International Journal of Historical Archaeology (2022) 26:22–52
https://doi.org/10.1007/s10761-021-00593-9

"It's Not About Us": Exploring White-Public Heritage Space, Community, and Commemoration on Jamestown Island, Virginia

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Accepted: 29 January 2021 / Published online: 23 February 2021

Abstract
This article explores the complex dynamics involved in making African Diaspora histories and cultures visible at Historic Jamestowne, a setting traditionally viewed as white public heritage space. In response to the 400th anniversary of the forcible arrival of Africans in Virginia, archaeologists and heritage professionals at Jamestown are engaging the local African American descendant community in collective knowledge production centered around Angela, one of the first African women that lived at Jamestown in the 1620s. This article explores the production of dominant histories, alternative interpretations of the (colonial) past, and relationships between heritage sites and local descendant communities.

Keywords African diaspora · Community-based archaeology · Black feminist archaeology · Memory · Heritage · Jamestown · Virginia

Introduction

On July 30th, 2019, President Donald Trump addressed a crowd at the Jamestown Settlement Museum in commemoration of the first legislative assembly in Virginia. His speech skirted through "American History" with two mentions of Native Americans and a mollified history of enslaved Africans. There was no mention of the contradiction of a free nation built on land dispossession and slavery. The telos of this history was a nationalistic rendering of American exceptionalism, as Trump echoed dominant public history narratives of Virginia's first General Assembly, depicting the gathering of a group of elite landowning English men in Jamestown's church four hundred years earlier as the beginning of "our nation's priceless culture of freedom, independence, equality, justice, and self-determination" (Edlund 2019).

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Trump did not deliver his speech without challenge. Black lawmakers in Virginia boycotted Trump's visit after he made a series of remarks deemed racist in an attempt to disparage minority lawmakers. Democratic Virginia State Delegate, Ibraheem Samirah, disrupted Trump's speech and held up signs that read "deport hate," "reunite my family," and "go back to your corrupted home" (Samirah 2019). At nearby Jamestown High School, about 350 protestors gathered in opposition of Trump's visit, chanting protest phrases like, "this is what democracy looks like" and "No Trump! No KKK! No fascist USA!" (Roberts 2019).

A few weeks later, on August 18th, national and local officers of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), a small delegation from Ghana represented by members of the Adinkra Group, and over 200 people gathered at Historic Jamestowne to remember the first Africans who were forcibly brought to Virginia in 1619 (Fig. 1). For them, and for many who gathered to listen to them, the 400th anniversary of the forcible arrival of Africans in Virginia offered an invitation to challenge the over 100-year-old dominant historical narratives of Jamestown. The anniversary was a call to refuse an (American) universal history in favor of a particular one grounded in the histories and cultures of the African diaspora.

This article examines how local archaeologists and descendants of enslaved Africans fashioned the commemoration of the 400th year since the first arrival of the First Africans in Virginia into the start of a public process of reclaiming and reframing their historical contemporary experiences at Jamestown. By enforcing a (white) nationalistic framing and rejecting a local narrative of Jamestown's past during the Jim Crow era, Jamestown became uniquely regarded as the "Birthplace of American Democracy." Although archaeologists and heritage professionals at Jamestown have

Fig. 1 National and local officers of NAACP and community members marching to the Angela Site on Jamestown Island, Virginia to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the forced arrival of a group of captive Africans in Virginia on August 18th, 2019, looking northwest (Photograph by the author)

contested Jim Crow-era retellings since the 1990s, many local African Americans still perceive Jamestown as a heritage space only for whites. For example, one African American woman who grew up a few miles from Jamestown Island told me, "Why would we want to go to Jamestown? It's not about us" (Descendant "S", pers. comm., 2019). Collective memories of Jim Crow discriminatory practices and interpretation still influence perceptions of who is and is *not* welcomed at Jamestown and whose heritage is represented. In 2017, a new public archaeology project broke ground at the site where Angela, one of the first documented African women in Virginia, lived in the 1620s. Archaeologists and heritage professionals at the Angela Site are now implementing community-based approaches to share knowledge production at Jamestown with the local African American community. This approach is literally and figuratively groundbreaking for an early seventeenth-century public archaeological site.

People of African descent lived and labored on Jamestown Island for nearly three hundred years. However, the memory of their presence was purposefully erased from the heritage site during the Jim Crow era (late nineteenth–mid twentieth centuries) (Horning 2006; Lindgren 1993). Central to this project was the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA), whose members transformed the island from a regional tourist attraction in ruins into a National heritage space that valorized perceptions of seventeenth-century American whiteness and excluded contributions of nonwhite peoples, all in service of twentieth-century social and political white supremacy. Specifically, by using archaeology, artifacts, historical events, and the spaces these took place in, Virginian Anglo-American elites beginning in 1893 asserted their Anglo-Saxon, Protestant identity on the Jamestown colony and reclaimed a southern white racial, political, and economic power that was threatened as a result of the Civil War and Reconstruction period. Although having been populated by Indigenous Algonquian peoples and, since 1619, enslaved Africans, these elites declared the island hallowed ground just as their colonial predecessors had and, in so doing, constructed a shrine to white America (Lindgren 1993:110).

Connecting postcolonial theory and a community-collaborative approach enables researchers to explore the production of dominant histories, alternative interpretations of the colonial past, and relationships between heritage sites and local descendant communities. In this article I examine African American descendant community members' collective histories of Historic Jamestowne and ideas and efforts toward decentering dominant heritage narratives that ignore or downplay the early African presence in Virginia. I also explain the major challenges facing archaeologists as they struggle to assert the visibility and importance of African Diasporic histories and cultures in a place that has been constructed as a "white public space" (Page 1999; Page and Thomas 1994) since the early twentieth century. I modify this concept to consider white public *heritage* space as an analytic tool for investigating the intersection of the politics of heritage, memory, race, and history.

Through historical research and oral biographical interviews with six local African American women (IRB protocol PHSC-2019–02-07–13,412-jljones01), this article explores (1) how white public heritage space was instituted over time materially and ideologically; (2) how the erasure of African and African Americans at Jamestown has affected perceptions of belonging and civic estrangement amongst

local African American descendants; and (3) how archaeologists may work to empower marginalized communities to contest such spaces. I address how people of African descent living in Tidewater Virginia construct collective memory, community, and landscape histories. It also sets the stage for a larger, archaeological study of seventeenth-century African perspectives and influences in the Historic Triangle (Jamestown, Yorktown, and Williamsburg) region that decenters Eurocentric practices and knowledge hierarchies to facilitate multiple epistemologies for anthropological knowledge production about the nation's founding and early history (Edwards-Ingram 2001; Franklin 1997; Harrison 1995; Risam 2018; Said 1997).

Jamestown as White Public Heritage Space

In order to understand Jamestown as a white public heritage space, it is necessary to understand what I mean by whiteness and how it is perpetuated and maintained in this context. Racial whiteness refers to a constructed identity with material consequences for health, wealth, and other lived experiences that was first invented in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Blakey 1999; Epperson 2004; Goodman et al. 2020; Orser 2007; Smedley and Smedley 2012; Trouillot 2015). Like other identity constructs, whiteness has changed over time (Painter 2010) even as nonwhite identities have consistently served as a boundary allowing for the creation of binaries which promote the perceived backwardness of nonwhite peoples (Fanon 1963). Page (1999:118) argues that "Europeans in America and elsewhere made themselves into a transnational group called whites to distinguish themselves and their supremacist entitlements from those designated nonwhites and seen as deserving few or no racial entitlements." Whiteness is attached to material privileges that influence social and economic relations (Collins 2017; Harrison 1995). Since the boundaries of whiteness continue to expand and contract, some groups are included and others are not (DuBois 2005[1915]; Painter 2010; Goodman et al. 2020; Lewis 2015). For example, it was not until the mid-twentieth century that Jewish groups came to be considered white (Orser 2007). Conversely, Mexicans at one time in the early twentieth century were considered white, but today are considered a minority and have faced increased discrimination and dehumanization (Camp 2011). Thus, how race has been negotiated and enacted varies, allowing whiteness to be continually defended and reasserted (Lewis 2015).

Page and Thomas (1994;111) coined the term *white public space* and defined it as a system or network of "locations, sites, patterns, configurations or devices that routinely discursively, and sometimes coercively privilege Euro-Americans over nonwhites." Here, I augment their term to specify white public *heritage* space, or those spaces constructed to privilege heritage and historical narratives that promote white solidarity through appeals to white supremacy. Racial agents who manage white public space construct spatial and symbolic boundaries similar to those that were marked during Jim Crow (Lewis 2015; Page 1999). Thus, historical narratives detailing past societies are usually aimed at a white, middle-class public, resulting in static and essentialized views of nonwhites when they are included in these narratives. At Jamestown, Anglo-Protestant elites used segregationist practices

and selective cultural memory to create white public heritage space during the Jim Crow-era, reaffirming racist narratives through their interpretation of historical events, archaeological sites, and artifacts. Jamestown emerges paradoxically as the birthplace of American freedom and white supremacy. Thus, that African American visitation and engagement has been noticably low at Historic Jamestowne throughout the history of the site is perhaps unsurprising.

By using white supremacist symbols and selective cultural memory of the past as early twentieth-century APVA members did at Jamestown, white public heritage space establishes a historical context for a social and economic materiality which privileges contemporary whites and separates them from nonwhites deemed as biological and social inferiors. White public heritage space naturalizes white privilege and systematically excludes nonwhite people and their histories (see for instance, Trouillot 2015). Altogether, these orchestrated exclusions construct an uneven past that contribute to what Salamishah Tillet (2009:125) describes as alienation or "civic estrangement […] from the rights and privileges of the contemporary public sphere." For African Americans, civic estrangement further complicates the always complex process of identify formation and negatively affects transnational diasporic relations. Tillet argues that the lack of formal association with the lives and contributions of enslaved African Americans on national landscapes motivates some African Americans to turn away from American national monuments and heritage spaces. Instead, they reappropriate their "forgotten" history by turning to West African sites and symbols. Thus, the national amnesia about American chattel slavery causes these African Americans to dismiss American heritage symbols and sites and instead embrace a transnational African Diasporic identity that reconstructs "their unique history of American slavery, segregation, and post-Civil Rights racism onto the racial histories of non-US subjects and places" (Tillet 2009:126).

Decolonizing the Heritage Site

The production of historical narratives is an unequal political process made up of power differentials that encourage the creation of certain histories while silencing others (Trouillot 2015). Moreover, defining what constitutes heritage and heritage sites is loaded with social inequalities and political power disparities that are connected to the legacy of colonialism (LaRoche and Blakey 1997). For the last 30 years, however, archaeologists at Jamestown have contested earlier interpretations of Jamestown as a Anglo-Saxon, Protestant heritage space by exploring the roles of Native Americans and African Americans in the colony (Brown and Horning 2004; Horning 2006; Horning et al. 2001). Researchers have sought to decenter western hegemonic knowledge hierarchies and facilitate multiple epistemologies in knowledge production (Perry and Paynter 1999). Building on this research, I apply Black feminist thought and archaeologies to move away from practices that reinforce the production of white public heritage space at Jamestown.

The 2020 uprising sparked by the murder of George Floyd, coupled with the beginnings of a racial reckoning within the field of archaeology (see, for instance, SBA et al. 2020), add emphasis to Paul Mullins' (2008a, 2008b) call for an

empirically and politically rigorous African Diasporan archaeology that focuses on activism in the present. Mullins (2008a:104) suggests that a diasporic analysis must take a position in "antiracial discourses" rather than "negotiating between African anti-essentialism and the evidence for African cultural persistence." Historical archaeology should actively dismantle racist stereotypes in order to create a "vindicationist archaeology" that can contribute to present-day discourses on race, class, and gender (Battle-Baptiste 2011; Blakey 2001; Drake 1980). Black Feminist theory advances this argument, making it a valuable theoretical framework for historical archaeologists interested in interpreting identities and experiences of people of color in the past. Additionally, it provides tools for researchers to engage in contemporary political discourse (Bailey 2015; Battle-Baptiste 2011, 2017; Berry and Gross 2020; Collins 2000; Crenshaw 1991; Franklin 1997, 2001; White 2001). This theoretical framework is influenced by Black Feminist thought and literature that traces back to the nineteenth century and draws on various intellectual traditions. Black Feminists illustrate how Black women are marginalized through race and gender in multiple ways. Further, these writers argue the importance of recognizing "intersecting oppressions" and asking new questions about relationships and social constructs that shaped these relationships in the past (Berry and Gross 2020; Collins 2000; Crenshaw 1991; White 2001).

Black Feminist archaeologists such as Maria Franklin and Whitney Battle-Baptiste challenge researchers to question their own subjectivities as related to their research and argues for research questions focused on counteracting modern-day injustices. In her 1997 article, Franklin called for archaeologists to be self-reflexive about the reasons they undertake African Diasporan archaeology. She urged that researchers needed to orient themselves toward meaningful collaboration with descendant communities at the critical moments during the formulation of research questions as well as at other stages of research. Put simply, archaeologists must question narratives of the African American past or they may be doomed to repeat them. Further, Black Feminist theory allows researchers to explore the complexities of subjects' multitude of personhoods. This allows for a deeper understanding of not only race, or even of race and gender, but of various modes of social identity, including religious affiliation, occupation, sexuality, disability, or economic class (Meskell 2002).

Searching for Angela

In a continued struggle to counter early twentieth-century (mis)representations of African American history and culture, archaeologists and heritage professionals at Jamestown have started engaging local and descendant African American community members in an inclusive production of knowledge centered on Angela, one of the first African women that lived at Jamestown in the 1620s. According to the 1624 muster list, "Angelo," or Angela, lived in the household of prominent planter and merchant Captain William Peirce of Jamestown. Angela appears in the historical record only one other time: a census conducted in the Virginia colony on January 24, 1625 (see Heywood and Thornton 2007 for theories of why the masculine form

of Angela was recorded in these colonial documents). In the first, she is one of the colony's 21 Africans, identified as "Angelo a Negar" and living in "James Cittie," Virginia's first capital located on Jamestown Island. The second record provides a bit more detail as it groups residents according to household and transport vessels. Here, Angela is still listed as living in the James City household of Captain William Peirce, along with Peirce's wife, Joan, and three presumably European indentured servants. In 1625, Angela is one of 23 Africans in the colony. She is identified this time as "Angelo a Negro Woman in the Treasurer." The Peirce household was described by a contemporary as "the fairest in Virginia" (McCartney 2007) and on a large urban lot. It is likely that Angela worked alongside Ester, a European indentured servant, and Joan Peirce in the garden and around the house (Brown and Horning 2004; Heywood and Thornton 2007; Horn 2018; Horning et al. 2001).

Although limited, these details about Angela's daily work regime offer an opportunity to apply bell hooks' (1990) and Whitney Battle-Baptiste's (2011) concepts of *homeplace* and *homespace*, respectively, to explore multivalent interpretations of material interactions within mixed ethnic households. Homeplace/space refers to the environment and objects that shape the experiences and memories of Black individuals, families, and communities. Applying homespace to the household and yardspaces of many early seventeenth-century African-Virginians offers a new way to interpret resistance, survival, and strength through temporal, spatial, and conceptual boundaries constructed for captive Africans during the seventeenth century. Additionally, homespace may offer archaeologists and descendant communities new insights into the making of the Black subject in early America (Morris 2017). It also challenges us to think more critically about the unique challenges Angela may have faced as the only Black woman in the Peirce household. Although early seventeenth-century homeplaces/spaces would have, in many cases, been less Afrocentric spaces since Africans only accounted for about 2% of Virginia's population for most of the seventeenth century (Horn 2018), further archaeological analysis will be crucial to allow us to more carefully consider how early captive Africans would have created community, memory, and ultimately home in seventeenth-century Virginia.

Telling Our Stories: The Angela Site Project

The Angela Site project was inaugurated in 2017 (Young 2017; note Young's observation about race and archaeology). However, the first systematic archaeology that included portions of the Angela Site was conducted in 1934 by National Park Service (NPS) field director H. Summerfield Day and a team of segregated African American Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) archaeologists (Fig. 2). The driving force behind this project was to test the hypothesis of Colonel Samuel Yonge, who excavated with the APVA at the turn of the twentieth century, about the development of Jamestown's seventeenth-century town and Virginia's first capital. Implementing shovel test pits, cross trenching, and limited open-area excavations, Day and the CCC archaeologists exposed foundations, ditches, wells, and burials related

Fig. 2 Left, Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) archaeologists excavating near the Angela Site on Jamestown Island in 1935, looking west (Courtesy of National Park Service, Colonial National Historical Park, Jamestown Collection). Right, Angela Site project archaeologists (left to right) Chardé Reid, Katie Dowling, Lee McBee, and David Givens with Mr. Purcell Bailey (second from right) who was a 1930s CCC worker (Author's photograph)

to the seventeenth-century town. The African American archaeologists were in fact the first to excavate much of Jamestown, including portions of today's Angela Site. These men not only excavated, but recorded interpretations in the field and cleaned, sorted, and cataloged artifacts. While these men were permitted on site as physical and intellectual laborers, they were not permitted on the site as visitors due to Jim Crow laws. Similar to the story of African and African Americans living at Jamestown during the colonial and antebellum periods, the CCC workers' experiences at Jamestown were ultimately silenced in the official narrative that came to define Jamestown as white public heritage space in the early to mid-twentieth century.

The Angela Site Project engages in a critical praxis that aims to decolonize archaeology by reconstructing both traditional power relationships in the creation of archaeological histories and recover formerly erased narratives (Allen and Jobson 2016; Blakey 1997; Fanon 1963; Harrison 1997; LaRoche and Blakey 1997). The project is an attempt to render visible the life and influences of one of the first African women to have lived and labored in the colony through material and documentary records. The very act of naming the site after Angela also re-centers the narrative by calling attention to her (reminiscent of Kimberlé Crenshaw's #SayHerName project) and to the other Africans who arrived in the Virginia colony in 1619. With the guidance of descendant intellectual collaborators, we are prioritizing questions about African agency rather than Eurocentric ones. This approach is literally and figuratively groundbreaking for a seventeenth-century public archaeological site in the United States.

I joined the Angela Site Project archaeological research team as the inaugural First Africans Research Fellow in May of 2018 to assist with excavations and African American community engagement. As we began meeting with community members and holding engagement meetings at Historic Jamestowne, the National Park Service's Colonial National Historical Park (COLO) and the Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation (JRF) decided to advance engagment efforts beyond the usual

NPS "stakeholder" model (building on previous critiques by Blakey 2001; Brady 2009; Castañeda 2008; Cook 2015; Handler 2008; La Salle 2010; McGill 2010; Osei-Tutu 2002; Supernant and Warrick 2014), focusing on how archaeology can be used as a vehicle to empower "descendant communities" of color while gaining shared understandings of the role of Africans and African Americans in the colony. This approach is unique because it focuses on the formation of African American identity in the seventeenth century and links to the present-day, while also offering descendant community members the opportunity to reimagine futures of Black transnational connections (Allen and Jobson 2016; Breunlin and Regis 2009; Gilroy 1993; Harrison 2016; Thomas 2018; Tillet 2009; Youngquist 2005).

The winter before I joined the First Africans archaeological research team at Historic Jamestowne, Montpelier hosted the inaugural *National Summit on Teaching Slavery* workshop. The workshop gathered a group of educators, curators, scholars, activists, museum and historic site practitioners, and descendants to come up with guidelines and practices for teaching slavery in a more engaging and inclusive manner. Recently, James Madison's Montpelier and the National Trust for Historic Preservation African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund published *Engaging Descendant Communities in the Interpretation of Slavery at Museums and Historic Sites: A Rubric of Best Practices Established by the National Summit on Teaching Slavery* (or the Rubric), which sets standards for community-collaborative engagement. The standard stresses the importance of incorporating "the stories and experiences of enslaved people through the voices of their descendants" by evaluating the effectiveness of engagment practices on a scale 0–4 (James Madison's Montpelier 2018:1). The scale rates institutions across three categories and related subcategories, including: multi-disciplinary research, relationship building with descendant communities, and interpretation. The ultimate goal is for institutions to "consider descendants not as a supplemental part of operations or programmatic offerings, but as essential knowledge-keepers, experts, and advocates" (James Madison's Montpelier 2018:8). This rubric will be essential for heritage sites such as Historic Jamestowne that set forth to engage and empower African American descendant communities.

Archaeologists are able to engage diverse communities and individuals about the meaning, value, and interpretation of "hard histories" around enslavement and narratives of resistance and resilience. Some eighteenth- and nineteenth-century era heritage sites have heeded the call for more inclusive and antiracist representations of the historic past. Several heritage sites are explicitly expressing values of inclusion and antiracism by sharing power and authority with descendant communities, including the New York African Burial Ground in New York City, Montpelier and Monticello in Virginia, Somerset Place and Stagville in North Carolina, and Whitney Plantation in Louisiana. By incorporating "the stories and experiences of enslaved people through the voices of their descendants" (James Madison's Montpelier 2018:1), these sites have been able to transform white public heritage spaces into more inclusive sites that reflect American history in a spirit of restorative justice and shared understanding. Engaging descendants of enslaved communities is an essential part of this process (La Roche and Blakey 1997). According to the Rubric, "descendant community" is a group of people whose ancestors were enslaved at a

particular heritage site, although this limited definition can be expanded to include various other groups.

Currently, "descendant community" is defined at the Angela Site as all African Americans with known ancestral ties to Tidewater Virginia (for example, through oral history traditions) and symbolically through attachment to the research. When working with African American communities, ethical questions addressing power relations associated with structural racism and other colonial legacies of inequality that still disproportionately affect communities of color must be considered (Battle-Baptiste 2011; Franklin 2001; Grosfoguel et al. 2015; Horning 2016; La Roche and Blakey 1997; SAA 2017). As Historic Jamestowne has not always been an inclusive space for people of color, the 2019 commemoration was an opportunity to reflect on these exclusionary legacies.

Creating Historic Jamestowne and A National Myth

Today, Jamestown is primarily a heritage tourist site and educational center (Fig. 3). Located on the banks of the lower James River, Jamestown Island is a 1,561-ac (632 ha) landform located in James City County, Virginia (Gould et al. 1993). Many visitors are surprised to learn that the landform that makes up Jamestown has been an island only since the twentieth century after the remaining isthmus connecting Jamestown to Glasshouse Point eroded away. Three organizations interpret the island's history: Preservation Virginia (PV; formerly APVA) which was founded in 1889 by Mary Jeffery Galt and Cynthia Coleman; the National Park Service's

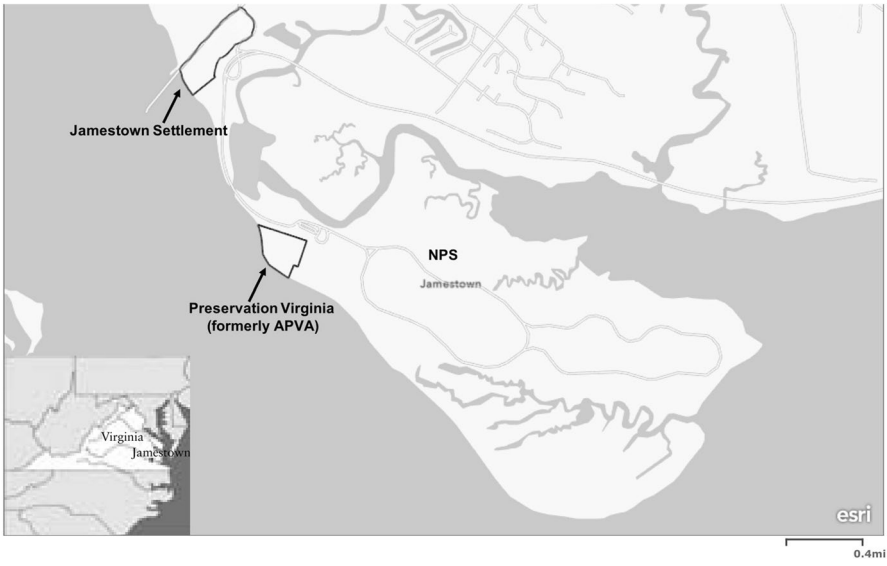

Fig. 3 Map of Jamestown Island showing the locations of Jamestown Settlement living history museum, Preservation Virginia's museum and 1607 fort archaeology site, and NPS's visitor center and archaeological remains of the colonial town including the Angela Site (Esri ArcGIS Map produced by the author)

Colonial National Historical Park (NPS) which purchased the remaining 1,500 ac (607 ha) of the island in 1934; and Jamestown Settlement, located 1.25 mi (2 km) away from Historic Jamestowne, formed in 1957 and operated by the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation and the Commonwealth of Virginia. Jamestown Island became known as Historic Jamestowne shortly before the 400th anniversary in 2007, and is jointly managed by NPS and PV. Each of these institutions played important roles in the construction of Jamestown's popular historical narrative.

Commemorating Jamestown and Virginia's Lost Cause Narrative

Over three million people visited Jamestown and Yorktown in 2019 (NPS 2020), but interest in Jamestown's recent past traces back centuries. Beginning in at least 1707, Virginians began making pilgrimages to Jamestown to commemorate the 1607 colony (Horning 2006). The size of the crowds flocking to Jamestown to commemorate the colony would continue to grow during the nineteenth century (King 2001). These events could get quite rowdy at times. For example, during one celebration in May 1822, an overzealous crowd swarmed the island and "burnt down one of two large brick houses on the island and broke the tombstones into fragments and scattered them over the face of the earth so that the whole island exhibited one wide spread field of desolation" (Ambler 1826; Horning 2006:5). Accounts of these events note that virtually all those who participated "were male, and all but one was white" (Horning 2006:5; King 2001:1). James Lindgren (1993) argues that these nineteenth-century events aimed to reassert Virginia's role in the founding of English-speaking America, serving as something of a counterweight to Plymouth where New Englanders celebrated with annual festivals. In 1859, Edward Everett called for the preservation of the decaying colony, invoking proto-American narratives of Jamestown "where the germs of the mighty republic, now almost coextensive with the continent, were planted in 1607" (Lindgren 1993:92). Pilgrimages to the site continued to increase after the Civil War and steamboats began running daily from Richmond and Norfolk to the historic site (Horning 2006).

Ownership of the island was also an issue that underscored the need to affirm Jamestown's – and the South's – key role in the founding of America. When a New Yorker purchased the island for $9,000 at an auction in 1879, the extreme state of decay of the seventeenth-century church tower ruins and associated burial ground became a rallying cry for a group of Virginian white women seeking to preserve the "hallowed grounds" from "the depredations of that modern vandal, the Relic Hunter" (Lindgren 1993:92). It was under this perceived threat of northern aggression against southern antiquities that the APVA began fundraising to purchase the land around the church ruins in 1889. In 1892, Edward E. Barney, an industrialist from Ohio, purchased Jamestown and planned a residential development of the area. Barney refused to sell the church property to APVA. Instead, he promised to preserve the remains of the seventeenth-century church tower and build a seawall. Unconvinced, Galt and Coleman persuaded the General Assembly to give them the power to seize the land. It was under this threat that Barney decided to donate 22.5 ac (9 ha) (including the 1647 church ruins, graveyard, a colonial magazine, and the

Civil-War-era Fort Pocahontas) to APVA in March 1893 (Horning 2006; Lindgren 1993). Soon after, APVA member Elizabeth Henry Lyons declared that the association would preserve the site as "the Mecca of all true worshippers of a free government" (Lindgren 1993:97).

The APVA set to work stabilizing the ruins, investigating archaeological sites, and abating river erosion at Jamestown in anticipation of the 300th anniversary. Although the Jamestown Tercentennial Exposition was held in Norfolk, the APVA received $50,000 in federal funding and an increase in visitation in association with the celebration. Mary Galt directed much of this work alongside Lucy Parke Chamberlayne Bagby. A descendant of the prominent Byrd family, Bagby referred to herself as "eternally a Confederate" and would chair the APVA's Jamestown committee for 20 years (Lindgren 1993:111). Bagby was outspoken and persistent. With Galt, she ushered in what Lindgren (1993) describes as prevailing nineteenth-century racialized viewpoints of traditionalism with the use of cultural symbols and selective cultural memory. Traditionalism opposed social pluralism, venerated social position by birth rather than achievement, stressed individual responsibility over environmental determinism, and emphasized historical idealism over historical realism. Another main focus of the APVA was to dispel the "lies" that northern textbooks had promoted about the Pilgrims being the "first" Americans. An important goal was to reassert not only that Jamestown was the first permanent English colony, but, as the president of the APVA stated in 1896, that "America was rescued from the grasp of Spain and France, and reserved to become the home of the Anglo-Saxon race" (Lindgren 1993:95).

From the traditionalist perspective, Jamestown and the United States belonged to Anglo-Protestants and certainly not to people of African descent. Any cultural memory of the First Africans or other founding African peoples was actively diminished and erased from the symbolic and physical landscape of Jamestown. Furthermore, Jamestown's official guidelines reflected Virginia's Jim Crow policies, stating that "negro excursions or picnic parties are not admitted" (Lindgren 1993:109). Similarly, the APVA homogenized, trivialized, and even tried to claim the Virginia Indian past as their own, dismissing contemporary Virginian Indians' ancestral ties to the margins on land stolen from them three hundred years earlier (see Gallivan et al. 2011; Hantman 2008 for a more thorough discussion of how Virginia Indian communities contested and continue to contest these narratives).

This racist treatment led some African Americans to refuse to participate in the Jamestown Exposition, but others, including Giles B. Jackson, W. Isaac Johnson, and Reverend A. Binga, Jr. took a different approach. They continued to challenge directly their exclusion and the erasure of their ancestors from the landscape. In an "Address to the American Negro," the group made the case that as a consequence of "the uncertain and unsatisfactory conditions now existing as to the Negro in this country…a creditable exhibit of his industrial capacities would result in untold good to the entire race" (Yarsinske 1999:32). The group's efforts were successful and Congress appropriated $100,000 for a Negro Building at the Jamestown Exposition in Norfolk for the creation of an exhibit hall honoring African American industry, history, and culture. The Virginia legislature refused to support it and Jim Crow laws allowed exposition officials to separate African American materials from

the white ones. Jackson, who was formerly enslaved and in 1887 became the first African American attorney certified to argue before the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals, led building and organizing efforts (Lee 2014). Designed by a Black architect and constructed by Black artisans and laborers, the Negro Building was filled with the products of Black virtuosity and technical skill such as African American life dioramas by sculptor Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller, which included a depiction of the forced arrival of Africans in 1619 (Fitzhugh Brundage 2003). Unfortunately, these dioramas were destroyed when Fuller's Philadelphia warehouse burned down in 1910. Throughout the fair the building received "unstinting commendation" from both Black and white visitors, some of whom considered its exhibits among the "most instructive features" of the entire exposition (Lee 2014; Yarsinske 1999:174). Despite being relegated to the periphery of the fairgrounds, the Negro Building drew in over 750,000 visitors (Lee 2014; Lindgren 1993; Yarsinske 1999).

Following the exposition, in 1916, J. M. Gandy, president of the Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute in Petersburg, requested permission from the APVA to erect a monument to the First Africans at Jamestown. The APVA responded with a rejection, stating:

> Jamestown was the first permanent Colony of the English speaking people in this Country…and the incident of bringing the negros by the Dutch ship to Jamestown forms no such part in the life of the Colony as will justify our granting permission to erect a memorial to that event (Lindgren 1993:110, "Report of the Jamestown Committee," YB 1931:23; Meeting, 6 Nov 1916, MB).

By interpreting Jamestown in this way, early preservationists obtained national recognition to force "an acceptance of the propriety, validity, and effectiveness of the Old South civilization. The past became a prologue to the present" (Lindgren 1993: 245). The APVA actively transformed Jamestown in order to link the colonial past to the Lost Cause by selectively presenting past (and even fictional) events, traditionalizing celebrations, placing commemorative plaques to solidify the intended interpretation, and beautifying the landscape and architecture. By denying Gandy's request the APVA promoted the erasure of the role of colonial Africans in the founding of America. Thomas Nelson Page, a frequent advisor, orator, and interpreter of history for the APVA, claimed that slavery "was brought upon the South without its fault, and continued to be forced upon her against her protests" (Lindgren 1993:110). Joseph Bryan, a Confederate veteran and APVA advisor, argued that slavery was a Northern creation and found "great gratification … to know that careful investigation has failed to show that any Virginian was ever engaged in the African slave trade" (Lindgren 1993:110). The blatant disregard or denial of Jamestown's role in the subjugation, dehumanization, and dependency on forced labor fostered continued structural violence against Native Americans and people of African descent. These formulas of erasure and banalization (Trouillot 2015), were a continuation of the scientific racist ideals that began at Jamestown in the seventeenth century, which continued to be transformed and only became more rigid after Reconstruction.

Some African Americans regularly inhabited Jamestown even as it transformed into a white public space. For example, although the APVA embraced Jim Crow

laws to ensure Jamestown's continued role as a shrine to white America, it employed African American custodians who ironically often acted as interpreters. Moreover, these African American men were responsible for giving the APVA-approved tours of the island to the scores of visitors who made pilgrimages to the site each year. Sam Robinson was hired by the APVA in 1934 and famously told "The Mother-in-Law" legend to Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip when they visited the 350th commemorative events in 1957. According to this legend, the roots of a Sycamore tree that pushed apart the graves of husband Rev. James Blair (the first president of the College of William and Mary) and wife Sarah Harrison, moving her grave closer to her family's plot, was an act beyond the grave of her mother who never approved of the marriage. (An audio recording of one of Robinson's 1957 tours has been preserved on YouTube; see: Archive Williamsburg 2016.)

Erosion concerns led to the construction of the seawall by the US Army Corps of Engineers, which included African American laborers from South Carolina. Galt grew concerned about the location of the labor camp at her sacred site, complaining about "the unsightly tents of the colored people so very near [the ruins] – the scene cannot be very attractive" (Lindgren 1993:119). Bagby worried that the laborers would disturb visitors and requested that police be on site "to keep order & ensure protection" (Lindgren 1993:119).

In 1930, Jamestown was authorized by Congress as a Colonial National Monument. The National Park Service purchased the remaining 1,500 ac (607 ha) and founded Colonial National Historical Park. The National Park Service partnered with the APVA to preserve and manage the island's historical resources for the public in an educational manner. Jamestown remained racially segregated, but African Americans continued to fight their unequal access. For example, after being refused admittance with some friends, Richmond clergyman W. L. Ransome wrote *The Richmond News Leader* to express feelings of "pain to know that Negroes are counted unworthy and unfit to stand on the soil to which their fathers were brought in 1619" (Smith 2002). In response, the APVA began allowing African Americans admission twice a year through the Hampton Institute. Presumably, the presence of the federal government also allowed for more access to the site for African American visitors as national legislation and rulings outlawed Jim Crow policies. Although it must also be noted that NPS continued to perpetuate the APVA's racialized historical narratives of Jamestown's past into the mid-twentieth century.

In 1957, a commision was founded to build Jamestown Festival Park in celebration of the 350th anniversary of the 1607 landing. In anticipation of the event, archaeologists John Cotter and H. Summerfield Day directed successive teams of African American Civilian Conservation Corps workers in the archaeological investigation and conservation of Jamestown. Much of the landscape familiar to visitors today is the result of their expert excavation, conservation, and restorations. Notably, the detailed personal notes of foreman Empy Jones would help archaeologists in the 1990s and 2010s reevaluate the diverse history of the island. This event was, in economic terms, a success. Once again, tourism increased and a new generation of visitors was exposed to the traditionalist narrative of Virginia's leading role in the founding and social development of the United States first promoted by the APVA. The 1957 commemoration melodramatically played up the role of the English

colonists and included a speculative reconstruction of the 1607 fort, wattle-and-daub buildings, and replica versions of the three English ships that made the first journey to the Chesapeake (Grasso and Wulf 2008).

The Festival Commission alloted a large portion of its resources to publishing educational booklets and microfilming important English documents (Yarsinske 1999). On Jamestown Island, a new Visitor Center was built, interpretive signage was placed throughout the town site and island, and artist Sydney King was commissioned to paint colonial scenes based on 1930s-50s architectural and archaeological interpretations (Horning 2006). This more scholarly approach to the telling of the Jamestown story still focused primarly on Anglo-Protestant influences on the founding of America. However, the Jamestown story broadened beyond adventure tales of famous colonists like John Smith to include the lifeways of the colonial port town, the roles of European women, and a more accurate portrayal of the role of Virginia Indians in the establishment of the English colony. Nonetheless, the experiences of African Americans and the origins of slavery and its central role in the development of the colony received virtually no attention (Yarsinske 1999). This interpretation helped solidify the public's understanding of the American or, as Horning (2006) notes, "proto-American," aspect of the site. African Americans, in the minds of many white southerners, were not part of the American story. For instance, the official commission report attributed the "success" of the colony solely to the English colonists, stating:

> The colonists brought with them the law, language, and religion of England. They convened in 1619 the first representative assembly in the New World. One hundred years before the Declaration of Independence, they resisted the British governor when he abused his authority and failed to provide adequate protection for the growing frontier population. At Jamestown, European agriculture and rudimentary industry were implanted in the area of what were to become the 13 original States (The Jamestown-Williamsburg-Yorktown Celebration Commission 1958: 2).

There is not a single mention of the contributions and roles of Africans or African Americans in the colony in any of the official sesquarcentennial booklets or reports. The memories of two African American women I met with who visited the 1957 celebrations as children corroborate this attempted erasure of an early African presence at Jamestown. They remember the thrill of visiting the Virginia Indian village reconstruction, but neither has any memory of the arrival or the role of Africans being acknowledged or represented. To these two women (and others, as discussed below), Jamestown represented and persists as a white space. Historians point to the social, cultural, and political upheaval of this period as the reason for Park officials' narrow focus on Anglo-Protestant accomplishment at this time (McLennan 2012). The country was still in the midst of legal segregation and Black activists and their allies were beginning to win human rights victories in the Federal courts. Most famously, the 1954 United States Supreme Court's ruling in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education* rendered segregation in public schools illegal. However, in 1956, Virginia in reaction to this ruling adopted the policy of "*massive resistance*" to block desegregation efforts. Certainly, these events influenced the

festival's celebratory interpretation of colonial history at Jamestown. However, these traditionalist interpretations continued a half-century practice of constructing a narrative of Anglo-Protestant exceptionalism at the expense of a fuller, more accurate, multiethnic history. This white supremacist version of the history of the founding of English North America would influence many textbooks and popular writings, promoting race-class hierarchial ideologies and the further erasue of people of African descent in early America (Lindgren 1993). Thus, Anglo-Protestant elites were able to use "archival power" (Trouillot 2015) to further influence what is and is not a serious object of research, and, by extension, who was considered American.

Inscribing Whiteness on Jamestown's Cultural Landscape

The monumental architecture of Jamestown continues to support the traditionalist ideology first disseminated by the APVA. This includes statues dedicated to well-known individuals like Pocahontas (dedicated in 1922) and Captain John Smith (1909) and a shrine dedicated to Rev. Robert Hunt (1922), the colony's first Anglican minister. Other memorials commemorate famous events (i.e., the Tercentennial Monument unveiled in 1907) and symbolic places (i.e., the Wooden Cross dedicated in 1957 to mark the location of the early burial grounds). Only one of these commemorative works, the Pocahontas statue, is dedicated to a non-English individual. Yet, even this statue lacks the cultural sensitivity it deserves as the Virginia Indian culture is misrepresented by clothing more indicative of a Plains Indian woman (Fig. 4). Ultimately, this statue represents the appropriation of Pocahontas by western civilization and silences the complexities of Powhatan-English relations during her lifetime (Horning 2006).

Additionally, the dedicational text on many of these monuments is extremely ethnocentric and seems to serve early twentieth-century white supremacist practices of erasing Black and Native people from the historical record. For example, the text for the Tercentennial Monument simply focuses on the English inhabitants that occupied the fort and later colonial town (Fig. 5). This is striking because early Jamestown was a diverse place with people living in the colony from numerous European regions, Persia, West and Central Africa, and several different Virginia Indian tribal nations. Further, even primary accounts from seventeenth-century colonists confirm that the English colony would not have survived without the aid and labor of the Powhatan Indians. Nor would the colony have thrived without the labor of Africans and African Americans. As Horning (2006) has previously stated, the celebratory landscape which transformed Jamestown from a southern to a national shrine is still appealing to twenty-first-century visitors, but this landscape reveals more about the Jamestown of the Jim Crow era than the Jamestown of the 1600s. Jamestown became central to Virginia's Anglo-American elites' efforts to reassert their power in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By retaking not only political control through Jim Crow laws, but also social control by using the past as a means to assert white supremacy, elite governance, and social hierarchy, Southern elites were also able to define what was and was not "American" by reconstructing Jamestown as a national symbol (Horning 2006).

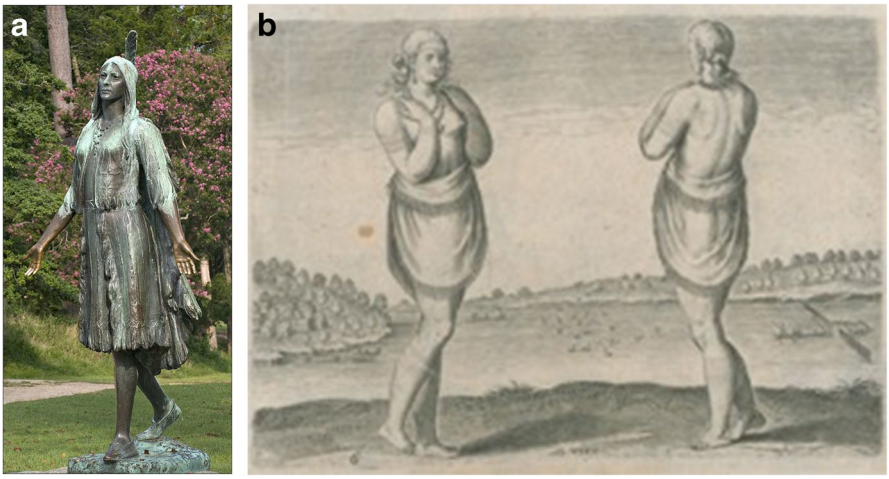

Fig. 4 Left, Statue of Pocahontas by William Ordway Partridge was erected in 1922 at Jamestown (Photograph courtesy of Hfdapuirhdk via Wikimedia Commons). Right, *A young gentle Woman Daughter of Secota*, ca. 1590 engraving by Theodore de Bry based on John White's watercolors (Courtesy of Special Collections Research Center, William & Mary Libraries). Both images are European depictions of southeastern Algonquin Indian women during the early period of European contact. These artistic renderings and associated texts continue to influence perceptions of Native American peoples and the North American past

Fig. 5 The Tercentennial Monument dedicated at Historic Jamestowne in 1907 to mark the 300th anniversary of the founding of the Jamestown Colony. The monument multiple engravings only focus on the English people roles in founding the colony while overlooking the important contributions of Virginia Indians, captive Africans, and other European peoples in securing the permanency of the colony (Photographs by the author)

Contesting Jamestown's "White" Past: 1990 to Present

Certainly, the founding of Jamestown as the first permanent English colony is an important history that should continue to be preserved and studied. Still, misconceptions of an isolated colony inhabited only by Anglo-Protestant people must be challenged and addressed. An aim of recent rehistoricization efforts at Jamestown has been to gain a better understanding of interethnic relationships. Over the last three decades archaeologists, historians, and Native American and African Diasporic scholars have worked to recontextualize the cultural landscape of Jamestown Island (Brown and Horning 2004; Horn 2018; Horning 1995; Horning et al. 1998; Kelso et al. 1995; Kelso and Straube 2004; McCartney and Walsh 2003). During the lead up to the quadricentennial celebrations at Jamestown, two projects led to more nuanced understanding of the island's multiethnic seventeenth-century settlement. The Jamestown Archaeological Assessment (JAA), led by Cary Carson, Marley Brown, III, and Audrey Horning from 1992 to 1996, conducted a reassessment of human history and activity on the island as a whole (Brown and Horning 2004; Horning 1995, 2007). This reanalysis led to better understanding of the long history of Virginia's First People on the island, the colonial town site, the historic landholdings, reassessment of earlier excavations, and burial reassessments. It also led to a better understanding of the roles that enslaved, indentured, and free Africans and African Americans played in founding this nation. Another important contribution of the JAA project was supporting and utilizing the research skills of graduate and postgraduate African American students in the archival and archaeological research program, including Maria Franklin and Anna Agbe-Davies. In fact, Agbe-Davies' dissertation (and later book) included a large sample of pipes from Jamestown (Agbe-Davies 2004, 2015; Brown and Horning 2004). Although the JAA project made giant strides toward better understanding the interethnic community of early Jamestown, questions still remain about the lives and influences of people of African descent. Accordingly, researchers recommended that further research into the roles of enslaved, indentured, and free Africans and African Americans would contribute to the overall understanding of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Virginia (Brown and Horning 2004; Horning et al. 2001).

Similarly, beginning in 1994 Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation (JRF) conducted open air excavations of Preservation Virginia's parcel (formerly APVA) (Kelso 1995, 2006; Kelso and Straube 2004). These excavations continued to focus on the first decade of the colony, leading to the rediscovery of the 1607 fort and better understandings of Powhatan-English relations (Kelso and Straube 2004). Additionally, Jamestown Settlement (formerly Jamestown Festival Park) unveiled their "Three Cultures, One Century, America's Story" permanent exhibit in 2007, contextualizing the historical and cultural milieu of Native Americans, Africans, and Europeans (Grasso and Wulf 2008). The "From Africa to Virginia" section contributed to previously overlooked influences of the Central African orgins of early seventeenth-century enslaved Africans and included videos, text, and seventeenth-century objects excavated or recovered from present-day Angola.

However, although the archaeological research led to better interpretation of the diverse group of actors that lived, labored, and died in the early colony, the 400th

commemoration of Jamestown once again focused on the master narrative of Jamestown as "America's Birthplace" (Gallivan et al. 2011; Grasso and Wulf 2008; Horning 2006). For instance, when President George W. Bush visited Jamestown during the 2007 commemoration, instead of framing the event as a time for reflection as some Native American and African American groups encouraged, he saw it as a time to "celebrate," stating "Yet they are more than just American values and British values, or Western values. They are universal values that come from a power greater than any man or any country. These values took root at Jamestown four centuries ago" (Bush 2007). Addresses like this and Trump's 2019 address ignore the history of violence, enslavement, and warfare that took place at Jamestown, and may contribute to feelings of estrangement from this version of history and heritage sites by marginalized groups (Gallivan et al. 2011; Grasso and Wulf 2008).

Despite the strides that have been made over the last three decades, misunderstandings of Jamestown's historical past still persist in public memory. Only one of the six interviewees remembers attending the 2007 commemoration. Having grown up only a few miles from Jamestown, she had no memory of being taught about the First Africans in school and believes she first heard of Africans living in colonial Jamestown during one of the 2007 commemorative events. History exists only in relation to the present, thus individual and collective memory are shaped by the politics and power relations of the present (Trouillot 2015). As Quentin Lewis (2015:279) notes, "Disjunctures between historical events and the narratives that describe those events reveal underlying power relations and inequality" such that revisions to historical narratives must also take into account various retelling of those events across time and space. Failure to challenge these narratives only reaffirms Jamestown as white public heritage space.

Outsiders Within

In order to explore questions about inclusion and exclusion at Jamestown, I began meeting with African American community collaborators beginning in the summer of 2018 who shared their stories, insights, and recommendations for respectful remembrance of African and African American culture and history. In early 2019 I conducted a pilot study with six African American women who live locally in southeastern Virginia and/or self-identify as descendants of First Africans. The interviews were semi-structured, allowing the women to decide what they wished to highlight and what they did not want to discuss. Therefore, the knowledge production at work is collaborative, shaped by the desires and ideas of the interviewees and interviewer, but also accounting for the social and cultural context (Valkonen and Wallenius-Korkalo 2016). The interviewees were selected through informal conversations with local community members identified through Angela Site community meetings and various African Diasporic-related history, culture, and social justice events.

This project presented me with unique opportunites and challenges given my role as researcher and my social postion as an African American woman who descends from a family of early eighteenth-century free people of color in Tidewater Virginia.

I share a similar cultural background with the women I interviewed. The shared connection helped create a safe and confidential space in which creating knowledge from inside the African American community became possible. One interviewee described the importance of including African American voices in the interpretation of First Africans at Jamestown:

> I think it matters a lot. And I think it's the African Americans who should be talking about their own history because the other folks on the outside looking in don't really know what happened. We know what happened. We know how we feel. And some of them looking on don't really see what they need to see. They might see what they want to see, but they don't really see what really is to write anything. It needs to be people who are African American. The other folks who write books, they may have some of it right, but not all the time right. (Descendant "P", pers. comm., 2019).

At the same time, generational and other differences in our backgrounds allowed for rich exchanges and discussion of ideas from varied perspectives. Additionally, my privileged position as a researcher attached to both a university and a federal government agency allowed me a forum to amplify the voices of local African Americans who feel like their and their ancestors' narratives have been purposefully left out of historical and anthropological knowledge productions. However, these differences and my role as researcher may also affect the disscussed topics and the information that was revealed.

The interviewees are in a unique position of knowledge having grown up around or living near symbols of national heritage that have, in many cases, trivialized or erased the narratives of them and their ancestors. Furthermore, these interviews offer an opportunity for community collaborators to inform researchers about the specific questions they have about the local past and particular research topics they would like to be explored.

"It's Not About Us"

Despite these more inclusive methods and interpretations recently developed at the Historic Jamestowne heritage site, many African Americans still consider Jamestown a space packaged for and consumed exclusively by whites. As previously stated, one African American woman told me, "Why would we want to go to Jamestown? It's not about us" (Descendant "S", pers. comm., 2019*)*. Collective memories among local Black communities dating back to the Jim Crow era still influence perceptions of who is welcomed at Jamestown and whose heritage is actually represented. During Jim Crow, African Americans were not simply excluded figuratively from the Jamestown site narrative, but were physically barred from the site as well. During oral biographical interviews with descendants*,* the long-term effects of white public heritage space and the transformative power of the First Africans story became clear.

Historically, "First Africans" refers to the "28 or 32" Africans that arrived in Jamestown in August of 1619, who were captured the previous year during the

Portuguese wars in the regions surrounding and within modern-day Angola (Heywood and Thornton 2007; Horn 2018; Thornton 1998), of whom, as mentioned earlier, Angela was one. To the women I interviewed, First Africans represent the foremothers and forefathers of African American culture and recovering their stories and heritage may be the key to unlocking the origins of anti-Black racism in America.

The personal histories shared by the six women range in time from the legal segregation era to the present day. The act of enunciating this history and producing this material is part of the decolonizing process as the women's stories form a counter-narrative to the hegemonic white public space narratives and exemplify the value of an oral biographical approach (Valkonen and Wallenius-Korkalo 2016). Additionally, these narratives can be regarded as retrospectives on the effects of civic estrangement and assessments on how white public heritage space (especially in the education system) has impacted them.

According to the women I interviewed, many local African Americans see Jamestown as a middle and upper middle class "white people's" heritage site. Most recalled past visits where they felt they were treated like they did not belong. One interviewee spoke of the long cultural memory of local African American communities and when asked why many of these communities may not engage at sites like Historic Jamestowne, stated that it was likely that "somebody said something inappropriate or awkward" when they were on a tour, "so why keep setting yourself up for that?" (Descendant "L", pers. comm., 2019). Another interviewee laughed at the idea that the site welcomed Black people (Descendant "A", pers. comm., 2019). While many did not express a negative feeling toward the site, they noted its insignificance to them, their families, and communities. When asked whether she and her family visited Jamestown while she was growing up, one woman who grew up 5 mi (8 km) away from Jamestown responded, "We knew Jamestown was down [the road] there, but we didn't go there. It was not something that was thrown out there as 'you need to go there' or 'you need to find out about it.' We just knew it was there and that was it" (Descendant "S", pers. comm., 2019).

While the opinions of the women were shaped by past experiences at Historic Jamestowne, school textbooks, popular writings, and media representations also influenced their responses. In particular, these opinions were formed early for the four women who grew up in the area through school field trips or family visits during or immediately after the Jim Crow era. One woman, remembering visiting Jamestown in the early 1960s during a fourth-grade field trip, recollected:

> Why would we want to go to Jamestown? It's not about us, so people just didn't try to go to Jamestown, except for if you were taken there for your school trip because fourth grade was the year that everyone got to go to Jamestown […] There was nothing mentioned about any Blacks living at Jamestown […] Nobody knew anything. Nobody talked about it. It wasn't talked about. It wasn't brought up. (Descendant "S", pers. comm., 2019).

Five of the six women I interviewed did not remember hearing any conversations about black people or recall historic interpretations of "Black people being there" when they visited the Park prior to the existence of the Angela Site. In fact, the only

woman who did not view Jamestown with a sense of detachment had not been to the Park until 2018 when she specifically visited for Angela site-related activities.

My questions about the Jamestowne heritage site in particular elicited broader histories of racial violence in the area. One informant recalled witnessing a Klan rally in the early 1970s when driving down what she believes was the Colonial Parkway. While with her family, she recalls seeing a Ku Klux Klan rally in a clearing that took place under the guard of state troopers with shotguns. She recalled that "What I remember is that they were just kind of standing around and I remember this vision of them, and I remember my mom saying '[Father's name], we gotta get out of here' and he didn't question that… I remember that very clearly." (Descendant "L", pers. comm., 2019). Although she could not recall exactly where this event took place in the Williamsburg/Jamestown area, it was a vivid memory that she attached to feelings toward visiting the area as a child. These experiences with racist and exclusionary symbols both at the heritage site and nearby are likely shared across local African American communities and become part of the cultural memory of Jamestown for some.

For others, the "unwelcoming" feeling is linked to the impression that Jamestown chooses to set itself apart from the rest of the Hampton Roads community. Some of the women mentioned that public events at Historic Jamestowne were not broadcasted to local Hampton Roads communities – especially African American groups. Their exclusion from the advertising efforts of events further solidifies their sense that Historic Jamestowne is more of a site for middle class, white tourists than for local African American families. However, the incorporation of diverse narratives like the story of Angela and the First Africans at Historic Jamestowne is creating new spaces for archaeologists and community members to explore together. As a result of the Angela narrative, some community members are reconsidering their impressions of whose heritage is represented at Jamestown.

The Angela Site is opening up space for Historic Jamestowne and local community members to reflect on the history and influences of Africans and African Americans in Tidewater Virginia (Figs. 6 and 7). Building upon the research and interpretations of the 1990s JAA project, archaeologists and public historians are publicizing the history of seventeenth-century captive Africans, later enslaved populations, and the 1930s and 1950s CCC archaeologists in myriad ways. The "First Africans" walking tour by JRF public historian Mark Summers focuses on African and African American life and culture at Jamestown. The archaeological site serves as an outdoor museum, archaeologists interact with visitors and keep them informed about the most recent research on Angela and the First Africans narrative. They explain the process of archaeology to visitors and allow hands-on opportunities with some artifacts. These interactions give visitors a tangible connection to the past, and many express feelings of great empathy and emotion when they realize they are standing where Angela once lived and worked (Levin 2011; Morris 2017).

This connection has been important to many of the women I spoke with who have visited Jamestown since the start of the Angela project. All of the women I interviewed also expressed interest in learning more about the First Africans and participating in future engagement opportunities at the site. One woman I interviewed

Fig. 6 A break-out session during one of the Angela Site community events in 2019 at the Historic Jamestowne Visitor Center. Community members led conversations with each other and researchers and gave feedback on questions and themes they wanted the Angela Site research team to focus on (Photograph courtesy of Carolyn Black)

began probing her past attitude toward Historic Jamestowne and what has been written about early American history, stating:

> That's when I go back to that history book thought process. Has this been edited? Is this the true story? Or is this just the "white wash" of it? How many times have I heard this story before? Is it anything new I'm learning? So, I really am going to be honest and transparent – I come in with this bias. I come in with a very strong bias. I remember a family visited us in Williamsburg and we were like "What do we want to do?" and they were like "I am not going to Colonial Williamsburg because I don't want to see any more 'slave stuff.'"

Fig. 7 Descendant community members visiting the Angela Site after a community meeting in 2019 (Photographs taken by the author)

> So it's just like this bias of what to expect and it wasn't until this Angela Project – I'm like "Maybe I should open my eyes?" And the [events around] 1619 that's going on [made me think] maybe I should start shedding these biases." (Descendant "A", pers. comm., 2019).

As examined above, these "biases" are informed by how African and African American history has been taught and interpreted traditionally at white public heritage sites. The Angela Site offers space to contest white public heritage space by essentially becoming an outdoor forum for visitors. Offering a space for open dialogue to confront these misrepresentations will be critical in order to topple white public heritage narratives. Similarly, Historic Jamestowne archaeologists and education staff are offering opportunities for classrooms to bring students to the site to learn about the science of archaeology, to engage hands-on with history, and to think critically about what artifacts may tell us about obscured realities of the colony. Project archaeologists have also visited local Hampton Roads classrooms to talk to students about the Angela Site and the diversity of early America. These classroom interactions show students how the past informs the present, allowing students to see that this history is not static and foreign, but that all have an active role in interpreting history and the legacies of the past. This is critical since all of the women I talked to stated that they learned virtually nothing about the First Africans in Virginia while in K-12 classrooms. Consequently, one community member expressed the importance of Angela and the First Africans story as part of the larger African American narrative of oppression, resistance, and resilience, remarking that the Angela Site has the potential to further others' "understanding of what a group of people have gone through if it's told right" (Descendant "A", pers. comm., 2019).

However, another woman expressed concerns about historians and archaeologists reinterpreting the status of the First Africans from indentured to enslaved from the beginning, asking, "if that indeed did happen – what governing bodies were instrumental in bringing that about? They were still human beings, why were they treated differently because of the color of their skin? If that started back then, is that why we still have it now? Is that related?" (Descendant "P", pers. comm., 2019).

Work at the Angela Site counters the traditional view of colonial history by allowing visitors, local community members, and descendants to ask questions and to critically examine the origins of the complex and paradoxical relationship of Black people to America. Through community events and one-on-one interviews, we are also soliciting and incorporating important themes and questions from African American descendant community members into the project. Empowering descendant voices challenges the public to consider the points of view of the historically marginalized. Beyond simply gaining historical information, archaeologists working respectfully with descendants can forge connections and transform concepts and narratives of heritage sites. The Angela Site advances the praxis of decolonizing anthropological approaches by shedding light on counter-histories of seventeenth-century Virginia and creating spaces for descendant communities to produce and share their own knowledges should they wish.

Conclusion

The archaeology and history of the First Africans represents an important counter to white public heritage space. In order to advance this research, scholars must continue to involve descendant communities and share the power of knowledge production. An oral biographical emphasis allows Jamestown (and other area sites) to transform from a "top down" approach to allow for history to be told "from within" the communities they affect most (Valkonen and Wallenius-Korkalo 2016). Further, this approach creates collaborative knowledge production within the community where the site is located (Atalay 2012; James Madison's Montpelier 2018; LaRoche and Blakey 1997; SAA 2017). This study begins to illustrate that we as archaeologists are not always effective at sharing the knowledge we are creating with the communities in which our sites and research are based. Twenty-two years after Maria Franklin (1997:39) argued that "it is a sad irony that archaeology is perhaps the only discipline involved in the study of early black lifeways which has yet to incorporate significant contributions from any segment of black society," this remains an unfortunate reality at many African Diasporic archaeology sites. The discipline of archaeology and the heritage sites many of us practice in are not timeless or static, nor are our positions within the cultures and communities that we study. While Jamestown is uniquely regarded as the "Birthplace of American Democracy," we must recognize that each site that we investigate is part of a larger community with living descendants. The Angela Site is bringing archaeologists and the descendant community together to complicate traditional narratives of American history by exploring questions about how Black people were central to the founding of this country, and how they were exploited to help create and maintain white supremacy (Berry and Gross 2020). Descendant community voices should and must be included and taken seriously.

Although racist violence has been a reality of American society over the last four centuries, recent anti-Black police and white vigilante violence against Black Americans emphasize the lack of ethical education about the history and lasting legacies of American chattel slavery, and the need for shared understandings (EJI 2017). Protests over racialized policing and Confederate/Lost Cause symbolism have created a space and desire for more earnest and thorough explorations of Americans' shared histories across identity lines that intersect even as they divide us. In this moment, archaeologists must more carefully examine who benefits from our research and empower the communities our research impacts by seeking their input.

The Angela Site project members, including myself, are committed to continuing the task of decolonizing history at Jamestowne. We have started an oral history project to investigate the experiences of the 1930s and 1950s segregated African American CCC field and lab technicians (Fig. 8). We will also continue to present research at local venues and look forward to creating an affinity consultation group with descendants and other interested people. Through the community engagement meetings, we will continue to create a space for researchers, community collaborators, and park managers to evolve Historic Jamestowne

Fig. 8 The author interviewing Mr. Purcell Bailey, of Surry County, a former CCC worker who mainly worked at the Williamsburg CCC Camp in the late 1930s, but visited the Jamestown excavations regularly. Mr. Bailey, who will be 102 years old in September, 2021, shared his memories about his CCC service and the Jamestown excavation crew with Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation in 2018 and 2019 (Photograph courtesy of Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation)

beyond its role as white public heritage space by uncovering and exploring more diverse and accurate narratives of our shared past.

By focusing on diverse stories that are so often sidelined, we are not necessarily advocating for replacing narratives of English colonists like John Smith. Rather, as one of the interviewees in the pilot study pointed out, we are *enhancing* them (Descendant "H", pers. comm., 2019). Jamestown's importance as the first permanent English settlement in North America should not be diminished. Instead, misconceptions that were promoted at the heritage site during the early Jim Crow era should continue to be challenged and contested by all who work and volunteer at the site, as well as by those who visit it. At Jamestown, archaeologists began confronting and complicating the story of English America's first colony in the 1990s, but as another commemorative event faded from the minds of the public much of the gains were lost once again. It is the hope that an affinity group of descendant community members will help hold Historic Jamestowne accountable and reshape the Jamestown experience for future generations. But only time will tell if the current efforts will help break the symbolic power of white public heritage space.

Acknowledgments This article is adapted from my master's thesis, undertaken at the Department of Anthropology at the College of William and Mary, on the intersection of race, memory, community, and archaeology on Jamestown Island in southeast Virginia. I would like to express my sincerest thanks to the community collaborators who shared their knowledge, questions, and memories with me. I am grateful to my faculty advisor Joseph Jones for his guidance, encouragement, and thoughtfulness. I would like to express the deepest appreciation to my committee members, Michael Blakey and Audrey Horning for their enthusiasm, constructive criticisms, and feedback. I greatly appreciate the support and funding I received from Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation, the National Park Service's Colonial National Historical Park, and William & Mary's Office of Graduate Studies and Research to conduct research at the Angela Site. A special thanks to Camille Westmont and Elizabeth Clay for inviting me to participate in this thematic issue. I would like to thank Adela Amaral, Neil Norman, Ravynn Stringfield, Jennifer

Porter-Lupu, Tiffany Cain-Fryer, and Aja Lans for reviewing versions of this article and offering helpful suggestions.

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