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Early African America: Archaeological Studies of Significance and Diversity

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Abstract This article examines archaeological studies of the cultural heritage and social dynamics of African descendant populations in the United States and Canada from AD 1400 through 1865. European colonial enterprises expanded in Africa and the Americas during that time span, effecting an accompanying movement of free and captive Africans into North America. Archaeological investigations of early African America are remarkable for the diversity of analytic scales and research questions pursued. This diversity of research efforts has yielded a highly productive, interdisciplinary expansion of knowledge concerning African diaspora histories.

Keywords African-American archaeology · Slavery · Resistance · Cultural heritage

Introduction

Archaeological research of African descendant populations in North America has expanded dramatically in scope and diversity over the past several decades. In addition to exchanging information, theories, and data through published venues, researchers working on African-American archaeology and the African diaspora have collaborated through resources such as the African Diaspora Archaeology Network (ADAN). The field promises even greater future advances in compiled data, detailed contextual interpretations, and comparative analyses. We can anticipate an increasing emphasis on comparative and synthetic studies based on an expanding field of research in the areas within North, Central, and South America, the Caribbean, and the regions of Africa impacted by the trans-Atlantic

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slave trade. A growing focus on maritime archaeology of slave vessels may yield greater insights into the horrific operations of the Middle Passage. In addition, rapid developments in bioarchaeological methods for analyzing traces of isotopes and DNA elements promise to provide data on potential links between populations across time and space.

In January 2007, I organized a forum of the ADAN at the Society for Historical Archaeology's annual conference, entitled "Research Designs for Atlantic Africa and African Diaspora Archaeologies." Discussion focused on theoretical constructs and interpretative frameworks employed in African diaspora archaeology projects and comparative studies in the historical archaeology of sites in Africa. The resulting assessments provided ample evidence that archaeological studies of the African descendant populations in North America pursue diverse research questions at multiple scales of analysis (Ogundiran 2008). Researchers have conducted studies spanning spatial scales from the global to the hemispheric, interregional, regional, and local. I provide a brief sketch of this diversity in this introduction and then address several subject areas in detail in the following sections.

Some scholars call for a focus on the dynamics and modalities of capitalist economies on a global scale and resultant impacts on African and African descendant populations (Orser 1994). Others recommend a primary focus on the specific structures of racial ideologies (Mullins 2008). Other analysts have emphasized the benefits of focusing on the execution of rich, contextual studies at the regional and local scales (Armstrong 2008; Brandon 2008). A broad spectrum of research projects has been implemented using investigative programs significantly informed by the interests of descendant and local communities (Blakey 2004; LaRoche and Blakey 1997; McDavid 1997). Archaeological research also has engaged ongoing theoretical debates in the disciplines of anthropology, history, and African-American studies concerning such themes as class structures, social group identities, ethnicity, racism, power, agency, double-consciousness, and self-determination. An interdisciplinary engagement in African-American archaeology is further enhanced when researchers become conversant with the analyses of scholars in Black studies, such as Frederick Douglass, St. Claire Drake, W. E. B. Du Bois, bell hooks, Zora Neale Hurston, Manning Marable, Arturo Schomburg, Booker T. Washington, George Williams, Carter Woodson, and Malcolm X (Franklin 1997b, pp. 44–45; Mullins 2008, pp. 105–107).

In implementing this array of research designs, analysts have produced detailed archaeological and historical studies of racial ideologies and the mechanisms of racism underlying economic structures (Babson 1990; Joseph 2003; Orser 2003, 2007). African-American laborers provided the foundation not just of agricultural economies but also of industrial enterprises in North America (Gradwohl and Osborn 1984; Shackel and Larsen 2000). Archaeologists also have undertaken extensive studies of changing culinary and dietary practices over time and of African-Americans' choices as economic consumers (Mullins 1999; Reitz 1994; Wilkie 2000).

Investigations have contributed significantly to broader debates concerning the processes by which particular beliefs and social practices related to African cultures developed in new ways in North America (Brown and Cooper 1990; Deetz 1996;

Ferguson 1992; Samford 2007). Similarly, archaeologists have focused on questions concerning the ways in which ethnic group identities and social networks among African diaspora populations form, evolve, and dissipate over time and in particular spatial domains, engaging related debates on ethnogenesis, creolization, and syncretism (Fennell 2007a; Franklin and Fesler 1999; Ogundiran and Falola 2007; Wilkie 2000). Related analyses of the material expressions of evolving cosmological and spiritual belief systems among African descendant populations also have been undertaken (Fennell 2003; Leone and Fry 1999; Ruppel et al. 2003; Wilkie 1997).

In-depth bioarchaeological investigations have addressed the health, diets, and lifeways of African Americans and the physical stress, trauma, and violence they endured during periods of enslavement (Blakey 2001; Cabak et al. 1995; Gibbs et al. 1980; Handler 1994; Mack and Blakey 2004). Archaeological investigations of mortuary traditions and the impacts of racism on the funerary practices of African Americans also have provided insights (McCarthy 1997, 2006). Other scholars have undertaken the study of African-Americans' acts of self-determination in the operation of escape routes to defy the system of bondage, as well as the development of "maroon" settlements by many individuals and families who succeeded in those efforts (Delle 2008; LaRoche 2004; Weik 2004, 2007, 2009). Studies of the landscapes of African-American lifeways similarly span a spatial scale from region, to community, to plantation domains, to individual occupation and work sites (Battle-Baptiste 2007; Heath and Bennett 2000; Upton 1990). Archaeological investigations increasingly focus on gender dynamics within African-American communities and households (Barile and Brandon 2004; Galle and Young 2004; Wilkie 2003).

Here I provide an overview of these diverse research topics by focusing on several subject areas in North America and the period of AD 1400 to 1865. The first section to follow discusses historical contexts for archaeological studies of African-Americans' experiences. Next surveyed are bioarchaeological studies, the physiological evidence of life histories, and dietary and health-care practices. African-American archaeology was dominated in its early years by research concerning plantation landscapes in the southern portions of the United States and the subjects of agency, production, and consumption in those domains. The next section examines colonial strategies, changes in plantation designs, and debates concerning the production and use of colonoware pottery, Chesapeake pipes, and subfloor storage chambers. I next consider the communities of free and enslaved African Americans in northern and midwestern sections of the United States, with primary examples drawn from Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, and Illinois.

Archaeological studies of escapes from, and defiance against, the system of slavery are then reviewed with a focus on escape routes and settlements in the United States and Canada, including settlements of self-liberated laborers in Virginia, North Carolina, and Florida. For Canada, I also address the "Black Loyalist" settlements of Nova Scotia. This survey turns next to rapidly expanding research on gender dynamics and theoretical debates presented by feminist perspectives. Extensive archaeological and historical studies of African-American

spiritual beliefs and practices are then considered. I close with the question of whether African-American archaeology represents a field of multivariate and multiscalar rigor, or a domain adrift in disordered pluralism. As the intervening discussions show, an answer of interdisciplinary vitality is amply supported.

Developments in historical evidence of trans-Atlantic African diasporas

Archaeological studies of early African America tend to be interdisciplinary. Such investigations should be undertaken in the context of known data from historians' analysis of documentary records concerning developments in particular regions and the specific contours of the operations of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Oral history accounts of specific regions, locales, and individuals also provide information for comparative study. Together, the interpretation of past documentary evidence and oral histories can be tested against the archaeological record to provide points of contrast and correlation. Such interdisciplinary approaches produce increasingly robust data sets and generate new, probing research questions focused on the points of contradiction between these evidentiary sources.

Historians' compilations of data on the operations of the trans-Atlantic slave trade have expanded significantly over the past several decades. The increased specificity of chronological accounts of the locations from which people were abducted and the locations in the New World to which they were transported provides valuable contextual evidence for archaeological studies in North America. Detailed historical investigations of the operations of the trans-Atlantic slave system were significantly advanced by Curtin (1969) and more recent work. The collaborative work of Eltis, Halbert, Richardson, and their colleagues has produced an expanded "TransAtlantic Slave Voyages" database that now contains information on 34,850 slave vessel voyages and the people ensnared in those campaigns of bondage (Eltis and Halbert 2008; Eltis and Richardson 2008).

A growing number of historical and archaeological projects study the operations and remains of slave ships (Handler 2006; Webster 2008a, b). Such studies seek to understand the material culture of these mechanisms for transport of millions of African captives to the Americas (McGhee 2007; Moore and Malcom 2008; Rediker 2007). For example, artifacts uncovered from the *Henrietta Marie*, which sank in the Florida Keys in 1700, include fragments of ivory from elephant tusks, glass trade beads, shackles, the ship's bronze watch bell, a copper cooking pot, and English pewter (McGhee 2007, pp. 387–389; Moore and Malcom 2008, pp. 28–36). The Danish slave ship *Fredensborg* sank off the coast of Norway in 1768 on a return trip from the Danish West Indies. Artifacts recovered from the wreck include fragments of ivory from elephant and hippopotamus, mahogany from the West Indies, items of crew clothing, clay tobacco pipes, a mortar for preparing food, sealing wax, and seals (Webster 2008b, pp. 11–12). Excavators of the *Fredensborg* also found close to each other the leg bones of a water chevrotain and a peacock—a small ruminant and a bird species associated with West Africa—which may have been included in a West African religious amulet carried onto the vessel by a captive (Webster 2008a, pp. 2–3).

According to the updated TransAtlantic Slave Voyages database, at least 12,521,334 individuals were abducted into slavery between 1501 and 1867 (Eltis and Richardson 2008, pp. 40–41). The following numbers of individuals were abducted from each specified region of Africa: Senegambia (755,512), Sierra Leone (388,771), Windward Coast (336,868), Gold Coast (1,209,320), Bight of Benin (1,999,060), Bight of Biafra (1,594,560), West Central Africa (5,694,573), and Southeast Africa (542,668) (Eltis and Richardson 2008, pp. 46–47; Fig. 1). Expanding research that details the arrivals of enslaved persons at ports in the Americas has similarly produced more refined accounts of the percentages and overall numbers of individuals arriving in specific regions over time and the areas in Africa from where they were abducted (Gomez 1998; Hall 2005; Heywood and Thornton 2007; Holloway 1990; Lovejoy and Trotman 2004; Walsh 2001).

This dramatically expanding body of evidence directly impacts large-scale conceptual debates concerning archaeological and historical studies of African diaspora communities. An earlier debate between the contrasting views of Herskovits (1941) and Frazier (1966a, b) developed into competing frameworks that include the work of Mintz and Price (1976). In brief, one view of the impact of the trans-Atlantic slave trade is that it was deployed with such brutality that it

Fig. 1 Locations, cultural groups, and language areas in Africa discussed in this article include (1) Bambara, Mandinga, Gambia, Senegal, Senegambia; (2) Mande, Sierra Leone; (3) Windward Coast; (4) Elmina, Gold Coast; (5) Akan, Asante, Ashanti; (6) Dahomey, Ewe, Fon, Yoruba; (7) Bight of Benin; (8) Igbo, Benin; (9) Bight of Biafra; (10) BaKongo, Kongo, Angola, West Central Africa; and (11) Southeast Africa

negated the possibility of continued development in the Americas of the particular beliefs and practices of the African cultures from which individuals had been abducted. Mintz and Price (1976) also observed that early historical analysis of slave trade practices indicated that captive Africans were typically intermixed in transit to prevent individuals from the same culture and language group from joining into cohesive networks to rebel and resist the system of bondage.

Mintz and Price (1976) contended that enslaved African Americans most likely forged new social relationships with one another by focusing on their common cultural assumptions and created innovative social networks in new settings. Such oppressed individuals focused less on trying to sustain the "formal elements" of their different African cultural traditions, such as specific forms of kinship, social status, or political modes of organization (Mintz and Price 1976, pp. 6–7). In this perspective, analysts respond to an observed trend of "randomized ethnicities" among captive Africans in the trans-Atlantic system by focusing on identifying modes of radical creolization and the creation of new forms of cultural beliefs and practices among African diaspora populations.

The "Creole" school of analysis advocated by Mintz and Price has been countered by extensive evidence that enslaved Africans retained detailed knowledge of the cultures from which they were abducted, transmitted that knowledge to others in the Americas, and continued to develop those beliefs and practices in new locations (Falola and Childs 2004; Heywood 2002; Ogundiran and Falola 2007; Thompson 1993; Thornton 1998). Captive Africans may have been unable to transport and replicate their statuses, kinship systems, or political structures in colonial America. Nonetheless, they could retain cultural knowledge of their homeland, even in the face of the horrendous brutalities of the Middle Passage across the Atlantic. This alternative view can be labeled the "Africanist" perspective (Ogundiran and Falola 2007, p. 19).

The recent expansion of the TransAtlantic Slave Voyages database provides evidence that supports both the Creole and Africanist approaches, but in different locations and time periods. In addition to many instances of slave transports that caused a randomization of ethnicities in each voyage and destination, there were numerous episodes of coherent waves of individuals from the same culture and language group transported together to particular destinations (Beaudry 2008; Eltis and Halbert 2008; Eltis and Richardson 2008; Mitchell 2005). At a recent conference reporting on these expanded data sets, examples of such coherent, episodic waves included (among others) members of the Igbo culture of the Niger Delta transported to Virginia; members of the Bambara culture of Senegambia to Louisiana; members of the Yoruba culture to Cuba, Haiti, and Brazil; and members of the BaKongo culture to the Carolinas, Georgia, Cuba, and Haiti (Beaudry 2008; Gomez 1998; Figs. 1 and 2).

More recent historical scholarship has displaced another general perception concerning the history of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Historians previously assumed that the 1808 abolition of international slave trading by the United States had significantly curtailed the arrival of newly abducted Africans into North America. This view was supported by data on the expansion of the domestically born population of enslaved African Americans and the rapid development of a

Fig. 2 Locations and communities in the Americas discussed in this article include (1) Black Loyalist communities, Birchtown, Nova Scotia; (2) Toronto; (3) Parting Ways and Isaac Royall plantation, Massachusetts; Rhode Island; (4) New York African Burial Ground, Shelter Island, and Long Island, New York; (5) Berks and Lancaster Counties, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; (6) Chesapeake Bay and Tidewater regions of Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia; Annapolis, Maryland; Swan Cove, Delaware; (7) Piedmont plantations, Virginia; (8) North Carolina; Edgefield, Charleston, and lowcountry plantations, South Carolina; and Georgia; (9) Kingsley Plantation, Fort Mose, and Pilaklikaha, Florida; (10) New Philadelphia and Bloomington, Illinois; Hannibal, Missouri; (11) Kentucky and Tennessee; (12) Louisiana; (13) Brazoria, Texas; (14) Campeche, Mexico; (15) palenques, Cuba; (16) Saint Domingue, Haiti; (17) La Isabela, Hispaniola, Dominican Republic; and (18) quilombos, Brazil

"domestic" slave trade within the borders of the United States (Bergad 2007; Deyle 2006). Recent research has shown, however, that slave traders engaged in extensive importing of captive Africans into the United States after 1808. For example, U.S. Senator James DeWolf and his family operated an extensive enterprise of slave trading, molasses production, and plantation holdings in Rhode Island, West Africa, and the Caribbean. His family alone transported over 10,000 captive Africans to North America. He continued these operations into the 1820s, employing stratagems to bring slave vessels into Rhode Island ports through bribery of officials and other illicit means (Coughtry 1981; DeWolf 2008; Farrow et al. 2005). Such relatively late-arriving captives provide additional evidence for an "Africanist" perspective concerning potential cultural developments among African and African-American populations in the United States.

Bioarchaeology, mortuary practices, and physiological life histories

Physiological analyses of archaeological skeletal remains have made significant advances in our understanding of African-American history (Blakey 2001). Studies of health-care practices, diet, and culinary traditions evident in the remains of African-American residential, work, social, and congregational spaces also have been highly informative. Unfortunately, the circumstances in which the remains of African-American lifeways are exposed and become the subject of archaeological investigations are typically a testament to the impacts of racism in today's society. The sites of past African-American homes, work spaces, and burial grounds are more frequently subjected to the impacts of "urban renewal, gentrification, or some other project involving land modification" than are the spaces of European-American heritage (Orser 2007, p. 36).

Bioarchaeology and evidence from disturbed cemeteries

Isotopic analysis promises the means in future studies to establish links between populations of captive and free Africans in the Americas and the regions in Africa from which individuals were abducted. Recent studies have focused on traces of strontium isotopes, which enter the body through the food chain and accumulate in tissues, such as tooth enamel, early in an individual's life. Different types and ratios of these isotopes can be directly linked to the bedrock of specific locales around the world. These isotopes pass from bedrock through soil and water to plants and animals; they are then absorbed by humans through food consumption. Strontium isotopes can be detected in an individual's teeth and provide evidence of that person's place of birth and childhood (Goodman et al. 2004, pp. 234–236; Price et al. 2006).

Construction work in 2000 disturbed the skeletal remains of several individuals in a burial ground next to a colonial church in Campeche, Mexico. The remains date between the late 1500s and early 1600s and are some of the oldest physical evidence uncovered to date for Africans in the New World (Price et al. 2006, p. 485). Campeche is one of the oldest European settlements in Mexico, serving Spanish colonial enterprises from the early 1500s. Enslaved persons were very likely transported from the infamous West African port of Elmina to Campeche to serve as servants and laborers.

The Campeche burial population included at least 180 individuals of Amerindian, European, and African descent (Price et al. 2006, p. 485). Incisors from a small number of the skeletons had been filed at an angle, a form of dental decoration utilized in West African social practices in the 16th century. A strontium isotope analysis of these modified teeth yielded highly persuasive evidence that the individuals were born in West Africa. Although the dental modifications and strontium traces indicate African birthplaces, the physical evidence alone does not reveal whether the individuals were enslaved or free (Price et al. 2006, p. 489).

Encouraged by these results, Price and his colleagues reexamined skeletal remains from La Isabela, the settlement Columbus established on the north coast of Hispaniola (today the Dominican Republic) in 1494 (Lydersen 2009). La Isabela

was occupied for a few years by approximately 1,200 crew members of 17 ships in Columbus' second expedition to the Americas. Documentary evidence indicates that this large crew likely included at least a few individuals who had been born in Africa. The site of La Isabela was excavated in 1983, and skeletal remains of 20 individuals were preserved for later examination. Price and his colleagues analyzed samples of bone and teeth from La Isabela skeletal remains for traces of strontium, oxygen, and carbon isotopes. The teeth of three individuals had carbon isotope traces in amounts that may indicate they were African. Carbon isotope trace amounts reflect aspects of an individual's diet at the time that mature teeth emerged during childhood (Goodman et al. 2004, p. 232). These preliminary findings may be further supported when the analyses of strontium isotope traces are completed for the same samples (Lydersen 2009).

Analysis of strontium isotope traces in teeth from a number of individuals uncovered in the New York African Burial Ground project produced varied results, finding a range of probable birthplaces from regions of Africa to the Caribbean to New York (Perry et al. 2006, p. 453). Isotope analyses also suggest that some individuals spent their formative years in the Caribbean before arriving in New York (Perry et al. 2006, p. 453). Using another methodology, the researchers in New York found that mitochondrial DNA sequences obtained from 32 individuals in the African Burial Ground indicated shared maternal ancestry with current populations in Senegal, Nigeria, Niger, and Benin (Mack and Blakey 2004, p. 11). Analysis of carbon and nitrogen isotope traces in skeletal remains also may provide reliable data on individuals' dietary histories in similar research projects (Schroeder and Shuler 2006; Sealy et al. 1995).

Studies of African-American cemeteries in the United States have yielded extensive data on mortuary practices, nutritional influences on physiological conditions, diseases, and physical trauma (Blakey 2001). I summarize the results of two prominent projects undertaken in Philadelphia and New York. The conclusions of these projects have been supported by the findings of many other smaller-scale investigations of African-American cemeteries of the same time period elsewhere in North America.

The First African Baptist Church (FABC) cemetery in Philadelphia included members of the congregation interred there during the first half of the 19th century (Crist et al. 1997; Rankin-Hill 1997). Philadelphia's population of African Americans grew from approximately 4,200 individuals in 1800 to nearly 11,000 by 1850 (McCarthy 1997). Many of the new residents were formerly enslaved individuals and their families, who moved from southern states to pursue new opportunities. Impacted by the path of an expressway construction project, the cemetery was excavated in 1984 and 1985, uncovering 140 individuals interred between 1822 and 1843 (Rankin-Hill 1997, p. 5). Documentary evidence on the history of the cemetery and congregation indicates that the deceased individuals were members of the poorest segment of Philadelphia, "the people who did the laundry, cleaned houses, and carted heavy loads from the docks into the city" (Rankin-Hill 1997, p. 1).

The graves were very closely spaced, with some overlapping horizontally and others including four individuals buried one on top of the other over time. In some

graves pieces of plates had been placed on the stomachs of the deceased, and coins were placed near their heads; a single shoe was placed on one coffin. The archaeologists interpreted these deposits as reflecting African-American burial traditions (Rankin-Hill 1997, p. 5). Employing interdisciplinary sources of evidence, McCarthy (1997, 2006) has interpreted these mortuary deposits as practices consistent with particular African-American funerary observances. He also determined that African Americans in this congregation exercised mortuary practices related to their African heritage with greater frequency, and as a measure of solidarity, during times of heightened racial strife in Philadelphia (McCarthy 1997, 2006; Yamin 2008, pp. 110–114). Garman (1994) found a contrasting pattern in his study of grave markers for African Americans in a cemetery dating from 1720 through 1830 in Newport, Rhode Island. In that community, African Americans worked to subvert the "color line" of racial difference imposed by cemetery segregation in the early 1800s by choosing to display the same styles of grave markers as did the European Americans in the surrounding community (Garman 1994).

Physiological studies of the FABC burials found evidence of maladies and overall stress during the individuals' life spans (Blakey 2001, pp. 404–405), including tooth enamel defects in 100% of adults and 92% of subadults, porotic hyperostosis and anemia in 53% of adults, osteoarthritis in 33% of females aged 18–30, periostitis in 25% of adults, and impact trauma in 17% of adults (Rankin-Hill 1997, p. 165). Defects in dental enamel provide evidence of malnutrition and overall health stress on individuals during gestation and childhood. Although the FABC congregants suffered less severe malnutrition, stress, and trauma than did African-American populations represented by burials in other locations in the Americas, they were characterized by three major patterns observed in other Afro-American skeletal populations: "(1) high infant and childhood mortality; (2) periodic malnutrition and infectious disease; and (3) high degenerative joint disease and muscle hypertrophy" (Rankin-Hill 1997, p. 173).

A number of FABC interred individuals had osteophytosis, abnormal outgrowths of bone tissue in response to stress, as the result of their having been forced to lift and carry very heavy loads. Even more severe evidence of such conditions was found in the remains of African Americans enslaved on rural plantations. Such differences may result from "the more diverse or generalized biomechanical requirements for urban-dwelling populations" compared to "the more specialized and intensive biomechanics of field work" (Rankin-Hill 1997, pp. 173–174).

Starting in 1991, a large-scale construction project in Manhattan, sponsored by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), uncovered part of a deeply buried cemetery, eventually referred to as the New York African Burial Ground (Blakey 2001). Underlying city blocks of lower Manhattan, the cemetery contained over 15,000 interments dating from the middle of the 17th century through the 18th century. Even though New York City had a higher proportion of African heritage persons during the colonial period than most other locations in North America, except for Charleston, South Carolina, there is very limited documentary evidence on the cemetery. The entire, original cemetery likely encompassed more than several acres; construction activities in 1991–1992 exposed approximately 882 m^2

of the burial ground. Excavations in this part of the cemetery uncovered 424 graves from which 419 identifiable individuals were recovered (Blakey and Rankin-Hill 2006; GSA 2007; Perry et al. 2006, p. 444)

The evolving archaeology project was notable for its accountability to the interests of local and descendant communities. The African-American community in New York City succeeded in seizing "power and control" and not just an "afterthought of inclusion" in the guidance of this large-scale archaeology project (LaRoche and Blakey 1997, p. 100). Among the theoretical perspectives that shaped the project were the concerns of "vindicationist" studies in which African-American scholars emphasized an imperative to "correct the demeaning distortions of the culture, biology, and history of the Africana world" (LaRoche and Blakey 1997, p. 90; Mullins 2008, p. 108).

Blakey and his colleagues at Howard University worked closely with community members to undertake the New York African Burial Ground project. Their work was shaped by a grass-roots political movement that demanded a community-engaged approach. "Members of the descendant community and their allies were steadfastly committed to ensuring that the skeletal remains uncovered at the site were treated respectfully and re-interred with dignity, that African-American scholars were appointed to direct the scientific study, and that the realities of enslavement in colonial Manhattan be brought to wide public attention" (Perry et al. 2006, p. 445). For the African-American community in New York City, "the excavation of our ancestors" was both "a cathartic and wrenching experience" (LaRoche and Blakey 1997, p. 100). In 1993, the New York African Burial Ground site was designated as a National Historic Landmark.

The New York African Burial Ground project pursued four primary research topics: the likely geographic, population, and cultural origins of the individuals; physiological evidence of the quality of their lives; the cultural and biological impacts of life in New York for captive Africans; and modes of defiance and resilience against the structures of slavery (LaRoche and Blakey 1997, pp. 86–87). The project employed a broad spectrum of interdisciplinary methods, including investigative techniques from archaeology, history, botany, osteology, craniometrics, dental morphology and radiology, chemistry, isotopic studies, and molecular genetics (Jackson et al. 2006, pp. 150–151; Mack and Blakey 2004, p. 10).

Assigning dates to the 419 graves was difficult due to the general lack of material culture in the graves. Material culture items on top of or within individual graves were very likely destroyed or significantly displaced by the construction activities that uncovered the burial ground. The investigators formulated dates for individual graves through a combination of relative locations, burial stratigraphy, coffin shapes, and chronometric dates provided by datable material culture included within or near some graves. The investigators also examined several aspects of burial practices, including coffin usage, body position, grave orientation, individual versus group burials, the clothing and attire of the deceased, personal objects and adornments, and the presence and characteristics of grave markers. Researchers also examined the spatial distribution of the deceased persons, such as the locations of adult males, adult females, and children (Perry et al. 2006, p. 447).

Four aspects of burial practice were remarkably consistent across all interments, including the use of coffins, body orientation with the head to the west, extended supine body position, and individual burial (Perry et al. 2006, pp. 447–448). The excavations also showed that the deceased were typically covered in shrouds. The remains of copper-alloy pins for such shrouds were recovered from half the burials. The few personal adornments or possessions found in the graves include glass beads (nine of which were likely manufactured in western Africa), metal jewelry, finger rings, pipes, coins, and shells (Perry et al. 2006, p. 448). It is possible that the deceased were honored with more ephemeral deposits, such as flowers or other perishable organic materials. No differences in burial practices for males and females were observed (Perry et al. 2006, pp. 448–449).

Documentary evidence for the colonial period in New York City does not reveal whether there was some form of municipal oversight for this cemetery. During the 1720s and 1730s, New York instituted municipal codes that dictated the time and place for African-American funerals. However, those codes provided no specifications as to whether a coffin should be used, how graves should be oriented, or how the deceased should be positioned within the grave. The analysts in the African Burial Ground project viewed this absence of detailed regulations as indicative that European Americans likely did not undertake detailed oversight of African-American funerals and that burial practices remained fairly flexible (Perry et al. 2006, p. 450).

Investigations of the 419 interments revealed that many suffered infectious diseases such as meningitis, pinta, and yaws. Nearly half of the individuals suffered from anemia due to malnutrition, disease, or sickle-cell conditions. Infant mortality was an estimated 50%, much higher than that of European Americans (Blakey 2001). Analyses of lead and lead isotope traces provided evidence of higher levels of lead in the teeth of individuals born in New York than those likely born in Africa (Goodman et al. 2004). Heightened levels of lead in teeth provide evidence of lead pollution and poisoning of laborers at locations in the Americas (Goodman et al. 2004; Handler et al. 1986).

One example from the 419 interments (Burial 101) provides insights into the physical hardships endured in life and possible evidence of burial practices shaped by a particular cultural heritage. Burial 101 held the remains of a man who died in his early thirties, during the middle of the Burial Ground's primary date range of 1712–1794. His remains showed evidence of bone scarring due to infection or injury to the legs and cranium, enlarged muscle attachments at the elbows due to work stress, and episodes of malnutrition and later arthritis (LaRoche and Blakey 1997, pp. 84–85; Perry et al. 2006, p. 451). The lid of his coffin was decorated with tinned tacks in a heart-shaped composition that is similar to the Sankofa symbol of the Akan people of Ghana and the Ivory Coast of West Africa. Among the Akan, the symbol of Sankofa enjoined the living to remember and revere the ancestors. Some analysts question whether the Sankofa symbol was in popular use among the Akan in the 18th century (Seeman 2010). If this rendering invoked the beliefs expressed by an evolving Sankofa symbolism, this burial speaks to the resilience and continuing developments of particular African cultural beliefs on American soil (Perry et al. 2006, p. 452).

Diet and health care

Studies of the physiological experiences of African Americans include analyses of diet, culinary traditions, and health-care methods. Warner (1998) and Mullins (1999) analyzed the archaeological evidence of occupation sites in the late 18th and 19th centuries in Annapolis, Maryland, demonstrating that free and enslaved African Americans supplemented their diets with wild fish and game and purchased national brands of food products, with their greater uniformity of quality and pricing, to avoid the impacts of racism and discrimination when dealing with local food merchants. On plantations throughout Virginia and the more southern colonies, studies of colonoware pottery use by African Americans also provide evidence of their preferences for hollowware vessels for preparing and serving stews and soups in a manner consistent with West African culinary traditions (Barker and Majewski 2006, p. 229; Yentsch 1994, pp. 196–215).

Historical and archaeological studies of sources of nutrition have shown that plantation owners provided weekly or daily rations of food, typically corn, pork, vegetables, and some potatoes (Hilliard 1988; Mrozowski et al. 2008). On occasion, rations also included small amounts of beef, salt, coffee, or molasses. Researchers have examined detailed descriptions of such food allowances in plantation managers' journals and then calculated the likely caloric and protein contents of those rations (Gibbs et al. 1980). Compared to the typical energy expenditures demanded of plantation laborers, these food allowances were usually deficient, resulting in malnutrition if not supplemented from other sources. Other sources of food thus were vital, including food crops raised by the laborers in small provisioning gardens and the fresh fish, shellfish, and game they obtained through fishing, gathering, and hunting (Heath and Bennett 2000; Hilliard 1988; Mrozowski et al. 2008; Yentsch 2008). The houses of laborers on southern plantations often yield the remains of flints and ammunition from firearms used for hunting. In addition to needed nutritional sources, such acts of self-provisioning contributed elements of African-Americans' sense of dignity within an adverse social environment (Fairbanks 1974; Ferguson 1992; McKee 1999).

Early studies of the diets of enslaved African Americans found distinct patterns in the cuts of meat consumed by those laborers, in contrast to the diets of European Americans. Analyses of faunal remains from residences of enslaved laborers often yield data on highly fragmented bones from meat parts drawn more from the feet and heads of livestock, whereas European Americans were assumed to avoid such a culinary pattern (Edwards-Ingram 1999). These findings were interpreted as evidence of lower socioeconomic status and of the influence of African culinary practices that focused more on the preparation of stews and soups. Later studies showed greater complexities, however. Residential sites of elite European Americans in Virginia also included significant amounts of faunal remains from presumably lower-valued cuts of meat, while faunal remains of higher-quality meats used in roasts have been uncovered from residences of enslaved laborers (Bowen 1996; Crader 1984; Edwards-Ingram 1999; Franklin 2001b).

African Americans were very resourceful in health-care activities and practices within their households and communities, using herbal compositions for maternal

care and for treating diseases at the individual, household, and congregational levels (Edwards-Ingram 2005; Groover and Baumann 1996; Wilkie 2003). In free African-American communities, churches and other social institutions assisted with health care as well. Archaeological research at the Wayman African Methodist Episcopal Church in Bloomington, Illinois, which was established in 1831, uncovered the remains of several hundred prescription and medicine bottles and jars, as well as test tubes and syringes (Cabak et al. 1995). This church hosted one of the oldest African-American congregations in the Midwest. The assemblage of material culture for health care provides evidence of African Americans responding to the racial discrimination in public and professional health services of their day by using a combination of European- and African-derived knowledge administered in the space of their church (Cabak et al. 1995).

Plantation landscapes, agency, production, and consumption

Historical and archaeological studies of plantations in North America have demonstrated a transformation of those landscapes from the mid-17th century to the early 18th century. These studies provide a context for ongoing archaeological interpretations and debates concerning such topics as colonoware pottery, Chesapeake pipes, and subfloor pits. Interdisciplinary studies of the historic period of North America have provided a persuasive account of colonial strategies, contingencies, and cultural developments in which particular racial ideologies were created and deployed. Current understanding of the past contingencies of the formation, implementation, and dissipation of particular racial ideologies is vital for our own society's ongoing efforts to combat the deleterious effects of such racial ideologies in the present.

Historical contingencies and colonial strategies

During European colonial expansion into the Americas, the initial overall strategy was to employ indentured laborers, principally drawn from the poorer populations of England. The first captive Africans were brought to North America on a Dutch ship arriving at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1613. Plantation owners, often referred to as "planters," began purchasing captive Africans, but in low numbers, in the early and mid-1600s. Anglo-American planters also purchased enslaved Native Americans in low numbers. Such enslaved laborers were treated much the same as indentured servants. In the early and mid-1600s, the typical planter's house was an asymmetrical, "hall-and-parlor" design, with all laborers—both indentured and enslaved—and the owner's extended family subsisting under one roof (Deetz 1993; Epperson 2001; Neiman 1980). In contrast, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, and French colonial enterprises in the Caribbean and South America principally relied on the use of enslaved laborers starting in the 16th century; they imposed bondage on both Native Americans and captive Africans on large-scale plantations producing commodities such as sugar and coffee.

The British colonial system in North America encountered significant difficulties due to the high mortality rates among indentured servants as a result of disease. An early focus on tobacco—a labor-intensive cash crop—also entailed evolving difficulties as export prices fluctuated throughout the latter part of the 17th century. Upon completing an indenture period (usually six to seven years), laborers were to receive land for settling on western edges of those colonies. Former indentured servants and their families played a dangerous role as a "buffer" group, settling western frontier lands between earlier-settled coastal areas and interior regions inhabited by Native Americans (Davis 2006; Morgan 1975).

Racism in Anglo-American colonies in North America first developed and focused on Native Americans in the 1600s, with this ideology spreading among poorer Anglo-Americans in frontier zones. Racism, as an ideology of difference, was developed and employed to justify violent attacks against the Native American groups on the frontier. Discontent among poorer Anglo-American families, who had worked off indentures and settled on western frontiers, intensified in the 1660s and 1670s due to increasing warfare with Native Americans. These developments climaxed in Bacon's rebellion of 1676 in the Virginia Colony, a landmark event that represented the larger-scale discontent of the indentured servant class. After Bacon's rebellion was suppressed there was a dramatic shift away from use of indentured servants and a new concentration on enslaved laborers (Davis 2006; Morgan 1975).

A significant shift of plantation landscapes in the late 1600s coincides with a transformation in plantation management strategies (Kelso 1984; Upton 1982, 1985, 1990). An earlier approach of planters accommodating all laborers in a main house was abandoned in favor of a hierarchical configuration of plantation landscapes (Carson et al. 1981; Neiman 1980). Following "Georgian" design plans, plantation owners moved their laborers out of the main house to outlying residential buildings, typically referred to as the "quarters." The archaeological footprints of the main plantation houses shifted over time during the late 1600s and early 1700s, from asymmetrical and corporate spatial arrangements in a hall-and-parlor design to a main house marked by symmetrical spatial layouts and increased emphasis on the privacy of internal spaces. The surrounding plantation buildings and facilities were increasingly shaped to fit designs of a hierarchy of activity zones (Deetz 1993; Epperson 2001; Upton 1982, 1985, 1990). Architectural historians observe that the symmetry of the facades of the Georgian "big houses" that developed in this period also communicated messages of hierarchy and order (Glassie 1975; Upton 1982; Vlach 1990, 1993). Racism in North America, from the late 1600s onward, focused increasingly on justifying enslavement of Africans and the destruction of Native American groups (Berlin 2003; Kulikoff 1986; E. Morgan 1975; P. Morgan 1998).

This series of events played out principally in the British colonies in Virginia and northward. In contrast, British plantations in the Carolinas, Georgia, and farther south were still in the process of being developed in the latter part of the 1600s when these transformations were taking place to the north. As a result, Anglo-American plantations in the Carolinas and Georgia were established from the outset using a large-scale, hierarchical plan in which enslaved laborers were housed in outlying quarters (Morgan 1998). New plantation owners in the Carolinas focused

on the potential of rice and for obtaining laborers from the West African regions of Senegal, Gambia, and Mandinga. Those regions specialized in rice-growing techniques in climates similar to the coastal areas of the Carolinas and Georgia (Davis 2006; Gomez 1998).

Africans captured from the rice-growing areas of West Africa possessed knowledge of techniques for tidal rice cultivation that employed dikes and ditches to control water levels in fields. They also possessed skilled traditions in constructing woven baskets for sifting rice, as well as the use of large mortar and pestle assemblies for processing grain. The labor of enslaved African Americans along the coast of South Carolina to transform wetlands into productive rice fields was staggering in its scale. One of the principal archaeological remains of those efforts is a transformed tidal landscape, presenting evidence of millions of cubic feet of earth moved by hand, basket, and small boats, in the late 17th century onward (Ferguson 1992).

Another subject of plantation management provides a similar source of contextual data for consideration by archaeologists investigating the built environment and material culture of African Americans. Plantations in Virginia, Maryland, other northern colonies, and areas of Tennessee and Kentucky that concentrated on tobacco production in the 17th century utilized "gang" management approaches to organizing their laborers. Under this approach, all laborers worked each day at designated assignments under the watchful eye and constant surveillance of European-American foremen and overseers (Berlin and Morgan 1993). This gang system was sensible for tobacco production, because that crop was labor-intensive and required constant and varied labor inputs throughout the year to clear fields, plant seed, remove destructive pests, and harvest and process the plants (Morgan 1998).

In contrast, commodity crops such as rice raised on plantations along the coast of the Carolinas involved more episodic labor inputs during the year. Carolina plantation owners tended instead to utilize a "task" management system in which laborers were assigned certain overall tasks and given deadlines for their completion, with the threat of brutal punishment if the assigned work was not completed in a timely and thorough manner (Berlin and Morgan 1993). This task system involved less regular oversight and surveillance of enslaved laborers by European-American plantation operators than did the gang system. The task system was generally utilized in coastal areas of the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida, and in many Caribbean and South American plantations (Morgan 1998). The overall differences of these management systems led archaeologists to investigate which approach was likely utilized on different plantations and whether such social contexts resulted in greater independence among African Americans to shape their built environment and material culture when working within a task system (Singleton 1985).

Developing themes in plantation archaeology

Approaches to plantation archaeology in North America include Fairbank's (1974) attempts to investigate the "extent to which an African heritage was transplanted,

modified, and replaced in slave material culture" (Singleton 1990, p. 71). Pursuing a much different set of questions, Otto (1984) focused on differences in socioeconomic status and class evident in the material culture of enslaved laborers, overseers, and plantation owners. Other research designs include Orser's (1988) critical analysis of plantations as a form of capitalist economic enterprise that depended on the expropriation of enslaved labor and social domination implemented through the transformation of the natural and built environment. Similarly, Babson (1990) and Epperson (1990) studied the cultural landscapes of plantations as being shaped by socioeconomic class structures that deployed rapidly developing racist ideologies and hierarchies of spatial segregation and surveillance.

Surveying the strengths and weaknesses of plantation archaeology studies, Singleton (1990) proposed avenues for future expansion of research designs. She advocated a greater concentration on regional variations in the social and economic organization of plantations and analysis of how these differences impacted the lives of African Americans living and working in those spaces. Singleton (1990, p. 76) similarly advocated a progression away from studying the variations in "status and class" within plantations to a greater focus on the impacts of "economy and power" at broader geographic scales. Her advocacy of more expansive spatial perspective for research designs later developed into the current global-scale approach of researchers analyzing plantation systems (Kraus-Friedberg and Fellows 2008).

Howson (1990) also provided an influential critique of plantation studies, advocating a greater focus on the meanings of material culture within the context of particular cultural traditions and the ways those cultural elements changed over time. She outlined the limitations of earlier positivist and behavioral approaches (South 1977) that placed strong emphasis on economic motivations as causative and which often viewed cultural dynamics as epiphenomenal in character. In such behavioral approaches, there had been a tendency to search for simplistic "Africanisms" in the 17th and 18th centuries as cultural markers with an isochrestic character of passive and unconscious behavior. Similarly, one would seek to identify statistically definable assemblages of material culture resulting from an "African-American pattern" of material culture in a particular period and region. In turn, those approaches also had expected to detect the dissipation of such an African-American pattern and the "acculturation" of African-American lifeways to Anglo-American material culture and built environments in the 19th century (Howson 1990, pp. 79–80).

Howson's critiques engaged a broader theoretical debate within prehistoric and historical archaeology concerning concepts of agency and the shaping of material culture. Archaeologists have often viewed some artifacts as potential "ethnic" or "cultural markers" (Paynter 2000, pp. 184–185). These terms and concepts can be utilized in different ways. In the approach criticized by Howson, it is the analyst who does the "marking," by first theorizing that past cultural actors shared a particular belief system with which members shaped their material culture in a passive, unconscious process. Material culture shaped by such unconscious dispositions has been labeled as "isochrestic" in character (Sackett 1985). The analyst can then view a pattern in material culture expressions as the consistent manifestation of a shared meaning system and designate, or "mark," that pattern for

use in identifying the archaeological remains of that cultural group. Thus, early work in African-American archaeology sought to identify a statistically significant pattern in artifact assemblages and architectural remains that could be labeled as an "African-American pattern."

In another approach, an ethnic marker is viewed as representing a past social actor's conscious efforts to create material culture expressions that signal group identity to others (David et al. 1988; Hegmon 1992; Wiessner 1985; Wobst 1977, 2000). Consistent patterns can be observed within such material culture because members purposefully and consciously expressed elements of the group's shared meaning system in those objects and aspects of their built environment. Thus the archaeological record often presents patterns of persistent material forms of stylistic and symbolic expressions that can be interpreted in the context of one or more past cultural traditions and associated meaning systems (Tilley 1999; Turner 1973). Analysts can detect such patterns and endeavor to describe and interpret the cultural traditions that inspired past actors in their creation and use of varied stylistic motifs and associated meanings incorporated in those expressions. Persuasive interpretations and explanations can be formulated when supported and tested by multiple lines of evidence that address the attributes and context of the material culture in question (Fennell 2007a; Shanks and Tilley 1992).

Building on the general data sets compiled in earlier investigations of African-American sites, Howson (1990) advocated an epistemological approach consistent with realist philosophies of science, which placed greater emphasis on practice theory and the interdependence of structure and agency in analyzing developments and changes in particular cultures. This method called for detailed, contextual, and interdisciplinary studies of specific populations, locations, and cultural elements within more refined time periods (Howson 1990). One decade later, Heath and Bennett (2000) completed a project that provided an example of this type of interdisciplinary and contextual analysis.

In a study that traversed from broader-scale questions of power relations within plantations to closer-scale spatial analysis, Heath and Bennett concentrated on investigating the uses and meanings of the yard areas surrounding African-American dwellings on plantations. Their work explored a spectrum of research questions, from community interactions, to work and leisure activities in home sites and yards, to landscape aesthetics and cultural changes over time. At a broader scale, Heath and Bennett's (2000) analysis also was comparative, presenting ethnographic, historical, and archaeological data from pertinent landscape studies in West Africa, African diaspora communities in the Caribbean, and other plantations in the American south. Similarly detailed studies of plantation communities in Louisiana and Kentucky have been undertaken by MacDonald et al. (2006), Wilkie (2000), and Young (1997, 2004).

Much work undertaken by archaeologists on plantations has been carried out in the context of cultural resource management (CRM). Joseph (2004) surveyed the expansive body of data and interpretations compiled by CRM archaeologists and their tremendous contributions to our understanding of African-American history. Writing 14 years after the critiques discussed above by Howson and Singleton, Joseph (2004) again found a series of interpretative biases that emerged in many

CRM studies. For example, important studies at Curiboo and Yaughan Plantations in South Carolina (Wheaton et al. 1983) recovered evidence of the continuing development of particular African cultural practices, such as architectural and pottery styles, during the 18th century (Joseph 2004, p. 19). However, many archaeologists retained working assumptions that African Americans experienced assimilation and acculturation within European-American cultural traditions by the start of the 19th century (Wheaton and Garrow 1985). Such researchers therefore typically expected to see no continuing development of African cultural influences on material culture at residential sites after that time. Joseph (2004) summarized an expanding body of data that demonstrated the weakness of such assumptions.

Colonoware pottery

An array of similar pottery types referred to as "colonoware" has been the subject of wide-ranging debates that intersect the large-scale historical developments discussed previously in regard to the transformation of plantations in North America. Generally speaking, colonoware pottery was created between 1680 and 1865, with the greatest frequency at sites in the late 18th century. Remains of colonoware have been uncovered on plantations on the eastern coast from northern Florida to Delaware and westward into Tennessee and Kentucky. Colonoware was made of local clays, and the clay paste was often tempered with shell or sand. It was made with a variety of hand-shaping techniques such as coiling, in contrast to the wheel thrown and mold techniques typically used by European Americans. Colonoware was often burnished with an implement of stone or other hard material (Deetz 1993, 1996; Ferguson 1992; Galke 2009; Mouer et al. 1999).

This pottery type was first called "Colono Indian Ware" by archaeologist Noël Hume in early 1960s; he believed the pottery was made by free Native Americans and then traded to European Americans and African Americans. He supported this view with late 19th and early 20th century records of the production of similar pottery by Native American groups known as the Chickahominy, Mattaponi, Pamunkey, and Catawba. Yet similar pottery traditions of coiled earthenwares existed historically among West African cultures as well. Archaeological studies of cultural groups in Africa for the period from 1400 to 1900 are now beginning to accumulate. Future comparative studies of New World locations and particular African cultures hold great promise for more detailed interpretations and views of changes over time.

Other archaeologists disputed Noël Hume's early interpretation of this pottery type, and debates continue over what groups made colonoware pottery—Native Americans or African Americans. In contrast, there has been overall consensus on who used colonoware; it is strongly associated with African-American work and residential sites in plantations. A fair amount of consensus also exists among archaeologists concerning the decline of colonoware pottery, with frequencies dropping from the 1820s onward. African-American sites from the late 1700s onward have increasing frequencies of wares made by American and European pottery manufacturers. By the 1820s, more African-American households, whether free or under bondage, used European- or American-manufactured ceramic wares

instead of colonowares (Deetz 1993, 1996; Ferguson 1992; Galke 2009). Following the same trend over time, more African-American households, both free and in bondage, attained the ability to purchase and trade goods with local merchants. Other households may have been receiving older and worn European and American ceramics from plantation owners as new goods and furnishings were obtained for the big houses (Heath 2004).

One of the debates about who produced colonoware involved differences in vessel form. Some analysts contend that Native American pottery typically had rounded bases, as did pottery from many African traditions. In contrast, European pottery typically had flattened bases. These differences in vessel forms are related to differences in culinary traditions—rounded vessels facilitated culinary practices in which pots were placed into hot coals, whereas flat-based vessels served cooking methods employing flat-top preparation surfaces. Many colonoware pottery vessels, particularly from the Chesapeake region, incorporate vessel forms with flatter bases. Some analysts, such as Deetz and Ferguson, argued that the potters who created colonoware learned the flattened-base preference from the European-American households in which they had previously interacted.

Deetz (1993, pp. 78–90, 1996, pp. 237–244) focused on the basic chronology of colonoware pottery production and noted differences in the colonoware produced in the Chesapeake region of Virginia and Maryland compared to that found on plantations in the Carolinas. He asked why archaeologists find so little colonoware before the 1680s and an increase in frequency thereafter. Similarly, why would there be such a frequency of flat-bottomed colonoware vessels in the Chesapeake region, but not in the plantations of the Carolinas? His answers fit neatly with the overall trajectories in plantation management discussed earlier.

Colonoware was not needed on plantations before the 1680s in the Chesapeake region, because plantations had not yet been transformed by spatial separation of the laborers into sequestered quarters. Earlier in the 1600s, workers were fed in the main house of Anglo-American plantations that employed a mix of indentured servants and enslaved laborers. After the ruptures represented by Bacon's Rebellion in 1676 and the transformation of plantations in the late 1600s, expanding populations of enslaved African Americans in separate slave quarters needed new pottery supplies. Those African Americans would have experienced transitional periods during which they were exposed to flat-based European ceramics in the plantation big houses. When later forced to produce pottery for their own quarters, they would more logically have tended to incorporate some of the European pottery forms (Deetz 1993, 1996).

In contrast, the British plantations of the Carolinas developed in the late 1600s after these spatial and management transformations had already become popular among planters to the north. African Americans on plantations in the Carolinas did not experience a transition during which they were housed and fed in the main houses of planters; instead they were introduced into a plantation landscape already spatially segregated. Thus Deetz (1993, pp. 78–90) argued, we see a much lower incidence of flat-based colonoware in Carolina sites. The overall difference in vessel forms of colonoware along the Atlantic coast is consistent with the later development of plantations in the Carolinas and Georgia, starting in late 1600s.

With these multiple lines of evidence and correlating trends, it was clear to Deetz (1993, 1996) that African Americans were the producers of colonoware (Singleton and Bograd 2000, pp. 5–6).

Working on plantation sites in South Carolina, Ferguson (1992) placed more emphasis on multiple lines of influence among Native Americans, African Americans, and European Americans, all interacting in colonial settings. He proposed that colonoware production was shaped by processes of creolization, a concept defined in this analytic context as interacting populations blending different cultural traditions to create new forms. Archaeologists derived this conceptual framework from studies by linguists in which they described the creation of pidgin and creole languages.

In linguistics, a grammar consists of learned rules concerning ways you properly order words and sentences into meaningful compositions, and a lexicon is the collection of words ordered by grammar. Creolization concepts can be applied by analogy in broader cultural frames, with the material culture of someone's lifeways (lexicon) being composed and ordered by underlying, learned grammars. The grammar learned in one culture can be later applied to order and compose material things manufactured by another culture. Ferguson (1992, pp. xlii–xliii) provides an example of persons of West African heritage using English-made bowls, instead of English-made plates, to serve food in their houses on early 1800s plantations because of surviving West African culinary traditions and related grammars. "An ignorant visitor might observe that slaves had adopted European tablewares but didn't know quite how to handle them, preferring bowls to plates; a more informed observer might see West African rules of etiquette employed with a new kind of bowl" (Ferguson 1992, p. xliii).

As first proposed by Noël Hume and later refined by Ferguson, Native Americans may have been involved in colonoware exchange through production in their villages and subsequent market trade with plantations. Enslaved Native Americans residing on plantations also may have produced colonoware (Singleton and Bograd 2000). Joseph (2005, 2007) conducted extensive studies of colonoware at sites in Charleston, South Carolina, and found production dates that coincided with a period "in which Native Americans had been forced into South Carolina's backcountry following the end of the Yemassee Indian War in 1718." In turn, production of similar earthenware vessels in the region by the Catawba did not develop until later in the 18th century (Joseph 2007). Deetz (1993, pp. 86–87) observed that researchers such as Noël Hume, who contended that colonoware was produced principally by free Native American groups as a trade item, had relied mostly on evidence of late-19th century activities of the Catawba in the Carolinas and the Pamunkey in the Chesapeake region. Such evidence was not directly relevant to the chronological distribution of colonoware in the late 1600s through the early 1800s. However, it is entirely likely that the producers of some types of colonoware included free and enslaved Native Americans.

Recent analytical debates by Espenshade (2007a, b), Ferguson (2007a, b), and Joseph (2005, 2007) have highlighted the degree to which studies of colonoware are employing more refined chronologies, typologies, and assessments of variations on production and distribution. Growing evidence indicates that some colonoware was

produced by enslaved African Americans for market trade by their Anglo-American owners rather than for use in the plantations on which those potters worked (Crane 1993; Joseph 2005, 2007). In other cases, enslaved African Americans produced colonoware vessels only for use in their local community (Espenshade and Kennedy 2002). New research frameworks under development and implementation emphasize the probability of multiple lines of production, distribution, and consumption of colonoware over time.

As outlined by Joseph (2005, 2007) and Espenshade (2007a, b), pottery made for market sale in areas like Charleston, South Carolina, may reflect different attributes than colonoware made for use on the plantations where the potters resided. For example, market-bound colonoware may exhibit attributes of European pottery forms and have burnished surfaces that are more aesthetically engaging and easier to clean. Colonoware produced for market trade likely had a more uniform consistency in production quality and vessel attributes due to repetition of manufacturing efforts and market feedback through valuation in trade. Such market value influences would have less impact on the characteristics of colonoware made for immediate use on a plantation. Concerted, market-bound production efforts at particular times and locations should also increase the degree of uniformity in the clay paste, temper mix, firing levels, and vessel forms produced in given batches than would more occasional and episodic production for personal use (Espenshade 2007a, b; Joseph 2005, 2007).

Approximately 26 colonoware bowls with marks etched in their bases have been recovered from coastal plantations along rivers in South Carolina. Ferguson (1992) has interpreted these vessels as likely components of riverside observances by enslaved African Americans. In personal rituals of the BaKongo culture of West Central Africa, for example, one could make supplication to ancestors and spirits for aid by creating a material composition with cross-line symbolism inside a surrounding circle. Casting this composition into a river with accompanying prayers invoked symbolic meanings of a boundary between the spirits and the living that was to be crossed (Fennell 2007a). Espenshade (2007a) questions whether such colonoware fragments simply represent refuse that was dumped or washed into rivers from surface deposits. Joseph (2007) asks whether colonoware found in rivers instead represents market-bound wares transported in small boats that sank. He also has intriguingly observed that “Dave the Potter,” an enslaved artisan who worked in the stoneware potteries of Edgefield, South Carolina, from 1830 onward, inscribed his market goods with similar cross marks (Joseph 2007).

In addition to the articulation of these detailed questions, an expanding body of studies of African diaspora communities in South America and the Caribbean is now providing valuable comparative data concerning particular African-influenced pottery traditions that developed in those locations (e.g., Hauser and DeCorse 2003; Symanski 2006). Studies in the Caribbean also have started to expand beyond questions of the potters’ cultural affiliations to analysis of differences in production procedures due to consumer demands for market trading or personal use (Hauser 2007, 2008; Ogundiran and Falola 2007, p. 25). A growing array of archaeological investigations in West Africa may provide data for such comparative studies. Examinations of the pottery traditions from the 17th through 19th centuries in the

societies targeted by the trans-Atlantic slave trade may provide suggestive data for analyzing the characteristics of colonoware in the Americas (Hauser and DeCorse 2003; Kelly 2004). However, analysts must proceed carefully in such comparisons in view of the highly disruptive character of the slave trade and its impacts on the social contexts in which material culture was produced (Ogundiran and Falola 2007, pp. 14–15).

Chesapeake pipes

Tobacco developed as a cash crop from the outset of colonial investments in the New World, fueled by an increasing demand in Europe. Investments in tobacco production in the British colonies involved a labor-intensive approach of planting, pest control, and harvesting that fueled decisions to utilize enslaved laborers from the late 1600s onward. European-made tobacco pipes are found archaeologically at most colonial sites. English manufacturers mass-produced clay smoking pipes of a white, "ball" clay and exported them throughout the colonies (Davey 1979; Davey and Pogue 1991). Because this clay was inexpensive and fragile in pipe forms, broken pipes are frequent in refuse deposits at work and residential sites (Agbe-Davies 2004b, p. 275). Dutch manufacturers of pipes also competed against English companies and used similar production methods. The stem hole diameters of English-made pipes were sufficiently regular in different time periods—becoming narrower over time—to provide a chronological marker (Harrington 1978; Monroe and Mallios 2004, p. 72).

In contrast, locally made pipes, referred to variously as Chesapeake, colonoware, and terracotta pipes, were produced of local yellow-red, reddish, and paler-colored clays at sites in the Chesapeake Bay region (Agbe-Davies 2004a). I refer to these as "Chesapeake pipes." Production of these pipes increased in the 1640s, declined in the 1680s, and largely dropped off by the first decades of the 18th century (Henry 1979; Monroe 2002). This period coincided with downturns in the profitability of tobacco sales by colonial planters in the Chesapeake region.

Deetz (1993, 1996) argued that the production period for locally made pipes coincided with episodes of unrest and civil wars in England that disrupted the regular flow of imported pipes to the colonies. Henry (1979) contended that this period was a time of decreasing profitability of tobacco sales for colonial planters, and Chesapeake pipe production was a means to supplement their production incomes. Following earlier archaeological and historical studies, Monroe and Mallios (2004, p. 71) observe that English planters in the Tidewater area increasingly moved their laborers away from the main house on each plantation and out into new, separate housing. Such developments of residential arrangements on plantations may have motivated the production of local wares, including colonoware pottery and Chesapeake pipes, for local market exchange and for use by those laborers, many of whom were African American (Deetz 1993, pp. 100–101).

These pipes, found in work and residential sites, were both handmade and moldmade and included decorative motifs such as rouletting and impressed stamp designs (Monroe 2002, p. 3). Exhibiting "a range of decorations including designs common in northern European, pre-Contact Native American, and African

repertoires," Chesapeake pipes presented analysts with a "unique mix of material, formal, and decorative attributes that distinguish them from contemporary pipes from other traditions" (Agbe-Davies 2004b, pp. 273–274). Resulting studies fueled interpretive debates that have led analysts to observe that the "clay tobacco pipe, especially in its 'terracotta' versions, is arguably the most studied colonial artifact type in the New World" (Luckenbach and Kiser 2006, p. 161).

The remains of imported English, imported Dutch, and locally made Chesapeake pipes often appear contemporaneously with one another in the same colonial sites (Agbe-Davies 2004b, p. 275). However, differential distributions of these pipe remains have been detected within plantation sites. The fragments of Chesapeake pipes were more often uncovered in the areas of plantations once frequented by indentured or enslaved laborers. Imported pipes were frequently distributed in spaces more closely related to the plantation owners' main residence and the front yards of those houses (Agbe-Davies 2004b, p. 294; Henry 1979, p. 33; Neiman and King 1999).

"Terracotta pipes in the Chesapeake were functional objects, made to smoke tobacco, but the plasticity of the medium and ease of decoration allowed for considerable decorative and stylistic variation" (Luckenbach and Kiser 2006, p. 162). An extensive debate among archaeologists focused on whether these pipes were made primarily by African Americans and incorporated African decorative elements. Emerson (1988, 1999), with supporting arguments by Deetz (1993, 1996) and Monroe (2002), argued that such was the case.

Deetz (1996, p. 249) contended that these pipes are a creolized form that combined English production techniques using molds and stem-boring implements with "decorations done in a manner with close African connections." In particular, Emerson and Deetz focused on decorative motifs that were reminiscent of the Kwardata symbol of cultures in West Africa that had been impacted by the trans-Atlantic slave trade. They also focused attention on motifs with double-bell and quadruped animal images that they believed resonated with other symbols and decorative motifs of West African cultures. In contrast, Noël Hume, Mouer, and several other archaeologists rejected such proposals, contending that the pipes were made by European Americans and include decorative motifs borrowed more from English and Native American sources (Mouer et al. 1999).

Much of this debate developed among analysts studying the remains of pipes recovered from the refuse of consumers. A recent excavation by Luckenbach near Providence, Maryland, uncovered the remains of a Chesapeake pipe kiln, called the Swan Cove kiln of Emmanuel Drue. The kiln was constructed and operated by Drue from 1650 to 1669. Documents and archaeological evidence show that individuals of European heritage operated the kiln, utilizing techniques of pipe kiln operation found in Dutch and English production centers. The Swan Cove operation also produced pipes that included rouletting similar to that which Emerson and Deetz viewed as African in character (Luckenbach 2004, p. 9).

The Swan Cove kiln site's history and archaeology thus largely support those who criticized Emerson's interpretations as placing too much emphasis on African decorative styles as a way to explain the ornamental techniques and motifs on Chesapeake pipes of the mid- to late 1600s. Those supporting Emerson's line of

reasoning might suggest that the presence of enslaved or indentured laborers at sites like Swan Cove may have been omitted from the documentary records produced by the business operations. Such elisions have occurred at some sites when business operators sought to avoid taxes that might apply to the number of laborers at their sites. Monroe (2002, p. 9) contended that the evidence and correlations compiled by Emerson and Deetz "suggests that at least a large portion of decorated" Chesapeake pipes were made by African Americans and reflect the expression of facets of African cultural heritage.

More recently, Luckenbach and Kiser (2006) surveyed archaeological and historical evidence for a number of production sites in the Chesapeake region and concluded that "most of the pipes created by these makers were distributed in a limited geographic area" (Luckenbach and Kiser 2006, p. 175). Larger ranges of distribution occurred to some extent. They found evidence of two pipe makers in the Chesapeake region who distributed their pipes as far as Newfoundland. Overall, Luckenbach and Kiser (2006) found archaeological and documentary evidence to support the interpretation that Chesapeake pipes were a product of English and Native American approaches rather than African-American influences.

In contrast, a recent study by Monroe and Mallios (2004) suggests that the involvement of Native American producers was unlikely, and that English and African heritage workers were more likely the manufacturers of Chesapeake pipes. These researchers found that most Chesapeake pipes were produced using a stem bore implement similar to those used to produce English pipes, but the chronology in diameter reduction over time was different. The rate of diameter decrease in stem holes was faster over time for English-made pipes in the 17th century than was the case for Chesapeake pipes. Based on extensive data analysis, they formulated a new method for dating Chesapeake pipes utilizing a chronology of changing stem hole diameters over time.

Monroe and Mallios (2004) also found intensive production of Chesapeake pipes at sites in Virginia during the 17th century when Native American populations were no longer active in the region. Thus they contend that it is far more likely that a combination of English and African heritage workers produced these pipes instead of Native Americans. Rather than finding resolution through larger data sets, historical archaeologists engaged in these debates are finding greater complexity.

Households and storage chambers

Another interesting subject of considerable debate among researchers is the use of storage chambers, often called "subfloor pits," in the residences of free and enslaved African Americans in the 18th and 19th centuries. Such features have been found with notable frequency in enslaved laborers' houses on Virginia plantations, starting as early as the mid-1600s and increasing in number through the 1700s and 1800s (Samford 2007, pp. 5–7). In some instances, plantation overseers dictated to enslaved laborers the appropriate spacing of houses within the slave quarters and the basic designs, floor plans, and building methods to be used in their construction. On other plantations, African Americans were simply instructed to build houses for themselves and were left to employ their own knowledge and resources (Ferguson

1992; Walsh 1997). Subfloor pits were typically constructed by digging a relatively shallow space under the floors of such houses, often rectangular in shape with flat bottoms, at times square or more circular in configuration. These pit features provide a fairly robust data set for analysis, with over 250 such features uncovered on Virginia sites alone, spanning more than a century (Kelso 1984; Neiman 2008; Samford 2007).

Archaeologists have offered a number of explanations for the use and significance of these pits over time. In Virginia plantations, the soil and subsoil are rich in clay; these small pits may have been "borrow pits" for obtaining clay for filling in gaps in house walls. African Americans may have created such pits simply to store and cool food products for later use by their immediate household or for sharing with neighboring households in the slave quarters. Pits under a house may have served for storage of more valued possessions, to keep those items hidden. Such chambers could have been used to secret items obtained illicitly, to hide such possessions from plantation owners and overseers. In a limited number of instances, such features also show evidence that they were used as part of spiritual beliefs and practices as spaces for commemorating ancestors (Neiman 2008; Samford 2007; Yentsch 1992).

Neiman (2008) has asked research questions informed by neo-evolutionary theory. In a detailed analysis, he applies theories of strategic behavior informed by economics to analyze changes over time in the placement of laborers' houses, spacing of pits within or between houses, and the degrees of kinship or close social relationships among households. He posits that changes over time in the number and placement of storage pits may reflect changes in the social relationships and degrees of coordination among the laborers' households (Neiman 2008). Other analysts are skeptical of the application of such economic interpretations as "strategic game theory" to the interpersonal relationships of enslaved laborers. Epperson (1990, 2004) and Orser (2007) challenge such analytic approaches as inappropriately assuming that one can attribute to captive African-American laborers the European ideologies of individualism, private property rights, and notions of personal wealth maximization.

Samford (2007) has contributed to debates by examining the possible employment of some subfloor pits in spiritual practices. In a wide-ranging study of sites with pits, Samford finds that many pits were used as mundane storage chambers. Indeed, multiple subfloor pits were often found under a single house, and pits used for storage of household possessions and food products were more frequent in "non-kin coresidential dwellings rather than family-based households" (Samford 2007, p. 177). The number of subfloor pits decreased in houses used by one family, likely due to the ease of keeping all possessions in the main living space of the house. Where two or more families shared one house, multiple subfloor pits were likely created to expand storage space for each family group (Samford 2007, p. 177).

A small number of these features appear to have been used as personal shrines, including primary deposits composed of objects that conveyed symbolic meanings of commemoration and supplication to ancestors and the spirit world. Samford (2007, pp. 177–179) provides an intriguing analysis of this alternative purpose for some pits, drawing on comparative studies of subfloor shrines in Igbo houses in

West Africa. Igbo society was heavily impacted by trans-Atlantic slave traders who transported many abducted Igbo to the plantations of Virginia (Walsh 1997).

Social landscapes in the northern and midwestern United States

African-American archaeology has been dominated by studies of southern plantations in past decades (Agbe-Davies 2007, p. 417). However, a growing body of analyses of the conditions of slavery in northern states has developed over time as well. Recent studies include Chan's (2007) archaeological investigations at the Isaac Royall estate in Massachusetts, research at Sylvester Manor plantation on Shelter Island, New York, by Mrozowski and his colleagues (2007), and a project focused on Lloyd Manor plantation on Long Island, New York, by Coplin and Mathews (2007). The growing textile industries in northern states also fueled the demand for cotton and similar commodities produced by enslaved labor on southern plantations. In addition, Paynter and his colleagues (1994) have undertaken historical and archaeological research in a multiyear project focused on the boyhood home of W. E. B. Du Bois, in Great Barrington, Massachusetts.

The late 18th-century residential spaces for enslaved servants in George Washington's presidential house in Philadelphia also have been the subject of extensive research and excavation (Jeppson 2007; Yamin 2008, pp. 78–98). Planned construction near Independence Mall impacted not only those occupations but also the buried remains of the nearby home of James Dexter, founder of St. Thomas's African Episcopal Church. These plans were greeted with public protests and debate, which resulted in the development of an ongoing archaeological project of civic engagement by the National Park Service (Jeppson 2007; Yamin 2008, pp. 78–98).

Deetz (1996) investigated a small African-American settlement called Parting Ways, near Plymouth, Massachusetts, which dates from 1792 to 1824. Three African Americans buried in the vicinity of the settlement were known to have served in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. Excavations revealed possible grave sites decorated with stone cobbles, pottery, and fragments of glass vessels in practices that were consistent with other African-American cemeteries and a history of observances among West African cultures (Vlach 1990). The houses in Parting Ways also were designed with floor plans and smaller rooms that correlated more with West African vernacular forms than with Anglo-American building traditions (Deetz 1996; Jones 1985; Vlach 1990).

In nearby Boston, the First African Baptist Church opened in 1806 and served as a primary social center for African Americans who worked as entrepreneurs and business people in a community that included formerly enslaved laborers (Landon 2007). Referred to as the African Meeting House, this location, along with a neighboring schoolhouse on Beacon Hill, also served as a congregation place for the New England Anti-Slavery Society that was formed by William Lloyd Garrison in 1832. Among other events at the Meeting House, Frederick Douglass presented a speech condemning slavery in 1860. The structure of the Abiel Smith School was later developed into part of the facilities for the Museum of Afro-American History.

Archaeological investigations of the Meeting House and school areas were undertaken in anticipation of large-scale renovation and restoration projects in recent years, uncovering extensive material culture remains of daily activities throughout the 19th century (Landon 2007). A similar archaeological project on Nantucket Island, Massachusetts, uncovered the remains of the African Baptist Society Meeting House constructed in the 1820s (Beaudry and Berkland 2007).

Fitts (1996) conducted an in-depth examination of the "landscapes of bondage" using a detailed case study of enslavement in Rhode Island as a focal point. He compiled evidence that refuted past myths that slavery in northern states was somehow "mild and paternalistic" in contrast to greater brutalities of the plantation South. Applying landscape analysis methods, Fitts (1996, p. 67) examined the ways that northern plantation owners configured and controlled domestic and work spaces to "instill their ideology of alienation" of African Americans and to deprive them of capacities of self-determination. In response, captive laborers pursued acts of defiance in a variety of ways within those settings. Such instances of resistance were carried out in private dwellings, during work hours and in running errands between plantation and work sites, and through subversive activities at church, local social celebrations, and funeral gatherings (Fitts 1996, pp. 66–67).

African diaspora research also has been undertaken in communities in the Midwest. Archaeological and historical investigations of New Philadelphia, Illinois, revealed that the town grew from its legal founding in 1836, reached a peak population of approximately 160 people in 1865, and then declined in the 1870s and 1880s (Shackel 2006). The first town planned and legally founded by an African American in the United States, New Philadelphia grew as a small commercial hub in a rural landscape between the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. This community, founded by Frank McWorter, developed as a demographically integrated town, with approximately two-thirds of the residents classified as "white" in the census and one-third classified as "black" or "mulatto." Although surrounded by racial violence and strife, archaeological and historical research shows no evidence of racial violence or property destruction within the town (Shackel 2006).

In the late 1850s, a regional railroad company planned a new railroad to cross the county where New Philadelphia was located. That investor group was dominated by businesspeople in nearby Hannibal, a city in the slave state of Missouri with active sales of laborers in bondage. Based on extensive archival research and landscape analyses, researchers have concluded that company managers purposefully routed the line to bypass the town (Fennell 2009). This action illustrates the distortive impacts of racial ideologies. Racism does not function in every instance as a mechanism for rationalizing the expropriation of wealth from others. In operation, racial ideologies also can result in conduct involving losses of economic resources in order to obtain social capital within a distortive ideology. The railroad company lost significant funds in increased construction and operating costs to bypass the town, with no discernable monetary gains, even through illicit sources. After railroad construction was completed in 1869, the town merchants and residents of New Philadelphia moved away in pursuit of new opportunities and the town faded from the landscape (Fennell 2009). In view of its remarkable history spanning the

19th century, and after several years of archaeological research work, New Philadelphia was declared a National Historic Landmark in 2009.

Among the extensive archaeological findings at New Philadelphia, excavators uncovered small shaped pieces of ceramics and glass that have been found previously at residential sites for which researchers possessed multiple lines of evidence indicating that the residents were of African-American heritage (Chan 2007, pp. 177–184; Galke 2000; Patten 1992; Samford 1994; Yamin 2008, p. 86–87). These small shaped items have been interpreted as gaming pieces for use in the games of Mankala or Wari. Similar to checkers and backgammon, these games involve variations of moving the pieces across a small playing space and using them as counters for accumulated points during play. Whereas previous archaeology projects have primarily uncovered such gaming pieces in the remains of African-American households dating to the 18th and 19th centuries, these gaming pieces were found in both European-American and African-American households of the mid-19th century in New Philadelphia. This distribution likely indicates social interactions among those residents and provides evidence that archaeologists must proceed cautiously before assuming that certain types of artifacts were always associated with one social group (Shackel 2006).

Archaeology of escape and defiance

In North America, many enslaved Africans, African Americans, and Native Americans escaped from plantations through routes traversing the countryside and waterways in both open and clandestine paths. Many attempted to find family members who had been sold to distant plantations, whereas others traveled to the relative safety of Canada to escape bounty hunters (Blight 2004). It is very difficult to find archaeological remains of escape routes. Many escaping persons avoided houses and settlements and traveled across the landscape and waterways at night (Ginsburg 2007). In time, networks of persons formed to assist runaways and maintain safe houses and transportation routes in what became the "Underground Railroad" to freedom. Even in the time period of the Underground Railroad, however, archaeologists find very few remains that can be directly associated with such activities, likely due to the secretive character of those efforts (Vlach 2004). Ongoing research efforts are providing greater appreciation for the work of African-American churches in assisting escapees, as well as for the ingenuity and self-reliance of individuals (LaRoche 2004). Researchers have examined such dynamics of self-determination, the operations of escape networks combating slavery, and the development of "maroon" communities of escaped laborers and their families in the United States and Canada (Delle 2008; LaRoche 2004; Weik 2004, 2007, 2009).

Delle and his colleagues have succeeded in completing projects that provide two dramatic exceptions to the general trend of archaeological invisibility of escape routes. The first focused on the home of Thaddeus Stevens in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Stevens lived in Lancaster in the 1850s and was a strident abolitionist (Delle and Levine 2004). Oral and documentary histories indicate that he worked to aid African Americans escaping bondage. His house in Lancaster was adjacent to

the Kleiss Saloon, which he owned. The saloon was managed for him by Lydia Hamilton Smith, who at other times also managed housekeeping at his residence in Washington, DC. A narrow alleyway separated his house from the saloon in Lancaster, and adjoining cisterns were built in the intervening space of the alley. Archaeological research showed that the cisterns had been modified to provide a tunnel from the saloon basement into the cisterns, which were large enough to accommodate one or two people as a short-term hiding place. The remains of a spittoon dating to the 1850s were uncovered from inside one of the cistern chambers (Delle 2008; Delle and Levine 2004).

The second project by Delle and his colleagues focused on the Parvin family home in Berks County, Pennsylvania (Delle and Shellenhamer 2008). The Parvin family had been Quakers and active in abolitionist movements in the early 1800s. The current family members hoped that archaeological investigations at the Parvin house would reveal an elaborate system of subterranean tunnels to aid escaping slaves. While such elaborate engineering commitments were not found, the archaeological and historical research uncovered basement rooms and persuasive evidence that those spaces were used to accommodate escaping laborers for short stays. In 1856, Jacob Parvin built a new addition and accompanying basement space in the house, which included a cold cellar with a small alcove (2 m by 1.5 m in floor space, and 2 m high) that could serve as a secret room (Delle and Shellenhamer 2008, pp. 57–58).

Archaeological excavations at the Parvin house revealed the contours of those basement chambers and uncovered the fragments of redware chamber pots, storage vessels, and serving bowls, as well as refined earthenware bowls, small plates, and vessels in the alcove. The refined earthenwares included creamware, pearlware, and whiteware. These ceramics date from the early to mid-1800s. A small blue bead, which archaeologists interpreted as a likely personal adornment dropped by an escaping African American, was uncovered in the alcove, as were fragments of medicine bottles dating to the relevant period. Similar blue beads have been uncovered in a number of other work and residential spaces of African Americans in the 18th and 19th centuries. They appear to have been a popular form of adornment among segments of that population (Stine et al. 1996). A combination of oral history, documentary evidence, and archaeological investigations provided persuasive evidence that the Parvin family sheltered escaping African Americans in their basement and provided them with food, chamber pots, and medicines during their brief stays (Delle and Shellenhamer 2008, pp. 57–58).

Very limited archaeological work on Africans in Canada has been undertaken to date. Overall, African descendant people moved into Canada during the 18th and 19th centuries in two principal waves. The first involved the migration of approximately 3,500 free, indentured, and enslaved Africans and African Americans to Nova Scotia with British Loyalists after the American Revolutionary War (Niven 1994; Smardz Frost 2007, pp. 207–208). The free African Americans included some who had purchased their freedom and many others who had fought for the British during the Revolutionary War in exchange for their freedom. These "Black Loyalists" were forced to leave the newly formed United States after the defeat of the British. The principal archaeological work on Black Loyalists in Nova Scotia

has focused on the settlement of Birchtown, which reached a peak population of approximately 1,500 in 1784 (Niven 1994, 1999). Excavations over several years revealed a diversity of housing for residents of Birchtown, from temporary construction to residences with substantial cellar spaces (Niven 1999). Unfortunately, racism erupted in Birchtown as well, and a race riot in 1784, followed by famine conditions in 1789, led to the settlement's demise and an exodus of the African heritage population to Sierra Leone in West Africa in 1791 (Niven 1999). Approximately 2,000 free African Americans who had fought for the British in the War of 1812 settled in Nova Scotia after the end of that conflict (Whitfield 2006).

In the late 18th and early 19th century, approximately 35,000 enslaved and free African Americans fled from the United States to Canada to escape slavery and the accompanying social structures of racism (Smardz Frost 2007, pp. 207–208). In January 2009, I organized and moderated a forum of the African Diaspora Archaeology Network at the annual conference of the Society of Historical Archaeology, which met in Toronto, Canada. With the theme of "African Heritage in Canada," we addressed subjects such as the Black Loyalist communities, emancipation havens of the early 1800s, and African-Canadian settlements of the late 1800s and early 1900s. Related research questions included the social and economic dynamics impacting such communities, the character of networks traversing the American and Canadian border, and agencies of resistance and abolition. Panelists included Canadian archaeologists Smardz Frost and MacLeod-Leslie, who summarized that archaeological work on the settlements of these populations to date has primarily entailed the preliminary identification and delineation of occupation sites.

Smardz Frost (2007) and her colleagues undertook the most in-depth archaeological and historical study of African-Canadian heritage to date, conducting investigations of the home and business sites of Thornton and Lucie Blackburn in Toronto. The Blackburns were born into slavery and lived in Kentucky in the early 1800s. They undertook a daring escape to Canada as a married couple in 1831 to prevent Lucie's sale to a new, distant slave owner. Rather than escaping under cover of night, they started their journey by boarding the steamboat *Versailles*, walking through the dockside crowds along the Ohio River in the broad daylight of Louisville, Kentucky. Apprehended for a short time in Detroit, Michigan, the Blackburns made legal history in the course of their escape, as reflected in decisions by courts in the United States and Canada as to the exact scope of federal fugitive slave laws and the grounds for extradition of escapees. Settling in Toronto in 1834, the Blackburns again made history in 1837 by starting the city's first horse-drawn taxi service and exercising their skills as businesspeople and entrepreneurs (Smardz Frost 2007).

Excavations of the Blackburn house in Toronto uncovered material culture dating to their occupancy and the remains of a root cellar, an outlying horse barn, and the overall footprint of their small "shot-gun" style house. Artifacts included cutlery, transfer-printed plates, clay smoking pipes, and fragments of wine bottles and preserve jars. The house design included a linear arrangement of three rooms that was popular in African-American vernacular architecture forms in North America during the 18th and 19th centuries (Smardz Frost 2007, pp. 264–267). The term

“shot-gun” was likely derived from the Yoruba term “togun,” which denoted a place of gathering. The Yoruba of West Africa were among those most heavily targeted by the trans-Atlantic slave trade. This terminology and domestic building tradition in the Americas likely developed early in plantation locations in the Caribbean and soon after in the regions of the United States and Canada impacted by slavery and the movement of African diaspora populations (Vlach 1990). The Blackburns were likely familiar with this house design due to its popularity in Louisville, Kentucky (Jones 1985, p. 205).

Settlements of African Americans who defied slavery include those referred to as “maroon” communities. The term derives from the derogatory Spanish word *cimarrone*, which designated an enslaved person who had escaped (Weik 2007, pp. 316–317). Such communities were called *palenques* in Cuba and *quilombos* in Brazil (Agorsah 1994; La Rosa Corzo 2003; Orser and Funari 2001). Maroon communities included persons from diverse cultural backgrounds of West Africa, West Central Africa, and Native Americans, all of whom had escaped from area plantations. Some communities, such as several of the palenques in Cuba, were organized along the lines of shared cultural heritage and thus consisted of persons primarily of Yoruba or BaKongo heritage (Fennell 2007a, pp. 83–87).

A number of maroon communities in North America have been the focus of archaeological research. Sayers and colleagues (2007) have recently undertaken the challenging task of investigating the remains of escape settlements in the Great Dismal Swamp, which straddles the tidewater areas of southeastern Virginia and northeastern North Carolina. Documentary evidence indicates that thousands of African Americans escaping bondage created long-term settlements in this swamp region in the 18th and 19th centuries (Genovese 1979, pp. 68–69; Morgan 1979). Native Americans maintained settlements in interior portions of the swamp. Encampments of enslaved laborers also occupied parts of the region from 1765 through 1865 as part of canal construction projects (Sayers et al. 2007, p. 75). Survey and excavation work uncovered structural and artifact remains of African-American settlements on “mesic islands,” which consisted of portions of the landscape that rose higher above the water level of the swamp (Sayers et al. 2007, pp. 80–81). Although some African-American settlements along the swamp perimeter engaged in exchanges of goods with outsiders, interior “scission” communities were marked by an absence of such interactions (Sayers et al. 2007, pp. 85–87).

Prominent examples of maroon communities in North America were established at “Pilaklikaha” in central Florida and the “Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose” military compound (or “Fort Mose”) and adjoining settlement north of St. Augustine (Landers 1990; Mulroy 1993; Weik 2004, 2007, 2009). As Europeans sought to colonize the New World, southeastern North America became a contested area for Spain, England, and France. After 1776, the United States also joined the colonial struggle for control of the region. The Florida peninsula in particular was much sought after by colonial governments seeking to control the rich and strategic shipping routes in the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. As early as 1687, the Spanish government had unofficially offered asylum to enslaved persons escaping from British plantations, in an attempt to break Britain’s economic stronghold in the

borderlands around Spanish Florida. In 1693 that asylum was made official when the Spanish crown offered limited freedom to any enslaved person escaping to Spanish Florida who would accept Catholicism. When the English established the border colony of Georgia in 1733, the Spanish Crown made it known once again that runaways would find freedom in Spanish Florida, in return for Catholic conversion and a term of four years in service to the crown (Deagan and MacMahon 1995; Mulroy 1993; Weik 2004, 2007).

Incoming freedom seekers were recognized as emancipated, mustered into the Spanish militia, and placed into service at Fort Mose, which was established in 1738. Their leader, who had fled from British slavery in Carolina, was known to the Spaniards as Francisco Menéndez. Once in Florida, African Americans encountered the Creek and Seminole Native Americans who had established settlements there at the invitation of the Spanish government (Deagan and MacMahon 1995). Those who chose to live among the Creeks and Seminoles were welcomed into those Native American societies and were later referred to as "Black Seminoles" or "African Seminoles" (Mulroy 1993; Weik 2007). Fort Mose was a diverse community made up of African heritage individuals with varied backgrounds, such as the Araras, Carabalis, Congos, Gambas, Gangas, Guineans, Lecumis, Mandingos, Minas, and Sambas (Landers 1990, p. 27; Weik 2007, pp. 323–326). Excavations at Fort Mose have revealed artifacts of the daily lives of the occupants. Designated a National Historic Landmark in 1994, Fort Mose is now a premier site on the "Florida Black Heritage Trail" and a tangible commemoration of the lives of the freedom fighters.

Pilaklikaha was occupied by African Seminoles primarily from 1813 through 1836, when the settlement was destroyed by the U.S. military. Archaeological investigations of the settlement have uncovered ceramics, pipe fragments, bottle glass, wrought and cut nails, and brick fragments. Artifact assemblages at such African Seminole communities in 18th and 19th century Florida were similar to the material culture uncovered at other European-American occupation sites in colonial settings (Weik 2007, pp. 325–326). Rather than create some unique and isolated form of material culture for their households, "Maroons took part in the wider global economic and social systems of the Americas" through "trade, raids, barter, gift giving, and local production" (Weik 2007, p. 327). A number of other African Seminole settlements were established over time across the southeastern and southwestern United States (Weik 2008).

Gender dynamics

The past decade has witnessed a significant expansion of work focusing on gender statuses, roles, and relationships in free and enslaved African-American communities (Galle and Young 2004; Wilkie 2003). In contrast, gender studies in historical archaeology over the past few decades had previously focused on European-American households. As Wilkie and Hayes (2006, p. 249) observed, such an earlier focus of addressing gender dynamics through studies of European-American women demonstrated the unanswered critique by "third-wave" feminist scholars that

archaeology was assuming "white women's experiences to be normative and universal." New scholarship on gender within African-American communities is working to address those critiques and to pursue research questions that examine women's experiences within varying scales of social and economic networks and not simply in the "domestic" sphere of the household (Barile and Brandon 2004; Galle and Young 2004; Wilkie and Hayes 2006, p. 250). Franklin (2001a, p. 111) similarly calls for a "Black feminist" focus on African-American "women's labor, and how it has been devalued from times of slavery to the present."

The most extensive studies published to date have focused primarily on women's experiences in enslaved African-American households in the southern United States (Barile and Brandon 2004; Galle and Young 2004). Heath (2004) and Samford (2004) demonstrate the ways women succeeded as entrepreneurs in local exchange markets and their ability to engage as consumers making credit purchases from local merchants. Fesler (2004) similarly provides a richly detailed reconstruction of the ways that women headed households in early communities of slave quarters in Virginia.

Such studies overcome an earlier research gap in African-American archaeology. As McKee (2004, p. 288) observed: "Looking at the enslaved as just 'raced' but not 'gendered' individuals eliminates key parts of our field of vision about the African-American past, especially in terms of seeing how the particulars of gender could be used in strategies of resistance." These studies of gender dynamics often are invigorated by engaging issues raised by feminist perspectives in anthropology, archaeology, and African-American studies (Franklin 2001a). Yet Wylie (1996, pp. 312–322) observed that studies of gender undertaken in archaeology and informed by feminist critiques of the Western science tradition have often, paradoxically, produced interpretations and historical accounts presented as statements of objective fact.

One might expect feminist critiques to continually reject positivist-sounding representations of objective facts and to subscribe fully to postmodernist condemnations of a tradition of empiricism that proposed objective truth as an obtainable goal of scientific inquiry. However, the postmodern and poststructural critiques are viewed by many feminist scholars with great skepticism. "The worry is that the deconstructive arguments intended to destabilize Enlightenment 'myths' of objectivity and truth are themselves 'merely an inversion of Western arrogance'" (Wylie 1996, p. 322). In this view, feminist and African-American practitioners of African-American archaeology will do best to attain a central role in research and to have their interpretations viewed as reliable fact and not as radically unstable points of view in a constructivist, postmodern world (Blakey 2001; Mascia-Lees et al. 1989; Wylie 1996).

Artifacts of spiritual beliefs and practices

Researchers have uncovered a broad variety of objects that appear to have been created and used for religious purposes by African Americans in North America. Examples include ceramic bowls with cross lines incised on interior or exterior

surfaces of the bases, and white clay marbles, coins, and pewter spoons with similar marks scratched into them. Archaeologists also have uncovered caches of polished stones, quartz crystals, pieces of chalk, bone disks, coins, ash, bird skulls, crab claws, iron nails, and blade-like fragments that were deposited beneath entryways or along perpendicular axes under the wood or brick floors of dwellings and work spaces (Brown 2001, 2004; Fennell 2003, 2007b; Ferguson 1992, 1999; Franklin 1997a; Leone 2005; Leone and Fry 1999; McKee 1995; Ruppel et al. 2003; Samford 1994; Wilkie 1997; Young 1996, 1997). These deposits typically appear in contexts that indicate they were used in private, often secret, settings. The symbolic composition of these objects appears to be abbreviated in comparison to primary symbols within the religious systems of the particular African cultures targeted by the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

In many colonial settings a social group in a controlling position placed its religion in a dominant position over others (Thomas 1971; Yoder 1965). For example, many European Americans advocated Christianity as the proper form of religious belief. However, many plantation owners preferred to avoid the conversion of enslaved laborers to Christianity; they feared that such conversion could support arguments for emancipation. These countervailing views did not lead plantation owners to adopt African religions as tolerable alternatives for their laborers. Instead, European Americans typically viewed the spiritual lives of enslaved laborers with a dismissive, apathetic disposition (Genovese 1976, pp. 211–212; Gomez 1998, p. 288; Raboteau 1980, pp. 98–99).

When a religion is placed in a dominant position in a particular society, it has the effect of driving other spiritual belief systems "underground" (Morgan 1998, p. 612; Shorter 1972, p. 148). These nondominant religions are often referred to as "vernacular" or "folk" religions by anthropologists, historians, and folklorists (Thomas 1971; Yoder 1965). The publicly visible exercise of group rituals of such folk religions typically becomes impracticable due to the disapproving social pressures imposed by proponents of the dominant religion. As a result, folk religion observances are usually conducted in private settings. Over time, individuals who subscribe to those nondominant spiritual beliefs may adopt the dominant religion and attend its public ceremonies, while continuing to practice the beliefs of their nondominant religion in private contexts (Gundaker 1998, pp. 75–76; Thomas 1971, pp. 221–232; Yoder 1965, pp. 36–39). The past suppression of one religion by another, dominant religion does not mean that individualized invocations of the folk religion represented the mere "debris" of that belief system (Turner 1973, p. 1105). Those private observances instead served as vital continuations and further developments of what was a comprehensive belief system (Butler 1990, p. 159). Varying denominations of Islam, Christianity, and specific African religions were practiced in West and West Central Africa during the period of the trans-Atlantic slave trade (Gomez 1998; Raboteau 1980; Thompson 1993; Thornton 1998).

Earlier generations of Africans and African Americans could practice rituals derived from their African religions only when outside the scope of surveillance. Such observances were typically convened in hollows, hush harbors, and other secret locations near the plantations (Long 1997, p. 26; Raboteau 1980, p. 215; Rawick 1978, p. 23). The material compositions used in such observances are often

difficult for archaeologists to interpret because seemingly mundane objects were frequently employed to represent metaphoric meanings within the belief system. For example, white objects such as clay marbles or ash could be used to invoke a color symbolism connoting supplication to ancestors and the spirit world. Crossed-line motifs frequently communicated invocations of aid for the protective capacities of spiritual forces to cross a boundary into the domain of the living (Fennell 2007a, b).

From the 17th through the early 18th century, plantation owners in North America usually preferred that their slaves exercise no religious engagement, fearing such conduct could lead to instances of solidarity and defiance among the enslaved laborers. Planters also feared that conversion to Christianity could weaken the arguments for slavery and cause an overall loss of labor time (Genovese 1976, p. 211; Levine 1977, p. 60). To address the dilemma presented by conversion, a number of colonies passed laws by the early 1700s declaring that conversion would have no effect on an individual's status as a slave. In the same period, new Christian evangelical movements spread across the colonies, promoting conversion of as many people as possible (Gomez 1998, p. 21; Levine 1977, pp. 60–61).

The primary symbols of Christianity contained ideographic elements that resonated with the symbolism of many African religions. Crossed lines would have been read in diverse ways by members of different African religions, such as the Asante, BaKongo, Fon, Igbo, or Yoruba. That symbol was meaningful to members of each of those religions, even if interpreted differently (Raboteau 1980, pp. 34, 85; Stuckey 1987, pp. 34–35, 92). Through these processes of interaction and constraining social influences, many African Americans subscribed to evolving African religious beliefs in private, while shaping evangelical Christian traditions for the promotion of their group interests and solidarity (Genovese 1976, p. 211).

African-American archaeology: A field of multivariate rigor or disordered pluralism?

The diversity of approaches discussed in this article raises questions as to whether the field of African diaspora archaeology in North America has reached a point of maturity as an area of specialization in which comparative and synthetic analyses can be conducted. In the variety of research projects surveyed, one sees researchers increasingly engaged with local and descendant communities when formulating key questions and planning investigative methods and site conservation. Such an expansion of research questions to include those emphasized by community stakeholders could raise the danger of a field marked by a wide variety of projects with overly particularistic findings. However, these collaborative scholars are in fact undertaking rich, contextual analyses of such sites and then relating their findings to other studies both in North America and in the broader geographic scale of African diasporas. In addition, they succeed in serving their "ethical clients" represented by the descendant and local communities that have a significant stake in the cultural heritage of those research sites (Blakey 2004; LaRoche and Blakey 1997).

African-American archaeology has developed over the past several decades within the context of the broader field of North American archaeology. As in other

branches of the social sciences, North American archaeology experienced a strong promotion of a positivist philosophy of science and related development of theoretical frameworks focusing on behavioral phenomena, systems models, and an emphasis on economic variables. That trend has been significantly displaced over the past four decades by realist philosophies of science and the development of theoretical frameworks that focus on historical contingencies, challenges of intercultural interpretation, and the interdependence of individual and social group variables (Keat and Urry 1982; Rorty 1979; Rouse 1998; Wylie 1985). Social theories based on realist philosophies of science are often more flexible and accommodating to multiple analytic approaches in a field than were positivist theoretical paradigms (Rouse 1998). In the archaeology of North America, it would appear that a diversity of research questions have been pursued in a manner reminiscent of Deetz's (1987) call for "paradigmatic pluralism." Yet analysts increasingly make clear that they do not endorse "an anything-goes pluralism" and instead recognize that the character of the archaeological record itself often presents evidential constraints on the diversity of views that can plausibly be expressed in interpreting the history of a particular time and place (Wylie 1996, p. 324).

The move from positivist philosophies of science to poststructural and postmodernist approaches involves fascinating dilemmas for a field such as African-American archaeology. Scholars in this field have called for increased respect for the interests of descendant populations in the formulation of research questions and methods. This emphasis places previously underrepresented groups center stage in the production of knowledge about early African America. Yet, with concerns parallel to those articulated in feminist critiques, these advocates equally advance a view that knowledge is objective. Accordingly, such scholars reject the proposition in postmodernist perspectives that knowledge must remain inherently fluid, plural, and indeterminate (Hartsock 1987, p. 191).

Those skeptical of postmodern and poststructural perspectives also are motivated by a sentiment reminiscent of one of the rallying cries of New Archaeology in the 1960s. Archaeological research can provide new insights into diachronic social dynamics that can aid present-day groups in improving their own lifeways and social conditions. Where New Archaeology focused on the lessons to be learned from diachronic ecological studies, archaeologists researching early African America see the chance to help combat current and evolving forms of racism by better understanding the past contours of discriminatory ideologies. To employ archaeological knowledge successfully in proposals for current-day societal changes, however, practitioners are better served by a field in which knowledge attains the credibility of being held accountable and testable within known evidential constraints. Projects committed to civic engagement and to facilitating an exchange of views among diverse interest groups will be enhanced by maintaining such evidentiary standards.

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