captivating and effective tool for interpretation.¹²⁹

By creating the five steel frame ghost structures, Historic Columbia emphasized the effects of urban renewal on sites of African-American history. The ghost structures would serve as abstract structures that evidenced the erasure of the buildings they mimicked. These structures recalled resources that have vanished: they were ghosts. They were not meant to be fully corporeal, but rather representative. The outbuildings on the Mann-Simons Site were no longer extant as a result of race and class-fueled urban renewal policies. In the 1970s, immediately following the end of de jure racial segregation, the City of Columbia demolished many downtown buildings in order to “fight blight,” and most of these so-called blighted areas were home to African-Americans.¹³⁰ To fully reconstruct the demolished buildings at the Mann-Simons Site from brick and mortar would have been misleading to a public audience.¹³¹ It would have removed the layer of history that saw these structures demolished due to a perceived lack of value of African-American historical sites.

Practical factors like cost and material durability influenced the decision to use steel frame ghost structures. Constructing the skeleton of a building was far less expensive than the cost of replicating an entire building using historic building technologies. The ghost structures Sherrer saw at Historic Tredegar in the 1990s were

¹²⁹ John Sherrer interview.

¹³⁰ Central Midlands Regional Planning Council, “Neighborhood Analysis of the Columbia, S.C. SMSA,” Neighborhood Analysis (Columbia, SC: Department of Housing and Urban Development, June 1973), Thomas Cooper Library.

¹³¹ Robin Waites interview.

pressure-treated wood rather than steel.¹³² Originally, Historic Columbia planned to erect wooden ghost structures at Mann-Simons like the ones at Tredegar. However, the structures needed to be financially viable—not just to build, but also to maintain.¹³³ From an interpretive standpoint, the use of wood frames was more compatible with the original frames of the reconstructed buildings, but the upkeep of wood was too demanding. While steel construction was expensive in terms of acquiring, welding, and painting the steel, wood required more maintenance to combat weather-related warping over time. Steel ultimately was more practical, durable, and cost-effective in the long term. Using frames gave the project—including construction, labor, and signage—a total cost of \$21,500.¹³⁴

Finally, Historic Columbia possessed sufficient evidence to recreate the skeletons of the vanished buildings, but not enough for a full reconstruction compliant with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards (*Figure 4.4*).¹³⁵ Crockett’s archaeology, family photos, and Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps provided concrete evidence of the locations of the buildings and how the site evolved over time. However, without blueprints, knowledge of building materials, and sufficient photographic evidence, Historic Columbia could not faithfully reconstruct the buildings in full.

Executive Director Robin Waites described the steel-frame structure construction process as a “perfect storm” (in a good way): the elements came together to make a financially prudent and striking result.¹³⁶ Because the ghost structures were not inhabitable, the City of Columbia government considered them “art installations” rather

¹³² John Sherrer interview.

¹³³ Robin Waites interview.

¹³⁴ “Project Budget,” *National Trust Preservation Funds Final Report: “Re-Imagining the Mann-Simons Site: Interpretation and Access.”*

¹³⁵ Crockett, *Archaeology at the Mann-Simons Site*.

¹³⁶ Robin Waites interview.

than buildings. Therefore, the zoning and permitting process was far less complicated for the structures than it would have been for a building in the same location.¹³⁷ Additionally, archaeologist Jake Crockett's father Mark Crockett was an experienced welder, so utilizing his skills made steel frames an even more cost-effective and convenient choice. Finally, Historic Columbia received an in-kind donation of concrete and labor from Hood Construction, a local construction company that was working on another Historic Columbia house museum, the Robert Mills House, concurrently. Hood Construction installed the concrete footers that support the steel frames. A local design company, Palmetto Decorators, provided an in-kind donation of white paint to seal and protect the steel (*Figure 4.5*). These factors resulted in abstract and stimulating ghost structures that provided freedom of interpretation for visitors, allowing them to place their own ideas on the structures.¹³⁸

Promoting Access for a Broad Range of Visitors

The second objective of “Re-imagining the Mann-Simons Site” was to provide access to a broader audience by engaging with a different visitor demographic. According to Executive Director Robin Waites, a major goal of the project was to “strengthen Historic Columbia as a community resource and facilitator.”¹³⁹ By creating a free outdoor museum on the site to draw in low-income neighbors and by collaborating with local high school students through the Richland County School District One Career and Technology Education (CATE) department, Historic Columbia hoped to increase its community

¹³⁷ John Sherrer interview.

¹³⁸ Robin Waites interview.

¹³⁹ Robin Waites, Notes for Terrence Mills Grant Application, January 2012, Historic Columbia Mann-Simons Files.

engagement and disseminate the site's racially relevant history to a wider audience than before.

With the ghost structures and corresponding signage, Historic Columbia aimed to “grant optimum public access” to the Mann-Simons Site, and its highly visible location helped make this feasible. Mann-Simons sits on a high-traffic corner lot in downtown Columbia, making it an ideal location for Historic Columbia to draw in passersby who might not usually visit an historic site (*Figure 4.6*).¹⁴⁰

Because the ghost structures were eye-catching and prompted passersby to ask questions, John Sherrer and Robin Waites would often receive inquiries from Columbia residents who mistakenly assumed the structures were unfinished and asked Historic Columbia when they would be completed.¹⁴¹ The structures drew attention as white skeletal frames that they might not have as brick and mortar replicas, allowing Historic Columbia to attract passersby and atypical visitors. Sherrer noted that he frequently saw people walk by and stop to read the signage, their interest piqued, to find out more about the cottage and structures.¹⁴² Historic Columbia's intention in reconstructing these sites was for passersby and community residents to understand the whole picture of the Mann-Simons family and to demonstrate the evolution of the site over time without having to pay to step inside the cottage or receive a guided tour.¹⁴³

It was vital for accessibility purposes to make the space attractive and welcoming because many museums can seem to be exclusionary spaces, catering to only a certain

¹⁴⁰ “Mann-Simons Site;” 1403 Richland Street sits on the outskirts of the newly branded Robert Mills District, a largely commercial neighborhood that is home to large, turn-of-the-century houses that are now law offices and businesses. However, its location in the district is in a residential area.

¹⁴¹ Robin Waites interview; John Sherrer interview.

¹⁴² John Sherrer interview.

¹⁴³ Robin Waites interview.

part of the population, such as middle and upper-class whites. In 2010, the United States' minority population was forty-six percent, yet only nine percent of museum visitors were minorities.¹⁴⁴ Visiting a museum could also be prohibitive because of costs or hours of operation. Creating a free outdoor museum open at all hours addressed both of these challenges, providing access to a valuable piece of Columbia's African-American history to people without money and at any time of day.¹⁴⁵

Affordability was imperative to Historic Columbia because the site was adjacent to a Columbia Housing Authority project, and the neighborhood had a large homeless population. In fact, the Columbia Housing Authority owned the land upon which Jakob Crockett conducted a significant portion of site excavation and where most of the ghost structures now stand.¹⁴⁶ The proximity of the Marion Street High Rise, the Columbia Housing Authority housing project on this land, necessitated a partnership with the Columbia Housing Authority to make the Mann-Simons project a reality.¹⁴⁷

Historic Columbia's proximity and successful partnership with the Columbia Housing Authority sparked additional community engagement through the archaeology and construction processes because the residents of the Marion Street High Rise became protective of the site. Prior to construction, the homeless population of Columbia in 2011 was approximately 1,600, and a significant portion of this population lived downtown, quite close to the Mann-Simons Site.¹⁴⁸ Some members of the transient population in the

¹⁴⁴ Betty Farrell and Maria Medvedeva, "Demographic Transformation and the Future of Museums," *Center for the Future of Museums, an Initiative of the American Alliance of Museums*, 2010, Website.

¹⁴⁵ "Project Outcome," *National Trust Preservation Funds Final Report: "Re-Imagining the Mann-Simons Site: Interpretation and Access."*

¹⁴⁶ "Public Housing," *The Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, S.C.*, 2018, Website; The Columbia Housing Authority houses 15,000 residents.

¹⁴⁷ Robin Waites interview.

¹⁴⁸ "Facts on Family Homelessness," *Family Shelter SC*, 2011, Website.

neighborhood would sleep on the back porch of the Mann-Simons cottage or deal drugs on the Marion and Richland street corner by the house. The protective Columbia Housing Authority neighbors made sure these passersby did not negatively interact with the site. This thesis must clarify, however, that many homeless people in the neighborhood did not have ill intentions and did feel the same pride and interest in the project as the people Sherrer saw stopping to read the signage.

In addition to providing access to a different demographic by creating a free outdoor museum, Historic Columbia engaged local high school students through Richland County School District One's CATE department. CATE's mission is to "afford students the opportunity to receive college credit, state and nationally recognized industry certifications, internships, technical skills, infused academics, leadership skills and participation in student organizations and technical honor societies."¹⁴⁹ They fulfill this mission through "work-based learning" experiences, including apprenticeships, internships, career mentoring, and service learning.¹⁵⁰

In the Mann-Simons project, Historic Columbia partnered with local teenagers through CATE, exposing them to the history of the house and family. Jakob Crockett, his father Mark Crockett, and the students were responsible for the design and construction of the ghost structures. CATE trained the students to use AutoCAD technology to render the structures based on Jakob Crockett's archaeological work.¹⁵¹ CATE students presented the designs for the ghost structures to the Design/Development Review Commission of the City of Columbia, the body responsible for design compliance in

¹⁴⁹ "Career and Technology Education: Learning Today, Earning Tomorrow, Preparing Future Professionals," *Richland One*, 2018, Website.

¹⁵⁰ "Career and Technology Education."

¹⁵¹ Auto-CAD (Computer-assisted design) is a computer program used for creating architectural renderings.

City-protected historic districts.¹⁵² Finally, Mark Crockett helped the students to weld the steel-frame structures. The Mann-Simons project engaged students that might not regularly visit house museums or learn about the family's history. CATE let these students be a part of creating a historic resource, or rather, recreating a resource lost.

Today the ghost structures promote wider community access to the history of the Mann-Simons Site through the annual Jubilee: Festival of Black History & Culture. This free outdoor festival celebrates African-American heritage on the block where the Mann-Simons Site stands.¹⁵³ The festival is another chance for Historic Columbia to attract visitors to the space through public programming. Jubilee began in 1978 when the Mann-Simons cottage first opened as a museum, but the outdoor museum aspect has added more historical exposure to the experience. At Jubilee, guests can explore the ghost structures and signage and learn the story of the family while enjoying art, music, dance, storytelling, and food (*Figure 4.7*).¹⁵⁴

By increasing community engagement through a free outdoor museum and partnerships with the Columbia Housing Authority and Marion Street High Rise residents as well as CATE students, Historic Columbia made themselves a “community resource and facilitator” and realized their goal of site accessibility.

Takeaways, Challenges, and Next Steps

Historic Columbia was able to meet its goal of increased accessibility by reaching out to nontraditional visitors and by providing new interpretive experiences for traditional

¹⁵² Robin Waites interview.

¹⁵³ “40th Annual Jubilee: Festival of Black History & Culture,” *Historic Columbia*, 2018, Website.

¹⁵⁴ “40th Annual Jubilee.”

visitors. The National Trust for Historic Preservation grant that funded the wayside signage required a follow-up report to explain how Historic Columbia utilized the funds and if they met their goals. In this report, Robin Waites confirmed: “By offering new materials at the Mann-Simons Site in a free-accessible fashion, Historic Columbia Foundation was able to both better engage existing audiences, such as heritage tourists, and new audiences, such as those citizens living and working in the neighborhood who do not take traditional tours of historic sites.”¹⁵⁵

Robin Waites and John Sherrer both found the project to be successful as it accomplished their goals for interpretation and access. Sherrer remarked that if he could change anything about the project, he would install steel muntins in the ghost structure windows to make the effect less abstract. He also would reconstruct the original cottage on the site – this was not possible because the building footprint extends well into the Marion Street High Rise property.¹⁵⁶ However, these were his only proposed changes, and Robin Waites stated that she would do the project the same if she were to do it again.¹⁵⁷

The ghost structures add an immersive component to the landscape of the Mann-Simons Site, and they draw the attention of people exploring the area. While John Sherrer argues that this has increased community engagement, this assessment is problematic. Historic Columbia does not currently employ any method to determine how many passersby are actually reading and absorbing the information presented by the new wayside signage. Despite this, in the author’s own experience, the ghost structures

¹⁵⁵ “Project Outcome,” *National Trust Preservation Funds Final Report: “Re-Imagining the Mann-Simons Site: Interpretation and Access.”*

¹⁵⁶ John Sherrer interview.

¹⁵⁷ John Sherrer interview; Robin Waites interview.

fulfilled their purpose of drawing in—and at the very least sparking the curiosity of—Columbia residents and visitors.

Ultimately, the five structures that Historic Columbia, CATE, and the Crocketts did erect: the grocery, the lunch counter, a privy, and two residences, effectively conveyed the spatial relationships and change over time experienced on the site due to family growth and later Urban Renewal demolition.

The addition of wayside signage and continuing public programming at the Mann-Simons Site ensured that the Mann-Simons family's story would be told. With educational archaeology field trips for students and the upcoming fortieth Jubilee Festival this September, Historic Columbia will continue to utilize the ghost structures to provide interpretation and access to visitors and Columbia residents (*Figure 4.8*).

Chapter Four: Corresponding Figures



Figure 4.1 Mann-Simons Cottage
Image shows the Mann-Simons Cottage, c. 2016.
Image courtesy of Historic Columbia

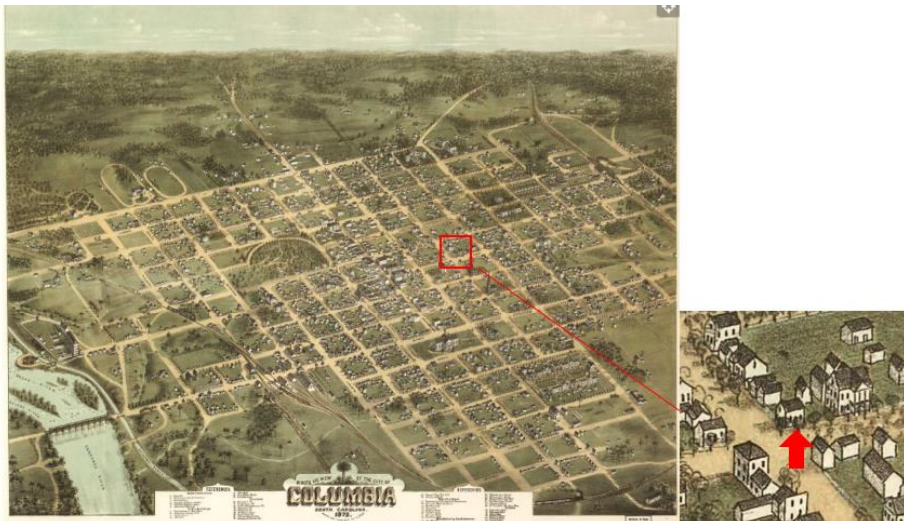


Figure 4.2 1872 Bird's Eye View of Columbia
Image shows Mann-Simons Cottage on C.N. Drie's 1872 Bird's Eye View of Columbia.

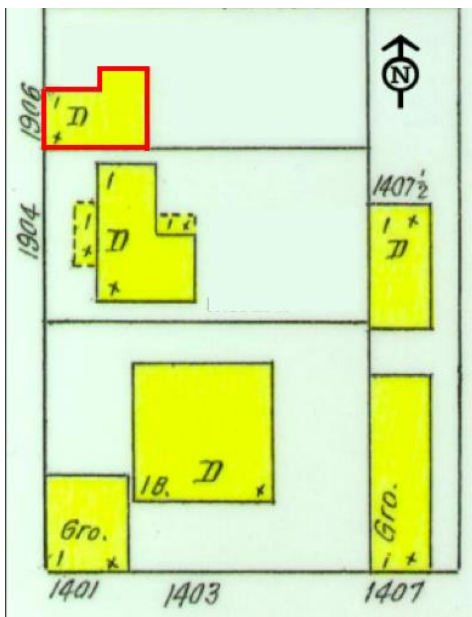


Figure 4.3 1904 Sanborn Map

1904 Sanborn Map showing Mann-Simons Site. Red outline denotes 1906 Marion Street, not reconstructed.

Image Courtesy of University of South Carolina Libraries

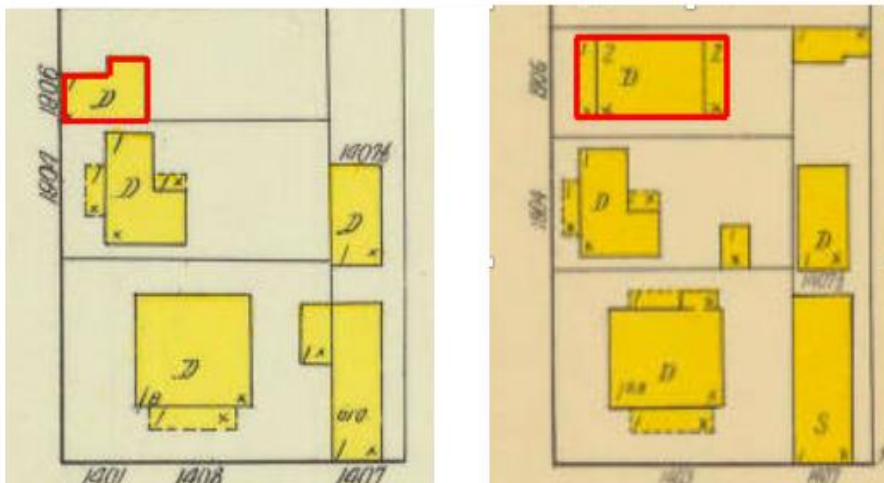


Figure 4.4 1910 and 1919 Sanborn Maps

Images show the Mann-Simons Site in 1910 and 1919. Red outline denotes 1906 Marion Street, not reconstructed. Note that the two maps show different residences at this address—1906 as demolished and replaced in this time. Building formerly at southwest corner of property (Sanborn 1904) no longer extant.

Image courtesy of South Caroliniana Libraries



Figure 4.5 Lunch Counter Ghost Structure

Image shows the ghost structure representation of the lunch counter, west of cottage. (Building visible on 1904 Sanborn Map).

Image courtesy of Historic Columbia

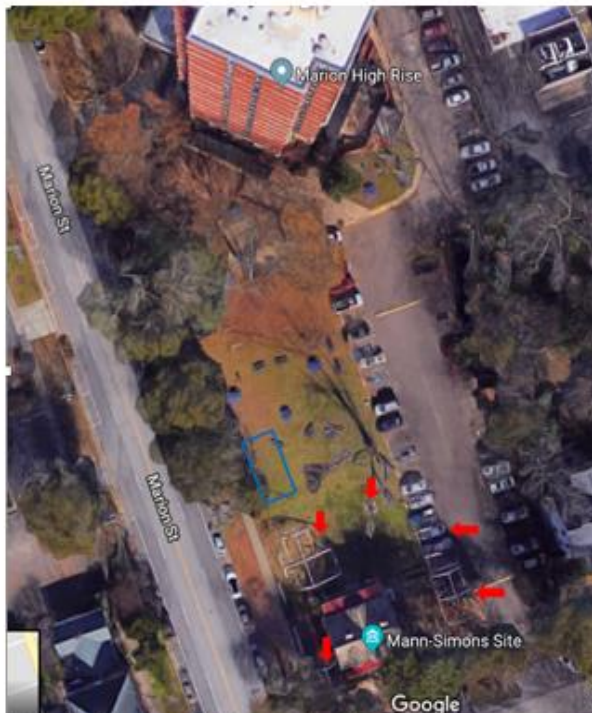


Figure 4.6 Mann-Simons Site Aerial View

Image shows the Mann-Simons Cottage, ghost structures, and spatial relationship of the site to Marion Street High Rise. Red arrows point to ghost structures. Blue outline shows location of nonreconstructed residence (not to scale)

Image courtesy of Google Earth



Figure 4.7 Jubilee Festival

Image shows two women enjoying the Jubilee Festival at the Mann-Simons Site. Ghost structures representing the outhouse, grocery, and one residence are pictured.

Image courtesy of Historic Columbia



Figure 4.8 Historic Columbia Summer Camp

Image shows children at Historic Columbia summer camp playing on the ghost structure representing the residence at 1904 Marion Street. (Northwest of cottage, visible on Sanborn Maps).

Image courtesy of Historic Columbia

Chapter Five:

Conclusion

This thesis has analyzed three case studies in order to understand why stewards of historic sites choose to reconstruct resources that were no longer extant. Research found that each site decided to reconstruct with the primary goal of educating the public, although each organization had more nuanced motivations than this. The Thomas Jefferson Foundation aimed to present a more complete understanding of the physical landscape of the Monticello Mountaintop as well as a more complete interpretation of slavery through the reconstructions of the Hemings Cabin and Storehouse for Iron on Mulberry Row. The Cyrus Garvin House reconstruction aimed to interpret African-American history, attract heritage tourism, and rescue a rare architectural form. The Mann-Simons Site treated a longer period of time spanning from slavery through segregation, but focused mainly on the era of segregation; in this steel-frame reconstruction project, Historic Columbia had the dual intentions of increasing interpretation of Columbia's black history and increasing access to Historic Columbia's resources.

The extent of reconstruction that each case study site employed differs, with Monticello executing the most complete brick-and-mortar (or log-and-daub) reconstruction and Mann-Simons executing the most ephemeral and perhaps evocative. The Mulberry Row reconstructions recreated vanished log cabins using historic building

materials and technologies, but Monticello calls these “recreations” because it was uncertain that the buildings were completely accurate as the Foundation utilized knowledge of similar slave cabins to fill in gaps in the evidence. The Garvin House reconstruction was an interesting case, because the cottage was still technically extant, although in ruins. This thesis treated it as a reconstruction because construction entailed completely disassembling then *reconstructing* the house from foundation to roof. The reconstruction incorporated new building materials and completely recreated lean-to additions that time had erased. The final product was a completed house, but this was a less extensive project than Monticello because the Town of Bluffton did not have to start from scratch. Finally, Historic Columbia chose to use steel-frame ghost structures at the Mann-Simons Site, so while Historic Columbia started from scratch as well, the final products were abstract outlines of the structures rather than completed buildings.

The locations of the sites, methods of fundraising, and types of organizations spearheading the reconstructions varied as well. While the three sites were all located in the Southeast, with Monticello in Virginia and the Garvin House and Mann-Simons Site in South Carolina, their settings differed. Monticello was an isolated mountaintop site, so no one could visit it unintentionally. Those who viewed Mulberry Row did so because they were visitors to Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello. The Garvin House sat within a public park, so visitors to the park would see the cottage. However, the park was not centrally located within Bluffton’s town center, so it was a low-traffic area. The Mann-Simons Site, on the other hand, sat on a high-traffic corner in the downtown area of the state’s capital city. It received more unintentional visitors and passersby than the other, more isolated sites. Funds for the Monticello Mountaintop Project came from private

donations, while the majority of funding for both the Garvin House and Mann-Simons Site came from grants. And, with Monticello, the private Thomas Jefferson Foundation elected to reconstruct the Mulberry Row buildings. Having private leadership and private funding gave this project less constraints. The Town of Bluffton spearheaded the Garvin house project, relying on community support to make it a reality. Historic Columbia is a nonprofit organization in a mid-sized city, so they needed to be the most practical in terms of raising funds and following city regulations. The factors of location, funding, and organization type manifested in the final results of these reconstruction projects.

Despite these differences and the challenges encountered during each reconstruction process, the professionals who were interviewed unanimously felt that their projects had been successful. The Mulberry Row reconstructions had “a huge impact on engaging with the space” for visitors.¹⁵⁸ The option to touch and enter into these buildings added (third) dimension to the interpretation of enslaved experiences presented through “Slavery at Monticello” tours. The Garvin House project transformed an unsafe eyesore into a local historic treasure and space for telling African-American history. The Mann-Simons Site used the steel-frame reconstruction of five resources as a preservation strategy to interpret and make accessible two-hundred-thirty years of an African-American family’s history. The ghost structures successfully added a tangible aspect to this example of African-Americans “negotiating Civil War, Reconstruction, and segregation.”¹⁵⁹

Throughout this thesis, the author has argued for a more inclusive definition of reconstruction. The case studies that this thesis utilized did not comply with the Secretary

¹⁵⁸ Katelyn Coughlan interview.

¹⁵⁹ “Reimagining the Mann-Simons Site: Interpretation and Access,” 4.

of the Interior's Standards, but they were reconstructions nonetheless. This is because they yielded corporeal, tangible structures that provided immersive experiences for public audiences. Reconstruction includes more than complete brick-and-mortar exact replications of nonextant historic resources. The Mulberry Row, Cyrus Garvin House, and Mann-Simons Site reconstructions did not possess the paper trail required by the Secretary's Standards, and they did not result in carbon copies of their preceding buildings. However, the interpretive and immersive opportunities that physical structures representing nonextant historic resources presented outweighed the necessity to adhere to the Secretary's rigid standards.

In conclusion, these case studies exemplified historic sites choosing to reconstruct absent spaces of African-American history to educate the public about previously marginalized groups and time periods. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for reconstruction require a heavy burden of proof, specifying that organizations should only reconstruct when a reconstruction would be "essential to the public understanding."¹⁶⁰ Undoubtedly, preserving resources pertaining to underrepresented groups or difficult chapters of the American past is necessary. Historiographical trends reflect this increased emphasis on telling marginalized stories. This thesis, however, argued the necessity of going beyond preservation in some cases when it was too late to preserve these significant resources because they had been lost to time or demolition. In these instances, it was indeed essential to the public understanding to reconstruct these resources in order to share their important stories, even when (and at times *especially* when) these reconstructions pushed the boundaries of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

¹⁶⁰ *Secretary's Standards*, revised 2017, 225.

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Appendix A: Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Reconstruction

Standards for Reconstruction

1. Reconstruction will be used to depict vanished or non-surviving portions of a property when documentary and physical evidence is available to permit accurate reconstruction with minimal conjecture and such reconstruction is essential to the public understanding of the property.
2. Reconstruction of a landscape, building, structure or object in its historic location will be preceded by a thorough archeological investigation to identify and evaluate those features and artifacts which are essential to an accurate reconstruction. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
3. Reconstruction will include measures to preserve any remaining historic materials, features, and spatial relationships.
4. Reconstruction will be based on the accurate duplication of historic features and elements substantiated by documentary or physical evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different features from other historic properties. A reconstructed property will re-create the appearance of the non-surviving historic property in materials, design, color and texture.
5. A reconstruction will be clearly identified as a contemporary re-creation.
6. Designs that were never executed historically will not be constructed.