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Telling a Different Narrative: Exploring the Values and Challenges of Performing Enslaved Community Members' Stories at U.S. Southern Plantation Museums

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TELLING A DIFFERENT NARRATIVE: EXPLORING THE VALUES
AND CHALLENGES OF PERFORMING ENSLAVED COMMUNITY
MEMBERS' STORIES AT U.S. SOUTHERN PLANTATION MUSEUMS

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in

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College of Education

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DEDICATION

Here's to you Margie and Zander.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgements ... I have so many people, places, events, and experiences that helped me evolve into the researcher and person I am today. I would like to start by thanking my parents who have always supported me, always told me that it was going to be OK, and always were there for me no matter the crisis. Dave, Angie and my two nephews ... thank you for brightening my day with colorful videos of the boys cheering me on and showing me WyWy's badass side.

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encouragement, and strength to get through these past two years. It was a pleasure to know that we could share our experiences on the stage and through a comedic outlet. Thank you to Dr. Bryan for your humor, sensitivity, and willingness to take me in as your advisee. You truly are an inspiration with your capability to juggle so many plates and still be able to keep all of your hair! And a huge thank you to Derek, who I will always spill a drink for no matter the occasion ... *whatever*.

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I have come along way over the past four years ... and will look back on my PhD experience as another chapter in my life. A chapter filled with a wide range of emotions and events ... all contributing toward a wild ride. On to the next chapter!

ABSTRACT

Informed by both performance studies and collective memory theory, this study centers around *Let Them Be Heard*, a theatrical production that breathes life into the narratives of former slaves, performed at three plantation sites in the U.S. South. I seek to understand the lived experience of the performance through the eyes of three key stakeholder groups (plantation museum curators and docents, the director of the *Let Them Be Heard* production, and the show's performers), and the impact of the performance on those individuals and on the plantation sites where the performances took place. Ultimately, I am attempting to discern the viability of positioning plantation sites on which such performances occur as educative spaces capable of fostering discussion around a deeper, more accurate representation of enslaved community members' lived experiences in addition to contributing to the reinterpretation of the practice of slavery in the U.S. into a new, more complex way. I argue that performance pieces like *Let Them Be Heard* have the ability to foster and facilitate critical dialogue in/about spaces where marginalized voices are silenced intentionally.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Get Off Your Qualitative Horse

In 2011, I graduated with my Master's in sustainable tourism from East Carolina University (ECU) and embarked on a new chapter in my life – a chapter entitled Benjamin's PhD Journey. The support, guidance, and empowerment that I received at ECU from the faculty and graduate students there shaped me into a confident, opinionated researcher who was optimistic, excited, and ready for her adventure to begin. My journey started as a PhD student in the Hospitality, Retail, and Tourism Management (HRTM) program at the University of South Carolina (USC). However, I was not prepared for what I encountered during my first year in the HRTM department.

My HRTM cohort consisted of five PhD students who focused on quantitative research methodology and feared choosing another discipline for their cognate. I however, was an oddity, excited to search for courses in Anthropology, Geography, and Education in order to learn different theories and ways of acquiring knowledge using different perspectives. I came from a MS program where our director encouraged an interdisciplinary approach to education. For instance, instead of taking an online hospitality management course my first semester, he suggested that I choose an

introduction to human geography course. After taking that course, I was forever a changed woman, equipped with a new understanding of what research could look like.

The introduction to human geography course intrigued me. In the class I explored topics ranging from film-induced tourism to the politics of place-naming to perceptions of places or landscapes. Prior to this, I didn't know my passion for film and popular culture could be a potential topic for a thesis project. I had been under the impression that research had to be cold, impersonal, statistical, and disconnected from human emotion. The knowledge that I learned opened my eyes to a world that I never knew existed in higher education. The wisdom I acquired from the faculty at ECU helped shape me into the researcher I am now – a researcher seeing the world from a different ledge.

At ECU, my thesis revolved around the effects that *The Andy Griffith Show* had on the town of Mount Airy, North Carolina. My research agenda focusing on film-induced tourism helped me secure a PhD assistantship in the Center for Economic Excellence with the HRTM department at USC. However, I did not continue my work on film-induced tourism but instead on the economic development of a potential Equine Park in Aiken, South Carolina. The assistantship, and lack of faculty support, forced me to find solace in other departments. I found like-minded people in the Anthropology department at USC, where I started to form a research agenda focused on African American heritage tourism in the U.S. South.

During my second year in the HRTM department, I distanced myself further and further from the faculty and students. My epistemological views were extremely different from those of my department. For instance, I was the only student who

critiqued positivist methodologies such as sample size, data collection, and analysis and who thought objectively rather than subjectively in my research seminar course. I argued that qualitative research and visual methodologies as tools could connect to broader societal issues, ideologies, and ways of understanding human nature. At the time, I did not have the proper language to defend qualitative research. Consequently, I took additional statistics courses to strengthen my quantitative skill set.

Outside of my cohort, I was the only student who did not “pass” the *research methods* section of HRTM’s qualifying exam. Eighty percent of this research methods portion consisted of statistical analysis, and twenty percent consisted of research project development. For my research project, I proposed a qualitative study consisting of a small sample size of participants, in order to understand their motivations and experiences with volunteer tourism. In other words, my study was not statistically significant nor did it include any quantitative methodology.¹ Consequently, I did not pass, nor was I able to see my exam. Instead, I sat down with one of the HRTM faculty to *discuss* the errors and mistakes that I’d made on the exam.

As the door closed behind me, I took my seat ready to discuss where I had gone wrong. Instead, I was told to “get off of my qualitative horse and to make friends with numbers” and that I would not be a successful researcher if I continued to disregard

¹ In quantitative research, the concept of statistical significance exists. Damali & McGuire (2011) argue that there is no such thing as a perfect sample. Since sampling a portion of the study population, there will be a sampling error (the difference between sample data and data of the population). In statistical terms, significance means probably true (not due to chance). The statistical significance is the degree of risk you are willing to take that you will reject a null hypothesis when it is actually true. There is a confidence level that tells the researcher how confident they are before believing their research findings. In the field of tourism, the confidence level must be at 95% in order for researchers to tell others of their findings.

quantitative research within my research agenda. The next day I spoke with my teaching assistant in my statistics course, housed in the education department. I expressed my frustration with the HRTM faculty and the issues that I faced identifying as a qualitative researcher amongst quantitative scholars. He suggested that I connect with a faculty member in the education department and enroll in her advanced qualitative research seminar. I took his advice, connected with her on many different levels, and found my support group in the educational foundations and inquiry (EDFI) program.

In my second year, last semester in the HRTM program, I retook the qualifying exam after months of private torture in statistics and intense studying. After two weeks of radio silence from my department, my advisor sat me down and notified me that I did not pass the test, and I was consequently asked to leave the program. I asked to view my exam in order to see proof that I did in fact “fail.” My advisor told me that this was not an option, and even after several meetings with the university’s ombudsmen, I was unsuccessful in scheduling a meeting to review my exam. I turned to faculty from ECU for help and guidance in my next chapter of my journey.

I made a lateral move and applied to the educational foundations and inquiry program at USC. The summer of 2013, I officially joined the program and embarked on yet another chapter of my academic career. Delgado and Villalpando (2002) state the following:

Higher education in the United States is founded on a Eurocentric epistemological perspective based on white privilege and ‘American democratic’ ideals of meritocracy, objectivity, and individuality. This epistemological perspective presumes that there is only one way of

knowing and understanding the world, and it is the natural way of interpreting truth, knowledge, and reality. (p. 171)

After joining the EDFI program, I found the language and confidence to argue what I was unable to elucidate in HRTM. The guidance from the faculty and curriculum in EDFI provided a toolbox filled with different perspectives to support my critical analysis of higher education. Now I am able to articulate alternative ways of interpreting knowledge and to refer to educational foundation scholars to solidify my epistemological views.

Overlapping Foundations and Tourism Studies

As a researcher, I viewed my dissertation study through two lenses: a tourism perspective and an educational foundations perspective. The interdisciplinary nature of both educational foundations and tourism studies lends itself to the inquiry process informed by the disciplines of history, philosophy, and sociology. Warren (1998) posits that he intended foundations to be based upon unique resources from various disciplines, in order to critique and examine “fundamental and urgent social problems, and issues, thus promoting authentic interdisciplinary reliance and collegiality” (p. 120). Ritcher (1995) argues that even though tourism is supposed to be marketed as politically neutral, it is still crawling with problems of class, race, and gender. Consequently, both tourism and foundations studies intersect with the socio-cultural inequities of the politics of race, gender, and wealth.

The sociology of education is the primary field in which scholars address the role/function of race in education. Scholars in this field recognize that schooling is a valuable commodity and is distributed unevenly. Foundations scholars consider and use

the discipline of sociology in questioning the production of academic achievement, outcomes of education (occupational status), and income (Weis et al., 2011).

Considering the politics of education allows scholars to address the contested nature of education in regards to the curriculum and to who teaches this curriculum. Edmundson (2005) argues that social foundations help prepare teachers for guiding students in their awareness of “intimate social, political, and cultural assumptions” and in their ability to question and challenge dominant Eurocentric narratives (p. 152). Lastly, Bauer argues that if those who prepare teachers adopt the social foundations of education, then they will be able to implement “an image of inquiry and scholarship which examines and relates the school to various aspects of the social and cultural milieu” (1992, p. 10).

Tyack and Cuban (1997) state, “All people and institutions are the product of history. And whether they are aware of it or not, all people use history (defined as in interpretation of past events) when they make choices about the present and future” (p. 6). Within tourism studies, Eichtedt and Small (2002) use the concept of symbolic annihilation to characterize how transitional accounts of the South’s antebellum history silence or misinterpret enslaved community members. The authors argue that “racialization processes work in various locations, linked by shared and often overlapping ideologies and representations to produce and reproduce racialized inequality and oppression” (p. 3). According to the authors, the tourism industry, much like the institution of U.S. public schools, is one such location in which tourism management perpetuates “racialized imagery and ideology” (p. 3).

Choosing My Dissertation Topic

During the summer of 2014, as a foundations PhD student, I participated in an anthropological research study in eastern North Carolina in which I interviewed residents about their perceptions on climate change. I formed a close relationship with an Anthropology graduate student from East Carolina University. She suggested that we visit Elm Grove plantation since she knew my interest in heritage tourism and African American history. Together, we went to the plantation to participate in their special heritage day event, which included performances and reenactments of enslaved peoples. At the plantation, we witnessed an enslaved narrative performance called *Let Them Be Heard (LTBH)*.²

According to Paul Banks, Director of *LTBH*, *LTBH* was an original adaptation of interviews with former slaves from North Carolina from the Works Progress administration's *Slave Narrative Project*. The *Slave Narrative Project* is composed of 176 interviews with men and women who had been enslaved in North Carolina. Black actors from a North Carolina theater group selected five interviews and presented them almost in their entirety as a dramatic, live performance. The performance first took place in June 2014 at Rose Plantation, where the actors performed each narrative at the original slave quarter cabins and hand-built barn. The actors warned the audience about the show's language and the sensitive themes that could be offensive to some people. Lastly,

² This project features a collection of dramatic slave readings from formerly enslaved people interviewed by the Works Progress Administration gathered between 1936 and 1938. Paul Banks, founder and director of *LTBH* talks about the stories collected, "In these accounts, previously enslaved individuals talk about working from sunrise to sundown; seeing families sold apart; being sexually exploited, whipped, maimed, and branded; and witnessing murder" (Paul Banks, 2014).

the group told the audience that the actors were speaking in dialect exactly as it was recorded in the *Slave Narrative Project*, without changes.

The stories that each actor performed come directly from the *Slave Narrative Project*. The *Slave Narrative Project* is part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), in which the U.S. government employed individuals who collected over 2,300 interviews from surviving, formerly enslaved peoples during 1936-1938. Most of the narratives collected are verbatim testimonies concerning antebellum slave life and the respondents' personal reactions to plantation life (Yetman, 1967). According to Yetman (1967), the informants were relatively young when they experienced slavery and possibly had naïve memories of their childhood on plantations. To date, researchers have no sure way of testing the assertion that slave narratives “or any other documentary source drawn from remote memory, provide an adequate or reliable understanding of the past” (Spindel, 1996, p. 261). However, Yetman (1967) asserts that the narratives collected in the *Slave Narrative Project* are autobiographical accounts from former slaves and continue to serve as a primary source of enslaved peoples' memories and experiences.

The most powerful performance that I witnessed at Elm Grove Plantation was the narrative of Thomas Hall. The actor pointed to two White men in the group and said, "Some of White people are good ... but I don't trust most of you White men." The actor pointed to a Black family in the tour group, too, and said that they would be split because "White folk always against the Negro" (Benjamin, 2014). As we were walking to the last performance, an older White man turned to me and said that the Thomas Hall narrative was the most powerful performance since it hit him personally and since "it made a point" (Benjamin, 2014). After the performance, I was overwhelmed with emotion and

had to hold back tears. I realized that *LTBH* was special and something I had never witnessed before at a plantation museum.³

For my dissertation study, I wanted to fuse together my interest in tourism's sociocultural racial issues with the politics of race in education. I wanted to hone in on a topic that bridged my background of sustainable tourism, focusing on socio-cultural issues, with my coursework within foundations. I wanted to create a dissertation that was novel, unique, and able to represent how I had evolved as a researcher. *LTBH* at Elm Grove Plantation proved to be a means of bridging my two academic worlds – tourism studies and educational foundations—to shape a study mirroring my emotional journey as a researcher in higher academia.

Equity, fairness, and social justice are of increasing interest among tourism scholars, some of whom assert that tourism has the potential to bring historically divided groups together, address ingrained racial divisions, and facilitate minority empowerment (Barton & Leonard, 2010). Tribe (2008) argues for a critical exploration of the tourism industry for the sake of the survival of tourism; he notes to “make genuine and deep progress in sustainable tourism,” management practices must be informed by the “current configurations of power and the operation of dominant ideological practices” (p. 253) that work through heritage tourism and preservation. Furthermore, tourism scholars can dissect the political forces involved in how tourists interpret plantation museums.⁴ From

³ In Chapter 6 I provide more information about the implications of calling a plantation museums versus a plantation site.

⁴ Eichstedt and Small (2002) define plantation museums as “sites based on physical structures that were originally used as part of plantation complexes during the period of slavery and which now are organized to provide exhibits and tours of southern history, with an exclusive or extensive focus on the period of enslavement” (p. 9).

a foundations perspective, plantation museums can serve as educational spaces for transformational learning experiences to occur (Mezirow, 1990).

Plantation museums are sites with contested meanings. Buzinde and Osagie (2011) posit that plantation museums are not “innocent edifications; rather, they are representations of thoroughly ideological narratives bound up within political discourses that tacitly endorse dominant societal values” (p. 57). The authors argue that plantation sites are sites of authority “in which memory and illusion coalesce to shape a romanticized recollection of the contentious plantation past” (p. 57). The power and political forces involved in perpetuating romanticized versions of the past were evident in my past observations of plantation museum sites. Docents and interpreters at the sites I visited gave tours explaining how the plantation owners were good masters who treated their slaves well. I didn’t witness the management of a plantation museum actively rewriting the historical script of the enslaved community until my visit to Elm Grove.

Eichsted and Small (2002) argue that docents enact histories in narratives that reflect four discursive strategies: symbolic annihilations and erasure, trivialization and deflection, segregation and marginalization, and relative incorporation (see Chapter 2 for definitions). For this study, I focused on relative incorporation where “the topics of enslavement and those who were enslaved are discussed throughout the tour” (Eichsted & Small, 2002, p. 11). Eichsted and Small (2002) illustrate that the stakeholders at plantation museums who integrate relative incorporation “are much more likely to raise issues that disturb a positive construction of whiteness and challenge the dominate themes that each state tends to present about its own history” (p. 11).

My experience of *LTBH* at Elm Grove plantation influenced my decision to find out how the *LTBH* performance came to fruition. I wanted to know: Who were the stakeholders involved in developing an emotional human connection with the institution of slavery? What were their motivations in changing the interpretation of enslavement at their plantation museums? Who were the stakeholders involved in adopting more inclusive representational strategies? Although *LTBH* is not a docent narrative, it still reflects the larger plantation narrative that docents and others deliver. I explored the ways in which actors who perform the narratives of former slaves serve as “docents” and thus contribute to a collective memory that links past cultural politics to the present racial climate in the U.S.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The modern consciousness of African Americans has called for a new look at the way in which history has been written in the past. Traditional narratives by professional historians focused disproportionately on the experiences of the dominant group and were designed to reinforce the interests of the ruling class. For example, very little attention was given to the brutality of the institution of slavery from the vantage point of the victims. The rewriting of history is designed to give explicit recognition to the noteworthy accomplishments of African Americans. Historical corrections are necessary to set the record straight and to provide a basis for appreciating the black heritage within the context of a pluralistic society. (Neal, 1999, p. 214)

In the U.S. South, selective remembrance often produces a romanticized and glorified image of plantation sites that consequently silence and ostracize enslaved

community members' stories, memories, and experiences.⁵ Within broader U.S. political and ideological contexts and worldviews, White elites dominate the perceptions and valuations of heritage circulating on plantation museum sites, especially with regard to African American identities and histories.⁶ Docents and interpreters at plantation museums tell narratives that in particular typically abridge the negativity of slavery with “noble tales describing the lives of the plantation owners and the architectural intricacies of their homes” (2009, p. 439). The absence and misrepresentation of African American history perpetuates the dominant White planter’s narrative as the norm at plantation sites, thus creating an inaccurate historical interpretation of slavery (Buzinde & Santos, 2009). However, recent evidence indicates that docents or tour guides, interpreters, and site managers at plantation sites have become part of an effort to foster a dialogue about the institution of slavery and have begun incorporating enslaved community members’ stories and experiences at plantation sites (Butler et al, 2008; Litvin & Brewer, 2008).

Hosting a performance in which actors embody autobiographical accounts of former slaves is one example of incorporating the institution of slavery. Denzin (2001) posits that “people enact cultural meanings” through performances and that “interviews are performance texts” (p. 27). Furthermore, Denzin (2001) argues, “The performative sensibility turns interviews into performance texts, into poetic monologues. It turns interviewees into performers, into persons whose words and narratives are then

⁵ Collective memory studies help create a collective paradigm shift on how enslaved individuals are remembered. Collective memory has the potential to affect “a range of other activities having as much to do with identity formation, power and authority, cultural norms, and social interaction” (Zelizer, 1995, p. 214).

⁶ Heritage is defined as “anything a community, a nation, a stakeholder, or a family wants to save, make active, and continue in the present. Heritage is one way of engaging in or assessing the past” (Jackson, 2012, p. 23).

performed by others” (p. 25). One such effort to transform interviews into performances is *LTBH*.

Scholarship has increased on how tour guides, docents, and site managers interpret enslaved peoples’ narratives at plantation sites. These studies reveal that terms such as “slave” or “slavery” are often absent from promotional texts and substituted with words like “servant” or “laborer” (Buzinde, 2010). These omissions are also evident in plantation docents and interpreters’ narratives on guided tours, as these reveal strategies of annihilation and/or trivialization of the slave past through the use of mythical frames (Buzinde, 2007; Eichstedt & Small, 2002; Modlin, 2008). Buzinde and Santos (2008) and Dann and Potter (2001) argue that the exhibitionary practices adopted by plantation sites focus on dominant White narratives, omitting enslaved peoples’ experiences entirely. In addition to focusing on brochures and museum portrayals, scholars also examine other communicative media such as websites (Buzinde, 2010). Alderman and Modlin’s (2008) study revealed that online plantation portrayals draw on racial stereotypes “of the typical slave and/or the happy go-lucky slave” (p. 270). In essence, these investigations indicated the racial inequities that characterized the plantation era, since authors of the plantation portrayals either purposefully omitted enslaved peoples’ narratives or characterized them as “overly content and ignorant” (Buzinde, 2010, p. 5).

Jackson (2011) argues that scholars must reconfigure how we and others talk about Africans (enslaved and free) and their descendants, through a dissection, critique, and direct re-writing of tours and exhibits at these heritage sites. Carrying out this broader, conceptual rewriting of the dominant narrative is especially necessary when we consider that some plantation museum docents and managers claim, whether legitimately

or not, that they would talk more about the history of slavery if they actually knew more about it and had stories to share with visitors (Carter, Butler, & Dwyer, 2011).⁷ Carter et al. (2011) emphasize the continuing need for scholarship that guarantees that enslaved members are seen and heard, “thus providing a potential resource for heritage tourism practitioners (site managers/tour guides/performers/ visitors) as they take on the challenge of re-imagining the memorialized South and the plantation in more inclusive and just ways” (p. 146). As Kershaw notes, “Exactly how the past is doubled through performance determines the kinds of access performance has to ‘history’” (1999, p. 174).

I wanted to explore alternative ways of incorporating the historical accounts and contributions of African Americans at plantation museums. For the study, I interviewed the director of *LTBH* to understand his motivations and participation with the performance. Additionally, I sought to understand the site managers’ involvement and their decisions around including performance pieces like *LTBH* at their site. Lastly, I was interested in understanding the experiences the actors endured throughout their performances. I interviewed the actors, too. My aim was threefold: (1) to better understand how the site managers articulated their experiences along with their concerns of hosting forgotten narratives at plantation museums (2) to better understand how the creator of *LTBH* articulated his experiences along with his concerns of disseminating forgotten narratives at plantation museums and (3) to better understand how the actors of the *LTBH* articulated their experiences along with their concerns of performing forgotten narratives at plantation museums.

⁷ The dominant narrative focuses on the wealth and performances exhibited by the planter family, their daily routines, their stories, memories, and most importantly, their history. The carefully crafted dominant narrative, “selectively and seductively shape the past into embraceable and restorative national legacies” (Buzinde, 2007, p. 233)

1.2 Study Relevance

This study contributes broadly to three major bodies of literature: The first contribution is how the history of slavery is presented at plantation museum sites. The second contribution is the involvement in implementing enslaved members' narratives through performances with site managers and the creator of *LTBH*. The third contribution is to the utility of performance and primary source documents as pedagogical tools for understanding how to educate students about the institution of slavery. Through the study, I hope to contribute to the understanding of how plantation sites can be used as educational spaces in telling enslaved community members' stories from the perspective of those members, using performance pieces like *LTBH*. My analysis of the literature regarding the absence of slavery at plantation museums, how U.S. public schools currently teach slavery, and how performances can affect how people think and believe, supports my assertion that plantation sites can offer interpretations (in this case, performances) that include African Americans history and the slave past.

Heritage tourism. Scholars define heritage in numerous ways, and this search for definition represents a strong desire to understand who we are in order to share that knowledge with others. Alderman and Inwood (2013) argue that "heritage has become a global industry that sells the past to promote tourism and development, feeding a rampant consumer appetite for things retro, restored, and re-enacted" (p. 187). While heritage has a global appeal, not all social groups participate in the heritage industry equally. Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) suggest that heritage is inherently "dissonant" and is characterized by a lack of consistency or agreement in the way people produce and consume the past in the present (p. 51). While certain representations of heritage can

evoke feelings of identity and belonging for some groups, those same representations can be a source of alienation and exclusion for others.

With the propagation of remembrance, heritage tourism, and historic preservation, scholars can gain insight into the complicated and shifting boundaries of identity within modern society (Alderman & Inwood, 2011). Heritage-based tourism can provide economic and social benefits to populations at a community level (Gallardo & Stein, 2007). Tourism is a “community product,” and “community and local capabilities are directly involved in tourism development and promotion networks” (Wilson, Fresenmaier, Fesenmaier, & Van Es, 2001, p. 133). However, even though tourism is supposed to be marketed as politically neutral, it encompasses issues of class, race, and gender (Ritcher, 1995). Thus, if the objective of tourism is to improve the quality of life of local people, researchers must note that various social groups constitute communities and may each differ in income, race, religion and power (Gallardo & Stein, 2007). Additionally, many communities are more heterogeneous but differ in memory, experiences, history, and politics. These differences may affect how and if they value tourism sites, specifically heritage sites. Thus, heritage is seen as more than diverse knowledge in the sense that, for numerous heritages, contents and meaning change through time and across space (Graham, 2002).

Heritage is a sign and symbol of people’s ethnicities, nationalities, and identities but is subject to numerous interpretations and different meanings (Park, 2010). Alderman and Inwood (2011) argue the following:

Heritage has become a global industry that sells the past to promote tourism and development, feeding a rampant consumer appetite for things retro, restored, and

re-enacted. These activities signal an important transition in the construction of landscapes of memory, from a historically elite-dominated practice to one increasingly populist in terms of its participants and historical themes. (p. 1)

Heritage is essential in communicating cultural identity and allows for the creation of a particular space where people can come together collectively to reflect on shared experiences (Prentice & Anderson, 2007).

Addressing the absence of slavery at plantation sites. Over a decade ago, David Butler (2001) completed a textual analysis of brochures and associated marketing materials from tourist plantations throughout the United States. His findings documented the extent to which plantation house museums in the South perpetuated a “whitewashed” representation of history (Alderman & Dobbs, 2009). Buzinde (2011) posits that the “whitewashed” representation of plantations marginalized Black servants as caricatures or tropes such as those from *Gone with the Wind* (Mitchell, 1936) or popular epic novels such as *North and South* (Jakes, 1982) and *Queen* (Haley & Stevens, 1993). The presence of these tropes and the subsequent absence of enslaved peoples in the narrative of the South reify plantation life as a beautiful and romanticized image from U.S. history (Buzinde, 2011). In essence, the majority of these investigations indicated that contemporary plantation discourses perpetuate the historical racial inequities that characterized the plantation era through discursive means (Buzinde, 2011).

Teaching about slavery. The National Center for Education Statistics (2007) illustrates that elementary schools spend 7.6 percent of their total instructional time on social studies, and history constitutes only one part of the subject. More importantly, the amount of instructional time devoted to social studies has been decreasing over the past

two decades where, on average, students were spending eighteen hours less in social studies classes each year than they did in 1987-1988 (U.S. History Standards, 2011). According to *The State of State U.S. History Standards 2011*, administrations under-emphasize teaching history or social studies in U.S. public schools for grades K-12, due to the fact that universities seldom require prowess in history as a condition of entrance. This under-emphasis on teaching history is a huge issue, as the focus of social studies practitioners becomes more about skill acquisition than knowledge acquisition. Thus, students have little true understanding of history and consequently “minimize real people and specific events, instead making broad generalizations and invoking specifics only with random and decontextualized examples” (U.S. History Standards, 2011, p. 8). Such broad generalizations are evident in the representation of the institution of slavery within U.S. public schools. Through these broad generalizations, teachers omit enslaved community members’ lived experiences and send an implicit message that this troublesome portion of our nation’s history is not important and that old atrocities should be buried quietly with those who suffered through them. In this study, I argued that the omission does not provide young people in the U.S. with the option of using the mistakes of the past to continue to build a brighter future. Along with this knowledge about slavery, teachers should take care to share other facets commonly ignored in textbooks in order to expand the historical knowledge base of children.

According to the Thomas B. Fordham Institute’s (2011) study, most U.S. states address the horror of the Atlantic slave trade in social studies and history courses, but not a single state tells the full story in the textbooks that it provides to the students. For example, the state of Texas’ textbooks list sectionalism and states’ rights as the causes of

the Civil War before the issue of slavery. Furthermore, the books downplay slavery and barely mention segregation. Buzinde (2010) asserts that plantation slavery is an “integral part of America’s history and national identity, in part due to its existence in the nation for over two centuries” (p. 219). If the standards for teaching history in the U.S. are not accurate or representative of the complete narrative of the institution of slavery, then teachers are not challenging students to think about the causes and consequences of slavery, freedom, and moral accountability in the Civil War era and in our own time.

Rooted in the past yet relevant to the present, the legacy of slavery in America is linked to the “displacement and extermination of native populations ... the enslavement of millions of Africans, the tragedy of the Middle Passage” and the untold suffering of millions of enslaved Africans and their descendants (Russ, 2009, p. 3). Love (2004) argues, “Educators and policymakers, teachers, students, parents, and community members will find that an increased ability to deconstruct the master narrative and create counter-stories will increase their capacity to create system changes” (p. 244).⁸ In this study, I argued that plantation sites, specifically those including performances of enslaved community members’ narratives, can decenter normative Whiteness and open up a consideration of multiple perspectives.

The functions of performance. Schechner (2006) posits that performance involves many functions and that he found it very difficult to stipulate precisely how each culture defined performance. For instance, the Roman poet-scholar Horace in his *Ars poetica* argues that theater “ought to entertain and educate” (Schechner, 2006, p. 45), whereas the Indian sage Bharata felt that performance is “a very powerful vehicle for the

⁸ Love (2004) uses “master narrative” here, and in my study, I argued to use it interchangeably with “dominant narrative.”

expression of emotions” (Schechner, 2006, p. 45). Schechner (2006) posits that using performance as a tool, individuals can look into things otherwise closed off to inquiry. Furthermore, Schechner (2006) argues that performance has the power to shape, teach, entertain, and establish a new kind of community. In this study, I argued that performance pieces like *LTBH* use historical narratives to bring life to enslaved peoples’ stories in order to help create a *new community* of narratives at plantation sites.

1.3 Research Questions

An exhaustive search of research on theatrical performances of stories and memories of enslaved community members at plantation sites yielded no results. I used Google Scholar, University of South Carolina’s library electronic article database, and several meetings with the University of South Carolina’s Librarian staff for the literature search. Two issues stem from the lack of literature regarding dramatic performances in which actors represent the lives and memories of enslaved community members: 1) the scarcity of such performers/performances at actual plantation/museum sites and 2) the marginalization of research on plantation sites in the field of tourism studies. Through this study, I attempted to develop a better understanding of the experiences faced by the site managers, creator, and actors of *LTBH*, in addition to the potential challenges they may have faced in telling *different narratives*. These stakeholders’ experiences of including enslaved narrative performances can contribute to establishing plantation sites as educative spaces capable of fostering discussion around a deeper, more accurate representation of enslaved community members’ lived experiences. The inclusion of these performances may also contribute to a reinterpretation of the practice of slavery in the U.S. in a new, more complex way. I chose to interview the creator of *LTBH*, the

actors who staged the performances, and the plantation site managers who hosted the performance at three North Carolina plantation sites in order to better understand the following:

1. What challenges do plantation museum managers and interpreters encounter when incorporating enslaved African Americans' experiences into their plantations' narrative?
2. How do the actors and director of *Let Them Be Heard (LTBH)*, as well as plantation museum managers, articulate *LTBH*'s educational value?
3. How do the actors, director, and managers articulate, and make meaning of, their experiences participating in the *LTBH* production?

I hope that this study contributes to a larger discussion regarding the importance of and need for such performances at plantation sites. Given that “retelling the past happens in and through places and landscapes, and space represents an important medium for storytelling rather than simply a backdrop for history” (Modlin et al., 2011, p. 5), in this study I argued that performances can foster a dialogue around telling a different narrative inclusive of enslaved community members' stories.

1.4 Significance of the Study

I want to suggest that all performance depends on the doubling of memory, on memory in and of performance, for its character of uniqueness. Or to put this differently, the way that performance plays with the doubled past gives it its particular nostalgic resonance, sense of veracity, ironic distance, and radical edge in the present. The way in which the past is doubled through performance therefore determines the kinds of access that performance has to “history” (Kershaw, 1999, p. 174).

Little literature exists regarding performances of enslaved members' narratives at plantation sites. Therefore, I attempted to contribute to the understanding of how plantation sites can be used as educational spaces in telling enslaved members' stories using performance pieces like *LTBH*. In addition, the study contributes to bodies of work related to performance as a pedagogical tool in retelling the historical narratives of enslaved community members.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Collective memories thus serve as a storehouse of knowledge that goes far beyond the information that is directly stored in the brains of living men and women. The importance of the data from the past, however, is not self-evident. It must be interpreted, given credibility, and constructed along lines that give it applicability to present concerns. (Neal, 1998, p. 203)

Maxwell (2005) posits that a research study's conceptual framework should consist of four components: 1) the existing literature relevant to the topic; 2) the theoretical and conceptual notions that impacted the study; 3) the knowledge and understanding that the researcher gained from the pilot study; and, 4) the researcher's situated knowledge and assumptions. I address the four components of Maxwell's model to highlight how they informed my research process.

Furthermore, I address three specific points of the study. First, I researched literature revolving around the absence of slavery at plantation museums, the absence as evident in an analysis of marketing efforts and language used on tours. Secondly, I explored how U.S. public schools currently teach slavery and the role of plantation museums within the U.S. public schools' curriculum. Lastly, I investigated the potential of performances and how they can affect how people think about and believe things.

2.1 A Review of Related Studies and Relevant Literature

The purpose of this study was to explore the challenges and values of including African Americans' narratives at plantation museums. Consequently, this review of the literature is an overview of research exploring a) how plantation museums represent the historical accounts of enslaved community members, b) the efforts of plantation museum staff to create a plantation narrative more inclusive of enslaved community members' experiences, c) how others see historical sites like plantation museums as museums, d) examples of performances and reenactments that teachers or others use for educational purposes, and e) how educators currently teach slavery in U.S. public schools, as well as the role of plantation visits within that curriculum.

2.1.1 Plantation sites as museums. Museums serve as a source of narration for a community's history, and they give meaning and purpose to a culture (Buzinde & Osagie, 2011). Eichstedt and Small (2001) define "plantation sites" as "plantation museums" based on the presence of physical structures that were originally part of plantation complexes and that currently showcase exhibits, plaques, and representations of the period of enslavement. Furthermore, Buzinde and Osagie (2011) posit that plantation museums in the U.S. South form part of the nation's heritage tourism industry and serve as "important mnemonic sites" (p. 44). However, Buzinde and Santos (2011) argue, "Through the discursive politics of inclusion and exclusion, museums draw on selective symbolic cues to perform cultural citizenship" (p. 43). These sites rarely represent marginalized peoples' histories, beliefs, and culture, resulting in a "social engineering

that celebrates dominant value systems while marginalizing subaltern histories” (Buzinde & Santos, 2011, p. 44).

2.1.2 Representation of slavery at plantation museums. Scholars like Eichstedt and Small (2002); Buzinde and Santos (2008, 2009); Jackson (2011); Modlin, Alderman, and Gentry (2011); Carter, Butler, and Dwyer (2011); Butler (2001); Nora (1989); Horton (1999); and Marcus (2008) contributed to the literature that critiques the White-centered, dominant narrative that plantation museums present. For instance, in their detailed analysis of 122 former slave plantations, Eichstedt and Small (2002) found that tour guides’/docents’ narratives described slaves as “faithful servants” or “loyal slaves” (p. 7.) They portrayed Whites as “good slave owner[s]” who were “just” and “generous” (Eichstedt & Small, 2002, p. 7). Eichstedt and Small found that the plantation museums in their study overwhelmingly catered to White visitors, avoided the negative aspects of history, normalized the White family’s lifestyle, and thus constructed “narratives of U.S. history that valorize whiteness and mystify the experience of enslavement, both for the enslaved and for the master-enslavers” (p. 4). They concluded that tour guides, docents, and interpreters at plantation sites typically represent slavery as a benign institution with caring masters and faithful slaves.

Further, Eichstedt and Small (2002) argue that, through this White-centered, dominant representation, docents create and perpetuate a landscape of romantic plantation images, detached from the guilt associated with how plantation owners constructed these sites. The White-centered, dominant narrative that tour guides/docents present *romanticizes* the system of enslavement, consequently leaving out *how* the role of enslaved peoples’ work provided the foundation for the planter family’s wealthy lifestyle.

Eichstedt and Small (2002) note that “it is only when sites work to incorporate discussions of enslavement that the pretty picture gets disturbed. It is no wonder, then that the primary ways that enslavement is discussed serve to erase, minimize, or trivialize the fact and experience of slavery” (p. 51).

Eichstedt and Small (2002) developed a framework for organizing and understanding the patterns of representation that plantation museum staff use to address (or not address) the experiences of enslaved peoples. The four representational strategies are 1) symbolic annihilation and erasure, 2) trivialization and deflection, 3) segregation and a marginalization of knowledge, and 4) relative incorporation. In their study, they further defined each discursive framework:

Symbolic annihilation. Sites that employ symbolic annihilation and erasure as their primary interpretation ignore the institution and experience of slavery altogether or treat them in a perfunctory way.

Trivialization and deflection. Trivialization and deflection includes those sites in which slavery and African Americans are mentioned but primarily through mechanisms, phrasing, and images that minimize and distort them.

Segregation and marginalization of knowledge. Segregation and marginalization of knowledge take place at those sites where information about enslaved peoples is presented, but largely through separate tours and displays that visitors can choose to see or ignore, depending on their desire.

Relative incorporation. The few sites that contribute toward relative incorporation are more likely to raise issues that disturb a positive construction of

whiteness and challenge the dominant themes that each site tends to present about its own history. (Eichstedt & Small, 2002, p. 11)

Docents at plantation museums, in overlooking slave narratives, contribute to “distortions in contemporary understandings of racialization, which suggest that Whites (anywhere in the world) can create a livable world without engaging in a sustained conversation with people of color” (Eichstedt & Small, 2002, p. 7). Consequently, the authors argue for docents at plantation museums to illustrate deeper, more accurate representations of enslaved communities: representations that facilitate a reinterpretation of enslaved peoples’ lived experiences by incorporating enslaved descendants’ knowledge obtained through ethnographic, ethno-historical, and oral history research.

In this study, I argue that, as three plantation museum managers’ decide to bring *Let Them Be Heard (LTBH)* (as is based on the type of historical research that Eichstedt and Small advanced) to their sites, these decisions represent intentional efforts to incorporate the experiences of enslaved African Americans. The managements incorporate performances (in a meaningful, tangible, and emotional way) as a part of their plantations’ discursive representations of the past, and this incorporation positions each effort as a move beyond relative incorporation.

Buzinde and Santos (2009) explored how tourists interpreted the narrative that docents presented at Hampton Plantation, especially focusing on whether this narrative included enslaved people’s lived experiences. The researchers conducted 27 on-site exit interviews with tourists who answered the following questions: (1) What does this site represent to you? (2) What significance does it possess? (3) Why should it be commemorated? (4) Are there other elements that should be added to the overall

narrative? In order to decode and encode the tourists' interpretations of Hampton, the authors employed a narrative analysis within the interview context. Buzinde and Santos (2008) assert the following:

As much as slave heritage tourism sites are demonized within academic discourse for their inescapable authority or their impossible mission to show the American plantation past through cosmopolitan representational tactics, one has to acknowledge that there is no unified power bloc or conspiratorial heritage system to blame or defeat. It is rather a tangled skein of complicitous human interactions that promote the cultural authority of these sites ... They are not apolitical spatialities, equally hospitable to any form of cultural expression but rather consist of culturally specific values which utilize discursive lenses to influence how historical events are understood and interpreted. Like many heritage sites, they serve as locales of pedagogical power wherein the state disciplines history, knowledge, and ultimately the populace. (p. 448)

In their findings, Buzinde and Santos' (2009) recognized an emerging theme: "Slavery as a Lesson for Humanity: Pedagogical Responsibility." Through these findings, too, they confirmed the previous literature, in which scholars made evident the lack of enslaved community member voices and stories at plantation museums. Buzinde and Santos noted that visitors at these sites are interested in and sought out counter-narratives.⁹ The authors also asserted that tourists who are interested specifically in visiting heritage sites are becoming increasingly international and multicultural and that

⁹ Solórzano and Yosso (2002) document counter-narratives as those that "expose deficit-informed research that silences and distorts epistemologies of people of color. Although social scientists tell stories under the guise of 'objective research, these stories actually uphold deficit, racialized notions about people of color'" (p. 23).

site managers, docents, and interpreters at slave-related sites ought to craft metanarratives that incorporate pluralistic perspectives.¹⁰ Buzinde and Santos (2009) posed a concluding question: “How are commemorated plantations constructing healing and holistic messages?” David Butler (2001) sought to answer this question through his investigation of the way plantation museum stakeholders market their sites using brochures.

By analyzing tourist brochures, Butler (2001) investigated how stakeholders market plantation museums to tourists. Through a textual analysis of over 100 plantation tourist brochures, Butler found “slavery,” “slaves,” and “slave cabins” less often than such expressions as “owners,” “landscapes,” and “furnishings.” Butler (2001) asserts, due to the under-emphasis on slavery in the brochures, that the nation “lost [an] opportunity . . . to learn from its past mistakes” and that “many plantations eradicate the history of slavery from their own worldview” (p. 173-174). Given the absence of enslaved community members’ lived experiences, evidenced through Butler’s (2001) textual analysis, scholars must further investigate *why* plantation museum stakeholders actively choose to center the marketing of plantation museums around the White planter family, their home, and their furnishings.

2.1.3 Changing the dominant narrative. Nora (1989) documents that, due to the pluralistic nature of U.S. society, history teachers have not always associated history with nation-building. Essentially, various parties hold multiple interpretations of the same historical events, and those interpretations are evident in the way that some groups remember the South and plantations. Alderman (2009) posits that the depiction of slavery “as a benign institution of caring masters and faithful slaves is the cornerstone of

¹⁰ However, the author’s article does not acknowledge Buzinde’s positionality as a Black woman and how that may have affected the interviews with White visitors.

an Old South mythology that southern Whites have not only marketed to tourists but used to justify racial inequalities in the New South” (p. 93). Nora (1998) argues that the job of the historian is not only to catalogue and record events, but also to recreate them so that they come alive. This critical study of history/historiography shows a conscious human effort to make the present moment differ from the past.

Links of memory, or *lieux de memoire*, are both natural and constructed and serve as the transition from the past to the present, as they embody change and incorporate traditional elements within themselves (Pierre, 1998). Nora (1998) asserts, “The historian becomes the memory man, or link of memory” (p. 14). Furthermore, Nora (1998) provides an example: a history textbook that glorified the French nation would be good for French schoolchildren in 1877 but might not be the most suitable history textbook in the 1930s, when other concerns became more significant. Nora (1998) also identifies certain *lieux de memoire* as dominant ones, usually sanctioned and patronized by the state since they were “the result of historical reconstruction” (p. 19). Thus, scholars study history, or the links/locations of memory, not only to study reality, but also to study *reconstructed* reality and, along with it, why people recreate reality in certain ways and to satisfy which purposes.¹¹

Jackson (2011) challenges the dominant narrative, which focuses on the life and struggles of the plantation owners, and advocates for the inclusion of African American history to create “a more inclusive and textured story about the past” (p. 11). Yet

¹¹ I used Nora’s (1998) piece to understand how historical narratives can help change White-centered, dominant narratives. I sought to understand how tour guides/docents and plantation museums managers can help change the romanticized version of the dominant, White-centered narrative to include the lived experiences and memories of African Americans, in order to portray a more accurate depiction of the slave past.

reintroducing enslaved peoples into the public history of the Southern plantation requires the dissection, critique, and direct rewriting of the tours and exhibits at these heritage sites, thus changing what visitors hear about slavery. Jackson thus argues for scholars to engage in oral histories and ethnographic interviews with descendants of former enslaved community members, in order to contribute to a reinterpretation of the practice of slavery in the U.S. in a new, more complex way at plantation museums. I believe that performances, like *LTBH*, in which actors embody and tell stories of enslaved community members, can provide a more inclusive perspective for the U.S. national, public memory.

Tour guides and docents have the power to incorporate the slave past by reconstructing White-centered narratives at plantation museums. As Modlin, Alderman, and Gentry (2011) note, tour guides and interpreters have the power to give tours that include empathetic stories of enslaved community members at plantation house museums, the inclusion of which is an “important step toward coming to terms with and publicly remembering the enslaved” (p. 15). Modlin, Alderman, and Gentry (2011) spent two years observing how docents at Destrehan Plantation in Louisiana interpreted enslavement during their tours. The authors observed that the docents on their tours talked about the institution of slavery as a fact but did not attribute any emotion or human characteristics to former slaves. Yet Modlin, Alderman, and Gentry posit that docents and tour guides can create emotive bonds in the interpretation of enslaved peoples’ experiences by presenting slave narratives filled with emotion, not just facts.

Carter, Butler, and Dwyer (2011) also explored how tour guides at plantation museums interpreted narratives. The scholars conducted a general critique of the narratives presented to most audiences at plantation museums, “recognizing that these

heritage sites are portrayed in a fetishized manner that hides rather than reveals the historical contributions and struggles of the enslaved” (p. 142). Furthermore, Carter, Butler, and Dwyer explain, “The power to get one’s story told is the power to shape understanding and the production of knowledge” (p. 142). Consequently, they argue that museum docents and interpreters need to act in order to guarantee that enslaved peoples are seen and heard (p. 146). These docents would “thus provid[e] . . . a potential resource for heritage tourism practitioners as they take on the challenge of re-imagining the memorialized South and the plantation in more inclusive and just ways” (p. 146).

In the age of globalization, the performance of cultural memory at plantation museums has changed (Buzinde & Osagie, 2011). Buzinde and Osagie (2011) posit that “Americans are now increasingly encapsulating discursive reconstructions of the nation’s slave past in a more forward-looking manner” (p. 55). The authors purport, “This relative incorporation, as Eichstedt and Small label it, is an example of the emerging cosmopolitan memory in the discourse of plantation museums” (p. 55). The performance of heritage, in the form of Black narratives at plantation museums, “can incorporate the slave past in such a way that past elisions are corrected and the status of citizenship rights of suppressed groups are respected” (p. 56). Most importantly, the authors assert the following:

Relative incorporation as a strategy tends to promote a monologue that is directed and controlled by the heritage producers, and thus precludes a critical dialogue, one that could enable the museum visitors to engage the past out of the realities of the present. It is important for heritage producers to understand that the struggles and lessons in the present are very much rooted in the past. (p. 56)

Consequently, I argue that audience members engage with performances like *LTBH*, in addition to the decompression sessions, in a critical dialogue about the current political implications of the slave past.

2.1.4 Reenactment and performances as education. Numerous performances and reenactments serve as opportunities to learn about specific times, places, or events. Schechner (2006) posits that, for “sophisticated simulations” like Colonial Williamsburg and Plimoth Plantation, plantation site stakeholders not only mold sites to “look like what the sites once really were, but employ trained interpreters to enact historical persons who once lived there” (p. 136). The purpose of these sites, according to Schechner (2006), is to “trade on a national nostalgia in the garb of education” (p. 136). While literature focusing on reenactments at historical sites is limited, I found two articles that explored the role of performance at living historical museums.

Informed by performance studies, Snow (1993) analyzed the evolution of how role-playing at Plimoth Plantation transformed the site into a living historical museum. Under the direction of Harvard-educated anthropologist James Deetz, Plimoth became a “living museum” in which stakeholders reproduced the material culture of the period and recreated the mental and behavioral culture of the people (Snow, 1993).¹² In the emergence of living history performance at Plimoth, stakeholders, along with postmodern American culture, influence and shape a new model of contemporary cultural creativity (Snow, 1993).

¹² A living museum is a type of museum that recreates historical settings to simulate past time periods, providing visitors with an experiential interpretation of history (The Association for Living History, Farm, and Agricultural Museums).

Snow (1993) explored role-playing at Plimoth Plantation through an ethno-historical approach. Through participant observation, Snow (1993) portrayed two Pilgrim characters in the recreated Pilgrim Village throughout a fifteen-month fieldwork experience. He took extensive field notes between 1984 and 1986; conducted interviews with the performers, spectators, and Plimoth Plantation staff; made sound recordings of the performances; and gathered photographic documentation. Snow asserts that the interaction between visitors and actors at Plimoth Plantation created an environmental theater that blurred the lines of traditional theater. Snow (1993) describes the actors' performance within this environmental theater at Plimoth Plantation as a cultural performance, since it "serves to dramatize our collective myths and history" (p. XIX). Influential performance was a crucial element of Plimoth Plantation's educational component.

Tivers (2010) conducted a study to understand whether or not performances held at heritage sites added value to tourists' experiences. Using a case study approach, she investigated the actors' and managers' motivations for producing historical events and the visitors' desire to attend the performance at three heritage sites in the United Kingdom. Tivers (2010) asserts the following:

Performances are able to get inside the skin of women, and servants, and people of colour from a previous era, and to understand better the problems of gender, class and race in modern society. People can easily be misinformed by some heritage interpretations, or not encouraged to challenge ill-forced assumptions. (p. 198)

Furthermore, Tivers argues that learning through experience gives more credence than learning through cognition. Tivers asserts, “People are drawn into an experience of heritage which may have meaning for them, whether they are participants or audience, and which may contribute to a sense of identity and a better understanding of society, both past and present” (p. 1999). Tivers argues that plantation site stakeholders in “living history” cannot recreate the past or provide a truly authentic atmosphere and that visitors’ perceptions of the past “will always be influenced by their present-day attitudes and perceptions” (p. 198). However, Tivers explored sites that were reenactment sites, where the performers were in character and answered questions in character. Yet they performed characters, not necessarily historical narratives, like in *LTBH*.

2.1.5 Politics of education. Due to the notion of White privilege, the U.S. public education system has influenced who has access to schooling, which historical narrative educators tell, and how public schooling looks today generally. Spring (2007) argues that citizenship laws, education laws, and court rulings are part of a socially-constructed racism that benefits the dominant Anglo-Saxon class. The common-school movement of the 1830s and 1840s was a direct challenge, fighting against multicultural development in the U.S. By removing Native Americans off their lands, supporters of the common-school movement sought to maintain a civilized yet segregated society. Proponents of the Protestant ethic emphasized hard work and gaining property—the opposite of what Native Americans believed. Government agents believed that the key to civilizing Native Americans was to control education and change Native American ideas about farming, government, and economic relations so that they might adopt this new, White, American culture.

According to Spring (2007), Congress passed the Civilization Fund Act in 1819 to provide money to support Native American schools that were designed to transform culture and religion and to implement the English language. In replacing native languages with English, teachers helped to abolish Indian customs and further “civilize” and “teach allegiance” to the U.S. government and policies (Spring, 2007, p. 31). Finally, in 1928, the Meriam Report helped to change this previous education of the Native Americans. The report included recommendations for the implementation of native cultures, in contrast to the former tradition of trying to *civilize* native populations through Anglo control. Subsequently, Native Indians tried to rebuild their culture and reverse what the federal government had destroyed through “educating” Native Americans (p. 36).

Native Americans were not the first nor the last people that Anglo America tried to “deculturalize” and control through education. The U.S. government instituted “deculturalization programs to ensure that conquered populations would not rise up against their new government” (Spring, 2007, p. 84). The U.S. government excluded Hispanic/Latino Americans including Mexican, Cuban, and Puerto Rican Americans, along with Asian Americans, when it came to schooling, citizenship, jobs, and voting. Not until the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s did activists address central issues of “school segregation and cultural and linguistic genocide” or critique the White domination and disenfranchisement of the *lesser* of the races (Spring, 2007, p. 111).

Between the years of 1800 and 1835, citizens found it illegal to educate slaves in Southern states (Spring, 2007). By making education illegal, the government allowed Whites to control a population and deter an uprising or revolt. Even after the Civil War,

the underfunding of schools and educational segregation, which the dominant, White class perpetuated, allowed for control in manipulation and creation of a labor force compliant to the new Southern economy (Spring, 2007). Anderson argues, “It was logical outgrowth of a social ideology designed to adjust Black southerners to racially qualified forms of political and economic subordination” (1988, p. 3). Ex-slaves fought to fund their education in order to gain social mobility within U.S. society. However, their effort to gain equal education created a national debate about the “social purposes of Black education,” including how the schools would be funded (Anderson, 1988, p. 3).

During the years of 1860 to 1880, former slaves formed a unified front to depart from the planters’ ideology of education and society and to campaign for universal, state-supported public education (Anderson, 1988). According to Anderson (1988), former slaves viewed literacy and formal education as a “means to liberation and freedom” (p. 17). Despite the ex-slaves early successes in helping to create universal education in the South, the planters presented several obstacles when they gained control of the state governments between 1869 and 1877. The planters kept universal schooling underdeveloped and increased their supervision and control over the ex-slave laboring class, in order to “maintain the supremacy of the white class” (p. 27). Because the Civil War had ended, planters found it illegal to keep slaves in the South. However, the Southern economy needed a subordinated population to take the place of the slaves. Therefore, the South had to create a working class and promote an education that trained Blacks in “industrial education,” such as the education at the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute of Virginia (p. 28).

Southern Whites, along with a coalition of Northern philanthropists, viewed

universal schooling as a way to train laborers to be better citizens and more efficient workers. Universal education was a “sound investment in social stability and economic prosperity” (Anderson, 1988, p. 80). More importantly, universal schooling was a means to an end—an efficient society socialized and controlled for labor production (Anderson, 1988). However, White Southerners debated amongst themselves about universal public education for the laboring classes. Reformers believed that “rudimentary schooling could help upgrade black labor productivity while preparing blacks for racially prescribed social roles” and thus threw their support behind the Hampton-Tuskegee Idea (Anderson, 1988, p. 82). Ultimately, the Hampton program would help to solidify the South’s political economy and make it run more efficiently (Anderson, 1988).

Southern White educational reformers held conferences for Education in the South during a period from 1898 to 1900 and helped to solidify funding for the Hampton-Tuskegee Institutions from John D. Rockefeller, Jr., the Peabody Fund, the Slater Fund, and the Anna T. Jeanes Foundation (Anderson, 1988). With the help of funding and support from Northern philanthropists and White supremacists, reformers perpetuated the notion of the Black race as inferior to the Anglo-Saxon race (Anderson, 1988). Additionally, Anderson (1988) purports, “These philanthropists also shared the white southern belief in Negro disfranchisement, even though they opposed movements to repeal the Fifteenth Amendment” (p. 93). However, many Black intellectuals and leaders felt that the Hampton-Tuskegee program was a way to manage the Black race and keep them subordinate to the White race (Anderson, 1988). The Northern philanthropists thus needed a spokesperson to help persuade Black intellectuals and leaders of the benefits of the Hampton-Tuskegee program (Anderson, 1988).

Booker T. Washington “urged Afro-Americans to remain in the South and seek their fortune, primarily in common agriculture and domestic labor” (Anderson, 1988, p. 102). Washington also discouraged Blacks from voting, running for political office, or pursuing civil equality, as consistent with the Hampton Idea (Anderson, 1988). In 1903, Andrew Carnegie gave an endowment of \$600,000 to the Tuskegee program and helped to showcase how White, elite philanthropists were supporting the Hampton-Tuskegee foundation, in order to create a subordinate, Black, industrial class.

W.E.B. Du Bois and Washington started a national debate regarding Black education. Du Bois advocated for higher education of selected youths (Talented Tenth), in addition to industrial education for the masses, whereas Washington looked to industrial normal schools like Tuskegee to “produce leaders who would endorse and advance the Hampton Idea” (Anderson, 1988, p. 105). Du Bois, the philanthropists, and Washington all were concerned with the “training of Black teachers and leaders and the ideological persuasion of that class” (Anderson, 1988, p. 105). However, Du Bois called the “Washington forces” formidable because they consisted of wealthy “White philanthropists, large amounts of capital, large sections of the black press, a cadre of educators in small industrial schools, and powerful white politicians” that could sway the public and commit Blacks to the Hampton-Tuskegee “educational and social ideology” (Anderson, 1988, p. 106). During the years of 1900 to 1935, activists organized a second crusade for the common schools. In this crusade, the government taxed both Whites and Blacks to support White schools, and Blacks voluntarily paid a second tax, in a system known as double taxation, to help support their own schools (Anderson, 1988). Blacks paid the *voluntary* tax so that they could secure an education

for their children and better livelihoods for their community and race.

Throughout history, U.S. public education has been neither equal nor accessible to all. The White, dominant, Anglo-Saxon class has had the power, privilege, and funding to determine through laws and policies who gains access to education, how that education is funded, and what kind of education it is. As Anderson (1988) states, “This was not a haphazard path that America has gone through in order to create public education today” (p. 58). The same issue persists in the role that politics plays with the presentation of slavery in U.S. public schools. Scholars must closely investigate how teachers in U.S. public schools teach the institution of slavery and African American history to children. If teachers in the U.S. public school system continue to present the institution of slavery as benign, then they are disserving the population and perpetuating racism in the country. This issue parallels how power and politics influence the African American narrative at plantation museums.

2.1.6 How slavery is currently taught in schools and the role of plantation visits with that curriculum. Horton (1999) posits that the vast majority of U.S. citizens are not familiar with the history or impact of slavery. Educators taught students in the late 1940s and early 1950s that the abolition of slavery may not have been the best thing for Blacks because slaves had “snug cabins to live in and plenty of food to eat and work that was not too hard for them to do” (p. 23). Horton also purports that public education prepared children to think about slavery and race in ways consistent “with the assumption of white supremacy built into American law and custom” (p. 23). Furthermore, over the past two generations, while most textbooks have changed, many individuals maintain stereotypical assumptions about the benign institution of slavery.

In regards to the institution of slavery, Anderson (1994) states that many books simply reframe slavery as “the tragic flaw that temporarily derailed the American pageant’s procession toward democracy and justice for all” (p. 89). Additionally, Lowen (1995) asserts that U.S. history textbook authors have typically perpetuated a “progress as usual,” dominant narrative about slavery in which “the U.S. is always intrinsically and increasingly democratic, and slaveholding is merely a temporary aberration, not part of the big picture” (p. 142). Furthermore, Gordy and Pritchard (1995) argue that students have only a small look into the injustices of slavery, due to U.S. History textbooks. The authors assert that students “will not be given full understanding of the racial and gender discrimination inherent in the slave system and the consequences of this discrimination will live on through generations of Americans, both African American and White” (p. 213). Current U.S. History curricula perpetuate an “archetype to progress” concerning U.S. race relations, particularly concerning slavery and Reconstruction (Anderson & Metzger, 2011, p. 395). Through a discussion of slavery in U.S. history texts, teachers frame politically-influenced, dominant ideologies that are often indicative of the era (Bailyn, 1981).

In regards to the topic of slavery, Washburn (1997) analyzed how U.S. history textbooks presented the topic of slavery across five periods from 1900 to 1992. Washburn identified five patterns with regard to the representation of slavery in texts: (1) Neutral Presentation of Slavery, (2) Justification of the Slave System, (3) Slavery as Necessary Evil, (4) Slavery as Un-American, and (5) Slavery as Reflection of Conservative Values. According to Washburn, textbook authors tend to craft their historical narratives to suit contemporary needs, and so “the discussion of slavery in U.S.

history texts is framed by ideologies dominant at the time of their writing” (p. 486). The Religious Right has influenced the way select U.S. history, public school textbooks present the institution of slavery.¹³ In the next section, I focus on two states, Tennessee and Texas, as prime examples of how conservative, right-wing individuals influence the representation of slavery in U.S. textbooks.

Tennessee and Texas are two examples in which right-wing-dominated state school boards enforced state standards for social studies and history (Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2011). In Texas in 2010, the State Board of Education approved massive changes to its school textbooks to position slavery in a more positive light, whereas in Tennessee a group of Tea Party activists renewed its push to whitewash school textbooks, in seeking to remove references to slavery and mentions of the country’s founders being slave owners (Lee, 2012). In the Thomas B. Fordham Institute’s review of state’s social studies and history standards for 2011, the authors noted that authors of history textbooks for public schools in Texas downplayed the topic of slavery and barely mentioned segregation. Texas textbook authors did not mention the issue of slavery in the territories and listed sectionalism and states’ rights before slavery as causes of the Civil War. Furthermore, neither during nor after the authors addressed representations of Reconstruction did they include mention of the Black Codes, the Ku Klux Klan, or sharecropping; the term “Jim Crow” never appeared, and authors only mentioned racial

¹³ Tom Head (2014) states that, “while the Religious Right is extremely diverse and shouldn't be characterized in simple terms, the movement as we have come to know it is an ultraconservative religious response to the sexual revolution and other events that are seen, by Religious Right proponents, as being connected to the sexual revolution--and an attempt to effect this religious response as public policy.”

segregation in a passing reference to the 1948 integration of the Armed Forces. The textbooks that the school boards selected failed to provide students with a full story of U.S. history. Consequently, students were not able to analyze or understand what they did not know.

Social institutions like schools and state agencies continue to reproduce the White-centered, dominant narrative. Horton (1999) challenges that schools and state agencies formed the U.S. understanding of race and the relationships between races in America. Furthermore, Horton (1999) asserts, “The things Americans take for granted about race, those assumptions for which they require no explanation, those feelings of which they are barely conscious, are the products of a culture that slavery and efforts to justify it have shaped” (p. 37). Lastly, Horton (1999) suggests the following:

As we seek to confront our national history and its relevance to our present and future, the history of slavery matters a great deal. Difficult as it is, the discussion must start immediately, and historical scholars in the academy, in museums, in historic parks and houses, and wherever else they do their work must be part of the process. (p. 38)

With recent events like the killings of unarmed Black men by White police officers in Milwaukee (April, 2014), Ohio (August, 2014), California (August, 2014), Arizona (December, 2014), Ferguson, Missouri (August, 2014), New York City (August, 2014), New Jersey (December, 2014; March, 2015), Maryland (April, 2015), Wisconsin (March, 2015), Oklahoma (April, 2015), and North Charleston, South Carolina (April, 2015), I argue that teachers must foster a dialogue revolving around racism and the systemic inequities that have led to where we are today (Quah & Davis, 2015).

Slavery is unarguably one of the most unsettling chapters of U.S. history. Consequently, Adams (2007) argues, “The very fact slavery can be so easily detached from the history of the plantation suggests the peculiar choreography of memory through forgetting that French historian Ernest Renan argued is crucial to national unity” (p. 67). Furthermore, Buzinde (2010) asserts that a logical point of a discussion around slavery is within the plantation museum because it is “literally and figuratively the genesis of race relations and, like many mnemonic sites, its contemporary narrativistic (re)construction is depictive of the present-day social order (i.e. racial politics)” (p. 54). In order to help compensate for the ideological influences in textbook content, an alternative way to reevaluate the ethics and esthetics of slavery can occur outside the classroom at plantation museums where students can engage in alternative forms of knowledge. Horton (1999) also advocates field trips outside the classroom (i.e. plantation museums sites) as an effective way of educating students and can stimulate an interest in history.

Marcus (2008) explored the importance of developing strong adult education programs between museum staff and K-12 teachers. He argues for students and teachers to visit museums and expose students to multiple perspectives, which he argues, “are only marginally included in textbooks, and help them to better understand the thoughts and actions of people in the past” (p. 59). Additionally, Marcus argues that students need opportunities to critically analyze and evaluate the narratives and exhibits presented at museums. He explains, “Students can examine how past events and people are constructed into historical narratives by museum curators...and understand the historical perspectives presented and omitted by museums” (p. 62). Consequently, I argue that plantation museums are heritage sites and a space to critique the political, social, and

economic influences of stakeholders involved in the interpretation of plantation museums.

2.1.7 Conclusion. The dialogue around how the management presents slavery at plantation museums is ongoing (Jackson, 2001). Select stakeholders at plantation museums have made conscious efforts to eradicate the *annihilation* of enslaved community members' lived experiences by including African American narratives on tours (Modlin et al., 2011). However, like Butler (2001) states, "Tourists walk away from a plantation with a sense of authenticity ... If plantations falsify or remove slavery from prominence in their museums, the result is a lost opportunity for a nation to learn from its past mistakes" (p. 173). The experience of slavery in the U.S. is not so distant that educators and plantation museum managers cannot develop more nuanced interpretations of African American lives. In this study, I sought to explore how stakeholders at heritage sites presented an empathetic, accurate depiction of enslaved community members' narratives through *LTBH* in an effort to contribute to the continual reconstruction of plantation spaces.

2.2 Theoretical Framing

Plantation museum stakeholders can use performance as a way to include enslaved community members' stories in order to in African Americans' history of the slave past. Performance studies (Pelias & VanOosting, 1987; Schechner, 1998; Schechner, 2002; Schechner, 2004; Pollock, 2008) and collective memory (Connerton, 1989; Kanstenier, 2002; Till, 2006) theory greatly informed my theoretical framework.

2.2.1 Performance studies.

A performance-centered approach to culture displaces narrative into practice; defines practice by repetition; finds in the unstable aesthetics of repetition an ethics and politics of possibility; and ultimately then shifts culture itself into the subjunctive register of what if, as if, could be. (Pollock, 2008, p. 122)

Scholars of performance studies argues that the field neither resists or rejects definition and “assumes that we are living in a postcolonial world where cultures are colliding, interfering with each other, and energetically hybridizing” (Schechner, 1998, p. 360). Schechner (2002) explains that scholars explore a wide variety of subjects using different methodologies in performance studies to question embodiment, action, behavior, and agency. Schechner (2004) asserts the following:

Performance studies is sympathetic to the avant-garde, the marginal, the offbeat, the minoritarian, the subversive, the twisted, the queer, people of color, and the formerly colonized. Projects within performance studies often act on or act against settled hierarchies of ideas, organizations, and people, therefore, it is hard to imagine performance studies getting its act together or settling down, or even wanting to. (p. 4)

More importantly, scholars demonstrate that performance studies is “inter:” in-between, interdisciplinary, intercultural, and therefore, inherently unstable. As a discipline, performance studies cannot be mapped effectively “because it transgresses boundaries, and it goes where it is not expected to” (Schechner, 1998, p. 360). Lastly, Schechner (1992) asserts the following:

The new paradigm is ‘performance’, not theater. Theater departments should become ‘performance’ departments. Performance is about more than the enactment of Eurocentric drama. Performance engages intellectual, social, cultural, historical, and artistic life in a broad sense. Performance combines theory and practice. Performance studied and practiced interculturally can be the core of a ‘well-rounded education’. (p. 7-10, 9)

There is no such thing as “unbiased” research within performance studies and scholars who practice performance studies do not aspire to “ideological neutrality” (p. 2). Instead, Schechner asserts, “The challenge is to become as aware as possible of one’s own stances in relation to the position of others – and then take steps to maintain or change positions” (p. 2). Most importantly, Pelias and VanOosting (1987) express the following:

Performance studies calls into question the privilege of academic authority by including all members of a speech community as potential artists, all utterances as potentially aesthetic, all events as potentially theatrical, and all audiences as potentially active participants who can authorize artistic experience ... These claims, then, yield an ideology that is racially democratic and counterelitist. (p. 221).

Similarly, scholars posit that the field of performance studies mirrors education of foundations. Foundation scholars assist students to develop inquiry skills, to question educational assumptions and arrangements, and to identify contradictions and inconsistencies among social and educational values, policies, and practices. I feel like

performance studies challenges researchers to be self-reflexive and challenge the assumptions of the world around them.

Conquergood (1991), one of the founders of performance studies at Northwestern University, outlined five areas of performance studies; performance and cultural process; performance and ethnographic praxis; performance and hermeneutics; performance and scholarly representation; and the politics of performance. For each of the five areas, Conquergood (1991) uses questions to help the reader understand each area of performance studies:

Performance and cultural process. What are the conceptual consequences of thinking about culture as a verb instead of a noun, a process instead of product? Culture as an unfolding performative invention instead of reified system, structure, or variable? What happens to our thinking about performance when we move it outside of aesthetics and situate it at the center of lived experience?

Performance and ethnographic praxis. What are the methodological implications of thinking about fieldwork as the collaborative performance of an enabling fiction between observer and observed, knower and known? How does thinking about fieldwork as performance differ from thinking about fieldwork as the collection of data?

Performance and hermeneutics. What kinds of knowledge are privileged or displaced when performed experience becomes a way of knowing, a method of critical inquiry, a mode of understanding?

Performance and scholarly representation. What are the rhetorical problematics of performance as a complementary or alternative form of

“publishing” research? What are the differences between reading an analysis of fieldwork data, and hearing the voices from the field interpretively filtered through the voice of the researcher? [...] What about enabling people themselves to perform their own experience?

The politics of performance. What is the relationship between performance and power? How does performance reproduce, enable, sustain, challenge, subvert, critique, and naturalize ideology? How do performances simultaneously reproduce and resist hegemony? How does performance accommodate and contest domination? (p. 190)

Linking social sciences and performance studies together, Carlson (2003) related performance studies to fields such as anthropology, ethnography, sociology, psychology, and linguistics examining how cultural performances are linked to everyday interactions. Furthermore, Carlson (2003) argues the following:

As performance studies has developed as a particular field of scholarly work, especially in the United States, it has been very closely associated with the various social sciences, and a complex and interesting crossfertilisation has been the result. The study of traditional ‘artistic’ performance, such as theatre and dance, has taken on new dimensions and begun to explore newly observed relationships between these and other cultural and social activities, while the various social sciences have found theater and performance metaphors of great use in exploring particular kinds of human activities within their own fields of study. (p. 7)

Furthermore, performance studies is more interactive, hyper-textual, virtual, and fluid than most scholarly disciplines. I argue that using performance studies in my research I am able to become more self-reflexive and critically analyze how the world around me performs. I feel like performance studies as a field balances well with foundations of education and allows for a fluid understanding of how power and politics work through performances.

Within the arts, the notion *to perform* is to put on a show, a play, a dance, a concert and in everyday life, *to perform* is to show off, to go to the extreme, to underline an action for those who are watching (Schechner, 2003). However, Schechner (2003) argues that *performances* mark identities, bend time, reshape and adorn the body, and tell stories. Everyday life involves years of learning appropriate, culturally specific bits of behavior “of adjusting and performing one’s life roles in relation to social and personal circumstances” (p. 29). Schechner identified eight *kinds* of performance: in everyday life (cooking, socializing, “just living”); in the arts; in sports and other popular entertainments; in business; in technology; in sex; in ritual (sacred and secular); and in play. For instance, we can *perform* as a graduate student, *perform* as an audience member, *perform* as a site manager, and *perform* as an actor. Using performance as a framework, I identified and analyzed how site managers, the director, and actors of *LTBH* contributed towards *performing* their roles of including African American history at plantation museums.

One cause of performance, according to Bharata, is a comprehensive source of knowledge and a very effective vehicle for the expression of emotions (empathy).¹⁴ Shaughnessy (2012) posits that empathy helps audiences understand how the act of performance works through the process of embodiment. *Rasa* is the conceptualization of emotions. Shaughnessy (2012) asserts that nine *Rasas* range in “key emotional states considered to be felt across all cultures: love, heroism, the comic, disgust, fear, anger, pathos, wonder, and peace” (p. 64). Furthermore, Aston and Harris (2008) argue that *Rasa* is the “emotional juice” of the story and it is this essence that is the basis for the audiences’ empathic response “triggering of emotional resonances that suggest meaning” (p. 149). The emotional cognitive approach enables audience members to engage in various functions of performance.

Scholars have designed several ways to list the function of performance. Schechner (2003) lists seven *functions* of performance: to entertain; to make something that is beautiful; to mark or change identity; to make or foster community; to heal; to teach, persuade, or convince; to deal with the sacred and/or the demonic. There are many ways to understand performance and to use performance as a tool of educating and entertaining people. For instance, Aston and Harris (2008) argue that when emotion is evoked through performances “you go back to your history, through your memory. That creates a process of reflection; the reflection creates what we call your interior landscape, your internal geography” (p. 66). Furthermore, Denzin (2003) asserts, “Performed experiences are the sites where felt emotion, memory, desire and understanding come

¹⁴ Bharata (c. second century BCE-c. second century CE) was the putative author of *The Natyasastra*, the earliest and still very influential South Asian theoretical and practice treatise on all aspects of traditional Indian theatre, dance, playwriting, and to a lesser extent, music (Schechner, 2003, p. 45).

together” (p. 13). Consequently, I explored how *LTBH* served as a tool of educating visitors at plantation museums about the history of slavery through the function of entertaining visitors, healing the past, and teaching about the history of African Americans.

Performance and oral history.

Slave oral histories put forth an alternative way of viewing and knowing the Southern plantation. The power to get one’s story told is the power to shape understanding and the production of knowledge. (Carter, Butler, & Dwyer, 2011, p. 143)

Pollock (2008) asserts that a performance-centered account of oral histories understands oral history as a critical repetition among repetitions “liminal truth-truth storied ‘in the in-between of all regimes of truth’- as at least complementary to ‘the hierarchical realm of facts’ conventionally favored by the social sciences” (p. 124). In practice, this means that one can view an interview as a performance and becomes the measure of the micro-politics and power dynamics enacted throughout the interview process. Within the frame of a performative culture, oral history is a form of cultural currency (explain term) that flows among participants. As such, Pollock (2008) posits that oral history does not belong to any one teller and “enacts the intersubjection of interview partners, and their mutual becoming in the fraught negotiation of subjectivity, temporality, memory, imagination, and history” (p. 128).

For instance, Emily Mann produced projects (*Still Life* in 1981, *Greensboro-a Requiem* in 1996, and *Execution of Justice* in 1986) based on oral histories of court transcripts, news accounts, and conversations. In response to the accuracy of her dramatization of conversation with a Vietnam veteran, his wife, and his lover, Mann

states, “Perhaps one could argue about the accuracy of the people’s interpretations of events, but one cannot deny that these are actual people describing actual events, as they saw and understood them” (Pollock, 2008, p. 129). In her plays, the actors spoke directly to the audience so that the audience could hear what the actors heard and experienced what the actors were experiencing. In *LTBH*, actors are retelling the experiences of former enslaved peoples while simultaneously connecting and reaching out to the audience ... going beyond the *fourth wall*.¹⁵

Pollock (2008) posits that with circulation of traumatic stories and events comes the hope that traumatic stories will prompt “examination and self-examination, or critique and reflexivity, and lead to the kind of understanding that will allow us to ‘come out the other side’” (p. 129). In performing oral histories, Mann argues that she and other actors were able to “redouble” the interviewees’ memory and possibly recreate the conditions of historical trauma. Additionally, Pollock (2008) asserts the following, with regard to performing oral histories:

Performers of the performance of oral history double its force in their/our bodies, transferring narrative pain with narrative truth, including audience members in a circuitry of affect and power which may be built from ephemeral, fugitive memory but which will not disappear. (p. 133)

Lastly, Pollock (2008) argues for an engagement of the audience with performances using oral histories in order to collectively wonder how could this have happened? How does it happen? Could it happen again? How could things be otherwise? I investigated

¹⁵ The Fourth Wall is a theatrical term for the imaginary “wall” that exists between actors on stage and the audience.

how *LTBH* engaged audience members and explored if visitors' self reflected and questioned their memory of the institution of slavery.

2.2.2 Collective memory theory. Olick (1999) asserts that collective memory theory is a theory that includes how personal memory, group interactions, social institutions, and cultural practices shape how individuals remember an event. Furthermore, collective memory theorists such as Connerton (1989) argue that persons within society share a specific memory of the past and that the nature of their recollections is reliant upon the current social order. Kanstenier (2002) argues that collective memory is not history; however, sometimes made from similar material. Most historians who study collective memories take the work of the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1887-1945) as their primary theoretical reference point. Following Halbwachs theories, historians understand collective memories as collectively shared representations of the past (Kanstenier, 2002). Memory is ostensibly about the past, shaped to serve ideological interests in the present and to carry certain cultural beliefs into the future (Till, 2006). Lastly, the role of landscape in the social construction and contestation of public memory represents the vibrant interdisciplinary field of collective memory (Till, 2006).

Confino (1997) defines collective memory much more broadly as “the representation of the past and the making of it into shared cultural knowledge by successive generations in ‘vehicles of memory’ such as films, museums, commemorations, and others” (p. 1368). Collective memories serve as a storehouse of knowledge that goes far beyond the information that is directly stored in the brains of living men and women (Confino, 1997). Neal (1998) posits, “The importance of the data

from the past, however, is not self-evident. It must be interpreted, given credibility, and constructed along lines that give it applicability to present concerns” (p. 203). In this definition, every representation of the past is potentially a form of collective memory.

Sociologists have used collective memory to “examine elements of political and cultural memory in various sites (e.g. Holocaust museums) as well as within ‘speeches ... editorials ... school textbooks ... widely noticed historical art ... and commemorative monuments’” (Kammen, 1997, p. xii). Williams (1980) problematizes the discursive construction of collective memory as a “selective tradition” or alternatively a “significant past; that is, it focuses on the manner through which, from a whole possible area of past and present, certain meanings and practices are chosen for emphasis, [while] certain other meanings and practices are neglected and exclude” (p. 39). In Nora’s (1989) work, he notes, “We speak so much of memory because there is so little of it left” (p. 8). The fact that African Americans were not allowed to learn how to read or write left out large pieces of U.S. history with no evidence as to the memories, lived experiences, or emotions of former slaves. Consequently, the only accounts of former slaves were the narratives collected during The Slave Narrative Collection. In adopting collective memory, my goal was not to verify historical facts of the slave narratives performed by actors in *LTBH*, but rather to uncover the essence of the constructed meaning of the slave past from the actors’, docents’, site managers’, and directors’ perspective.

To understand a memory, there must be an investigation to how an individual remembers an event. Olick (1999) posits that “memory is in no way a repository of all past experiences. Over time, memories become generalized ‘imagos,’ and such imagos require a social context for their preservation” (p. 335). Essentially, history is the

remembered past “to which we no longer have an ‘organic’ relation - the past that is no longer an important part of our lives - while collective memory is the active past that forms our identities” (Olick, 2002, p. 335). Neal (1999) argues that people tend to ignore the level of significance given to certain memories, information, and events that are embarrassing to the nation or lack relevancy for the moral foundations of society.

Buzinde and Santos (2008) used collective memory theory in their study that explored dominant narratives presented by docents at Hampton Plantation in South Carolina. The authors argued that collective memory was based on the assumption that social agents “must presuppose a shared memory” of the past and that the nature of recollection is contingent upon the current social order (p. 470). Buzinde and Santos (2008) propose that everyday knowledge and the social world are “discursively defined and organized through official collective representations of the past” (p. 470).

Scholars have no way to understand fully what has happened in the past. As Neal (1999) states, “The human predicament is that we are caught up in a contemporary setting that is necessarily fragmented from both the past and the future” (p. 214). Furthermore, Neal posits that the future is unknown and that historical fragments are drawn upon and are embellished and taken out of context. For instance, African Americans and other marginalized groups have expressed concerns over their exclusion of historical narratives. Neal argues the following:

The modern consciousness of African Americans has called for a new look at the way in which history has been written in the past. Traditional narratives by professional historians focused disproportionately on the experiences of the dominant group and were designed to reinforce the interests of the ruling class.

For example, very little attention was given to the brutality of the institution of slavery from the vantage point of the victims. The rewriting of history is designed to give explicit recognition to the noteworthy accomplishments of African Americans. Historical corrections are necessary to set the record straight and to provide a basis for appreciating the Black heritage within the context of a pluralistic society. (1999, p. 214)

I selected these frameworks to understand both stakeholders' experiences, as well the challenges encountered while adopting more inclusive representational strategies at plantation museums. Essentially, I was interested in exploring their experiences with incorporating the experiences of African Americans at their respective plantation museums.

2.3 Situated Knowledge and Assumptions

Culturally, I identify as a Jewish woman, but in all honesty, I could not accurately explain the difference between Rosh Hashana and Yum Kippor. As a kid, I never went to temple and if I did it was for my closest friends' bar or bat mitzvahs. As a family, we did light the menorah for Chanukah but never recited any prayers. The lighting of the menorah symbolized our being *culturally Jewish* yet was never made into a religious event.

My dad suggested that I read *The Diary of Anne Frank* when I was eleven years old before my class trip to Washington D.C. I remember crying over the horrific reality of what happened to her after I finished her diary. I asked my father, "How could this happen to an innocent girl?...This could have been me!" The conversations I had with my father regarding the Holocaust and the life of Anne Frank formed my collective

memory of what it is like to be a Jewish person. My parents helped me to understand what *our people* had gone through and where we are today.

The history of the Civil War fascinated me thanks to family trips to Gettysburg where we viewed numerous battlefields. While on vacation, we visited a restaurant that had a small room downstairs dedicated to telling the history of the Underground Railroad. I remember looking into a glass viewing-hole in the wall where three Black mannequins sat on the floor in the room. There was a plaque next to the viewing hole explaining why the mannequins were sitting in the room and the history behind the Underground Railroad. I remember being frightened by the display and questioned how something like slavery could have existed. In that moment, staring into the faces of the Black mannequins, I recalled the images that my father showed me of photographs taken of concentration camp prisoners during the Holocaust. As a Jewish girl, I felt a connection with African American history and could relate on some level to the injustices endured.

My developing identity as a researcher built upon my personal experiences from family vacations to talks with my father. Thus, I am passionate about the examination of our own knowledge formation process that helps us to question the authority of all knowledge sources, including ourselves.

Some critics of tourism research have called for a greater level of self-awareness and self-reflexivity by tourism researchers in their research agendas (Goodson & Phillmore, 2004). Galani-Moutafi (2000) refers to reflexivity as “the conscious use of the self as a resource for making sense of others” which requires researchers to acknowledge and question their own culture and identity in order to provide some insight into their understanding of themselves in the context of their interactions with others (p. 220).

Consequently, I took responsibility and conducted research that required self-reflection and critique rather than oppressive methods of research.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Incorporating a wider range of perspectives based on narratives of descendants of enslaved Africans can help revision or rethink static, discretely bounded portrayals of slave life and open up the space to view African communities in plantation spaces more holistically and dynamically. (Buzinde, 2011)

In this qualitative study, I interviewed two key stakeholder groups (plantation museum site managers and the director of the *LTBH* production) in order to understand their experiences with including African American stories at plantation museums. I attempted to discern the viability of positioning plantations sites as educative spaces capable of fostering discussion around a deeper, more accurate representation of enslaved community members' lived experiences. In the following section, I address the methodological approaches that I used. Furthermore, I situate that approach within the existing literature and describe the study contexts and participants. I further detail my methods of data collection, data analysis procedures, the methods that I used to establish the data's trustworthiness, and the limitations of the study.

3.1 Methodological Approach

I chose a qualitative approach for this study for several compelling reasons. In general, scholars find qualitative research methods especially useful in discovering the meaning that people give to events they experience (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003;

(Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Qualitative research questions often begin with how or what, so that researchers can gain an in-depth understanding of what is going on relative to their topic (Patton, 2002; Seidman, 1998). For this dissertation study, I explored how stakeholders involved in the production of *LTBH* contributed to narrative reconstruction at plantation museums. Consequently, I explored their experiences with *LTBH* by engaging in qualitative inquiry in order to collect rich, in-depth data from the three stakeholder groups.

I used an interpretive paradigm to correspond with a phenomenological research approach (Henderson, 1991). In an interpretive paradigm, “the central endeavor is ... to understand the subjective world of human experience” (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 36). In an endeavor to achieve this understanding, I gathered data using qualitative research methods including in-depth, one-on-one, face-to face interviews within a semi-structured framework. This research approach contributed to my understanding of the stakeholders’ lived experiences with the performances of *LTBH*.

Interviews. Denzin (2001) posits that “the interview functions as a narrative device which allows persons who are so inclined to tell stories about themselves ... when performed, the interview text creates the world, giving the world its situated meaningfulness” (p. 25). Additionally, Denzin (2001) posits that the interview is an active text, “a site where meaning is created and performed” (p. 25). Furthermore, both the interviewer and the interviewed enact different performances – performances based on different narratives and interpretive practices (Denzin, 2001).

Gibson and Jordan (1998) used in-depth interviews as a data-gathering technique to understand the experiences of female solo-travelers. The authors’ study was similar to

mine in that little known research existed regarding the experiences of female solo travelers. The authors provided some descriptive data while undertaking survey research; however, their study did not provide in-depth knowledge of women's actual experiences while traveling solo (Gibson & Jordan, 2004). Gibson and Jordan posit that using interviews enabled them to adopt an inductive approach whereby they were not testing a theoretical model but instead identifying patterns in their data that lead to the development of a grounded theory based on women's articulations of their actual travel experiences. In a similar manner, I used interviews as a way to construct the stakeholders' involvement in implementing *LTBH*, in order to help tell a narrative inclusive of enslaved community members' lived experiences.

There are many ways that researchers can gain information using interviews. Seidman (1998) argues, "Interviewing provides access to the context of people's behavior and thereby provides ways for researchers to understand the meaning of behavior" (p. 128).¹⁶ Furthermore, Seidman (1998) argues the following:

A basic assumption in in-depth interviewing research is that the meaning people make of their experience affects the way they carry out that experience . . .

Interviewing allows us to put behavior in context and provides access to understanding their action. (p. 128)

Most importantly, in-depth interviews do not limit respondents to a fixed set of answers and thus have the potential to reveal multiple, and sometimes conflicting, attitudes about a given topic (Marvasti, 2004). Marvasti (2004) asserts that in-depth interviewing

¹⁶ Phenomenology is a distinct approach to thinking about and researching the social world and involves "focusing on ways in which people categorize the world by distinguishing certain phenomena, the meanings people place on events, and how social reality is reproduced through interactions" (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004, p. 12).

encourages mutual self-disclosure in the context of an emotionally charged atmosphere where “the interviewer and the interviewee freely express their views about an issue” (p. 22). During this study’s interviews, participants spoke freely and shared their experiences and perceptions with me so that I could gain knowledge of the phenomenon at hand.

Performance writing. Phelan (1998) argues that performance writing “is an inquiry into the possibilities of the intersections between speech and writing ... it evokes what it means” (as cited in Denzin, 2001, p. 36). Pollock (1998) posits that performative writing is not a matter of formal style, but rather “it is evocative, reflexive, multi-voiced, criss crosses genres, is always partial and incomplete” (p. 80). Denzin (2001) explains that scholars often encounter and experience performative writing in an active way:

[Performative writing] allow(s) persons to experience their own subjectivity in the moment of performance. Performance writing is poetic and dramatic. It transforms literal (and transcribed) speech into speech that is first-person, active, in motion ... In such texts, performance and performativity are intertwined, each defines the other. The performer’s performance creates a space the other enters. (p. 36)

Furthermore, Denzin (2001) asserts that performative writing is a way to understand how people enact and construct meaning in their daily lives. He argues, “[Performative writing] uses narrated words and stories to fashion performance texts that imagine new worlds” (p. 43). I used collective memory sites and performance studies sites as a framework to better understand how the site managers, director, and actors of *LTBH* used

narratives to incorporate historical accounts of African Americans into the narrative presented at plantation museums.

3.2 Situating the Approach

Since few scholars study my research topic, I looked toward literature (Tivers, 2010) that involved interviewing performers at heritage/historic sites. For instance, Tivers (2010) interviewed “heritage performers” at four different “living history” sites in the United Kingdom in order to understand their motivations for taking part in the historical reenactment, their attitudes toward the importance of authenticity, their relationship with visitors/the audience, and their own personal backgrounds.¹⁷ Additionally, Tivers explored “the nature of ‘performance’ and the ways in which performance strategies are employed within the heritage industry” (2010, p. 197). She concluded that living history drew the actors into an experience of heritage that had real meaning for them and that living history contributed both to a sense of identity and to an enhanced understanding of society, past and present. Since such presentations were popular with visitors, the audience seemed to receive similar benefits. Informed by Tivers’ (2010) study, I explored how performances employed at plantation sites might contribute an alternative understanding of the institution of slavery at plantation sites.

3.3 Site and Participant Selection

I used purposeful sampling to select the participants for this study (Patton, 2002). Maxwell (2005) denotes purposeful selection as “a selection strategy in which particular settings, persons or activities are selected deliberately in order to provide information that can’t be gotten as well from other choices” (p. 88). I specifically interviewed three site

¹⁷ Heritage performers are individuals, dressed in costumes indicative of the heritage site’s period, who perform as characters.

managers who were responsible for inviting the *LTBH* troupe to their respective plantation museums. I also interviewed Paul Banks, director of *LTBH* and transcribed a YouTube video of interviews with select actors who performed in *LTBH*.

Lastly, I changed the names of the participants, plantation museums, and plantation museums' stakeholders in order to protect their confidentiality and privacy. The name of the performance, *Let Them Be Heard*, however, is the original title of the play. I felt like the title of the play was significant and important to maintain since it refers to the unheard voices of enslaved community members.

3.3.1 Sites. The production of *LTBH* started in February 2013 at three North Carolina plantation sites: Elm Grove Plantation, Rose Plantation, and Hazel Place Plantation. I explain the history of each plantation site in the following section.

Elm Grove Plantation. Elm Grove Plantation, located in the eastern part of North Carolina, was home to the Josiah Jones¹⁸ family, and the family owned and operated the plantation from 1785 to 1865. Prior to the end of the Civil War, Elm Grove Plantation was one of the Upper South's largest plantations. While Pettigrew State Park owned the property from 1939 to 1968, the property became a historic state park in 1969. Currently, the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources owns the plantation. Thanks to archaeological and other historical records, the slave homes and buildings on the grounds have been constituted "one of the country's most important sites for the interpretation of the slaves' experience" (Hudson & Ballard, 1989, p. 36). The site contains reconstructions of two enslaved community members' cabins and a hospital. In addition, plantation stocks, which the plantation master used to punish slaves, still exist. One

¹⁸ I changed the name of the family that owned Elm Grove Plantation for anonymity.

former slave, Suckey Davis, had a two-story, four-room, multi-family dwelling comparable to dormitory-style living (see Figure 3.1 below).



Figure 3.1: Reconstructed slave cabins at Elm Grove Plantation.

Interpreters take tourists on a guided ninety-minute tour of the planters' home and enslaved community¹⁹. Whitney Johnson, site manager of Elm Grove, explained the typical tour of Elm Grove:

We talk about the general history of how the plantation started, the owners and how many enslaved people were here, where they were from and what their role was here. Additionally, we talk about the planter's role that owned the plantation, the overseer's role and what the agriculture business was here. Initially it was rice and then corn and wheat and lumber. We also talk about the acts of the defiance upon the enslaved community. There were burning of buildings, there were runaways, and we talk about the cultural traditions that were passed down.

(Whitney Johnson, personal communication, February 13, 2015)

¹⁹ The planter home refers to the home of the family who opened the plantation.

Visitors can tour the 1830s period plantation house, dairy, kitchen/laundry, kitchen rations building, smokehouse, salting house, and another reconstructed slave home, that of Judy and Lewis. The latter building was a one-room slave home, which a restoration specialist by the name of Russell Steele replicated in 1997. Judy and her husband Lewis lived in the original home until the 1840s with nine other people, including their son Francis Martin, his wife and their children, and one young lady not related to the family. Not all of the families lived in structures with other family members, and none of the enslaved people lived in the buildings inside the owner's compound. All of the enslaved people, even the house servants, lived in a community divided from the owner's compound by a fence. Twenty-five house servants included butlers, cooks, coachmen, and gardeners.

A hospital and church also stood on the plantation grounds, and interpreters, in their tours, often referred to the hospital and lake chapel that had once existed on the plantation. The Lake Episcopal Chapel on the plantation was specifically for the enslaved community. Whitney Johnson, site manager at Elm Grove, states, "The chapel was used as a method for controlling the enslaved community, to teach obedience. If you want to see your heavenly master then you have to obey your Earthly master. So religion was used as a method of control" (Whitney Johnson, personal communication, February 13, 2015). Mr. Jones built the hospital to ensure the health of all enslaved persons since he considered each to be a valuable asset. In addition to servicing the sick enslaved people, the hospital functioned for the purposes of difficult births, amputations, medical exams, and tooth extractions. However, the enslaved community members did not want

treatment by the physicians and saw the hospital as the last means necessary. The enslaved community instead relied on herbal remedies and teas, in addition to midwives.

Rose Plantation. Located in central North Carolina, this plantation site was home to one of the largest plantations of the pre-Civil War South. Starting in 1768, the plantation belonged to the Franklin-Cameron family, whose combined holdings by 1860 totaled approximately 900 slaves and almost 30,000 acres of land. During a period spanning almost sixty years, Richard Franklin's keen business sense made him one of the wealthiest men in North Carolina. In 1776, Richard Franklin married Mary Loomis, and they had two children: Rachel, born in 1778, and David, born in 1782. Upon his death in 1825, Richard Franklin left all his properties to his son David (see Figure 3.2 below).



Figure 3.2: The Rose Plantation's planters' home.

David never married and devoted his life to his family and the operation of the plantations. He lived at Rose Plantation his entire life. Upon his death, David left all of his land to his nephew Alex Cameron. In addition to tending to plantation operations, Alex Cameron was a North Carolina State Senator from 1856 to 1857. Given the remote location of Rose Plantation, he was able to maintain a safe distance from the impact of the Civil War. When the war ended, many newly freed families left Rose Plantation.

Others chose to stay as day laborers or sharecroppers. Sharecropping was the dominant form of labor throughout the South after the Civil War. Many descendants of the Franklin-Cameron enslaved community still remain in the surrounding area. In addition, the original slave cabins still stand at Rose Plantation (see Figures 3.3 and 3.4 below).



Figure 3.3: Rose Plantation’s enslaved cabin community.



Figure 3.4: Rose Plantation’s “Great Barn.”

The Franklin and Cameron families left behind an immense amount of personal and business papers that scholars have collected in two local repositories: The Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the North Carolina State Archives. From these surviving family letters and documents, site managers, interpreters, and historians are able to glean detailed accounts of activities on the plantation and to greatly enhance their understanding of life on the Rose Plantation lands in North Carolina, Mississippi, and Alabama (Teaching Through Our Historic Sites, 2015).

Hazel Place Plantation. Hazel Place Plantation is located in the eastern part of North Carolina. Governor David Smith (1770-1818) built the manor house on Hazel Place Plantation during the 18th century. His wife, Hannah Smith, “had eleven children. The son never has any children so the name dies. But through the female name there are still direct descendants” (Ken Frances, personal communication, January 31, 2015). Private investors restored the manor with original period furnishings and opened the plantation to the public in 1972. A slave dwelling exists in the basement of the mansion, and an exhibit room in the Heritage Center depicts the interaction of African Americans, Native Americans, and English settlers (see Figure 3.5 below).



Figure 3.5: Hazel Place’s planters’ home.

Table 3.1: List of Participants

Participant's Name	Educational Background	Home State	Interests
Whitney Johnson	College graduate	North Carolina	“History has always been one of my loves. My family called me old...said I have an old mind because I love old buildings, old stories, and old people”
Kate Mitchell	MS in Public History	North Carolina	The interpretation of African American history to diverse audiences
Ken Frances	MS in Public History and Museum Studies	New York	Costume design

3.3.2 Participants. I conducted three face-to-face, in-depth interviews and one phone interview with the following participants. See Table 3.1 for information about each participant.

Whitney Johnson. Whitney Johnson is a Black female in her mid-forties and the site manager of Elm Grove Plantation. She began as a part time interpreter in December 1997, was the assistant manager for ten years, and now currently serves as the site manager. She grew up in Pasquotank County, which is in the northern part of North Carolina, and found the position at Elm Grove after college. Johnson states, “I saw it posted on Employment Security Commission. History has always been one of my loves. My family called me old, said I have an old mind, because I love old buildings. Old stories and old people” (Whitney Johnson, personal communication, February 13, 2015). She has been working at Elm Grove Plantation for seventeen years.

Kate Mitchell. Kate Mitchell, a White female in her forties originally from North Carolina, is the site manager for Rose Plantation. She started working at Rose in 2012. She received her Master’s in Public History and her primary interest is in the interpretation of African American history to diverse audiences. She explains, “So that is why Rose Plantation was a perfect fit because of the African American history interpretation here” (Kate Mitchell, personal communication, February 16, 2015).

Ken Frances. Ken Frances is a White male in his forties originally from New York. He currently lives in North Carolina and identifies as a gay, Jewish man. Frances received his Master’s in Public History and Museum Studies from North Carolina State University. He has served as a volunteer coordinator for programming, education, and collections for the past three years at Hazel Place Plantation. He volunteers with

conducting all the programming and educational outreach and both maintains and interprets the collections. Additionally, he works as a university library technician at a public university in North Carolina. In his spare time, he is a costume designer and has helped with the costumes for *LTBH*.

Paul Banks. Paul Banks is a White male in his late thirties who is founding director of *LTBH*. He has been the managing director of Bare Theater for over nine years, in addition to serving as the media technician at a university. Paul states, “Arts advocacy is also very important to me. When people experience live performances, music, and art, they not only get entertainment and enrichment, but they make a significant economic impact in their community” (Paul Banks, personal communication, March 10, 2015). He received his Bachelor of Arts in Media Studies, Communications, and Broadcast and Film.

Bare theater actors. My hope was to interview the actors who participated in *LTBH*. However, I was unable to connect with the actors. I tried to get access from Paul Banks and messaged the actors via Facebook, LinkedIn, and Backstage Casting. I did not have any luck reaching the actors but did find a YouTube video containing interviews with select actors about their experiences with the performance. I transcribed that video and used it in my analysis for a collective story in Chapter Four.

3.4 Data Collection

Seidman (1991) states, “I interview because I am interested in other people’s stories.

Telling stories is essentially a meaning-making process. When people tell stories, they

Table 3.2: Data Sites and Sources

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	DATA SITES & SOURCES				
	Elm Grove Plantation	Rose Plantation	Hazel Place Plantation	NC University Courtyard	YouTube
1. What are some of the challenges that come about from trying to represent slave experiences?	Whitney Johnson, Site Manager Linda, Interpreter	Kate Mitchell, Site Manager John, Docent	Ken Frances, Site Manager	Paul Banks, Director of <i>LTBH</i>	
2. How do the director of <i>LTBH</i> , actors, and plantation site managers articulate the educational value of these performances?	Whitney Johnson, Site Manager	Kate Mitchell, Site Manager	Ken Frances, Site Manager	Paul Banks, Director of <i>LTBH</i>	Sarah, Actor in <i>LTBH</i> Vince, Actor in <i>LTBH</i>
3. How do the site managers, director, and actors articulate and make meaning of their experiences participating in the <i>LTBH</i> production?	Whitney Johnson, Site Manager	Kate Mitchell, Site Manager	Ken Frances, Site Manager	Paul Banks, Director of <i>LTBH</i>	

select details of their experience from their stream of consciousness” (p. 34). When conducting interviews, interviewers must establish relationships and rapport, as well as trust, since “The purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in and on someone else’s mind. We interview people to find out from them those things we can’t observe” (Patton, 1980, p. 196).

Individual interviews. For this study, I conducted three face-to-face, in-depth interviews and one phone interview (see Table 3.2 for data sites and sources). I traveled to Hazel Place Plantation (for a six hour face-to-face interview with Ken Frances), Elm Grove Plantation (for a ninety minute face-to-face interview with Whitney Johnson), and central North Carolina (for a two hour face-to-face interview with Paul Banks), in addition to a sixty-minute phone interview with Kate Mitchell from Rose Plantation. I audio-recorded the interviews and followed an in-depth, unstructured format.

I conducted the first set of interviews with the participants during the winter months of January to March 2015. The first interview was a face-to-face interview with Ken Frances on January 31, 2015. I spent the entire day (from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.) with Ken walking the grounds of Hazel Place Plantation, in addition to joining him for lunch and running errands in the eastern part of North Carolina. The second interview was face-to-face with Whitney Johnson on February 13, 2015 at Elm Grove Plantation. Her interview lasted two hours, and I conducted this on-site at the plantation. The third interview was a phone interview with Kate Mitchell on February 16, 2015 that lasted one hour. I conducted the last interview, with Paul Banks, on March 10, 2015 in the courtyard at a University. This face-to-face interview lasted two hours. Before each interview, I provided each participant with a permission letter (Appendix B) that insured

confidentiality before the interview. I informed all participants that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. I conducted a second round of follow-up interviews over the phone that lasted between 25 and 35 minutes.

After each conversation, I transcribed the interview from my audio recording and returned it to each participant via email to review for necessary edits or corrections. Through this process of member-checking, I enhanced the credibility of the data by assuring that I correctly understood and transcribed their voices (Heppner & Heppner, 2004)²⁰. Only one participant, Ken Frances, asked that I eliminate some of the interview since it contained “sensitive” information (Ken Frances, personal communication, March 13, 2015).

3.5 Data Analysis

The interpretive practice of making sense of one’s findings is both artistic and political. Multiple criteria for evaluating qualitative research now exist, and those we emphasize stress the situated, relational, and textual structures of the ethnographic experience. There is no single interpretive truth. As argued earlier, there are multiple interpretive communities, each having its own criteria for evaluating an interpretation. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 15)

Analysis of in-depth interviews. Following each in-depth interview and its subsequent transcription, I analyzed the data first using *initial coding*. During *initial coding*, the goal is to peruse the data for potential initial themes (Marvasti, 2004). *Initial coding* centers around answering basic questions like, “What is this about?” or “What

²⁰ Member checking is when the researcher sends the transcribed interviews back to the participant to ensure that the interview was transcribed correctly (Merriam, 2002).

does this text communicate and how?” (Marvasti, 2004, p. 86). Essentially, I wanted to *eyeball* the data and read over it numerous times in order to get a better sense of what each participant was saying. I did not want to jump right into creating codes or themes. I wanted to make sure that I was familiar with the data in order to begin coding.

After I used *initial coding*, I coded the data using *in vivo* and value coding. *In vivo* codes translate "behaviors or processes which will explain to the analyst how the basic problem of the actors is resolved or processed" and "help us to preserve participants' meanings of their views and actions in the coding itself" (Saldaña, 2001, 76). Saldaña (2009) posits that *in vivo* codes provide imagery, symbols, and metaphors for rich category, theme, and concept development and reflect the participant's language, not the researcher's. In addition to *in vivo* coding, I also used values coding. Saldaña (2009) explains, "Values coding is the application of codes onto qualitative data that reflect a participant's values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing his or her perspectives or worldview. Though each construct has a different meaning, values coding as a term, subsumes all three" (p. 89). With both coding practices, *in vivo* and values coding, I was able to generate themes and identify patterns within the data.

I used memo writing as a way to elaborate on my analytical categories and began the task of writing analytical memos. Marshall and Rossman (2011) suggest that researchers write their thoughts about how the data are coming together in themes or patterns as the data accumulates. Furthermore, Marshall and Rossman (2011) argue, "Writing notes, reflective memos, thoughts, and insights is invaluable for generating unusual insights that move the analysis from the mundane and obvious to the creative" (p. 213). To recap, I first coded the data using *initial coding* and then focused on specific

codes (in vivo and value coding) in order to generate themes and concepts. From those themes, I created a thematic story from the participants' data, including the interviews, observations, and transcription from an online video. These thematic stories are the foundation for the collective story in Chapter Four.

Schechner (2003) identifies eight *kinds* of performance that humans *perform* in everyday life, including performance in business, socializing, the arts, and technology. I used in-depth interviews *performed* by each participant (business), informal interviews/lunches with various interpreters (socializing), the *LTBH* performance (the arts), and the YouTube video of the actors (technology) as a means of *processing to knowing* for my analysis. From these interactions, I was able to craft narratives to illustrate how performing in everyday life helps individuals acquire knowledge (Denzin, 2001). Within these narratives, I recognized themes that helped me create a collective story, one informed by a collective memory framework, to explain the motivations and experiences of the actors in *LTBH*.

Crafting narratives using performance studies. Using performance (i.e. the in-depth interviews with each participant) as an “explanatory metaphor” (Denzin, 2001) involves reconstructing the notion of performance from “*theatrical entertainment to performance as a method of explaining, exemplifying, projecting, knowing, and sharing meaning...ways of using performance as a means, method, and mode of communication establishing an intercultural dialogue*” (Alexander, 2008, p. 80-81). Drawing from the interviews that I collected and from my own observations, I was able to use performance studies to craft narratives that explained *our parts* (site manager, director, actors, graduate student) in incorporating the slave past into the production of *LTBH*.

Alexander (2008) argues that performance methodology can be described as a collectivized ensemble of principles that individuals can use, especially those committed “to the communicative and pedagogical potential that knowledge - the process of attaining, sharing, and projecting knowing- can be accomplished through doing” (p. 81). Furthermore, Alexander (2008) asserts the following:

In each case, performers use the processes of research, analysis, and synthesis leading toward message rehearsal (intent, content, and form) to culminate in an enactment of thought and knowing. Hence, the process of coming to know and the act of projecting the known are intricately interwoven. (p. 81)

The voices from the actors performing in *LTBH* are absent from Chapter Five because I was unable to interview the performers. Consequently, the actors’ experiences with performing enslaved narratives are also missing. However, in one YouTube video, interviewers are able to explore the actors’ experiences and motivations with *LTBH*. Therefore, I was able to construct a collective story based on my interview with Paul Banks, the transcription from the YouTube video with the actors, and my own experiences and observations with *LTBH*. In Chapter Four, I explain what a collective story is and explain how I created a fictionalized narrative to represent the actors’ collective contribution in shared representations of the past.

Positionality. I acknowledge that I am a White, able-bodied, 31 year-old, female, PhD candidate raised within a middle-class family in Miami, Florida. A family that valued education raised me; both my parents are college graduates, and my father is a dentist. We were fortunate to go on family vacations and visit heritage sites, thanks to my father’s passion for all things historical. When I was eight years old, we visited some

Civil War sites in Pennsylvania, and my interest in the Civil War grew. The politics behind the war and the institution of slavery intrigued me. I wanted to know more about the *why* behind the division of the United States and how slavery played a role at that time. When we took a vacation to Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia, I noticed that tour guides barely mentioned slaves at that time. I remember asking my father, “If we are learning about how the White people lived, then why are we not learning about how their slaves lived?” I continued to ask questions revolving around why guides, teachers, and others tell certain stories and silence others. I did not understand why this silencing was happening and who was to blame. Was my school to blame? Was society to blame?

I understand that I am a White academic researching plantation museums. I did not want others to perceive me as an “ivory tower” type of researcher but as a woman who is passionate about this subject. I wanted others to see me as a woman who is actively engaged in understanding the experiences and perceptions of the performers and site managers. I never met Kate, Ken, Whitney, Paul, or the actors prior to conducting this study and consequently had not built any trust or rapport with them. I am an outsider. I do not want to come off as a sterile researcher but rather someone who truly wants to hear their stories and experiences.

I do not identify as an actor, but I am a part of an improvisational team that puts on performances monthly. I do not have a theater background, nor have any experience with managing heritage sites. I do however have a background within tourism and a Master’s degree in sustainable tourism that helps me understand the heritage elements of the sites that I explored.

3.6 Trustworthiness

Because qualitative research entails that the researcher take an active role in the collection and interpretation of others' meaning making, qualitative data must be good and trustworthy in order to be credible (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Stake (1995) cautions qualitative researchers against narrow thinking and instead suggests that researchers learn to understand their research as their participants do, rather than impose their own assumptions. Decrop (2004) argues that trustworthiness refers to "scientific inquiry that is able to demonstrate truth, provide the basis for applying it, and allow for external judgments to be made about the consistency of its procedures and the neutrality of its findings or decisions" (p. 157). Addressing the trustworthiness issue is important in helping to make qualitative research rigorous and more acceptable to quantitative and positivist researchers within academia, specifically the field of tourism.

Positivist researchers tend to criticize qualitative research due to the supposed lack of objectivity and generalizability associated with collecting and analyzing qualitative data (Decrop, 2004). This issue is in a realm beyond the quantitative/qualitative debate, as "all research must respond to canons that stand as criteria against which the trustworthiness of the project can be evaluated" (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 143). Personally, I wanted to ensure trustworthiness as a means of demonstrating the instrumentality of qualitative research as a form of social research and also to challenge the way that quantitative researchers discredit qualitative researchers as *touchy feely*.

Scholars have made several attempts to rethink validity, generalizability, and reliability within different qualitative research paradigms. To decrease threats to

credibility, Lincoln and Guba (1985) developed criteria for qualitative inquiry that parallel the quantitative terminology.

Credibility within qualitative research, owing to the subjective nature of the data collected, is questionable, as an interactive, cooperative and intimate relationship exists between researchers and their participants, instead of a rigid separation (Decrop, 2004). According to Henderson (1991), credibility in qualitative studies is mostly a question of personal and interpersonal skills. With my study, I argued that there should be no separation between the *researcher* and *participant*, thus allowing for a space for understanding and compassion.

Dependability is a third criterion involved in appraising the trustworthiness of qualitative inquiry. In interpretive research, reality is not single and absolute but multiple and contextual. Therefore, the knowledge that researchers generate is not immutable, since the nature of the social world is ever-changing (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). To increase the trustworthiness of the study's findings, I employed member checks and provided an audit trail.

I performed *member checks* (Merriam, 2002) by sending participants a copy of their interview transcript and asking them to verify the accuracy of the contents. In addition to member checks, Merriam (2002) recommends that credible and trustworthy researchers follow these additional guidelines: (1) *Reflexivity*: Engaging critical self-reflection on the part of the researchers, regarding assumptions, biases, and their relationship to the study, as these factors may affect investigation; (2) *Engagement*: Allowing for adequate time to collect data, such that it becomes saturated; (3) *Maximum variation*: Purposefully seeking variation or diversity in sample selection to allow

consumers of the researcher to apply the findings in a greater range; (4) *Rich description*: Providing enough rich, thick description to contextualize the study, such that readers will be able to determine the extent to which their situation matches the research context (p. 31). Merriam (2002) further describes his strategy of ensuring rich description as “providing enough description to contextualize the study such that readers will be able to determine the extent to which their situation matches the research context” (p. 31). Thus, the prominence of Merriam’s (2002) and Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) strategies in this study’s methodology suggests the goodness/ethical practices and trustworthiness of this research.

3.7 Limitations/Considerations

I acknowledge that I am not a trained actor. I am White. I identify as an academic, and thus, plantation museum site managers and those involved in producing *LTBH* may have perceived me as someone who is only interested and vested in the project to advance my career. However, I did not convey this to the participants. I wanted them to know that I was not *using* them for pure *research* but that I am instead passionate about hearing their experiences and stories.

I was unable to interview the actors of *LTBH*, and I feel like this was the main limitation of the study. I was unable to connect with the actors, and consequently, their voices were missing within this study. I did everything in my capacity to reach out to them: corresponding with Paul Banks and emailing actors directly on several social media sites, including LinkedIn, Backstage Actors, and Facebook. I did not hear a response back from the actors or Paul and resorted to transcribing an interview with the actors from a YouTube video that I incorporated in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER 4

A COLLECTIVE STORY

4.1 Constructing a Collective Story

Given I was unable to interview the actors; their voices are not included in Chapter Five. Consequently, I wrote this chapter as a fictionalized collective story based on the actors' reflections on their experiences with, motivations for, and feelings about the production of *LTBH* documented in a YouTube video. This fictionalized collective story focuses on the creation of *LTBH*, the collaboration between Paul Banks and the actors in the development of the production, and the actors' major contribution to the production as Black actors telling enslaved community members' stories.

In 2006, Freeman, Mathison, and Wilcox explored how assessment-driven accountability altered the way schools delivered their services to children and their relations with parents. The authors conducted ten focus groups with parents to examine how state testing affected their children's educational experience. They analyzed the focus group transcripts by taking note of the logical sequences, natural turns, and thematic connections. The authors did not include all of the themes they discussed or all of the participants involved. Instead, Freeman et al. (2006) state:

It is not possible to include all or even the majority of parental voices involved, we had to make some decisions about who would speak and how their voices would get incorporated into an integrated dialogue when the original

conversations occurred in separate spaces and with only a selection of other parents. (p. 472)

The scholars analyzed the focus group transcripts and selected passages that focused on testing and accountability in order to retain the conversational nature of the focus group to create a collective story. Additionally, Freeman et al. (2006) repositioned and integrated parts of conversations with other parents that may or may not have occurred together. Their aim was to maintain as much authenticity of the concerns raised by the groups of parents. Lastly, the authors reduced the amount of speakers and “blended” various voices from different focus groups into one character (p. 472). This provided a way to represent numerous points and concerns in one shared voice. For this study, I also created a collective story that represented the actors and director’s voices from a transcribed online video, interview with the director, field notes, and personal experiences from the performance, *LTBH*.

Interviews regarding select actors’ from *LTBH* experiences of and motivations for the performance were included in a YouTube video that I found online. The video consisted of five actors interviewed separately where the footage of the actors bounced back and forth from actor to actor. For instance, one actor spoke about their experience with *LTBH* followed by the next scene with another actor talking about why they felt *LTBH* was an important performance. There was not a consistent flow from one actor’s interview to the next actor’s interview. As a result, I transcribed the entire YouTube video, combined the actor’s statements together, and created three fictional characters; David, John, and Alicia. I used Freeman et al.’s (2006) technique of “blending” various voices to create three fictional characters (p. 472). The authors argue, “This provided a

way to represent a variety of points of view while retaining a ‘voice’ for their shared concerns and response” (Freeman et al., 2006, p. 472). Since I was unable to interview the actors, I included all of the dialogue from the actors in the video and made sure that all the comments from the actors ended up in the story.

In addition to the YouTube video, I also included the interview with the director of *LTBH*, Paul Banks. For the collective story, I pulled quotes where Paul talked specifically about the logistics of creating *LTBH* including the songs chosen, where the performances took place, and how he directed the actors’ interactions with audience members. The interview with Paul helped me to understand the collaborative effort between him and the actors in creating *LTBH*. Lastly, I referred back to my field notes from when I was an audience member at Elm Grove Plantation this past summer. I used personal experiences, observations, and interactions with the actors and audience members to help frame the story.

I included two additional elements in the collective story based on my experience observing *LTBH*: a song called “No More My Lord” and the slave narrative of Thomas Hall. As the audience walked to the first slave narrative performance at Elm Grove Plantation, an actress sang the song “No More My Lord.” During our interview, Paul explained to me the reason for choosing that particular song and I included it within the collective story to elucidate the importance of how music contributed towards the emotional performance of *LTBH*. I chose to include Thomas Hall’s narrative in the collective story because it was not only the most powerful performance that I experienced, but also the performance that two of the site managers, two docents, and numerous audience members mentioned being the most impactful piece. For example,

during the performance, the actor who played Thomas Hall intentionally interacted with the audience by pointing directly to both White and Black audience members.

Ken Frances, site manger at Hope Plantation, consequently referred to the narrative as the “fuck you” performance. He explained that this performance was the only performance where the actor purposefully got into the faces of the White audience members physically pointing and wagging his finger at them. The actor portraying Thomas Hall stated that some White men were good but overall he was unable to trust a White man. I witnessed this particular performance and noticed how angry and emotional the actor became as he performed Thomas Hall’s narrative. The performance was powerful and left me feeling overly emotional over the anger and resentment Thomas Hall had with the White man. Consequently, I included both the song and narrative as a means of including two elements of *LTBH* that were powerful and moving and contributed towards the overall emotional impact of the performance.

4.2 Dress Rehearsal

The setting is Benton’s Community Theater (BCT) on Market Avenue in the Triangle Area of North Carolina. BCT is a space dedicated to the community where actors, directors, costume designers, and theater students can access rooms to rehearse and practice. Paul Banks, director of Bare Theater, reserved a room for the theater group’s first dress rehearsal of *LTBH* on a late Saturday afternoon. A conversation develops between the actors (John, David, and Alicia) and Paul regarding the direction of the production. John Mills, a black male in his 40s, has been an actor for over twenty years and member of Bare Theater for the past ten years. David Williams, a retired UPS driver in his 60s, has 40 years of acting experience and fifteen years as a member of Bare

Theater. Alicia Thompson, a 28-year-old woman, is currently perusing her master's degree in music and theater and has been a member of Bare Theater for the past five years. Paul starts the conversation at 1:00pm in the afternoon:

“First off, thank you all for your willingness to participate in *LTBH*. I have looked forward to finally having the space where we all can discuss how this production will unfold.” Paul takes out his notebook and takes his seat in the circle formed with the actors. “I guess before we dive into the details of the direction with *LTBH*, I would like to tell you how this production started. As you all know, I'm from the area, went to school here, and grew up in this town. I never, however, was taught or even told about Rose Plantation. Yes, I was taught about slavery but never knew that Rose Plantation was here ... in my own backyard. It was just a few years ago, 2011 I think, when I found out about Rose. My dad started volunteering at Rose and took me on a tour of the site. The most amazing thing to me at Rose are the slave quarters. You can see in the chimney actual finger imprints and even a small footprint of a child that stepped on the clay brick as it was drying in the sun before they built the chimney. So you can actually see history right there in front of your face. I wanted to tell the story not of the slave owners that lived at Rose but focus on the majority of the population ... the overwhelming majority which of the 900 African American slaves on the at the time of the Civil War. So I started talking with my dad discussing why I never knew about Rose ... my frustration that I was never taught about Rose in school. So he suggested I do something about it and perhaps a performance of some kind could help get Rose Plantation and the history of

enslaved community members' out to the public. He introduced me to the narratives of former enslaved peoples' documented in the WPA's *Slave Narrative Project*. Are ya'll familiar with these narratives collected during the 1930s right after the Depression?"

Paul looks around the room observing John, David, and Alicia all nodding their heads. Paul takes a moment and drinks some of his water trying to gather his thoughts. He is somewhat embarrassed by his lack of knowledge of the *Slave Narrative Project* and how White he feels amongst the Black actors in the room. "Ok. So, I guess I'm the only one unfamiliar with this project" he states and laughs nervously in hopes that his laughter will break some of the awkwardness in the room.

Paul: "So I read through the 176 narratives in the collection and narrowed down the stories to be performed to the narratives collected in North Carolina. I was looking for a few different criteria; does this tell a compelling story that has an impact, does it give us some really good factual details as to what was life was like for those folks and does it tell a coherent story? Because a lot of the testimony in there is ... well it feels incomplete. The writer or editors maybe left things out. We don't know ... all history is imperfect, impartial. That document is imperfect at best. However, there are still plenty of stories that I think do offer that compelling story. So that is what I was kind of looking for. I asked you all to pick out two to three of the narratives that you found meaningful

or that you connected with in some way. I did not want it to be a matter of just me handing out parts to you. I wanted you all to connect to the *character* and make that choice, not me. I wanted you to have the chance to sort of say what you thought was important to them. What are your feelings so far?"

Reaching for his cup of coffee, John answers Paul's questions first. "These are the actual voices, actual slaves who said these words. So it is not something out of a writer's creative mind. It actually was said, it was recorded ... documented." He reaches for his copy of the printed narrative told by Thomas Williams and places it on his lap. Taking a long, deep inhale then exhale, he solemnly looks up at the group. "They could have been scientists and doctors ... lawyers. Instead we are reenacting their memories of what it was like to be out in the fields ... as sharecroppers. These are the voices that that we are portraying ... I want to do them justice. This is our history ... "

Alicia interjects before John can finish his sentence. "It is not only Black history John ... it is everyone's history. And these narratives have to be told. I want to do these monologues justice. I want to make Mattie Curtis proud that her story was told and that I have something to do with that."

Feeling as though his message may have been misconstrued, John uncrosses his legs and places his coffee mug on the floor. "I'm not saying that we, as Black people, are the only folks responsible for talking about the lived experiences of

former slaves. However, I do believe that as Black actors we are the only folks who have permission to reenact the memories of *our* ancestors. Yes, this is American history ... but it is our responsibility to give life to these stories and make an emotional connection with the audience. Through Bare Theater, we are able to take a snapshot of life back then and present it to an audience. A White actor can't embody our ancestors ... only we can." Picking up his coffee mug, John turns to look at Paul. "How do you feel about being a White director editing some of these narratives and directing us as Black actors?"

"It is intimidating for me as a white director to go in ... edit these stories ... and also to try and direct an African American cast. As I have seen ... I knew going into this ... yeah I'm going to make some mistakes and reveal some ignorance on my part about some things. But I felt like ... this is important enough and felt like your going to feel like it is important enough. And if that is our common ground then we should be able to figure anything else that comes along with that out. Yea it is a bit intimidating. And that is why I want your help. I don't want to be the leader in this production, even though I'm the *director* technically. It is your voices, your direction, your feelings, your input as Black people ... as far as editing goes with the narratives ... I'm only cutting out details that don't contribute to the overall story."

Having worked with Paul before, David, Alicia, and John know that his intentions are not to play the *good White*. "We understand," David says and

continues, “It says it all in the title man, it says it all in the theater company ... Bare Theater ... it is raw ... *LTBH* is actual voices.”²¹

Paul takes out his legal pad with his notes and comments about his ground rules for the production. “I wanted first to share with you all my ground rules with this production. I’m not going to profit at all from these performances. All the money made will go towards ya’ll, the cost of the show ... you know costumes and transportation costs.” Paul pauses and takes a sip of water then continues reviewing his notes. “I wanted to close the performance with a song. Alicia, I would love your assistance here since your voice is magical and your thesis includes slave songs. I’m looking for a song that is not traditionally heard with slave performances ... NOT ‘Amazing Grace’ ok? Something that is complex since this production can be uneasy to unpack. What do you think?”

Paul looks to Alicia and notices that she is blushing. She takes a moment to think of a song. “‘No More My Lord’,” Alicia says out loud. “It was a slave work song. Not sure if ya’ll know this, but during the 1930s, Alan Lomax, collected folk music and went to Parchman Farm Prison. This prison was an infamous prison plantation and convicts were forced to work, and the labor conditions

²¹ Thompson (2003) argues that “the desire to be and to be known as a good White person stems from the recognition that our whiteness is problematic, a recognition that we try to escape by being demonstrably different from other, racist Whites” (Thompson, 2003, p. 9). Paul explained to me that his ground rule with *LTBH* was that he was not to profit at all from the production. I did not see this ground rule as performing “the good White” but instead consciously being aware that he is a White man directing Black actors in a dramatic slave reading performance.

inside the prison were largely indistinguishable from slavery. In order to keep pace, the inmates would sing. And their songs were good ... really emotional. So Lomax recorded them and placed these songs into his collection of American Folk Songs of the South. The song that stood out for me in his collection of folk music was ‘No More My Lord.’” Alicia takes a long breath and starts to sing the lyrics of the chorus:

No more, my Lord,
No more, my Lord, Lord,
I'll never turn back no more.
I found in Him a resting place, And He have made me glad.
Jesus, the Man I am looking for, Can you tell me where He's gone?
Go down, go down, among flower yard,
And perhaps you may find Him there.²²

David looks to Alicia and nods his head with approval of her choice. She continues “This song was sung by prisoners ... but also sung by slaves. They too ... they too were prisoners. Seventy years later prisoners were still singing these songs in prison ... but with some different words here and there. The song ties the periods of the 1930s back with the period of slavery. ‘No More My Lord’ at the end is just a great way to end *LTBH* by saying yea ... yes slaves were singing it then hoping that it would all end and seventy years later ... they were still singing it hoping that it would end.”

²² “No More My Lord”. (1947). On *Alan Lomax Collection*. Retrieved , March 31, 2015, from http://www.traditionalmusic.co.uk/folk-song-lyrics/No_More_My_Lord.htm.

Alicia's knowledge of "No More My Lord" exemplifies to Paul why it is so important and crucial to have her contributing to the direction of *LTBH*. Without Alicia's input, Paul would have never known to include this particular song and he is grateful for her expertise.

Paul writes in his director's notebook that the performance will end with "No More My Lord." He looks up from his notebook and discusses his reasoning behind the edits he made with the narratives. "As for the edits made to the narratives ... I don't want to change the meaning behind any of these narratives. So if they said that slavery and freedom were two snakes full of poison ... that meaning is going to stay there. Also, there is the N word in some of these narratives. I don't feel like I have the right as a White man to make this edit ... we do caution the audience before about sensitive language with *LTBH* ... But I want to leave this decision up to you, Alicia, John, and David ... "

Paul looks towards the actors for their input. "Please stop me if this doesn't have the ring of truth to it. I don't want you to say something and feel like you have to force it out."

David speaks first. "Yes! This is what is in there and we should say it. We are OK with that." David looks to John then to Alicia and together they nod their

heads in agreement. John looks Paul straight in the face and says, “ It is real life being depicted and it is a beautiful thing to be apart of that.”

Paul fidgets a bit with his watch and looks back at his notes. “I’m happy you all are in agreement, because I, too, feel like it is more impactful with the *raw* language left in the narratives. I feel like White audiences do not hear it a lot and maybe by your performances, using former enslaved peoples’ exact language, will take them back to a time where it was a common thing to say ... and perhaps question why now, if they hear it, why it is such a charged word ... and ... ”

David observes Paul’s nervousness with his constant fidgeting of his watch. He places his hand on Paul’s shoulder and says, “Listen...I hope audience members will take away some insights and learn a few things about what it was like to be a slave. And what it was like to live under those conditions but yet survive those conditions. And look forward to something better. Hopefully, people will leave with more questions then they came with. I think that is a really compelling part of telling a real story.” Together they are working on telling a *real* story ...

Together they will help create *LTBH*.

Paul looks to Alicia telling her that he did not make any edits with Marrtie Curtis’ narrative that she selected to perform. He then looks to John and tells him the same thing about John’s selection with Thomas Hall. “I didn’t edit Thomas Hall at all because *everything* he says ... needs to be there. And if I tried to edit that it

would compromise what he is saying and it would change it. How about we start with John. Can we hear Thomas Hall's story?"

John stands up from his chair, adjusts his shirt, and pulls out the narrative. He clears his throat, cracks his neck, and begins to embody the soul of Thomas Hall:

Conditions and rules were bad and the punishments were severe and barbarous. Some masters acted like savages. In some instances slaves were burned at the stake. Families were torn apart by selling. Mothers were sold from their children. Children were sold from their mothers, and the father was not considered in anyway as a family part. These conditions were here before the Civil War and the conditions in a changed sense have been here ever since. The whites have always held the slaves in part slavery and are still practicing the same things on them in a different manner. Whites lynch, burn, and persecute the Negro race in America yet; and there is little they are doing to help them in anyway. Lincoln got the praise for freeing us, but did he do it? He gave us freedom without giving us any chance to live to ourselves and we still had to depend on the southern white man for work, food and clothing, and he held us through our necessity and want in a state of servitude but little better than slavery. Lincoln done [did] little for the Negro race and from[a] living standpoint nothing. White folks are going to do nothing for Negroes except keep them down...When I think of slavery it makes me mad. I do not believe in giving you my story because with all the promises that have been made the Negro is still in a bad way in the United States, no matter

in what part he lives it's all the same. Now you may be all right; there are a few White men who are but the pressure is such from your White friends that you will be compelled to talk against us and give us the cold shoulder when you are around them, even if your heart is right toward us. You are going around to get a story of slavery conditions and the persecutions of Negroes before the Civil War and the economic conditions concerning them since the war. You should have known before this late date all about that. Are you going to help us? No! You are only helping yourself. You say that my story may be put into a book that you are from the Federal Writer's Project. Well, the Negro will not get anything out of it, no matter where you are from.²³

The room is silent. You can feel the raw emotion of anger and hatred John performed through Thomas' words. John looks to Paul and shares why he chose the narrative to perform. "This narrative to me really gives a voice to the rage and the anger and the sense of being wronged in a way that the other ones in that collection just don't do. You are hearing about all the injustices and it builds up to that and then Thomas Hall is able to just give voice to that and say White people ... why don't you know more about this? I don't trust Lincoln. I don't even like Harriet Beecher Stowe. Thomas really rails at them."

²³ From the Enslaved Narrative Collection. Thomas Hall, age 81, place of interview: Raleigh, North Carolina, interviewer: T. Pat Matthews, interview date: September 10, 1937

Paul, looks down at the scribbles on his notepad and looks back at John. He springs up from his chair and moves towards John. “As ya’ll know, one thing that Bare Theater really likes to do and my brand of theater, I really like is when we break the fourth wall and just directly speak to the audience. I want you to pick one White person out of the audience each time and speak directly to him or her when you say, “Now you may be all right; there are a few White men who are but the pressure is such from your White friends that you will be compelled to talk against us and give us the cold shoulder when you are around them, even if your heart is right toward us.” Don’t worry about getting in their face. Don’t touch them but don’t worry about ... you can find the respectful distance from them ... but get pretty up in their face. Make that one person, the person that is the *you* in that situation. Make them feel your anger ... Your frustration ... let Thomas Hall’s voice be heard. Also, point to some Black audience members and allow your anger and frustration to flow through them. Especially when you reflect on Thomas Halls’ memories of being separated from his family ... When Thomas Hall says, “Families were torn apart by selling. Mothers were sold from their children” ... point to a Black mother in the audience and really make her feel the pain of never seeing her children again. “How do you feel about that?”

John smiles at Paul, looks to Alicia and David then laughs. “How do I feel? I feel like I am speaking the words of people who were really not heard. That didn’t have voices ... that didn't have voices then and unless we do something about it now ... those peoples and those thoughts will just go away into history. So yea

... I feel pretty damn good about getting into a White person's face ... after all ...
it is our history ... Our collective memory of enslavement to give new life to.”

4.3 Curtain Call: Analyzing the Collective Story

David, John, and Alicia's input and opinions were crucial in the direction of *LTBH*. For instance, Alicia decided to include “No More My Lord” as the song to close the production. Her knowledge and expertise contributed towards a different conceptualization of enslavements. Most importantly, it was the actors' willingness and passion in telling their collective memory of enslavement that made the performance truly come to life.

As mentioned previously, there were nine *Rasas* that were key emotional states universally felt across all cultures (Shaughnessy, 2012). The collaboration between the actors and Paul exemplified all nine emotions ranging in love, heroism, the comic, disgust, fear, anger, pathos, wonder, and peace. I included John's selection of performing Thomas Hall's narrative as it illustrates the *Rasas* of disgust, fear, anger, and wonder. Schechner (2003) argues that the Rasic performer “opens a liminal space to allow further play - improvisation, variation, and enjoyment” (p. 64). John was empowered to become the Rasic performer and gave an unforgettable performance.

Paul noted that he observed Black audience members identifying with the performance “their heads nodding and vocalizing yes and giving him energy and saying thank you.” John's raw, emotional performance and his willingness to challenge White audience members forced some participants to challenge their own collective memory of enslavement. Using collective memory as a framework, I wanted to depict a story that illustrated why the actors chose to be part of this production. It was the actors'

contribution, their performances, their voices that helped audience members identify with the memories and experiences of former enslaved community members. Over (2001) argues, “literature does not transform society single-handed ... the artistic form makes its spectator perceive ... the invisible people of their world-at least a beginning of social justice” (p.12). The actor’s embodiment of enslaved narratives performed through *LTBH* was an attempt made by the management in order to adopt a more inclusive representational strategy of the slave past at plantation museums.

CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The relevance of current cultural politics to societal understanding of heritage and public memory is important. In the context of plantation heritage sites the present racial climate undoubtedly informs contemporary constructions of the plantation past, particularly as it applies to the current discourse on post-racial America.

(Buzinde & Osagie, 2011, p. 58)

In this chapter, I draw upon significant portions of the data to respond to the study's guiding research questions:

1. What challenges do plantation museum managers and interpreters encounter when incorporating enslaved African Americans' experiences into their plantations' narrative?
2. How do the actors and director of *Let Them Be Heard (LTBH)*, as well as plantation museum managers, articulate *LTBH*'s educational value?
3. How do the actors, director, and managers articulate, and make meaning of, their experiences participating in the *LTBH* production?

5.1 Research Question 1: What challenges do plantation museum managers and interpreters encounter when incorporating enslaved African Americans' experiences into their plantations' narrative?

The site managers and interpreters/docents elucidated the daily struggles of trying

to represent slave experiences at the Elm Grove, Rose, and Hazel Place Plantations. I identified three themes that emerged from my interactions with the site managers and interpreters/docents at each plantation site: 1) Visitors' pre-conceived notions of slavery; 2) white and folks of color? Visitors' interest in White planters' lifestyles; and 3) Interpreters/Docents' interpretations of enslaved community members' lived experiences. I explain each theme in the next section.

5.1.1 Visitors' pre-conceived notions of slavery. One major theme I identified dealt with some visitors' pre-conceived notions of slavery. Kate Mitchell, site manager at Rose Plantation, expressed that some visitors carry preconceived notions of slavery. She noted, "one of our *main problems* that we are facing at Rose Plantation is due to visitors' pre-conceived notions of slavery." Affirming the findings of scholars such as Butler, Carter, and Dwyer (2008), Kate argued that was is a difficult task for the docents and interpreters at Rose plantation to gage visitors' preconceptions of plantation life and their knowledge of U.S. history. She explained, "lots of people come in and think they know exactly what went on during the period of slavery ... they either know nothing about slavery or they know everything about slavery. You have to give them the information without swaying their opinions."

I spoke with an interpreter named Linda, a young Black female and recent college graduate of history (with a minor in anthropology) in Elm Grove Plantation's gift shop who shared Kate's assessment. Linda and I talked informally, interrupted here and there by visitors walking in to get information or to simply *warm up* from the bitterly cold February morning. During our conversation, she expressed her frustration with some of the visitors' limited knowledge regarding plantation life. Linda stated:

People come with these preconceived notions that you have to try to deal with in an hour and thirty minutes. There is no way we can possibly teach everybody what they need to know. About history or slavery ... that is something that needs to be done way before they come here.

Linda's statement parallels the issues surrounding the politics of teaching history of slavery within U.S. public schools and at plantation museums. She purports that students and visitors that come to Elm Grove Plantation are receiving an incomplete narrative of the institution of slavery from schools, family members, and society. Furthermore, it is a failure indicative of U.S. public school standards in teaching about the institution of slavery coupled with the sensitivity around the issue of slavery. Linda further addressed how popular culture, family, and schools influenced visitors' perceptions of life at Elm Grove:

A lot of people already have these preconceived notions that they received either from their parents, family TV, a lot of people receive things from TV. 'I thought this was going to be like *12 Years a Slave*' ... no not everyone had a life like he did and not everybody was able to get his freedom or had his freedom taken away and get his freedom again. That is a rare story and people don't realize that. So they come with all of these preconceived notions from school and parents from basically the culture that we are in. It is very hard for us ... So I think that sometimes we may get kind of almost a bum deal but sometimes we do.

Film/literature trope. Linda's commentary illustrated how influential popular culture is on visitors' preconceptions of plantation life. Popular culture has influenced

visitors' expectations of plantation museums thanks to films like *Gone With the Wind* and *12 Years a Slave*. John, a seventy-four year old White male docent, talked about the *Gone With the Wind* trope on my tour of Rose Plantation. Two White men in their forties joined me on the tour, both of whom were interested in the planter's lifestyle in addition to enslaved peoples' lived experiences. Responding to one of the men's queries as to whether or not Rose Plantation was doing anything *special* for the 150th celebration of The Civil War, John was quick to explain his distaste for romanticized plantation tropes. He stated:

What we try to do here is get away from the Civil War. I cannot stand these moonlight magnolia people ... that is what I call them ... These 'oh the great Robert E. Lee ... what a wonderful time it was back at the big plantation house!' I call it the *Gone with the Wind* mentality ...

Adams (1999) posits:

Gone with the Wind is thus an important locus of the generation of otherness as a White and a privileged positioning; the planter is exalted in his or her oppression. Southern Whites here become simultaneously marginalized and representative of American identity. The work of the plantation becomes specifically White work, as Scarlett and her family, rather than their slaves, are depicted picking cotton and going hungry. At the same time, the values of the Old South are made synonymous with a spirit of resistance to domination that has characterized the nation's self-image since 1776 (p. 167).

Furthermore, Adams (2007) argues:

The plantation became popular as a film set in the early to mid twentieth century

and, later, as a tourist destination. As each of these sites, strange things happen to property—to physical property, to the memory of property, and to the people. (p. 10-11)

I heard John’s statement as an affirmation of Adam’s claims. He further stated that Rose Plantation docents and managers were attempting to change visitors’ experiences of the site:

We are trying to get away from the Civil War here ...we want you to have some thoughts about what slavery was and how these people lived. I have studied African American history and slavery most of my adult life ... I'm not going to give you a big old lecture on slavery. I’m going to give you a short two minute blurb. I think everyone needs to think about this some. There was no such thing as a kindly White slave owner. Slavery was an evil system. Now let me back up a minute ... I’m not saying that every slave owner was necessarily evil. It was the whole system that was evil.

As I reflect on John’s statement, I question why he only gave visitors a short two-minute blurb on slavery. Why does John not give a two-hour lecture on the institution that built plantation life? The tour that John gave of the planter home was considerably longer than the slave cabins. If John was so adamant on getting away from the “moonlight magnolia people” then why not include a longer, more extensive portion of the tour that dives deeper into the lived experiences of the enslaved community?

The inherent tension between White supremacist practices and their devastating consequences allowed for the privilege of White supremacy in the U.S. evident with expressions like, “what a wonderful time it was a the big plantation house!” However, I

question whether John had the power to raise race as an issue. As a White man, was John equipped with the *right* to facilitate critical conversations around race? Furthermore, drawing on my understanding of collective memory, I posited that John was trying to change the *Gone With the Wind* dominant White-centered narrative at plantation sites by adding his interpretation of enslaved peoples' lived experiences to the narrative he offered during his tour. However, I felt that a two-minute blurb on slavery was not sufficient and argue for a tour that truly balances both the planter narrative with the slave narrative.

Visitors' interest in White planter's lifestyle. The grandeur and beauty of the planter home is literally and figuratively at the center of plantation museums. Undoubtedly, visitors who are fascinated by the White elite planter family lifestyle of luxurious furnishings and parties are often White folks wanting slave erasure experiences. During my tour of Rose Plantation, John addressed this phenomenon. The tour of Rose Plantation began with the tour of the planter home and followed by a car ride down the road from the visitors' center to enslaved peoples' cabins and the Great Barn. After our tour of the planter home, John shared with the group:

It's time to go to the slave quarters. Lots of rich White folks always try to hurry through this ... I get these little old ladies that are only interested in antiques and furniture. It's time to go to the slave quarters ...

John also referenced the larger, grander plantation museums located in South Carolina and Virginia during his tour. Elm Grove Plantation, however, has a small planter home that has no "bells or whistles" and thus some visitors' were disappointed when they visited Elm Grove. I asked John whether visitors continue to the enslaved cabins after

the planter home tour or if they chose to leave after the planter home tour. John answered:

I think on several occasions, I've had older, like my age or older, White ladies that do not ... 'why would we want to see slave quarters?' they asked. They are interested in antiques. They get somewhat disappointed that we don't have one of these Charleston or James River Plantation Houses, you know? You get that not frequently but you get it on occasion. But, we are trying to fix things up to have a visitor center down here (enslaved cabin community)...again money is the problem.

Butler et al.'s (2008) conclusion that the majority of the White visitors to Laura Plantation (whom they interviewed for their study to better understand what narrative was of most interest to visitors) were more interested in dominant White-washed planter narratives influenced by the visitors watching of *Birth of a Nation* and *Gone with the Wind* mirrors John's observations.

While talking with Linda, an interpreter at Elm Grove Plantation, I asked her about the types of inquiries visitors posed regarding Elm Grove Plantation. She recalled answering a phone call from a visitor worried about the construction of the planter's home and whether it would be open for tours. Linda stated:

The other buildings are open (referring to enslaved homes) and they would call beforehand. A lot of time I would pick up the phone and say the Jones' family's home is closed because we are doing construction but a lot of people were like, 'Well there's nothing really else to see' ... *Yes!* There is! We have the enslaved homes, the Sookie Davis home, the plantation hospital. But they didn't seem as

interested in *those* buildings. So a lot of times they will say, 'Oh, we will come back' or call back and see if the (planter) house is open. And sometimes I guess I feel kind of disappointed I guess because a lot of times, especially being an African American person, you like to see your history being explained and being heard. But a lot of times people have this fascination more so with wealth and White privilege more so than enslaved people.

To me, Linda seemed simultaneously sad, disappointed, and frustrated. I sensed that she wanted desperately for visitors to show an interest in enslaved people's lived experiences but was uncertain as to visitors' or, more importantly, society's willingness to hear raw stories of enslaved people's lives. Continuing to share her experiences with past visitors, she speculated:

I don't know if society itself will change. I guess it is our culture ...we fixate more on wealth and prestige more so than about slavery. Hearing about slavery is sad in some ways but it is a reality ... it happened. And it needs to be discussed in order to understand what is going on currently now ... with race relations ... it needs to be discussed. A lot of people don't see that as being really important and I feel like our culture ... especially in the U.S., we focused so much on wealth that the story on people living in small one room houses with 12-15 people living in there ... that doesn't fit their, what they want to think of the world. It is a harsh reality but it happened and I think people sometimes need to realize that this happened but we can move on from it but in order to move on from it and to realize what happened in history we have to talk about it. And a lot of people don't want to talk about it.

The object of consumption being the planters' homes, not the slave narrative, parallels the hegemony of capitalism. Linda argued that the culture of the U.S. focused more on material wealth, power, and prestige more than the reality of the institution of slavery. Horton (1999) echoes Linda's comments arguing that the public is often reluctant to deal with a history that is uncomfortable, sensitive, and filled with difficult subjects revolving around slavery. It is easier to talk about the nostalgic representation of plantation life with the planter home and the grandeur White lifestyle than the horrific acts associated with slavery. However, there are stakeholders involved at plantation sites that are making the conscious effort to engage audiences and visitors with sophisticated narratives associated with slavery.

In sharing his experiences with visitors at Hazel Place Plantation, site manager Ken Frances appeared to take a more "in your face" approach than Linda did in his narrative interpretation of slavery at Hazel Place. Consequently, he spoke about White visitors who seemed to shut down when it came to the topic of slavery. By way of example, Ken spoke at length about his role in the new interpretation and reconfiguration of the rooms and furniture in the planter home on Hazel Place Plantation. Ken shared:

Because you are going to talk about the topic regardless of how closed the shutters are. We are talking about this ... you are not getting away from it. You just ... you hope somehow ... if you are a praying person ... you hope and you pray that folks are somehow ... something is getting through. Now ... I have never had a tour where the person goes ... '*Oh My God Negroes* ... oh no we aren't going to talk about Negroes!?' Thank goodness. I really seriously don't know what I would do. Probably after my jaw got off of the floor I would be giving their

money back. Or I would be giving them to someone else because I have no clue... what I would do. But we had a woman come through several years ago I can't remember which of the docents got her. But she said, 'Oh my God' as the woman was rolling her eyes at the pass through room and ... 'oh no' ... I thought oh no really? And then she wrote a nasty letter to the editor of the paper. Oh the place (Hazel Place planter's house) looks like a dump. And then came the phone call. And she *demand*ed not requested *demand*ed a meeting with "Larry" and me ... Hey it is a member of the public and I will take the input. 'What did you do ... you changed it! Why did you change it?'

The amount of backlash Ken faced from board members and the general public (mostly White older natives of the area) demonstrated that changing the dominant White-washed narrative at plantation sites can be an arduous battle. However, Ken was not the only site manager who faced challenges in their efforts to represent enslaved peoples' experiences. Moreover, as I address in the next section, the efforts made by Kate, Linda, John, and Ken also proved problematic for other interpreters/docents at their respective sites.

Interpreters/docents' roles in interpretations at plantation sites. Previous studies demonstrated that "rather than encouraging a critical dialogue about slavery," plantation museum sites "are dominated by well-scripted, often sanitized representations of slave life that minimize the contributions and suffering of enslaved Africans" (Modlin, 2008, p. 269) Noland & Buckman 1998; Butler 2001; Eichstedt & Small 2002; Alderman & Modlin 2011. Furthermore, Modlin (2008) posits, "docents are essential to the operations of any museum, they are especially crucial in guiding tourists' understanding

of the history of slavery” (p.5). Consequently, it is crucial to understand the accuracy of the docents’ interpretations at plantation museums.

The interpretation of the history of the plantation museum depends on how narrative presented by the docent/interpreter. Kate, Ken, and Whitney Johnson, site manager at Elm Grove, stated that there are no scripts given to their docents/interpreters to memorize. Instead, each docent/interpreter is encouraged to read historical documents and tag along on tours led by other docents in order to create their own narrative. Kate, Whitney, and Ken each explained the training of their docents/ interpreters:

Kate: It is their own tour. They are taught the interpretation and they are given the sources to read and they basically come up with their own tours. Our part time employees are volunteers and our interns are simply given the information and they create their own tours. *We do not* have a script.

Ken: We don’t give our docents a script. A docent is free to ask me any question they want to ask and I will find the answer. I had one person ask me about salt ... another docent about where does sugar come from. And I will answer the questions and get back to them it is part of my job. But you know ... You have no other choice. This is not a bifurcated world. There are... you cant just talk about the great White man. You cant ... it would be an awfully dull tour because he was a politician. We have his letters as governor and that is about it. You have to talk about ... there are two families ... as you walk up you have to say there are two families that live on this plantation and we are going to tell you about both of them. Two groups of people. And they are family groups. You can’t not.. you got to! It’s not an option. Things have changed... things have

changed here ... in the past four years ... The reinterpretation of the mansion.

Whitney: Yes they go through training. We do have written scripts basically for the orientation. The other material they study is from highlighted points that we would like for them to say during the guided tour. So they kind of tag along on the tours to observe and for a certain period of time and trained with all the hands-on activities and educational activities here. We send them to any workshops that the department offers in interpretation. And so I will say the period probably about six months overall. Usually when we bring new interpreters in they work with the school groups for that spring.

Hazel place. The management at Hazel Place Plantation made several changes to the narrative presented within the planter's home in 2012. Ken assisted in the rearrangement of furniture of each room in the planter home forcing a different interpretation that was inclusive of the role that slaves played in the home. Ken reflected on the changes the management team made at Hazel Place:

We interpreted a cabin again of the inventory and interpreted the carpenter shop. That is the basement ... and we have the wine cellar ... Having those two areas forces people to discuss the topic of slavery. It is unfortunate that is has to be forced ... learning what to tell people ... because we now had to do a whole new shift in education. A whole new shift in how you talk about room usage. And that is a whole different issue. And it was not met with a whole lot of happiness from some of the docents.

Ken referred to one specific incident with a docent who had issue with using the word "slave." Ken reflected on his interactions with her:

We have one docent that ... um ... will not use the word slave. She uses the word servant. Yes language. When we presented the new plan to show people how to do a tour through the mansion. She said ... if you are going to talk about *them* ... lets hurry up and do it ... And this is the sad thing was it took me a minute to understand who 'they' was. Then I said ... Really!? Really!? It is the 21st flipping century ... really! ... We got a grant from the golden leaf foundation. She wouldn't take people through the basement. You know you can get secret shopped from these people? We can't give the money back because we spent it. Show them the basement! Talk about it! Suck it up ... or leave! That's my feeling. You can't not talk about it ... You can't not ... it happened ... People owned other people ... people treated people appallingly badly. Is it pleasant? No! Does not talking about it not make it any less pleasant? No! Does calling them servants add anything ... no!

Docents' resistance to talking about slavery is not a new challenge for the site managers. Furthermore, some docents do not talk about the institution of slavery at all. Eichstedt and Small (2002) refer to this issue as "symbolic annihilation" and not mentioning slavery or not using the word slave, as Ken exemplified from his docent's resistance, perpetuates the marginalization of enslaved community members. Additionally, Eichstedt and Small (2002) argue that docent narratives present at plantation museums are for the most part aligned, "with the injustices that exist in the larger culture reinforcing the silences, stereotypes, and erasures in people's minds" (p. 270). Furthermore, Buzinde and Osagie (2011) argue that docents who did not mention enslaved people on their tours prevent visitors from attributing any guilt to the enslavers

for the suffering they inflicted upon the enslaved. However, all three plantation site managers stated that they were making efforts to train their docents/interpreters to speak about enslaved community members' lived experiences; however, sometimes issues arise from visitors' perceptions of plantation narratives.

Elm grove. Whitney explained that one of the challenges experienced at Elm Grove was dealing with visitors' requested to hear about the *rawer, harsher* realities of enslaved peoples' experiences. For example, Whitney recalled one of her personal experiences with such a request:

Yea um ... so some of the personal experiences that staff here have had and I know because they come in after the tour and they mention it ... we will have African Americans or Black individuals go on the tour and say ... tell me the stories you don't want me to tell. We were like ... we are telling you what we know. We can't tell you what we think ... Black visitors, compared to the White visitors John and Linda spoke about, demanded to hear the *uncomfortable* stories of enslaved peoples at Elm Grove.

However, each site manager explained the challenge of trying to tell enslaved peoples' memories without having historical records, like journals and diaries (as seen with White planter families), to accurately talk about on their tours. For instance, Whitney shared:

We base our interpretation on the facts here and because the enslaved community didn't write or learn how to read or write ... we don't have a lot of their stories so we base it on the documents that we do have. We know which enslaved person lived where. We base it on the inventory list. The inventory list was taken every year which cabins the slaves lived in ... the names the ages the work assignments.

So we know who lived where ... And we don't sugarcoat it and we don't make it worse than what we know it was.

I believe that Whitney, Ken, and Kate are doing their best to interpret enslaved peoples' lived experiences. The lack of historical records elucidating how each enslaved person felt about their daily struggles makes offering their interpretations more challenging. However, even with journals and diaries of White planter families, docents and interpreters still generalize and fictionalize the daily routines and events of White families. I argue that if there is a generalization of how White planter families lived, why is there no generalization of how a slave person lived? Why are some docents and interpreters uncomfortable with generalizing about the daily life of slave? Is there a higher standard of evidence needed to disrupt the interpretation of slave life compared to the White lifestyle?

Accuracy of interpretations. I argue that Whitney, along with Kate and Ken, was attempting to tell the *whole story* of their plantation sites and in doing so, each manager referred to the need to stick to the facts in reference to plantation life. As Whitney argued:

We stick to the facts so a lot of the African American or Black interpreters get that from Black visitors that come. But then the flip side a lot of the Caucasian or White interpreters get racist people on their tours and expect for them to join in with their remarks. We have had things said to some of the staff as soon as they come into the visitors center. We have had Black groups say that I want a Black interpreter to give us a tour. But we don't base our tours on the audience. We

give a story of everyone that lived here. A more concise interpretation of life here at Elm Grove.

Due to the lack of historical narratives collected, docent/interpreter's unwillingness to talk about slavery, and the influence Hollywood still has on visitors' preconceptions of plantation life, interpreting enslaved community members' stories can be a challenge. I believe that all three management groups at the plantation museums were doing their best in facing each of these challenges. Moreover, I assert that their hosting of *LTBH* represents one strong example of telling enslaved community members' experiences using oral histories. However, Paul Banks, director of *LTBH*, observed that, despite their use of interviews that came directly out of the Works Progress Administration's *Slave Narrative Project*, the performers still encountered challenges in telling the stories of former slaves.

The performances were located at plantation museums in North Carolina so Paul selected narratives from North Carolina for *LTBH*. To the 176 NC narratives collected, he applied the following three criteria: "Does this tell a compelling story that has an impact? Does it give us some really good factual details as to what life was like for those folks and lastly, does it tell a coherent story?" (personal communication with Paul Banks, March 10, 2015). Paul admitted that some of the narratives challenged his personal memory of what he the institution of slavery. For instance, Paul talked about the internal struggle he experienced upon encountering narratives that challenged his understanding of Reconstruction:

One of the themes that became clear to me reading the whole NC collection was yea slavery was bad but what happened after was even worse. And I think that is

a concept that is really challenging. It is challenging whether you are White or Black. It is hard to imagine but there are several I call them characters ... but several of the people that said these things. Made it really clear when Patsy talks about two snakes ... slavery and freedom. And she said that they were both bad. And that was something that was kind of surprising to me ... my limited high school education of slavery. And I think that really challenges the audience too. And I always wanted to include that in *LTBH* and always made that one of the big themes. When you hear that then you have to go ... ok so freedom was bad ... you had Jim Crow and some of them refer to Jim Crow and talk about the KKK or talk about the hardship of living and sharecropping. All of those hardships that went up to the 30s and then a lot of the audience (members) go yea ... and some of that is still around in some aspect. And we have heard from a lot of the audience that brings it home for them. That nothing was really solved just because freedom finally came. There were still voting rights and still everything else that had to happen.

According to the narratives Paul read, the theme of slavery *and* freedom both *being bad* really struck a chord with White audience members and their collective memory of how they were taught/learned about slavery was “that it was bad. End of story.” However, the narratives collected were not one generalized memory of slavery being bad ... the voices from former enslaved community members spoke about freedom being a bad thing too and that just because they were free did not mean everything was *just fine*.

Consequently, I discuss the educational value of *LTBH* in the next section paying special

attention to how influential enslaved narratives are to the current interpretation of slavery on plantation sites today.

5.2 Research Question 2: How does the director of LTBH, actors, and plantation site managers articulate the educational value of these performances?

But having it be live and having the experience like when you go in and you walk into the house and you turn the corner and there is a person there who starts speaking to you.

There is just something about that ... there is no other way that you can get that experience ... And so it not only gives people an access to the documents and the history but it makes it real and impactful in ways that we really don't have another alternative for. I always envisioned this at Rose Plantation and then onto other historic sites and I think that for me personally, I feel like that is where you are going to get the biggest impact because when you are at a site where this actually happened and you are standing in the rooms where they lived and where they worked and all ... That is where you are going to get the biggest impact ... It is having that authenticity ... I like the fact of not having audiences not sitting in comfy chairs and climate controlled spaces. I think that when they are out there sweating or freezing (laughs) with the actors it brings it to a whole other level you know? (Paul Banks, Director of LTBH)

Schechner (2006) suggests that performance has the power to shape, teach, entertain, and put forth a new kind of community. I posit that *LTBH* is a perfect example of a performance that includes each characteristic mentioned above. In the next section, I address how *LTBH* helped teach (using oral histories from the *Slave Narrative Project*), entertain (through actor's performances), and put forth a new community (using decompression sessions) at Elm Grove, Hazel Place, and Rose Plantation sites.

Teach. Paul's, direction with *LTBH* included a diverse collection of enslaved narratives performed by Black actors helped give voices towards the complexities of the institution of slavery. Alderman (2003) argues, "African Americans are not a monolithic group and we should not expect that we are introducing just one new voice, but many" (p. 165). Consequently, Ken, Kate, and Paul realized the educational value of the *Slave Narrative Project* and included the narratives within educational activities and future projects to assist in telling various experiences of the institution of slavery, not one generalized story.

Kate Mitchell, site manager at Rose Plantation, explained how staff members discussed the narratives collected from former enslaved peoples' at Rose Plantation during the 1930s with middle and high school students. Kate, Ken, Paul, and Whitney all commented on the importance of using enslaved narratives from the WPA project to help teach students and visitors about U.S. history. In addition, the staff members talked about the importance of the *Slave Narrative Project* during the Great Depression and how researchers use the documents today. Most interestingly, Kate stated that they also talked about the flaws of using source documents:

Such as the attitudes between Blacks and Whites during the 1930s. Why the Works Progress Administration began to be. Why some of these narratives may or may not be truthful with an African American speaking to a White person that they don't know. So they read through these narratives and they are written in dialect so they discuss why they are written in dialect. The kids read through that and also look at some of the original documents from the site such as ledgers to show that some information changes with age. People being interviewed when

they are in their 80s and 90s. With age comes a bit of distortion in your memory.

So they go back and say, he says this but if we look back in our ledgers this is actually the case so they learn using primary resources for their research.

Kate realized how impactful the narratives were as an educational source of explaining the complexities of using source documents. For instance, when I visited the visitors' center at Rose Plantation there were photographs of students showing their written reflections of how they felt after reading the some of the narratives. I was so impressed that Kate and the staff at Rose Plantation were dissecting the narratives and having students devote time to understanding the biases of interviewer/interviewee dynamics. The staff proved that using narratives was a beneficial tool in educating students and that there was more to slavery than what Hollywood portrayed.

Ken Frances, site manager at Hazel Place Plantation, has not used slave narratives as an educational tool with students that visited Hazel Place. However, he shared his future goals with reaching out to neighboring schools to show students the importance of source documents like the *Slave Narrative Project* in learning about U.S. history. He especially felt like structuring a school program around reading slave narratives would help with African American students learn about their ancestry Ken shared:

The challenge that African Americans find is finding themselves in the record. ... you give people an entry into the world with using source documents ... The thing is that they can now take this knowledge and say ... hey ... I want to learn about my people ... I want to go to my grandmother ... gives these things (narratives) perfect entry ports into discussing your people. Asking your mother your grandmother, aunts, uncles 'what were you doing in 1965'? ... This is how

you start looking for your people. And maybe somebody sees this be it here ... Elm Grove, Rose ... somebody sees this and they say OK. I have a 12 year old at home and traced my family back to the Bishop plantation and it is time. Time for me to talk to my son or my daughter or my grandchildren about their past. And lets use this as a tool to show them the work I've done and to tell them, 'keep on doing work' and share this and be proud of who your ancestors were. Be proud of your stock. Your genetic stock in life. I don't know there is a nicer way to say that. Stock is such a terrible because it sounds like cattle. Be proud of your past. Learn from your past (takes a long pause and points to a bird soaring).

Eichstedt and Small (2002) argue that embracing an inclusive historical perspective was “much more likely to raise issues that disturb a positive construction of whiteness” (p. 36). Ken illustrated their argument and felt that using narratives that elucidated enslaved peoples' lived experiences were tools in opening a dialogue around the institution of slavery and *uncomfortable* discussions around slavery. Paul took also reflected on the relevant nature of the slave narratives in regards to present race related issues in the U.S.

Paul Banks, director of *LTBH*, reflected on the narratives where former enslaved peoples' spoke about incarceration rate of Blacks and how race related issues are still relevant today. He eloquently shared how the *Slave Narrative Project* not only educated him but also had the power of educating White audiences on racial issues still prevalent in U.S. society:

Even though I knew I never thought that racism was over or everything is fine ... but when you think about it that way and what had happened and what is still happening, it really made it clear to me how deep this problem goes and

entrenched it is. And I think that I don't know that you can get that from a school lesson. I mean maybe. I mean I'm sure there are some fantastic schoolteachers out there who have some good lessons about slavery but it is really hard to get that unless you hear somebody say it and say the words and say this is what happened to me.

Whitney Johnson, site manager at Elm Grove Plantation and the only Black site manager in the study, shared that slavery needs to be told, no matter who tells it.

Whitney elucidated:

To learn about the rich history and culture of our state. A lot of that took place on plantations. It is part of the history of the state. Part of the history of the country. And it is important to know where the country is and to compare it to where we are today. So we can be better individuals and more culturally inclined to what happened and what is happening now. It is important to know your past just as much as it is to prepare for your future I believe.

One of the actors, "Sarah Colon", of *LTBH* also argued that "It is not only Black history it is everyone's history. And these narratives have to be told" (Colon, 2014). I agree with Whitney and Sarah that slavery is not *Black* history but *American* history. However, I question the *right* White people, including the site managers, docents/interpreters have in telling enslaved community members' stories at plantation sites. But, I feel like performances like *LTBH* that include enslaved peoples' narratives, acted by Black actors, help in opening a dialogue speaking towards an alternative way of viewing and knowing the U.S. Southern plantation.

Paul critically self reflected on being a White man and acknowledged the

privileges that were bestowed on White people and injustices forced on Black people in the U.S. He reflected on how important the voices of former enslaved peoples' were and are to spreading knowledge about the history of slavery. However, Paul is a White man. Paul is a White man who was directing Black actors in a performance about former enslaved peoples' memories, feelings, and lived experiences regarding slavery. I question, is it a White man's story to tell? Can a White person/White site manager/White docent tell enslaved peoples' stories, their memories, their lived experiences? The implications of Whiteness between Paul and I parallel my identity as a White researcher. I ask myself whether I have the *right* as a White researcher to focus on African American history. I relate to Paul and the struggle he faces with being a White man directing *LTBH*. However, we both are aware of our Whiteness and consciously make the effort to acknowledge our role as allies and not leaders in including African American history at plantation museums.

Entertain. Educating audience members about slavery coupled with the entertainment value of *LTBH* were emotional components of the performance. For instance, Paul, Kate, and Ken expressed how the actors' performances of telling enslaved members' lived experiences in *LTBH* brought human, emotional and spiritual connections to enslaved community members. For instance, Kate shared how the actors' reenactment of former enslaved peoples' allowed for a human connection:

Personally I feel the value is that it helps get people talking as well as getting Rose Plantation out in the limelight. It is so relevant not only to our interpretation but to America's history that it really helps us because the narratives from the gamut are fairly innocuous, others are sad, others are angry, others are scary. So

it really helps us give this personal human touch to Rose Plantation and to slavery because like I said, we try to give people human stories so they can really connect to the interpretation. By saying it you are hearing the actually words of someone who was enslaved in North Carolina it really drives it home for people that this wasn't a sea of nameless Black faces working in cotton fields. These were human beings with thoughts and feelings and emotions and fears and love that lived and died during different time and the trial and tribulations that they experienced. I think that is the ultimate success story of *LTBH* is that it gives this human component.

Kate's testimony of the importance of *LTBH* reiterated how influential performances were with helping audiences understand enslaved peoples' lived experiences pulling in the human component not easily found within historical textbooks. I argue that performances can entertain along with educate audiences evident through the actors' emotional reenactments of slave narratives in *LTBH*.

Paul contributed to Kate's argument of performances, like *LTBH*, as a means of the power that actor's have in physically and emotionally bringing oral histories to life. He asserted that some people do not retain information easily from a book and that by having actors reenact history can contribute to a different way of learning. Paul stated:

So I think that once you then put it in a live theatrical context you are giving people access to that material in a way that they haven't ... Most people are not going to sit down and read it. It is not really fun to read ... So in that same way, putting it on for people gives not only access to the history and what is contained in the documents but it also shows the impact of seeing something as opposed to

reading it ... I think that you can't deny that there is an impact to seeing it as opposed to reading it. And not everybody learns as well in the written form. A lot of people need to see it so I think theater has always been fine with that ...

Paul argued that students, visitors, and audience members experience performances of enslaved peoples' narratives differently rather than reading about the institution of slavery in a textbook. Consequently, the collective effort of the actor's emotional reenactments of enslaved narratives and the site managers' willingness to incorporate *LTBH* in their respected plantation site's interpretation created a space for critical dialogue of the institution of slavery to *put forth a new community*. A community of stakeholders; Paul, Kate, Ken, Whitney, Linda, and John, all adamant towards contributing to an alternative way of educating audiences about the slave past.

Put forth a new community. I would like to conclude this section with the words of "Vince", one of the Black actors that performed an enslaved narrative during *LTBH*. Vince shared his intentions with *LTBH* during an interview with the cast. For instance, he explained how *LTBH* was contributing towards a *new community* with the actors' performances of former enslaved peoples lived experiences:

We are speaking the words of people who were really not heard. That didn't have voices ... that didn't have voices then and unless we did something about it, those peoples and those thoughts would just go away into history ... I hope they will take away some insights and learn a few things about what it was like to be a slave. And what it was like to live under those conditions but yet survive those conditions. And look forward to something better ... Hopefully people will leave

with more questions than they came with. I think that is a really compelling part of telling a real story.

Eichstedt and Small (2002) argue that site management at plantation museums whom adopt relative incorporation embraces an inclusive historical perspective.

LTBH is an example of relative incorporation and did just what Vince said it would do according to the conversations I had with Paul, Ken, Kate, Whitney, and the docent/interpreters at each plantation site. I along with other audience members left with more questions ... questions reflecting on our own interpretation of what we thought about the intuition of slavery ... self-reflection that could possibly lead towards understanding our current state of race related issues in the U.S.

5.3 Research Question 3: How do the site managers, director and actors articulate and make meaning of their experiences participating in the *LTBH* production?

To answer research question three, I first talk about Ken's experience with *LTBH* and the struggle he faced in getting permission to invite the performance to Hazel Place. Secondly, I address the emotional impact with *LTBH* as the major theme that emerged from my conversations with each site manager and Paul. Lastly, I answer how each site manager and Paul made meaning of the importance of the decompression sessions.

Ken's story. Ken Frances, site manager at Hazel Place Plantation, was the only site manager who experienced *LTBH* as an audience member at Rose Plantation in 2012 during the performance's opening night. He reflected on his personal experience as an audience member:

I don't think I could've walked through that production alone. I'm very thankful that I had some emotional support. I walked out of there and all I could think

was ... actually I couldn't think ... *I was blown away*. Absolutely blown away. I had read the narratives and I have heard the narratives read (long pause). But this was different. When you are reading something or listening to something like a book on tape ... or something on YouTube. You can close it, you can pause it, put the bookmark in it ... you can walk away from it. You can't walk away from this! I was blown away! I mean absolutely blown away. And it was blown away on many different levels. The first level was obviously an *emotional level*, you can't listen to any of these narratives and not feel sucker punched ... you can't ... So there was an *emotional response* and a *visceral response*. I walked from the great barn to my car and was talking to my friend and all you can say is, Wow! There are no words ... seriously there are no words except for wow!

After I experienced *LTBH*, I too had no words and only tears to express how I felt. I agree with Ken in that with performances you cannot hit the *pause* button. Thus, you hear, witness, feel and self reflect on what the actors say to *you*. However, Ken was the only site manager that faced resistance from board members in inviting *LTBH* to the plantation.

Ken and I, through our performances as audience members, led us to different goals with *LTBH*. My goal was to explore *LTBH* as a dissertation study whereas Ken's goal was to get *LTBH* to Hazel Place Plantation:

And then there is the part of me that is always thinking about programming for Hazel. And yeah that side is mercenary ... *I want this program!* And I said ... I want this program! I want this to come here. And I will make it happen. And I will figure out how it is going to happen. And I will be honest

with you ... we don't have a lot of money. So we can't spend a lot of money on programming and it would have been really cost prohibited to try.

LTBH moved Ken to the point of finding *any way* possible to get the performance to Hazel Place. Privately funded Hazel Place, unlike Rose and Elm Grove Plantations, Ken ran into some issues with one, older female board member native to the area. For instance, she expressed her distaste in allowing an enslaved narrative performance since it would change the *traditional* interpretation of Hazel Place.

Ken asked that I keep his comments off the record since he felt like the issue with this particular board member was a *sensitive* matter. He stated, on the record, that once she *passed away*, she was able to get *her reward* and he was able to *get his*; to change the interpretation of Hazel Place to include enslaved peoples' stories. Ken was able to rearrange the furniture in each room and reinterpret the planter home according to historical documents of inventory based off the furniture purchased for each room once the board member passed away.

Ken reflected on his experience with trying to bring change to Hazel Plantation with his interactions with the resistant board member:

Her memories ... well ... her memories were assaulted. That is what happened. Because we had changed things. Because the memories had ... her memories ... we had shaken up the attic. Her snow globe ... whatever analogy you want ... we had changed things and she was having none of it. They cling ... they call them the moonlight and magnolia crowd. They cling to this ideal of ... an ideal that didn't exist. Oh the happy ... the happy ... not the woman who tried to poison her mistresses coffee. They don't want to hear about that. Oh no! She was happy.

You try being owned by another human being and emptying their waste bucket. And that is where ... I'm the White person talking about this. How can I talk about this ... what do I know? I know a good amount but never experienced it. It seemed as though Ken's *emotional* and *visceral* experiences with *LTBH* as an audience member influenced him as a site manager to find anyway possible to bring the production to Hazel Place. However, Ken's awareness of being a White man challenged his *right* in telling enslaved narratives at Hazel Place. Consequently, he felt that the performance of *LTBH* would help bring about change ... change that had the potential to give his community an emotional impact to a part of history that for too long has been overshadowed, figuratively, by the planter's home.

Emotional responses. Paul Banks, director of *LTBH*, argued for audiences to feel *uncomfortable* and *express their emotions* at environmental spaces, like plantation museums:

So one of the things that my particular brand of theater is ... I like really immersive theater and I like theater that takes people out of a traditional theater like a black box where people can just sit in the dark and be removed from what is happening on stage. And especially the piece like this, I wanted to totally get away from that and so ... So being able to stage it in the various houses and buildings was something that was really neat about it.

Through the environment of each plantation site, the actor's voices, the *in your face* theater, we as an audience, collectively heard and experienced a different memory of enslaved community members' experiences. For instance, each stakeholder, in addition to my informal discussions with docents/interpreters and tour guides, expressed how

emotional *LTBH* was ... not only to them but also with their observations of audience members/visitors.

Ken reflected on the intense emotion he observed with some audience members.

Ken stated:

And to see ... people's faces. And to ... feel their reactions ... because you do ... emotion ... emotion are very interesting ... you can smell emotion, you can taste emotion ... you can see emotion. I had the opportunity to talk to them afterwards and the guy who came back and just said ... I need to think ... and I said talk to me if you need to ... and you open up the opportunity for dialogue.

Watching and re-watching *LTBH* took a toll on Ken. He shared with me how he needed to divorce himself emotionally when the performance was at Hazel Place. He stated:

I listened to part of it the first time and there was NO way I could do that twice more. I just couldn't. The very last monologue I was forced to listen to three times because it was on the front porch and the cast came out. And it was hard ... forced makes it sound like I didn't want to do it ... but you know ... it's um ... the last monologue she talks about how ... kids these days in the 1930s do this this ... when we were slaves we had three square meals and folks just don't know how hard things ... people aren't respectful of their elders ... summation of the last monologue. Very bad summation of it by the way ... we had ... one man in the first group ... came back after the talkback ... and ... just said I need to walk around ... I need to sit. I need to think ... I said, if you need to talk I'm here. So I learned something, that in this case I did need to be emotional divorced from it.

Performing as a site manager, Ken danced a different performance than when he was an audience member. Although performing both roles was an emotional ride for Ken, he emotionally divorced himself from *LTBH* in order to give the audience space for their own reflections.

Whitney Johnson, site manager at Elm Grove Plantation, also expressed her emotional experiences with the narratives performed with *LTBH*:

Well I think it was a breathtaking performance. There were times when I teared up (laughs) especially with the Negro spiritual singing, kind of liked touched your soul. As you walk by and it just gave me a tingling sensation and it felt ... we felt like ... well I felt like I was here during the plantation days. When ... and to see them, the characters, in costume and telling the stories and thank god we have those slave narratives because those stories were so precise and for the period. It almost felt like you were stepping back in time. And most of the visitors that I was around, close by while observing the performances; I remember there was one lady. She was in tears and was like 'I'm so glad you are having this program'. It really gives us a reflection of what it was like on the plantation. You read the stories and you take the tours but to actually see people acting and singing, it really was uplifting for her to know the African American history was still being taught and reflected upon ... So I think the whole purpose of *LTBH* fulfilled its goal.

Whitney felt like *LTBH* was able to tell enslaved stories in a way that her team of interpreters were unable to do previously. Audiences' experienced enslaved members' memories told through the actor's voices allowing an emotional response to stories once

silenced. Linda also witnessed audience members' reactions to some of narratives during *LTBH* including shock:

Some people were just kind of shocked about it. A lot of people seemed like it didn't really bother them ... but the people that were shocked were like *wow!* Cause it was ... I never heard anything like that before being said by a person that was a former slave. I never came across anything like that with the narratives. You had some people saying things like it wasn't that bad or and some people saying their tragic stories and some sharing fond memories but I never came across anything like that. So if it kind of took me a back ... it probably took other people a back as well because we are not used to hearing people being so honest and blunt about their feelings towards slavery especially a person that was an enslaved person.

Pollock (2008) posits that performances with traumatic stories and events forces audience members to self-examine and reflect emotionally. The emotional rollercoaster that the audience, including Ken, Whitney, and Linda, and myself experienced emphasized the integral role that performances played in the production of knowledge at each plantation site.

Paul witnessed audience members crying (*pathos*) and barely able to speak at Rose Plantation during the first night of *LTBH*. He realized, after that first performance, that there must be some type of forum for discussion of what *just happened* with *LTBH*:

But that night it was clear that we need to let people debrief or something here because there was so much emotion that ... then they were going off to get into their cars and its like (laughs) they didn't have a release really. So I feel a little bit

bad for those people because it was just like *ahh* what do I do now!?” ... We tend to have discussions afterward and we do have an introductory piece in the beginning to kind of prep the audience to say ok this is where the material comes from and about. And we talk about it with the actors too. Why would somebody say that? And there are reasons that ... a lot of different reasons that they might.

Rose Plantation and Hazel Place Plantation had *decompression sessions* after each performance where visitors could discuss and debrief their experience with *LTBH*.

However, Elm Grove Plantation was unable to hold a decompression session due to a lack of staff members in order to manage the session.

Kate Mitchell, site manager at Rose Plantation, shared with me why the decompression session was an important element with *LTBH*:

We had actually had a decompression session where after the performances visitors got to sit and talk to employees and volunteers and get their thoughts out about the performances that they felt so moved to do so. Because you are throwing a lot of really heavy stuff at them and you can't just let them go home with all of that.

Kate and Ken felt like the decompression sessions were crucial in order for the audience to make meaning of what they observed. The decompression sessions helped audience members understand and discuss the complexities of the performances they experienced.

Whitney stated, “One of the things I did wish we had was like the question and answer session afterwards so people could ask questions about these particular individuals they portrayed.”

Although I was unable to observe the decompression session at Rose Plantation (since it was not offered), I was able to get a sense of some themes that emerged from Kate, Ken, and Paul's experiences with the talkbacks. For instance, Kate expressed that audience members were able to walk away from *LTBH* with a better understanding of how the institution of slavery affects the U.S. currently:

We had some people thanking us for putting on the performances. They felt that it was relevant to the current events to um ... the current state of social affairs in America. They felt that the narratives helped them understand history a little bit better because it gave them the real words or real people. So instead of reading a section out of a history book about you know the slave experience they actually heard how someone felt about it and there may not have conformed to what they believed someone to feel. So um ... by adding that personal human touch to it we have had numerous people that been floured by it and there were decompression sessions that were thanking us and glad I will see this every single time you perform this and I will try to bring my kids so they will understand it. So there is a lot of gratitude. I never had anyone who was angry. I never had anyone who did not enjoy themselves. If they did they didn't tell me (laughs). But it always seems to be ... a lot of inner concentration.

The talkbacks allowed not only audience members but also the plantation staff to make meaning of the enslaved narratives performed. There was something to be said with Paul naming the talk-backs *decompression sessions ... audience members along with the staff really needed a space to decompress ... to reflect ... to challenge what was being thrown in their faces. A moment for clarity ... a moment to process different, unheard, once*

silenced memories of enslaved community members' lived experiences. As Probyn (2003) posits, “space informs, limits, and produces subjectivity” and with decompression sessions, audience members can delineate for themselves the dialogue around America as a post-racial society.

The concept of commemorative surrogate describes heritage representations (i.e. *LTBH*) that go beyond *relative incorporation*. Dwyer et al. (2012) documents, “these heritage surrogates – which range from surviving elements of material culture to ‘authentic reproductions’ and ‘re-enactments of the past’ – stand in for a history perceived to be lost or nearly so” (p. 428). The performance of *LTBH* serves as an example of a commemorative surrogate. Alderman (2010) argues, “in some cases, commemorative surrogates are judged to have transgressed sensitive norms and emotions, a situation described as excessive surrogating” (p. 95). Furthermore, Dwyer et al. (2012) conclude, “the concept of the surrogate is nuanced enough to inform an analysis of the manner in which a heritage site is an arena for political jostling and the performative aspects of collective memory” (p. 441). The management at Rose, Hope, and Hazel plantation museums provided surrogates with *LTBH* as a means of inviting performances that investigate the profound and mundane condition of enslavement (Dwyer et al., 2012).

5.4 Summary

Many collective memory scholars believe that the nature and interpretation of present day reality significantly determine the direction that reconstruction of the past takes.

(Osagie, 2003, p. 98)

The primary purpose of this study was to explore stakeholders' experiences and motivations with incorporating the slave past using dramatic live performances based on historic slave narratives at U.S. plantation museums. Furthermore, I sought to understand the educational value of performances that incorporated oral histories, like enslaved narratives, as an alternative form of understanding U.S. history. It is clear that incorporating dramatic performances based on texts embodied by a group of gifted actors contributed towards an inclusive representational strategy at plantation museums. In summarizing the study's finding below, I provide examples that elucidate how enslaved narrative performances can help challenge White-washed narratives at plantation museums.

The major theme that each stakeholder expressed was the emotional impact of *LTBH*. The texts embodied by the actors provided an alternative form of knowledge where enslaved community members seen through an emotional representation, not factual. McConachie (2007) posits, "in embodying other's emotions, produces emotions in us" (p. 67). Consequently, I argue that performance pieces like *LTBH* can reconceptualize and reconstruct plantation narratives to incorporate the slave past.

As evident through the conversations, observations, and experiences from each stakeholder involved in this study, applying performance enabled us to perceive differently and evaluate our own collective memory of enslavement. Performing the role as site manager, docent/interpreter, director, actor, and graduate student, we all contributed towards the untraditional manner of "performing art" from dress-up to certain kinds of writing or speaking (Schnecter, 1998, p. 361). Shaughnessy (2012) argues that performance, as a pedagogical tool, has the potential to "transform experience through

participatory processes in which memory can be remade, re-conceptualized and rediscovered in different forms” (p.61). Furthermore, Buzinde and Osagie (2011) demonstrate, “in the context of plantation heritage sites the present racial climate undoubtedly informs contemporary constructions of the plantation past, particularly as it applies to the current discourse on post-racial America” (p. 58). Incorporating *LTBH* at plantation museums worked towards incorporating the slave past in such a way that contributed towards a better understanding of the contributions and historical accounts of African Americans along with the naming and experience of racism.

The use of narratives from the *Slave Narrative Project*, not only with *LTBH* but also at the visitor’s center at Rose Plantation, also served as an interdisciplinary supplemental tool and a form of commemorative surrogation at plantation museums. For example, the management at Rose Plantation provided students with narratives and discussed how politics and power played a role in telling one’s story. Kate, site manager at Rose, explained the discussion with students regarding the racial dynamics with the interview and interviewee process with the *Slave Narrative Project*. She stated that the politics of the collection of the narratives paralleled with the politics of who gets to decide the “truth” in textbooks. Essentially, Kate argued that there is a strong correlation between the politics of the exhibits presented at plantation museums as “truth” with how teachers present the institution of slavery in public schools.

The historical and cultural systems driving globalization and changing societies around the world has brought a change in how management at plantation museums incorporates performance of cultural memory. Hope, Rose, and Hazel Place are sites where the management employed such an approach attempting to “demonstrate the

fluidity of history, politics, and the semiotics of culture ... the past is always in question and so too are the values imposed upon the reconstruction of the past” (Buzinde and Osagie, 2011, p. 58). *LTBH* exemplified a commemorative surrogate promoting a critical dialogue around present race related struggles that are very much rooted in the past (Dwyer, Butler, & Carter, 2012).

CHAPTER 6

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

I Rather than seeing the world in terms of different domains of knowledge, in which objective knowledge is privileged over subjective feeling or local know-how, there is an increasing search for ways of thinking and learning that acknowledge their interdependence. (Nicholson, 2011, p. 8)

As site managers, docents, director, and actors in the original adaptation of the WPA Enslaved Narrative Project, the stakeholders shared their experiences with their involvement with the production of *LTBH*. There are still challenges faced by each stakeholder in presenting enslaved narratives at plantation sites – issues that are salient amongst *defetishizing* the U.S. plantation. In this chapter, I present my assessment of the study's implications for plantation sites (including participant's perspectives), recommendations for future research, reflections on developing my research agenda, and concluding thoughts.

6.1 Implications for plantation sites

U.S. educator, Elizabeth Ellsworth recognized that the physical environment, the place of learning, and the movement of bodies in space are integral to the experience of learning (Nicholson, 2011). Ellsworth's emphasis on the centrality of place and embodiment also offered new ways of thinking about the significance of history. Rose, Hope, and Elmwood Plantation museums all served as physical spaces for visitors' to

understand U.S. history in a new way. For instance, Kate reiterated that fieldtrips to plantation museums help children visualize what it was like to live and work as an enslaved person. Most importantly, the actors who performed the first person accounts of slave life engaged audiences to think critically about the contributions of African Americans.

Performances like *LTBH* disrupt the hegemonic metanarratives (dominant narratives) of plantations White-washed narratives. Butler et al. (2008) argue, “Slave oral histories put forth an alternative way of viewing and knowing the Southern plantation. The power to get one’s story told is the power to shape understanding and the production of knowledge” (p. 142). The actors’ embodiment of former enslaved community members served as tools in eliciting emotion. For instance, implementing performances like *LTBH* at plantation sites produces new patterns of knowledge for audience members and the stakeholders involved. Audience members question their own identity and reflect critically on their collective memory of enslaved community members’ lived experiences evident through the decompression sessions and stakeholders’ observations.

The emotional impact of *LTBH* was a major theme throughout the interviews conducted with each stakeholder. They witnessed audience members wiping away tears, collecting their thoughts, and trying to understand what *just had happened*. Implementing decompression sessions allowed for a space where audience members could ask questions as to why an enslaved member would say, “freedom and slavery was like a two-headed snake.” In the decompression sessions, audience members questioned *their* collective memory of enslavement and challenged *their* preconceptions of what it

was like to live as an enslaved member on a U.S. Southern plantation. Most importantly, implementing *LTBH* allowed for “... fluid and dynamic nature of identity formation and the construction of memory, informing how we understand and experience the legacy of the transatlantic slave trade and slavery” (Jackson, 2011, p. 457). Consequently, including enslaved narrative performances at plantation sites allowed for an alternative way of understanding the history of slavery.

Performances like *LTBH*, that included enslaved community members’ lived experiences, likely deepen society’s understanding of the critical role played by enslaved peoples and helped form an alternative way of understanding the slave past. Buzinde and Santos (2008) posit that plantation sites often represent national identities to both domestic and international publics and serve as a means through which national and international publics learn about themselves and others. Enslaved narrative performances provided means through which national populations could conceptualize their own varied identities and reflect on their diverse cultural practices and histories.

The management at plantation sites misrepresented or underrepresented the lived narratives of descendants of enslaved people. Incorporating a wider range of perspectives based on narratives of descendants of enslaved community members helps to open spaces in order for visitors to view enslaved communities in plantation museums more holistically and empathically. For instance, performances like *LTBH* at plantation sites serve as a step in the direction of changing White-washed narratives to include once silenced voices. Moreover, performances that include enslaved narratives allow for an emotional and human connection towards the rethinking of the memories of the descendants of enslaved peoples helping to form a reconceptualization of plantation life.

Implications of calling a plantation site a plantation museum. There are implications of calling a plantation museum versus a plantation site. For instance, Gaither (1992) asserts:

First, museums must serve an ever-broader public in ever-bolder ways. And second, museums must honor America's diversity without paternalism and concession ... Museums have obligations as both educational and social institutions to participate in and contribute toward the restoration of wholeness in the communities of our country ... They ought to help give substance, correction, and reality to the often incomplete and distorted stories we hear about art and social history. They should not dodge the controversy that often arises from the reprisal of our common and overlapping pasts, ... The United States' social health is too important to go unaddressed by any significant sector of its institutions. (p. 58)

Therefore, I argue that plantation sites like Hope, Hazel, and Rose be renamed as plantation museums for the management's efforts of incorporating enslaved performances like *LTBH*. Butler (2001) states, "Tourists walk away from a plantation with a sense of authenticity" (p. 173). Plantation museums that are going beyond relative incorporation have made the leap towards creating a racially just society providing African American history to the masses.

On the other hand, some plantation sites may take issue with calling themselves plantation museums. Eichstedt and Small (2002) argue that the discursive strategies in the plantation industry of the South operate as they do because of the work of collective identification, White guilt, and avoidance. The authors assert, "We should best

understand the overall affect of the racialized discourses in effect at plantation museums sites as helping to construct and solidify a White public memory of valor, hard work, democracy, and grandeur” (p. 15). Furthermore, sites that engage in “social forgetting” are creating a vision of the nation as noble and dissociated from “racialized atrocities” (Eichstedt & Small, 2002, p. 15). By calling a plantation site a plantation museum, the management must adhere to an ethical obligation to include the experiences of African Americans representing a more inclusive history.

In this dissertation study, I referred to plantation sites as plantation museums. I used the term plantation museum instead of plantation site from the work of Eichstedt and Small (2002). The authors visited 122 plantation sites to understand how public and private plantation museums in the American South present plantation history. Eichstedt and Small (2002) argue, “that the work that museums engage in is the building of identity, cultural memory, and community” (p. 4). Additionally the authors state, “We also align ourselves with those in the museum world who see museums not only as sites where outside processes are played out but as sites where knowledge and power are created” (p. 16). Most importantly, the authors argue that the displays and narratives presented at museums frame what they teach as history versus heritage, where heritage is more folkloric and less factual than history. Adopting the terminology from Eichstedt and Small (2002), I argued that the management at Hazel, Hope, and Rose plantations were making the conscious effort to include the experiences that enslaved people had at their respected sites with *LTBH* performances acting as teachers for a just future.

6.2 Implications for educators

Educators can use the *Slave Narrative Project* as a supplemental tool in

discussing the slave past. For example, inside the visitor's center at Rose plantation museum there was the Learning Literacy through Photography project on display. In 2013, fifth grade students from a local magnet school worked with Duke undergraduate interns in the Median Studies program to dissect the narratives of the *Slave Narrative Project*. The students visited Rose Plantation several times and wrote about the life of one enslaved person through multiple perspectives. The students wrote fictionalized stories about that of an enslaved person, that of a friend, and the perspective of a slave owner. Additionally, the Duke interns helped students video-record their performance as they spoke their historical fiction. This project exemplifies the interdisciplinary nature of the slave narratives both inside and outside the classroom.

6.3 Implications for future research

This dissertation study provides a means of exploring the importance of including emotional performances elucidating enslaved community members' lived experiences through the observations and experiences of stakeholders involved in *LTBH*. Through their stories, I was able to better understand how crucial enslaved performance pieces are in telling reconstructing narratives at plantation museums. I offer a few suggestions for future research projects in addition to reflections on developing my research agenda.

Interviewing the actors. I was unable to interview the actors that performed in *LTBH* and consequently the majority of this study does not include their voices. I am interested in hearing their experiences of performing as a former slaves. I want to ask the actors: Was it an emotionally draining process? Is it something that they could do on a daily basis? Since they are trained, professional actors, was it just another paid performance? Did they run into any issues with audience members? Additionally, I

would like to hear their experiences with the questions and comments from audience members in the decompression sessions. Most importantly, did they feel *LTBH* actually made a difference in creating a change of dominant White-washed narratives at plantation museums?

Interviewing audience members. I received an email from a woman that I spoke with after we both experienced *LTBH* at Rose Plantation last summer. She asked if I remembered her, our conversation, and the *actors*. She was a member of a local Methodist Church group involved with providing their members opportunities to discuss race related and social justice topics. I would like to interview the members of her church group who were audience members of *LTBH* and hear their reflections of the performance. Additionally, it would be interesting to have the members revisit Rose Plantation to work on a Volunteer Elicit Photography (VEP) project.

Volunteer employed photography. Volunteer employed photography, also known as auto-photography, is widely used as a means of understanding how people view their environment, their sense of place, and what is important to them. VEP is a data collection technique that gives cameras to people and asks them to take a number of photographs of a particular subject or theme that can then be analyzed using a variety of quantitative or qualitative methods (Garrod, 2007). Under the VEP approach, the visual data collected by participants enables their viewpoints, biases and experiences to be taken into account in the research (Loeffler, 2004). This allows for community participation in the development, planning, and management stages within tourism but also within other disciplines such as education, geography, and health fields.

Empowering respondents to be active participants in a VEP research project

allows them to be the authors of the experiences and memories they narrative. Instead of a researcher-led project, respondent-led photography opens up a space for deeper intersubjectivity between respondent and researcher. The photographs act as agents opening up a dialogue where silence, emotion, and experiences play a major role in understanding how we view the world. As MacKay and Couldwell (2004) suggest, respondent-led photography offers the “potential for capturing and analyzing people’s perceptions” (p. 391). Respondents are able to feel a sense of pride in the photographs they take and in the narrative they construct around them. Additionally, using VEP induces participants to reflect on and discern their own perspectives (Carlson, 2001). The explanations from the participants about their photographs can convey significant socio-cultural perspectives (Riley & Manias, 2003). More importantly, “If managers understand visitor meanings and incorporate these ideas into education and outreach services, they will be more effective at reaching diverse audiences, thus building constituencies and maintaining site relevance” (Lin, Morgan, & Coble, 2013, p. 52).

I would like to invite the church members that experienced *LTBH* last summer to participate in a VEP project at Rose Plantation. It would be interesting to see if *LTBH* had any influence on how they perceive the plantation now. Are they interested in the enslaved cabins/community or more concerned with the planter’s home? Does their race, gender or age play a factor in how they perceive Rose Plantation?

6.4 Reflections on developing my research agenda

I will never know how it feels to be Black or understand how it would feel as a Black person to visit a plantation site. As a Jewish woman, I could compare a plantation visit with visiting a concentration camp. But being Jewish and identifying with that

history does not necessarily help in my understanding of what it feels like to be Black. Consequently, I have some concerns and hesitations moving forward, as a White scholar, in researching U.S. plantation museums.

After speaking with the White docents/interpreters and White site managers in this study, I heard their experiences with interactions with some Black visitors. I heard how some Black visitors questioned their *right* as White people in talking about slavery. I remember Ken specifically reflecting on a young Black student's reaction to his tour on slavery at Hope Plantation. The student asked, "How do *you* know what it was like? You are a White man!" Paul ran into this issue as well with the first site manager at Rose Plantation.

In our interview, Paul explained some of the issues he encountered during the first year with *LTBH*. *Frank* was a Black man and site manager at Rose Plantation. Paul shared that Frank was not enthusiastic with the fact that Paul was a White man directing Black actors; Black actors who would be reenacting enslaved narratives at his site. For instance, Paul shared that Frank doubted whether the actors would even show up, was not comfortable with the performance, and asked that the N-word left out of the performance. Paul could not speak on behalf of Frank's reactions and decisions with *LTBH* and thus, had no comments but his own feelings towards the interactions between him and Frank. Paul's interaction with Frank and the intimidation he felt being a White man directing *LTBH*, was at times similar to how I felt as a White woman researching enslaved performances at plantation sites.

At times, I felt like I another *White girl* trying to play the *good White*. However, I wanted to conduct research that made a difference, that focused around social justice

issues, and challenged White-washed narratives traditionally presented at heritage sites. I would like to continue researching how innovative approaches can challenge the public's understanding of history. Additionally, I learned a great deal from performance studies in regards that performance is a way of knowing and can be a representation of the politics, cultural process, and scholarly representations of everyday life. Lastly, I would like to focus on community development through tourism, politics of tourism representations, and tourism development within marginalized communities.

6.5 Conclusion

Throughout *Faces at the Bottom of the Well*, Bell argues that racism in the U.S. will be forever present and that all Whites are bonded by it. He wrote, "Americans (i.e. White Americans) achieve a measure of social stability through their unspoken pact to keep blacks on the bottom ..." (Bell, 1973, p. 152). The association and power of being White in the U.S. creates a carefully calculated dominant discourse that privileges some and marginalizes others. Specifically White-washed narratives told by docents and interpreters at plantation sites contributes towards the silencing of enslaved community members' narratives consequently creating an inaccurate, romanticized version of the slave past. However, as evident in this study, there are stakeholders actively incorporating and adopting more inclusive representational strategies, i.e. *LTBH*, alternating visitors' understanding of the slave past.

Autobiographical accounts of former slaves and their descendants with the Slave Narrative Collection, embodied by a group of gifted actors, contributes to an alternative way of informing visitors' knowledge of U.S. history and culture. The stakeholders involved expand the public's understanding of plantations as communities and sites of

knowledge through the incorporation of descendent voices with *LTBH*. Knowledge created through these performances is helping to shape public memory and consequently, evoking alternative ways of interpreting plantation landscapes for the future.

EPILOGUE

MY EVOLUTION AS A RESEARCHER

To end, I want to reflect back on my evolution as a researcher and the challenges I faced throughout this dissertation study. I have come a long way from when I started my journey as a first year PhD student in the Hospitality, Tourism, and Research Management program. I grew not only as a researcher but also as a person. I was able to hone the skills I acquired through my coursework in foundations to help me navigate the complex layers of my own identity as a researcher. My embodied experience of witnessing *LTBH* transcended my understanding of what research could look like. *LTBH* was my focus for this dissertation study to elucidate how research on *LTBH* performances could reflect interdisciplinary analysis—for example, as an entertainment value drawing potential visitors to a site (Tourism studies), educating visitors on slave pasts (foundations), and evoking emotions through evocative performative moments (Performance studies). I found solace in pulling from different theories and methodologies of expert scholars across several fields (Buzinde, Osagie, Alderman, Butler, Carter, Santos, Eichstedt, and Small) to help me understand the complexities of how power, politics, and race factor into presenting the slave past.

I navigated my fair share of challenges throughout this dissertation study. The biggest challenge I faced was the lack of response from the actors of *LTBH*. I first asked the director, Paul Banks, to connect me to the actors he felt were open to discussing their

experiences with the performance. During our interview, he was very willing and excited to assist me; however, after two weeks of attempting to solicit that help from Paul with no response, I had no other choice but to try to connect with the actors myself. I was persistent in my attempts to contact the actors through messaging them on Facebook™ in addition to LinkedIn™ and an online Actors' Website. I was unsuccessful connecting with the actors after four weeks and chose to continue research without interviews with them.

My committee members asked during my defense why I thought the actors were unresponsive to my messages. I speculated that race could have played an issue. My profile picture on LinkedIn and Facebook reflects a White girl, and I was asking them to discuss their experiences around performing slave narratives on a plantation. I asked myself several questions why I have not heard back from the actors: Why should they take time out of their busy day to sit down and talk with a White girl interested in slave narrative performances? How could they trust me? Have researchers in the past twisted or misconstrued their words leaving a bad taste? Was there resistance to or avoidance of academia? I reflected on the performance of Thomas Hall's narrative in which the actor playing Hall stated that Thomas did not trust most White men since they only help themselves. I asked myself, was I the interviewer from the Federal Writer's Project that Thomas Hall did not trust? Was I "most *White men*"?

Alternatively or concurrently, I believe that perhaps the actors were just too busy. In all honesty, I do not know why they chose not to respond. I was not their friend, colleague, or acquaintance. I was a random White PhD student who was a stranger desperately trying to conduct an interview. I may never know the answer. However, I do know that I am a different researcher and more importantly, a different woman than when I started my dissertation study. I have embraced and cherished my ability to use interdisciplinary theories, methodologies, and ideologies where I am able to analyze the world around me.

Because I was unable to interview the actors, a fellow PhD student and I creatively developed an alternative solution that allowed me to include the actors' voices in the study. I wrote a collective story where I *blended* a transcribed YouTube video of interviews with the actors, my interview with Paul, and my reactions to an emotional journey I experienced during *LTBH* at Elm Grove Plantation (Freeman, Mathison, & Wilcox, 2006). Through my lived experiences as an audience member witnessing the dramatic slave narrative readings performed by the actors at Elm Grove Plantation, I was able to channel the emotions I felt during *LTBH* to create a new scholar - a new scholar who was able to write a truly interdisciplinary study that fused together the disciplines of foundations and tourism to help toward a novel approach to research. I now acknowledge how the emotional journey endured through my academic trajectory prepared me to embrace emotion as a powerful tool in conducting research.

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APPENDIX A – INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

The following list of questions was used as an outline for the interview questions.

Interview with *Let Them Be Heard* Creator

- 1) What motivated you to create *Let Them Be Heard*?
- 2) How were the plantation sites chosen to host the performance?
 - a. Were there plantation sites that were uneasy about having this performance at their site?
- 3) How did you choose the WPA narratives to be reenacted?
- 4) How were the actors chosen for the performance?
- 5) Tell me about any fears or concerns you had about representing the slave experience with *Let Them Be Heard*.
 - a. In what ways do you feel resistance as a white male directing an enslaved community performance piece?
- 6) What do you think is the value of these performances?
- 7) Tell me about any experiences that stand out for you that you want to share.
- 8) What are the future plans for this performance?

Interview with Plantation Site Managers

- 9) What type of enslaved community history is represented currently at your site?
 - a. When was this established?
 - b. Is there a separate charge or tour

- 10) Tell me about your experiences observing/managing the performance.
- 11) What are some of the challenges that come about from trying to represent the slave experience?
- 12) How did you hear about *Let Them Be Heard*?
- What made you interested in inviting *Let Them Be Heard* to your plantation site?
 - Tell me about any instances (if any) of resistance to this production.
- 13) What do you think is the value of these performances ?
- 14) Have you had any school groups come to the production?
- If so what do you think the value of this production is?
 - Why should educators be interesting in visiting plantations?
- 15) What has the reaction been so far with the visitors in terms of their experience with the performance?
- Tell me about any instances (if any) of resistance from visitors.
 - Tell me about any positive feedback from the visitors.
- 16) Would you have *Let Them Be Heard* back?

Roving Focus Group with Performers

- 17) Why did you get involved with *Let Them Be Heard*?
- Were you asked or did you volunteer?
 - If you volunteered, what motivated you to do so?
- 18) How did you prepare for this performance?
- Did you try and research the former enslaved member beforehand?

- b. Were there any performance rituals that you did?
- 19) Tell me about your experiences performing *Let Them Be Heard*.
- a. Did you ever feel unwelcomed at the plantation sites?
 - b. What were the reactions from the visitors?
 - c. In what ways were there any similarities with the plantation sites in terms of your experiences with the visitors. How about differences?
- 20) What are some of the challenges that come about from trying to represent the slave experience?
- 21) How do you make meaning of your experiences in participating in the *Let Them Be Heard*?
- 22) What do you think is the value of these performances?

APPENDIX B – LETTER OF CONSENT



INFORMED CONSENT

You have been asked to participate in a study conducted by Stefanie Benjamin, PhD candidate at University of South Carolina. The goal of the study is to better understand how the enslaved community's narrative is interpreted at plantation sites.

Please note that all responses will remain anonymous and will be used for a dissertation. If at any time you do not feel comfortable with this interview please feel free to stop.

Thank you for your participation of this project. If you have any questions or concerns please email Stefanie Benjamin at: benjamsk@email.sc.edu.

I give the researcher permission to audio-tape the interviews.

I do not give the researcher permission to audio-tape the interviews.

With my signature I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this consent form.

Signature of Research Participant Date

Printed Name of Research Participant

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent Date

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent

APPENDIX C – IRB APPROVAL LETTER



OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER for EXEMPT REVIEW

This is to certify that the research proposal: **Pro00040955**

Entitled: *Telling a Different Narrative: How Enslaved Community Members' Performances Can Retell History at Plantation Sites*

Submitted by:

Principal Investigator: Stefanie Benjamin
College: College of Education
Department: Foundations of Education
Address: Wardlaw
Columbia, SC 29208

was reviewed in accordance with 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2), the referenced study received an exemption from Human Research Subject Regulations on **2/5/2015**. No further action or Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight is required, as long as the project remains the same. However, the Principal Investigator must inform the Office of Research Compliance of any changes in procedures involving human subjects. Changes to the current research protocol could result in a reclassification of the study and further review by the IRB.

Because this project was determined to be exempt from further IRB oversight, consent document(s), if applicable, are not stamped with an expiration date.

Research related records should be retained for a minimum of three (3) years after termination of the study.

The Office of Research Compliance is an administrative office that supports the University of South Carolina Institutional Review Board (USC IRB). If you have questions, contact Arlene McWhorter at arlenem@sc.edu or (803) 777-7095.



Sincerely,
Lisa M. Johnson
IRB Manager