

Session Three:

BLACK CULTURAL LANDSCAPES AND INSTITUTIONS

Although many were enslaved well into the nineteenth century, people of African descent infused their African cultural traditions in domestic spaces, public and secret routes, the education of their young, burial practices, and other aspects of their physical and social environments. Related historic places include, but are not limited to, schools, churches, gardens, cemeteries, settlement patterns, places of spirituality and worship, houses, transportation routes, and places of assembly and social interaction.

Africanisms in the “Old Ship of Zion”: What Are Their Forms and Why Do They Persist?

Audrey Brown

Interwoven Traditions: Archaeology at The Conjuror’s Cabins and African American Cemetery at the Jordan and Frogmore Plantations

Kenneth Brown

Some Evidence of African Cultural Traditions Among the Residents of Black Church Centered Farming Communities in North Central Louisiana

Joe Lewis Caldwell



**Places of Cultural Memory:
African Reflections on the American Landscape**

Africanisms in the “Old Ship of Zion”: What Are Their Forms and Why Do They Persist?

Audrey Brown

In 1980, my husband and I went to live with his mother’s people in rural north central Florida. We left Interstate 75 at Ocala, and headed west on SR 40 for about eight to ten miles. There, just off the road as it turned from asphalt to dirt, we found New Zion Baptist Church. We were in the heart of Zion, where African Americans have lived for at least 178 years, first as maroons, then as slaves, and then as free pioneers. Where they once homesteaded, now a few members of those families continue as a community, in a place of cultural memory, an African American ethnographic cultural landscape called Zion (pseudonym).(1)

The landscape concept derives from the art world where beginning in the sixteenth century painters depicted rural scenery as an idealized or imagined place where people lived, divorced from the realities of the everyday real world.(2) Anthropologists use the concept of an ethnographic landscape as a framing convention as they try to distinguish between the “objective” outsider’s view of place, and the insider’s or “native’s point of view.” We describe the objective and interrogate how, as Setha Low put it, “place becomes space made culturally meaningful.”(3) In this paper I aim to uncover how, in Zion, African Americans created and sustained such a place for generations. I argue that some of the “Africanisms” I found in Zion helped sustain this community for more than a century on African American archaeology.

Precinct 4

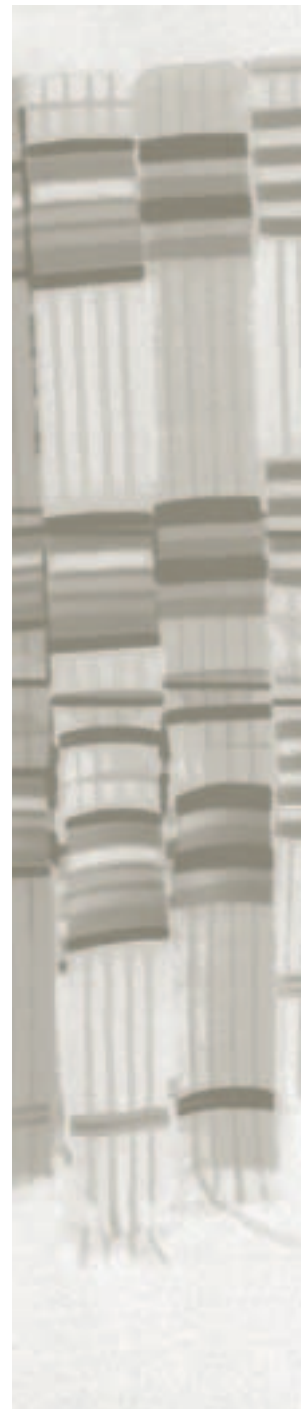
The place that people who live here call Zion, United States Census Population schedules call Precinct 4. Oral history, historical documents, tombstones, maps, and references to the population from 1828 through 1875 suggests that most Zionites are descendants of maroons, freed slaves, and Seminole Indians.(4)

In 1828, J. C. Ley, a Methodist Circuit rider was traveling through Florida preaching to settlers, their slaves, maroons, and Seminoles. In his diary, Ley says he heard about a group of blacks living with the Indians a few miles west of Camp King, the general location of present day Zion.(5) He set out to find them hoping they would translate his message to the Indians. Ley tells of finding the Indians and about fifty blacks who came out of the woods led by Pompey, the “father and grandfather and leader of them all.”(6)

Early maps of Florida mark “Negro Town” at the mouth of the Withlachochee River, and Negro towns along the Suwanee River. Zion is geographically located between the Withlachochee and Oklawaha Rivers. Comparison of the 1860 and 1870 census schedules for Precinct 4 show a dramatic increase in the black population. This finding supports historical accounts that after the Afro-Seminole Wars some maroons went into hiding only to reemerge after the Civil War. It also supports oral history and written historical accounts of slaves leaving South Carolina and Georgia plantations during the final days of the Civil War, traveling by boat along the Georgia coastal waters, down the St. John, and Oklawaha Rivers to freedom in the isolated thickets of Central Florida.(7) Zion is an ethnographic cultural landscape full of structures, sites, and places of memory to descendants of seven African American families enumerated there in the U.S. Census of 1870 and the Florida State Census of 1875.(8)

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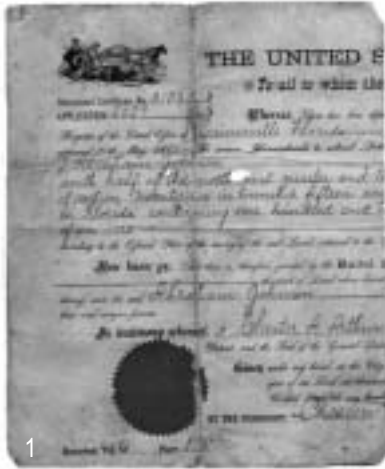


Figure 1. Homestead Deed of Abraham Lincoln Johnson.

Figure 2. Old Zion Church built circa 1900.

Figure 3. New Zion Baptist Church, Zion, Florida built circa 1950.

Figure 4. Friendship Church in Martel, Florida built circa 1900-1915 by people of Zion for migrant African American workers in lime quarries, on roads and railroads.

Figure 5. Women Worked in the Fields.



Around 1863 my husband's great-grandparents, Abraham Lincoln and Melinda Johnson, runaway slaves from South Carolina, first camped in the woods of present day Zion. By 1870, one finds the Staggers, Mobleys, Austins, Robinsons, Carters, and Jacobs lived nearby. In the 1880s these seven families, and their descendants formally homesteaded the lands on which they settled.(Figure 1) The Lewis brothers joined them and married their daughters. The Wilson brothers and Joe Mae-weathers did the same thing ten years later. One hundred years later, I recorded accounts of life in Zion, as the children and grandchildren of these African American pioneers remembered it, or as their elders recalled it to them.(9)

Between 1870 and 1880, "Uncle" Oliver Lewis, an ex-slave Baptist deacon from Virginia, and "Aunt" Suzie Staggers, the community midwife, began to hold Baptist church meetings in Zion "peoples homes," then in "bush harbors." "Aunt" Suzie was the first Mother of the Church. The people built a cabin church on land donated by Huldy Austin, who later became the second Mother of the Church. Huldy Austin was also a community midwife. Between 1885 and 1890, "Aunt" Suzie's son, Reverend Henry Staggers, was called to pastor the church. He continued to pastor there until his death in the 1940s. His daughter, "Cousin" Rea, the Mother of the Church when I lived in Zion, remembered her father holding services in a one-room frame church, before he built "Old Zion" around 1900.(Figure 2) "New" Zion church followed a half century later.(Figure 3) Zion settlement was named after the church. Zion Church, like other rural churches, was originally a family church, with no outside membership. To keep it that way, one person told me the community men built another little church for "them boys who come

down here to work in the turpentine stills and quarries."(10)(Figure 4)

Old Zion Church, like the other Baptist churches that mushroomed across the rural south after the Civil War, was the center of community life. From Old Zion and the other churches sprang schools, benevolent and mutual aid societies, and social institutions that sustained community life.–Between 1869 and 1889, Zion churchwomen were among the Afro-Baptist women who formed 28 women's societies in Florida to help ex-slaves.(11)

Between 1900 and 1940, when the hamlet was at its zenith, about 300 Zion people farmed over 1700 acres of homestead land. They were mostly subsistence and small cash crop farmers of cowpeas, corn, and rice. The community grew as women birthed families of five to ten children. Taking their small babies with them, women worked the fields along side of the men.(Figure 5) Some tasks were the sole province of women such as delivering babies, caring for the elderly and children, and treating common illnesses with herbal remedies.(12) Even in the 1980s there were some women who still farmed, and all women, regardless of education and occupation, were responsible for providing, and cooking vegetables and other staple foods for the family, and caring for the elderly and the young.(13)

My husband and I first lived in one of three houses still found on his great-grandfather's homestead. It was a tin-roofed cement block house that had been built in 1959. The rooms ranged in size from eight feet by eight feet, to 12 feet squared. The cabin behind it in the northeast was about a 12 feet squared room with another smaller room behind, and a little eight feet by eight feet room, built out in front on one side of the porch.–It had wooden windows and an open hearth for cooking and warmth.(14)

There was frame shotgun house behind our house to the southwest, back about 50 feet.–The rooms in the frame house were small, no larger than ten feet by ten feet. Like most houses in Zion, all three of these houses had porches.

The Staggers home, about one-half mile east of where we lived, was a modified shotgun house. There were two rooms built parallel to the basic two-room, shed kitchen model. In 1980, it was still heated by an open hearth. Two of Suzie Stagger's granddaughters lived there along with their extended families. None of the rooms in this house exceeded ten feet by ten feet. Nearby, there were ruins of a building of the same design that had been home to another one of their sisters. About 50 feet away, a third building that had housed their youngest brother, had been torn down and replaced by a trailer.

The Mobley land began just beyond the Staggers. When we first came to Zion there were seven Mobley home sites, four houses, one ruin, and two trailers. Malachi, whose mother was a Mobley, preserved his mother's home after her death. He lived next to it in a trailer about 25 feet away. Three other buildings on Mobley land were home to an elder Mobley man and his cousins, two elderly sisters. These homes, built about 25 to 30 feet apart, were the same design as Malachi's mother's house and about the same size. (Figure 6) They had small rooms about ten to 11 feet squared. After the elder Mobley died, the houses were torn down and four trailers erected. Although the trailers had larger rooms and they were located on several acres of land, the close settlement patterns persisted.

Younger people, like Pauline, a school teacher, and her husband, a retired military person, built their home with seven rooms and a porch, none of which exceeded the 12 feet by 12 feet

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dimensions that we shall see was characteristic of colonial African American domiciles. In 1986, J.B.'s cousin Georgie, a retired postal worker, built her mother a "new" house. The rooms in the new home, built by a local African American contractor, are about 12 by 12 feet or less. I asked myself what does it mean that Zion people with the means to build spacious houses recreate rooms the same size as the houses built by their foreparents? What are the origins of the architectural styles and settlement patterns found in Zion? To answer that question I turned to the archaeological record of colonial African American sites in low country South Carolina, the place of origins of almost all the people who settled Zion.(15)

Archaeological Evidence

Yaughan and Curriboo plantations operated in an isolated area of South Carolina low country from 1740 through the 1820s. During the 1700s the ratio of Africans to Europeans was 15:1, and population increases resulted from fresh infusions of Africans. Natural increase resulted in the 27:1 ratio found after the Revolutionary War. During this period, slave families were kept together, even when estates were settled, a factor promoting stable family life. Left largely on their own under these conditions, Africans and their descendants had cultural autonomy that was reflected in their material culture.(16) They established and maintained a society that Berlin argues was based on an African model. The fact that Mintz and Price argued for a Caribbean model, Wheaton and Garrow comment, "does not change the fact, however, that the slaves who inhabited Yaughan and Curriboo maintained a material culture that was distinct from that extracted from Euro-American sites."(17)

Figure 6. Malachi Green's Mothers House. Circa 1930s. Zion, Florida. Preserved by Mr. Green in memory of his mother.



Figure 7. Cabin of freed Negroes in Virginia.

Figure 8. Haitian-West African Architectural Form.





Figure 9. Front view of house built by enslaved BaKongo.



Figure 10. Modified Shotgun House, Front view. Cotton Plant, Florida 1985.

House Architecture

Three distinct slave quarters were excavated, early Yaughan (1750-1780), later Yaughan (1780s-1820s), and one slave quarter at Curriboo occupied from the 1740s until shortly after 1800. The architectural features of these structures present a clear picture of change from mud-walled huts, evidenced by wall trenches with cob-wall construction in the earliest structures, to frame houses constructed on posts after the Revolutionary War.(Figure 7) The Early Yaughan structures had no chimneys. Evidence of an open hearth directly on the earthen floor was found in one house along with the bottom of another hearth outside the houses.(18)

The dimensions of the Yaughan and Curriboo houses varied in size between periods: the earlier structures had ranged from 12.5 feet by 11 feet to 13.5 feet by 20 feet, three of the later structures were 14.5 feet by 9.8 feet to 15.5 feet by 10 feet in dimension. Most were rectangular and housed one family.(19)

Settlement Patterns

In the early slave quarter, one set of Yaughan houses are located approximately 25 to 50 feet apart in a circle. A second set is adjacent to each other approximately 25 feet apart. A third set of structures show a similar pattern. At Curriboo, houses are 50 feet or less apart. Wheaton and Garrow concluded that settlement patterns and architectural form of the buildings on Yaughan and Curriboo plantations appeared to have

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antecedents in West Africa, and “probably represents a West African Architectural form.”(20)

Other scholars commenting on architectural form and settlement patterns of eighteenth and early nineteenth century African Americans, both slave and free, agree that the patterns seen reflect West African origins. Vlach, commenting on architectural form and settlement patterns on enslaved African American constructions, noted the 12 feet square unit, the presence of porches, and close settlement patterns resonates with houses constructed in Haiti and West Africa.(21) (Figure 8) Deetz made similar comments about the closeness of settlement patterns in an excavation of houses built by free African Americans in Massachusetts. He concludes that the close settlement patterns at the site differed significantly from their Yankee contemporaries and that they “reflect a more corporate spirit than four Anglo-Americans might show under similar circumstances.”(22)

By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, African American architecture featured the shotgun house, one room wide, two or three room deep house with a forward-facing gable and porch.(Figure 9) A modified shotgun house was built with two room additions along the side of the basic floor plan. The second Florida house we lived in followed this pattern, with room sizes ranging from ten feet to the 12 feet-square dimension.(Figure 10) It was located in a family clearing along with two trailers. One author comments that the close settlement patterns are African ways of expressing kinship and corporate closeness through physical nearness.(23) The persistence of small room size in African American architecture might also express the same kinds of African values.

Zion people still live in “micro” settlements of extended families, their homes built close together. The older houses, and some new ones, replicate the architectural characteristics of their foreparents. History shows there were close connections between post-emancipation land use and familial and kin beliefs of freed men and women. Of particular concern to freed slaves were their “old and infirm Mothers and Fathers and our children.”(24)

During the Great Migration, people left Zion, and over the years much of the land was sold to “outsiders,” both African Americans and whites. Today, relatively few Zionites actually live in the circumscribed area around the church building. Those that do are mostly middle age and elderly people. Yet, Zion community and New Zion Baptist Church persist as a culturally meaningful place to Zionites across the state and the nation, connected by modern transportation and communication networks. Wherever they live, people return periodically for church services. Some come annually for Homecoming Sunday in July. Others come only for Home-Going Celebrations when people die. The turnout for the Mother of the Church, Cousin Rhea, in 1993 was one of the largest in recent years. Mothers Day services draw the largest congregations.

Kinship, community, and funeral celebrations are all significant aspects of West African culture. Along with the housing and settlement patterns, it seems to me there are also reflections of West African influences in the matrifocality in family and church life.

Matrifocality in the Social Organization of Zion

Zion social organization is matrilineal, matrifocal, and matrilineal in family and in the church.(Table 1) When asked, people say they live near their mother’s people even though their father’s people also live in the community. They attend their mother’s church. Men who marry into the community attend their wife’s mother’s church. People venerate their mothers and motherhood. If women do not bear children, they adopt them. Elderly mothers have the greatest prestige in Zion. Adult children will visit their mothers frequently and elderly mothers are visited daily. Women and men will provide physical care for their mothers as needed. When a daughter or granddaughter are unavailable to give care, other women, cousins, nieces, and daughters-in-law help. If no one else is available a son will live with his or mother and take care of her. People reckon descent through their mothers, again even when their father’s people live in the community.

The New Zion Baptist Church social organization is also characteristically matrilineal, matrifocal, and matrilineal. People attend their mother’s church. Men who marry into the community attend their wife’s mother’s church. If a man from the community marries a woman from another church, at least one of his children, usually a daughter, will attend his mother’s church, but the rest of the children attend their mother’s church. A man or woman who marries into the community may be “funeralized” at New Zion but they are buried in the cemetery of their mother’s church. Prestige in the church is determined by gender, age, descent, and religious commitment. Elderly women who never left

Family and Church Social Organization		
Social Organization	Family	Church
Matrilocal	People live near their mother's people	People attend their mother's church
Matrifocal	Veneration of motherhood and mothers. Expressed in biological of fictive motherhood. Expressed in physical care for elderly mothers.	Elderly women are called "church mothers." Highest prestige accorded elected "Mother of the Church"
Matrilineal	People reckon descent through their mother's family	Mother of the Church Office only held by female descendents of first and second Mothers of the Church (circa 1880-2001)

Table 1. Comparison of Family and Church Social Organization

the church, called church mothers, have greater prestige than even the deacons. The church social organization is illustrated by the way Zion elders arranged themselves for photographs. The oldest women are in front with those descended from the original families in the middle. Their younger sisters and cousins are on the second row. Cousin Rea, for example, 93 years old, Mother of the Church and granddaughter of the first Mother, would sit in the center. "Aunt" Sister, the granddaughter of Huldj Austin, would sit next to Cousin Rea, dressed in white. The women on the ends of the front row are an "incomer" on the right and an "outsider," on the left. The men arranged themselves behind the women by age, then by family descent of their wives or mothers.

The most prestigious woman's role is Mother of the Church. Theoretically she is elected from among all the church mothers. However, a pattern of what

seems to be matrilineal succession is evident among all the women who have been elected.(Figure 11)(25)

"Africanisms" in American Culture: Women's Church Roles along the Continuum

Locating the presence of this black cultural landscape was relatively straightforward. Linking house architecture and settlement patterns to West African customs and material culture can be supported or refuted by observation. However, making the argument that matrifocality in Zion family and church social organization are "Africanisms" is more problematic. Social scientists question, if there are Africanisms in African American culture, how does one identify them and explain the persistence of some African cultural traditions and not others? Herskovits held that

what he called "Survivalisms" are likely to be found in religious cultural forms and that one could best identify African patterns by comparing the intensity with which they present themselves along a continuum, beginning in the Caribbean and ending in urban areas of North America. If the form was of African origin, he theorized, it would be most recognizable and intense in the Caribbean and least evident in the northern urban milieu.(26) Following his model, I searched for the presence or absence of a woman with the title, role and functions like the "Mother of the Church." I looked at Jamaica Revivalists and Spiritual Baptists of Barbados,(27) two religious communities with ethnohistorical linkages to North American Afro Baptists dating back to the late eighteenth century.(28) I also searched for evidence of an emphasis on "Mother" in New Ferryfield Baptist Church on John's Island, South Carolina; Salem Baptist Church in Washington, DC; and Kaighn Avenue Baptist Church in Camden, New Jersey.

I found the title of "Mother" used in different variations for elderly women of prestige was more or less emphasized in all of the religious communities except in New Jersey. Just as Herskovits predicted, the northern most, urban church demonstrated least evidence of the cultural form. Kaighn Avenue Baptist Church, established in 1854, is one of the oldest Afro-Baptist congregations in New Jersey. In a 1986 interview, the present pastor told me there was no one with the title of Mother of the Church. At Salem Baptist Church, established in 1874 in Washington, DC, the Mother of the Church was the oldest living church member.(Figure 12) She held the title but with no role-functions. At Ferryfield Baptist church, established in 1885, the Pastor's wife's mother was the Mother of the Church.(Figure 13)

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There were multiple “Mother” roles among the church women, in both Jamaica and Barbados. The “Mother With the Most Status” in the Jamaica group had similar role-functions as those of the Florida Mother of the Church. Much as Herskovits theorized, I found this social form had greatest intensity among the Spiritual Baptists in Barbados. There were greater numbers of Mother roles among them and probably most telling, the highest women’s roles was the Arch Mother. The Arch Mother blesses the sea and sanctifies the beach where baptism takes place. The Arch Mother is also the sister of the group’s leader evidence of matrilineal social organization.(29)

Matrifocality is clearly a West African cultural form. It was evident in the pre-contact social organization of all of the Sub-Saharan West African societies that were the provenance of the majority of the slaves coming to Barbados, Jamaica, the northern colonies and South Carolina between 1650 and 1806. The Mande, Akan, and the Kongo cultures were matrilineal. Even though Oyo, Benin, and Dahomean social structure was patrilineal, females were central figures in their religious pantheons. Women held prestigious roles of religious ritual authority with title of Mother, for example the Iyorishas, or Mother of the Orishas [gods] among the Yoruba. Women were equal partners in the Ogboni and other secret societies, that served as super-ordinate institutions of social control, and whose members had great prestige.(30) In fact, matrifocal social forms within the context of religion, are among what Turner called “the same ideas, analogies and modes of association [which] underlie symbol formation and manipulation from the Senegal River to the Cape of Good Hope. They are symbols which remain extraordinarily viable,” he noted, “and

the themes they represent and embody are tenaciously rooted.”(31) Herskovits suggested the tenacity of cultural patterns was related to the compelling nature of their cultural significance.

The Africanisms found in Zion are also expressed in a myriad of ways by African Americans in general. The cultural landscape I describe here is one where closeness and cooperation within and between families are as necessary now as they were 150 years ago. It seems to me that the social forms and material cultural Africanisms that continue to have salience in Zion are precisely those needed to sustain the community over time. Matrifocality in the family and the church expressed in roles and responsibilities of the Mother of the Church are, as Clifford Geertz put it, at once models for and of social reality, in this case what women had to do to maintain family and community integrity both physically and spiritually.(32) The West African architectural and settlement patterns promote living accommodations that seem to buttress the centrality of family. The primacy of family relationships and the closeness of family ties are forged in the intimacy of small size rooms, while the settlement patterns emphasize the necessity of closeness and cooperation between family groups.

The Africanisms in Zion are a microcosm Africanisms in African America. One has only to observe the various award shows to be struck the frequency with which blacks receiving various awards, first give thanks to God, and then to their family, particularly their mothers. African American literature and ethnographies repeat themes and descriptions of settlement patterns in urban and rural settings that reinforce closeness and cooperation.(33) It seems to me that these discernable Africanisms in the cultural landscape of Zion repre-

sent values and belief systems that were, and are, necessary to sustain this particular community and African American communities in general. New Zion Baptist Church is still the central social institution in Zion as the church is still the central African American social institution. In Zion, Atlanta, and Harlem the family is in the church and families are the church.

When our political representatives speak, they use the idiom of the matrifocal family; a notable example is the referral to Rosa Parks as the “Mother” of the Civil Rights Movement. In the family and church, the emphasis on women as “mothers” in the church’s social organization and their church roles of prestige, are African-derived cultural values and social forms which are materially significant to day-to-day family life that have sustained Zion over time, as a cultural landscape. A place of cultural memory, an imagined place where people can find respite from the realities of the everyday real world as well as not yet forgotten, if not always adhered to, principles to live by.

Notes

1. The paper is based on primary source ethnographic and archival data I collected between 1980 and 1994 in Florida, in other parts of the south, and the Caribbean, along with comparative data derived from the literature on African American archaeological sites. The research reported in this paper was funded by: National Endowment of the Humanities, Summer Seminar for College Teachers, Atlanta University, 1984; University of Florida Minority Graduate Student Fellowship, 1983-1984; National Institute of Health, NRSA, post-doctoral Advanced Research Training Grant, NU05738-01, 02, and 03, Department of Anthropology, University of Florida, 1984-1987;



Figure 11. New Zion Elders, 1985. Front Row: Left to Right, Sister Tot Bellamy; Sister Josephine Maeweathers Tindall; Deaconess Annie Staggers Jacobs ("Cousin" Rea, Mother of the Church); Deaconess Harriet Jacobs Lewis ("Aunt" Sister, Acting Mother of the Church); Mrs. Rosabelle Lewis Simms ("Cousin' Rosabelle"); Mrs. Cecelia Carter; Mrs. Mary Mobley ("Miss" Mary). Second Row: Mrs. Hattie Staggers Butler (Present Mother of the Church); Mrs. Cora Maeweathers Beasley; Mrs. Crozella Mobley Jacobs (Presently on Mothers Board and Mother of the current pastor); Mrs. Victoria Bell (Former Pastor's Widow). Back Row: Chairman of Deacon Board, Deacon Edgar Simms; Reverend Henry Lewis; Deacon Prince "Doc" Brooks; Deacon Sebron Bellamy; Deacon Irving Lewis; Mr. Isom Mobley.



Figure 12. Episcopate Mother of a Revivalist Band Church, Kingston, Jamaica.

Figure 13. Reverend Mother of Spiritual Baptist Church, Ealings Grove, Barbados.



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Fulbright Senior Research Fellowship, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, 1988-1989; Thanks be to Grandma Winifred Foundation, 1993-1995; American University Graduate Student Fellowship, 1994-1996.

2. Eric Hirsh, "Introduction," in *The Anthropology of Landscape Perspectives in Time and Space*, eds., Eric Hirsh and Michael O'Hanlon, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 1-3.

3. Setha M. Low, "Cultural Conservation of Place," in *Conserving Culture: A New Discourse on Heritage*, ed., Mary Hufford (Chicago: University of Illinois, 1994), 66-67.

4. General D. L. Clinch, "Letterbook, 1834-1835, Fort King, FL," DLC; United States Territorial Census, "Alachua County, FL, 1840 (Tri-County Regional Library, Ocala, FL); United States Bureau of the Census, *United States Census, 1850, Marion County, FL* (Tri-County Regional Library, Ocala FL); U. S. Bureau of the Census, *U.S. Census, Marion County FL, 1860* (Tri-County Regional Library, Ocala, FL); U.S. Bureau of the Census. *U.S. Census, Marion County FL, 1870* (Tri-County Regional Library, Ocala, FL); J. R. Giddings, *Exiles in Florida* (Columbus OH: n.p., 1858); Florida Bureau of Census, *Florida State Census Manuscript Schedules, 1865* (Tri-County Regional Library, Ocala FL); Florida Bureau of Census, *Florida State Census Manuscript Schedules, 1885* (Tri-County Regional Library, Ocala FL); J. C. Ley, *52 Years in Florida* (Nashville TN, Dallas TX: Publishing House of the M. E. Church South, Barbee and Smith, 1879); Kenneth Porter, "Florida Slaves and Free Negroes in the Seminole War, in *Journal of Negro History* 28(4)(1943): 390-421. Audrey L. Brown, "Gimme that

Ol' Time Religion: Oral History Tapes, 1983-1984," Audiotapes and slides. (Marion County, Florida, n.p., n.d.)

5. Camp King came to be known as Fort King during the Afro-Seminole Wars. It was subsequently developed into the city of Ocala.

6. Ley, *52 Years in Florida*, 39-42.

7. Clinch, "Letterbook, 1834-1835," DLC; M. M. Cohen, *Notices of Florida and the Campaigns*. Florida State Museum Library (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1964[1863]).

8. U. S. Bureau of the Census, *U. S. Census, 1870*; Florida Bureau of the Census, *Florida State Census Manuscript Schedules, 1875*, (Tri-county Regional Library, Ocala, FL).

9. U. S. Bureau of the Census, *U. S. Census, 1870*. Personal documents of the Abraham Lincoln Johnson Family, 1883-1937; audiotapes of Malachi Green, Cora Maewathers Beasley, Mary Mobley, Willie Bostick, Harriet Jacob Lewis, Rosabelle Lewis Simms from Brown, "Gimme that Ol' Time Religion."

10. Audrey L. Brown, personal communication with "Doc" Prince Brooks.

11. George P. McKinney and Richard I. McKinney, *History of the Black Baptists of Florida 1850-1985* (Miami, FL: Florida Memorial College Press, 1987).

12. Brown, "Gimme that Ol' Time Religion."

13. According to oral history, the men were responsible for providing meats and fish in the past. Interestingly, in the 1980s they still were responsible for doing so just as they were when they hunted and fished for them.

14. Even though a nearby "horse farm," steadily encroaches upon these lands, buying up acreage whenever land came on the market to settle estates, much of the original hamlet is still evident in these old houses standing after new houses are built.

15. Brown, "Gimme that Ol' Time Religion."

16. Amy Friedlander, "Establishing Historical Probabilities for Archeological Interpretations: Slave Demography of Two Plantations in the South Carolina Low Country, 1740-1820," in *The Archaeology of Slavery and Plantation Life*, ed. Theresa A. Singleton, 215-238 (Orlando, FL: Academic Press, 1985)

17. Thomas R. Wheaton and Patrick H. Garrow, "Acculturation and the Archaeological Record in the Carolina Low Country," in *The Archaeology of Slavery and Plantation Life*, ed. Theresa A. Singleton, 242, (Orlando, FL: Academic Press, 1985).

18. Wheaton and Garrow, "Acculturation and the Archaeological Record," 243-257.

19. *Ibid*, 243-247.

20. *Ibid*, 257.

21. S. Fiske Kelso, *Kingsmill Plantations, 1619-1800* (New York: Academic Press, 1984); John M. Vlach, *By the Work of Their Hands: Studies in Afro-American Folk Life* (Ann Arbor, MI and London: UMI Research Press, 1991), 225.

22. James H. Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten: The Archaeology of Early American Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1977).

23. Susan Denyer, *African Traditional Architecture: An Historical and Geographic Perspective* (New York: Africana Publishing Co., 1978) 18.

24. Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom 1750-1925* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976), 209-210.

25. In 1993, after Cousin Rea died, the church conference elected Cousin Crozella Mobley Jacobs, a descendant of Abraham Lincoln Johnson through her father's mother. Cousin Crozella is also the mother of the current pastor. However she declined passing the title instead to Cousin Hattie Butler the granddaughter of Suzie Staggers.

26. Melville Herskovits, "Problems of Method and Theory in Afro-American Studies," in *The New World Negro*, ed. Frances Herskovits (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966[1945]), 565-57.

27. The Revivalists evolved out of the Native Baptists, who were established by George Liele and Moses Baker, two ex-slave Afro-Baptist preachers from Georgia. Liele, who was born into slavery in Virginia in 1752, was converted and baptized by Matthew Moore, an ordained Baptist minister, becoming the first Black Baptist in Georgia. After being licensed to preach, between 1773-1775, he and his converts formed an Afro-Baptist church, on a plantation in Silver Bluff, South Carolina. In 1788, another of Liele's converts established the Bryan Street African Baptist Church in Savannah that was reorganized in 1794 as the First African Baptist Church.

Liele, freed in his master's will, traveled to Jamaica and Trinidad preaching to slaves and freedmen. Military companies of former slaves who fought for the Loyalists in the War of 1812 were freed in Trinidad. Liele traveled to Trinidad to

preach to them and Africans still enslaved. The soldiers formed so called Company towns in Trinidad, where they practiced a more "Africanized" form of Baptist religion. They shared these communities with Yoruba peoples, who had also been freed by the British. The Spiritual Baptist religion evolved out of the syncretism between Yoruba orisha worship, called Shango in Trinidad, and the African American soldiers' spirited "African" form of the Baptist religion. See, Asram L. Stapelton, "The Birth and Growth of the Baptist Church in Trinidad and Tobago, and the Caribbean," (for the International Spiritual Baptist Ministerial Council, West Indies Pamphlet, West Indian Collection, U.W.I., Cave Hill, Barbados, 1982).

28. In 1988 I spent a week interviewing and videotaping at St. Michael's Revivalist Tabernacle, Kingston, Jamaica. I conducted participant observation in Barbados from October 1988 through May 1989 as an initiate of the Spiritual Baptist religious community.

29. Reverend Neverson of the St. Vincent Spiritual Baptist told me that Mother Reverend is the title of the highest woman's role in their religious community and she too is the church leader's sister.

30. Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992). Hall summerizes Germaine Dieterlen, *Essai sur la Religion Bambara* (Bruxelles, Belgique: Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1988); Adu Boahen, with J.F. Ade Ajayi, and Michael Tidy, *Topics in West African History*, 2nd ed (Edinburgh Gate, Harlow, Essex, England: Longman Group, 1986); Wyatt McGaffey, *Religion and Society in Central Africa: the*

Bakongo of Lower Zaire (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1986); Pascal Imperato, *Buffoons, Queens, and Wooden Horsemen; the Dyo and Gouan Societies of the Bambara of Mali* (New York: Kilima House, 1983); John M. Janzen, *Lemba, 1650-1930: a Drum of Affliction in Africa and the New World* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1982); Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "invisible institution" in the Antebellum South* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); W. T. Harris, and Harry Sawyer, *The Springs of Mende Belief and Conduct* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1968); E. Bolaji Idowu, *Olódùmarè; God in Yoruba Belief* (New York: Praeger, 1963); Karl Edvard Laman., *The Kongo*, volume 4 (Upsala: Studia Ethnographica Upsaliensia, 1953-1968); Melville J. Herskovits, *Dahomey, an Ancient West African Kingdom* (New York: J.J. Augustin, 1938).

31. Victor W. Turner, "Symbols in African Ritual," in *Science* 179(1973): 1100-1105.

32. Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in the *Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973[1966]). For further discussion read: Audrey L. Brown, "Women & Ritual Authority in Afro-American Baptist Churches of Florida," in *How Sweet the Sound: The Spirit of African American History*, Nancy E. Fitch, ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace Publishers, 2000); Idem, "Women & Ritual Authority in Afro-American Baptist Churches of Florida," in *Anthropology & Humanism Quarterly* 13(1)(1988): 2-10.

33. Zora Neal Hurston, *Dust Tracks on a Road: An Autobiography*, 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press 1984[1970]); Carol B. Stack, *All our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black*

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Community (New York, Harper & Row, 1974); Carol B. Stack, *Call to Home: African Americans Reclaim the Rural South*, (New York: Basic Books, 1996); Alice Walker, *The Color Purple: A Novel*. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982); Melvin D. Williams, *On the Street Where I Lived* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981).

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- Source Notes about Photos**
- Figure 1. *Homestead Deed*. Source: Personal papers of James Brown Jr.
- Figure 2. *Old Zion Church*. Photograph Collection of James Brown Jr.
- Figure 3. *New Zion Baptist Church*. Source: Brown, Audrey L. 1986: Photographer." *Tis the Old Ship of Zion;*" *Rituals and Oral Traditions of Afro-Baptist Churches in Florida, 1983-1986*. Ocala, FL: n.p.
- Figure 4. *Friendship Church*. Source: Brown, Audrey L. 1986 :Photographer." *Tis the Old Ship of Zion;*" *Rituals and Oral Traditions of Afro-Baptist Churches in Florida, 1983-1986*. Ocala, FL: n.p.
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- Figure 7. *Cabin of freed Negroes in Virginia*. Source: Dunbar, Paul Laurence 1899. *Poems of cabin and field ...illustrated with photographs by the Hampton Institute camera club and decorations by Alice Morse*.
- Figure 8. *Haitian-West African Architectural Form*. Source: McDaniel, George W. 1982. *Hearth and home : preserving a people's culture*. Philadelphia : Temple University Press.

Figure 9. Front view of house built by enslaved BaKongo. Source: McDaniel, George W. 1982. *Hearth and Home: Preserving a People's Culture*. Philadelphia : Temple University Press.

Figure 10. Modified Shotgun House, Front view. Cotton Plant, Florida 1985. Source: Personal Collection of Audrey L. Brown.

Figure 11. New Zion Elders. Source: Brown, Audrey L. 1986, Photographer. "Tis the Old Ship of Zion;" *Rituals and Oral Traditions of Afro-Baptist Churches in Florida, 1983-1986*. Audio and video-tapes. Ocala, FL: n.p.

Figure 12. Episcopate Mother. Source: A. L. Brown, 1988. Photographer, Videographer. "REVIVAL! Kapo's Last Pentecost: Rituals and Oral Traditions of St. Michael's Tabernacle, a Jamaica Revivalist Band [Audiotapes, Slides and Videotapes] n.s., n.d. [10 audio-cassettes (60 min); 4 video-cassettes (VHS); 100 color slides (35mm, 2"x2").

Figure 13. Reverend Mother, Barbados. Source: A. L. Brown, 1989. Photographer, Videographer. "Another Ark: Rituals and Oral Traditions of the Spiritual Baptists of Barbados 1988-1989." [Audiotapes, Slides and Videotapes] n.s., n.d. 100 audio-cassettes (60 min); 20 video (VHS); 200 color slides (35mm, 2"x2") and photographs.

Interwoven Traditions: Archaeology of the Conjuror's Cabins and the African American Cemetery at the Jordan and Frogmore Manor Plantations

Kenneth L. Brown

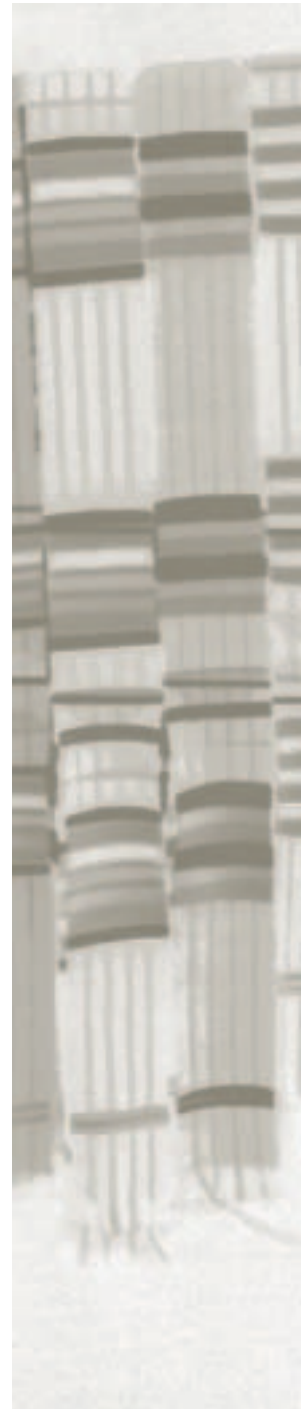
Within the past two decades a major focus of historical archaeology in North America has become the study of “people without history.”(1) That is, historical archaeologists have begun to systematically investigate the lives, beliefs, and behaviors of people who left relatively few primary, readable written accounts despite their living within a “literate society.” Thus, a written record of these “people without history” may exist. However, what is significant is that authors outside of the actual community under study produced that written record. For example, many written records describing the beliefs and behaviors, e.g., the culture, of enslaved Africans and African Americans exist, some even written and/or transcribed from the testimony of enslaved persons. However, the extant records discuss little to nothing concerning the details of the use and meaning conferred on the material culture or the landscape by enslaved and/or emancipated people of African descent. While oral testimony may add to our knowledge of this aspect of African American culture, detailed social archaeological investigation also has the potential to expand our knowledge well beyond the confines of people’s inherited memories.

Unfortunately, much of the historical archaeological investigation of people of African descent in the New World has focused on questions related to the material items utilized by the enslaved. Included within these studies, one finds research focused upon the African origins of individual items from houses, tobacco pipes, the production of low-fired earthenware ceramics, the meaning of blue glass beads, and even the symbols placed on a number of these items.(2) Many of these studies were conducted with the explicit attempt to link African cultures with enslaved peoples in North America and/or the Caribbean. However, in a majority of these studies the actual meaning of these items and the symbols for peoples of African descent in the New World has been directly inferred from the Old World.(3) Only in very rare instances have the archaeological contexts for these objects been as systematically investigated. That is, what use and/or meaning did such objects have for people of African descent in North America, and this determination must be based upon the other directly associated artifacts. The question that needs to be addressed here relates to the construction of the culture of African Americans within the systems of enslavement and, later, freedom.

This paper represents an attempt to demonstrate the utility of archaeological research in defining use and meaning of objects recovered from sites occupied by both enslaved and free African Americans. This will also begin to define some of the use of space in, and, importantly, under the landscape of the sites. Within this paper, aspects of the archaeological record from two Quarters sites will be examined: The Levi Jordan Plantation, Brazoria County, Texas; and the Frogmore Manor Plantation, St. Helena Island, Beaufort County, South Carolina.

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History and Archaeology of the Levi Jordan Plantation Quarters

Archaeological excavations, directed by the author, have been conducted within the slave and tenant quarters of the Levi Jordan Plantation, Brazoria County, Texas.⁽⁴⁾ The Jordan Plantation Quarters Community was founded in this location in 1848. During the period from 1848 through the early 1870s, the plantation produced sugar and cotton as cash crops, along with wheat, corn, potatoes, and other subsistence foods. The work of the plantation was organized through the use of the gang labor regime. Jordan purchased the Texas land as the last in a series of plantations he bought, occupied, and sold stretching across the South, beginning in western South Carolina and continuing through Alabama, Louisiana, and Arkansas. At its pre-1865 height, the Jordan plantation had a resident enslaved population exceeding 140. After emancipation until the late 1880s, approximately 100 people resided within the tenant community occupying the old slave quarters. All of these individuals participated in agricultural activities as wage laborers, renters, and/or sharecroppers. A number of the members of the community practiced specialized occupations in addition to their farming activities, e.g., conjurer/mid-wife, carver, hunter, seamstress, blacksmith, and carpenter.

By the mid-1870s, sugar had been abandoned as a cash crop. However, cotton continued to be raised by tenants, sharecroppers, and wage laborers residing on, and around, the plantation through the late 1880s. Historical archaeological investigation of the plantation has focused on the recovery of detailed contextual information to permit the interpretation of the life of the

enslaved people as well as the tenants who resided within the community. Historical research has demonstrated that the vast majority of the residents of the community during the post-emancipation period had previously been enslaved on the plantation.⁽⁵⁾

The Jordan Plantation investigation has been referred to as “the best known example” of an archaeological approach that has “...attempted to identify archaeological contexts and assemblages that represent religious behavior on the part of enslaved African Americans.”⁽⁶⁾ However, this research has developed evidence related to a much wider variety of behavioral patterns than is implied by the quote above. Economic, political, and social behaviors have been defined from the archaeological and historical research thus far conducted. The historical data concerning the continuity of population when combined with the archaeological evidence strongly supports the pre-emancipation nature of the behavioral patterns defined. Thus, this data, and its interpretation, has been employed to define a number of the adaptive responses made by members of the community to the conditions of both enslavement and freedom. While a number of historical archaeological studies have included the interpretation of African American ritual activities, the Jordan Community investigations (and recently concluded research at the Frogmore Manor Plantation on St. Helena Island, South Carolina) have identified a variety of archaeological contexts that aid in the definition of ritual activities and symbols for African American populations.⁽⁷⁾ Several of these contexts at Jordan demonstrate the community-based nature of these religious, social, and economic behavioral patterns.

The research design for the Jordan Plantation slave and tenant quarters

included a variety of activities. The standard excavation unit measured five feet by five feet. The stratigraphy of the site demonstrates that three broad levels were present within the artifact bearing deposit, each with its own depositional history and formation processes. The upper level included the modern topsoil and the brick rubble from the collapse of the walls of the structures over the past 110 years. The second level included a wide variety of artifacts, some whole, or that had entered the archaeological record whole and been broken after they were deposited. Further, within this level, a number of artifact types that would normally be employed together in an activity were found together in the ground. The third level contained small artifacts distributed in a somewhat more random fashion.

The artifacts contained in level two suggested that an intentional abandonment of the quarters had taken place at some point in the past. This abandonment was not known from any historical records we were (and are) aware of, nor did any members of the descendant families (black or white) have any information concerning such an event. However, the discovery of this artifact and context-rich zone forced an alteration of the excavation strategy.

Continuing with units that disturbed 25 square feet in this artifact and context rich zone did not appear to be an appropriate methodology. As the excavation grid had been imposed over the site, and several excavation units completed, the standard excavation unit remained five-feet by five-feet. However, immediately before excavating through the brick rubble layer, each of these units was divided into 25 one-foot by one-foot subunits. Further, unless the stratigraphy noted within a unit dictated otherwise, the standard level depth was 1/10th of a foot once the unit was placed into

subunits. The subunits and the level depth were maintained throughout the excavation of both the second and third artifact bearing zones. This methodology permitted the recording of highly specific provenience information, including actual maps, of the distribution of artifacts within zone two (the so-called “abandonment zone”) and zone three (the so-called “sub-floor zone”).

Archaeological investigation also included research within the African American cemetery on the original Jordan Plantation.(8) This research included the mapping and recording of surface features along with limited, though systematic, excavation. Initial surface survey involved establishing a grid over the cemetery area and mapping in the location of all apparent cultural features. The cultural features included on the map consisted of graves and other depressions, tomb markings, and plant types. This mapping project provided information on approximately 140 graves. The excavation was limited to testing ten percent of the unmarked grave shafts to determine if we were correct in our definition of these depressions as grave shafts. This investigation consisted of the excavation of one foot wide by five feet long units across the short axis of the depression. These units were excavated only as deep as was necessary to determine the presence or absence of a grave shaft. Any artifacts encountered in these excavation units were noted and left in place. No artifacts were collected or moved during this research. In all approximately 140 graves were recorded and mapped during this investigation. The data collected from the tombstones, oral history, and historic documents has permitted the identification of forty-eight of the individuals buried within this cemetery.

Throughout this project, historical and oral historical information has been

collected related to the occupants of the plantation.(9) Black and white descendants have visited the site, viewed the data, were presented interpretation of structures and activities, and had their information recorded and incorporated into the interpretations. Federal census, county tax, and genealogical records have been investigated and analyzed in order to determine the families who occupied the plantation, and their roles within the community. The purpose of this portion of the investigation was to provide an active data source that could be employed to test, as well as interpret, the archaeological record. This active use of a number of legal records and family oral histories provided the apparent cause for the abandonment of the quarters between 1886 and 1888.(10)

Finally, the project's research design included the continual collection of ethnographic data from among the black and white descendants.(11) Additional ethnographic data has been obtained from reports of investigations conducted in Africa, the Caribbean, South America, and North America.(12) The ethnographic information has been utilized along with the historical data to interpret and test the artifacts and contexts recorded within the archaeological record of the Jordan Plantation's African American community.

The result of this approach has been data that can be utilized to define behavior and beliefs practiced and maintained by members of the Jordan Plantation community. Only those interpretations dealing with one occupational specialization, e.g., the Conjuror/Midwife, the determination of community membership, and spirituality practiced within the slave/tenant community will be summarized and discussed within this paper. However, a very brief description of some of the physical aspects of the Quarters area will be presented prior to

this discussion. This description will provide some of the spatial organization of the residential portion of the community.

A Description of the Jordan Quarters

The Jordan Community was physically located approximately 350 feet north of the “Main House” area of the plantation. The area of the Jordan Plantation occupied by the community's cabins measures approximately 300 feet by 150 feet. The community members were housed in four blocks of paired “barracks-like” buildings. That is, each block consisted of two brick buildings set facing one another along a central hallway, with an in-ground cistern at the northern end of this hallway. Three (Blocks I, III, and IV) to four (Block II) individual cabins were contained in each of the buildings within the blocks. Thus, Blocks III, IV each contained six actual cabins, and I while Block II consisted of eight cabins. The exterior of the walls of each building was made of dry-laid bricks, while the interior divisions within and between the cabins were made of wood. Evidence suggests that a single, continuous roof covered each block. During the pre-1865 period, an additional “block” of three cabins was built near the Main House. The enslaved household staff occupied this set of cabins. After 1865, the occupants of this block who remained on the plantation took up residence within the 26 cabins of the Quarters.

Archaeology within the Quarters has suggested that within I, III, IV, and the Main House Block each cabin appears to have consisted of two rooms. The main room's floor space measured approximately 15 feet by 16 feet, and contained the hearth. The second room measured approximately six feet by 16 feet, and, in at least two cases these rooms function for both sleeping and

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craft activities. Each hearth had its own chimney. In Block II, each of the eight cabins consisted of a single room measuring approximately 16 feet by 16 feet. While each cabin had its own hearth, the hearths in adjacent cabins in the same building shared a single chimney. The only “cabin” to vary from this pattern was cabin I-A-1, the Praise House discussed below. The reason for the different architecture of Block II may be that it was the first to be constructed, and may have been built prior to the Jordan’s actually taking up residence on the plantation.

The Conjuror/ Midwife’s Cabin (Cabin II-B-1)

The Conjuror/Midwife’s residence is the northeast cabin in Block II of the slave and tenant quarters. This residence has been discussed in two previous publications, and appears to be best known as a result of the discovery of the so-called “Conjuror’s Kit” located in the southeastern corner of the cabin.⁽¹³⁾ The contents of this kit included a wide variety of artifacts including among other items five cast iron kettle bases, chalk, at least one sealed tube made of brass bullet casings, medicine bottles, and a thermometer. Adjacent to this deposit were water worn pebbles, mirror fragments, many square nails and spikes, several fake metal knife blades, a small doll, a concave metal disc, several ocean shells, and a number of blue glass beads. These artifacts have been interpreted as representing both the actual curing kit as well as the remains of an Nkisi similar to those found among the BiKongo peoples of West Africa. The Nkisi was employed as an integral part of the curing ritual among West African groups, but this represents its first interpreted presence in North America. Taken together, this full set of materials

was utilized in the manipulation of the supernatural world for the benefit of the health of members of the community.

However, within this cabin there are at least four other ritual deposits, three of which, when combined with the conjurer’s kit, form a cosmogram. The northern most of the three deposits consists of a set of seven silver coins. This set includes four quarters, two dimes, and a perforated half-dime. The coins had been deposited tightly wrapped together by cloth. Little of the cloth remained, but what was left appears to be coarsely woven cotton. The coins may have been ordered in a particular way within the cloth before being placed into a small hole, dug into the soil below the floor of the cabin. The set of coins was placed into the ground so that the coins were “standing” nearly vertically on their sides. They were oriented on a north-south axis. The perforated half-dime (dated 1853) was on the outside facing south, then came three quarters (two dated 1853 and one dated 1858), then the two dimes (one dated 1853 and the other 1858), followed by the last quarter (dated 1858). Thus, only two years were represented among the dates of these seven coins.

On the west side of the cabin was another interesting type of Nkisi deposit. The artifacts of this feature had been intentionally placed in a small pit dug into the soil adjacent to the brick foundation and under what appears to have been the doorway into the cabin. This set of materials included a wide variety of artifacts, nearly all of which were made of cast iron. The primary focus of this feature was two cast iron kettles placed upright, one inside the other. A third, smaller kettle had been broken and the pieces of the walls had been placed on top of the other two kettles. The bottom of this kettle was found approximately five feet to the northeast.

Before the two kettles were placed one inside the other, the bottom kettle had ash placed into it. This ash lens was the sealed by the upper kettle. The upper kettle contained a few objects of metal, ocean shells, glass, small bone fragments, and soil. Indeed, the kettle may have been filled simply by the accumulation of items falling through cracks in the floorboards. These kettles were wrapped around their circumference by a heavy chain.

Two “lines” of artifacts radiated out from these kettles. Toward the northeast were Confederate military buttons, large bone fragments, unperforated cockleshells, more chain, and a complete bayonet. Toward the southeast a number of large metal objects were placed along with two additional Confederate military buttons, a quartz crystal, perforated cockleshells. The large metal objects included a hinge, several spikes, a bolt, and a fragment of a plow. This feature likely formed a Nkisi that aided in ritually securing the protection of the cabin, its occupants, and the activities conducted inside from harm that might be caused by powerful elements from the outside world. However, this set of artifacts may not solely symbolize this transition. These artifacts may also represent an *amula* to Ogun, a Yoruba deity, similar to those noted from Cuba.

Another deposit was discovered after the previous three, and as a direct result of an archaeological test to discover a possible meaning for the others. That is, taken together, the previous three deposits could be interpreted as having represented the eastern, northern, and western points of a cosmogram, the BiKongo symbol for the cycle of life as well as an important curing symbol. The eastern point of the cosmogram is represented by the Conjuror’s kit, which would be employed in helping to give and maintain life. The northern point on

a cosmogram represents the height of one's power in this world, and maleness. To the north the set of coins was located. The western point on the cosmogram represents the point of passage from this world to the next—the process of moving from life to death. The presence of the ash and the distribution of perforated and unperforated shells may support a symbolic view of this transition. Thus, it was felt that one possible test of the cosmogram hypothesis would be the discovery of an artifact feature forming the southern point which, on the cosmogram, represents the height of one's power in the spirit world, and one's femaleness.

During the excavation of the living area of the cabin around the hearth, no such feature was encountered. However, excavation within the hearth area did produce a deposit of artifacts that forms the southern point as predicted by the cosmogram model. Based upon the presence of a lens of soil and brick over this feature, this deposit was placed into the hearth sometime after completion of the fireplace. The feature itself consisted of a hole dug into the soil supporting the base of the hearth and chimney. Ash, burned ocean shell, and burned square nails and spikes were placed on the floor of this hole. The hole was then filled with soil and brick rubble and the hearth floor reconstructed. This represents the only feature placed into a hearth yet discovered within the Quarters area of the plantation. At the risk of being considered "politically incorrect," in light of the traditional female association for the southern point on the cosmogram, it is interesting that it was placed within the hearth of the cabin. Certainly, however, placement within the hearth may have been the result of the shape of the cabin and the need to maintain cardinal directions while

placing the points of the cosmogram. The importance of hearth and household will be noted later in yet another context.

Each of these four features within the Conjuror/Midwife's Cabin support the interpretation of an African American behavioral and belief system—one that serves to control the outside world through the manipulation of the supernatural world. The full set of artifacts and contexts suggest that many of the basic ideas and rituals were of African origins. Very importantly, however, they show an interesting mix of materials from at least two West African cultural groups—BiKongo and Yoruba. However, the patent medicine bottles and the thermometer demonstrate some adaptation of non-African ideas as well. That is, all of these elements support the hypothesis that the conjurer/midwife had sanctified the floor space of the cabin for its use within the ritual performance of curing, conjuring, and, possibly giving birth. In the truest sense of the word, these features, along with the artifacts present, represent an example of the creolization process in operation.

Praise House/Prays House (Cabin I-A-1)

Cabin I-A-1, the northwest "cabin" within Block I has been identified as a "Community Building."⁽¹⁴⁾ Given the artifacts excavated from this cabin, and Barnes' analysis of this material, it is likely that the model of a "Praise House/Prays House" more clearly defines its uses.⁽¹⁵⁾ Excavations were begun here as the final test for the arrangement of the Quarters area at the time of its abandonment. At the time, it was decided that the testing of this cabin would provide information on the apparent "two-room" nature the tenant/sharecropper cabins. Further, the excavation of this cabin had the potential to provide

information on the earliest slave quarters on the plantation along with the brick manufacturing area that had been located below this Block of cabins. The first two units excavated into the cabin yielded a surprisingly low frequency of artifacts. However, not only was the amount of material lower than expected, even in so-called "non-abandoned cabins," but there was less variability in the artifact types present. Therefore, additional units were excavated in an attempt to more completely determine the nature of the deposits within this cabin.

These units revealed additional differences between the sub-floor deposits in this cabin and all of the other 16 cabins tested. These differences include: the reduction in artifact frequency and variability, the movement of the hearth, an increase in the size of the cabin, and several sub-floor features not previously observed in other cabins. As a result of the continued excavation of this cabin, artifact counts and distributions have not been completed. However, a few tentative and general comments can be made. First, total artifact counts per unit within this cabin appear to be from one-quarter to one-third of the counts for other cabins. Second, this represents the only cabin in which the building material artifact class is, by far, the largest. Indeed, one artifact type—square nails—makes up close to 25% of the artifacts recovered. Third, artifact types that generally appear in high frequencies in other cabins, such as ceramics, cooking, and eating utensils, bottle glass, bone, buttons, various personal items, and shell, are in very low frequency within this cabin. Thus, the artifact classes indicative of residential activities are the ones that exhibit the low frequency of occurrence. Other than a badly broken pocketknife, no tools were found within this cabin. Again, this is atypical of the artifact inventories of

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the other 16 cabins tested, in that it is the only cabin that lacked tools. On this evidence, it is possible to conclude that this cabin, unlike all of the others tested, may not have served as a residence. Although, it may have had a residential function for only a short period of time.

On the other hand, certain artifact types appear at a somewhat higher frequency in this cabin than in others. This "higher frequency" is likely the result of the low overall artifact density, thus making rare artifact types appear in higher frequency. However, the types of artifacts involved are interesting. The artifact types noted in higher than normal frequencies include: buttons, coins/metal tokens, fragments of slate boards, and slate pencils. The frequency of jewelry is approximately the same, or very slightly higher, in I-A-1 than for the other cabins tested.

One item of jewelry appears to be extremely significant in the determination of the function and meaning of this "cabin." This item is a small brass cross set with five cut red glass pieces and suspended on a small brass chain. The cross and chain were found to have been placed approximately in the geographic center of the cabin. When discovered, the cross was oriented north to south, with the actual cross located to the south of the closed-clasp chain. The chain and cross appear to have been deliberately placed below the floor, rather than having been "dropped." Indeed, the appearance was almost as if it was "on display" in a very shallow hole scooped out of the soil below the floor. Equally important, in terms of its deposition, the clasp on the chain was closed. This last point may represent a further indication that the cross and its chain may not have simply become lost below the floorboards. Certainly it could have been lost after being removed by the person wearing it, and then dropped

through the floor boards of the cabin before it was known to have been lost, the closed clasp and the slight depression in the ground surface, at least supports the possibility of its having been intentionally placed. This positioning within the cabin, the location of the cross, vis-à-vis the chain, and the closed clasp all aid in making this item potentially very important in the determination of the function and meaning of the cabin. That is, the cross might support the hypothesis that the meaning and function of the cabin was within the Christian religious views held by members of the community: the "cabin" was the location of the "Prays House."

This hypothesis is further supported by the presence of two coins located near the cross. One of these coins, an 1858 half-dollar piece, was found two feet north of the cross. The second coin is an 1858 half dime found 3.5 feet west of the cross. The coins appeared to be located roughly on the lines that would be created if one were to continue outward from the cross along two of its axis's (e.g., north and west from the cross). Also, it should be noted that both of these silver coins date to the same year as at least six of the seven coins in the cosmogram placed beneath the floor of the Conjuror/Midwife's Cabin. Again, both the location of the coins, and their date, supports the hypothesis that they are related to the cross, and functioned within the same sub-system as the cross and chain. While more excavation is required to determine if coins, or other items, radiate out from the cross on the east and south, the cross/chain and coins may represent a cosmogram with the cross in the center. This might suggest either another example of the creolization process, or a statement of completing views of the organization of the way the world operates.

Another point of support for the Prays House function of the "cabin" is that at some point early in the history of its use, the hearth was moved outside of the main room, and its size was slightly increased. Early Prays Houses in the Gullah area of the Lowcountry were built without hearths. Excavation along the west wall demonstrated that the original hearth was located near the northwest corner of the cabin, as defined by the presence of the wall trench for a hearth in this area. At some point this hearth was moved approximately 12 to 13 feet southward along the west wall. It is here that the remains of the brick walls of the hearth were found. Excavation of the west side of the rebuilt hearth walls demonstrated that they met, but were not integrated into, the western brick wall of the cabin block. This is the only set of hearth walls not integrated into a cabin block wall in the ten cabins excavated where this could be investigated.

Further, no other hearth was found within the main room of the cabin. Thus, the movement of the hearth also had the impact of increasing the size of the "cabin" nearly seven feet toward the south. That is, the newly reconfigured "cabin" would have measured 16 feet by 28-29 feet. Robert Harris's analysis of cabin I-B-3, the "Carver's Cabin," the standard cabin size in Block I was 16 feet by 22 feet, and cabins appeared to have had two rooms within this space. Thus, the extension of cabin I-A-1 would have increased its size; while at the same time reduced the size of cabin I-A-2 by almost exactly the amount of the narrow interior room defined by Harris.

The heaviest distribution of artifacts that appear to be indicative of residential-type activities was located within this extended area of the cabin. In general, the dating of the bulk of the materials deposited here, supports the view that

this extension to the cabin was utilized very late in the use-history of the cabin (post 1880). Thus, it is likely that this material was deposited sometime after the extension of the cabin and the movement of the hearth, but exactly when cannot be determined. However, cabin I-A-1 was reconfigured into a larger two-room cabin (with one of the rooms measuring 16 feet by 22 feet and the second measuring 16 feet by 6 feet) much earlier during its use. This would have made it the largest cabin in the quarters. In this light, the lack of artifacts indicative of a domestic function is all the more interesting and important.

In this context, two unique sub-floor deposits were discovered within this cabin. The first extended around the eastern and northern sides of the reconstructed hearth. This was a thick intentionally placed deposit of ash and charcoal. Mixed into the ashy matrix of this feature were bones (some very large), small ceramic shards, small glass shards, broken buttons, burned shell, and square nails. This material was placed into a shallow hole, approximately four to six inches in depth, dug out to a distance of approximately one foot out from the eastern and northern walls of the hearth. Clearly, ash and charcoal tend to increase in frequency on the surface of the ground as one approaches the hearth walls in each of the cabins thus far investigated. However, the situation in the so-called Prays House represents the only time that a special hole was dug around the hearth to hold this material. Further, this is the only time that charcoal, ash, and small household artifacts appear to have been deposited, as opposed to their having accumulated, around the hearth.

The second deposit was found along the eastern wall of the cabin. The feature consists of a shallow pit dug into the soil likely near the area of the

entrance to the cabin. Lime-based plaster was employed to produce a raised design on the floor of the hole. The matrix filling the hole and surrounding the "sculpture" consisted soil containing many tiny pieces of the same white, lime-based plaster and very few brick fragments. The soil matrix into which the hole was dug contained a very high density of brick fragments, thus suggesting the hole was not refilled with the soil originally dug out of it. The hole had been capped by two layers of firmly packed, finely crushed brick separated by a thin lens of tightly packed soil. Unfortunately, we have not been able to fully determine what the intended design might originally have been. Tree roots and ground water have destroyed a large portion of the design that was originally present. As with the feature connected with the hearth, this is the only sealed deposit of plaster yet discovered on the site.

Initially, this cabin appears typical of the others in Block I in terms of size and function—it was a residence. However, early in its use, the cabin was physically altered and its function changed. In attempting to interpret the reconstructed cabin's function, the archaeological deposit was tested against Margaret Creels' ethnographic description of a Gullah Praise House (or Prays House).(16) Unfortunately, she does not include any discussion of the material items and artifact contexts associated with such a structure. However, a number of test implications that might be developed from her model are met by this structure. For example, she states that the Praise House was the first cabin in the quarters, often originally the residence of an important person within the enslaved community. This is confirmed by the data from cabin I-A-1.

The presence of the cross, the coins, and the ash feature around the hearth

all suggest a community ritual nature for the reconstructed cabin. Both Creel(17) and Patricia Guthrie(18) have demonstrated that, among the Gullah, the Praise House functioned as the center of community religious and political activities. In their data, households and residences on a plantation define communities, and households are defined by the presence of hearths. Thus, it is not a great leap to attempt to interpret the ash, charcoal, and burned household artifact deposit around the reconstructed hearth as having been intentionally placed to demonstrate community membership, and helping to secure Praise House membership. Limited historical information further suggests the presence of a religious structure for the black community on the Jordan Plantation prior to 1870.

The African American Cemetery

David Bruner conducted research within the plantation's African American cemetery during 1994-96.(19) This investigation was primarily oriented toward the mapping of the cultural features within the cemetery. Initially, the cemetery was located and its boundaries defined by oral testimony. That is, the current landowner, a descendant of Levi and Sarah Jordan, as well as an individual with several ancestors buried within the cemetery, provided information on its location and extent. In order to insure that the complete cemetery was included within our research, the initial mapping project extended outside the "traditionally" defined boundaries. A grid was superimposed over the area, and all mapping was done from the grid points. A total of 140 probable graves were recorded in this mapping operation. Of these potential grave shafts, 37 were marked in some fashion at the surface.

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However, only twelve were marked in the traditional European American fashion with head- and/or foot-stones. The others were marked with a variety of forms of markers—e.g., pipes, railroad rails driven into the ground, and other forms of metal “objects.” No signs of wooden markers remained on the surface at the time of the investigation. The vast majority of potential graves, therefore, lacked surface monuments. In order to determine the actual number of graves present, it was decided that two additional operations would be undertaken to aid in the definition of graves: the use of a metal detector, and highly controlled and limited excavation.

A metal detector was employed in an effort to determine whether or not a pattern of metal artifacts was present within the area of an unmarked potential grave depression that might indicate the presence of a coffin within the depression. This operation was successful in determining the apparent location of coffins below the surface of the ground within the several of the depressions defined. Also significant was the observation that no “coffin [p]atterns” were defined unless there was a depression present. However, not all depressions revealed the presence of a coffin through this operation. The metal detector also discovered a number of objects that appear to mark graves, in an African American fashion—e.g., metal “pipes.” A number of these pipes were no longer observable from the surface. However, based upon the information from marked graves, pipes had been placed standing upright near the western end of graves within this cemetery. Therefore, the information from the metal detector portion of the survey suggested that such pipes could be employed as grave markers, even if the original intent was not for this

purpose. Metal pipes were employed to “connect” many of the dead buried within the cemetery with the surface.

Further, shallow excavation units were placed within the cemetery focusing solely on the confirmation of grave shafts and, in a very limited fashion, to aid in the illustration of the surface treatment of the graves. That is, units one foot wide and up to five feet long were excavated across a randomly selected ten percent sample of the unmarked, potential grave depressions. Excavation in these units was continued until it was determined whether or not an actual grave shaft was present. No bodies were disturbed, and no artifacts were collected during this operation. When artifacts were discovered in these units, they were left in place, and excavation continued down around them. Bottles, ceramics, knives, plow parts, car parts, and tractor parts were identified as having been placed on top of or within the graves. All of the depressions tested were determined to have straight-walled shafts that were interpreted as graves.

Based upon this archaeological investigation, the cemetery appears to be the resting place for the physical remains of approximately 140 individuals. Research into a variety of records (both written and oral) was employed in an effort to determine the names of the actual individuals present. Study of the information derived from the head stones, combined with genealogical data, death certificates, oral historical knowledge, and other information, has revealed the identities of approximately one-third of the individuals believed to have been interred within the cemetery. In turn, this evidence has led to an interesting hypothesis concerning the decision-making pattern for burial within this cemetery. With one exception, only people known to have spent their childhood on the plantation were buried in this

cemetery during the 125 years of its active use. Spouses of those buried in the cemetery and who did not grow up on the plantation are buried elsewhere.

The single known exception is that of a week old child who died in 1973. This child was, however, born into a family that had continued to live on land that was part of the original Jordan Plantation. Indeed, the child was buried in the portion of the cemetery employed by the family through the 1970s. The scope of this project did not include the investigation of other plantation cemeteries in an attempt to determine if it was possible to identify whether or not they also demonstrate this pattern. However, this pattern appears to be similar to that defined for the Gullah by Guthrie.(20)

Another of the important discoveries made during this survey was the presence of a metal object placed in the ground between the edge of the slough and a set of ten graves. For a variety of reasons, it appears likely that these graves were the earliest ones placed within the cemetery, and may represent the graves of enslaved individuals. This object consisted of a metal half-circle welded onto a railroad rail. Bruner noted that this marker resembles the lower half of a cosmogram—the half which signifies that portion of the life cycle related to death and one’s life in the spirit world.(21) This marker does not appear to have been placed on or near a grave. It is, on the other hand, likely that this marker (along with the yucca plants that flank it on either side) identifies the entrance to the cemetery from the slough. If this was, indeed, the case, then a link can be made between the symbolism employed within the community’s cemetery and beliefs expressed in a number of contexts within the community itself.

Excavations at Frogmore Manor Plantation

Historical archaeological investigation at the Frogmore Manor Plantation Quarters was begun during March, 1998, under the direction of the author. At the request of the landowner, excavations had to be concluded in August, 2000. In this case, excavation was undertaken solely within the area of the Quarters, although the main house and at least one of the eighteenth century plantation buildings are still in use. Historical records indicate that the Quarters were first built and occupied by enslaved Africans and African Americans owned by William Bull sometime after 1770. By the time of his death in 1791, William Bull operated a sea island cotton plantation covering over 3,300 acres with at least two Quarters areas: the one excavated during our project, and a second one inhabited by enslaved people owned by Bull's overseer, a Mr. Robertson, and located on the northern end of the original plantation, near the modern town of Frogmore.

The earliest written documentation related to the Frogmore Manor Quarters consists of a 1791 map showing the location of the Quarters and several of the plantations other structures. At that time, the Quarters consisted of 18 houses with an enslaved population of less than 100 people. Under the ownership of Colonel John Stapleton and, later, William Grayson, the enslaved population had increased to over 170. Not including the Federal Census lists, a series of four "slave lists" exist for the plantation spanning the period from 1791 (Bull's probate record) through 1852 (Grayson's sale of enslaved people). Each of these lists is in family groups and includes such information as gender, age, occupation, and, in three

cases, continent of origin. Thus, the actual written documentation for the enslaved population that occupied the Frogmore Manor Quarters is much more complete than that for Jordan. However, for the purposes of this paper, two aspects of the record are critical: one, that the populations of enslaved people were relatively "the same," and two, that one of the occupations listed at Frogmore Manor was that of "midwife."

The excavation methodology followed at Frogmore Manor was essentially identical to that employed at Levi Jordan. The major exception being that the size of the unit was changed from five by five to three by three. This alteration of the initial unit size was deemed necessary as a result of the sand soil matrix encountered on St. Helena Island. However, these units were also divided into subunits after the first level removed the forest leaf litter. The continuation of the use of subunits throughout this excavation was maintained for two reasons: one, the aid in recording detailed archaeological context, and two, to aid in identifying the two primary house types (based upon their foundation) for enslaved people known from the Carolina Lowcountry, if the types existed within this community.

Prior to discussing the results of our excavation into one of the Frogmore Manor Quarters residences, it is necessary to point out that our investigations at Frogmore Manor, while terminated, are not complete. Therefore, some of the results are tentative at this time. After originally agreeing to four field seasons of excavation, during the third field season it was requested that we not return. The current landowners were receiving a great deal of pressure from other members of their large extended family to have the excavations halted. According to the owners, the rest of the family is certain that we could somehow

steal their land as a result of the presence of an important archaeological site. While the owners were assured that such an event could not happen, and were given copies of existing South Carolina and Federal Laws to that effect, nothing would alter their opinion. Thus, excavations were terminated before the planned completion date, leaving important information unavailable.

That having been said, we were able to recover information on at least eleven cabins (five from the early Quarters and six from the later Quarters) and a possible lime and/or ceramic kiln. Of these cabins, two were extensively excavated, both from the later Quarters. The results of one of the excavations of one of these cabins will be presented here as they relate to the Conjuror/Midwife's cabin at Jordan.

The Possible Conjuror/Midwife's House

The house was located in the eastern portion of the Quarters as defined by our testing. Approximately 50% of the original cabins floor area was investigated during our excavations. Of importance here was the discovery of four sub-floor features centered on each of the four walls of the cabin. Two of these deposits consisted of the intentional burial of articulated animals, one a storage pit, and the other a deposit of ash and burned shell and metal. These four deposits appear to form a cosmogram below the floor of the cabin. Unlike the Jordan cosmogram, however, this cosmogram was oriented to the walls of the cabin, and not to cardinal directions.

The first deposit was discovered during the Summer 1999 field season. The deposit consists of a fully articulated chicken placed in a small hole facing east with its wings slightly extended to

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either side. The chicken had been placed below a broken base of a green glass wine bottle. As yet, we have been unable to determine how the bird was killed. It was the discovery of this deposit that led to the decision to excavate a number of additional units in the area in an attempt to determine the reason for the burial of this animal. This later excavation has demonstrated that the chicken had been placed along the western wall of the cabin.

The second deposit was discovered during the Summer 2000 field season. The deposit consisted of an almost fully articulated young cow. Upon complete excavation, it was determined that the cow was missing its tail. Like the chicken, the cow had been placed into a hole with its legs and head facing to the east. One major difference between the positioning of the cow and the chicken was that the cow was placed lying on its side and the chicken had been placed standing up. The cow was placed below both a green glass wine bottle base and a complete wine bottle. As with the chicken these glass objects had been placed upside down. A large portion of a colonoware vessel was also recovered from above the cow in the fill of the pit. The cow was placed to the northeast of the chicken, and along the northern wall of the cabin.

The third deposit was also discovered during the Summer 2000 field season. Indeed, both the third and fourth deposits were found as a direct result of a test that the cow and chicken formed two of the four deposits of a cosmogram. The third deposit consisted of a shallow, rectangular pit placed below the ground surface immediately in front of the cabin's fireplace. At the time of its excavation, the pit contained a great deal of shell (possibly from the disintegration of the fireplace base), a complete green glass wine bottle, the

fragments of another wine bottle missing its base, a long cast iron "needle," a large blue glass bead, several mirror fragments, a number of smoothed bone fragments, and several colonoware sherds. Samples of the soil were collected for possible botanical analysis. This deposit may have been a "hidey-hole," and unrelated to the other deposits, except for three factors: the wine bottles, the association of artifacts that help to comprise the conjurer's kit at Jordan and in the ethnographic examples recorded by Bascom, and the fact that no other houses for which hearths have been identified (four) had these pits.(22) This deposit was located northeast of the cow, but it would have been placed alone the eastern wall of the cabin.

The fourth deposit was also discovered during the Summer 2000 field season. This deposit was the most ephemeral of the four. It consisted of a fine, lime ash, with very small fragments of burned shell and metal (including a number of small nails). This deposit was placed in a very shallow hole scooped into the sand. The texture of the sand lined the bottom of the pit suggested that the materials might have been burned *in situ*. However, later depositional factors have had the effect of softening this burned lens, and making it difficult to determine if the materials were actually burned there. The artifacts recovered from within this deposit are identical to those of the southern deposit in the cosmogram interpreted from the Jordan Quarters, and like that one, the one at Frogmore was located on the southern wall of the cabin.

Taken together, these four deposits directly mirror the cosmogram deposits recovered from the Jordan Quarters, and the ethnographically defined meanings of the four points of a cosmogram found in West African contexts. The only major difference between the two

cosmograms is the use of animals at Frogmore Manor, rather than the European American technology employed in the Jordan cosmogram. However, the meanings of the deposits appear to have been identical. Indeed, the Frogmore Manor deposits have a much more "African" appearance. Cattle often symbolize wealth in many West African cultures, while protection from spirits can be obtained from chickens. In both Frogmore Manor and Jordan, chickens were sacrificed and then buried fully articulated, though in the case of Jordan this may have been done at the death of the Conjurer/Midwife's two children and husband during the 1870s.

Summary and Conclusions

There can be no question that African cultural traditions became actively incorporated into African American culture through the interactions and adaptations made by Africans, Europeans, and Native Americans who operated within the system of enslavement practiced in the American South. For Africans and African Americans, however, a number of these traditions had to be maintained through their being hidden from the wider, dominant society. Thus, the traditions had to continue but in an "underground" and/or altered expression from those originally practiced in Africa. Some could be hidden within the traditions and beliefs of the dominant culture, as in the Christianity of the Prays House.(23) Sometimes they were hidden, as Bruner stated, in "plain view" within the landscape they created.(24) In other cases, the symbolic representatives of the beliefs and behaviors had to literally be hidden from the view of individuals both within and outside the community. Thus, for African Americans the placement of objects below ground was far more

important than had been the case in Africa. Given the power of the inhabitants of the spirit world, placement out of view, below cabin floors or other locations below ground, even on their bodies, had no impact on the efficacy of the deposits thus “hidden”/placed out of view.

The detailed contextual historical archaeological research of the African American communities of the Jordan and Frogmore Manor Plantations have revealed a number of patterns of behavior along with symbolic representations that appear to have antecedents in Africa: the conjurer, the cosmograms, and other symbolically charged objects, along with a number of beliefs and rituals connected with the burial of the dead. Further, the information discovered during both the Jordan and Frogmore Manor Quarters excavations have also revealed another pattern found within the African American expression of this symbolic culture. That is, for the most part, these displays are hidden from the view of individuals within this world, especially those of the dominant culture, unlike in West Africa where they could be placed into the above ground landscape defined by the inhabitants.

However, what is important in this transition from plain view to hidden is that the elements were still “visible” to inhabitants of the supernatural world. These elements still functioned to aid in the manipulation and maintenance of the supernatural world—a world still heavily defined by the beliefs of peoples of African descent. Such patterns appear similar to historically and ethnographically defined practices from the Caribbean, South America, North America, and, most importantly, the Gullah of the Sea Islands where Frogmore Manor is located.(25)

Clearly, over time the material objects that have symbolic importance within African American systems of belief and behavior were changed from their African counterparts. As people of African descent became increasingly confronted with European American technology they gave it meaning and value within their own cultural contexts. In this they had little choice. Stores and merchants in the New World spent little effort importing the goods from Africa necessary for African belief and behavioral practices to continue with the same materials that might have been employed in Africa. Further, the pattern of cultural repression practiced by European Americans noted above, literally drove people of African descent to a redefinition of meaning and beliefs connected with European American technology and definition of the landscape around them. Thus some of the behavioral and belief patterns noted by historians and historical archaeologists appear to represent adaptations to life under the conditions of enslavement.(26) These patterns would include: determination of community membership, treatment after death, Prays House, and internal community craft production.

The two cosmograms defined from Frogmore Manor and Jordan represent this change from more “African” material culture to European American items being assigned identical meanings. Unfortunately, it is this change toward European American material culture that has caused historical archaeologists “trouble” in defining African and African American impacts on the landscape of American culture. We have spent too much time looking for African material culture, rather than African meaning and value assigned to European American material items. Historians and historical archaeologists have conceived of African practices/material expressions

as “retentions” rather than as what they are—elements of a new culture constructed to permit survival within the oppressive systems of enslavement and tenancy/sharecropping. We have taken the view that the dominant culture “provided” the beliefs and behaviors that African and people of African descent had to follow. Phillip Morgan even assigns the role of the labor system as the determining character for “African American cultural retentions.”(27) In this view, people of African descent are merely vessels that slowly are filled with European American culture. Clearly, the material presented above suggests this view is totally inadequate. Peoples of African descent played the major role in their cultural development. They simply placed it in contexts “hidden from view.”

Notes

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Some Evidence of African Cultural Traditions Among the Residents of Black Church Centered Farming Communities in North Central Louisiana

Joe Lewis Caldwell

The fact that black and white Southerners worshipped together during the antebellum period has been firmly established by current scholars.(1) After the Baptist, Methodist Episcopal, and Presbyterian denominations split (Presbyterians avoided formal separation until the Civil War) along sectional lines in the 1840s, there was a near uniform south-wide commitment toward evangelical activities among the slaves. Black slaves were segregated within the church proper; but slave converts partook of the Lord's Supper, albeit at a separate setting, received the right hand of fellowship, and were referred to as brothers and sisters within the churches.

White southern churchmen of all stripes professed concern for the souls of their fellow human beings held in servitude. Religious newspapers carried articles and statements encouraging an increased involvement on the part of their denominations in ministering to the slaves. In its January 1858 issue, the Mount Lebanon *Louisiana Baptist* carried an urgent appeal for greater attention to the question of missionary work among the slaves. The title of the article was "Preaching to Colored People," and the author had this to say on the subject, "This matter is either neglected, or badly managed by most of our churches and ministers. The experience of all our churches would testify to the importance of separate instruction for the colored people..."(2)

It is difficult to accurately assess the success of such efforts in the Louisiana Delta. The Episcopal church of Louisiana supported missionary work among Louisiana's slave population. It established a missionary station in Lake Providence for the

purpose of proselytizing the faith among the slaves of Carroll Parish and adjoining parishes. According to the published proceedings of their annual state convention, this venture garnered few fruits in the 1840s. Association reports from the Baptists indicate a strong desire to work with slaves in the Louisiana Delta. However, these associations left little concrete information on the number of slaves converted in the four parishes. One scholar asserts that white Baptists in antebellum Louisiana developed biracial churches, where the slaves' participation in the services was far from superficial, and far less circumscribed than we have been led to believe.(3) Among the slaves of this region, the missionary thrust of the Methodist Episcopal Church South was certainly felt. Between 1846 and the outbreak of the Civil War, this denomination brought 9,483 blacks into the Methodist fold. This means that blacks made up 55% of the professing Methodists who lived in the Louisiana Delta during the 14 years previous to the Civil War.

The Methodist Episcopal Church South intensified its missionary efforts among the Louisiana slaves on the eve of the Civil War. Reportedly, Methodist ministers had preached to 4,330 slaves by year's end in 1860, and to 4,400 the next year.(4) Baptist ministers were probably no less energetic, and may have surpassed their Methodist brethren. However, once the first rays of freedom penetrated the dark cloud of slavery, blacks in the Louisiana Delta wasted little time establishing churches. At least one black church was formally organized shortly after the close of the Civil War. The Gilfield Baptist Church was founded in 1866 on the Gilfield Plantation, located in Concordia Parish.(5) From that point onward, blacks began organizing churches in each of the four parishes being studied. The three major denominations were Baptists, Colored Methodists (CME), and African Methodist Episcopal (AME).(6)

Session Three:

Black Cultural Landscapes and Institutions



Places of Cultural Memory: African Reflections on the American Landscape

Amidst the turmoil and changes of early Reconstruction, blacks in the Louisiana Delta showed a near single-minded dedication to the idea of having own places of worship. On Sundays, rural black church members and visitors arrived in the morning, and stayed late into the night. Between church services, they occupied themselves by exchanging pleasantries and local news. Families brought food in picnic baskets, and shared it with visitors.(7)

Traditionally, black churches set aside one or more weeks for their yearly revivals. Known as protracted meetings, these marathon soul saving events were scheduled for the latter part of July through August. The farms and plantations required very little work at that time of year. Therefore, the period between laying by and the beginning of the harvest was ideal for the protracted meetings. Gatherings of this type probably originated during slavery, because the slaves had a greater opportunity to attend religious meetings at that time of year. Though they were steeped in the evangelical revivalistic tradition of the Southern Baptist faith, there is no denying the social dimensions of these affairs. Food was plentiful and the singing, praying, and preaching provided topics for conversations many days afterwards.(8) While they were the premier religious and social occasions of the year, protracted meetings were also welcomed respites from the daily routine of plantation labor for countless numbers of working class blacks in the Louisiana Delta.

In the early post-emancipation years, the freedmen faced an uncertain future in the Louisiana Delta. Under Presidential Reconstruction, their lot was hardly different from what it had been during the days of slavery. The Black Code placed many familiar restrictions on the black population of Louisiana.

There was at least one positive aspect, however. Many blacks took advantage of the new laws permitting them to legalize and sanctify their marital bonds. A number of those weddings were celebrated in the new churches erected by blacks.(9)

Weddings generally were festive social occasions among the Delta blacks. They took place at the homes of minister and friends, in the office of magistrates, at the homes of the brides, in the churches on the plantations, and elsewhere. The records indicated that black couples went to the altar throughout the year. Seemingly, June, July, August, December, and January were popular months, with Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and early January being preferred times. On December 25, 1868, the Reverend Fite Kennedy performed wedding ceremonies for eight couples on the Villa Clara Plantation, in Tensas Parish. Caleb Dowe, a white minister who had performed the wedding rites for D. Cessor and Laura Ellis, noted on the marriage certificate that he had proceeded to the house of a colored man to perform the ceremony. This took place on June 27, 1874, in Tensas Parish.(10)

The records are imprecise concerning attendance at these affairs, although the number probably varied from a few friends and family members, to hundreds of guests, invited and uninvited. The Rev. Churchill Reed left a glimpse of the size of the crowds at blacks weddings in Concordia Parish. He pastored Saint Luke the Baptist Church on Lake Saint John in that parish. Charley Beesley, the church clerk who was probably acting with his pastor's consent, noted on a marriage certificate:

Elder Churchill Reed performed a (wedding) Nelson Harris & Susan Chase 24 November 1877—on the (Coosa) plantation Parish of Concordia in the Church of St. Luke

the Baptist in the presence of three witnesses & a large company of people....(11)

The same observation was made when the Rev. Churchill Reed joined Andrew Hout and Lou Dudley in holy matrimony—this event took place on the following day at the above mentioned church. Wilson Wood and Virginia Beverly were married by the Reverend Reed on December 1 "...in the presence of a large company of people."(13) On March 4, 1878, another couple from the Coosa Plantation, Henry Seale and Mandy Clark, were married in the Saint Luke the Baptist Church, in the presence of a large company of people.(14) The Rev. William Brown married a couple from the Coosa Plantation before a large congregation in the Saint Luke the Baptist Church on May 2, 1880. The Rev. Eli Johnson performed a wedding ceremony for Robert Wall and Anna Winston on May 26, 1880, in the school building on the Osecola Plantation, located in Tensas Parish.(15) During the period under consideration, a majority of the black people residing in the Louisiana Delta lived and worked on plantations. It was not unusual for a plantation to have from 50 to 100 workers, sharecroppers, renters, and day laborers. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that—once the appointed time arrived—these rural wedding were grand social occasions.

Because the church was one of the most important social institutions in the black community, it received its share of attention from friends and foes alike. Most of the black churches received parcels of land from white landowners in the area. Such donations were generally made with a stipulation that the property was to be used strictly for religious purposes.(16) The donors allowed the

donated properties to be used for both religious and educational purposes in only a few cases.

What was the purpose of these restrictions? It certainly was not an attempt at ecclesiastical control. There is only one recorded instance of the donor demanding that the donees follow specific denominational practices. On June 30, 1877, William G. Wyly donated a one-half acre lot on the Raleigh Plantation, in Carroll Parish, to the Mount Zion AME Church. The following were members of its board of trustees: Robert Stone, Solomon Richardson, [Miles] Hoffman, E. Howard, and Nicholas Burton.(17) Wyly made the donation for the consideration of one dollar and "...because of his good wishes for the causes...."(18) This donation went further than others in that it stipulated that the services were to be conducted by a minister of the AME Church South, who had been duly appointed by the General Conference of the AME Church. The donor also insisted that a full board of trustees be maintained at all times. In the event of a vacancy, he insisted the minister in charge call a regular meeting of the congregation and hold a democratic election to fill the vacancy. If the votes were tied, a steward or the minister would cast the tie breaking vote.(19)

Religious and humanitarian considerations aside, the primary motive was the desire of whites to exercise some control over black affairs in the postbellum world of the Louisiana Delta. By prescribing church activities through clauses in the instruments of donation, limiting the use of the property to religious purposes, white donors placed themselves in a position to monitor the behavior of their black beneficiaries. Additionally, restricting the use of donated properties may have been designed to prevent the congregations from using the church buildings for educational pur-

poses, although some buildings were used for both religious and educational purposes. Whatever the intentions, donations of this type enabled the donor to exercise subtle control over a particular congregation, and certainly excluded political activities on the church property.(20) Although these restrictions prevented the congregation from holding political rallies on the donated property, they had little, if any effect on the ability of the ministers to engage in politics.

The donors were not exclusively white men. White women, in at least two cases, gave a parcel of land from their dotal property to an incorporated black church association. On July 24, 1872, Elizabeth Ogden, who was then living in New Orleans, made a donation of this type to the Gilfield Baptist Church of Concordia Parish.(21) The donation was made "...for and in consideration of Her feelings of benevolence and humanity she bears the donees...."(22) Albert Rush, Alfred Williams, Washington Smith, and Joseph Tinsly (the Trustees of the Gilfield Baptist Church) were the donees. A condition was attached to the donation; the donated property was to be used exclusively for religious and educational purposes. If it were used for any other purpose, the donation would be declared null and void. Located on the Hole in the Wall Plantation, the one-half acre lot was valued at \$100.(23)

A similar donation was made to the Cypress Grove Baptist Church and School Association, which was domiciled in Tensas Parish. The Reverend George Washington, the organization's president and legal representative, accepted, on April 20, 1876 a donation of one-half acre of land located on Lee Place in Tensas Parish. Margaret P. Kempo made the donation with the following instruction:

This donation is made and accepted upon the following conditions: 1st

that a church or school house be erected on the within donated piece of land, within one year from the date of this act; and, 2nd that said piece of land and the building or buildings erected thereon, shall be used solely for religious and educational purposes, and in the event of any attempt of the aforesaid association to appropriate the said land or building or buildings to any other purpose whatsoever—the title, rights, interest and claims to and in the same shall revert back to the donor.(24)

One church, the New Hope Baptist Church of Madison Parish, received a donation with no strings attached. John P. Sudeling transferred to this body a lot of 150 square feet, located in the town of Delta, in Madison Parish. As pastor of the church, Daniel Dorsey accepted the donation on April 13, 1870.(25)

A transaction which clearly shows a desire on the part of some whites to maintain a not so subtle control over affairs in the black community was made by W. C. Currie, president of the board of trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, domiciled in Carroll Parish. Acting in his capacity as agent for that church, he sold a building situated near the Monticello road in the extreme corner of the plantation owned by H. Goodrich. The board of trustees of the AME church of Goodrich Landing finalized the transaction on May 17, 1872 by paying a sum of \$700 in cash. It was understood that the land upon which the church sat was not a part of the sale, but that the church would retain possession of the same as long as it was used exclusively for religious purposes.(26)

On August 20, 1872, A. W. Caudel donated a lot valued at \$200 to the First Colored Baptist Church of Madison Parish. Located on Roundway Bayou, the lot encompassed 50 square feet. He

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stipulated that a building be erected on the premises, with no time limitation, to be used for religious purposes only. Jacob Preston was the pastor of the church.(27)

Edward S. Wilson donated a town lot, lot number 192 in block 16, to the First Colored Baptist Church of the town of Providence, located in Carroll Parish. The donation was made with the understanding that a place of worship would be erected upon the lot within 60 days from the date of the gift, which was May 10, 1873, or the transaction would be null and void. He further stipulated that if at any time the property ceased to be used for religious purposes, it would revert back to the donor or his assignees.(28) On September 19, 1873, Pauline Carter, represented by A. V. Davis, agent of Pauline Carter and her husband, Dr. Robert Carter of Newport, RI, sold a Vidalia town lot situated near the intersection of Carter Avenue and a lot owned by Douglas Sledin. It was sold, for the sum of \$50, to a group of black men representing an unnamed Baptist church.(29) This Concordia Parish church, and thousands other like it throughout the South, became the spiritual home for the first wave of rural black peasants, who turned their faces toward southern villages and towns after the Civil War.(30)

The restrictions do not seem to have diminished the strong desire of blacks in the Louisiana Delta to establish churches of their own. By accepting donated parcels of land, with clauses specifically prohibiting educational activities, and political activities by inference, on the donated properties, blacks were not placing themselves completely under the control of their white benefactors. To the contrary, they were able to act independently within the context of these proscriptions. On the local and state level, they organized independent

church associations. Through these bodies, and in cooperation with white churches of the same denomination, and black co-religionists in Mississippi, they ordained ministers, elected and appointed association officials, established bylaws, disciplined members, and published annual reports.

Black ministers were the key actors in the struggle for an independent black church in the Louisiana Delta. Those who had been preachers during the days of slavery quickly grasped the significance of the changed circumstances, and sought ordination as soon possible. They were also involved in incorporating church and school associations.

What kind of black men chose to follow the gospel path in the turbulent years of Reconstruction, and where did they receive their training? Obviously, some had been preachers during the slavery. The Rev. John Emery had been preaching during the antebellum period along Tate Creek in Madison County, Kentucky, where he was ordained on August 24, 1856. His certificate of ordination was recorded in Madison Parish, Louisiana in 1872. He performed a wedding ceremony for Honore King and Jules Jones in Madison Parish, October 10, 1873. Thereafter, he continued to officiate at weddings and carry out the other functions associated with his profession. He possessed some education, judging from the fact that he affixed his signature to marriage documents, instead of making his mark.(31)

David King, Tillman Banks, and Bohannas Woodford—Trustees of the First Morning Star Free Will Missionary Baptist Church of Carroll Parish—were all ordained ministers. Bohannas Woodford was ordained in April 1867, and David King received the blessings of the fellow ministers nearly a year later

on March 15, 1868. Tillman Banks was present at the ordination of King and had probably been ordained earlier.(32)

Several significant facts can be gleaned from the certificates of ordination. Based on the information contained in those documents, for example, it is clear that the prospective ministers underwent a period of apprenticeship in their home churches. During this period, the man desiring ordination was observed for evidence of piety and good moral character. Occasionally, he had an opportunity to exhibit his oratorical skills by leading the congregation in prayer or by preaching to small gatherings. Apparently, there was no established time limit for the apprenticeship. After the leaders of the church were satisfied that a sufficient amount of time had elapsed, the individual was recommended for ordination. Judging from the ordination certificates, the examinations were extensive. However, it should be pointed out that the overwhelming majority of the black men who followed the ministry as a profession during the early years of freedom had little, if any, formal education. Very few were able to sign a marriage certificate for the couples they married, making their marks instead. Exceptions were men like Curtis Pollard of Madison Parish, Alfred Fairfax of Tensas Parish, and David Young of Concordia Parish. The problem of an uneducated black ministry, which affected all of the denominations in the black community, lasted long past Reconstruction.(33)

Formal organizations did exist among the highly democratic Baptists. A council composed of representatives from regular Baptist churches convened to conduct the examinations for persons wishing to practice the ministry under the banner of that faith.(34)

The more centrally organized Methodists controlled ordination through

their General Conference. Also, those white Protestants groups, such as the Baptists and Methodists, who had licensed black ministers before the war, continued to do so in the early post-emancipation years. However, the southern branches of these churches rapidly extricated themselves from involvement in the affairs of their black co-religionist in the period under review.(35)

Apparently, the records of certificates of ordination are incomplete for the four Louisiana Delta parishes. A far greater number of men acted as preachers than is indicated by the ordination certificates. Based on these documents, and on the evidence of black ministers who performed wedding ceremonies or identified themselves as ministers in government records, at least 119 black ministers worked in the Louisiana Delta between 1865-1880.

Of course, a few ministers were ordained in other states. For example, Mortimer Anderson was ordained at the Second Baptist Rock Church in Vicksburg, Mississippi, May 15, 1867. John Emery of Kentucky was mentioned previously. Their ordination certificates were filed in the courthouses of their respective parishes. Anderson lived in Carroll Parish, and Emery called Madison Parish home.(36)

Evidently, the authorities were alert to any flagrant disregard of procedure in fulfilling the lawful obligation connected with the marriage ceremony. The Rev. Joshua Frazier of Madison Parish was required to execute a \$2000 minister's bond May 18, 1869.(37) No specific charges were lodged against him. But the fact that he had been a licensed minister prior to this date does raise some questions about the reason for this rather large bond. Also, no other ministers' bonds were found by the author.

The condition of Rev. Joshua Frazier's bonds suggests some official reservations about his past performance. It had the following stipulations:

...therefore, if upon the issuance of Licenses from the court of said parish and State, the said Joshua Frazier minister shall, will and truly perform all the acts that are contemplated in laws of this state in the celebration of marriages in all cases.... (38)

As securities, J. R. McDowell and A. E. Amis, two white men of some means, signed the bond with Frazier. Despite the large bond, he continued to perform weddings in Madison Parish throughout the period under consideration.(39)

Abednego McCall was ordained by the First Regular Baptist Association of Louisiana September 20, 1872. The association was composed of representatives from "nearby churches." Rev. Dorsey Frazier, along with a council made up of other ministers and laymen, unanimously recommended his ordination. Martin Forrest was ordained on December 31, 1875, at the Galilee Baptist Church in Carroll Parish. His ordination was sanctioned by a council of regular Baptist churches (probably the same group that endorsed McCall's efforts in 1872), meeting at the Galilee Baptist Church, pastored by Elder Jo Griffin. Monroe Rollins was examined and licensed to preach the gospel on October 29, 1879. He was recommended for ordination by the Mount Maria Baptist church, located in Madison Parish, of which he was a member.(40)

Possibly, among the very independent-minded Baptists, individual churches ordained their own ministers, and later recommended them for examination before a regular council of churches. Rev. Erasmus Brown's ordination certificate suggests such a possibility. It reads, "Rev. Erasmus Brown was

examined and duly licensed, having been regularly ordained as Elder of the Mount Zion Free Will Baptist Church on the 10th day of October 1869...."(41) Once a minister was ordained, he was then a full fledged member of the profession. If an opportunity to pastor a church presented itself, he accepted it. Until such time, he was welcome as a pulpit guest in black churches throughout the area. Of course, he could always start his own church, providing he had a following, or if a schism developed in an existing congregation.

As noted earlier, some of the black men who were involved in establishing churches were ordained ministers; others may have sought ordination afterwards. The records indicate that far more laymen than ministers assisted in the formation of churches. However, this does not tell the entire story. According to the oral tradition, Rev. Lewis Taylor, a black minister from Carroll Parish, was responsible for founding several churches in the Louisiana Delta. Conceivably, other black ministers and laymen played similar roles. Together, these black pioneers, known and unknown, laid the ground work for one of the most durable social institutions in the Louisiana Delta's black community. A few examples will serve to illustrate this point. In Tensas Parish, the Spring Hill Baptist Church and School Association was incorporated April 21, 1870, with seven men listed on the charter of incorporation (James Brooks, Nathan Wingfield, Leroy Pickett, Frank Johnson, George Jefferson, Peter Anderson, and Charles Buchanan). There was no information on the official status of the incorporators. However, since James Brooks' name was included in such a manner as to give the impression that he was conducting business for the corporate body, it is safe to assume that he was the acting president, until an election was held,

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as was provided for in Article Two of the Act of Incorporation. All of the signatories made their marks. Uneducated though they were, they made provisions for the erection of educational facilities for those persons in the immediate vicinity of the Spring Hill Baptist Church.(42) Article Five stated that a Baptist church and school would be located "...on or near the margin of Lake St. Peter in Sec. 31 Township 11, N. Range 11E in the Parish of Tensas State of Louisiana."(43)

On July 30 of the same year, the Lakewood Baptist church Association of Tensas Parish was incorporated. Here, as with the previous body, seven men were instrumental in obtaining the incorporation. While the records do not show any of the seven charter members as having been the pastor of the church prior to its official incorporations. Article Three of the Act of Incorporation designated the seven men as a board of trustees, with Calvin Hunter acting as the president of the board until the first regular meeting in January of the following year.(44)

The China Grove Church of the Missionary Baptist Association of Tensas Parish was incorporated May 6, 1871. George E. Wallace was the only individual who did not sign his name by marking the X. Article Three of the charter provided for an annual election to be held on the first Monday of each year. At that time, a five member board of directors or trustees would be chosen. It would elect one of its members as president. Until that time, Wallace served as president of the board of trustees.(45)

Of the 21 men involved in establishing the three incorporated churches mentioned above, only one was a licensed minister at the time of the foundings. Significantly, the move to establish independent black churches enjoyed great success in the Louisiana

Delta. By 1880, 61 independent black churches—or an average of 15.5 churches per parish—were serving over 50,000 black men, women, and children. On a per capita basis, it amounted to one church for every 825 persons in the Louisiana Delta's black populations.

The fact that black churches in the Louisiana Delta were beholden to white benefactors for land, and in some cases, buildings, did not prevent these bodies from forming and joining local and state conferences, and associations.

Historically, both black and white Baptists had been independent groups. However, this does not mean that black Baptists in post-emancipation Louisiana eschewed formal organizations that would have enable them to fraternize with their fellow Baptists on the local and state level. In the Louisiana Delta, George Benham, a northerner who purchased a plantation in Carroll Parish, saw evidence of some type of black religious organization with headquarters in Vicksburg, New Orleans, and elsewhere. His observation was made in 1866, and since the church going laborers on his estate declared themselves Baptist, his findings probably point to the first efforts of a bi-state organizational drive among black Baptists in Louisiana and Mississippi.(46) One author stated that "the first Negro Baptist conventions were formed in North Carolina in 1866, and in Virginia and Alabama, in 1867."(47) According to this source, by 1870 all Southern states had black Baptist State Conventions. Benham aside, state wide Baptist organizations certainly existed among black Louisianians by 1869.(48)

These bodies drew up constitutions, wrote bylaws, adopted covenants, elected officers, and empowered themselves with the authority to ordain ministers and constitute churches. Dividing the state into districts, they charged a \$50 fee to any church wishing to come into their

association from one of the other state conventions. A new church seeking membership in an association, and having no prior connection with other state conventions, was charged only ten dollars. Each member church was assessed an annual fee, to be paid on or before the annual convention met. The fee was based on the size of the congregation and its ability to pay.(49)

Undoubtedly, some black Baptist churches refrained from joining any formal associations. Conceivably other state and local associations could have eluded scholars, due to a dearth of extant records or the early demise of the associations. However, the above mentioned organizations are concrete examples of early efforts on the part of black Baptists in Louisiana to establish fraternal contact with one another.(50)

Decentralization was a prominent feature of these statewide organizations. They attempted to steer clear of disputes that arose within member churches, as well as those that developed between member churches. Such matters were referred back to the district level for arbitration. The parent bodies were quite clear on questions of doctrine and Christian behavior. However, even in these matters, they merely echoed the beliefs and practices of the member churches. They supported temperance, total immersion, an evangelical gospel, a simple Calvinistic creed, and the exclusion from fellowship of any member convicted of un-Christian behavior.(51)

Article Six of the constitution of the Louisiana Freedmen's Baptist Association was very precise on these points:

Any member who shall be found guilty of drunkenness, lying, stealing, slander, mischief making or other disorderly conduct, shall be liable to immediate expulsion. The association shall [be] governed by regulations as

those which a regulated Baptist church is governed according to the spirit and tender of the 18th chapter of the Gospel by Matthew.(52)

On the local level, the church acted as an agent of social control and as an instrument of self-government in the black community. One could take pride in and gain prestige from church membership. As during the days of slavery, the post-emancipation black community was divided into religious and non-religious camps. General behavior provided the best clue as to which group with which an individual was associated. Local churches were serious about excluding members who violated established standards of behavior. In 1880, several churches represented at a meeting of the Southern Baptist Association, 15th district, reported excluding a number of their members.(53)

While these churches are outside the geographical scope of this study, they do serve as useful examples of the rural black church's willingness to censor its members for un-Christian behavior. Of course, exclusion did not have to be permanent. Once an excluded member came back to the church on a regular meeting Sunday or at a regular conference and apologized for his behavior, requested the prayers of the faithful, and expressed the opinion that God had forgiven him for his transgression, he was readmitted to full fellowship. Looking at the available minutes of state and district Baptist Associations, it becomes increasingly clear that black church leaders were involved in a serious effort to maintain a high level of Christian devotion and moral rectitude among their members in post-emancipation Louisiana. Additionally, the leadership expressed a desire for an educated ministry, as well as educated laity.(54)

By establishing normative behavioral standards for church members, ordained ministers, building separate house of worship, and forming local and state associations, and conferences, the black church leaders early demonstrated their independence from total white control.

Immediately after the Civil War, some attempts at cooperation had been made between white and black Baptists in Louisiana. Concerned over rapid inroads northern Protestants were making among blacks in Louisiana, white Baptists made some tentative efforts to become involved. For example, in 1893, H. S. Reiser and C. D. Lee (both white) attended the annual session of the black Thirteenth District Baptist Association held in DeSoto Parish in Northwest Louisiana.(55)

The Louisiana Delta was primarily a Baptist stronghold. However, at least five black churches of the Methodist denomination, four AME churches and one CME church existed in the Delta. In 1866, most of the approximately 49,600 black members of the Methodist Episcopal Church South withdrew and formed the CME church, which established congregations throughout the South.(56) Apparently, any black members of the Methodist Episcopal Church South (of Goodrich's Landing, Carroll Parish) withdrew and joined the AME church, or the CME church in that area. Methodists were more tightly organized than the Baptists; their congregations were given little, if any, choice of ministers. This was done at the General Conference, where the bishops and presiding elders held sway; they chose the ministers. While no denominational breakdown is available, it is inconceivable that the Methodists could have claimed more than one-fifth of the total black church membership in the four Louisiana Delta parishes. In 1880, William Murrell, Jr., a long time resident

of Madison Parish, stated that four-fifths of the "black people down there were Baptists."(57) Whether his comment was intended to embrace the entire state, or just the Louisiana Delta, is not clear. The 1870 census offers some information concerning religion in Louisiana, but gives no statistical breakdown by race. According to these returns, 3,200 Baptists and 2,500 Methodists resided in the Louisiana Delta, meaning that the Methodists comprised 44% of the church-going population. Certainly only a fraction of this group was black. The census marshal reported 37 churches, of various denominations, in the four parishes. One scholar set the number of black Baptists in Louisiana at over 60,000 in 1871. In 1892, a statewide Baptist organization concluded that 83,000 black Baptists lived in Louisiana.(58)

Black church leaders in the Louisiana Delta were successful in their struggle to build independent churches in the post-emancipation era. Their success was attributable, in part, to their indefatigable efforts, and to the nature of post-emancipation southern society. Aside from the proscriptions spelled out in the instruments of donation, white benefactors collectively—and Louisiana Delta whites generally—were either unable or unwilling to stifle the development of an independent black church movement. The black church extended its influence beyond the physical boundaries of the church property, and embraced the physical and spiritual black community. Acting as an agent of social control, and an instrument of self-government, it established behavioral norms, continued to disseminate the cultural ethos of black Americans, and provided a structural framework for local and state church organization, which survived into the twentieth century.

Notes

1. Larry M. James, "Life Together: Blacks and Whites in Antebellum Mississippi and Louisiana Baptist Churches" (master's thesis, Tulane University, 1986), 20-52; Clarence L. Mohr, "Slaves and White Churches in Confederate Georgia," in *Masters and Slaves in the House of the Lord: Race and Religion in the American South, 1740-1870*, ed. John N. Boles (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1988), 155-158.

2. Blake Touchstone, "Planter and Slave Religion in the Deep South," in *Masters and Slaves in the House of the Lord: Race and Religion in the American South, 1740-1870*, ed. John N. Boles (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1986), 100-101; James, "Life Together," 42, 55; "Preaching to Colored People," *Mount Lebanon Louisiana Baptist*, January 20, 1858.

3. *Journal of the Proceedings of a Convention of the Clergy and Churches, in the State of Louisiana, held in Christ Church, 1838-1850*, Vol. 1, (New Orleans, LA: n.p., n.d.) 94, 137, 151; *Minutes of the Louisiana Baptist Association, Eastern Louisiana, 1843-1957* (Nashville, TN: Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, n.d.), passim; These records are devoid of statistical information on black Baptists in the Louisiana Delta during the antebellum era. *Minutes of the Louisiana Baptist Association [with the Minutes of the] Bayou Macon Association* (Nashville, TN: Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Conventions, n.d.), passim; The Bayou Macon Association was organized November 29, 1855 at Deerfield, Louisiana, situated in Carroll Parish. Its minutes contain very little useful information on black Baptist activities

during the antebellum period. There is a substantial amount of materials missing between 1856-1868.

4. *Missionary Reports and Minutes of the Fifteenth Session of the Louisiana Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church South* (Baton Rouge, LA: n.p., 1860), 24; *Missionary Reports and Minutes of the Sixteenth Session of the Methodist Episcopal Church South* (Baton Rouge, LA: n.p., 1861), 19.

5. *Guide to Vital Statistics Records of Church Archives in Louisiana. Vol. I. Protestant and Jewish Churches—Prepared by War Service Program, Louisiana Service Division* (New Orleans, LA: Works Project Administration, 1942).

6. *Ibid.* Undoubtedly some black Catholics lived in Northeast Louisiana, individuals who were sold up river from Natchez, Mississippi, shipped into Louisiana from Maryland and South Carolina, and those who found their way into the Louisiana Delta from other Southern Louisiana parishes.

7. Henderson H. Donald, *The Negro Freedmen: Life Conditions of the American Negro in the Early Years After Emancipation* (New York: Henry Schuman, 1952), 121; Sydney Nathans, "Fortress Without Walls: A Black Community After Slavery," in *Holding on to the Land and the Lord: Kinship, Ritual, Land Tenure, and Social Policy in the Rural South*, eds., Robert L. Hall and Carol B. Stack (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1982), 60.

8. Mechal Sobel, *Trabelin' On: The Slave Journey to an Afro-Baptist Faith* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979), 242-243; Albert J. Raboteau, "Slave Religion: The 'Invisible Institution'," in *The Antebellum South* (Oxford and New

York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 303-304; John D. Christian, *A History of the Baptists of Louisiana* (Shreveport, LA: The Executive Board of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, 1923), 142; Touchstone, "Planter and Slave Religion," 122.

9. *Madison Parish, State of Louisiana, Marriage Records and Miscellaneous Bonds, 1866-1869*. (Tallulah, LA: The Ark-La-Tex Genealogical Society, n.d.), 1-119, 129, 146; *Concordia Parish, State of Louisiana, Marriage Records, 1870-1881*, Vol. O (Vidalia, LA: n.p., n.d.), 245-532; *ibid*, part 2, Vol. D, 51-106.

10. *Tensas Parish, State of Louisiana, Marriage Record, 1867-1870*, Part 4, Vol. C (St. Joseph, LA: n.p., n.d.), 379, 382, 389; *ibid*, 1878-1880, Vol. G, 658; *ibid*, Vol. E, 1054.

11. *Concordia Parish Marriage Records, 1873*, Vol. E, 721.

12. *Ibid*, 722.

13. *Ibid*, 727.

14. *Ibid*, 727, 821.

15. *Ibid*, 1106.

16. *Concordia Parish, State of Louisiana, Conveyance Records, 1871-1878*, Vol. P (Vidalia, LA: n.p., n.d.), 128-129; *Tensas Parish, State of Louisiana, Notarial Records, 1868-1872*, Part 7, Vol. G (St. Joseph, LA: n.p., n.d.), 690-692.

17. *East Carroll Parish, State of Louisiana, Conveyance Records, 1874-1879*, Vol. P (Lake Providence, LA: n.p., n.d.), 605-606. The record is not clear, and the assumed first name of Hoffman is Miles.

18. *Ibid*.

19. Ibid. A previous transaction was made which involved an AME church situated on a plantation owned by H. Goodrich of Carroll Parish. Since it was a sale and not a donation, it will be discussed later.

20. *East Carroll Parish Conveyance Records*, Vol. A, 755-756.

21. *Concordia Parish Conveyance Records*, Vol. P, 128-129.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid

24. *Tensas Parish Notarial Records*, Vol. H, part 8, 704-705.

25. *Madison Parish, State of Louisiana, Conveyance Records*, 1865-1874, Vol. G (Tallulah, LA: n.p.), 335-336.

26. *East Carroll Parish Conveyance Records*, Vol. O, 324.

27. *Madison Parish Conveyance Records*, 658.

28. *East Carroll Parish Conveyance Records*, Vol. A, 755-756.

29. *Concordia Parish Conveyance Records*, Vol. P, 281.

30. Ibid.

31. Available records are silent on the subject of what motivated black men throughout the post-emancipation South to choose the ministry as a profession. A large majority of these individuals were sincere when they said they had received the call. Certainly a number of them (exactly how many may never be known) received the call during the days of slavery. Having gained the confidence of their congregation under the trying circumstances of slavery, it was only natural that these "slave preachers" continued to preach after the coming of freedom. As religious and political leaders in

the black community, black ministers in the Louisiana Delta often touched the lives of members of their congregation from the cradle to the grave. See *Madison Parish Conveyance Records*, Vol. G, 188; *Madison Parish Marriage Records*, no vol., 246, 322, 345.

32. *East Carroll Parish Conveyance Records*, Vol. P, 755-756.

33. Ibid; *East Carroll Parish, State of Louisiana, Marriage Records*, Vol. C (Lake Providence, LA: n.p.), 96-97, 224; Erskine Clarke, *Wrestlin Jacob: A Portrait of Religion in the Old South* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979), 53-54; Sobel, *Trabelin' On*, 160-161, 196-197; Charles V. Hamilton, *The Black Preacher in America* (New York: William Marrow and Co., 1972), 20-22, 39. Also see *Madison Parish Conveyance Records*, Vol. G, 167, 218; *ibid*, Vol. I, 21; *Tensas Parish, State of Louisiana, Marriage Records*, 1866-1869, Part 3, Vol. B (St. Joseph, LA: n.p.), *passim*; *Concordia Parish Marriage Records*, Vol. B, 466-546; *East Carroll Parish Marriage Records*, Vol. C, 97-98.

34. *East Carroll Parish Marriage Records*, Vol. C, 96-97, 224.

35. "A Negro Methodist Conference," in *The Cornhill Magazine* (March 1876): 346; Daniel A. Payne, *History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in the South*, ed. C. S. Smith (Nashville, TN: Arno Press, 1969), 218-223; Clarence Walker, *A Rock in a Weary Land: The African Methodist Episcopal Church During the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1982), 66; John Hughes, "A History of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ministry to the Negro, 1845-1904" (Ph.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1971), 32-34.

The first Baptist in Louisiana is believed to have been a free black itinerant lay preacher, who was later ordained by white Baptists in Mississippi around 1804. See William Hicks, *History of Louisiana Baptists: From 1804 to 1914* (Nashville, TN: National Baptist Publishing Board, 1914), 117. It is an undeniable fact that he single-handedly introduced the Baptist faith into the state of Louisiana. However, some authorities attempted to deny him his place of honor. See Christian, *A History of the Baptists of Louisiana*, 50-52, 73-74. For clear biographical information relating to this pioneer black Baptist, see Sobel, *Trabelin' On*, 193-194.

36. *East Carroll Parish Marriage Records*, Vol. C, 98; *Madison Parish Marriage Records*, no Vol., 125.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. United States Bureau of Census, *Ninth Census of the United States*, 1870, 4th Ward, 719.

40. *Madison Parish Conveyance Records*, Vol. G, 167, 218; *ibid*, Vol. I, 21.

41. Ibid.

42. Rev. John Henry Scott, interviewed by Joseph Logsdon (transcript, Earl K. Long Library, University of New Orleans, LA, 1967); *Tensas Parish Marriage Records*, Part 5, Vol. D, 61; *Tensas Parish Notarial Records*, Part 7, Vol. G, 264-265.

43. Ibid, 265.

44. Ibid, 321-322.

45. Ibid, Part 8, Vol. H, 31-32. There is some evidence which suggests that churches like China Grove may have existed prior to their incorporations. Alfred Pollard, one of the incorporators

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of the above mentioned church, was married at the China Grove Church on April 13, 1870. The wedding was performed by Rev. Milligan Blue. See *Tensas Parish Marriage Records*, Vol. D, 190.

46. George Chittenden Benham, *A Year of Wreck: A True Story by A Victim* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1880), 297.

47. Hughes, "A History of the Southern Baptist," 34.

48. *Ibid.*, 35.

49. *Minutes of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Session of the Louisiana Freedmen's Baptist Association* (New Orleans, LA: n.p., 1897), 1-2.

50. Christian, *History of the Baptist*, 142.

51. *Ibid.*; *Proceedings of the Twentieth Annual Session of the Louisiana Baptist State Convention* (New Orleans, LA: n.p., 1892), 1-2.

52. *Twenty-Eighth Annual Session of the Louisiana Freedmen's Baptist Association*, 1.

53. *Minutes of the Third Annual Session of the Fifteenth Judicial District Southern Baptist Association* (Thibodauxville, LA: n.p., 1880), 6-11, 13-14.

54. *Ibid.*; *Twentieth Annual Session of the Louisiana Baptist State Convention*, 4; *Minutes of the Thirtieth Annual Session of the Southern Louisiana Baptist Association, Fifth District* (Houma, LA: n.p., 1907), 19-20; *Twenty-Eighth Annual Session of the Louisiana Freedmen's Baptist Association*, 17-18.

55. *Minutes of the Forty-Fifth Annual Session of the First District Baptist Association of LA* (New Orleans, 1910), 10-18; *Twenty-Eighth Annual Session of*

the Louisiana Freedmen's Baptist Association, 17-18; *Twentieth Annual Session of the Louisiana Baptist State Convention*, 10-20; *Minutes of the Fifth Annual Session of the Thirteenth District Baptist Association* (DeSoto Parish, 1893), 6.

56. Hughes, "A History of Southern Baptists," 34.

57. William Murrell, *Report of the Select Committee of the United States to Investigate the Cause of the Removal of the Negroes From the Southern States to the Northern States, Forty-Sixth Congress, Second Session, No. 693* (Service Set 1900) (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880) II, 535.

58. U. S. Bureau of Census, *Ninth Census*, 541; Dr. W. E. Paxton, quoted in Christian, *History of the Baptists*, 141; *Twentieth Annual Session of the Louisiana State Baptist Convention*, 17.

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