NATIONAL PARK SERVICE • U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

In Plain Sight: African Americans at Andersonville National Historic Site

A Special History Study

December 2020

On the Cover:

Top image: Three unidentified women near Andersonville. “Andersonville Shanty,” in folder dated “1890, 1905,” Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans.

Bottom image: Group of African American girl scouts placing flags on markers at Andersonville National Cemetery on Memorial Day, Sumter County, May 1976. Courtesy, Georgia Archives, Vanishing Georgia Collection, sum119.

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Andersonville National Historic Site

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Georgia

December 2020

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Andersonville National Historic Site

Andersonville, Georgia

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AMA	American Missionary Association
AMAA	American Missionary Association Archives
AME	African Methodist Episcopal
AXPW	American Ex-Prisoner of War, Inc.
CBCVB	Black Caucus Veterans Braintrust
CRC	Civil Rights Congress
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
GAR	Grand Army of the Republic
GHC	Georgia Historical Commission
GMP	General Management Plan
HIAP	Historic Interpretive Apprentice Program
HRMP	Historic Resource Management Plan
HRS	Historic Resource Study
LRIP	Long-Range Interpretive Plan
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NACW	National Association of Colored Women
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
NHS	National Historic Site
NPS	National Park Service
PEPC	Planning Environment and Public Comment
POW	Prisoner of War
SCLC	Southern Christian Leadership Conference
SCV	Sons of Confederate Veterans
SECRAC	Southwest Cultural Resource Advisory Committee
SNCC	Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee
SWGP	Southwest Georgia Project
UDC	United Daughters of the Confederacy
USCI	United States Colored Infantry
USCT	U.S. Colored Troops
WCGPC	West Central Georgia Planning Commission
WCGPDC	West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission
W.E.B.	William Edward Burghardt Du Bois
WRC	Women's Relief Corps

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Introduction

Hiding in Plain Sight

INTRODUCTION

Many have traveled, often unwillingly, through southwest Georgia since European Americans seized the land from American Indians in the early 19th century. William Edward Burghardt (W.E.B.) Du Bois, a young history and economics professor at Atlanta University, came in 1898 as part of a study on Dougherty County. He described his travel five years later in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903). "If you wish to ride with me," Du Bois wrote, "you must come into the 'Jim Crow Car.' There will be no objection. . . . Of course this car is not so good as the other, but it is fairly clean and comfortable. The discomfort lies chiefly in the hearts of those four Black men yonder—and in mine."[1] Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore, a Welsh-born photographer, traveled with Du Bois. In Albany, Dugmore noted that Du Bois was "not allowed even to come on the verandah" of the White hotel.[2] The rail route to Albany likely took Du Bois and Dugmore from Atlanta to Macon and then through Fort Valley, Andersonville, and Americus. "Below Macon the world grows darker; for now we approach the Black Belt," he wrote, "that strange land of shadows, at which even slaves paled in the past, and whence come now only faint and half-intelligible murmurs of the world beyond."[3]

In his early writings, Du Bois mentioned Andersonville only in passing for its nearness to the Flint River that passes through Albany. Yet his analysis of fin de siècle (meaning "end of century") Albany and Dougherty County applied to Andersonville as well. "This is the Cotton Kingdom," Dubois wrote of southwest Georgia, "the shadow of a dream of slave empire which for a generation intoxicated a people."[4] Decades of human movement animated the region once known, Du Bois said, as "the Egypt of the Confederacy." First, came the U.S. government's expulsion of American Indians; then came the forced introduction of tens of thousands of enslaved men, women, and children. Du Bois described the Antebellum era as the prologue to war, emancipation, Reconstruction, and the resurgence of racial terror by the end of the 19th century. He imagined the early history as a series of resonances. He could almost still hear it. "Day after day," Du Bois wrote, "the clank of chained feet marching from Virginia and Carolina to Georgia was heard in these rich swamp lands." Amid the inanimate sounds of chains came the sounds of human suffering. "Day after day," he continued, "the songs of the callous, the wail of the motherless, and the muttered curses of the wretched echoed from the Flint to the Chickasawhatchee, until by 1860 there had risen in West Dougherty perhaps the richest slave kingdom the modern world ever knew." For Du Bois it was a "curious" place filled with "untold story" and "shadowed with a tragic past." It was "a land of rapid contrasts and of curiously mingled hope and pain."[5]

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1. W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, edited by David W. Blight (Boston: Bedford Books, 1997), 104. On Du Bois in Georgia, see Lee W. Formwalt, "W.E.B. Du Bois in Turn-of-the-Century Atlanta, 1897–1910," *Society* 50, No. 2 (April 2013), 180–189; W. E. B. Du Bois, "Testimony of Prof. W. E. Burghardt Du Bois," February 13 1901, in *Reports of the Industrial Commission on Immigration, Including Testimony, with Review and Digest, and Special Reports*, Vol. 15 (Washington G.P.O., 1901), 159–175

2. A. Radclyffe Dugmore, *The Autobiography of a Wanderer* (London: Hurst & Blacklett, 1930), 115

3. Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*, 105.

4. W. E. Burghardt Du Bois "The Negro as He Really Is: A Definite Study of One Locality in Georgia Showing the Exact Conditions of Every Negro Family—Their Economic Status—Their Ownership of Land—Their Morals—Their Family Life—The Houses They Live in and the Results of the Mortgage System," *The World's Work* 2 (May–October 1901), 852. This was the first iteration of what became two chapters in *The Souls of Black Folk*.

5. Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*, 100, 110, 111.

The 1898 journey through southwest Georgia was the first but not the last time Du Bois came through, wrote about, or left an impact on the region. His early writings inspired Joseph Winthrop Holley to establish the Albany Bible and Manual Training Institute, now known as Albany State University. Over the decades, Du Bois received multiple invitations to give lectures and commencement addresses.[6] He also returned to the subject of Andersonville and southwest Georgia in his classic, *Black Reconstruction in America* (1935), which became the foundational text of all modern studies on Reconstruction. In the penultimate chapter, Du Bois recovered the story of Clara Barton and "a colored wife of 18, whom her husband, a blacksmith, brought to her, walking 30 or 40 miles." Although he did not record their names, Du Bois recounted the harrowing story of violence against a pregnant woman who had been "unable to do the task of spinning which was given her." Still treated as property after the war, the couple fled their home for the hope of a better life elsewhere.[7]

The story of Arnold and Delia Cato, their toddler Samuel, and their unborn son Arnold, is presented in the first chapter of this study. Their journey from slavery to freedom is one of the many stories that illustrate the application of Du Bois's early assessment of southwest Georgia. Grasping for metaphors in *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois never seemed satisfied that one term or phrase captured the meaning of the "Black Belt" in southwest Georgia. There was also the "the Cotton Kingdom," the "shadow of a dream of slave empire," the "Egypt of the Confederacy," and "that strange land of shadows." The significance of the beknighted region hid in plain sight and called out for understanding.

This study is organized chronologically from the mid-19th century through the 21st century. Chapter one situates Andersonville and southwest Georgia within the cotton boom and the collapse of slavery. The region's remoteness, alongside the availability of enslaved labor, led to its selection as the place to locate a massive prison camp. Aside from a few names—Berry, Henry, Gus, and a few others—we will never know the names of most of the people who cleared the land, built the stockade, dug the earthworks, hauled food, and buried the dead. Accounting for the role of the enslaved is not merely an addition to the military story; rather, it fundamentally changes the meaning and the significance of the prison site, the cemetery, and the town. Some of the enslaved lived in Sumter and nearby counties; others were U.S. soldiers captured in battle and taken to Andersonville. By 1865, Andersonville was a grim monument to a government and an army built on the labor, knowledge, and skills of enslaved people. And yet, surprisingly, Andersonville quickly emerged from the Civil War as a refuge for men, women, and children like the Cato family fleeing slavery in southwest Georgia.

The possibility that Andersonville would become a symbol, not of slavery but emancipation and freedom, emerged quickly as the U.S. military seized Andersonville and began building the national cemetery. The seizure of land leased to the Confederacy during the war made Andersonville a magnet for landless people fleeing the traumas of slavery. As chapter two illustrates, the American Missionary Association (AMA) took advantage of this opportunity. In 1866, the AMA established a freedmen's school in the ruins of the Confederate Hospital located south of Andersonville and just east of the Southwestern Railroad. For nearly a decade, the

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6. J. W. Holley, President, Georgia Normal and Agricultural College (Albany, Ga.) to W. E. B. Du Bois, February 24, 1937, W. E. B. Du Bois Papers, MS 312, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries; W. E. B. Du Bois to Dr. Holley, April 13, 1937, Du Bois Papers, UMass Amherst.

7. W. B. Burghardt Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay Toward a History of the Part which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860–1880* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1935), 672–673.

school and the presence of the U.S. government were local symbols of Reconstruction and the promise of social transformation. At least one freedman at Andersonville, Floyd Snelson, went from the Sumter School to Atlanta University and embarked on a long, successful ministerial career. While both the teachers and administrators of the AMA envisioned their work as divinely inspired and politically radical, there were limitations to reform. Friction frequently arose between northern teachers and the men, women, and children struggling to survive in the dangerous region.

Although the Sumter School lasted less than a decade, it overlapped with important years in the national cemetery. As chapter three demonstrates, Andersonville National Cemetery served as a promising place to work, raise a family, and exercise new political rights. Whereas enslaved people like Peter and Cornelius built the prison landscape in 1864 and 1865, freedpeople like Floyd Snelson, James Haygood, and Robert Dinkins built the national cemetery landscape. The cemetery workers navigated a tense political landscape because threats of political retaliation and racial violence came both from local Whites and sometimes their own employers in the federal government. Over time, as Andersonville employed fewer African Americans at poorer wages, the cemetery transitioned from a place to work to a place of pilgrimage.

Chapter four continues a focus on African American pilgrimages to Andersonville, even as these were decreasing in numbers and changing in form. The grip of Jim Crow and the terror brought by the height of the southern lynching epidemic during the early decades of the 20th century undoubtedly served as a deterrent for African Americans, though pilgrimage never ceased entirely. By the 1930s, Black clubwomen carried on the tradition of honoring the sacrifice of Union soldiers and emancipationist memory of the Civil War. The chapter also expands to consider local African Americans in Sumter and Macon Counties, who were largely entwined with an unequal agrarian society. The chapter reveals, however, that some of these African Americans continued a tradition of Black workers at the prison site and cemetery; by the 1940s these government positions clearly offered a rung up the southern economic ladder. In addition, as later chapters will show, Black landowners bordered the site, making up its nearest neighbors. After World War II, the U.S. Army segregated burials in the National Cemetery, capitulating to southern custom. The post-war years, however, saw the birth of the modern civil rights movement, which came to Sumter County and shaped the lives of African Americans in Americus and Andersonville.

Sumter County was in the thick of the movement by the 1960s. The southwest Georgia city of Americus, only 10 miles from Andersonville, became a notable site of conflict between civil rights activists and defenders of segregation. Chapter five explores this movement and its intersections with Andersonville National Cemetery. Led initially by local activists who relied heavily upon the support of African American businesses and churches, the movement focused on voter registration. In 1963, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) came to Americus, following its work in Albany, and this phase of the movement became known as the Southwest Georgia Project. At one point, several SNCC leaders proposed a protest march to Andersonville National Cemetery, but it did not materialize. After SNCC left in 1965, local women and men continued to fight for their rights, particularly the goal of integrating the public school system. While the rural community of Andersonville was not a focus of these activities, local residents were certainly aware of the protests in Americus, especially high school students who attended the segregated high school there. Andersonville National Cemetery also integrated during this time, and notable burials included a civil rights protestor and an Alabama

Vietnam War soldier whose family chose to bury him here rather than the pauper's section of their community cemetery.

The Andersonville National Cemetery and Prison Park attracted growing regional and national attention in the late 1950s with the publication of MacKinlay Kantor's novel *Andersonville* and the upcoming centennial of the Civil War. Through the 1960s, local and state boosters promoted the establishment of a national park here to promote tourism and economic development in this region. To gain support for the proposal, in the thick of the civil rights movement, the National Park Service (NPS) proposed a focus on the prisoner of war experience that did not include any attention to the African American story at the Andersonville site both during and after the Civil War. Further, the Department of the Interior purchased much of the land of this African American community established here along the Dixie Highway, further erasing the stories of Black people who had lived here and tended to the cemetery and prison site for a century.

The stories of African American experiences, life, and history—enslaved, freed, citizens—in the town of Andersonville, Camp Sumter, Andersonville National Cemetery, and the Prison Park documented in the preceding chapters were either unknown, untold, or ignored at the Andersonville National Historic Site until the 21st century. Chapter seven seeks to understand why Andersonville's Black history went largely untold at Andersonville National Historic Site for almost 150 years. Shortly after the formation of the historic site, local White residents rallied to attract tourists to the town rather than just the national park or the nearby hometown of President Jimmy Carter. Town organizers and heritage groups combined efforts to convert Andersonville's small business district to a Civil War-era village with annual festivals and a memorial day for Captain Henry Wirz. While the historic site focused on its mission to tell all American prisoner of war stories and experiences across time, the Sons of Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederacy shaped the town's Lost Cause revisioning of the Civil War-era village. Dedicated efforts to create the National Prisoner of War Museum only heightened the emphasis on the historic site's mission in the 1980s. The mission does not exclude African Americans but may be interpreted as not allowing the inclusion of local histories of enslaved laborers and freedpeople in Andersonville, Camp Sumter, and Andersonville National Cemetery. In addition to the restrictions of the enabling legislation, the lack of documentation, historical interpretation, and the displacement of many African American townspeople may account for the absence of Black history at the historic site. Through the 1990s and increasingly in the 2010s, park staff worked to engage more with local Black history through classroom visits, tours, and social media. More dedicated storytelling of African American history at the historic site deepened with both the Civil War to Civil Rights Commemoration and the Civil War Sesquicentennial (2011–2015). During the time of that program, Andersonville National Historic Site sought to reach new audiences with more inclusive interpretation and community engagement that strengthened the park's mission by connecting the loss of civil liberties and paths to freedom of not just prisoners of war, but of African Americans as well.

What was still living memory for the Black men and women Du Bois encountered in southwest Georgia in 1898 has been obscured by time, neglected by historians, and rendered tangential to the main story of military sacrifice at Andersonville National Cemetery and Andersonville National Historic Site. Yet there has always been something radical in the promise at Andersonville. This national historic site, established by Congress in 1970, is notable for being more than just another Civil War site. While its historic core is a 26-acre field where more than 45,000 U.S. prisoners of war suffered in 1864 and 1865, the park also contains the National

Prisoner of War Museum and a still-operating national cemetery. African American history at Andersonville is not an additional history to be added to the historic site; rather, this history is an essential part of the location's history, the regional context, and the long struggle for freedom that began before Andersonville opened its wooden gates and continued long after the stockade rotted to the ground.

This special history study is the product of two years of research and collaboration by historians from the University of West Georgia, the University of Alabama, and Georgia Southwestern State University. Dr. Evan Kutzler of Georgia Southwestern State University wrote the first three chapters and, as an active public historian in southwest Georgia, offered guidance on other chapters along the way. Dr. Julia Brock of the University of Alabama researched and wrote chapter four. M.A. student Ronald Bastien and Dr. Larry Rivers at the University of West Georgia prepared chapter five with assistance from the rest of the team. Dr. Ann McCleary of the University of West Georgia researched and wrote chapter six. Keri Adams, M.A. of the University of West Georgia, researched and wrote chapter seven. Research assistants at the University of West Georgia who contributed to this study included graduates Ron Bastien and Valarie Pratt and undergraduate Annie Shirley who helped research photographs and images and provided editorial assistance.

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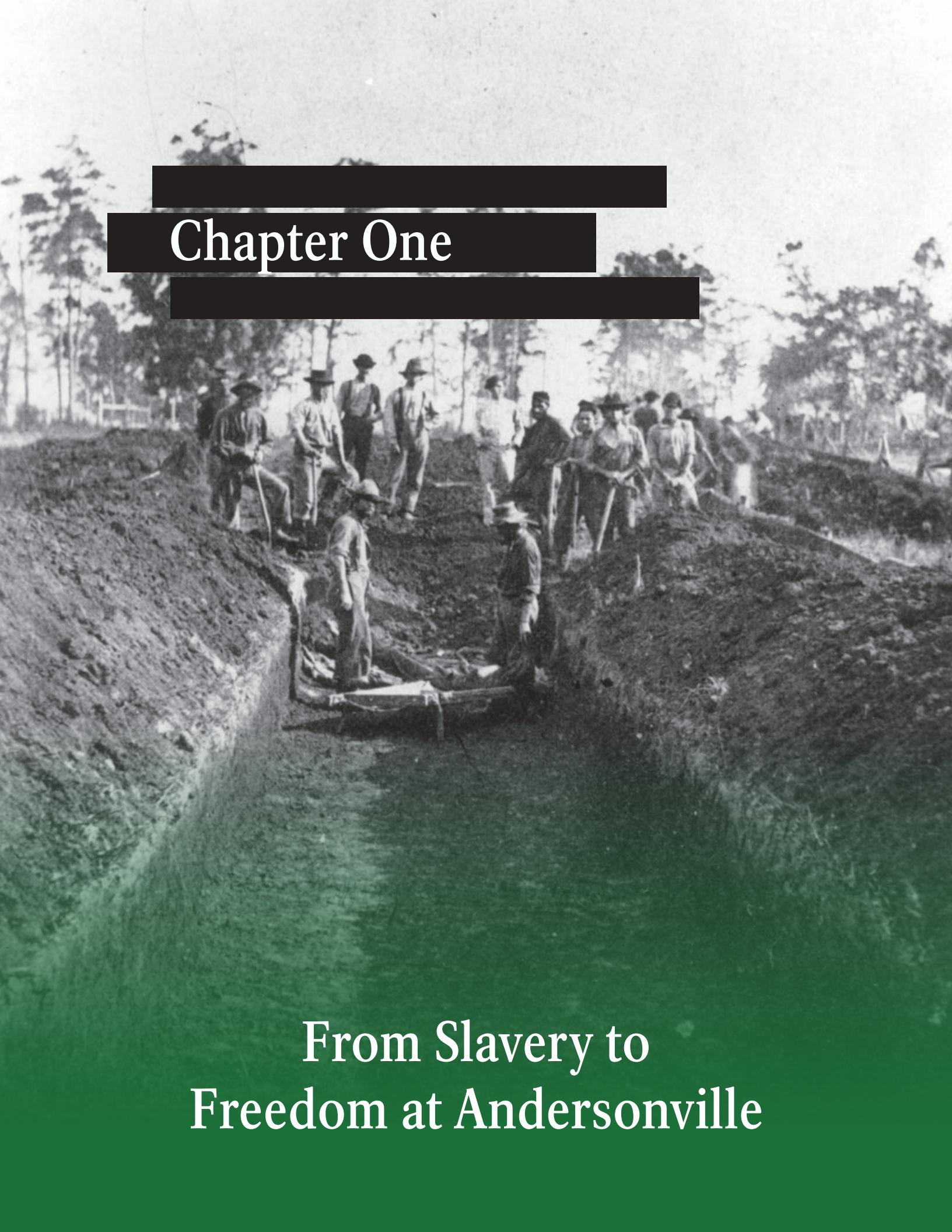

Chapter One

From Slavery to Freedom at Andersonville

CHAPTER ONE: FROM SLAVERY TO FREEDOM AT ANDERSONVILLE

Their names were Berry, Henry, Gus, Peter, and Cornelius.

Their stories, and what Andersonville meant to these five African American men in July and August 1864, can never be fully recovered. This is what little we know. Berry, Henry, Gus, and Peter were teamsters. Cornelius was described only as a "laborer," and he was enslaved by the same White man who enslaved Gus and Peter. The stolen labor, knowledge, and skills from the five men produced a $444 gain for the enslavers. Perhaps Berry worked alongside Henry, Gus, Peter, and Cornelius during those months. If so, did they haul in the food that fed more than 30,000 Union prisoners of war (POW) that July and August? Or did the teamsters remove the bodies from the prison and the hospital and cart them to the cemetery? Where did the men come from? And what became of them?[8]

Confederate receipts, the solitary known record of their lives, cannot answer even these basic questions. That was a product of design. Even the paper record contributed to the dehumanization that came with enslavement; a process—grounded in violence and never complete—of trying to turn one person into an expression of another person's will. The record shows that the men began working on July 1, 1864. Berry left Andersonville on August 24, 1864; the other four left at the end of the month. Three enslavers, A. J. Kitchens, C. H. Smith, and H. G. Dean, signed their names and a clerk witnessed the receipt. An assistant quartermaster wrote in closing, without a hint of conscious irony, "I certify on honor that the above receipt roll is correct & just."[9]

Coming to terms with slavery at Andersonville requires a reinterpretation of the standard military narrative of the prison. It means scrutinizing new and old sources for insight into the local and regional experience of slavery and emancipation as well as focusing on the human energy—the blood, sweat, and tears—required to build and maintain a massive prison camp. It means recognizing that slavery was as central to the day-to-day operations of Andersonville as it was to the slaveholding Confederacy. Making a commitment to tell these stories in public will require the skill of a researcher, the patience of a teacher, and the imagination of an artist.

In support of this future work, this chapter explores Andersonville from frontier to the Civil War era, contextualizing the prison's rapid rise and fall with a focus on enslaved African Americans, Black POWs, and the uneasy "new birth of freedom" that emerged from the plantation landscape. Andersonville, along with the rest of southwest Georgia, exemplified the rise and fall of a cotton kingdom built on slavery. In the span of a few decades, the U.S. government's forced removal of American Indians and the westward expansion of plantation slavery transformed the region. As the area developed, the South's national cotton production

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8. Slave Payroll 2899, Confederate Slave Rolls, Record Group 109, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, National Archives and Records Administration. The National Archives and Records Administration digitized thousands of documents related to the Confederate government and slavery since the first draft of this study. Unfortunately, the new digital collection is still too cumbersome for a comprehensive search at this time. In the future, it is likely to reveal many more names of enslaved African Americans in southwest Georgia.

9. Slave Payroll 2899, Confederate Slave Rolls, RG 109, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, NARA.

increased tenfold from 150 million pounds in 1821 to 1.5 billion pounds in 1860 and from a share of 24% to 61% of world production.[10]

The dark dreams of cotton planters had destructive consequences at both the national and local levels. During what is sometimes called the "Second Middle Passage," the Black population in southwest Georgia grew from 219 in 1820 to 63,000 in 1860. This internal slave trade separated African American families as far away as Kentucky and the Chesapeake Bay.[11] Some of the planters who invested in enslaved people and land bought shares in the Southwestern Railroad in the early 1850s. A decade later, this railroad brought Union prisoners to a station midway between Oglethorpe and Americus, Georgia, called Anderson or Andersonville. Whether Union prisoners called it Camp Sumter or Andersonville, they referred to names only recently inscribed on the changing landscape. This infamous prison, as well as the railroad, the town, and the region were all the products of a slave society in a process of growth and, ultimately, ruination.[12]

SLAVERY IN SOUTHWEST GEORGIA

Antebellum southwest Georgia reflected the development of the so-called "Black Belt" region of fertile land that stretched across the Deep South. In the late 1840s, proslavery boosters extolled the region's potential for building wealth. One local example was John B. Lamar, who enslaved hundreds of people in eastern Sumter County about 15 miles from Andersonville. In an 1847 letter to his brother-in-law, U.S. Representative Howell Cobb, Lamar plotted his future investment: "Lord, Lord, Howell you and I have been too used to poor land to know what crops people are making in the rich lands of the new counties. I am just getting my eyes open to the golden view."[13] So were other planters. As the region grew, forced Black importation outpaced White immigration, leading to a Black majority in many southwest Georgia counties by 1860 (figure 1.1).[14] In Sumter County, the percentage of enslaved people relative to total population increased from 29% (1,643/5,759) in 1840 to 37% (3,835/10,322) in 1850 to 52% (4,890/9,428) in 1860.[15] As enslaved people cleared land, built houses, and raised crops, small towns developed

10. Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), 114.

11. Susan Eva O'Donovan, *Becoming Free in the Cotton South* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), 18; Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 4–5; Henry Louis Gates Jr., "What Was the 2nd Middle Passage," *The Root*, January 28, 2013, https://www.theroot.com/what-was-the-2nd-middle-passage-1790895016.

12. Alan Anderson, *Remembering Americus: Essays on Southern Life* (Charleston, S.C.: History Press, 2006), 45–46; William Bailey Williford, *Americus through the Years* (Atlanta, Ga.: Cherokee Publishing Company, 1975), 58–59; Robert Scott Davis, *Ghosts and Shadows of Andersonville: Essays on the Secret Social History of America's Deadliest Prison* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2006), 5–6. It is likely that enslaved people were also essential to building the South Western Railroad. See Theodore Kornweibel Jr., *Railroads in the African American Experience* (Baltimore, Md.: John Hopkins University Press, 2010).

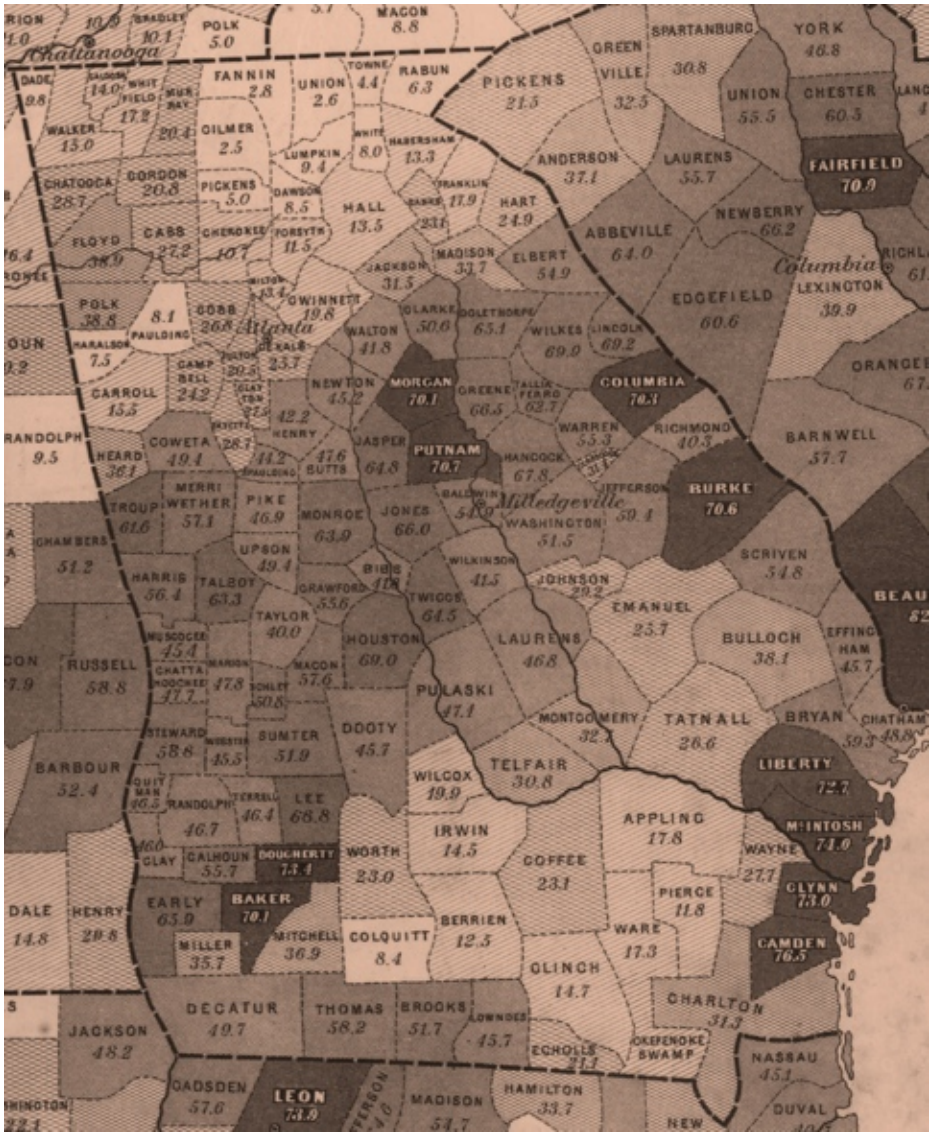
13. John B. Lamar to Howell Cobb, in Ulrich B. Phillips, ed. *Plantation and Frontier Documents: 1649–1863, Illustrative of Industrial History in the Colonial & Ante-Bellum South* (3 volumes; Cleveland, Ohio: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1909) Vol. 1, 177.

14. Edwin Hergesheimer, "Map showing the distribution of the slave population of the southern states of the United States. Compiled from the census of 1860," (Washington, D.C.: Henry S. Graham, 1861), Library of Congress.

15. U.S. Federal Census, 1840, 1850, 1860, Social Explorer; U.S. Census Bureau; Michael R. Haines. Historical, Demographic, Economic, and Social Data: The United States, 1790–2000, https://www.socialexplorer.com/.

along navigable rivers, such as Danville on the Flint River, and later along railroads, such as Andersonville and Americus.[16]

Figure 1.1. The number in each county represents the proportion of people who were enslaved. Detail of Edwin Hergesheimer, "Map showing the distribution of the slave population of the southern states of the United States. Compiled from the census of 1860," Library of Congress.



The planters' dream in southwest Georgia, "the golden view" as Lamar put it, came at a high cost to the majority of the population who came to southwest Georgia against their will. As historian Susan O'Donovan argues, relocation into southwest Georgia shattered unwritten customs and expectations between enslavers and the enslaved that took generations to secure. In the Chesapeake region, for example, enslaved people had come to expect greater day-to-day

16. Danville, Georgia, was located near the Highway 27 bridge over the Flint River in eastern Sumter County. On early settlement in Sumter County, see Williford, *Americus through the Years*, 30.

autonomy than earlier generations. Enslaved people in the early 19th-century Chesapeake region customarily chose how to spend their time on Sundays and half of Saturdays. In both towns and the countryside, enslaved men and women gained some geographic mobility and some religious autonomy. Enslaved people in the Black-majority rice districts of lowcountry South Carolina and Georgia likewise had much greater autonomy in their daily lives than those who were sent into southwest Georgia.[17]

The shattering of local customs from tobacco- and rice-planting regions of the Eastern United States also broke apart African American families. Black families rarely moved together—even when moving with their masters—because planters desired only prime cotton pickers in their new fields. Describing one part of an investment totaling $24,000, John B. Lamar wrote, "I have moved 1/3 of my force to Sumpter. I shall move another 1/3 this fall or winter, leaving the remaining 1/3 to cultivate the best lands on my Bibb [County] place."[18] Within the shifting of people between plantations, Lamar decided which families and which members of those families would go to Sumter immediately, follow the next year, or stay permanently in Bibb County.[19]

Even when Lamar kept mothers, fathers, and children together, his relocation broke apart extended families. He categorized the first arrivals into four groups: men, women, "boys and girls," and—though he did not indicate the cut-off age—children. From the 52 men, women, boys, girls, and children, Lamar calculated that he had 33 "full hands," the muscle equivalent of 33 adult men. Each category reflected assumptions and calculations about labor extraction based on age and gender. The division of "boys and girls" from "children," for example, reflected the importance of adolescent labor on cotton plantations. Although no "boys and girls" or "children" in Lamar's estate came to southwest Georgia alone, there were single men, single fathers, and single mothers. Ned Fulton, Randol, Young Scip, Mary Ann, and Julia Ann arrived alone. Maurice came as a single father with a child named Peter. Fanny and Sarah Anne came as single mothers with adolescent sons, Solomon and Nelson. Maria arrived with a child, Amy.[20] Each person represented a calculation about Lamar's current and future economic interest.

The families that arrived together did not always remain together. Peter and Catherine August arrived in Sumter County together in 1847. In a decision that went unexplained, Lamar recalled Catherine to Bibb County. When Jonas Smith, a barely literate overseer, reported back to Lamar on the conditions of Domino Branch plantation in 1851, he noted Catherine's absence and passed along Peter's request for her to return. "P.S. Peter Augus[t] Seams anchious to have cathrine home," Smith wrote. "You can attend to that as you like. If S[h]e is able to work I hav[e]

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17. O'Donovan, *Becoming Free*, 22–25. See also Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African American Slaves* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003); Philip D. Morgan, "Work and Culture: The Task System and the World of Lowcountry Blacks, 1700–1880" *William and Mary Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (October 1983), 563–599; Morgan, "Task and Gang Systems: The Organization of Labor on New World Plantations," in *Work and Labor in Early America*, ed. Stephen Innes (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 189–220.

18. John B. Lamar to Howell Cobb, January 10, 1847, in *Plantation and Frontier*, Vol. 1, 177.

19. O'Donovan, *Becoming Free*, 20.

20. Plantation Book, pg. 10, Box 1, John B. Lamar Papers, MS 131, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, The University of Georgia Libraries, Athens.

no objecthon my self nor dont care naw how. She can come with Old Siss But then her clothes could not come."[21]

Lamar never provided an explanation for the separation and years passed before any evidence suggests that Peter and Catherine August saw each other again. In 1858, Peter August picked 1,452 pounds of cotton, the fifth-most of any man or woman on the plantation. Catherine appeared nowhere in the Sumter County records. News of their owner's death in Maryland in September 1862 would have arrived about the same time as news of President Lincoln's preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. While the latter news may have inspired hope, the death of Lamar was a bad omen. The Augusts would have known that the distribution of an enslaver's estate to his White heirs often meant the further separation of Black families. Despite the odds, the Augusts reunited in eastern Sumter County by 1870. Catherine had no children, perhaps because the couple was separated for most of her 20's and 30's, but during Reconstruction they gained the right to marry and determine for themselves the distribution of household labor. Peter, 57 years old, continued to work as a farm laborer, and the two saved a moderate sum of $350. That was enough for Catherine, now 40 years old, to "keep home" and look after a 70-year-old member of the household, Gracie Bird, possibly Catherine's mother.[22]

As in the case of the August family, tens of thousands of Black men and women struggled to preserve families within the plantation power structure in southwest Georgia. Perhaps this was why Billy Proctor wrote Lamar from Americus requesting—of all things—to be purchased after discovering his owner's plans to sell him. Proctor feared removal to some distant place, and he appealed to the rhetoric of racial paternalism, reputation, and—most tellingly—money. "You know me very well yourself," Proctor wrote, "but as I wish you to be fully satisfied, I beg leave to refer you to Mr[.] Nathan C. Monroe[,] Dr. Strohecker[,] and Mr[.] Bogg." Proctor promised, "I can be bought for $1000 – and I think that you might get me for 50 Dolls less if you try, though that is Mr[.] Chapman's price." As a literate and skilled painter, Proctor hoped to hire himself out and promised Lamar a $600 return each year. At this rate, Proctor reasoned, "[I] will pay for myself in two years." Although Proctor never explained what he called twice his "great distress" in detail, the subtext suggested a strong desire to leave southwest Georgia and return to Bibb County.[23]

The bad reputation of large plantation districts may have factored into Proctor's distress. The hours—sunup to sundown—and the pace of hard work under a White overseer made an area with a sickly reputation even deadlier. When Jonas Smith reported to Lamar in 1852, he wrote, "The Negrowes on this place Is very Sickly & hav[e] bin all the while since you Left us & the d[is]eases Is growin wors all the while as well as the attacks more numerous. . . . As soon as one Gets out It Rains on him or he Is In a large due or in a mud hole & back he comes again."[24]

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21. Jonas Smith to John B. Lamar, May 5, 1851, Box 2, Folder 1, Cobb / Erwin / Lamar Family Collection, MS 86, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, The University of Georgia Libraries [UGA]. All original spellings are maintained. Bracketed letters are added for clarity.

22. William P. Mount to John B. Lamar, December 17, 1858, Box 2, Folder 15, Cobb / Erwin / Lamar Family Collection, UGA; 1870 U.S. Census, Sumter County, Georgia, population schedule, pg. 225 (stamped), dwelling 603, family 596, Peter August, Catherine August, Gracie Bird; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com : accessed May 22, 2017); citing NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 224. William Kauffman Scarborough, *Masters of the Big House: Elite Slaveholders of the Mid-Nineteenth Century South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003), 329.

23. Billy Proctor to John B. Lamar, December 1, 1854, *Plantation and Frontier*, Vol. 2, 41.

24. Jonas Smith to John B. Lamar, August 25, 1852, in *Plantation and Frontier*, Vol. 1, 309–310.

The sickly season of late summer and early fall compounded the enervating effect of hard work. Stancil Barwick, another overseer, defended himself against rumors of cruelty to Lamar. He wrote:

> Now was regards to the wimin loosing children, treaty lost one it is true. I never heard of her being in that way until she lost it. . . . As regards Louisine she was in the field it is true but she was workt as she please. I never said a word to her in any way at all untill she com to me in the field and said she was sick. I told her to go home. She started an on the way she miscarried. She was about five months gone.[25]

Barwick's defensiveness revealed much about the day-to-day tension in Sumter County. "The reports that have been sent," Barwick wrote, "must have been carried from this Place by Negroes[.] The fact is I have made the Negro men work an made them go strait[.] That is what is the matter an is the reason why that my Place is talk of the settlement. I have found among the Negro men two or three hard cases an I have had to deal rite Ruff but not cruly at all."[26] Accusations and counteraccusations highlighted an ongoing struggle between planters, White overseers, and the enslaved.

As with plantation management, elections in southwest Georgia reflected the economic interests of a plantation economy. Voters—all White men—chose nationalist Whig candidates in the 1840s. In the presidential elections of 1844 and 1848, for example, Sumter County and most of its six bordering counties supported Whig candidates.[27] The sectional politics over slavery registered strongly in voter returns, and in 1852, all seven counties chose Democratic candidate Franklin Pierce.[28] In 1856 and 1860, Sumter and many of its surrounding counties voted first for the American Party and then for the Constitutional Union Party.[29] The region's Whiggish background created a pro-Union and pro-slavery political culture, and the region embraced secession only after the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860. From 18 counties in southwest Georgia, only two (Webster and Thomas) elected pro-Union delegates to Georgia's secession convention.[30]

The remoteness of southwest Georgia resulted in minimal military and economic disruption during the U.S. Civil War. Some local plantations seemed to have staggering surpluses well into the war. In 1851, enslaved people on Lamar's plantation butchered 115 hogs weighing a total of 16,751 pounds. The next year, the slaughter amounted to 19,354 pounds of meat. When enslaved people slaughtered hogs in the fall of 1863, it amounted to 44,893 pounds. The state government took 2,693 pounds of pork as taxes and the overseer sold an additional 9,078 pounds to the Confederate government. It is unclear whether the government pork traveled hundreds of miles to the front lines, fed Confederate soldiers in Americus, or went to Andersonville. Next year, in the fall of 1864, enslaved people slaughtered 50,400 pounds of

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25. Stancil Barwick to John B. Lamar, July 15, 1855, in *Plantation and Frontier*, Vol. 1, 312.

26. Barwick to Lamar, July 15, 1855, in *Plantation and Frontier*, Vol. 1, 313.

27. The Whig candidates were Henry Clay (1844) and Zachary Taylor (1848). Michael J. Dubin, *United States Presidential Elections, 1788–1860: The Official Results by County and State* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, 2002), 84–85, 98–99.

28. Dubin, *United States Presidential Election*, 118–119.

29. Dubin, *United States Presidential Election*, 138, 162–163.

30. O'Donovan, *Becoming Free*, 63.

meat. From that total, the Confederate government received 5,500 pounds and 75 pounds went "to Anderson." At least some of the hogs raised by enslaved people on Lamar's plantation went to feed prisoners, guards, or the enslaved at Andersonville.[31]

On the other side of Sumter County, Matthew Rylander's wartime estate planning also suggested stability during the Civil War. Rylander came to Sumter County from Bibb County in the 1850s and amassed a sizeable plantation. The $10,000 value of Rylander's real estate—made up of land and the building now known as the Jimmy Carter Interim House—paled in comparison to his $27,000 personal estate, made up mostly of enslaved people.[32] The Rylanders were committed to slavery and, after secession, the Confederacy. One of Rylander's sons, John Emory Rylander, served as a Confederate prison commander at Camp Oglethorpe in Macon, Georgia, early in the war. In March 1864, as Union prisoners began filling Andersonville, the Rylander plantation still experienced prosperity. Peering into a future soon rendered moot by national events, Rylander planned to transfer to his wife, Sarah Rylander, 20 enslaved people, including 12 field hands and a woman named Meredith. He also provided a sizeable quantity of livestock and food stores:

> "Six mules or horses, twelve head of cattle and one hundred head of hogs and all my sheep. Said mules or horses[,] cattle & hogs to be selected by herself from among my stock. Also one four horse wagon, one ox cart, & one yoke of steers.... Also a sufficiency of corn, wheat[,] potatoes[,] & peas, [and] oats for the support of herself and Negroes for one year after the division of my property."[33]

Matthew Rylander, who died in 1880, outlived both slavery and his Confederate sons, both of whom died in Virginia. The never-executed will from 1864 revealed much about the wartime experience in Sumter County. There was no shortage of food in Sumter County for wealthy families like the Rylanders. As Andersonville opened, the future of King Cotton looked much like its past.

Building Andersonville

The wealth, food, labor, and seclusion of southwest Georgia appealed to the Confederate authorities who, by the fall of 1863, looked to build a new prison far from the front lines. General John H. Winder, who commanded the Richmond prisons, selected his son, Captain William Sidney Winder, to select a prison site in southwest Georgia in November 1863. Another family member, Captain Richard B. Winder, arrived at Andersonville in late December 1863, with the expectation that he "could get any amount of labor and teams to do this work."[34] Instead, Richard Winder faced initial local resistance from planters and this delayed work until

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31. Plantation Book, no. pp., Box 1, Lamar Papers, Hargrett Library, UGA.

32. 1860 U.S. Census, Sumter County, Georgia, 26th and 27th Districts, population schedule, pg. 515, dwelling 321, family 325, M. E. Rylander; digital image *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com : accessed November 21, 2017); citing NARA microfilm publication M653, roll 136. On the Jimmy Carter Interim House, see Historic American Buildings Survey, Engineering Record, Landscapes Survey, "Matthew Edmund Rylander House, Old Plains Highway (near Highway 280), Plains, Georgia," Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ga0576/. As of 2020, the house is owned by the Friends of Jimmy Carter National Historic Site.

33. Matthew E. Rylander Will, 1864, Probate Records, Sumter County Courthouse, Americus, Georgia.

34. Richard B. Winder to Major N. Church, August 30, 1865, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (70 vols. in 128; Washington, 1889–1901) Ser. II, Vol. 8: 731; William Marvel, *Andersonville: The Last Depot* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 12–17.

about January 10, 1864.[35] He recalled, "I found the people much opposed to the erection of a prison there, and consequently had then to get authority from Richmond to impress the necessary labor and teams."[36] The impending arrival of Union prisoners and a 60-day limit on impressment meant that J. M. McNealy, as overseer, pushed the enslaved at a relentless pace. In the weeks before the first Union prisoners arrived, enslaved men cut down thousands of trees, hewed logs, and created postholes by digging a deep and narrow trench.[37]

Confederate military officials contracted with local slaveholders, impressing or renting enslaved people from owners and purchasing corn and hogs that had been raised by enslaved people on southwest Georgia plantations. Winder hired Samuel "Hays" (the family spelled it "Heys"), "a practical mechanic," to build the initial stockade. Born in England, Heys owned a small iron foundry near Columbus, and claimed ownership of two enslaved people in the 1850s.[38] Winder also consulted with Heys on the construction of quarters for the guards, commissary warehouses, and hospital buildings. Heys advised Winder that plank buildings could be constructed quicker and at less expense than log ones, even though planks required transportation from a sawmill. Winder also bought from Heys one 60-gallon kettle, 600 pounds of iron, 1,000 feet of lumber, and a grindstone for $2,096.[39] As the business relationship with Heys illustrated, White Georgians assisted in providing the supplies, tools, and enslaved men for the prison. In early 1864, J. T. Brown, William W. Barlow, and Turner Clanton each loaned Richard Winder wagon teams, including enslaved teamsters.[40] In at least Clanton's case, the Confederate government also paid $0.66/day to pay for rations of "the teamster, 'John.'"[41] In most cases, the names of the enslaved working at Andersonville went unrecorded, but building and supplying a prison in a plantation landscape tapped into surrounding enslaved plantation labor.

While it is difficult to estimate the number of enslaved people at Andersonville, it is clear that Confederate authorities never had enough labor. In late July 1864, when a Union cavalry raid threatened the prison, Brig. Gen. John Winder appealed to surrounding counties for planters to lend the government their enslaved people. "The fortification at this post must be constructed at once," Winder stated. "The safety of the very country and people upon whom I call, and the welfare of the Government demand that it shall be done." Therefore, Winder called for "two thousand (2,000) negroes, properly supplied with axes, spades and picks, and supported by the requisite number of wagons and teams" to enable the Confederate engineer to complete fortifications within 10 days. While Winder needed the labor of enslaved people, he warned planters that he could not feed them. "Provisions and forage are scarce," he wrote, "and each owner will send food and forage for his hands and horses." Winder appealed to the planters' agricultural interest and safety while also implying that he could seize the labor if planters did

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35. John H. Winder to Lieutenant-Colonel Chandler, August 4, 1864, *War of the Rebellion*, Ser. II, Vol. 7: 541.

36. Richard B. Winder to Major N. Church, August 30, 1865, *War of the Rebellion,* Ser. II, Vol. 8: 731.

37. Richard B. Winder to General John H. Winder, February 17, 1864, *War of the Rebellion*, Ser. II, Vol. 7: 965.

38. 1850 U.S. Census, Muscogee County, GA, City of Columbus, population schedule, pg. 316B (stamped), dwelling 377, family 406, Samuel Heys; digital image Ancestry.com (http://ancestry.com : accessed 21 November 2017); citing NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 79; 1850 U.S. Census, Muscogee County, GA, slave schedules, pg. 6, Samuel Heys; Winder to Winder, February 17, 1864, *War of the Rebellion*, Ser. II, Vol. 7: 965.

39. "Samuel Heys" Citizen, Confederate Papers Relating to Citizens or Business Firms, 1861–1865, NARA Publication M346, roll 440.

40. "J. T. Brown" Citizen, Confederate Papers Relating to Citizens or Business Firms, 1861–1865, NARA Publication M346, roll 106; "William W. Barlow," Citizen, Confederate Papers Relating to Citizens or Business Firms, 1861–1865, NARA Publication M346, roll 166.

41. "Turner Clanton," Citizen, Confederate Papers Relating to Citizens or Business Firms, 1861–1865, NARA Publication M346, roll 42.

not supply it. "I appeal to the people to send at once the required force," Winder stated, "and save themselves from the necessity of impressment." He promised to send the 2,000 enslaved people, horses, and wagons back to their plantations in time to harvest crops.[42]

Early Union arrivals at Andersonville picked up on the connection between slavery and the construction of Andersonville. Still, White descriptions of—and interactions with—enslaved people were shaped by racial prejudice and the hopeful belief that African Americans were "faithful" Unionists. John McElroy, a prisoner at Andersonville, was not immune to the prejudices of 19th century America, but he had the capacity to see what scholars would later classify as daily resistance. "The negros were of the lowest field-hand class, strong, dull, ox-like," McElroy wrote, "but each having in our eyes an admixture of cunning and secretiveness that their masters pretended was not in them."[43] Blackness fascinated McElroy and, he believed, the enslaved men were equally fascinated by the prisoners. When Confederate guards were present, McElroy wrote, "this interest took the shape of stupid, open-eyed, open-mouthed wonder."[44] However, in rare instances when Union prisoners and enslaved people were alone together, "the blank, vacant face lighted up with an entirely different expression… He knew, apparently quite as well as his master, that they [Union prisoners] were in some way his friends and allies, and he lost no opportunity in communicating his appreciation of that fact, and of offering his services in any possible way."[45] McElroy inferred the ongoing struggle between enslavers and the enslaved as well as a political alliance—even one of context and necessity—between Union prisoners and enslaved people.

Enslaved men were still building the stockade when the first Union prisoners arrived at Andersonville. These early arrivals had the closest view of enslaved men finishing the stockade. McElroy recalled seeing 200 Black men cutting down trees, hewing trunks into logs, and placing them as posts into a narrow trench forming the base of the stockade wall.[46] The first Union prisoners at Andersonville spent much of their time watching and listening to the construction. "We were much interested in watching the negro work," McElroy wrote. "They wove in a great deal of their peculiar, wild, mournful music, whenever the character of the labor permitted."[47] McElroy's descriptions of the singing contained racial condescension. After all, it was their "wild" African-ness that he found remarkable. He concluded, "They never seemed to weary of singing, and we certainly did not tire of listening to them."[48] Still, the music captivated him.

Post by post, enslaved men sealed the prisoners inside Andersonville. After finishing the stockade, enslaved men dug rifle pits and built cannon emplacements—one of the few artifacts of enslaved people remaining at the current prison site. Some of these earthworks guarded

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42. Newspaper clipping, "An Appeal, to the Citizens of Macon, Taylor, Randolph, Schley, Terrell, Baker, Calhoun, Lee, Sumter, and Daugherty Counties," Record Group 109, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Entry 208, Box 18, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

43. John McElroy, *Andersonville: A Story of Rebel Military Prisons, Fifteen Months A Guest of the So-Called Southern Confederacy* (Toledo, Ohio: D. R. Locke, 1879), 134. McElroy's popular published account of Andersonville was, at best, written from memory. At worst, the specific story was apocryphal. Still, McElroy provides valuable contemporary insight into how prisoners might have imagined enslaved African Americans. On the limitations of McElroy, see Marvel, *Andersonville*, 256, n47.

44. McElroy, *Andersonville*, 134.

45. McElroy, *Andersonville*, 134.

46. McElroy, *Andersonville*, 134.

47. McElroy, *Andersonville*, 135.

48. McElroy, *Andersonville*, 136.

against attack from the outside. Others were carceral: the network of stockades contained prisoners; inward facing cannons and rifle pits served to intimidate prisoners or—in an emergency—kill them.

Attentive prisoners interpreted changes in the pace of labor in the spring and summer of 1864. Flurries of activity, for example, coincided with rumors or reports about Union cavalry raids. On July 31, Alonzo Tuttle Decker wrote with deep interest, "They keep the Negroes to work all day on their fortification—and cutting down trees. Something new for them to work on the Sabbath."[49] When a flash flood destroyed sections of the stockade, Levi Whitaker recorded that "troops turned out rite away & negroes set to work putting it up."[50] With a great demand for information but a lack of reliable news, prisoners watched and listened for clues about the progress of the war and the mood of their captors. Observing the type and pace of work enslaved people performed provided one of the myriad ways that prisoners made sense of their present and future.[51]

White prisoners may have experienced the issues of race and emancipation differently than White soldiers who were never captured. White officers of Black regiments risked being murdered at the point of surrender, and Confederate guards taunted White and Black prisoners alike. Lyle G. Adair, a White sergeant in the 111th United States Colored Infantry (USCI), recorded a Confederate soldier expressing disgust that his comrades had not killed all White and Black men fighting together. For Adair, a committed abolitionist with family living in the free-soil settlement in Osawatomie, Kansas, captivity likely intensified his opposition to slavery.[52]

Union soldiers from all-White regiments expressed a range of opinions about emancipation and race. For many prisoners, Andersonville became a symbol of the tyranny of the proslavery Confederate republic. Yet other White prisoners resented the U.S. government for placing the principle of racial equality—in prisoner exchanges at least—above their own release. William T. Peabody described his anger over exchange at Andersonville. "If the Government don't get us out they may go to the Devil with Abraham Lincoln and his votes. I will not vote for him again, that is so."[53] When M. J. Olmsted thought of home from a Savannah prison, he concluded, "But here we have to stay. And pine away through the prime of life all for the Sons of Africa."[54] After comparing the votes cast in mock prison elections to those in the Union Army, historian Glenn Robins concludes that captivity made many White prisoners less open to emancipation. Lincoln

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49. Alonzo Tuttle Decker Diary, July 31, 1864, Andersonville National Historic Site.

50. Levi Whitaker Diary, August 9, 1864, Andersonville National Historic Site. See also Eugene Forbes, *Diary of a Soldier, and Prisoner of War in the Rebel Prisons* (Trenton, N.J.: Murphy & Bechtel, 1865), 37.

51. Evan A. Kutzler, "Captive Audiences: Sound, Silence, and Listening in Civil War Prisons," *Journal of Social History* 48, no. 2 (December 2014): 239–63.

52. Glenn Robins, ed., *They Have Left Us Here to Die: The Civil War Prison Diary of Sgt. Lyle Adair, 111th U.S. Colored Infantry* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2011), 20. The prisoner file on Lyle G. Adair at Andersonville National Historic Site contains copies and transcriptions of letters between Adair and a family member in Osawatomie, Kansas, in 1864. See also Christopher Barr, "Loathsome Diseases and Principles: Conceptualizing Race and Slavery in Civil War Prison," in Michael P. Gray, ed., *Crossing the Deadlines: Civil War Prisons Reconsidered* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2018), 101–123.

53. William T. Peabody Diary, July 16, 1864, Andersonville National Historic Site.

54. M. J. Olmsted Diary, October 2, 1864, Andersonville National Historic Site.

won a majority of these prison polls in November 1864, but by smaller margins than in the actual election.[55]

While captivity seems to have hardened the racism of some White prisoners, it is worth noting that more than half of prisoners still supported Lincoln in November 1864. Prisoners resisted disillusionment with the war, their government, and the Emancipation Proclamation. "In my travels about the camp," Amos Yeakle wrote at Andersonville, "I see Indians, Negroes & white men of all nations who are those who fight for the old flag."[56] In May 1864, Henry Tisdale had a "sharp debate with comrades upon slavery." Although Tisdale did not record the outcome, he reflected, "Notice I need to watch against self-conceit, and cultivate a spirit humble and candid yet earnest, and ever to content for truth rather than victory."[57] William Tritt was less forgiving. "Quite a percentage of the prisoners are trash," he wrote, and "some still beller out against the negro."[58] Captivity may have affected prisoner views on race, but its negative effect was neither universal nor overwhelming.

White prisoners witnessed slavery at Andersonville, but their interactions with enslaved African Americans were also limited. Confederates imposed some of this limitation because they feared a conspiracy between the imprisoned and the enslaved.[59] Culture and racism was a second limitation. Most White prisoners opposed slavery, but few would have been abolitionists or racial egalitarians. White prisoners and the enslaved shared a common enemy, but there still existed a wall of cultural and ideological separation between them.

BLACK PRISONERS AT ANDERSONVILLE

While similarities existed among all prisoners during the Civil War, African American soldiers captured in blue uniforms faced exceptional challenges. Some Confederate soldiers took Black prisoners, others killed surrendering African Americans.[60] Black captivity involved an ever-present threat of racial violence, including public whippings, enslavement, and execution. Unlike White prisoners at Andersonville, who fell into Confederate hands at hundreds of individual locations, most Black prisoners at Andersonville came from a single, disastrous battle in northern Florida. When these prisoners arrived at Andersonville, Confederate guards treated Black prisoners as slaves, forcing all but the most severely wounded to work at the prison site. The number of Black prisoners (about 100) was small compared to White prisoners at Andersonville, but their experience illustrated a unique, unparalleled trauma in a war that fought slavery with liberty.

Most Black prisoners at Andersonville had been part of an ambitious plan to invade northern Florida from Jacksonville. With the backdrop of a presidential election and intra-party positioning, U.S. troops sought to recover portions of northern Florida, cut off agricultural

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55. Glenn Robins, "Race, Repatriation, and Galvanized Rebels: Union Prisoners and the Exchange Question in Deep South Prison Camps," *Civil War History* 53, no. 2 (June 2007): 128.

56. Amos A. Yeakle Diary, July 15, 1864, Andersonville National Historic Site.

57. Henry W. Tisdale Diary, May 30, 1864, Andersonville National Historic Site.

58. William Tritt Diary, June 19, 1864, MS92-141, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

59. "Be On Your Guard—Yankee Prisoners," *Memphis Daily Appeal*, June 10, 1864.

60. David Silkenat, *Raising the White Flag: How Surrender Defined the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 175–181.

supplies from Confederate armies, and recruit additional Black soldiers.[61] The Battle of Olustee in February 1864, soon overshadowed in American memory by Fort Pillow two months later, ended this campaign and devolved into battlefield executions of wounded Black prisoners. Three decades later, Confederate veteran William Penniman recalled passing over the battlefield at least partially for the purpose of trophy hunting among the dead and dying Union soldiers. He found his fellow Confederate soldiers not only going through the pockets of the dead but also shooting the wounded. "The next morning," Penniman recalled, "I had occasion to go over the battle field again quite early, before the burial squads began their work, when the results of the shooting of the previous night became quite apparent.... If a negro had a shot in the shin another was sure to be in the head."[62] Historian David Coles conservatively estimates that Confederates murdered between 25 and 50 Black soldiers that night.[63]

The abuse—and murder—of soldiers captured at Olustee continued in hospitals and on the road to prison. One day after the battle, Confederate James Matt Jordan wrote, "The negroes were badly cut up and killed[.] Our men killed some of them after they had fell into our hands wounded."[64] William Penniman recalled the interrogation of a Black prisoner. A Confederate soldier asked "how it happened that he had come back to fight his old master." Unsatisfied with an "insolent reply," the soldier clubbed the prisoner to death with his rifle. Penniman also recalled that Confederate surgeons amputated the limbs of wounded Black soldiers, but he doubted whether those wounds necessitated it.[65] An anonymous Union prisoner recalled Confederate treatment of Archibald Bogle, a White officer from the 35th United States Colored Infantry. Confederate guards "seemed to delight in the torture they inflicted on him: telling him hanging was too good; that he ought to be buried alive, with one of his negroes beneath him, and one above him."[66] For African American prisoners and the White officers of Black regiments, arriving at Andersonville meant surviving Olustee, and the murders and torture that followed.

A small proportion of prisoners, Black or White, left any significant paper trail before, during, or after captivity. Among Black soldiers, James Henry Gooding was the most prolific writer to fall into Confederate hands at Olustee. Gooding had at least two life stories. According to marriage documents, Gooding identified himself as the son of James and Sarah Gooding, and said he was born in Troy, New York. The New York Colored Orphan Asylum, in contrast, recorded a different history. By the school's account, Gooding had been born on September 11, 1838, to an enslaved mother and a free father in North Carolina. James M. Gooding, almost certainly the father, purchased James Henry and took him to New York City, where he paid for James Henry's admission to the New York City school in 1846. After four years, James Henry apprenticed with Albert Westlake in New York City before leaving at eighteen to work on

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61. David J. Coles, "'Shooting Niggers Sir': Confederate Mistreatment of Union Black Soldiers at the Battle of Olustee," in *Black Flag over Dixie: Racial Atrocities and Reprisals in the Civil War*, ed. Gregory J. W. Urwin (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004), 66.

62. William Penniman Reminiscences, pg. 60, William Penniman Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

63. Coles, "Shooting," 77.

64. James Jordan to his wife, February 21, 1864, "Letters from Confederate Soldiers, 1861–1865," United Daughters of the Confederacy Collection, Georgia State Archives, Morrow; Coles, "Shooting," 91.

65. Penniman Reminiscences, pg. 60, Penniman Papers, SHC, UNC.

66. [No Author], *A Voice from Rebel Prisons*... (Boston, Mass.: G. C. Rand & Avery, 1865), 4.

whaling vessels. Gooding spent six years at sea before returning to Massachusetts, getting married, and enlisting in the 54th Massachusetts Infantry.[67]

As a soldier and a war correspondent, Gooding wrote more than 40 letters to the *New-Bedford Mercury* in 1863 and 1864. His letters chronicled the travels, triumphs, and trials of the 54th Massachusetts Infantry, including the failed attack on Battery Wagner on Morris Island in July 1863. Yet his most symbolically important writing came in a letter to President Lincoln on September 28, 1863. Gooding described the men in his regiment as "freemen by birth" and addressed the pay inequality between White and Black soldiers. He asked President Lincoln a rhetorical question. "Now the main question is," Gooding wrote, "are we Soldiers, or are we Laborers?" Gooding laid out the case for equal pay: Black soldiers faced the same dangers and performed the same duties as White soldiers; Black women mourned the deaths of their loved ones on southern battlefields; and despite years of oppression and continued northern prejudice, Black soldiers defended the nation. He concluded, "Now your Excellency, we have done a Soldier's duty. Why can't we have a Soldier's pay? You caution the Rebel chieftain, that the United States knows no distinction in her soldiers.... Would it not be well and consistent to set the example herself by paying all her soldiers alike?" The appeal was part of Gooding's lifelong search for respect and equality that went well beyond the issue of soldier's pay.

Gooding's struggle for equality ended at Andersonville. At the Battle of Olustee, he was mistakenly listed as killed. This error led Ellen Louisa Gooding to apply for a widow's pension that spring while Gooding was still alive.[68] He died of his wounds at Andersonville in July 1864, one month after Congress granted equal pay to African Americans.[69] Gooding may have never known about the change; or, perhaps, the news filtered into Andersonville by word of mouth, a web of information exchange contemporaries called "the grape vine telegraph."[70] Yet any thoughts or writings by Gooding at Andersonville went with him to the grave or have never been attributed to him. The man who escaped slavery as a child, traveled the world as a whaler, and wrote his way into notoriety as a soldier, died without a trace of reflection.

Gooding's silence at Andersonville exemplifies the difficulty of recovering the voices of Black prisoners. No known portraits or photographs of Gooding—or any other Black prisoner at Andersonville—survive. Service records and descriptive books recorded physical descriptions and some basic biographical information and clues about their lives. Designed to identify deserters and the dead, descriptive lists provided little more information than antebellum advertisements for self-emancipating men and women. Furthermore, biographical materials—

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67. William Seraile, *Angels of Mercy: White Women and the History of New York's Colored Orphan Asylum* (New York, N.Y.: Fordham University Press, 2011), 67–68; Virginia M. Adams, ed., *On the Altar of Freedom: A Black Soldier's Civil War Letters from the Front* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991), xxii-xxxiii. "Records of the Association for the Benefit of Colored Orphans, 1836–1972 (bulk 1850–1936). Series III: Admission Records, 1837–1937," Vol. 23, pg. 78, New York Heritage Digital Collections, https://nyheritage.org/; "Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Widows and Other Veterans of the Army and Navy Who Served Mainly in the Civil War and the War With Spain, compiled 1861–1934," Application Number WC21553, James H. Gooding, Record Group 15, Record Group 15, Records of the Department of Veterans Affairs, 1773–2007, National Archives and Records Administration. On the proportion of prisoner diaries and memoirs, see Caroline Wood Newhall, "'This is the Point on which the Whole Matter Hinges': Locating Black Voices in Civil War Prisons" (M.A. Thesis, Chapel Hill, 2016), 12–13.

68. "Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Widows and Other Veterans of the Army and Navy Who Served Mainly in the Civil War and the War With Spain, compiled 1861–1934," Application Number WC21553, James H. Gooding.

69. James M. McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War: How American Blacks Felt and Acted during the War for the Union* (New York: Vintage, 2003 [1965]), 206.

70. On rumors, see Jason Phillips, "The Grape Vine Telegraph: Rumors and Confederate Persistence," *The Journal of Southern History* 72. no. 4 (November 2006): 753–788.

Gooding's location and status of birth, for instance—cannot always be relied upon. While imperfect, these records establish individual identities and provisional life histories, including the subtleties of childhood, pre-war occupation, and enlistment. They also help illustrate the individual and collective experience of enslavement, torture, death, and survival at Andersonville.

The scant information that does exist on Black prisoners at Andersonville indicates that Black soldiers were not monolithic in background or belief. Irving Hall, for example, was one of about 34 men from the 8th United States Colored Infantry held at Andersonville. Like Gooding, Hall's records are conflicting. His service records suggest that he came from a free Black family in Sussex County, Delaware—the state with the smallest percentage of enslaved persons. Hall was an adolescent during the political crises of the 1850s and worked as a laborer when war broke out. In August 1863, one month after Gettysburg, 20-year-old Hall entered the Union army, but it was not voluntary. Rather, Hall became one of the 46,000 northern men compelled into military service through conscription.[71] After the government drafted the young man into the 8th United States Colored Infantry, a White officer recorded a physical description: Hall was 5 feet, 2 ½ inches tall; dark hair, dark eyes, and a dark complexion. In February 1864, the short young man was among those at the Battle of Olustee who faced a triple burden: wounded, captured, and being a Black man in a blue uniform. Hall survived the post-battle murders, the Confederate hospital, and transportation to Andersonville in March 1864. If Hall was physically capable of working, Confederates compelled him to work for the prison, thus enslaving a free Black man drafted into the Union army. On April 24, Hall became the first Black soldier to die at Andersonville.[72]

Irving Hall never married. His mother, Phebe White, spent years applying for a government pension. The pension record and the military service record overlap in the geographical clues about Hall's life, but raise other questions about the man's name and the ages of mother and son. According to Phebe, she was born into slavery in the late-18th century and married Robert Hall in Baltimore Hundred, Delaware, in 1811. Her first husband died in 1850. Phebe remarried, but her second husband died in 1862. At some point, enslavers separated the family and by the 1850s the mother and her enslaved son lived across state lines. White testified that "Irvin" Hall "was about 25 years of age and lived at home with his master until his (master's) death." Had Hall self-emancipated during the Civil War only to be drafted? Hall sent his mother clothing and other provisions until entering the U.S. Army. Friends of the family testified that Hall lived in Roxana, Delaware, and he provided his mother support up until the time he went to war. Still, Phebe White's application for the survivor's benefit was rejected because there was "no evidence of support within the meaning of the law."[73]

Thirty-four soldiers from Hall's regiment, 14 of whom are buried at Andersonville National Cemetery, may have had more in common with him than with Gooding. Service records reveal a similar biography: most came from northern states or the border states; a sizeable proportion of

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71. The figure of draftees (46,000) is based on James M. McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era (New York, N.Y.: Ballantine Books, 1988), pg. 601. McPherson likely refers only to state units; therefore, it may not be directly applicable to African Americans drafted into national units. This is an area of needed study.

72. "Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served with the United States Colored Troops: Infantry Organizations, 8th through 13th, including the 11th (new)," Microfilm Publication M1821, roll 6, Irving Hall, 8th USCI.

73. Phebe White, Mother's Application for Army Pension no 192016; service of Irvin Hall (Pvt. Co. E, 8th United States Colored Infantry, Civil War); Case Files of Rejected Pension Applications…,1861–1914; Civil War and Later Pension File; Record Group 15, Records of the Department of Veterans Affairs, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

the men reported being free at the start of the Civil War; and most were laborers. There was also a similar reason many of these men went into military service. While many soldiers like Gooding enlisted to fight slavery and defend the nation, Hall's regiment contained a high proportion of conscripts and substitutes. The conscripts wanted to avoid the war and the financial burden it placed on themselves and their families. For men like Hall in the 8th USCI, conscription was a step toward Andersonville, enslavement, and—for nearly half—death.[74]

The only extant African American testimony of Andersonville comes through the retrospective lens of a few survivors. The effects of wartime wounds and prison illnesses robbed some survivors of the ability to work or take care of themselves. Samuel Peterson, a free Black man before the war from Perth Amboy, New Jersey, exemplified the enervating effects of captivity. In 1863, Peterson was 20 years old, healthy, and a waiter before joining the 8th United States Colored Infantry in New York City.[75] Peterson enlisted as a substitute, meaning that he switched places with someone selected in the draft lottery. A company officer described Peterson as having brown hair, hazel eyes, and a florid complexion. A Confederate bullet struck Peterson in the left thigh at Olustee. His captors sent Peterson by rail to Andersonville. Peterson stayed at Andersonville at least 10 months. In February 1865, Confederates removed Peterson from Andersonville and transported him through Columbia, South Carolina, to an exchange point in North Carolina.[76]

Captivity shattered Peterson's good health and this followed him to Camp Parole, Maryland, and then home. The financial burden of caring for the released prisoner fell upon his brother, Peter Peterson, who appealed to Edwin M. Stanton for financial assistance in May 1865. Perhaps unknowingly, Peter misrepresented the circumstances of his brother's enlistment, identifying him as a draftee rather than a substitute. Peterson wrote, "I was obliged to hire a nurse for 58 days at the rate of $1.50 and board. The doctor's bill will be very heavy on me. So I do not know what to do to help myself." The event suggested that White civilian support networks did not necessarily extend to Black families. According to Peter, the idea of writing Stanton came from several New York merchants and his employer, the president of the Continental Bank of New York. Peterson requested, at the very least, the government send his brother's back pay to help cover the medical expenses. The last financial statement with the military showed that Peterson received three months "extra pay" for his time as a prisoner of war. Yet government refused to cover the costs that fell on Peterson's brother.[77]

Neither Peterson nor any other known Black prisoner wrote formal memoirs, but Black prisoners testified at Henry Wirz's trial. Five men from Black regiments, four enlisted men and one White officer, testified in September 1865. Archibald Bogle went to Andersonville and not Camp Oglethorpe only because he served as a White commissioned officer in a Black regiment. Prison officials on both sides kept enlisted men and officers separated, sometimes at the same

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74. "Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served with the United States Colored Troops: Infantry Organizations, 8th through 13th, including the 11th (new)," Microfilm Publication M1821, rolls 5–15.

75. "Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served with the United States Colored Troops: Infantry Organizations, 8th through 13th, including the 11th (new)," Microfilm Publication M1821, roll 11, Samuel Peterson, 8th USCI.

76. "Compiled Service Records," Samuel Peterson, 8th USCI.

77. "Letter from Peter Peterson to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton Requesting the Back Pay of His Invalid Brother, Samuel Peters, to Help Pay the Medical Bills Due After His Return from Andersonville Prison," Record Group 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, Letters Received, 1863–1888, P-252 CT 1865: Samuel Peterson; "Compiled Service Records," Samuel Peterson, 8th USCI; James G. Mendez, *A Great Sacrifice: Northern Black Soldiers, Their Families, and the Experience of Civil War* (Fordham, N.Y.: *Fordham University Press*, 2019), 78–79.

location, but often in entirely different facilities. Retribution against White officers in Black regiments included revoking access to the better conditions of an officers' prison.

The four enlisted men who testified at the Wirz trial reflected the diversity of Black regiments. Frank Mardix (spelled Maddox at the trial and later pronounced "Mattocks" by friends) and Lewis Dyer were born into slavery, seized freedom themselves, and enlisted in the 1st North Carolina Colored Infantry, redesignated as the 35th United States Colored Infantry. Mardix worked for the U.S. government as a laborer before enlisting in the army. Dyer, perhaps an assumed name, left no record of his enlistment. The other two witnesses came from very different worlds. John Fisher was from Delaware, a slave state, but he reported that he was a free man at enlistment. William Henry Jennings came from the free state of New Jersey. Both Fisher and Jennings enlisted—rather than being drafted or serving as substitutes—in the 8th United States Colored Infantry. Although shaped by questions designed to convict Wirz and filtered through an abbreviated transcript, their testimony peered into Andersonville from an otherwise overlooked perspective.[78]

The witnesses described how Black prisoners faced additional dangers and trauma in captivity. Throughout the war, Union and Confederate officials agreed that captured soldiers could not be forced to work for their captors. However, the Confederacy did not recognize African Americans as soldiers; therefore, they forced Black soldiers to work as slaves.[79] Resisting enslavement came at high risks. Confederates whipped John Fisher for refusing to work. "I was barefoot and naked," he recalled at the trial, "and they wanted me to go out to work and I would not do it." For resisting enslavement, Wirz had Fisher "bucked and gagged, and whipped with thirty-nine lashes." Confederate officials also threatened punishment for enslaved soldiers who did not work fast enough. Fisher recalled Henry Wirz pulling a pistol on a prisoner named George Brown for not moving fast enough. "He was going after some shovels," Fisher recalled, "and could not run as fast as Wirz wanted him to."[80] For Black prisoners, surviving Andersonville meant navigating enslavement, torture, and death threats.

Fisher and other witnesses at the Wirz trial recalled specific, spectacle whippings. One victim was Isaac Hawkins of Ridgeway, New York. Hawkins, like Gooding, was a literate sailor before enlisting in the 54th Massachusetts Infantry. Lewis Dyer recalled at the trial that it was rumored Wirz had Hawkins whipped "for forging a pass."[81] Frank Mardix could not recall the reason Hawkins was whipped, only that he received 250 lashes. Afterward, Hawkins had "two feet of chain put on him" and was then sent to work in the cemetery after "being told that if he stopped five minutes during the day, he would get 250 more."[82] Despite his torture, Hawkins survived Andersonville and, at least in 1865, lived in Washington, D.C. That year, the U.S. government identified him as someone who might be able to help identify Union graves. Gardiner Tufts, in a letter to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, wrote that Hawkins had been "a prisoner at Andersonville from March 27, 1864 to February 2, 1865, and assisted in burying all of the Union

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78. "Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served with the United States Colored Troops: Infantry Organizations, 8th through 13th, including the 11th (new)," Microfilm Publication M1821, roll 6, William C. Jennings and John Fisher, 8th USCI.

79. Roger Pickenpaugh, *Prisoners in Blue: The Civil War Prisons of the Confederacy* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2013), 189–190.

80. U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, *Trial of Henry Wirz*, 40th Congress, 2nd Session, 1868, Executive Document 23, 280.

81. U.S. Congress, *Trial of Henry Wirz*, 408.

82. U.S. Congress, *Trial of Henry Wirz*, 177.

dead during that time. He appears to have considerable knowledge of the interments at that place which may be valuable in carrying out the work undertaken."[83]

It is possible, though unlikely, that Andrew Jackson Riddle photographed one or more African American prisoners burying the dead at Andersonville. It is unlikely because Black prisoners rarely worked alongside White prisoners. Mardix began working in the cemetery in September 1864, and he testified that Black prisoners, White prisoners, and enslaved people worked as separate groups. "White soldiers were burying the dead before we went there," Mardix stated. "There were no white soldiers so engaged at the time we were there." Likewise, enslaved people from the surrounding region were segregated from Black Union prisoners. Mardix continued, "There was a gang of confederate colored; about twenty. We all worked in the same burying-ground, but they did not allow us to have any conversation with them. We worked close together." Yet if Hawkins worked in the cemetery throughout the summer of 1864, it is possible he was present with the paroled White prisoners when Riddle photographed the burial crew.[84]

Figure 1.2. Detail of Andrew Jackson Riddle, "How they buried them at Andersonville, Georgia," August 17, 1864, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Witnesses at the Wirz trial also recalled the torture of Abraham "Abe" Harris. A Pennsylvanian by birth and a laborer by occupation, Harris enlisted as a substitute in the 8th United States Colored Infantry. Perhaps the 21-year-old changed his mind, or perhaps Harris aspired to be a bounty jumper and collect multiple payments for serving as a substitute. Whatever his reason,

83. Gardiner Tufts to Edwin Stanton, July 24, 1865, "Consolidated Correspondence File, 1794–1915," Entry 225, Box 35, RG 92, Records of the Quartermaster General, National Archives and Records Administration.

84. U.S. Congress, *Trial of Henry Wirz*, 179.

Harris walked out of camp on November 1863 and the U.S. Army paid $30.00 for his "apprehension and delivery" shortly before the regiment left for Florida. Back in the regiment by compulsion, Harris suffered a leg wound at Olustee and fell into Confederate hands.[85] The independent streak exemplified by his desertion may have clashed with Confederate attempts to enslave him. Lewis Dyer testified during the Wirz trial that Abe Harris "was whipped at Captain Wirz's house." Even though Dyer did not see the whipping himself, Dyer knew what happened to Harris because word of the incident travelled quickly. The whippings of Fisher, Harris, Hawkins, and others were the most symbolic examples of trauma reserved for Black prisoners at Andersonville.[86]

Public whippings were calculated to be reminders about White power. Fisher testified that guards whipped three Black men in September 1864, two of them at the cemetery. Although no blood was drawn, Fisher said, "They had marks upon them of the strap with which they had been whipped."[87] Eugene Forbes, a White prisoner, witnessed the whipping of a Black prisoner "for refusing to work." Forbes described the man as a member of "the sailor crowd" and remarked that "he came in crying."[88] Frank Mardix witnessed four or five whippings. He recalled, "When we were working on the stockade, four were whipped; one was knocked down with a spade; the first that I saw was in May; there were two whipped at Captain Wirz's headquarters; they each got 39 lashes; I do not know what they had done."[89] Although whippings seem to have been reserved for Black prisoners, Mardix recalled that one White prisoner attempted to escape Andersonville by putting on blackface in a futile attempt to blend in with the enslaved workforce. Confederates caught the man, and Wirz gave him 39 lashes. Mardix recalled, "Captain Wirz said the man had blacked himself to be a nigger, and God damn him, he would give him a nigger's law. That was 39 lashes."[90] Stripping and whipping served to control prisoners through terror.

Confederates forced most of the wounded Black prisoners to work for the prison. Mardix testified, "Some were not able to work. Some had only one leg and some had only one arm. Those who were able to do any work were at work outside." Yet the sick and wounded faced additional burdens. "Those who were not able to work received very bad treatment," Mardix recalled, "Once for a week they did not get anything to eat. That was in September."[91] Sick and wounded prisoners also faced the threat of violence for being unable to work. William Jennings suffered a bullet through the left thigh at Olustee, and the process of enslavement began when Confederates forced him to work "digging a ditch outside the stockade." After catching a cold in March, Jennings refused to work, and he suffered the retribution of Wirz, who sentenced him to thirty lashes. Jennings described the whipping as the combination of torture and humiliation. He testified, "They whipped me on my bare back. They made me bend over. Afterward they took me and put me in the stocks. I was kept there a day and a night. I did not get any food or drink

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85. "Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served with the United States Colored Troops: Infantry Organizations, 8th through 13th, including the 11th (new)," NARA publication M1821, roll 7, Abraham Harris, 8th USCI.

86. U.S. Congress, *Trial of Henry Wirz*, 408.

87. U.S. Congress, *Trial of Henry Wirz*, 280.

88. Forbes, Diary of a Soldier and Prisoner of War, 31.

89. U.S. Congress, *Trial of Henry Wirz*, 179.

90. U.S. Congress, *Trial of Henry Wirz*, 177.

91. U.S. Congress, *Trial of Henry Wirz*, 177.

while in the stocks.... When I was taken down, I could not walk."[92] Jennings's account illustrates that the stocks became yet another tool of racial control—and terror—at Andersonville. Black prisoners, regardless of their condition before the Civil War, learned firsthand at Andersonville the corporeal reality of slavery.

The work of Black prisoners at Andersonville varied from day to day, but it encompassed both the types of jobs performed by White paroled prisoners and enslaved people from the surrounding region. William Jennings worked in the swamp around the prison, probably felling trees that obstructed the defense of the prison against outside attack. Frank Mardix dug stumps out of the ground and cut wood for the guardhouse, the bake house, and the prisoners. In June, Mardix and other enslaved men enlarged the prison stockade by 10 acres, completing work begun by enslaved people the preceding winter. From September 10, 1864 to February 2, 1865, Mardix helped bury fellow prisoners in the cemetery. Most of the jobs performed by Black prisoners, like those of enslaved people, went unrecorded. It is safe to say that African Americans, imprisoned and enslaved, performed a wide variety of tasks necessary to running a massive prison camp.[93]

When Confederates began removing White Union prisoners from Andersonville in September 1864, Black prisoners prepared the trains for their departure. During that month, Mardix worked two shifts: during the day he labored in the cemetery; at night he worked at the railroad depot. At the depot, Mardix put rations onto boxcars, preparing for the nightly evacuation of prisoners set in motion by the capture of Atlanta by Sherman's army. "We got those rations out of the commissary there," Mardix testified. "My orders were to put so much in every box[car]." Work hours were so long during the months of prisoner removal that the guards did not bother to return Black prisoners to the main stockade. Instead, Mardix recalled, "I messed at the camp where I staid, right opposite the depot.... All that worked with me messed there."[94] This was probably the officers' prison, located on the opposite side of the road leading to the main stockade.

As Mardix and other witnesses at the Wirz trial indicated, their work could be difficult and dangerous or ordinary and mundane. Yet it highlighted the double meaning of captivity for Black prisoners at Andersonville. On the one hand, the forced labor in the cemetery intersected with the voluntary work performed by paroled White prisoners. On the other hand, digging ditches, felling trees, and other hard, manual labor intersected with work performed by the enslaved. Black prisoners at Andersonville lived two captivities. They were imprisoned and enslaved. Andersonville was a massive prisoner-of-war camp. It was also a massive slave labor camp.

Black prisoners generally stayed longer at Andersonville than White prisoners. They arrived as the new prison was still being cut from the pines of Sumter County. Forced into service, most Black prisoners worked as Andersonville became desperately overcrowded. In the late summer and fall of 1864, Black prisoners remained enslaved at Andersonville while the majority of White prisoners were evacuated to points farther away from Union troops. It was not until February 1865, when the Confederacy agreed to exchange Black prisoners, that those who arrived in March 1864 began a long journey for exchange points in North Carolina. By that time,

92. U.S. Congress, *Trial of Henry Wirz*, 187.

93. U.S. Congress, *Trial of Henry Wirz*, 176, 179.

94. U.S. Congress, *Trial of Henry Wirz*, 180.

Andersonville was a shadow of its former self. It was a ghost town of huts and caves built by Union prisoners inside a prison complex built by enslaved people and enslaved Black prisoners. Andersonville was already a ruin in the final months of the Civil War. Black prisoners witnessed its dramatic rise and fall.

A GRAVEYARD AND A FREE HOME

Andersonville emerged quickly from a landscape of slavery and imprisonment into a regional symbol of emancipation. Black men and women from 30 miles around converged on Andersonville in the late summer of 1865 in hopes that the small number of Union troops stationed there would clarify conflicting information: Did the fall of the Confederacy mean emancipation? Had someone shot President Abraham Lincoln? If the latter was true, what did that mean for emancipation? These Union soldiers and civilians who arrived at Andersonville entered into a tug-of-war between Whites and African Americans over the future of slavery and the meaning of emancipation and freedom.

What made the expedition to Andersonville especially important to local African Americans was that it included White and Black soldiers. For Black men, women, and children who came to Andersonville, members of the 137th United States Colored Infantry were probably the first Black soldiers—other than prisoners—they saw. Most of these soldiers had only recently become free men. Daniel Sanders, born in North Carolina, was living near Selma, Alabama, when Union troops liberated the city in spring 1865. As historian and park ranger Chris Barr points out, "One of Sanders's first acts as a free man was to join the 137th United States Colored Troops, which he did less than one week after he was liberated."[95] The regiment mustered into the U.S. Army at Macon, Georgia, on June 1, 1865, and Sanders' company joined Captain James M. Moore's expedition to Andersonville to identify the graves the next month. While helping to mark the graves at Andersonville, Sanders fell ill and died on August 13, 1865. Fifty-six of his comrades at Macon died of disease in camp, and all of them would be reinterred at Andersonville National Cemetery in the coming years.[96]

Clara Barton, who accompanied the expedition to Andersonville, witnessed the region's sudden transition out of slavery. In her testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives, Barton reported that newly freed people "were in a state of ignorance, generally, at the time of their own condition as freedmen."[97] Her statement was only partly accurate. More aptly, Black men and women understood the Civil War as a war of emancipation, but also knew the risks of acting on incomplete information. "Some of them knew it," she clarified. "They all, of course mistrusted it. They had all heard it from one another. A very few knew it from their masters."[98] African Americans still toiling on plantations also knew that a military expedition, including a northern woman, had arrived at Andersonville. On her first morning at Andersonville, Barton

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95. Andersonville National Historic Site, "Daniel Sanders: A Story in Stone," May 21, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=72Wj3gfy1iE.

96. "Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served with the United States Colored Troops: 56th–138th USCT Infantry, 1864–1865" Microfilm Publication M276, Daniel Sanders, 137th USCI; "The Andersonville Graves. Report of Capt. J. M. Moore," *New York Times*, October 19, 1865; E. B. Whitman, "Report of Final Disposition of the Remains of Deceased Union Soldiers and Prisoners of War in National Cemeteries…, January 1867 to January 1868," in "General Correspondence and Reports Relating to National and Post Cemeteries ("Cemetery File"), 1865–1914," Entry 576, Box 3, RG 92, NARA.

97. *Reports of the Committees of the House of Representatives, Made During the First Session Thirty-Ninth Congress, 1865–66, Part III, Georgia, Alabama Mississippi, Arkansas* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1866), 103.

98. *Reports of the Committees of the House of Representatives*, 103.

wrote, in racist dialect, "Aunt Milly came to call 'Miss Cara,' don't know how she learned my name. The darkeys came to my door in troops to 'see dat yankee 'oomen,' 'never seed a yankee ooman before."[99] Five days later, Barton recorded, "The negroes came before I was dressed with chickens, tomatoes, and peaches for me."[100] The grapevine telegraph, though imperfect, operated with great rapidity, and African Americans traveled through the night to Andersonville to learn the facts from this envoy.[101]

African Americans arrived at Andersonville knowing what questions to ask to correct misinformation from their enslavers. Barton recalled, "They had been told that he [Abraham Lincoln] was dead; that he had been killed; but at the same time they had been told that, now that he was killed, they were no longer free, but would be all slaves again."[102] Perhaps more than anyone else, newly freed people were experts at parsing information filtered through friends and family, poor Whites, overseers, and the White men and women who managed plantations. Black men and women had doubts when they heard of Abraham Lincoln's death, which had been a rumor more than once in wartime homes, armies, and prisons. For that reason, many concluded "it was a hoax to hold them in slavery." When new groups of Black men and women greeted Clara Barton each morning in front of her tent, she affirmed that Lincoln was dead, that she had seen the slain president's body, but that they were, in fact, free.[103]

The freedpeople who conversed with Clara Barton illustrated how information infiltrated a remote region of the Confederacy where no Union soldiers arrived as large armies. The ritual outside Clara Barton's tent included her recitation of new military rules created to usher in the transition from slave labor to compensated labor. She read a circular, issued May 22, 1865, by Brevet Major General Rufus Saxton, that offered proof to freedpeople that the U.S. government would defend them against their former enslavers. The proclamation established that Black men and women cultivating crops on abandoned lands owned the fruits of their labor unless justly compensated by those who held title to the land. A second order stipulated that "all persons employing freedmen in agricultural and mechanical pursuits" in Georgia must "announce to those in their employ the fact that they are free" and "make suitable agreements with them whereby a just and equitable compensation will be secured to them for their labor." A third provision stated that freedpeople had a right to half of all crops raised on land, including land in Sumter and Macon Counties, that had not been abandoned during the war. Saxton also established the whipping of Black men and women, especially for proclaiming the fact of their freedom, as assault and battery. Lastly, Saxton forbade landowners from evicting the elderly, children, and the sick until the U.S. government had arranged for their support.[104]

Masters intentionally misled freedpeople, twisting, bending, and ignoring the language of Union military orders about former slaves and masters. For this reason, local freedpeople asked Clara Barton to clarify orders published by General James H. Wilson, headquartered in Macon. "These they had never heard read, and they came to me to know what the paper said," Barton

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99. Clara Barton Diary, July 26, 1865, Library of Congress.

100. Barton Diary, July 31, 1865, LC.

101. *Reports of the Committees of the House of Representatives*, 103.

102. *Reports of the Committees of the House of Representatives*, 103.

103. *Reports of the Committees of the House of Representatives*, 103; Clara Barton Diary, August 1, 1865, LC.

104. Rufus Saxton, "Circular No. 3, Abandoned Lands and Freedmen Farmers," May 22, 1865, in Executive Documents Printed by Order of the House of Representatives during the First Session of the Thirty-Ninth Congress, 1865–66 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1866), 99–100.

said. "They said they had been told that General Wilson's orders said that they should work six days in the week hard, and half a day on Sunday. They wanted to know if it was so." In response, Barton read to them the *Macon Daily Telegraph*, which published a set of rules regarding the relationship between freedpeople and their former enslavers:

I. The common law governing the domestic relations, giving parents authority and control over their children, and guardians control over their wards, are in force. The authority and obligations of parents and guardians take the place of those of the former master.

II. The former masters are constituted the guardians of minors, and of the aged and infirm, in the absence of parents or other near relations capable of supporting them.

III. Young men and women, under twenty-one (21) years of age, will remain under the control of their parents or guardians until they become of age, thus aiding to support their parents and younger brothers and sisters.

IV. The former masters of freedmen must not turn away the young and infirm, nor refuse to give them food and shelter, nor shall the able-bodied men and women go away from their homes, or live in idleness, and leave their parents or children or younger brothers and sisters to be supported by others.

V. The former masters of freedmen will not be permitted to turn away or drive from their plantations faithful hands, who have helped to make crops, when the crops are saved without paying for labor already performed.

VI. Freedmen, like all other men, are amenable to civil and criminal law, and are liable to be punished for violations of law, the same as White citizens, but in no case will brutality be allowed on the part of the former master. Thinking men will at once see, that with the end of slavery all enactments and customs which were necessary for its preservation, must cease to have effect.

VII. Persons of age who are free from any of the obligations referred to above, are at liberty to find new homes whenever they can obtain proper employment, but they will not be supported by the government or by their former masters in idleness and vagrancy.

VIII. It will be left to the employer and servan[t] to agree upon the wages to be paid, and any jus[t] arrangement or contract will not be interfered with; but freedmen are advised that for the present season they ought to expect only moderate wages, and when their employers cannot pay the money, they ought to be contented with a fair crop to be raised. This rule is subject to such modifications as the Freedman's Bureau may require.

IX. All *officers*, *soldiers*, and *citizens*, are requested to give publicity to these rules, and to instruct the freed people as to their new rights and obligations.

X. All sub district post commanders, are authorized and required to correct any violation of the above rule, within their jurisdiction. All offenders hereunder may be tried before a military commission or provost court. [105]

Barton read these orders to individuals and small groups until nearly memorized. By her own count, she read it up to 40 times a day. On Sundays, the crowd sometimes numbered more than 100. Conversing with freedpeople took up all but a few hours of Barton's daily routine at Andersonville.

Local freedpeople also came to Andersonville with testimony about their treatment at the hands of their enslavers. Barton recalled meeting a "mulatto" man named "Arnold Cater" (his last name was Cato), a blacksmith and Baptist preacher once owned by the family of Georgia Governor William Rabun. The family sold Cato to Nicholas Wylie, an absentee landlord from Wilkes County who enslaved 154 people in Lee County.[106] Like many of those enslaved by wealthy Georgia planters, Cato left behind a wife and five children when he was marched off to a new plantation in southwest Georgia.[107] Starting over in Lee County, the 45-year-old blacksmith married 15-year-old Delia in 1863. Slaveholders often encouraged slave marriages for the capital gain it provided to their estate and valued reproducing women alongside their strongest men. Slavery provided no protection for Black women, but pregnant women, mothers, and children suddenly lost any status as an investment in 1865. By that year, Delia and Arnold Cato had one boy, a two year old named Samuel, and another child on the way.[108]

The violence Delia experienced in July 1865 exemplified the different ways men and women exited slavery in southwest Georgia. Seven months pregnant, Delia struggled to complete her assigned daily spinning quota. Jim Bird, the overseer and attacker, stripped Delia of her clothes before he bucked, gagged, and whipped her. He then left her "a gore of blood" for Arnold to find. Despite the illegality of such whipping in summer 1865, Arnold and Delia had no one to turn to for justice. The next day, when Delia was too weak to spin the required amount of thread, Bird threatened to whip her again. The Catos fled Lee County fearing for their lives. Although free by military order and very soon by the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment, Arnold and Delia ran like the thousands of fugitives from slavery before them. Amid the desperate act, the Catos left behind the toddler, Samuel.

The Catos fled first to Americus by taking a circuitous route that avoided main roads. This caution meant that the overseer reached Americus first, where he announced his pursuit of "runaway slaves." But the Catos eluded him. After blacksmithing as a refugee in Americus for one week, Arnold learned that "there was a settlement of Yankees forming at Andersonville." Arnold started north, leaving Delia hiding in Americus. He intended to take a train, but he had been paid in Confederate money for his blacksmithing and could not buy a train ticket. Therefore, Arnold walked the 11 miles to Andersonville. After interviewing Arnold, Clara Barton sent him back to the military authorities at Americus with a letter, "asking him [the U.S.

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105. "Headquarters U.S. Forces, Macon, Ga, July 5, 1865," *Macon Daily Telegraph*, July 18, 1865.

106. 1860 U.S. Census, Wilkes County, Georgia, population schedule, pg. 817 (stamped), dwelling 342, family 342, Nicholas Wylie; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com : accessed May 22, 2017); citing NARA microfilm publication M653, roll 141; 1860 U.S. Census, Lee County, Georgia, Slave Schedule, pg. 47–49, Nicholas Wylie; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com : accessed May 22, 2017); citing NARA microfilm publication M653, roll not identified; Clara Barton Diary, August 7, 1865, LC.

107. *Reports of the Committees of the House of Representatives*, 103.

108. O'Donovan, *Becoming Free*, 111–112; *Reports of the Committees of the House of Representatives*, 104–105.

officer at Americus] to send a sergeant and a wagon, or team of some kind, with that man back to Nick Wylie's to get whatever he had left."[109] Two days later, Arnold, Delia, and Samuel arrived back at Andersonville with a wagon hauling their furniture, bedding, and chickens.

Clara Barton assisted the Cato family, but the interaction between her and Delia also suggested a dynamic that echoed in the writings of White teachers at Andersonville over the next decade. On August 8, the same day Barton wrote a letter on Arnold's behalf, she recorded that "some worthless negroes came in, followed by their master."[110] When Barton examined Delia, she sought to infer the veracity of the couple's story from the wounds on a pregnant mother's back. Barton remembered Delia as "a young, bright-colored woman, a little darker than he, with a fair, patient face, with nothing sulky in her look."[111] The examination indicated the instincts of a nurse, but also the ritual of a slave buyer. Barton found 12 lashes "curled around her arms" between 8 and 10 inches long. The deep wounds, only some of which had healed, allowed her only to wear clothing "thrown loosely over her shoulders."[112] Perhaps she looked for older scars, something slave buyers in antebellum markets read as an indication of bad temperament.[113] Barton also scrutinized Delia's face. Barton testified, "She was one who, from her face, would never have rebelled against labor that she could have done; of that I am satisfied."[114] After examining the pregnant woman's body, Barton concluded that Delia could hardly have worked before the assault, and not at all after it.

The Catos became one of the first Black families to take up long residence at Andersonville. The first cemetery superintendent, Col. William A. Griffin, hired Arnold Cato as a blacksmith, and the family settled into a house near the cemetery. Two years after fleeing from Lee County, Arnold registered to vote for the first time in July 1867.[115] The children spent a considerable amount of their childhood at Andersonville. In 1865, Delia gave birth to a second son, Arnold. Two years later, Delia gave birth to her first daughter, Rhoda; and in 1870, she had a second daughter, Violet. Although the census enumerator in 1870 did not mark anyone in the household as attending school, it is likely that one or more of the Cato family went to school at Andersonville between 1867 and 1875, when they moved away from Andersonville.[116]

The Cato family exemplified the transition of Andersonville in the summer and fall of 1865. With the legal end of slavery uncertain and the antebellum power structure largely intact, freedpeople like Arnold and Delia Cato had to fight for their emancipation. They also looked for allies such as arriving Union soldiers and Clara Barton. For years, Andersonville remained a symbol of emancipation. As the next two chapters will illustrate, Andersonville also became a

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109. *Reports of the Committees of the House of Representatives*, 104–105; Arnold's Friends in Andersonville to Mr. Douglas, August 8, 1865, Clara Barton Papers, Subject File, 1861–1952; Civil War; Andersonville Prison, Georgia; Correspondence, 1864–1911, undated, LC.

110. Barton Diary, August 8, 1865, LC; Arnold's Friends in Andersonville to Mr. Douglas, August 8, 1865, Barton Papers, LC.

111. *Reports of the Committees of the House of Representatives*, 105.

112. *Reports of the Committees of the House of Representatives*, 105.

113. Johnson, *Soul by Soul,* 135–161.

114. *Reports of the Committees of the House of Representatives*, 105.

115. *Reports of the Committees of the House of Representatives*, 105; Return of Qualified Voters, Sumter County, Election District 13, July 8, 1867; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com : accessed May 22, 2017); citing Georgia, Office of the Governor, Returns of Qualified Voters under the Reconstruction Act, 1867, Georgia State Archives, Morrow, Ga.

116. 1870 U.S. Census, Sumter County, Georgia, population schedule, pg. 347 (stamped), dwelling 536, family 536, Arnold Cato, Delia Cato, Samuel Cato, Arnold Cato, Rhoda Cato, Violet Cato; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com : accessed November 10, 2017); citing NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 174.

place for learning, work, and political consciousness. Out of the ruined landscape of slavery came challenges and opportunities for newly freed people.

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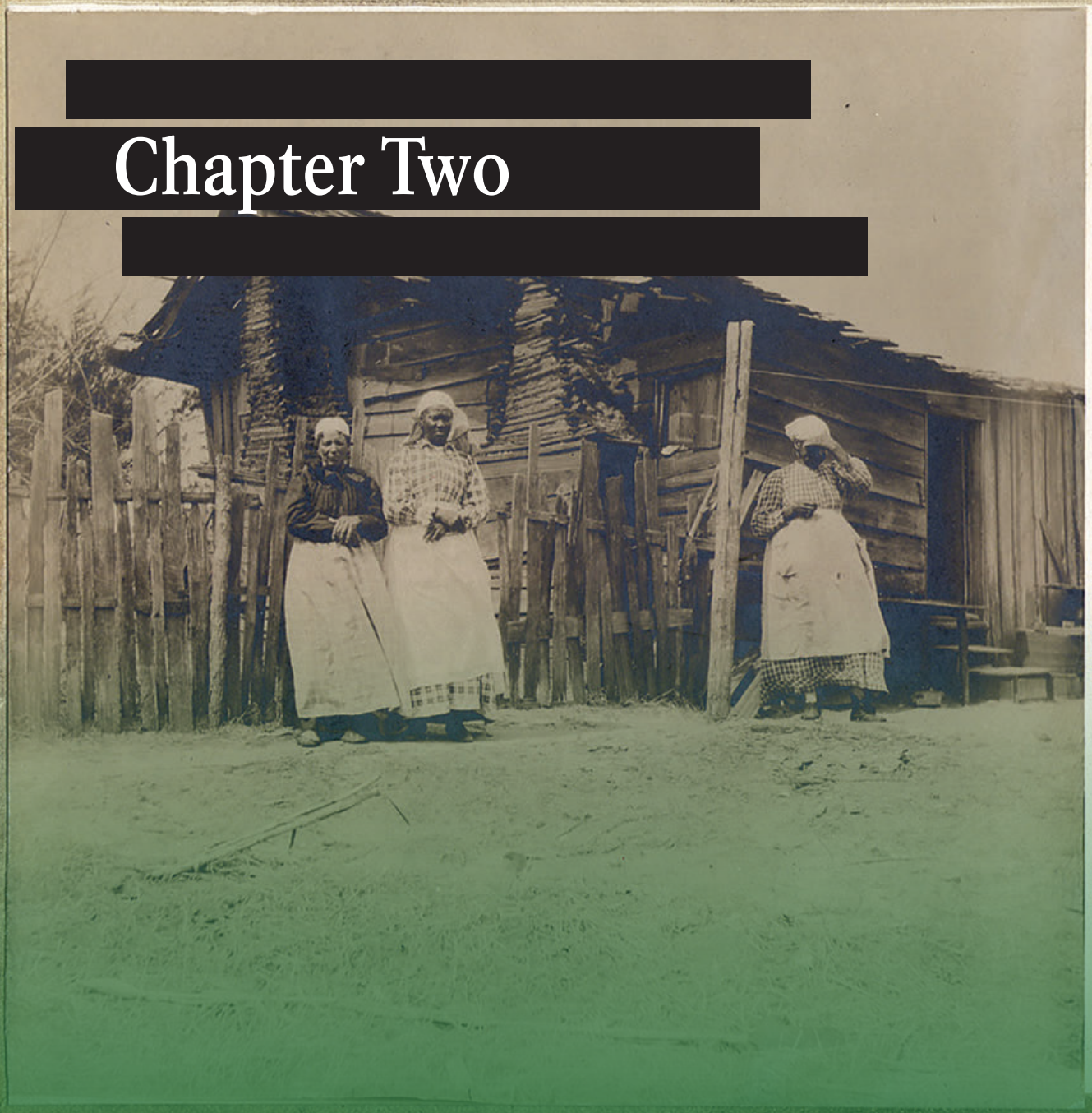

Chapter Two

The Sumter School, 1866-1874

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CHAPTER TWO: THE SUMTER SCHOOL, 1866–1874

Andersonville began as a site of imprisonment and slavery, but between 1865 and 1867 it became a place where African Americans negotiated the meaning of emancipation and freedom. Here, as elsewhere throughout the South, Black men and women rebuilt families, worshipped, and sought educational opportunities as freedpeople. As the U.S. government transformed the prison graveyard into a national cemetery, African Americans and the American Missionary Association (AMA) established the Sumter School at an abandoned Confederate hospital southwest of the prison. For freedpeople, the school and the presence of the U.S. government served as symbols of Reconstruction and the promise of social transformation. For hundreds of Black men, women, and children Andersonville symbolized not captivity and despair but emancipation, the hope of a better life, and the ongoing struggle for full freedom.[117]

This chapter traces the origins of the Sumter School, analyzes the varied experiences of teachers and students, and explores why the school closed in 1874. The AMA archives contain periodic monthly school reports, offering insight into some of the most quotidian details. For the sake of space, this chapter keeps tables to a minimum, but an appendix contains summary tables drawn from AMA reports. The AMA tabular and descriptive reports, while providing the single best look into day-to-day operations at Andersonville, do not convey the full range of African American perspectives as learners and teachers. These documents are also not representative of Black education in the South because resources and efforts varied by location. As historian Ronald E. Butchart writes, "Freedmen's education was not merely the AMA writ large, though it has largely been interpreted as though it were."[118] However imperfect, the AMA archives are the single richest cache of education records from Andersonville and a critical examination reveals the promise of Andersonville as a site of reform and empowerment.

Freedpeople needed no enlightenment to the religious, economic, and political benefits of literacy. Even though state laws and the threat of torture kept the vast majority of the enslaved population illiterate, up to 10% of enslaved people had learned to read by the Civil War.[119] Establishing schools became one of the first acts of freedom as formerly enslaved people appointed teachers from the literate. Into this mix came northern organizations, such as the AMA, the Freedman's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the American Freedmen's Union Commission. Unfortunately, as Butchart argues, northern organizations have tended to overshadow Black-led education in historical memory of Reconstruction. The AMA, for example, was perhaps the most widespread and bureaucratic organization, building or funding nearly 300 schools—or about 80% of Black schools in Georgia—between 1865 and

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117. On Andersonville and the Sumter School, in passing, see Benjamin G. Cloyd, *Haunted by Atrocity: Civil War Prisons in American Memory* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010), 50; Adam H. Domby, "Captives of Memory: The Contested Legacy of Race at Andersonville National Historic Site," *Civil War History* 63, no. 3 (September 2017): 262–263; Jacqueline Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love: Northern Teachers and Georgia Blacks, 1865–1873* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 63, 130–31, 157–59, 168–69; Robert Scott Davis, *Ghosts and Shadows of Andersonville: Essays on the Secret Social Histories of America's Deadliest Prison* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2006), 37–38.

118. Ronald E. Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People: Teaching, Learning, and the Struggle for Black Freedom, 1861–1876* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), xvii. See also Hilary Green, *Educational Reconstruction: African American Schools in the Urban South* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016).

119. Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People*, 2.

1873. Yet even this movement sat on a foundation of desire for intellectual autonomy among hundreds of Black freedpeople who taught and led.[120]

THE ORIGINS OF SUMTER SCHOOL

Freedpeople claimed Andersonville as a place to live, pray, and—likely—learn even before the AMA arrived in the fall of 1866. There was also friction between freedpeople and local Whites. When an army officer reported on the conditions of Andersonville in the spring of 1866, he found simmering sectional and racial tensions. There was an integrated cemetery work force, but the White men were "vicious rebels." Benjamin Dykes, who leased his land to the Confederate government in 1863, had gone to Washington to ask the Johnson administration to release the land seized from the Confederate government. The official inferred that Dykes's goal was to drive out Unionists and freedpeople from Andersonville, break up the Black church on the land, and foil plans to establish an AMA school.[121]

The existence of an autonomous African American church at Andersonville may have indicated the presence of Black teachers as well. A Black school at Andersonville, later colonized by the AMA, would also help account for the large population of African Americans at Andersonville in 1866. One official from the U.S. army bemoaned in July 1866 that a large population of freedpeople had taken up residence around the prison ruins. While some Black cemetery employees lived in old huts built by Confederate guards, landless refugees occupied the rest of the buildings. In the officer's view the buildings had become a "nuisance" and "a receptacle and rendezvous for such stray and idle freedmen as prefer to congregate about towns and villages rather than seek, or accept, employment."[122] White neighbors later described the Black community supporting the AMA school in similar terms. Local Whites would view the search for education as idleness in years to come. U.S. officials seem to have made the same mischaracterization in 1866.

When the AMA formalized the Sumter School in the fall of 1866, they found an immediate demand among Black men, women, and children. AMA Superintendent John Rockwell, based out of Macon, wrote that classes at the Sumter School began with 27 students and tripled by the end of the month. New students arrived each week and the average daily attendance rose from 30.5 students in the first week to 68.8 students in the fifth week (table 1). This increase took place "in spite of threatenings from the whites," AMA teacher Mary Battey wrote, "and consequently fears of the blacks."[123] Four out of the first 27 students—and 10 out of the first

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120. Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People*, 1-2; Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love*, 62, 70, 209; Heather Andrea Williams, "'Clothing Themselves in Intelligence': The Freedpeople, Schooling, and Northern Teachers, 1861–1871," *The Journal of African American History* 87, no. 4 (fall 2002), 373; Paul A. Cimbala, *Under the Guardianship of the Nation: The Freedmen's Bureau and the Reconstruction of Georgia, 1865–1870* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), 109.

121. The name of the officer is unclear in the original record. [H. B. Wilton?] to Col. Van Schroeder, June 11, 1866, "General Correspondence and Reports Relating to National and Post Cemeteries ("Cemetery File"), 1865–1914," Entry 576, Box 3, RG 92, Records of the Quartermaster General, National Archives and Records Administration.

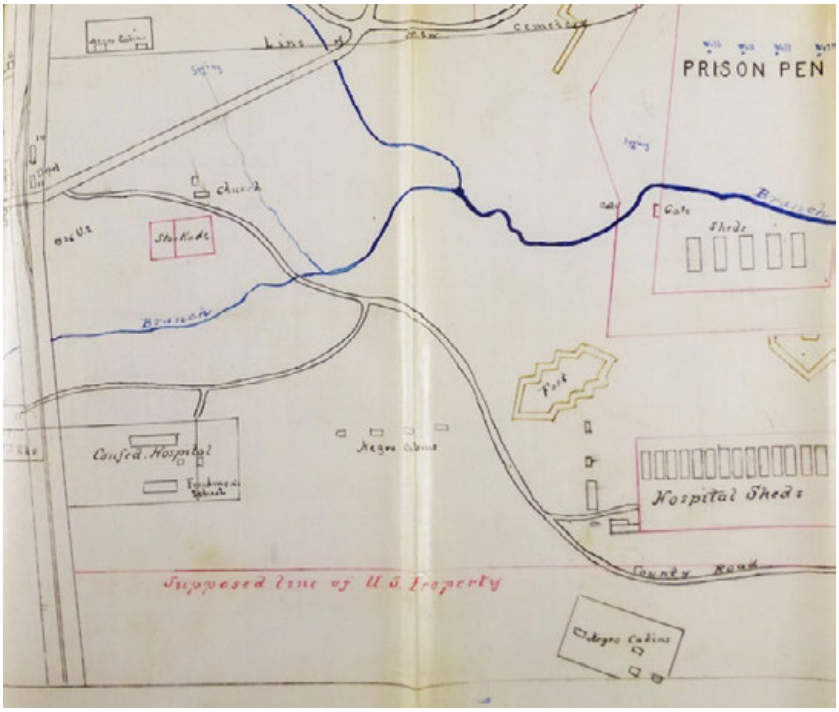
122. S. C. Greene to A. Ramsey Nininger, July 13, 1866, "Cemetery File," Entry 576, Box 3, RG 92, NARA.

123. Mary S. Battey to Rev. Edward P. Smith, December 11, 1866, American Missionary Association Archives [hereafter AMAA], Box 26, No. 20230–20231, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans [hereafter ARC]. AMA letters accessed through microfilm will have a roll number instead of a box number. Parts of this letter were reprinted in American Missionary 11, no. 3 (March 1867), 52–53. On the American Missionary Association's presence in Macon, see Titus Brown, "Faithful, Firm, and True": African American Education in the South (Macon, Ga: Mercer University Press, 2002), chs. 1–3.

79—could already read upon arrival. By the end of the month, 46 additional students could read two-to-seven letter words.[124]

The Sumter School contained both day and night classes because many students worked during the day or faced pressure from local Whites not to attend. Maria Root, a northern White teacher, reported the successful opening of her night school in November 1866, "notwithstanding the threats of the whites."[125] Seeking education was neither economically nor politically neutral; therefore, those who sought education risked the ire of conservative White neighbors, employers, and landlords. The night school, which attracted 34 students the first month, may have appealed to a more vulnerable population who could not attend day school for financial or safety reasons. Rockwell noted that night school students traveled from several miles away "and study at noon time at their places of work."[126] The day school was 60% female. In contrast, Root reported that the night school was "composed mostly of men from 20 to 50 years of age who are thoroughly earnest in their efforts to learn."[127] Working students lost sleep and traveled miles for the opportunity to learn at Sumter School.

Figure 2.1. Detail of "Sketch of Andersonville, Ga. and Vicinity," showing school at the old Confederate hospital and African American houses. "Cemetery File," Entry 576, Box 3, RG 92, National Archives and Records Administration.



124. John A. Rockwell to Rev. Edward P. Smith, Nov. 19, 1866, AMAA, Box 26, No. 20148-49, ARC; Report of School No. 1 Andersonville, Georgia for Month Ending Nov. 30, 1866, AMAA, Box 26, No. 20186, ARC.

125. Report of Night School, Andersonville, Ga. for month ending Nov. 30, 1866, Commencing Nov. 11th, AMAA, Box 26, No. 20207, ARC.

126. Rockwell to Smith, Nov. 19, 1866, AMAA, Box 26, No. 20148–49, ARC.

127. Report of Night School, Andersonville, Ga. for month ending Nov. 30, 1866, Commencing Nov. 11th, AMAA, Box 26, No. 20207, ARC.

THE TEACHERS OF SUMTER SCHOOL

If students took risks in attending the Sumter School, so too did the teachers. At Sumter School, as at other schools for freedpeople, the teachers included northern White men and women as well as African American men, including newly freed people.[128] Several of the AMA teachers at Sumter School were White women from New England. Mary S. Battey was born in Rhode Island about 1840—the middle daughter in a family of five children. Her father was a house carpenter and "pattern maker," which provided for a middle-class life in the mid-19th century. In 1860, she was already a school teacher in Cranston, a town on the outskirts of Providence.[129] Likewise, Anna Elizabeth Sawyer was born into a middle-class farm family in Massachusetts about 1848 and graduated from Mt. Holyoke Female Seminary in 1867.[130] Amelia Johnson, born about 1828, lived in Enfield, Connecticut, in the 1850s and 60s with her parents before coming to Andersonville.[131]

Other northern teachers, including Mary C. Day, Harriet V. Bills, Maria Louise Root, and Laura A. Parmelee came from Midwestern states. While Mary Day's parents were from Massachusetts, she was born in Ohio about 1842.[132] Maria Root was about two years older, came from the same county and township in Ohio, and their families shared similar migration patterns, employment as farmers, and middle-class status in 1850. The Root family appeared to fall on hard times by 1860. That year Root, one sister, and her mother lived with another family, but the family had rebounded—and reunited—by 1870. While neither teacher had a clear connection to nearby Oberlin College, the abolitionist- and feminist-influenced school in the same county, Root bequeathed a "massive brass key which locked the gates of Andersonville Prison" to the college. According to Day, "it was given [to] her by an old slave while she was [a] missionary."[133]

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128. Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People*, x-xii.

129. 1850 U.S. Census, Cranston, Providence County, Rhode Island, dwelling 741, family 742, pg. 225B (stamped), Mary S. Battey; Charles Battey; Julia Battey; digital image, Ancestry.com (http://ancestry.com : accessed February 15, 2018); citing NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 843; 1860 U.S. Census, Cranston, Providence County, Rhode Island, dwelling 1051, family 1271, pg. 295B (stamped), Mary S. Battey; digital image, Ancestry.com (http://ancestry.com : accessed February 15, 2018); citing NARA microfilm publication M653, roll 1206.

130. 1850 U.S. Census, Boxford, Essex County, Massachusetts, dwelling 159, family 170, pg. 414B (stamped), Ann E. Sawyer; digital image, Ancestry.com (http://ancestry.com : accessed February 15, 2018); citing NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 314; 1860 U.S. Census, Boxford, Essex County, Massachusetts, dwelling 502, family 569, pg. 75, Annie Sawyer; digital image, Ancestry.com (http://ancestry.com : accessed February 15, 2018); citing NARA microfilm publication M653, roll 496; Thirtieth Annual Catalog of the Mount Holyoke Female Seminary in South Hadley, Mass., 1866–1867 (Northampton, Mass.: Bridgman & Childs, 1867), no pp.

131. 1850 U.S. Census, Enfield, Hartford County, Connecticut, dwelling 80, family 89, pg. 5B (stamped), Amelia Johnson; digital image, Ancestry.com (http://ancestry.com : accessed February 15, 2018); citing NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 39; 1860 U.S. Census, Enfield, Hartford County, Connecticut, dwelling 1573, family 1550, pg. 755B (stamped), Amelia Johnson; digital image, Ancestry.com (http://ancestry.com : accessed February 15, 2018); citing NARA microfilm publication M653, roll 79.

132. 1860 U.S. Census, Sheffield, Lorain County, Ohio, dwelling 614, family 629, pg. 303B (stamped), Mary Day; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com : accessed February 15, 2018); citing NARA microfilm publication M653, roll 1002. There were at least two prisoners at Andersonville from Ohio with the last name of Day, which means it's possible there were personal reasons for why Day chose to teach at Andersonville.

133. 1850 U.S. Census, Sheffield, Lorain county, Ohio, dwelling 2108, family 2149, pg. 831B (stamped), Maria Root; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com : accessed February 15, 2018); citing NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 705; 1860 U.S. Census, Sheffield, Lorain County, Ohio, dwelling 610, family 624, pg. 303 (stamped), Maria Root; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com : accessed February 15, 2018); citing NARA microfilm publication M653, roll 1002; 1870 U.S. Census, Sheffield Township, Lorain County, Ohio, dwelling 56, family 56, pg. 669 (stamped), Maria Root; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com: accessed February 15, 2018); citing NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 1235. "De Rebus Temporis," *Oberlin Review*, 16, no. 3 (October 23, 1888), 31.

Figures 2.2 and 2.3. An African American at Andersonville gave this key to Maria Root when she taught at Sumter School. Courtesy of Oberlin College.

Some teachers came from teaching and missionary families or had long teaching careers. Laura A. Parmelee began her teaching career at Andersonville, but then taught at Straight University in New Orleans, Le Moyne Institute in Memphis, and Fisk University in Nashville.[134] Her parents arrived in Ohio about 1840 and the family moved from a farm in 1850 to Toledo in 1860. In 1860, her father worked as a clerk and the family had only a fraction of the wealth of Mary Day or Maria Root. Parmelee may have become inspired to teach by example of her older sister, Olive Parmelee, who taught in Toledo in 1860 and then at Mt. Holyoke beginning in 1862. The same year Laura Parmelee moved to Andersonville, Olive Parmelee boarded a ship for Mardin, Turkey, to teach at a girls' boarding school.[135]

At least two northern White men and two southern Black men taught and/or preached at Sumter School. Born about 1849 in Connecticut, Julius F. Wood had a difficult childhood. In fact, his family's experience in the Civil War era may have influenced his decision to go to Andersonville. His father, Henry "Sylvester" Wood, was a "peddler" in the 1850 census and the family had no personal or real estate. Julius Wood's entire family died before he reached adulthood, including a brother, William H. Wood, at Andersonville. Arriving at adulthood as an orphan, Wood taught and preached for at least a few months at Andersonville in the spring of 1870. Wood planned to return one day, but he died about 18 months later aboard the bark (ship)

134. "Miss Laura A. Parmelee," *American Missionary* 47, no. 2 (February 1893), 33–34.

135. 1850 U.S. Census, Chesterfield, Fulton County, Ohio, dwelling 1, family 1, pg. 269 (stamped), Laura A. Parmelee; digital image, Ancestry.com (http://ancestry.com : accessed February 15, 2018); citing NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 681; 1860 U.S. Census, 2nd Ward, City of Toledo, Lucas County, Ohio, dwelling 617, family 589, pg. 130 (stamped), L. A. Parmelee, O. L Parmelee; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com : accessed February 15, 2018); citing NARA microfilm publication M653, roll 1003; "The Pioneer Missionaries," *Life and Light for Women* 47, no. 10 (October 1917), 433; *Twenty-Fifth Annual Catalogue of the Mount Holyoke Female Seminary in South Hadley, Mass, 1861–1862* (Springfield, Mass.: Samuel Bowles & Company, 1862), no pp.

Peru and was buried at sea near the Falkland Islands.[136] Reverend Hamilton Wilcox Pierson, the former president of Cumberland College in Princeton, Kentucky, came to Andersonville in late 1868. While Pierson taught only briefly at Andersonville, he published an account of the intimidation he received from local Whites and the Ku Klux Klan.[137]

The AMA records probably do not name all of the African American men and women who taught at Sumter School—especially during the summers when the White northern teachers were away. Harrison Watkins and Floyd Snelson were the only two Black men officially connected with the AMA. Watkins helped build the Congregational Church at Byron, Georgia, in 1873, and he continued to preach and teach at Andersonville in 1874 and 1875.[138] Watkins rarely corresponded with the AMA. Snelson, in contrast, maintained extensive communications with the AMA officials. His writings offer the best insight into the development of an African American student, teacher, and minister at Andersonville during Reconstruction.

Floyd Snelson matriculated into Sumter School in December 1867 and within six months began corresponding with AMA officials. In what may have been his first letter, Snelson wrote to AMA General Field Agent Edward Parmelee Smith. This early letter demonstrated his growing literacy as well as the slow, painstaking care with which he practiced writing. The unique spacing and line-breaking patterns suggested he had practiced each phrase on a slate before transcribing the words to paper. He asked Smith to "look over my mistakes in spelling if you please, for I am only a december Scholar last up to now." Snelson also highlighted the collective successes of the semester. At a recent examination and picnic, more than 500 people showed up to see what the students had learned. He conveyed his sorrow that Mary Day had left for the summer, and predicted that "our hearts will relly brake" when the last teachers, Mary Battey and Maria Root, will have left for home. Some of this fear had to do with the ongoing racial and sectional tension in southwest Georgia. "We know that you all is the only friends we have save god," Snelson confided.[139] Within one year, Snelson took on the responsibility of teaching classes during the long summers between AMA teachers.

THE DANGERS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

As Snelson alluded to in his first letter, threats from local Whites, especially Benjamin Dykes, united students and teachers at Sumter School. Only a few days after Sumter School opened, Dykes warned the teachers to stay away from the buildings. Gilbert L. Eberhart, the

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136. 1850 U.S. Census, Sidney, Delaware County, New York, dwelling 306, family 319, pg. 86 (stamped), Sylvester W. Wood, Carolina M. Wood, Sarah M. Wood, William H. Wood, Julius F. Wood, digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com : accessed March 12, 2018); citing NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 494. The family deaths are inferred from inscriptions and presumed relationships in Cedar Grove Cemetery, New London, Connecticut, Find A Grave (accessed March 12, 2018), https://www.findagrave .com/cemetery /103253/cedar-grove-cemetery. There is a William H. Wood buried in Andersonville National Cemetery (grave number 7056). William H. Wood, Co. E, 59th Ohio Infantry, was captured at Chickamauga and died on August 28, 1864, at Andersonville. *Official Roster of the Soldiers of the State of Ohio in the War of the Rebellion, 1861–1865 / Compiled under the direction of the Roster Commission* (12 vols, Akron, Ohio: Werner Co., 1886–1895), Vol. 5: 266.

137. H. W. Pierson, A Letter to Hon. Charles Sumner, with "Statements" of Outrages Upon Freedmen in Georgia, and an Account of My Expulsion from Andersonville, Ga., by the Ku Klux Klan (Washington, D.C.: Chronicle Print, 1870), 10–12; 1860 U.S. Census, Princeton Division, Caldwell County, Kentucky, dwelling 323, family 323, pg. 48, H. W. Pierson, digital image, Ancestry.com (http://ancestry.com : accessed February 15, 2018); citing NARA microfilm publication M653, roll 359.

138. "Georgia. Bryon Station. From a "Brush Arbor" to a new meeting House –Building under Difficulties–Another Church Organized," *American Missionary* 17, no. 5 (May 1873), 99–100; Clara Merritt DeBoer, *His Truth is Marching On: African Americans who Taught the Freedmen for the American Missionary Association*, 1861–1877 (New York: Garland, 1995), 283, 289; *American Missionary* 20, no. 1 (January 1876), 28.

139. Floyd Snelson to Rev. Edward P. Smith, June 15, 1868, AMAA, Box 28, No. 21560, ARC.

superintendent for all AMA schools in Georgia, did not take the threat seriously. Eberhart wrote, "I think Dykes has never regained possession of the property—certainly not of the buildings—and has therefore no authority to 'warn off' any one." Eberhart minimized the danger. "I think it very likely that Miss Root and the freedmen are more scared than hurt," he wrote.[140] Yet Dykes maintained pressure on the teachers, the students, and U.S. government officials for years. Describing himself as old and "a cripple," Dykes complained to General Ulysses S. Grant, "The U.S. authorities took possession 10th May 1865 and still hold, and at this time has near 100 hands with about 40 families using what little timber the Confeds left."[141] Dykes threatened, pleaded, and eventually, orchestrated a violent reprisal against the freedpeople at Andersonville.

Dykes made good on his threats in July and August 1868. Northern teachers were home for the summer, and cemetery foreman Floyd Snelson continued to teach some classes during their absence. On July 19, 1868, Snelson wrote, "Mr. D. has been trying to turn all them that was not at work in the cemetery out of their houses." On July 29, the county sheriff "and many other rebels" seized the keys to the schoolhouse and evicted between 200 and 300 men, women, and children from their homes. Snelson and his family were not evicted because of his job with the U.S. government, but he had to defend his house against attacks for many nights. "I am still living in the house I was, thank God" Snelson wrote, "and guarding the home every night.... They want me because I write and lead the others, they say; but I trust in the Lord, it will be some time yet before they get me." A few nights later, the Whites "came in firing, and burned up eight of the small houses." Bloodshed was averted only by the speed with which the raiders came and went. Snelson and others arrived, presumably with weapons, but the arsonists had vanished.[142]

The nearest AMA representative, Rev. Frank Haley, came to Andersonville from Macon to protect the school. Violence nearly broke out again in the ensuing confrontation. Snelson wrote that the words of the local Whites "were very provoking for any man to stand; but he had a good heart and bore them all like a child of God." According to Snelson, Haley's patience averted a massacre. "I think if they had struck him there would have been much blood spilled, and lives lost. There was many standing with weapons ready to aid the work." Cemetery Superintendent Henry Williams, who Snelson described as a Democrat and a southern sympathizer, held the keys to the school and turned a blind eye to the White intimidation. Without the backing of the federal government, Snelson and other local African Americans stood guard night after night to prevent the burning of the schoolhouse and the houses that remained.[143]

The aggressive intimidation in 1868 was part of the large-scale violence in the lead up to the 1868 presidential election. Symbols of Black political organization, including schools, were targets throughout Georgia and the South.[144] For Rev. Hamilton Pierson, the intimidation peaked on February 12, 1869. Another witness recalled that "a boy" delivered a note to Pierson,

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140. G. L. Eberhart [Savannah, Ga.] to John A. Rockwell [Macon, Ga.], November 15, 1866, John A. Rockwell Papers, Box 1, Folder 5, ARC.

141. Benjamin B. Dykes to General U.S. Grant, November 11, 1867, "Cemetery File," Entry 576, Box 2, RG 92, NARA.

142. [Floyd Snelson] "Andersonville," *American Missionary* 12, no. 11 (November 1868), 246–47.

143. [Snelson] "Andersonville," 247.

144. Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 337–345.

and reported that the letter would "speak for itself."[145] Pierson, already collecting testimony of abuses against freedpeople, published the letter—a death threat written under skull and cross-bones:

> Dr. Pearson (so-called).
>
> Sir: For your especial benefit I am instructed to write you this special communication of warning and instruction.
>
> The citizens of this place are aware of a few facts relative to yourself that I will proceed to designate: In the first place, they know you to be a wandering *vagrant carpet-bagger*, without visible means of support, and living at present on the earnings of those who are endeavoring to make an honest living by teaching. You have also proved yourself a *scoundrel* of the deepest dye by maliciously interfering in matters which do not in the least concern you, to the detriment of some of our citizens.
>
> This, therefore, is to warn you to LEAVE this county forthwith. Twenty-four (24) hours from the above date is the time allowed for you to leave. If after the said time your devilish countenance is seen at *this place or vicinity your worthless life will pay the forfeit.* Congressional reconstruction, the military, nor anything else under Heaven, will prevent summary justice being meted out to such an incarnate fiend as yourself.
>
> By order of committee.

Pierson took the threat seriously and fled Andersonville, but he published the testimony he had collected between December 1868 and February 1869 in hopes of bringing the treatment of freedpeople in southwest Georgia to the attention of congressional Republicans.[146]

It would not have been surprising if the violence in 1868 and 1869 carried off both Hamilton Pierson and the entire school. After all, Sumter School's survival required not only the courage of the teachers but also the students. In November 1869 and January 1870, teachers reported that local White sentiment remained "bitter" toward the school.[147] However, a comparison of the monthly reports in January, March, and December in 1868 and 1869 (table 2) suggests that the intimidation was not decisive. The whole number of students and the seasonal fluctuation remained similar, with a sharper decrease from March to December 1868 than from March to December 1869. The number of students always present and always punctual dropped and the number of night school students, who risked a longer journey and darkness, also fell. Regionally, Sumter School, while smaller than other schools (table 3), remained an important educational outpost. While freedpeople remembered the violence of 1868 as a time of government failure, or "when the Government busted up," the disappointment did not squelch interest in reading and writing.[148] Intimidation did not suppress the will of students or teachers.

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145. Rev. G. D. Pike to Bro. Strieby, February 13, 1869, AMAA, No. 22101, Roll 4, ARC.

146. Pierson, *Letter to Hon. Charles Sumner*, 17–21.

147. American Missionary Association, Teacher's Monthly Report, "Sumter School," Sumter County, Georgia, November 1869, AMAA, Box 29, No. 22967A, ARC; American Missionary Association, Teacher's Monthly Report, "Sumter School," Sumter County, Georgia, January 1870, AMAA, Box 29, No. 23186, ARC.

148. Pierson, *Letter to Hon. Charles Sumner*, 17.

FUNDRAISING AND MARKETING

As an organization driven by donations and eager for publicity, the AMA had an additional reason not to cower in the face of intimidation. Indeed, the national name recognition of Andersonville—and the emotions associated with it—appealed to the organization. Throughout Georgia, the AMA understood the potential benefit of dramatic confrontation. Perhaps for this reason, the organization published extensively on the Sumter School, especially during its early years. Marketing played an important role in AMA communications, and private letters were often culled for publishable anecdotes that would help the organization's broader mission. [149]

In the months before the AMA began teaching at Sumter School, the organization's leadership emphasized the value of sensational anecdotes. In January 1866, Corresponding Secretary Rev. George Whipple solicited articles from Rev. Hiram Eddy, stationed in Macon. Whipple wrote, "We are beset daily for information in the shape of interesting letters about the work at the South." Therefore, he asked Eddy to collect accounts from teachers about individual cases of privation, violence against freedpeople, professions of faith, and the progress of learning. Their sensitivities perhaps hardened after years of bloodshed, northern readers and listeners responded coolly to "general statements of suffering." In contrast, Whipple wrote, "the recital of one particular case of misery will move them to tears," cause the listener to open their purses or wallets, and "give more largely to the Freedmen." The AMA required "faithfully and graphically reported" incidents to support its fundraising efforts. [150]

AMA teachers complied with varying degrees of enthusiasm and some chafed under the strong editorial hand of the AMA leadership. As historian Jacqueline Jones argues, letters that appeared in *The American Missionary Magazine* were not always faithful copies and exhibited editorial additions, omissions, and sentimental flair intended to tout success and underscore the need for more money. [151] Some letters were too bleak to inspire hope that the AMA could act swiftly enough to save lives. M. D. Ayers wrote to George Whipple from Macon, Georgia, in November 1866 with "extracts" from notes taken around the city which she offered for promotional purposes. In each vignette, Ayers described domestic scenes of privation: a White widow, a Black mother, and a disabled Black father. "Nancy Fields," Ayers wrote, "[is] a soldier's widow—is sick—has had no breakfast—yesterday had some bread to eat–the gift of a 'kind man,'…rent is behind—expects every day to have the door of the windowless room…locked against her." Ayers then turned her attention toward freedmen and women, weaving themes of sickness and destitution as she had when describing the White woman, but now adding an additional theme—earnestness. The first woman, Sally Franklin, lived in a windowless room and was slowly starving. "A baby is waiting at her side," Ayers wrote, "and the mother's bosom is bare." Sickness had disabled Franklin's husband, Job, who went missing begging for food. In the final vignette, Ayers described Henry Morton, suffering from the lingering effects of smallpox, dependent upon his wife to go out and seek work. "The father is an earnest working man," Ayers wrote, "and has money due him, which he cannot collect—hope, the offspring of freedom, has died out in his soul, and the wreck of every expectation is visible in his face." The

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149. Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love*, 98-100. See, for example, "Physical Destitution," *American Missionary* 11, no. 1 (January 1867), 2–3; *American Missionary* 11, no. 3 (March 1867), 52–53; [Julia A. Shearman,] "Georgia. Andersonville Prison Purified," *American Missionary* 11, no. 7 (July 1867), 160–161; "To my young Sunday School Friends" *American Missionary* 11, no. 9 (September 1867), 211–12.

150. Rev. George Whipple [New York] to Rev. Hiram Eddy [Macon, Ga.], January 16, 1866, Rockwell Papers, Box 1, Folder 1, ARC.

151. Jones, Soldiers of Light and Love, 99.

stories may have been real or apocryphal, but they were certainly designed to pull at the pocketbook through the heartstrings.[152]

It was likely with symbolism in mind that the AMA choose Andersonville in 1866. The organization deployed strategies developed elsewhere to use the poverty of the freedpeople to highlight the herculean efforts of the AMA. "Around no stop gather sadder memories," the *American Missionary* asserted, "than Andersonville." Descriptions of suffering freedpeople served as a continuation of the "chapter of horrors" from the Civil War. "To go there and encounter its remaining horrors require heroism," the magazine reported, "and something of the *martyr spirit*. And yet we have two teachers, who have ventured upon such a mission."[153] Julia A. Shearman, who visited the school in May 1867, contrasted the sounds and sights of captivity to those of freedom. The "wail of the captive" had "scarcely [been] hushed" before the northern teachers turned "that hell upon earth into a little earthly heaven[.]" Since the war, Shearman continued, "the sweet sound of prayer & praise" had replaced the "jeer and oath" of Confederate guards and the voices of singing children had replaced the sounds of bloodhounds chasing down prisoners. Finally, Shearman highlighted the importance of family and home, noting that "the persecuted slave has found a shelter in the huts erected by his persecutors & the Freedman's corn is growing in the new empty stockade!"[154]

THE STRUGGLE OVER SOCIAL REFORM

The value the AMA put on sensational anecdotes reflected their sometimes-limited goals. Like their close allies in the U.S. government, the Bureau of Freedmen, Refugees, and Abandoned Lands, AMA leaders considered themselves agents of social reform but not necessarily charity. Moreover, these men and women brought to their tasks a range of ideas about free labor that included a widely held belief about the gulf between worthy poor and the unworthy poor. Agents and teachers witnessed widespread destitution, but they feared that too much support—such as long-term free education—would produce dependency and stunt moral growth of freedpeople. While social, religious, racial, and economic outlooks constrained the actions of bureau agents and teachers, their work exemplified the possibility of change in a post-slavery South.[155]

One area in which the AMA teachers displayed the greatest cultural and racial chauvinism was temperance, which included the avoidance of alcohol, tobacco, and foul language. The temperance movement had achieved significant success in the decades preceding the Civil War, lowering the per capita consumption (of Americans over the age of 14) from 7.1 to 1.8 gallons of alcohol between 1830 and 1845.[156] Temperance organizations never wandered far from the metaphor of slavery to describe the debilitating effects of addictive habits on personal liberty.

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152. M. D. Ayers to. Rev. George Whipple, October 31, 1866, AMAA, Box 26, No. 20130, ARC.

153. "Physical Destruction," *American Missionary* 11, no. 1 (January 1867), 2–3.

154. J.A.S [Julia A. Shearman], "untitled," May 13, 1867, AMAA, No. 20697, roll 3, ARC. Julia A. Shearman, "Memoranda of Expenditure," February 11, 1868, AMAA, No. 21185, roll 3, ARC; [Julia A. Shearman,] "Georgia. Andersonville Prison Purified," *American Missionary* 11, no. 7 (July 1867), 160–61.

155. Jones, Soldiers of Light and Love, 144–146; Cimbala, Under the Guardianship of the Nation, 16, 107.

156. Charles Sellers, The Market Revolution, Jacksonian America, 1815–1846 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 259–260.

Emphasizing the negative effects of slavery on White and Black morals, abolitionist literature portrayed southern Whites and Blacks as prone to swearing, drinking, and promiscuity.[157]

When northern teachers traveled into Georgia, encounters with freedmen confirmed their suspicions about southern behavior and the morally debasing legacy of slavery. Travelers found that many freedpeople, alongside a substantial contingent of the White population, did not look down on the purchase and consumption of alcohol. Teachers thought temperance so important that they named their society the "Vanguard of Freedom," underscoring their belief in the connection between an individual's morality and station in life.[158] The *Band of Hope Manual*, a popular temperance book in the 1860s, advised that temperance societies should form out of Sabbath Schools and be composed of children between 7 and 18 years old who could pay an initiation fee and possibly monthly dues. Depending on an individual chapter's rules, honorary adult members were allowed so long as they paid quarterly membership dues. Members pledged, "I hereby solemnly pledge myself to abstain from the use of all Intoxicating Drinks, including Wine, Beer, and Cider, as a beverage; from the use of Tobacco in every form, and from all Profanity."[159] The manual then provided a selection of songs and readings designed to provide the foundation for a moral life of total abstinence.

Northern teachers hoped to capitalize on the antebellum connection between freedom and temperance, slavery and intemperance. One children's song, *The Temperance Army*, went to the tune of a Sunday school song and contrasted noble, patriotic temperance with the "slavish sin" of drinking:

We've joined this noble army,
And we are bound to fight!
With our banners proudly waving
For Temperance and right.

Chorus—For we're glad we're in this army
And we'll battle for the Cause.

What though we're small in numbers,
And smaller still in years?
We will never be disheartened,
Or yield to foolish fears.

Chorus.

Then let us shout for freedom
From every slavish sin,
And forever let us banish,
Rum, cider, beer, and gin.

Chorus.[160]

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157. Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love*, 158–159.

158. The Vanguard of Freedom, according to Jones, was a popular temperance organization, but local temperance clubs went by many names. *Soldiers of Light and Love*, 160.

159. Rev. James B. Dunn, *Band of Hope Manual: Containing Directions How to Form Bands of Hope*, also, *Constitution for Bands of Hope*, and *Band of Hope Ritual, Together with Dialogues, Recitations, Hymns, Etc.* (New York: National Temperance Society and Publication House, 1867), 6, 8–9.

160. C. L. Q., "The Temperance Army" in Rev. James B. Dunn, *Band of Hope Manual*, 28–29.

It is likely, though undocumented, that the AMA missionaries pushed the recitation of songs such as *The Temperance Army* at Sumter School. After all, the missionaries believed they were teaching the foundation of a life free from both physical or moral chains.

Despite two years promoting temperance, the AMA established only a weak foothold at Andersonville. Maria Root reported in May 1868 that the temperance organization was growing. Amelia Johnson, a new teacher, disagreed with Root's assessment. After visiting Black families, Johnson left convinced that bad homes stunted the advance of Black men, women, and children. She wrote, "It seems to me that it must degrade them both morally and physically to live in such squalor." Acknowledging that she did not know what reform efforts had already taken place, she continued, "Perhaps I do not have sympathy enough for their poverty, but when I hear how much money they spend for whiskey and tobacco I feel that a great work is needed for them to make them feel the need of improving their temporal condition."[161] Amelia Johnson, like other northern teachers, saw a clear need to place temperance alongside reading and writing. Such chauvinism blinded them to the possibility that drinking, smoking, and swearing were all ways to make the violence, uncertainty, and false-promises of Reconstruction less painful.

Figure 2.4. Three unidentified women near Andersonville. "Andersonville Shanty," in folder dated "1890, 1905," Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans.

White teachers struggled with the realization that their students deployed strategies of accommodation and resistance—to dull the intrusions into their personal lives. Saying one thing and doing another had undermined the goals of enslavers; in a similar way, it wrecked the AMA's social programs in freedom. In their November 1869 reports, Maria Root and Laura Parmelee confessed their inability to give an accurate number of "temperance people" and

161. Amelia E. Johnson to E. P Smith, December 1, 1868, AMAA, Box 28, No. 21786, ARC.

"faithful members of the temperance society."[162] In January 1870, the teachers reported only 23 people in the Vanguard of Freedom, a dismal participation considering 120 people attended the Sunday school.[163] Maria Root rebranded the Night School's group as the Haley Temperance Society in February 1870, but both teachers stopped reporting on their temperance efforts at the end of the school season.[164] The temperance society failed at Andersonville.

FLEECING THE FREEDPEOPLE

Neither the AMA nor the Freedmen's Bureau envisioned Black education as a free service. The policy of collecting tuition from students was part of its social reform program to turn freedpeople into consumers in a free labor society. Both organizations assumed that if Black men and women wanted education for themselves and their children, they should pay for it. Therefore, the AMA and other northern benevolent organizations subsidized schools, but rarely provided full funding. Gilbert L. Eberhart, superintendent of education for the Freedmen's Bureau, argued that free education was morally corrosive because it did not teach self-sufficiency. In 1867, Eberhart put it plainly when he wrote, "colored people who are unwilling to help educate their children do not deserve schools."[165] The same year, a sub-assistant commissioner wrote, "I do not believe in free schools for these people."[166] The point was clear: if newly freed men and women wanted to read the contracts they signed with their former enslavers, they should pay for it. In 1867, for example, school funding in Georgia came from three major sources: northern societies paid $5,000; African Americans paid $3,500; and the Freedman's Bureau paid $2,000.[167] African Americans paid for education, both in tuition and the opportunity cost of removing productive family members from farm work.

The Sumter School at Andersonville struggled to collect tuition in its first years (table 4). From January 1867 to November 1868, the teachers reported no tuition income. In those early years, though, it is possible that the Sumter School—located on the ruins of such a well-known prison—was more valuable than tuition dollars. By December 1868, though, everyone "except widows and orphans" were paying for their education.[168] Yet the problem of collecting tuition returned the next year. In December 1869, Laura Parmelee wrote, "I fear you will be obliged to wait some time for the payment of the bill as our state of finance is decidedly poor. The people are slow about paying their school fees and we have to live from hand to mouth."[169] Parmelee grew more concerned in 1870 when the cotton crop took a hit. "The people promise a full

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162. American Missionary Association, Teacher's Monthly Report, "Sumter School," Sumter County, Georgia, November 1869, AMAA, Box 29, No. 22967A, ARC; American Missionary Association, Teacher's Monthly Report, "Sumter School," Sumter County, Georgia, November 1869, AMAA, Box 29, No. 22969, ARC.

163. American Missionary Association, Teacher's Monthly Report, "Sumter School," Sumter County, Georgia, January 1870, AMAA, Box 29, No. 23186, ARC.

164. American Missionary Association, Teacher's Monthly Report, "Sumter School," Sumter County, Georgia, February 1870, AMAA, Box 30, No. 23288, ARC; American Missionary Association, Teacher's Monthly Report, "Sumter School," Sumter County, Georgia, February 1870, AMAA, Box 30, No. 23316, ARC; American Missionary Association, Teacher's Monthly Report, "Sumter School," Sumter County, Georgia, April 1870, AMAA, Box 30, No. 23452, ARC; American Missionary Association, Teacher's Monthly Report, "Sumter School," Sumter County, Georgia, May 1870, AMAA, Box 30, No. 23561, ARC.

165. Cimbala, *Under the Guardianship of the Nation*, 106.

166. Cimbala, *Under the Guardianship of the Nation*, 107.

167. Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love*, 62.

168. American Missionary Association, Teacher's Monthly Report, "Sumter School," Sumter County, Georgia, December 1868, AMAA, Box 28, No. 21899, ARC.

169. Laura A. Parmelee to E. P. Smith, December 22, 1869, AMAA, Box 29, No. 23040, ARC.

school," she wrote, "but as there is much sickness and the cotton crop does not pay[,] I fear we shall not do very well until after Christmas."[170]

Ideological concerns about free schools and pay schools carried over into other areas of giving as well. Some northern teachers even justified physical want and suffering by arguing that "giving does more harm than *real* good," but more commonly teachers merely sought to avoid excess or counterproductive support. While relief in Georgia varied from place to place, most outposts received at least some shipments of donated food or clothing.[171] Early in her stay at Andersonville, Mary Battey described the students' clothing as "mostly of their own manufacture, very coarse & generally very ragged, as well as filthy." Many of her students arrived wearing neither shoes nor socks and few had clothing appropriate for cold weather. Her letter, intended for publication in the *American Missionary*, pulled at the emotions of readers. "Unless help from outside comes to them," Battey wrote, "we see no way but that numbers must suffer greatly through the winter, from hunger & thin clothing. I have no doubt that there are abundant supplies of clothing at the North waiting a call to some needy spot. Andersonville is the place for it; and we will try to be faithful in the distribution of all entrusted to our care. Bedding would be very acceptable—blankets &c."[172] By February, the teachers had distributed "four boxes of clothing" and "fourteen barrels of corn." Overall, the aid was modest and teachers distributed only a few shipments of supplies between 1867 and 1869.[173]

Careful to cultivate AMA donors, teachers returned letters of receipt for each shipment. Two shipments of clothing, a barrel from Warsaw, New York, and a box from Cincinnati, Ohio, arrived in early 1868. The teachers then delivered the materials to "several cases of destitution" around the school.[174] Mary Battey gave "Aunt Isabel" bedding and a waterproof "camlet cloak." The barrel from New York also contained an overcoat. Battey wrote, "One bitter cold morning, old 'Uncle Charlie' passed by on his way to the station, bent & shivering, with a few tatters, which were part of a once army coat." After giving him the new overcoat, Battey wrote that he exclaimed, "Now this is nice I shan't be cold no more; thank you thank you! I guess they'll call me 'Mr. Ennis' now! Thank you a thousand times!"[175] In giving the coat to "Uncle Charlie," a man she described in earlier letter as "a good old negro," and recording his response, Battey signaled the connection between material relief and the AMA's desire to help those demonstrably earnest.[176]

The interaction between Battey and Charles "Charlie" Ennis also revealed the gulf that existed between northern White teachers and Black students. For Battey, the overcoat symbolized benevolence bestowed on a worthy but otherwise forgettable man on the southern landscape. Simultaneous familial and anonymizing titles such as "Aunt" Isabel and "Uncle" Charlie reflected the compatibility of southern racial etiquette and AMA paternalism. Only because it seemed to provide a useful anecdote did Battey inadvertently reveal Ennis's full name. However,

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170. Laura A. Parmelee to Rev. E. M. Cravath, October 18, 1870, AMAA, Box 30, No. 23732, ARC.

171. Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love*, 145.

172. Battey to Smith, December 11, 1866, AMAA, Box 26, No. 20230–20231, ARC.

173. Mary S. Battey to Edward P. Smith, February 13, 1867, AMAA, Box 26, No. 20439, ARC; Amelia E. Johnson to E. P. Smith, April 14, 1869, AMAA, Box 29, No. 22358, ARC.

174. Mary S. Battey to Edward P. Smith, January 24, 1868, AMAA, Box 27, No. 21173, ARC.

175. Mary S. Battey to Edward P. Smith, February 5, 1868, AMAA, Box 27, No. 21337, ARC.

176. Battey to Smith, December 11, 1866, AMAA, Box 26, No. 20230–20231, ARC.

Charlie Ennis, in thanking Battey, made a connection between appearance and respectability that escaped the northern teacher.

If Charles Ennis had written the anecdote himself, he might have exchanged the demeaning title, "uncle," for "reverend." His full name and title, as recorded by Rev. Hamilton Pierson, was Rev. Charles Ennis.[177] Ennis had been enslaved to Garrison C. McBee, who ran a ferry on the Holston River near Strawberry Plains, Tennessee.[178] As a ferry operator, Ennis carried Unionist politicians, including U.S. Representative Horace Maynard and Knoxville newspaper editor, Governor, and Senator William G. "Parson" Brownlow, across the river. From 1862 through the end of the Civil War, Ennis served as a body servant to Lt. Col. C. M. Jones, first of the 36th Georgia Infantry and later, stationed at Andersonville, of the 2nd Georgia Reserves.[179]

For Rev. Charles Ennis and his family, Reconstruction was the continuation, even intensification, of the violence of slavery and war. The family left Andersonville and moved to Camilla, Georgia, in early 1868. Fearing to return to their new home after the Camilla Massacre in September, the family moved to Houston County at the request of Henry Adams, whose child Ennis's wife had helped to deliver in 1868. Adams promised to pay their expenses, provide a school, and pay his wife as well. Yet the new life in Houston County soured. When Robert Adams, Henry Adams's uncle, set out to attack Ennis's wife, Ennis intervened and was nearly killed. The uncle threatened to kill Ennis if he reported the assault to the Freedmen's Bureau, and the husband and wife fled back to Andersonville. "I was a slave until freed by the war," Ennis recalled, "but I never received such treatment during all my life as a slave."[180] As Ennis's grim account suggests, freedpeople could not help but measure the present against the past and wonder whether the future held greater liberty or peril.

The trials of the Ennis family highlighted the dangers faced by freedpeople in the late 1860s. When Ennis spoke to Rev. H. W. Pierson in 1869, he highlighted the ongoing specter of racial violence. Ennis told Pierson, "A great many more are beaten, wounded and killed now than then. I know a great many cases where they have been beaten to death with clubs, killed with knives and dirks, shot and hung. We have no protection at all from the laws of Georgia." The testimony underscored the reality that the end of slavery did not mean political equality or equal protection under the law. "We had rather died than go back into slavery," he said, "but we are

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177. Pierson, *Letter to Hon. Charles Sumner*, 10.

178. According to the U.S. Census, Garrison C. McBee enslaved sixteen people in 1840, three of whom fit the age range of Charles Ennis. Yet by 1850 and 1860, McBee owned only two enslaved men, neither of whom fit the age description of Ennis. 1840 U.S. Census, Knox County, Tennessee, district not stated, pg. 36 (stamped), Garrison C. McBee; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com : accessed June 1, 2017); citing NARA microfilm publication M704, roll 527; 1860 U.S. Census, Jefferson County, Tennessee, district not specified, Slave Schedule, pg. 26, G. C. McBee, digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com : accessed June 1,2017); citing NARA microfilm publication M653, roll not identified; 1850 U.S. Census, Jefferson County, Tennessee, District 13, Slave Schedule, pg. 15, G. C. McBee; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com : accessed June 1, 2017); citing NARA microfilm publication M432, roll not identified.

179. Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of Georgia, Record Group 109, 36th (Broyles') Infantry, C. M. Jones, National Archives and Records Administration microfilm publication M266, roll 425; Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of Georgia, Record Group 109, 2d Reserves, C. M. Jones, National Archives and Records Administration microfilm publication M266, roll 158.

180. Pierson, *Letter to Hon. Charles Sumner*, 10–12.

worse treated than we ever were before."[181] Without romanticizing the past, Ennis questioned the narrative of progress from slavery to freedom.[182]

Ennis and the other African Americans who navigated the troubled political and social terrain of southwest Georgia never had a monolithic understanding of the problem or its solution. According to Ennis, some men and women advanced the idea of arming themselves in the already militarized struggle for civil and political rights. This sentiment was represented in the rise of Union Leagues and Grant Clubs, Black political organizations that doubled as community self-defense units.[183] Ennis argued that such an approach would result in failure and bloodshed. Imagining that dystopian future, Ennis argued "the whole [white] South would then come against us and kill us off, as the Indians have been killed off." Ennis held out hope that the U.S. government and army would continue to play the role of an ally to African Americans as it had during the Civil War. "We cannot protect ourselves;" he said, "we want the government to protect us."[184] Wrapped up in these different perspectives were unanswered questions about the reliability of the national government and even the friends in the AMA.

THE LATER YEARS OF SUMTER SCHOOL

Attendance at the Sumter School peaked in 1868 and 1869 and declined in the 1870s (table 5). When the 1872–1873 school year arrived, the usual difficulties affecting the Sumter School arose again. Laura A. Parmelee and Harriet V. Bills reopened the school in November with 41 students. As in years past, scholars arrived from some distance to attend school. With perhaps some exaggeration, Parmelee wrote, "Every year we have scholars who come from ten to one hundred miles for the sake of attending school," and she expected students from Americus, Winchester, Ellaville, and Montezuma.[185] The student body grew during the winter months of December and January, and then slowly declined in February, March, and April (table 6). Laura Parmelee attributed the decline to heavy rains in late March and the pressures of employment.[186] The percentage of students over the age of 16 hovered in the high 30s and low 40s throughout the year, suggesting that employment pressures affected children and adults at similar rates. In contrast, the proportion of male and female students changed over the school year. When the school opened in November, 60% of students were male. By January, female students outnumbered male students and the ensuing months witnessed greater attrition by male students than female students. By April 1873, women and girls composed 65% of the students at Sumter School.

School attendance declined in the early 1870s and the AMA recalled its teachers in 1874. The decision to close Sumter School was driven by multiple forces. For its entire existence, Andersonville struggled for funding. The AMA hoped that the emotional power of place would

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181. Pierson, *Letter to Hon. Charles Sumner*, 10–12.

182. On violence during Reconstruction in Georgia, see Donald L. Grant, *The Way It Was in the South: The Black Experience in Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993), 91–106; Susan Eva O'Donovan, *Becoming Free in the Cotton South* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), 261–63; George C. Rable, *But There Was No Peace: The Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1983), 73–74.

183. Michael W. Fitzgerald, The Union League Movement in the Deep South: Politics and Agricultural Change during Reconstruction (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989).

184. Pierson, *Letter to Hon. Charles Sumner*, 10–12.

185. Laura A. Parmelee to E. M. Cravath, November 11, 1872, AMAA, No. 24640, roll 8, ARC.

186. Laura A. Parmelee to E. M. Cravath, March 1, 1873, AMAA, No. 24758, roll 4, ARC.

inspire greater donations. Perhaps it did for a few years. The *American Missionary* regularly reported gifts made to the Andersonville school and occasionally printed stories about the family members of dead prisoners donating generously to the Sumter School. In 1868, for example, Louisa F. Clark, a widowed mother who lost her son to Andersonville prison, tithed 10% of her son's $100 bounty.[187] Yet donations only went so far. The African American population was too poor to fully support a private school and eventually the AMA pulled its financial support. Describing the status of the AMA in September 1875, the *American Missionary* reported, "Our want of funds has compelled us to abandon some schools entirely, as for example, at Andersonville, Ga., where the work was so successful, and attended with such remarkable tokens of the Divine favor."[188] Lack of funding though became the official reason Sumter School closed.

Given the history of intimidation at Andersonville, there is little doubt that pressure from the White community also contributed to the closing of Sumter School. However, local White resistance became less overt after Benjamin Dykes and local Whites attempted to burn down the school in 1868. By the 1870s, AMA teachers had largely stopped reporting direct intimidation. In February 1872, Laura Parmelee recorded "our first white lady caller," and remarked that it was "rather late in the day to be getting acquainted!"[189] Parmelee was more surprised with the attendance of a dozen White men, including prominent citizens, to the closing school ceremonies. "They all give pleased attention," Parmelee acknowledged, "asked some questions and laughed heartily at dialogues, declamations, and the songs the little boys sang. They freely express surprise at the progress of the scholars, especially in arithmetic, grammar, and geography, and commend them in all things." Even Dykes attended and showed interest in the recitations.[190] When Laura Parmelee returned to Andersonville that fall, she reported, "Our teachers were well received by both whites and blacks."[191] According to the teachers, relations between local Whites and the school had improved.

As the surface hostility decreased, economic pressure mounted on the Sumter School from different directions. Poverty factored into school attendance throughout its existence. In December 1871, Laura Parmelee wrote that the "loss of wages and sickness among the stock are reasons for boys and girls leaving school."[192] Teachers like Parmelee knew their students were poor, yet neither the teachers nor the AMA leaders could find a better solution to the diminishing revenue than requiring day workers and sharecroppers to pay for school. "The people are beginning to be alarmed lest they lose teachers by failing to support the school," Parmelee reported, "and at the meeting Saturday evening people will rally to the rescue. I have hinted quite broadly at the possibility of the teachers being withdrawn and think the fear will do good."[193] Local Black families told Parmelee they were too poor to afford school the current year, but hoped with a good crop to be able to attend the next year. Parmelee, apparently without appreciating the choice between food and school, advised the families, "better use school while you have it." The Sumter School patrons decided in February "to collect tuition for

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187. "A Tenth for Andersonville," *American Missionary* 12, no. 7 (September 1868), 212–13.

188. "Specific Wants," *American Missionary* 19, no. 9 (September 1875), 196.

189. Laura A. Parmelee to E. M. Cravath, February 24, 1872, AMAA, No. 24413, ARC.

190. Laura A. Parmelee to E. M. Cravath, May 27, 1872, AMAA, No. 24493, roll 8, ARC.

191. Laura A. Parmelee to E. M. Cravath, October 21, 1872, AMAA, No. 24605, roll 8, ARC.

192. Laura A. Parmelee to E. M. Cravath, December 27, 1871, AMAA, No. 24358, roll 8, ARC.

193. Laura A. Parmelee to E. M. Cravath, February 12, 1872, AMAA, No. 24407, roll 8, ARC.

the two months of free school," and raise the tuition by 25¢ each month.[194] Threats could only accomplish so much. Attendance became more difficult when the organization insisted upon greater financial support from the families of students.

A second economic problem involved finding a permanent lot and building for the school. Since 1866, the AMA had used captured Confederate buildings, but with each year the buildings became more unfit for use. When Laura Parmelee and Harriet Bills arrived in October 1872, the former reported that the teacher's home was "a hard looking old place," with cracks and a bad foundation.[195] A government official who visited the buildings in June 1874 described the AMA buildings as "in a bad state of preservation" and recommended that they "would not be worth the cost of removing."[196] Moreover, the disputed question of land ownership between Dykes and the U.S. government prevented the AMA from any secure title to the land. After deciding there was "no hope of securing" the original school site, Parmelee received permission from the AMA field secretary to purchase 10 acres at the edge of Andersonville on the Ellaville Road at a public auction. Unfortunately, the plan failed when a White man from the community, according to Parmelee, "was determined to have it at any price." Snelson and Parmelee hoped to spend $200 for the land and went as high as $266 before realizing they would not outbid their rival.[197] The botched purchase underscored the precarious future of the Sumter School.

For most of the Sumter School's existence, the ownership of the site was contested between Benjamin Dykes and the U.S. government. This was not settled until after the AMA pulled its teachers from Andersonville. In fact, while Dykes played a central role in the early years of intimidation, he hoped to sell the land—albeit at his price—to the AMA when title returned to him in March 1875.[198] It was too late. That spring, the school and teachers' home sat vacant. That the home still had personal property of Laura Parmelee suggests that teachers left Andersonville in the spring of 1874 expecting to return that fall. Dykes wrote the AMA field secretary asking for instructions on what to do with the teachers' personal property. He also indicated that he planned to combine the teachers' home and the school into a single building. "The one that is now there leakes bad and is Roting," Dykes wrote, "so I concluded to make one out of both when finished will be for sale."[199] While Dykes hoped to sell the land to the AMA, he warned that there would be no discount and that he preferred to sell the land, 860 acres, as a single unit for $13,000.[200] Dykes, still engaged in a lawsuit with the U.S. government over damages to his stand of timber, shared at least one belief with the AMA: business preceded charity. The time for establishing a permanent AMA school at Andersonville had passed.

Other factors besides economics, greed, and the general malaise of Reconstruction influenced the decline of Sumter School. Cultural and religious differences between AMA representatives and students may have disillusioned the latter. By the early 1870s, tension between

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194. Parmelee to Cravath, February 24, 1872, AMAA, No. 24413, roll 8, ARC.

195. Parmelee to Cravath, October 21, 1872, AMAA, No. 24605, roll 8, ARC.

196. J. S. Hoyt report, June 29, 1874, copied in letter to Quartermaster General, "Consolidated Correspondence File, 1794–1915," Entry 225. Box 35, RG 92, Records of the Quartermaster General, NARA.

197. Parmelee to Cravath, November 11, 1872, AMAA, No. 24640, roll 8, ARC; Laura A. Parmelee to E. M. Cravath, December 2, 1872, AMAA, No. 24659, roll 8, ARC.

198. Benjamin B. Dykes v. United States, United States Court of Claims, No. 10703, Entry 576, "Cemetery File," Box 3, RG 92, NARA.

199. B. B. Dykes to L. A. Parmelee, March 17, 1875, AMAA, Box 32, No. 25574, ARC.

200. B. B. Dykes to E. M. Cravath, March 22, 1875, AMAA, Box 32, No. 25577, ARC; B. B. Dykes to E. M. Cravath, March 23, 1875, AMAA, Box 32, No. 25580, ARC; B. B. Dykes to E. M. Cravath, April 14, 1875, AMAA, Box 32, No. 25589, ARC.

Congregationalist AMA officials and local Black Baptists became a recurring theme. In 1870, Julius F. Wood described the two Black churches in Andersonville as Congregationalist, controlled by the AMA, and the Hard Shell Baptist. According to Wood, the Black Baptists regarded the Black and White Congregationalists "with jealousy & prejudice" and had attempted to undermine the influence of Congregationalism. Wood thought little of the so-called "superstitions" of local Baptists. He wrote, "Excitement and superstitions seem to be the chief things in the religion of most of these Baptists & they are doing a great deal of evil by means of them." However, Wood also recognized that attacking superstitions was counterproductive in the pursuit of reconciliation. The Baptists "stick to them [superstitions] closer than to life. They are the last things which they are willing to give up."[201]

Floyd Snelson and Laura Parmelee directly confronted theological differences in the Black community. As the new Congregationalist minister, Snelson lamented that he was having a tough time. "The superstitious hardshell members are continually sowing discord among my members," Snelson wrote, and he actively sought to "settle it" by convincing the Baptists of their "ignorance." The effort took its toll on Snelson, who admitted, "I feel sometimes like giving up the idea of trying to change the minds of the older ones."[202] Like Snelson, Laura Parmelee was a devoted teacher who spent much of her life in education, but her doctrinaire religious views may have undermined the school. In 1873, Parmelee sought to expose the "absurdity of conjuring by animals." She wrote, "the scholars all admitted the physiological impossibility of frogs, lizards and snakes running around in the body," but the students also stood firm in their belief that "people can be witched with lizards."[203] Conflict between students and AMA ministers and teachers, both White and Black, may have contributed to Sumter School's decline.

Lastly, the eagerness of students and the early success of the Sumter School made the AMA less relevant over time. Despite the pervasive image of northern White teachers and Black students, African Americans were 15 times more likely to teach than northern White men or women.[204] Black teachers taught alongside White teachers at Andersonville and were the exclusive teachers during the long intervals between the abbreviated AMA school years. Before leaving for the north in 1872, Laura Parmelee wrote that "several of our older young people" would soon "be assuming duties of teachers" for the five months between the end of school in May and the beginning of the next school year in November.[205] By the time Parmelee returned that fall, two of the Black teachers had left Andersonville to enroll in the Normal School at Atlanta University.[206] The two young men were probably Floyd Snelson's son, Sebron, and Grant Green, both of whom traveled from Andersonville to enroll.[207]

Black education continued at Andersonville after the AMA left. In October 1874, Laura Parmelee excerpted six letters she received from Black teachers marked "B.," "C.," "M.," "G.," "W.," and "G. C." at Andersonville. "It is pleasant to know that, while we are resting at home"

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201. Julius F. Wood to Edward P. Smith, March 26, 1870, AMAA, Box 30, No. 23341, ARC.

202. Floyd Snelson to E. M. Cravath, August 19, 1871, AMAA, Box 31, No. 24202, ARC.

203. Laura A. Parmelee to [illegible], May [no day], 1873, AMAA, No. 24878A, Reel 8, ARC.

204. Butchart, *Schooling the Freedpeople*, 19–20.

205. Parmelee to Cravath, May 27, 1872, AMAA, No. 24493, Reel 8, ARC.

206. Parmelee to Cravath, November 11, 1872, AMAA, No. 24640, Reel 8, ARC.

207. *Catalogue of Atlanta University*, 1872-73 (Atlanta, Ga.: Atlanta University, 1873), 11–14. Earlier students at Atlanta University included Floyd Snelson. *Catalogue of the Normal and Preparatory Departments of Atlanta University, 1869–1870* (Atlanta, Ga.: Atlanta University, 1870), 9.

Parmelee euphemized, "the work we commenced goes freshly on." The closing of the school, in other words, only marked the end of the AMA's efforts. It did not mean the end of energetic Black educators or students in the Andersonville vicinity.[208]

The Andersonville letters were similar to the more optimistic reports AMA teachers had submitted early on at Andersonville. B. wrote: "I have thirty-two scholars and others are talking of coming soon. A baby of five, and an old woman of fifty-seven came the same day. They learned their letters together. I have a large Sabbath School, as many as a dozen men say to me that they never did hear the Bible read before." The letters also mirrored the paternalism found in earlier White teachers' lessons, suggesting the possibility that they were AMA forgeries using the voices of Black teachers to uplift the organization. M. wrote, "The people didn't seem to know what a Sunday school was. They are very ignorant. No one can read, but all want to learn." Others spoke of pedagogical concerns. "I would like to take a weekly paper that would tell me how to teach," W. wrote, "Please give me directions for sending for one." G. C., the only teacher with first and last initials, asked for a dozen singing books to improve the school. Only one teacher described great frustration. K. wrote, "The first day I thought it was the most trouble I ever had in my life." Only 5 of the 25 students showed up, "but I pitched in any how."[209] In that way, the effect of the Sumter School went far beyond 1874. Rather than being the temporary end of Black education around Andersonville, it was merely the end of northern-sponsored education at Andersonville.

208. [Laura A. Parmelee], "Students' Letters," American Missionary 17, no. 10 (October 1874), 234–35.

209. [Parmelee], "Students' Letters.," *American Missionary*, 234–35.

TABLES

Table 1. The Day School at Andersonville, November 1866

Instruction Days	22
Total Enrolled	79
Male Students	31
Female Students	48
Week One: Enrollment	34
Average Attendance	30.5
Week Two: Enrollment	62
Average Attendance	56.5
Week Three: Enrollment	73
Average Attendance	60.6
Week Four: Enrollment	75
Average Attendance	66.8
Week Five: Enrollment	79
Average Attendance	68.8
Monthly Average Attendance	56.6
Reading upon Arrival	10
Reading by Fifth Week	56

Source: Report of School No. 1 Andersonville, Georgia, for Month Ending November 30, 1866, American Missionary Association Archives, Box 26, No. 20186, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans.

Table 2. Sumter School Reports, 1868–1869

Category	January 1868	March 1868	December 1868	January 1869	March 1869	December 1869
Males	36	38	34	45	42	33
Females	75	89	52	66	50	48
Total	111	127	86	111	92	81
Students who left in last month	2	8	15	16	8	21
New Students	66	31	17	41	5	43
Average daily attendance	83.63	106	76.5	93	84.3	66.67
Students always present	29	70	19	23	35	15
Students always punctual	90	99	8	16	34	45
Students over sixteen years old	21	20	12	19	15	24
Students in primary studies	85	95	60	86	72	n/a
Students in intermediate studies	26	32	26	25	20	n/a
Students in advanced studies	0	0	0	0	0	n/a
Students in night school	94	71	44	52	35	n/a
Students in sabbath school	106	150	120	120	150	120

Source: Teacher's Monthly Report, "Sumter School," Sumter County, Georgia, January 1868 (No. 21224), March 1868 (No. 21419), December 1868 (No. 21899), January 1869 (No. 22055), March 1869 (No. 22307), and December 1869 (No. 23074), American Missionary Association Archives, Georgia, microfilm rolls 4–6

Table 3. Superintendent Summary of Schools in Central and Southwest Georgia, January 1869

Location	Schools	Teachers	Male Students	Female Students	Total Students	Over 16	Free in 1860	Night School Students
Macon	8	14	216	302	518	45	2	54
Albany	3	4	98	129	227	15	0	50
Andersonville	1	2	45	66	111	19	0	52
Milledgeville	3	5	108	88	196	37	6	22
Total	15	25	467	585	1,052	116	8	178

Source: Superintendent's Report of Schools in the District of Middle and Southwest Georgia, January 1869, American Missionary Association Archives, Georgia, No. 22077, microfilm roll 4

Table 4. Tuition Collection at Andersonville, 1867–1870*

Month and Year	Students Paying Tuition	Total Students
January 1867	0	79
February 1867	0	73
November 1867	0	42
December 1867	0	47
January 1868	0	111
February 1868	0	104
March 1868	0	127
November 1868	0	84
December 1868	all but widows & orphans	86
January 1869	All	111
February 1869	All	95
March 1869	All	92
November 1869	54	59
December 1869	78	81
January 1870	80	88
February 1870	All	17
March 1870	50	74
April 1870	All	7
May 1870	All	49

Source: American Missionary Association Archives, Georgia, microfilm rolls 2–8.
*Changes to school reports make tracking tuition payment more difficult after May 1870

Table 5. Students at the Sumter School at the Beginning of Each Calendar Year, 1867–1874

Category	1867	1868	1869	1870	1871	1872***	1873	1874***
Male Students	24	36	45	37	34	N/A	35	N/A
Female Students	55	75	66	51	43	N/A	44	N/A
Total Students	79	111	111	88	77	N/A	79	N/A
Adults*	16	21	19	18	28	N/A	32	N/A
Average Attendance	62.9	83.6	93	69	76.5	N/A	63.7	N/A
Learning to write	18	30	29	26	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number in Night School	20**	94	52	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: American Missionary Association Archives, Georgia, microfilm rolls 2–8

* In 1867, adults were considered over the age of 18, in subsequent years, students over the age of 16 were considered adults.

** Average attendance

*** No reports found for January 1872 or 1874

Table 6. Sumter School Attendance, November 1872 to May 1873

Category	November 1872	December 1872	January 1873	February 1873	March 1873	April 1873
Males	25.0	33.0	35.0	26.0	26.0	17.0
Females	16.0	28.0	44.0	41.0	35.0	31.0
Total	41.0	61.0	79.0	67.0	61.0	48.0
Number who left	0.0	4.0	17.0	17.0	13.0	10.0
New Students	41.0	24.0	44.0	5.0	3.0	1.0
Average Daily Attendance	29.0	42.25	63.66	61.0	49.75	43.66
Number always present	16.0	6.0	31.0	23.0	22.0	15.0
Number always punctual	12.0	6.0	25.0	14.0	12.0	10.0
Number over sixteen years old	18.0	24.0	32.0	27.0	23.0	19.0

Source: American Missionary Association Archives, Georgia, microfilm roll 8

Chapter Three

Earth Moving: Work and Freedom and Andersonville National Cemetery, 1865-1900

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CHAPTER THREE: EARTH MOVING

WORK, FREEDOM, AND ANDERSONVILLE NATIONAL CEMETERY, 1865–1900

African American men transformed a prison graveyard into Andersonville National Cemetery. This Reconstruction-era workforce, which swelled to 250 men in 1868, left an indelible mark on the historical landscape that is still visible today. Photographers captured the transformation. When James Furlong and John F. Engle, perhaps accompanied by the latter's wife, Belle, visited the Andersonville area, they photographed three changing landscapes: abandoned military buildings in town, the ruins of the prison, and the national cemetery.[210] Unfortunately, the White photographers left neither a descriptive account nor even the dates of their trip. In 1870, Furlong and the Engles lived at the same boarding house in Fernandina, Florida, when the census enumerator came in late June. They were in Albany, Georgia, that October when they advertised their mobile photography studio on Broad Street. If these artists set up their tent in Albany in summer or fall 1870, they left the city in early 1871, when the city council rejected their application for a six-month photography license. It is likely that they visited Andersonville sometime in the second half of 1870.[211]

The photographers followed in the footsteps of Andrew Jackson Riddle, who in 1864 also photographed the prison and cemetery (figure 3.1). In 1870, the route from the Andersonville train depot to the prisoners' graves took visitors north on Oglethorpe Street, crossed the railroad track above town, and veered onto a new avenue leading to the main entrance—and east-west axis—of Andersonville National Cemetery. As in many 19th century photographs, the White artists depicted African Americans as part of the landscape, orienting the viewer's eyes to scale without revealing individuality.[212] It is likely that some of the men were cemetery workers. A Black man in a White shirt and dark vest sits on the steps of the abandoned Confederate Commissary Depot (figure 3.2); the man in the vest stands next to a light-skinned Black man at the flag pole and behind the graves of the Andersonville "raiders" (figure 3.3). At least three men with a mule-drawn cart stand in the dirt road near the center of the cemetery (figure 3.4). The men and the mules are absent in a reverse view from the southern end of the cemetery (figure 3.5) and no one is present in the images of the prison ruins.

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210. All three adults were listed as photographers or photographic artists. Nassau County, Florida, 1870 U.S. Census, population schedule, City of Fernandina, pg. 389B, dwelling 186, family 175, boarding house of J. H. Hazen, John F. Engle, Belle Engle, James Furlong; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com : accessed September 16, 2018); citing NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 132.

211. *The Albany News*, October 18, 21, 1870, pg. 2; *The Albany News*, January 13, 1871, pg. 3. Robert Scott Davis assigns 1868 to these photographs; however, we have not been able to independently confirm this date. The condition of the stockade and the growth of the trees in the cemetery suggest later. Robert Scott Davis, *Andersonville Civil War Prison* (Charleston, S.C.: The History Press, 2010), 121. William Marvel cites the plates at the National Archives and estimates the photographs were taken "about 1868." William Marvel, *Andersonville: The Last* Depot (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 128–131.

212. On African Americans in Civil War Era photography, see Thavolia Glymph, "Refugee Camp at Helena, Arkansas, 1863," Susan Eva O'Donovan, "Finding a New War in an Old Image," Stephen Berry, "The Book or the Gun?," and Megan Kate Nelson, "George N. Barnard, Charleston, S.C. View of ruined buildings through porch of the Circular Church (150 Meeting Street),' 1865," in Gary W. Gallagher and J. Matthew Gallman, eds., *Lens of War: Exploring Iconic Photographs of the Civil War* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015), 135–140, 143–148, 216–221, 233–238; Maurice O. Wallace and Shawn Michelle Smith, eds., *Pictures and Progress: Early Photography and the Making of African American Identity* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2012).

Figure 3.1. The prison graveyard before the Reconstruction-era improvements. This is likely section K. Detail of Andrew Jackson Riddle, "Graveyard at Andersonville, Georgia," August 17, 1864, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Figure 3.2. Many of the Engle and Furlong photographs show African Americans in the background. Engle and Furlong, "Confederate Commissary Depot, Andersonville, Ga.," ca. 1870, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Figure 3.3. Two men stand at the flagpole in the center of the national cemetery. This photograph was taken from the raider's graves looking west. Engle and Furlong, "Graves of the *Six Men* hung at Andersonville, Ga., July 11, 1864," ca. 1870, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Figure 3.4. It is likely that men in the background are cemetery workers. Engle and Furlong, "Main Avenue, National Cemetery, Andersonville, Ga., Looking South," ca. 1870, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

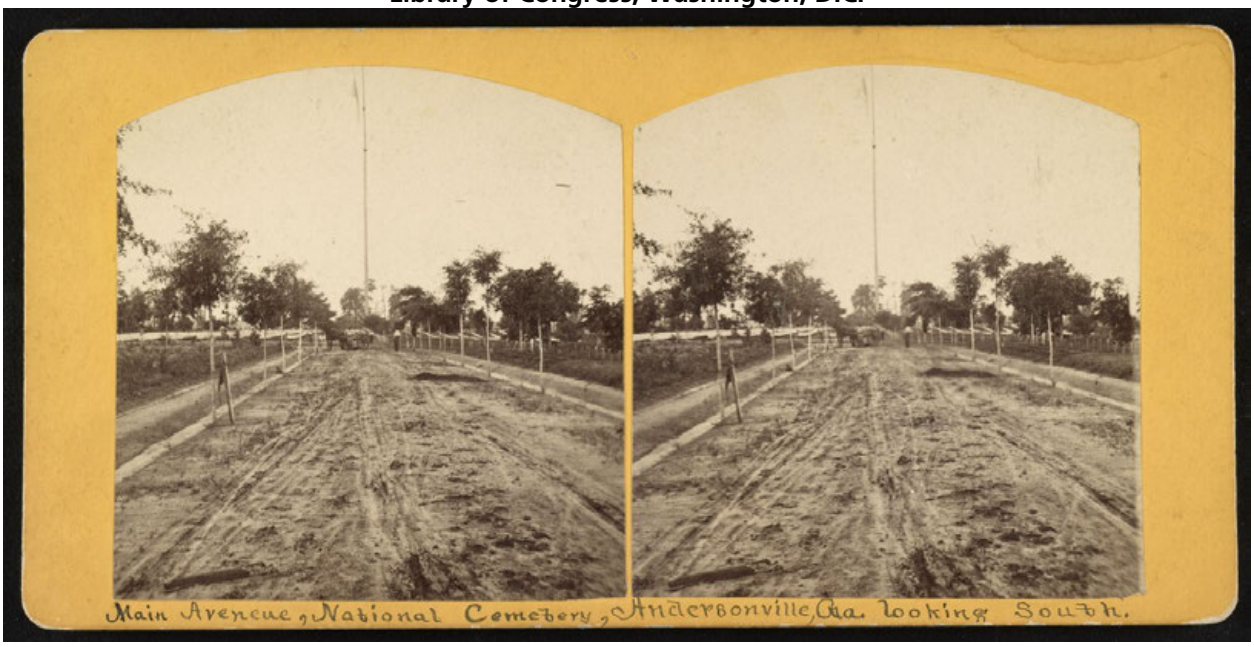
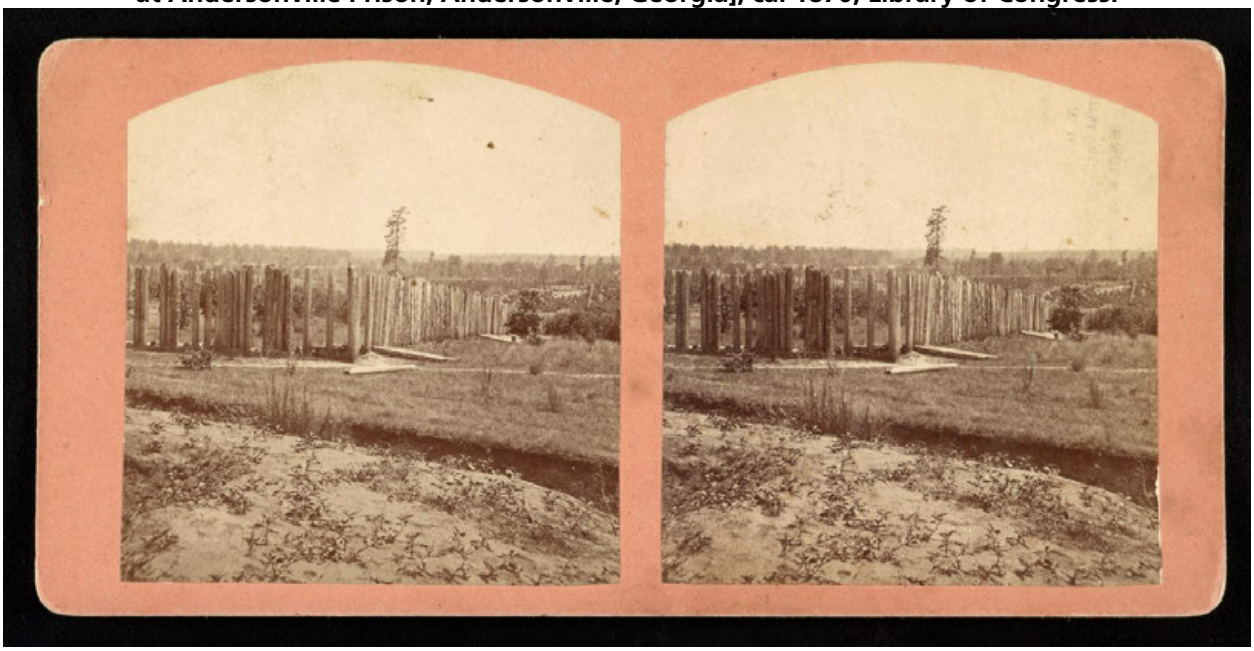


Figure 3.5 This view comes from the southern end of the main avenue, looking north. Engle and Furlong, "National Cemetery, Andersonville, Ga.," ca. 1870, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Figure 3.6. This photograph of the stockade appears to be taken from one of the earthworks. Unlike the cemetery photographs, no one appears in the background. Engle and Furlong, [Stockade at Andersonville Prison, Andersonville, Georgia], ca. 1870, Library of Congress.



Men and mules, like the ones depicted in Engle's and Furlong's photographs, transformed the prison landscape. Deepening—without disturbing—graves required moving hundreds of cartloads of earth. Preserving the graves from erosion meant digging drainage ditches and planting grass. Making the place accessible required walking paths and a flat road; however, as the ruts in the photographs indicate, a heavy rain turned clay roads into muck. Beautifying the national cemetery required replanting hundreds of bushes and trees. Enslaved Black men and paroled White prisoners built the landscape that Riddle photographed in 1864; free Black men and a handful of White laborers created the Andersonville National Cemetery.

This chapter explores work, workers, and commemoration at Andersonville from 1865 to 1900. It traces the transformation of the national cemetery from a site of work to a place of African American pilgrimage. As with most construction involving common labor in the 19th century, the U.S. government cared more about the work than the workmen; however, the names and some of the stories of the earth movers are recoverable despite the institutional and historical amnesia. When the census enumerator arrived at Andersonville in September 1870, Turner Hall, James Haygood, Willis Riley, and Barber Grant worked for the national cemetery. Other Black men, from Floyd Snelson to George Washington Kennedy, left evidence of their work in the historical record and on the physical landscape as well.[213]

Recently freed Black households depended on gainful employment. Andersonville National Cemetery offered better opportunities than work on plantations as laborers or sharecroppers. However, neither the work nor the relationship between the U.S. government and employees should be romanticized. When the government hired and suddenly laid off hundreds of workers in 1868, it played into the hands of local Whites who called for evicting unemployed Black families from Andersonville. Households with the means sought refuge in the security of land ownership. Those without the financial means continued to use Andersonville as a commemorative park to remember the dead and celebrate freedom.

REMAKING THE CEMETERY

Agents of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands—called the "Freedmen's Bureau" for short—envisioned themselves as intermediaries between recently freed people and their former enslavers. The Freedmen's Bureau had three levels of organization: at the national level, a single commissioner oversaw the organization; at the state level, assistant commissioners reported to the head of the Bureau; and at the local level, agents set themselves up in towns and cities and had the most direct interaction with White and Black southerners. Captain George Wagner, one of a series of Americus agents between 1865 and 1872, had served in the 110th Pennsylvania Volunteers. After falling from a horse, he spent the remainder of the war in the Veteran's Reserve Corps at Camp Morton, a prison camp for Confederates at Indianapolis.

213. 1870 U.S. Census, Sumter County, Georgia, population schedule, militia district 993, pg. 437 (stamped), dwellings 531, 532, 534, 535, families 531, 532, 534, 535, Turner Hall, James Haygood, Willis Riley, and Barber Grant; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com : accessed September 16, 2018); citing NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 174.

Wagner arrived in Americus on June 25, 1866. After securing an office at the courthouse, he met with Mrs. E. A. Christian, a southern White teacher running an African American school.[214] Wagner then took to the road to arrange labor contracts and settle disputes between freedpeople and White landowners. He first visited Andersonville in August 1866, met with the cemetery superintendent as well as Thomas Goodman, a man who claimed he was "Limber Jim," the famous hangman of the raiders.[215]

Wagner arrived in a region where mistrust between freedpeople and their former enslavers remained high and where the destruction of slavery came slower than elsewhere in the South. In spring 1865, neither large armies nor emancipation had reached southwest Georgia. Emancipation came in the middle of the growing season before the last crops planted by enslaved people had ripened. Therefore, planters and freedpeople found themselves enmeshed in conflict over the fruits of enslaved labor.[216] Planters wanted to maximize profit, but they feared that freedpeople would balk at low wages, take to the road, and leave crops to rot in the field. Propelled by the desire to exercise freedom and relocate family, some freedpeople left places of their enslavement at once. Other freedpeople stayed put but not out of affinity to their previous enslavers. As the tillers and sowers of spring fields, free men and women wanted to harvest what they had sown—and, in their view, owned. Elsewhere the downfall of slavery brought a flood of movement, but many African Americans in southwest Georgia ended the 1865 growing season in the same place they started.[217]

The weapons of daily resistance in slavery became, in freedom, the first weapons against unfair labor practices. Drawing on typical racial stereotypes, White planters complained that Black men and women would not work without being compelled to do so. Overseer Nathan Barwick in Sumter County reported to Howell Cobb in August 1865, "I have some negroes lieing up pretending to be sick but I think its freedom sick and too lazy to work." Barwick singled out "Samson" for special rebuke, arguing that the man had performed no work since signing his first labor contract. Samson not only refused heavy lifting, he also resisted shucking corn and making collars. "He is very sasy and impudent," Barwick wrote, and "If I was admitted to whip him I would know what to do with him."[218] T. J. Mount, another local overseer, stated that dry weather threatened the harvest of corn, peas, potatoes, and sugar cane. He also implied that these environmental anxieties amplified his standoff with freedpeople over wages. The men and women had rejected a verbal agreement and refused to work until presented with a written contract. Mount wrote, "all the negroes are getting badly Careless about there work," and "they seem to be dissatisfied because you have not come down & made a contract with them as others

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214. William A. Campbell, ed., "A Freedmen's Bureau Diary by George Wagner," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 48, no. 2 (June 1964), 199; George Wagner Diary, June 25–26, 1866, George Wagner Papers, ms895, Box 1, Folder 1, Hargrett Rare Books & Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries; Ronald Butchart, *Schooling the Freedpeople: Teaching, Learning, and the Struggle for Black Freedom, 1861–1876* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 164. In 1869, Christian lived at the corner of Prince and Johnson Street in Americus. *Americus City Directory, 1869* [typescript], Lake Blackshear Regional Library, Americus, Ga. On the Freedmen's Bureau in Georgia, see Paul A. Cimbala, *Under the Guardianship of the Nation: The Freedmen's Bureau and the Reconstruction of Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997).

215. Campbell, ed., "A Freedmen's Bureau Diary," 203, entries for August 13, 1866. Many people, including Thomas Goodman, were identified as the "hangman" of the raiders at Andersonville. Robert Scott Davis, *Ghosts and Shadows of Andersonville: Essays on the Secret Social Histories of America's Deadliest Prison* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2006), 114.

216. Susan Eva O'Donovan, *Becoming Free in the Cotton South* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), 112–121.

217. O'Donovan, *Becoming Free in the Cotton South*, 139–140.

218. Nathan Barwick to Howell Cobb, August 20, 1865, Box 3, Folder 12, Cobb / Erwin / Lamar Collection, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, The University of Georgia Libraries [UGA].

have done." Although the overseer had promised them "much better than what any person has agreed to do," the freedpeople wanted legally binding promises.[219]

The desire to inspect written contracts—alongside religious autonomy and social mobility—was a motivating force for education that supported the Sumter School. In the meantime, Freedmen's Bureau agents, who envisioned themselves as apostles of free labor values, helped write contracts. George Wagner facilitated one such agreement between 34 freedmen and freedwomen in Sumter County and The Liverpool Cotton Company. The men and women received the following annual compensation:

James Boone	$165.00
Samuel Davis	$215.00
Abraham Webb and Wife	$225.00
Oliver Boone	$140.00
Tom Jones and Wife	$225.00
Stephen Bartlett	$140.00
Ira Ann Bartlett	$ 85.00
John Sea	$125.00
George Riggins, three sons & one daughter	$300.00
Anderson Horne and Son	$175.00
Wiley Clark	$140.00
James Clark	$ 75.00
Oscar Clark & Wife	$225.00
Phebe Neal	$ 75.00
Ellen Neal	$ 75.00
Kirk Scott, two Sons & one daughter	$360.00
Major King and Wife	$225.00
John Lewis and Wife	$225.00
William Boone & Son William Boone	$200.00
Susan Williams – hired Jan 30th 1867	$ 75.00

For these wages plus "sufficient wholesome food and shelter," workers agreed to "hire and contract our services." The men, women, and children promised "to labour faithfully and honestly" and extended the right of the hirers "to discharge any of the parties…for worthlessness or misdemeanor at any time."[220] The contract was better than a verbal agreement, but it delegated considerable power to employers. Wages, food, and housing could vanish at any time.

The Liverpool Cotton Company contract also reflected how gender and age affected the wages of freedpeople. The Liverpool Cotton Company hired four categories of workers: individual men, married couples, men with children, and individual women. Single men earned between $75 and $215 with a median annual salary of $140. Five married men without children all received $225, reflecting the median salary plus $85 for the labor of the wife. Single women fared worse than married women, only one of whom received $85 for her work.

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219. T. J. Mount to Capt. John A. Cobb, Sumter County, Ga, August 27, 1865, Box 3, Folder 12, Cobb / Erwin / Lamar Collection, UGA.

220. Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, "*Theo Wiseman vs. Liverpool Cotton Co.* Americus, Sumter Co., Georgia, 1866–67," George Wagner Papers, Box 2, Folder 4, UGA.

The list contained at least one conspicuous absence. The Liverpool Cotton Company hired four fathers but not a single mother with this contract. Who made this decision? It is possible that the four men with children had wives and the mothers were "keeping house." The Freedmen's Bureau applauded such arrangements because reforming the former slave states meant, in part, crafting Black southern households in the image of the northern middle class. Yet because the contracts came with food and shelter, an arrangement in which mothers lived on the plantation came at a cost. As Susan O'Donovan argues, White planters in southwest Georgia reassessed how they valued Black motherhood during Reconstruction. Under slavery, the capital gain of Black motherhood made up for short-term losses in productivity. Freedom removed that incentive; therefore, some planters did not hire Black mothers.[221] This may explain why the four men with children—whose wives were likely invisible in the contract—fared worse than single men.[222] Assuming Anderson Horne received the median salary for adult men, he received $35 for one child's labor. William Boone had about $60 added to his contract for his son. George Riggins and Kirk Scott received somewhere between $40 and $70 per child. The ages of the children might have affected the wages. Still, it appears that under the Liverpool Cotton Company's contract, families stayed together at a price.

The U.S. government's mission to protect and commemorate Union dead also shaped work in southwest Georgia. Freedmen began improving the graveyard almost as soon as Camp Sumter closed. A government expedition led by James A. Moore intensified these efforts in July 1865.[223] The improvements became a local example of a national trend of protecting and honoring fallen U.S. soldiers. That fall, Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs requested information on the location and condition of cemeteries "with recommendations of the means necessary to provide for the preservation of the remains from desecration," including whether "bodies should be removed to some permanent cemetery near."[224]

The response to Meigs' inquiry laid out the challenging task ahead. Edmund B. Whitman and 20 men spent nine months traveling on horseback from Tennessee and Mississippi to Georgia, "including battlefields, skirmish-grounds, hospitals, and the prison pens of Andersonville and Millen or Lawton" asking White and Black residents for information on Union burials.[225] Meigs' inquiry reflected the doubts shared by northern veterans, families, and politicians about

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221. O'Donovan, Becoming Free in the Cotton South, 156–161. See also Thavolia Glymph, Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

222. 1870 U.S. Census, Sumter County, Georgia, population schedule, pg. 197B (stamped), dwelling 46 and 48, family 46 and 48, William Boon, Laura Boon, William Boon Sr, Rina Boon; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com : accessed October 24, 2018); citing NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 174. Their neighbors included Kirke and Charity Scott, albeit no children are listed. 1870 U.S. Census, Sumter County, Georgia, population schedule, pg. 197B (stamped), dwelling 43, family 43, Kirke Scott, Charity Scott; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com : accessed October 24, 2018); citing NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 174; 1880 U.S. Census, Sumter County, Georgia, population schedule, pg. 130 (stamped), dwelling 409, family 409, Anderson Horne, Millie Horn, Jesse , Zack, Victoria, Bobe, and Coot; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com : accessed October 24, 2018); citing NARA microfilm publication T9, roll 165.

223. James A. Moore to M. C. Meigs, February 5, 1866, "Consolidated Correspondence File, 1794–1915," Entry 225, Box 708, Record Group [RG] 92, Records of the Quartermaster General, National Archives and Records Administration [NARA]; Dorence Atwater, *A List of the Union Soldiers Buried at Andersonville Copied from the Official Record in The Surgeon's Office at Andersonville* (New York: The Tribune Association, 1868), vi. Elizabeth Brown Pryor, *Clara Barton, Professional Angel* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 140.

224. John R. Neff, Honoring the Civil War Dead: Commemoration and the Problem of Reconciliation (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 125.

225. E. B. Whitman, "Remarks on National Cemeteries.—Original Military Division of the Tennessee," in The Army Reunion: with Reports of the Meetings of the Societies of the Army of the Cumberland; the Army of the Tennessee; the Army of the Ohio; and the Army of Georgia (Chicago, Ill.: S. C. Griggs, 1869), 229.

whether Union graves were safe in former rebellious states. In trying to alleviate concerns about the nation's dead, the U.S. government expanded national cemeteries created during the Civil War and designated new ones. At Andersonville and beyond, freedpeople played a central role in protecting the nation's dead.[226]

The reburial program furthered the U.S. government's goal of establishing a free labor society in the South. In January 1867, Whitman sent instructions to reinter Union soldiers who fell in central and southwest Georgia to Andersonville. "In the employment of labor," Whitman ordered, "only steady and careful men should be selected and preference in all cases, should be given to discharged Union soldiers and to Freedmen, and in no case, except for very conducive reasons should discharged rebel soldiers be employed in this work."[227] Nationally as in rural Georgia, Black soldiers and freedmen played a key role in reburying hundreds of thousands of remains. By 1871, the U.S. government estimated that 303,536 bodies were in national cemeteries, 14,214 were still in local or family cemeteries, and relatively few remained unprotected.[228]

The urgent pace of reburial demonstrated its importance. Soldiers and work crews located 64 bodies two miles south of the national cemetery at the former smallpox hospital. Farther away, and with the help of local residents' knowledge, crews removed bodies from most major towns and cities in southwest and central Georgia: 3 from Oak Grove Cemetery in Americus; 28 from Columbus; 51 from an old city cemetery on Cherry Street in Macon; 56 Black soldiers from the "regimental burial ground of the 137th U.S.C.I." in Macon; and 87 from the Black cemetery, Oak Ridge, adjacent to the White cemetery, Rose Hill, in Macon.[229]

The work of locating graves took reburial crews to the sites of remote skirmishes and forgotten prison stockades. The reburial crew found 12 men in the Thomasville graveyard, 3 by the railroad depot, 26 slightly "west of Bainbridge Road," and 4 "south of old stockade, in pine woods." In Macon, Georgia, 22 came from the fairgrounds, the site of Camp Oglethorpe, a prison for Union officers.[230] When graves were marked, reburial crews meticulously recorded inscriptions. Comrades of William F. Allen, for example, had buried him themselves on their way through Georgia with Sherman's army. The original headboard proclaimed, "He sleeps – we mourn his loss." Other graves, such as that of William Hentz, had been plowed over, but local knowledge enabled his identification.[231]

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226. Drew Gilpin Faust, This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War (New York: Vintage, 2008), 214–217.

227. E. B. Whitman to E. B. Carling, January 11, 1867, "General Correspondence and Reports Relating to National and Post Cemeteries ("Cemetery File"), 1865–1914," Entry 576, Box 3, RG 92, NARA.

228. Quartermaster General's Office, Cemeterial Branch, Annual Report, September 23, 1871, "Consolidated Correspondence File," Entry 225, Box 289, RG 92, NARA.

229. E. B. Whitman, "Report of Final Disposition of the Remains of Deceased Union Soldiers and Prisoners of War in National Cemeteries…, January 1867 to January 1868," in "Cemetery File," Entry 576, Box 4, RG 92, NARA.

230. Whitman, "Report of Final Disposition," in "Cemetery File," Entry 576, Box 4, RG 92, NARA.

231. John V. Furey, "Register of Union Soldiers Reburied at Andersonville, 1867," in "Cemetery File," Entry 576, Box 4, RG 92, NARA.

Table 7. The Reburial Program at Andersonville, March 1867

No. of Bodies & Original Location of Remains	Date of Removal	No. & Final Resting Place of Remains	Remarks
78, Macon, Ga. & Vicinity	March 9, 1867	78, Andersonville National Cemetery	Colored
24, Macon, Ga. & Vicinity	March 12, 1867	24, Andersonville National Cemetery	22 Colored, 2 White
30, Sandersville, Ga. & Vicinity	March 25, 1867	30, Andersonville National Cemetery	n/a
5, Irwinton, Ga. & Vicinity	March 29, 1867	5, Andersonville National Cemetery	1 Colored, 4 White
10, Milledgeville, Ga. & Vicinity	March 30, 1867	10, Andersonville National Cemetery	n/a
1, Americus, Ga. & Vicinity	March 30, 1867	1, Andersonville National Cemetery	n/a

Source: Brvt. Major John V. Furey, A.Q.M., "Report of Final Disposition of the Remains of Deceased Union Soldiers and Prisoners of War in National Cemeteries in the State of Georgia," March 31, 1867, "Cemetery File," Entry 576, Box 4, RG 92, NARA

When identities could not be determined, the reburial crew gathered contextual details that provided some individuality. About half a mile northwest of Sandersville, "on Mrs. Flourney's land," the reburial crew came across the intermingled bones of 11 men "thrown in lengthwise" into a narrow trench. A citizen from the town reported that the men were stragglers from Sherman's army. After falling into Confederate guerilla Champ Ferguson's hands, the prisoners were "taken out in the field[,] shot and partially stripped of clothing. They were found by citizens the next day in this condition, and buried." The reburial crew was unable to identify the murdered prisoners, but they accounted for the personal items found among the dead. One man had a purse with $1.16 in silver. Three bone wedding rings were found, one of which contained the inscription, "J.M.S." Other personal items included "4 fancy buttons," a belt buckle, and a large pocket knife.[232]

One of the 11 men—and perhaps the owner of one of the rings—was William Budd. When his wife, Mallisa Budd, applied for a widow's pension in 1868, Captain John M. Preston stated that Budd had been captured "while on a foraging expedition or raid" near Sandersville and "was reported to me by citizens killed by the rebels." The description provided by the citizens confirmed for Preston that Budd was among the 11 murdered. "I have no doubt," Preston wrote, "that the said William Budd was one of the number."[233] As with each set of remains, the Black and White men took the bones of the 11 soldiers and reinterred them at Andersonville Cemetery under headstones that each read, "Unknown U.S. Soldier." Between January 1867 and

232. Furey, "Register of Union Soldiers Reburied at Andersonville, 1867," in "Cemetery File," Entry 576, Box 4, RG 92, NARA; Anne Sarah Rubin, *Through the Heart of Dixie: Sherman's March and American Memory* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 19; Ella Mitchell, *History of Washington County* (Atlanta: Byrd Print, 1924), 64–65.

233. "Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Widows and Other Veterans of the Army and Navy Who Served Mainly in the Civil War and the War With Spain," compiled 1861–1934, William Budd, Company G, 88th Indiana Infantry, filed by Malissa Packer Budd, RG 15, Records of the Department of Veterans Affairs, NARA.

January 1868, Black and White workmen reinterred 851 bodies from more than 100 different locations.[234]

The reburial of soldiers in coffins and well-spaced graves may have raised expectations for improving the original prisoner graves. W. A. Griffin, a White Unionist from Tennessee, became involved in the earliest efforts to improve the prison cemetery in 1865. James Moore noted that when Griffin came to Andersonville, he discovered "hundreds of remains protruding from the earth, presenting a ghastly spectacle." Griffin procured tools and hired freedmen to cover the bodies with earth and fix the fallen stakes. As a reward for this initiative, Moore appointed Griffin to be the first superintendent of Andersonville National Cemetery. His rocky tenure was marked by charges of disloyalty and counter charges of corruption. Moore defended Griffin against accusations of employing too many—up to 50—men in the cemetery. "Where there is considerable work to be performed," Moore wrote, "it is impossible for any one, to determine the amount of work performed, on a mere casual visit of a few hours duration." In addition to extracting stumps and building walking paths, laborers struggled against the effects of rain and wind on the graves and headboards.[235]

Within one year, workmen transformed a prison graveyard into a provisional national cemetery. An inspection in July 1866 estimated an enclosure of 50 acres—twice the size of the 21st century national cemetery—surrounded by a picket fence in the process of being whitewashed for a second time. Improvements to the national cemetery included walkways, transplanted trees, and a fire break around the fence to protect the wooden headboards. The workforce consisted of 10 men, White and Black. "The laborers consist of three white and seven colored men," Greene wrote, "the white men have served in the late Rebel army; their pay is twenty dollars per month and one ration each." In addition to improving the cemetery, workers also disinterred bodies for relatives of the deceased. The inspector recommended doubling the labor force.[236]

By fall 1867, the wartime burial trenches had become a point of criticism. Rufus Saxton, Chief Quartermaster for Georgia, Florida, and Alabama, successfully requested that Chaplain Thomas Budd Van Horne report "to him temporarily for Cemeterial duty."[237] Saxton and Van Horne believed that only a new and enlarged national cemetery could honor those who died at Andersonville. "To leave the remains as they are now, in the trenches where they were laid, giving only seven square feet of earth to each body," Saxton argued, "would be discreditable to the Government and to this Department, and would be no proper indication of the sentiment of the loyal nation towards these brave men who suffered and died in its service in this horrible prison."[238] Yet the directions from Quartermaster General Meigs were to minimize alternations and he prohibited large-scale modifications. Meigs wrote, "The moving of earth, (except in the very smallest quantities,) the cutting down of hills, the filling in of hollows, and all masonry

234. Whitman, "Report of Final Disposition," in "Cemetery File," Entry 576, Box 4, RG 92, NARA.

235. James A. Moore to M. C. Meigs, February 5, 1866, "Consolidated Correspondence File, 1794–1915," Entry 225, Box 708, RG 92, NARA; W. A. Rankin to M. C. Meigs, November 29, 1865, "Consolidated Correspondence File, 1794–1915," Entry 225, Box 708, RG 92, NARA.

236. S. C. Greene to A. Ramsey Nininger, July 13, 1866, "General Correspondence and Reports," Entry 576, Box 3, RG 92, NARA.

237. Quoted in D. H. Rucker to Edwin M. Stanton, April 23, 1868, "Cemetery File," Entry 576, Box 3, RG 92, Records of the Quartermaster General, National Archives and Records Administration.

238. R. Saxton to Brevet Major General [D. H.] Rucker, February 3, 1868, in "Cemetery File," Entry 576, Box 3, RG 92, NARA.

(except the simplest drains, and (where ordered,) walls of enclosure,) – are considered unnecessary, and entirely deprecated."[239]

In an effort to beautify the cemetery, Van Horne and other U.S. officials went far beyond those orders. In January 1868, A. W. Corliss increased the workforce at Andersonville to 250 men. This rise corresponded with high enrollment at Sumter School: 111 students in the day school, 94 students in the night school, and 106 students in the Sabbath school. The wage of $10 per month amounted to less than the median men's salary with the Liverpool Cotton Company; however, cemetery work may have appealed to freedpeople because it offered nonplantation employment adjacent to a school.[240]

The labor force swelled to begin landscaping for a new national cemetery that would replace the old prison graveyard. This new cemetery would be laid out according to one of two plans: the cheaper model enlarged the cemetery to 73 acres; the more expensive model required 135 acres. As workers cleared the land, Saxton solicited bids for supplies: 14,000 pine coffins; 1,000,000 hard bricks for sewers and gutters; 500,000 perches of crushed stone; and a monthly supply of 30 cords (approximately 4,800 cubic feet) of wood.[241] The improvements—and their cost—caught Meigs by surprise. When his office balked at the expense, Acting Assistant Quartermaster A. W. Corliss laid off more than half of the labor force, reducing the number of laborers from 250 to 100.[242] At the end of February, Miegs stated that he "cannot approve of the making [of] a new cemetery at Andersonville" and ordered Saxton "to confine his exertions at Andersonville to improving the original cemetery, and putting it, as far as possible, in a condition to resist the action of the elements." In early March 1868, Saxton suspended all work and laid off most of the remaining workers. Meigs ended all hopes of reconsideration in August 1868 when he echoed his earlier orders to preserve the original burials.[243]

Van Horne's attempts to enlarge the national cemetery—and orders countermanding them—played into the hands of local Whites who wanted to remove the freedpeople living near the old prison. Amos Thornburgh, a physician who had worked as a Confederate surgeon at Andersonville, was the first to sign a petition calling on the Freedman's Bureau to remove 300 Black men, women, and children at Andersonville. Thornburgh and the more than two dozen petitioners complained that African Americans at Andersonville "have no employment or visible means of support, only as they procure it by days work on the plantations in the country" and "our cattle and hogs are being killed by them daily." The request for the assistance of the Freedmen's Bureau concealed a vague threat. "We cannot longer bear these depredations and having no wish to committ a rash act or do any thing to array one class against the other, We therefore call upon you…to disperse them over the country, where they may by honest labor

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239. Quoted in Rucker to Stanton, April 23, 1868, "Cemetery File," Entry 576, Box 3, RG 92, NARA.

240. A. W. Corliss to R. Saxton, January 27, 1868, "Cemetery File," Entry 576, Box 3, RG 92, NARA; Freedmen's Bureau, "Theo Wiseman vs. Liverpool Cotton Co.," George Wagner Papers, Box 2, Folder 4, UGA; American Missionary Association, Teacher's Monthly Report, "Sumter School," Sumter County, Georgia, January 1868, American Missionary Association Archives [AMAA], Box 27, No. 21224, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans [ARC].

241. "Proposals," [Newspaper Clipping], December 28, 1867, "Cemetery File," Entry 576, Box 3, RG 92, NARA.

242. A. W. Corliss to Quartermaster General, February 1, 1868, in "Cemetery File," Entry 576, Box 3, RG 92, NARA; A. W. Corliss to R. Saxton, February 3, 1868, "Cemetery File," Entry 576, Box 3, RG 92, NARA.

243. Rucker to Stanton, April 23, 1868, in "Cemetery File," Entry 576, Box 3, RG 92, NARA; [Montgomery C. Meigs] to J. M. Schoffield, August 21, 1868, in "Cemetery File," Entry 576, Box 3, RG 92, NARA; M. C. Meigs to R. Saxton, August 29, 1868, in "Cemetery File," Entry 576, Box 3, RG 92, NARA; "Andersonville," Boston Daily Advertiser, April 18, 1868, clipping in "Cemetery File," Entry 576, Box 3, RG 92, NARA.

procure a support for themselves and families." In contrast to the underlying threat of taking matters into their own hands, the petitioners' tone of honesty and free labor language aimed to persuade Freedmen's Bureau agents into action.[244]

Some Freedmen's Bureau agents were sympathetic to racist and proslavery arguments that Black men and women had to be compelled to work. Frank Gallagher, an adjutant of the Bureau's Assistant Commissioner Caleb C. Sibley in Atlanta, warned earlier that year against giving freedpeople too much leniency in breaking labor contracts. He wrote, "Freedpeople must be taught & compelled to keep faith with their employers, or we cannot in justice compel the latter to keep faith with them."[245] The White petitioners appealed to these underlying assumptions about Black men and women. They wrote, "farmers have visited the place from all parts of the country and offered them homes and work at fair wages, but they refuse it." The White petitioners even included a list of "vagrants," along with the number of children who "will be obliged [to] starve unless their parents are forced to work for their support."[246]

When William C. Morrill, the Freedmen's Bureau Agent in Americus, received the petition, he forwarded it to Gallagher and Sibley in Atlanta. Sibley returned the petition to Morrill and instructed him to investigate. Sibley wrote, "Agent Morrill will in case he finds affairs as represented, advise the freedpeople to go to work & use every endeavor to find them homes." It also gave a stern warning about the consequences of a failure on the part of the freedmen. "In the event of a refusal, on their part, to adopt his advice" Sibley continued, "[Morrill] will proceed against them in conformity with the civil laws, in such cases provided."[247] State and local agents seemed to forget the government's responsibility for the unemployment at Andersonville.

Designed to facilitate eviction, the petition and census captured at least a partial record of the Black Andersonville community in spring 1868. The community fell into three broad employment categories: government work, railroad or private business, and—in the largest category—none. Households with men working for the government in the national cemetery tended to be small: James Haygood was single; Henry Davis, George Washington, Mark Brown, and Nathan Smith were each married but had no children. Only two government workers, Floyd Snelson and John Harris, had wives and children: the Snelson family had two children; the Harris family had one. The Black men who worked for the railroad had larger households: Deamon Wilson and his wife and three children; Bob Jessee and his wife had five children; Bill Hudson and Henry Hill both had wives and one child. Two shoemakers—Tom Chaves and Howell Ingram—also had larger families: Chaves had a wife and four children; Ingram had a wife and six children. Lastly, Arnold Cato, the blacksmith whose family fled to Andersonville in 1865, still lived and worked at Andersonville [248]

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244. "Petition of A. Thornburg and Twenty Four Others," June 1868, Records of the Field Offices for the State of Georgia, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1863–1868, M1903, roll 40, pg. 358–363. On Amos Thornburgh at Andersonville during the Civil War, see *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (70 vols. in 128; Washington, 1889-1901) Ser. 2, Vol. 6: 542, 544, 551, 881, 1359. While Thornburgh usually signed as "A. Thornburg," the *War of the Rebellion* index lists his first name, "Amos."

245. Cimbala, Under the Guardianship of the Nation, 156.

246. "Petition of A. Thornburg," pg. 358–363.

247. "Petition of A. Thornburg," pg. 358–363.

248. "Petition of A. Thornburg," pg. 358–363.

The petitioners' census supported their claim that unemployment ran high at Andersonville. While 14 men had jobs, these were exceptions in a community of 80 households. As illustrated by the layoff, government employment was capricious with high turnover. Two years later, when the federal census enumerator came to Andersonville, only 63-year-old James Haygood still worked at the national cemetery. Haygood was still unmarried and, like nearly all the other families in the vicinity, he had been unable to accumulate real estate or personal property on the government salary. In place of the men from the 1868 list, Turner Hall, Willis Riley, and Barber Grant now worked at the national cemetery.[249] Yet the government workers in 1868 (and 1870) represented a tiny fraction of local Black households. While neither the petition nor the census can be taken at face value, it illustrated the economic and social unrest made worse by starting—and then halting—the massive cemetery program.

During the month of July 1868, Black community leaders at Andersonville attempted to strengthen internal organization and discipline. This likely came in response to pressure from the Freedmen's Bureau. On July 19, Floyd Snelson informed the American Missionary Association of the community response. He wrote, "We have been busy for several days and nights, trying to regulate this place." Snelson interpreted the pressure as coming from Benjamin Dykes, a signer of the Andersonville petition and the claimant to the land seized by the U.S. government and occupied by the so-called vagrants. "Mr. D.," as Snelson referred to Dykes, "has been trying to turn all them that was not at work in the cemetery out of their houses." Snelson "called the people together" and the community "framed a constitution, and had it approved by the Bureau." These framers of the Andersonville constitution established a council to try cases, but Snelson reported that the council "found none guilty of vagrancy."[250]

The internal findings of the Andersonville council could not have satisfied the White men who had appealed to the Freedmen's Bureau. These petitioners turned threats to action, forcing Black families from Andersonville at gunpoint. Dykes, still embroiled in a legal dispute with the U.S. Government over the land, forcefully evicted the residents of Andersonville on July 29, 1868. The timing coincided with a suspension of work at the national cemetery and the summer gap between school sessions. According to Snelson, Dykes told the residents "that they must get out of their buildings within four days, or he would have them put out by the Sheriff, and they would have the cost to pay." Many chose to remain, perhaps because of the high cost of leaving. Abandoning the land in the middle of the season undercut freedpeople's ability to acquire provisions. Snelson wrote, "Many of them had built these houses at their own expense, and cleared, fenced, and cultivated gardens of from one to four acres, which were covered with corn, potatoes, and other vegetables, which, with their houses, they were required to leave without compensation."[251] Freedpeople looked back upon the raids on Andersonville as evidence that the U.S. government's authority was susceptible to the power of local White authorities.

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249. 1870 U.S. Census, Sumter County, Georgia, population schedule, pg. 347 (stamped), dwellings 531, 532, 534, 535, families 531, 532, 534, 535, Turner Hall, James Haygood, Willis Riley, Barber Grant; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com : accessed May 22, 2017); citing NARA microfilm publication M593, roll not identified.

250. [Floyd Snelson], "Andersonville," *American Missionary* 12, no. 11 (November 1868), 246.

251. Hamilton Wilcox Pierson, A Letter to Hon. Charles Sumner, with "Statements" of Outrages Upon Freedmen in Georgia, and an Account of My Expulsion from Andersonville, Ga., by the Ku Klux Klan (Washington, D.C.: Chronicle Print, 1870), 6; Adam H. Domby, "Captives of Memory: The Contested Legacy of Race at Andersonville National Historic Site," Civil War History 63, no. 3 (September 2017): 251–254.

In the wake of the July attack, only government employees could safely reside in the old Confederate buildings adjacent to the prison site. Snelson reported that his family had not been forced out, but he had to guard their home every night. "They want me," he wrote, "because I write and lead the others, they say; but I trust in the lord, it will be some time yet before they get me." The nighttime raiders also targeted the school house and the teacher's home, but diligent guards kept watch every night.[252]

The attack served as a turning point in several ways. Although Black men continued to shape the landscape, the U.S. government never employed large numbers of Black laborers again. In the wake of expulsions from Andersonville and the political violence of 1868, African Americans at Andersonville redoubled efforts to gain freedom through land ownership. Lastly, as Andersonville ceased to be a place of employment for freedpeople, it became a place of pilgrimage—a park—celebrating freedom.

PREPARING THE MODERN LANDSCAPE

After the hiring boom in early 1868, the number of Black men employed at the national cemetery remained low. The work also meant something different than it had in 1865. Immediately after the war, Black workers symbolized the potential of a budding free labor society, but that idealism evaporated in the coming years. White U.S. government officials came to see Black workers not as the agents of social and economic change but simply as a cheap source of labor. The careers of Floyd Snelson, James Haygood, and Robert Dinkins exemplified the contours of changing employment opportunities for Black men at Andersonville.

All three men had long tenures. In five transformative years, Snelson learned to read and write, became foreman in the cemetery, and graduated from Atlanta University. He served the Black community at Andersonville as a minister, teacher, and political leader. At the cemetery, Snelson provided comfort to distant White families. When Amelia Johnson wrote to the father of J. Leader Chapin, she described ongoing cemetery improvements. "I am happy to be able to say that our Government has manifested its gratitude, in some degree" she wrote, "to the noble ones who gave their lives to its support, by making the place where they are buried as attractive as possible under the circumstances." The gratitude came through the work of "ten or twelve colored men" who were "constantly employed in the cemetery."[253] Before leaving Andersonville for the summer, Johnson told Mrs. Chapin that "Mr. Snelson" would look after the grave of their son in her absence. Johnson described Snelson to the Chapin family as a student, church member, as well as "an *excellent* man," who remained the foreman in the national cemetery after declining an appointment as postmaster at Andersonville. She wrote, "I shall leave the grave in his care and shall *be sure* that it will receive all the attention *you* could give it." For Johnson and the Chapin family, Snelson represented the link between the government and still-mourning families.[254]

As Johnson's praise indicated, Snelson was highly regarded for his work at Andersonville. Snelson gave special attention to the Chapin grave, just one among more than 13,000, and also wrote to the Chapin family in Amelia Johnson's absence. In 1869, he installed a custom marble

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252. [Snelson] "Andersonville," 247.

253. Amelia E. Johnson to "Mr. Chapin," December 24, [1868], Chapin Family Papers, ms2922, UGA. The date of 1868 is based on Johnson's correspondence with the AMA. American Missionary Association Archives, Georgia, rolls 2-9, ARC.

254. Amelia E. Johnson to "Mrs. Chapin," May 19, 1869, Chapin Family Papers, ms2922, UGA.

headstone sent by the Chapin family. The next year, he received a package of cement and a request to fix an imperfection in the stone from a sibling of the dead soldier and prisoner. Snelson wrote, "I returned last night & found it to be the material for fixing your dear brothers grave stone. I expect to leave to day at noon. So I thought it my duty to go out & fix it as nice as I could & send you word. So it is done & cost to you is nothing. Will continue to see to it all the while."[255] While Snelson had left work at the national cemetery to attend Atlanta University, he still considered it his "duty," as he called the civic performance, to preserve the cemetery.

Snelson exemplified the potential—and the difficulty—of Black social mobility during Reconstruction. In January 1873, Quartermaster Henry Hodges appointed Floyd Snelson acting superintendent. Hodges misidentified Snelson, describing him first as a "laborer." The next month, Hodges corrected himself, noting the high degree of education possessed by the new superintendent. In March 1873, Hodges attributed the poor condition of the cemetery to the sickly superintendent Snelson had replaced. Hodges wrote:

> The person in temporary charge of the Cemetery shows to be quite an intelligent colored man – zealous, and anxious to do what is right. I particularly called his attention to the untidy state of the grounds, and I walked all over the cemetery with him and showed him what to do. He has set out a good many trees, obtained from the forests about Andersonville, to replace those killed by the drought last summer.[256]

Snelson served as acting superintendent for only a brief period, at least in part because the U.S. government did not hire Black men as superintendents during Reconstruction. During his brief tenure, Snelson proposed an idea that, while never enacted, revealed his hope for reconciliation across regional and racial lines. At the time, the graves of Andersonville guards were located outside the national cemetery and eventually all would be removed to Oak Grove Cemetery in Americus. Snelson suggested reinterring the guards inside the national cemetery, directly behind the first row of prisoner graves.[257] Snelson was no friend to rebels, but his proposal hinted that past grievances could be laid to rest in the national cemetery. A year after serving as the acting superintendent, Snelson moved his family to Liberty County, Georgia, to preach and teach school.[258]

Snelson used government work, the Sumter School, and the American Missionary Association to propel his family into the Black middle class. This was not the common experience at Andersonville. In contrast to Snelson, James Haygood represented the type of laborer whose steady work transformed the prison into a modern landscape without ever receiving much visibility.[259] Unlike Snelson, Haygood did not learn to read or write at the Sumter School, but

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255. Floyd Snleson to G. W. Chapin, July 12, 1870, Chapin Family Papers, ms2922, UGA.

256. Henry Hodges to M. C. Meigs, March 18, 1873, in "Cemetery File," Entry 576, Box 4, RG 92, NARA.

257. S. M. Robbins, to M.C. Meigs, June 25, 1873, in "Cemetery File," Entry 576, Box 4, RG 92, NARA.

258. Floyd Snelson to E. M. Cravath, February 16, 1874, AMAA, Box 32, No. 25140, ARC.

259. Petition to "the Agents Freedman Bureau Americus Georgia," June 1868, *Records of the Field Offices for the State of Georgia, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865–1872*, NARA publication M1903, roll: 40, pg. 358–363.

like Snelson he registered to vote in 1867 and paid poll taxes through at least 1875.[260] By 1876, he was considered an "old hand," but he still made a good salary of $25 per month and lived adjacent to the national cemetery. Yet when Haygood came down with typhoid fever in 1876, the government lost no time replacing him. After spending 10 years working to preserve the graves in his care, Haygood's final resting place went unrecorded.[261]

Haygood and Snelson both received better compensation than common laborers. Even for skilled laborers at the national cemetery, though, employment became less lucrative over time. In December 1876, Civil Engineer James Gall Jr. recommended laying off workers and cutting wages at Andersonville. At the time there were two permanent employees and two month-to-month workers in the warmer season. Gall suggested retaining only one permanent worker, arguing that the winter work—trimming hedges and planting trees—needed only one man. In the summer, Gall suggested hiring one man to cut the grass.[262] This cost-cutting was part of a national trend. In January 1877, the Quartermaster General instructed all cemetery superintendents to cut costs. "For the ordinary field labor employed to assist the superintendent in cutting the grass, policing the grounds, etc.," the instructions stated, "the rates ruling in the vicinity for such service should govern." The effect was a dramatic reduction in wages. In 1877, S. E. Clark, Acting Assistant Quartermaster, directed Andersonville superintendent Eugene Sullivan, "If good labor in the vicinity of Andersonville can be had for $10.00 per month and a small ration, there is no reason why we should pay $25.00."[263]

The wages of Robert Dinkins came under special scrutiny. Dinkins, a widower, was a newcomer to the national cemetery who lived with his 17-year-old daughter, Betsy Dinkins, and granddaughter Ella Brown.[264] Superintendent Sullivan described Dinkins as a "skilled mechanic," who repaired wagons and carts, painted the lodge, and worked as a laborer and landscaper in the cemetery.[265] For this reason, Sullivan had paid Dinkins an extra $5 per month since July 1876. The pay rate aroused the attention of Quartermaster General Meigs, who consented to the pay raise only for someone "who is presumed to have some special fitness for the place."[266] After cutting the wage of the only other cemetery worker in January 1877 from $25 to $20, Clark consented to letting Dinkins receive his $30 on the condition that he take no outside work while employed for the U.S. government.

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260. 1870 U.S. Census, Sumter County, Georgia, population schedule, pg. 347 (stamped), dwelling 532, family 532, James Haygood; digital image, Ancestry.com (http://ancestry.com : accessed 9 December 2017); citing NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 174; Georgia, Property Tax Digests, 1793–1892, District 29, 1872–1875; digital image, Ancestry.com (http://ancestry.com : accessed December 9, 2017); citing Georgia Tax Digests, 1890, 140 volumes, Georgia State Archives, Morrow, Ga.; Return of Qualified Voters, 1867–1869, Terrell County, Georgia; digital image, Ancestry.com (http://ancestry.com : accessed 9 December 2017); citing Office of the Governor, Reconstruction Registration Oath Books, 1867, Georgia State Archives, Morrow.

261. Eugene Sullivan to QM, September 1, October 23, 1876, Letters Received, 1876 to 1878, Entry 48, Box 9, Record Group 92, Records of the Quartermaster General, Records of the Quartermasters, Atlanta, Ga., National Archives and Records Administration, Morrow, Georgia [NARA-Atlanta]. Haygood's name is also spelled as "Haggood" and "Heggood."

262. James Gall Jr. to Quartermaster General, December 28, 1876, "Cemetery File" Box 4, RG 92, NARA.

263. S. E. Clark to Eugene Sullivan, January 15, 1877, Copies of Letters Sent, 1875–1877, Box 1, Entry 48, RG 92, NARA-Atlanta.

264. 1880 U.S. Census, Sumter County, Georgia, population schedule, pg. 11B (stamped), dwelling 237, family 237, Robert Dinkins, Betsy Dinkins, Ella Brown; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com : accessed December 9, 2017); citing NARA microfilm publication [not given], roll 165.

265. S. E. Clark, "Estimate of funds for Andersonville, Ga., National Cemetery for the fiscal year of 1877," Box 1, Entry 48, RG 92, NARA-Atlanta; S. E. Clark to Eugene Sullivan, August 1, 1876, Copies of Letters Sent, 1875–1877, Box 1, Entry 48, RG 92, NARA-Atlanta; S. E. Clark to Eugene Sullivan, August 5,1876, Copies of Letters Sent, 1875–1877, Box 1, Entry 48, RG 92, NARA-Atlanta.

266. Montgomery C. Meigs to S. E. Clark, January 4, 1877, copied in S.E. Clark to Eugene Sullivan, January 15, 1877, Copies of Letters Sent, 1875–1877, Box 1, Entry 48, RG 92, NARA-Atlanta.

The work of Snelson, Haygood, Dinkins, and many others went mostly unrecognized. Indeed, the human and animal power that created Andersonville National Cemetery remains difficult to visualize. The rolling but sufficiently level ground was not a natural endowment; rather, it came as a result of years of hard work. In January 1876, the cemetery exhibited long flat "mounds" over graves separated by ravines, or "alleys."[267] It took four men, a cart, one mule or ox, and shovels to grade the cemetery. In winter and spring 1877, the hauling team started filling 11 "alleys" in the northwest section of the cemetery. According to Eugene Sullivan, some of the alleys required seventy loads of earth.[268]

Adding to the magnitude of such a job was extreme weather. During the construction of the brick cemetery wall in the late 1870s, rain pushed down an entire unfinished section.[269] In April 1884, a forest fire spread from a field west of the railroad to the edge of the national cemetery, putting the stable and forage room at risk and setting Robert Dinkins's house on fire "three or four times" before it was saved.[270] In March 1888, the superintendent's rain gauge measured 10.5 inches of rain in 14 hours. Four workmen spent the next day bailing water out of the superintendent's basement with little effect as groundwater permeated the brick as fast as men could remove it. The worst damage occurred behind the graves in the southeastern quadrant, where workmen had just planted the Bermuda grass roots. "This work is not only entirely destroyed," Superintendent J. M. Bryant wrote, "but the labor necessary to repair damages will be greater than the whole improvements would have cost under ordinary circumstances." So much water pooled in the southeast section of the cemetery that the superintendent asked for the installation of additional gutters.[271] The tranquil landscape of Andersonville in 2018 conceals layers upon layers of toil.

ANCHORING BLACK FREEDOM

The 1868 attack on the freedpeople's village coincided with the local fight for civil and political rights. The election of 1868 was unique in American history. This was the first presidential contest since the surrender of Confederate armies, and it was also the first national election under "congressional" or "radical" reconstruction, which saw the passage of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. The Fourteenth Amendment granted African Americans citizenship, "equal protection of the laws," and prohibited states from depriving citizens of "life, liberty, or property, without due process of law."[272] While the Fourteenth Amendment guaranteed civil rights, the Reconstruction Acts in 1867 provided political rights for African American men in the former Confederacy. That year, about 200 men, most of whom were Black, had registered to vote in Militia District 993.[273] Some of the registered voters were identified on the 1868 "vagrant" list at Andersonville while others, including Floyd Snelson, had registered elsewhere

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267. Sydney E. Clark to Montgomery C. Meigs, February 28, 1877, Copies of Letters Sent, 1875–1877, Box 1, Entry 48, RG 92, NARA-Atlanta.

268. Eugene Sullivan to Quartermaster, February 23, 1877, Letters Received, 1876 to 1878, Entry 48, Box 9, RG 92, NARA-Atlanta.

269. W. B. Marche to A. F. Rockwell, August 15, 1879, in "Cemetery File," Entry 576, Box 3, RG 92, NARA.

270. "From Andersonville," Americus Weekly Recorder, April 4, 1884; "Odds and Ends," Americus Weekly Recorder, May 10, 1885.

271. J. M. Bryant to E. B. Kirk, March 28, 1888, "Cemetery File," Entry 576, Box 3, RG 92, NARA.

272. U.S. Const. amend. XIV.

273. Return of Qualified Voters, Sumter County, Election District 13, July 8, 1867; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com : accessed May 22, 2017); citing Georgia, Office of the Governor, Returns of Qualified Voters under the Reconstruction Act, 1867, Georgia State Archives, Morrow, Ga.

in the county.[274] That Whites attacked the freedmen's village one day after ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment, was symbolically significant. The local struggle involved not only southern Whites and Blacks but also White federal employees and Black cemetery workers. It showed the tenuous state of civil and political rights. It also indicated that freedom from expulsion required owning the land.[275]

Voters in the election of 1868 had the choice between Republican presidential candidate Ulysses S. Grant and Democratic candidate Horatio Seymour. At Andersonville, conflict emerged between Harry Williams, superintendent of Andersonville National Cemetery, and the Black workforce. According to Snelson, Williams encouraged his employees to attend Democratic meetings. As Snelson reported, Williams "stated that he was a northern man and knew that it would be for the benefit of the freedman to vote that ticket, also that if Gen. Grant was elected it would result in injury to the freedman."[276] In August 1868, Williams suspended work in the cemetery and told his laborers and their foreman to attend a Democratic dinner. Williams also warned Black workers that they would be fired if they participated in Republican gatherings. "I talked with him," Snelson wrote, "and he told me if I had anything to do with that [Republican] party he would discharge us all." When members of a local Republican "Grant Club" came to the cemetery, Williams threatened to have the men arrested.[277]

Superintendent Williams was not the only person who felt threatened by the emergence of Grant Clubs. These organizations, alongside the older and longer running "Union Leagues," represented disciplined organization and the aspirations of Black men in the former Confederate states. Grant Clubs and Union Leagues combined national partisan politics with local drilling, policing, and self-defense. This made them targets for White paramilitary groups, including the Ku Klux Klan. George Smith, a Black man living near Ellaville, Georgia, recalled that the White paramilitary groups "looked in the night like Jersey wagons," with white sheets over their bodies and horses. Smith testified, "The Kuklux would go to the houses of all that belonged to the Grant club, call them to the door, throw a blanket over them and carry them off and whip them, and try to make them promise to vote for Seymour and Blair."[278] Richard Reese, the president of the Schley County Grant Club, hid in the woods for weeks leading up to the election.[279]

Members of the Grant Club at Andersonville stood their ground. Superintendent Williams threatened Snelson and national cemetery workers who wanted to march in a Republican parade through the town of Andersonville. Snelson met with the superintendent both as the foreman of cemetery workers and as president of the Grant Club in hopes of reaching an agreement. Snelson recalled, "He would not agree, and I concluded, as I was President of the

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274. For example, see Stephen Edge, Charles Mulkey, Jeff Greene, Spencer Morgan, Nelson Shelton, Robie Richards, Arnold Cato, Henry Hill, Henry Jackson, Robert Horton, [?] Jesse, Bill Hudson, Turner Hall, and Carter White on "Petition of A. Thornburg," pg. 358–363.

275. Eric Foner, *Reconstruction, America's Unfinished Revolution* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 253–61.

276. Affidavit of Floyd Snelson, May 20, 1869, Letters and their enclosures received by the Commission Branch of the Adjutant General's Office, 1863–70, M1064, roll 0444, RG 94, Record of the Adjutant General's Office, NARA.

277. Affidavit of Floyd Snelson, May 20, 1869, M1064, roll 0444, RG 94, Record of the Adjutant General's Office, NARA; [Snelson] "Andersonville," 247.

278. Pierson, Letter to Hon. Charles Sumner, 8.

279. Pierson, *Letter to Hon. Charles Sumner*, 9. Freedmen's Bureau agents in Americus, Georgia, had trouble in Sumter County, but they considered Schley County in a state of White rebellion against African Americans and the federal government. See "Letters Sent," Jan.–Dec. 1868, Vol. 2, Records of the Field Offices for the State of Georgia, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865–1872, National Museum of African American Life and Culture, https://sova.si.edu/details/NMAAHC.FB.M1903#ref146.

[Grant] Club, I would miss my dinner, and march until my time was out, and then be ready for my duty." In explaining the decision to the American Missionary Association, Snelson wrote, "I wish to do according to directions, but don't want a man to make a dog out of me." The conflict represented more than just a labor dispute. It was about Black freedom and Black manhood. Rhetorically, Snelson asked and then answered his own question:

> If you was elected to an office, and the people call upon you to carry out the points which you were elected for, would you, for fear of losing a little money from the man who employed you, fail to do what you was elected for? And everybody looking upon you as a Tory. No, I can't stand it; I must go; for if he finds you will do that, he may say the day of the election, 'if you vote, and don't vote as I want you to, I will discharge you,' and that will make a fuss in the family.

His statement said a great deal about Black freedom and Black masculinity. Both Floyd and, implicitly, Nancy Snelson equated their freedom and their ability to make independent household decisions. Submitting to the prejudicial whims of his employer was not freedom. Snelson's decision also reflected an economic calculation. The knowledge that "this is not the only place I can make a living" gave Snelson the independence to risk losing his job. In the end, Snelson, Henry Davis, and two other government workers marched with the Grant Club through the town. When the cemetery workers returned from town to the cemetery at 1:00 p.m., Williams fired them. A half-hour later, Williams changed his mind and rehired the men. But he threatened to never let them work for him again if they attended another Republican rally.[280]

Conservative White Democrats suppressed the vote that year through terror. In Dougherty County, Georgia, freedmen reported that a "Young Men's Democratic Club" purchased five cases of Spencer repeating rifles. In nearby Camilla on September 19, 1868, White men fired into a procession of hundreds of Black men, including an elected state representative, and several White Republicans. The shooters pursued the fleeing men with dogs into the countryside, spreading terror and leaving at least 12 dead. Political terrorism served as a warning to Black men preparing to vote for the first time in a presidential election.[281]

The effects of the violence were clear. Two Black men voted in Camilla in November 1868. In Americus, W. C. Morrill wrote, "there seemed to be a preconcerted action with the whites that there should be no election," and the polls did not open until Morrill went to the courthouse. John M. Shiver, a former Confederate captain and one of two men representing the "special police" asked the Freedmen's Bureau agent, "if niggers were going to open the polls." The second Confederate veteran and political terrorist, with a last name of Foster, promised to empty the contents of a cavalry pistol into any Black man who tried to vote. Eventually, "moderate" White citizens opened a polling place about noon, but the questions asked to freedmen shocked Morrill. Managers asked Black men questions about the location of their home, their place of work, and their taxes before deciding whether to let the man vote. Morrill reported that 137 of 1,500 freedmen cast ballots and the Democratic ticket won by 900 votes. "The whole affair was such a farce and everything connected with it so illegal, I do not see how it

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280. [Snelson], "Andersonville," 447–48.

281. O'Donovan, *Becoming Free in the Cotton South*, 261–262; Lee W. Formwalt, "The Camilla Massacre of 1868: Racial Violence as Political Propaganda," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 71, no. 3 (Fall 1987), 399–426; George C. Rable, *But There Was No Peace: The Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984), 73–74.

is possible it could stand as a legal vote, or showing the sentiment of this county."[282] Floyd Snelson, Henry Davis, and Turner Hall were all present in Andersonville on election day and presumably cast ballots. Statewide, however, voter suppression seemed to have worked. Georgia was one of only two former-Confederate states that voted for Democratic candidates Seymour and Blair.[283]

While fighting for their right to vote, African Americans in Andersonville hoped to anchor their freedom by owning land. The same summer Whites attacked the freedpeople in Andersonville, Floyd Snelson and George Washington purchased a half lot (about 101 acres) of forested land southwest of Andersonville. According to Snelson, the White "rebels" in Andersonville called it "Freedmen's village." Over the next two years, Snelson and Washington subdivided their land with Robert Scott, David Stickney, and cemetery worker Henry Davis.[284] Ten years later, four men—Turner Hall, Asbury Harrison, John Epkins, and Sam Peterson—bought an additional parcel just south of the Snelson and Washington purchase. This became Freeman Hill Cemetery. While the cemetery would become associated with the Saint Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church, in 1881 it appeared as a multi-denominational community cemetery. The land deed simply described the four men as "trustees appointed by the colored people of Andersonville & neighborhood" for the purpose of finding a place "for a cemetery in which to bury their dead." One of these trustees, Turner Hall, had been a so-called "vagrant" in June 1868 and a participant in the Republican rallies that same summer.[285]

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282. W. C. Morrill to M. Frank Gallagher, November 9, 1868, in Charles Stearns, *The Black Man of the South, and the Rebels; or, The Characteristics of the Former, and the Recent Outrages of the Latter* (New York: American News Company, 1872), 251–252. A Capt. John M. Shiver (1838–1869) buried in in Oak Grove Cemetery in Americus, Georgia. The 1869 Americus City directory lists a G. [George] S. Foster and an O. [Oliver] P. Foster, both grocers, living in the "Old Americus Hotel." *Americus City Directory, 1869* [typescript], Lake Blackshear Regional Library, Americus, Ga. Oliver Foster, a Confederate veteran like Shiver, is more likely to have been the second member of the "secret police." His older brother, George, spent the war procuring supplies for the Confederate army. See George S. Foster, Document No. 223, Confederate Papers Relating to Citizens or Business Firms, 1861–65, known as the "Citizens File," M346, roll 317, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

283. Affidavit of Floyd Snelson, Affidavit of Henry Davis, May 20, 1869, M1064, roll 0444, RG 94, Record of the Adjutant General's Office, NARA.

284. [Snelson], "Andersonville, 248; Deed Book Q, pg. 195, 252, 253, and 254, Sumter County Courthouse, Americus; Deed Book GG, pg. 193, Sumter County Courthouse, Americus; Deed Book P, pg. 72, Sumter County Courthouse, Americus. David Stickney, like Snelson, was also affiliated with the American Missionary Association, but less is known about him. See David Stickney to E. M. Cravath, October 7 and 19, 1874, AMAA, Box 32, No. 25407 and 25429, ARC; Laura A. Parmelee to E. M. Cravath, December 27, 1871, AMAA, Box 31, No. 24358, ARC.

285. Deed Book T, pg. 176–177, Sumter County Courthouse, Americus; "Petition of A. Thornburg" pg. 361; Deed Book T, pg. 176–177 Sumter County Courthouse, Americus; Deed Book YY, pg. 287, Sumter County Courthouse, Americus.

Figure 3.7. Floyd Snelson and George Washington purchased the southern half of Sumter County Lot 182 (the red box) in 1868. Andersonville National Historic Site, including the cemetery and part of the prison site, is visible on the eastern edge, but it is cut off because of the Sumter/Macon County line. Sumter County Tax Accessor Map (accessed October 20, 2017) https://qpublic.schneidercorp.com.

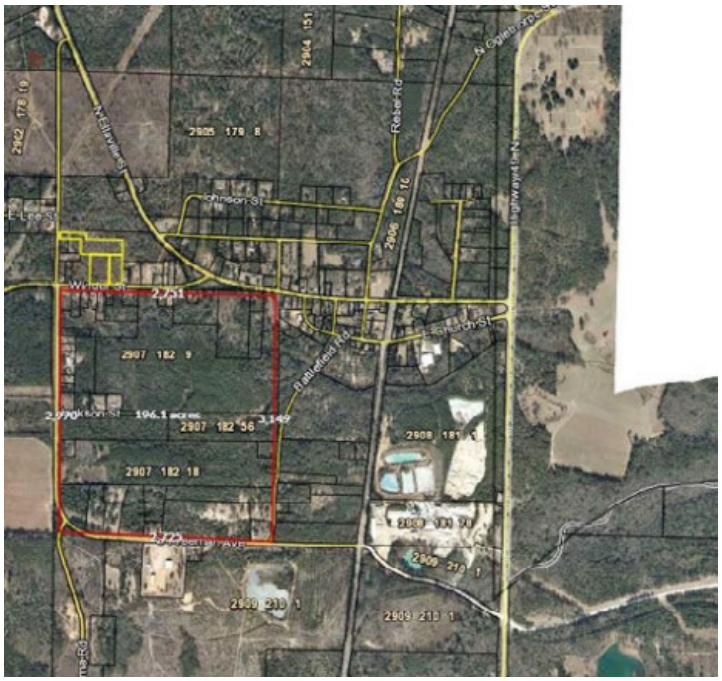

Figure 3.8. "Col. School & Ch" in lot 182 is the approximate location of Freeman Hill Cemetery. This is just south of the land purchased by Floyd Snelson and George Washington. It is also near the African American cemetery, formally established in 1881, and now known as Freeman Hill Cemetery. Map of Sumter County, Georgia, 1910, County Maps, Surveyor General, RG 3-9-66, Georgia Archives.

The largest African American land purchase included most of the prison site. At the beginning of the 1870s, Emma and George "Wash" Washington Kennedy were farm laborers with no reported personal or real estate in Sumter County. The household also included 55-year-old Harriet Kennedy of South Carolina, who lived with her son, daughter-in-law, and three grandchildren: William, age four; Harrison, age three, and an infant, age one.[286] This enabled them to purchase 455 acres of land in October 1885 that included most of the former prison stockade and a lot of land south of Sweetwater Creek. Five years later, the Kennedys sold 80 acres of land, including the prison site, to J. W. Stone and J. D. Crawford, who then sold the property to the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). The family continued to own substantial acreage in the Andersonville vicinity for years. When Wash Kennedy died in 1900, the family buried him in Freeman Hill Cemetery.

FROM WORKSPACE TO COMMEMORATIVE SPACE

The troubles during the summer of 1868 ushered in an era when African Americans were more likely to commemorate freedom at Andersonville than live or work there. As Adam Domby argues, "African Americans purposely linked the sacrifices and sufferings of the prisoners at Andersonville with their own freedom struggle."[287] Indeed, they did. The first two known Black freedom celebrations at Andersonville—Emancipation Day on January 1, 1869, and Decoration Day on April 27, 1869—came shortly after the eviction and political turmoil of the previous year. Hamilton Wilcox Pierson, who the Ku Klux Klan forced out the next month, described the Emancipation Day ceremonies as ways to connect Black freedom and national loyalty. The event included a service in the Sumter School and chapel, the decoration of graves in the national cemetery, and a salute to the American flag at the Andersonville train depot. At the schoolhouse, participants first sang, "From All That Dwell Below the Skies," listened to a reading of scripture by Amelia Johnson, a prayer by David Stickney, a recitation of the Emancipation Proclamation by Laura Parmelee, and an address by Hamilton Pierson. The men, women, and children then marched and sang from the school to the south entrance of the cemetery, placing wreaths on a series of tablets with poetry that marked the avenues. After singing, "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," the procession marched out the west entrance and to the railroad depot in Andersonville. Snelson called for "three cheers for the 'Dear Old Flag,'" and after rounds of singing and prayer, participants concluded the ceremonies.[288]

Emancipation Day set a model for the first Decoration Day. That commemorative event began as a subtle protest of how White southerners were commemorating the Confederate dead across the South. White Georgians chose Tuesday, April 27, 1869, as a day to mark the graves of Confederate guards—but not of Union prisoners—at Andersonville. Students at Sumter School beat the arrival of Whites by reaching the cemetery at 7:30 a.m., approximately 20 minutes before sunrise in an era before daylight saving time or any standard time zones. Preempting the Confederate mourners, the Black students spread oak leaves and flowers on the 13,000 Union graves and the graves of Confederate guards. "The ladies and gentlemen who came during the day from Macon and Americus covered their soldiers' graves with beautiful bouquets,"

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286. Georgia, Property Tax Digests, 1793–1892, District 29, 1880–1883; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com : accessed 1 November 2018); citing Georgia Tax Digests, 1890, 140 volumes, Georgia State Archives, Morrow, Ga.

287. Domby, "Captives of Memory," 263.

288. Pierson, *A Letter to Hon. Charles Sumner*, 21. Pierson called the song "My Native Country, Thee," but it is more recognizable as "My Country, 'Tis of Thee."

Parmelee wrote, "but had none for the martyred sons of the Union."[289] The students' decision to decorate every grave served as a reproach to the irreverence White southerners paid to the nation's dead.

Decorating Union and Confederate graves coincided with examination exercises that marked the end of the school season. Following two and a half hours of oral examination in the morning, the young men's debating society considered the question, "whether 'The Legislature of Georgia had a right to expel its colored members.'" The teachers preserved no record of the minutes of the debate, but the question was not hypothetical. Black Georgians registered to vote in 1867, selected delegates to the state constitutional convention, and watched White representatives expel Black members from the state legislature in summer 1868. The challenges to creating a representative democracy reverberated through school exams and the national cemetery on Decoration Day.

If the 1869 Decoration Day exercises symbolized hope and forgiveness after a series of severe setbacks, the ceremony of 1870 combined greater pageantry and deeper despair. Laura Parmelee wrote, "It is with unfeigned relief and pain that we close the books for another school year. Relief because the heat and sandflies are annoying[,] pain that so many pages are blotted and blurred."[290] Parmelee confessed that the school numbers were falling and might never rise again to their highs in the second and third years of Sumter School. When the school opened on January 3, 1870, the total enrollment had been 88, the average attendance for the month was 69, and the number of students always present was 27. By May, the total enrollment had dropped to 49 students, and average attendance of 45, with 16 always present.[291] Parmelee held out hope that "enough are left to make a good school, and there will always be some coming from a distance to attend it." Yet the numbers showed a clear trend. A combination of forces, including the search for work and White intimidation, had taken a toll on Black families at Andersonville.[292]

Parmelee described the Decoration Day ceremony with more gusto. In contrast to the local initiative in 1869, a delegation of the Grand Army of the Republic from Washington and Republican state politicians, including Governor Rufus Bullock, converged at Andersonville in 1870. Six hundred Black men, women, and children arrived "at the expense," Parmelee wrote, "in several instances, of losing their places." The stiff potential consequences—the loss of work and, possibly, home—reflected the ongoing struggle for Black civil and political rights. Participants at Decoration Day prayed and delivered speeches. A band of the 18th U.S. Infantry played, "Old Hundred," "The Star-Spangled Banner," and "America." After the ceremony, the band played, "Auld Lang Syne," while others decorated the individual graves. "Auld acquaintance," Parmelee wrote, "were surely not forgotten that day but every one of the unknown heroes was a friend and brother." Decoration Day served as both a day of celebration and a day of mourning. It was a national funeral and a Republican rally in a state teetering

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289. "Georgia. The Work in Andersonville," *American Missionary* 13, no. 7 (July 1869), 147–48. On the origins of Memorial Day, see Richard Gardiner and Daniel Bellware, *The Genesis of the Memorial Day Holiday* (Columbus, Ga.: Columbus State University Press, 2014).

290. Laura A. Parmelee to Rev. E. P. Smith, June 3, 1870, AMAA, Box 31, No. 23585, ARC.

291. American Missionary Association, Teacher's Monthly Report, "Sumter School," Sumter County, Georgia, January 1870, AMAA, Box 29, No. 23186, ARC; American Missionary Association, Teacher's Monthly Report, "Sumter School," Sumter County, Georgia, May 1870, AMAA, Box 30, No. 23378, ARC.

292. Laura A. Parmelee to Rev. E. P. Smith, June 3, 1870, AMAA, Box 31, No. 23585, ARC.

between slavery and freedom, Republicans and Democrats, Black male suffrage and White supremacy.[293]

Local White Democrats did not fail to recognize that Decoration Day at Andersonville doubled as an interracial Republican rally. The *Weekly Sumter republican* in Americus covered the event and set the pattern it would follow for the rest of the century. The sub-headline "White Women with Nigger Beaus" said much about the meaning of Decoration Day to local Whites. The writer, probably editor Charles W. Hancock, reported that his information came "from an 'intelligent contraband,'" a reminder of the liminal status of self-emancipated African Americans during the Civil War. In 1870, however, that word mocked freedpeople by insinuating that they were property. As the author reasserted ownership over Black bodies, he also claimed authority to speak for the dead, both Union and Confederate. Forgetting the scores of Black men buried in the national cemetery, he wrote, "If the buried dead could speak, their voices would unite in an indignant protest against such a sacrilegious desecration. They enlisted in the service of their country, and the cruel hand of war, which fell with equal fatality upon the wearers of blue and the gray, has left them beneath the sod at Andersonville."[294] Parmelee and the *Sumter Republican* agreed only on their estimates of the African American commemorators. The rebellious newspaper estimated the number at 700, only 100 more than Parmelee.[295]

The negative coverage by the *Weekly Sumter republican* in 1870 had similar reverberations by Americus papers for the rest of the century. According to the newspaper, Governor Bullock slandered the South through claims of guards feeding prisoners to dogs. Instead of African American patriotism, the paper described Black men and women as both childlike and dangerous. Instead of patriotic songs, the writer described a scene in which "the darkies" carried Bullock around the cemetery singing "Shoo Fly," or "High Daddy," and other "cornfield songs'"[296] After mocking the ceremonies, the editor concluded, "the crowd withdrew to their several holes, let us hope never to disturb the abode of the dead again with their disgusting carnival."[297] Descriptions of Black freedom celebrations as "disgraceful" and "disgusting" became an annual tradition alongside wishful predictions that the event would disappear.

An Atlanta-based Republican-leaning newspaper, the *Weekly New Era*, published a much more positive review of the Decoration Day ceremony. The correspondent, H. C. Corsan, provided a detailed chronological summary of the program:

1. Opening by Department Commander, Grand Army of the Republic.
2. Music.
3. Prayer by Rev. Dr. H. W. Pierson.
4. Music.
5. Reading orders Grand Army of the Republic by comrade M. M. Moore.
6. Salutatory by His Excellency Governor Bullock.
7. Music.

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293. Laura A. Parmelee to Rev. E. P. Smith, June 3, 1870, AMAA, Box 31, No. 23585, ARC; H. C. Corsan, "Andersonville. Memorial Ceremonies on the 30th," *Weekly New Era*, June 8, 1870.

294. "Andersonville. Bullock Bearded by Phil Cook. Ringed, Streaked and Striped. White Women with Nigger Beaus," *Weekly Sumter republican* (Americus, Ga.), June 3, 1870, pg. 3.

295. "Andersonville," *Weekly Sumter republican*, June 3, 1870, pg. 3.

296. "Andersonville," *Weekly Sumter republican*, June 3, 1870, pg. 3.

297. "Andersonville," *Weekly Sumter republican*, June 3, 1870, pg. 3.

8. Oration by Chaplain-in-Chief, G. W. Collier, Grand Army of the Republic.
9. Music.
10. Personal reminiscences of Andersonville prison, by Lieutenants W. H. Miller and A. H. Benner, U.S.A.
11. Benediction by Rev. Mr. Snead
12. Decoration of Graves.
13. Lunch.
14. Assembly and short speeches.
15. Return

In contrast to the Americus newspaper, the *Weekly New Era* described Bullock's speech as reconciliatory in tone. "While referring to the horrors which have been endured by the brave hearts who died in this prison to secure the blessing of liberty to this whole section of our country," Bulloch said, "I feel that it is proper for me to say that I believe the great responsibility for the wrongs done here rests upon the officers who were placed in command, and not upon the whole people of this State or of the South."[298]

Following Bullock, the chaplain-in-chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, George W. Collier, spoke in reference to the broad reach of "one of the most important National Cemeteries on the continent." He used Dorence Atwater's *A List of the Union Soldiers Buried at Andersonville* to underscore the geographic breadth of the national cemetery. "From this book containing the names of the dead," Collier said, "we learn that almost every language, county, city, village and town, has its representatives. The farmer from his prairie home in the West, or from his woodland clearing in the North, from the shop, the store, from the schools and the mines; all classes and climes mingle together here."[299] Like the great leveler death, the Andersonville cemetery connected people from many different places and conditions.

Collier spoke first and foremost to the White veterans in the audience. In referring to the Andersonville dead as "men of our race," Collier ignored the existence of Black veterans buried at Andersonville. Despite that erasure, he had a message for Black men in the audience:

> I thank you in the name of these brave hearts that when some were trying to escape from these dreadful prison walls, you gave them bread and succor. [Applause.] Their way was dark, their chance almost hopeless, yet you were their friends, and piloted them through. I want to say to you that while all is not as bright with you as we could wish, though the day seems dark and the light afar off, yet God will undertake to pilot you through the wilderness. We are bound for Canaan. [Applause.] And we are not bound alone. The Lord is with us, and the promised land is right before us. Do your duty. Be diligent. Not only learn to read and write, but learn to read your Bible and the history of the country, and stand up and be men. You are enfranchised. The shackles are off, and we stand here to-day in this grand and glorious presence, freemen, one and all.
>
> Governor, I am proud of your constituency. It is a glorious one.

298. H. C. Corsan, "Andersonville. Memorial Ceremonies on the 30th," *Weekly New Era,* June 8, 1870.

299. Corsan, "Andersonville," *Weekly New Era*, June 8, 1870.

> Colored men, I ask you to be true to your noble record of the past. I thank you for your loyalty and devotion during the struggle. God bless you and the loyal men of Georgia.[300]

While these words were secondary, they were not insignificant. Collier's charge to the audience recognized the ongoing struggles. It was an obvious point but also a necessary one. It affirmed the experience of Black men, women, and children in the audience who worked at Andersonville, learned at the Sumter School, had marched with the Grant Club, been evicted from their homes, or were in the process of purchasing their own land.

Beginning in 1870, Decoration Days became pilgrimages to Andersonville National Cemetery both for Union veterans and thousands of African Americans in the Deep South. Black newspapers echoed the language of Collier. Describing the importance of Decoration Day, a writer for the *Western Recorder* noted that northern celebrations had forgotten Black veterans and, in the South, only Black men and women commemorated the day. The paper asked, rhetorically, "Who is there to visit and scatter flowers upon the graves of that vast city of the Union dead at Andersonville but the Black man?"[301] While White veterans often visited Andersonville, most southerners who participated in Decoration Day were African American. This was a point the Americus newspaper was quick to point out. In 1882, the "Americus Guards," a Black militia of 20 men, provided an escort for men, women, and children to travel on an all-Black train the 10 miles to Andersonville National Cemetery. The *Weekly Sumter Republican* noted, "The decoration party was cheered on their way by the waving of handkerchiefs and other manifestations of good cheer by about 100 colored men and women who had assembled at the depot."[302] While Andersonville remained a place to live for some and a place to work for a select few, it became a place to visit for many in the coming decades.

When Americus newspapers covered Decoration Days, the events were described as a peculiarity at best and a revolting spectacle at worst. In 1887, the *Americus Weekly Recorder* derisively noted that "Unbleached Americus" had gone to Andersonville "ostensibly for the purpose of decorating the graves of Union Soldiers in the National Cemetery, but in reality on a big frolic." In Americus, 2,000 people arrived at the railroad depot to take the train to Andersonville. The writer understood that the day was as much about celebrating freedom as commemorating the prisoners and the writer understood the day in terms of segregation: Decoration Day was a Black day. "The day and the occasion were undeniably his own," the newspaper admitted, "and his rights thereto none dared to dispute, and while he was compelled to sweat like a porpoise and swear like a sailor, these detracted naught from the pleasures of the occasion, and the day was to him a veritable Fourth of July."[303] Two years later, the *Americus Times-Recorder* paper described "Andersonville Day" as one that White housewives in Americus feared and loathed because it meant the Black domestic servants would not be preparing supper for the White family.[304]

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300. Corsan, "Andersonville," *Weekly New Era*, June 8, 1870.

301. "Decoration Day," *Western Recorder*, June 7, 1873.

302. "National Decoration Day in our Southland," *Weekly Sumter republican*, June 2, 1882; "Decoration Day," *Americus Recorder*, June 2, 1885.

303. "The Colored Excursion," *Americus Weekly Recorder*, June 2, 1887.

304. "A Wifely Wail. The Housewife's Yearly Trial. How the Americus Housewife Dreads Andersonville Day," *Americus Times-Recorder*, June 1, 1890.

The Americus papers predicted that Decoration Day would be contained and, perhaps, eliminated. In fact, it grew in the 1880s and 1890s. In 1891, the year after the Grand Army of the Republic purchased the prison site from freedman George Washington Kennedy, the Americus newspaper reported the attendance of between 10,000 and 20,000 people "nine-tenths of whom were negroes." Five thousand passed through Americus in 1893. At the end of the decade, the *Americus Times-Recorder* predicted smaller crowds. Indeed, only 3,000 people rode the trains to Andersonville in 1899, but the next year approximately 10,000 came to mark the day. As it had in the past, southern White writers were quick to describe violence, pointing out in 1899 that one man was killed in a gambling dispute.[305]

A PROBLEM OR A PARK

From the perspective of the local White reporters, the pilgrimage known as Decoration Day, Memorial Day, or "Andersonville Day" was simply a problem. White reporters recognized the day's importance as a freedom celebration, but they could only see Black freedom as an unwieldy, dangerous force in need of White control. The superficial reports of drunkenness and criminality, even read against the grain, do not reveal what Andersonville Day meant to the men and women who participated in the events. What is clear is that the meaning of Andersonville as a place had changed. It was a place of death and captivity during the Civil War that became a site of life and freedom during and after Reconstruction. As Andersonville National Cemetery stopped being a place for large numbers of Black men to work, it became a place for pilgrimage and commemoration. From the first local Decoration Day in 1869 through the end of the century, it was already becoming a place to commemorate the war and celebrate Black freedom. In that way, it was already becoming a national park.

305. "Decoration Day. Yesterday The Day of Days with the Negroes. They Flocked to Andersonville Until the Woods Were Black—The Exercises at the Cemetery—Major Hanson the Orator of the Occasion," *Americus Times-Recorder*, May 31, 1891; "The Excursion to Andersonville," *Americus Times-Recorder*, May 31, 1893; "Quiet Day At Anderson[,] Only One Negro Killed, Crowd the Smallest in Years, Hardly 3,000 Sable Excursionists Made Trip—One Negro Killed in Crap Game—Good Order is Preserved for Little Town," *Americus Times-Recorder*, May 31, 1899; "Thousands Gather at Andersonville, No Diminution in Crowds There Yesterday. Estimated at Ten Thousand," *Americus Times-Recorder*, May 31, 1900.

Chapter Four

"Through the Crucible of Suffering": African Americans and the Andersonville National Cemetery in the Jim Crow South, 1900-1950

CHAPTER FOUR: "THROUGH THE CRUCIBLE OF SUFFERING": AFRICAN AMERICANS AND ANDERSONVILLE NATIONAL CEMETERY IN THE JIM CROW SOUTH, 1900–1950

In May 1900, the *Americus Times-Recorder* reported the return of African Americans to celebrate Decoration Day in Andersonville. The paper, with unveiled tones of irony and derision, noted the enduring commitment by African Americans to return to "this glorious Mecca" to renew their bonds to a site that held special historical significance.[306] The planned day of events mixed the solemnity of observation of the great sacrifice made by Union soldiers and revelry to celebrate the fruits of emancipation—thus, "appropriate exercises at the national cemetery" and a baseball game between rival Macon and Americus teams, picnicking, and music were included in the program. Though the newspaper intended to scare local Whites, with its promise that the crowd would bring violence, its coverage also attests to a sustained pilgrimage. The turn of the 20th century saw African Americans bringing life and meaning to the "city of the dead" at Andersonville National Cemetery.[307] Though newspapers wailed against the presence of thousands of Blacks from as far as Eufala and Dothan, Alabama, commemorations of the site on Decoration Day in late May carried on, albeit reduced from their heyday of the late-19th century.

The hostility of the editor's tone—warnings that the day would include "the Razor Brigade or the Revolver Revelers," for example—forecast the increasing racial tension and threat of racial violence that engulfed south Georgia and the rest of the region by the early 20th century.[308] By the first decade of the century, Jim Crow was a concrete reality that limited or nullified Black access to political power, education, jobs, and public amenities. Given the atmosphere of hostility against Black pilgrims to Andersonville by local and state troops, as well as the outrage of the region's Whites, it is telling about the meaning Blacks gave to the site that celebrations continued, though more contained, beyond World War I.

But the interaction of African Americans with the National Cemetery and former prison site is not solely defined by commemoration and historical memory in the course of the early 20th century.[309] This chapter chronicles the continued use of the site by African Americans; those who worked for the site, which was evolving in forms as a public space; and those families who sought access to its grounds for a final resting place for men who served in both World Wars. The chapter also provides the important context for the lives of African Americans who lived in Sumter and Macon Counties.

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306. "Negroes go on Excursion," *Americus Times Recorder*, May 20, 1900.

307. Ibid.

308. Ibid.

309. For a sustained look at the changing ways in which African Americans and Whites accessed and memorialized the Andersonville National Cemetery and former prison site, see Adam H. Domby, "Captives of Memory: The Contested Legacy of Race at Andersonville National Historic Site," *Civil War Memory* 63, no. 3 (September 2017), pp. 253–294; and Benjamin G. Cloyd, *Haunted by Atrocity: Civil War Prisons in American Memory* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press 2010).

Figure 4.1. Men stand by Providence Spring at the Decoration Day celebration in 1897. The image clearly illuminates that pilgrimages to the site were multiracial in the late 19th century. The original caption notes that many of these men had been imprisoned at the site earlier and were members of the Grand Army of the Republic. Courtesy, Georgia Archives, Vanishing Georgia Collection, sum119.

THE CONTINUATION OF MEMORIAL DAY CELEBRATIONS

Historians count the period between 1900 and World War II as generally being one of the worst for race relations in the U.S. South. Southern Georgia was right in the heart of a region seething with oppression and racial violence. The State of Georgia began restricting voting rights for Blacks and poor Whites (and therefore violating the Fifteenth Amendment) in 1877, the year Reconstruction officially ended. In the early 20th century the state further reduced access to political power when it introduced the White primary in 1900.[310] In 1907, after the Atlanta Race Riot the previous year, the state legislature voted to add a constitutional amendment that included a poll tax, a so-called "grandfather clause" (meant to allow suffrage to poor Whites), a "good character" clause (which was defined and determined by the county registrar), and a literacy test.[311] Disenfranchisement in Georgia was complete. As historian John Dittmer notes, while thousands of urban African Americans continued to register to vote (though very few participated politically), after disenfranchisement "Blacks disappeared from voting rolls" in rural Georgia. Sumter County, he notes, enrolled four African American voters in 1909, all of whom resided in Americus and had passed the "good character" test. Two years later, not one Black man was registered to vote in Sumter; African Americans would remain functionally disfranchised until the *King v. Chapman* case struck down the White primary in Georgia (and even then Whites suppressed Black votes).[312]

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310. Ed Hatfield, "Segregation," *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, last updated August 17, 2017, https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/segregation.

311. John Dittmer, *Black Georgia in the Progressive Era, 1900–1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977), p. 101.

312. Ibid., 103.; For more on the *King v. Chapman* case see Craig Lloyd, "Primus E. King," *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, last updated July 17, 2017, https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/primus-e-king-1900–1986.

Through this period Whites used intimidation, fear, and violence as tools to keep the racial order intact. Between 1890 and 1930, the state of Georgia saw 458 lynchings, a number second only to Mississippi.[313] W. Fitzhugh Brundage, in his comparative study of lynching in Georgia and Virginia, marked the cotton belt of Georgia, in which he places Sumter and Macon Counties, as the worst region for racial violence in the state; Whites killed 196 African Americans and 6 Whites in the region between 1880 and 1930.[314] Brundage explains that, "Staple-crop agriculture, sharp caste lines separating white planters and black farm laborers, and a white population vigilant to suppress any threats to their rule created an atmosphere charged with latent conflict."[315] In Sumter County, Whites murdered five men: the Mary Turner Project, which documents lynchings in the state, lists Hamp Hollis (1898), Babe Yarborough (1912), William Redding (1913), Charles West (1919), and Bob Whitehead and Will "Booney" Ivory (1920), all as victims of illicit and extralegal killing.[316]

Andersonville National Cemetery existed in the context of brutal and oppressive attempts by Whites to retain White supremacy in the South. The cemetery provided a counter-narrative, however, to White efforts to portray Blacks as criminals, lazy, inferior, and in need of an imposed racial order. This is perhaps why the memorial work at the site of the cemetery, and the meaning that African Americans gave to it, did not wane in the early 20th century. Henry Hugh Proctor, a graduate of Fisk and Yale and the leader of Atlanta's First Congregationalist Church, visited on Memorial Day in 1904. He wrote about the visit in several publications; one of those was reprinted in John L. Maile's memoir of imprisonment at Camp Sumter. Proctor's account offers some insight into the meaning Black visitors ascribed to the site from the perspective of one of the state's elite African American voices. He described the robust attendance of the day's program and the decoration of graves with flags in exuberant terms as "a transformation! Instead of the monotonous rows of bare white stone a field of flags, by the magic of loving remembrance, appears!"[317] But perhaps more impressive still, he argued, was the prison site, "just a few rods away." The site, with its then-growing collection of monuments, stirred in him deep feelings of patriotism: "I could but say in my heart I would rather be a plain American citizen, though Black, than a knighted Roman under Caesar." He considered the men who died there to be martyrs, and their sacrifice to be the nation's "crucible of suffering" through which it entered into "peace."[318]

African Americans like Proctor continued to affirm the site's symbolic value even while Whites vied to control and shape the work of commemoration at the prison site and cemetery. Historian Adam Domby notes that Blacks "lost control of the annual commemorations" to local White GAR members in the early 20th century (GAR chapters were segregated in Georgia).[319] Chapter three of this study noted that the GAR acquired the prison property in 1890 from George Washington "Wash" Kennedy, an African American farmer. Although Black attendance

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313. E. M. Beck, "Lynching," *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, last updated August 26, 2018, https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/lynching.

314. W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *Lynching in the New South, 1880–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), p. 107. Note that Brundage's account is not fully comprehensive and he may not account for all murders in the region.

315. Ibid., 108.

316. "Known Georgia Lynching Victims," *The Mary Turner Project*, accessed April 1, 2019, http://www.maryturner.org/database.htm.

317. Henry Hugh Proctor, "A Memorial Day Meditation," in John L. Maile, *Prison Life in Andersonville* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1912), 137.

318. Ibid., 139.

319. Domby, "Captives of Memory," 274.

at "Andersonville Day" lagged in the mid-1890s, it surged in 1900, making clear that the White veterans' organization did not yet have a tight grip on attendance and access. And yet, the GAR presence and regulation of the site suppressed African American visitation in the first decade of the 1900s.

The change was in no small part due to the alarmist reporting of local newspapers that continued to provoke White fear of supposed Black criminality. Conjuring images of "orgies," "riots," and murderous behavior, White newspaper editors at the *Americus Times-Recorder* reported with satisfaction the presence of White militias who went to Andersonville to quell the threat of unrest among African American crowds. It was with jubilation, then, when editors reported in 1903 that "'Andersonville Day,' ever one of terror, crime, and bloodshed, is no more."[320] The newspaper celebrated that trains would no longer send special, regional excursion cars to the site, and it reported that both "northern veterans" and "respectable colored people" had a hand in calling off the celebrations.[321] Highlighting the class distinctions among African Americans in the Jim Crow South as a regulating divide, the editors suggested that elite Blacks who went to Andersonville Day were "tired of having to associate with criminals, assassins, and murderers."[322] What is perhaps also plausible is that Blacks feared for their own safety amidst an increasingly militarized White presence.

White suppression of Black commemoration was never complete. Though Decoration Day organizers attempted to exclude Blacks in 1903, the following years saw a return of African Americans to the site, even as their numbers shrank by the end of the decade. In 1906, the newspaper compared the "solemn, impressive" exercises of GAR members from Macon and Fitzgerald, who were brought to Andersonville on trains for Whites only, to the "veritable inferno" of "wild revelry" created by visiting Blacks in the streets and surrounding woods of the village of Andersonville.[323] The editors wondered why African Americans chose Andersonville as a "Mecca, though a more inappropriate location couldn't be imagined."[324] They may have been alluding to the work of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), who had begun a movement to erect a monument to former prison commander Henry Wirz in the small village (a movement that drew the ire of Georgia GAR posts and Union veterans from afar. Or the editors were simply refusing to recognize the emancipationist narrative at the heart of the Black crowd who gathered.[325] Continued hyperbolic reports about Black criminality took a toll. By 1908 excursion trains that had once offered a cheap fare for Black pilgrims, were, according to the paper, no longer operating.[326] The changes followed the hardening of segregation throughout the region and White efforts to curtail Black mobility on public transportation.

The first decade of the century also saw the changing nature of the ceremonies and memorial landscape. Chapter three noted that the GAR's purchase of the prison site brought more oversight to public commemorations. Segregated GAR posts at Macon and Fitzgerald and

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320. "No More the Scene of Riot and Crime," *Americus Times-Recorder*, May 8, 1903.

321. Ending of the trains was also reported by the *Atlanta Constitution*; see W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 360n21.

322. Ibid. "No More the Scene of Riot and Crime." *Americus Times-Register*, May 8, 1903. Ibid.

323. "Crowd is Going to Fill Up the Town," *Americus Times-Recorder*, June 1, 1906.

324. Ibid.

325. "A Discordant Note Sounded," *Americus Times-Recorder*, February 23, 1906.

326. "Americus Boys to the Guard the Monument," *Americus Times-Recorder*, May 20, 1909.

seasonal northern veterans worked to limit Black access by taking command of the organization of the ceremonies, including choosing particular content that focused on the meaning of the site for White veterans. By the early 1890s, former Confederates gave keynote addresses on Andersonville Day that emphasized sectional reconciliation—a peace borne not, as Henry Proctor would have it, from the war itself but by northern and southern Whites forsaking African Americans in their struggle for equality and altering the meaning that Blacks gave to the cemetery and prison site.[327] Black pilgrims, then, were made to feel unwelcome, and they would have had little to embrace in the message proffered by the Grand Army of the Republic and other White veterans.

This exclusionary, White collective memory extended to northern state monument commissions, whose commissioners began to erect marble and granite monoliths to their fallen dead at the cemetery and prison site. All told, 15 states established monuments with great fanfare.[328] Commission members and friends ventured from Rhode Island, Michigan, Indiana, and Massachusetts to consecrate each state's monument with a morning of formal exercises. The transcripts of the speeches from these events provide a glimpse into the state-sanctioned historical narratives attached to the monument and, at heart, reveal the emergence of a whitewashed historical narrative about the site.

Most of the speeches included rhetorical overtures to sectional reconciliation. James H. Kidd, a speaker at the Michigan monument dedication, noted that Memorial Day was a celebration of "common American manhood," and that, "while distributing flowers [on graves], either north or south, no distinction is made between those who wore the blue and those who wore the gray."[329] The governor of Michigan, A. T. Bliss, linking the martial valor of the Civil War with that of the recent Spanish-American War, offered a tale of unity: "Out of the ashes of that gigantic strife has arisen a re-created nation, whose foundations have been cemented in the blood of a new generation shed on the battlefields of Cuba." Bliss concluded that "The mutual sacrifices of a reunited people have added another and greater glory to the *stars of a common flag* [emphasis original]."[330] General E. A. Carman, in his dedication to Iowa's monument, celebrated in 1906 that "the intensity of feeling which existed passed away, and we are again one and undivided."[331] These speeches all but erased the causes of the war and motivations of soldiers for fighting it.[332]

It mattered what commemoration speakers said because African Americans were listening in the audience; there, Black listeners received competing messages about the war and its legacy. In the published program from Maine's 1903 dedication, the commissioner addressed the "white and colored people of Georgia" in the audience. When he added that Americans lived in a "brighter,

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327. Domby, "Captives of Memory," 269. For an in-depth treatment of sectional reconciliation, see David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

328. See Cloyd, "'We are the Living Witnesses': The Limitations of Reconciliation, 1898–1914," in *Haunted by Atrocity*, 83–110; Stacy W. Reaves, *A History of Andersonville Prison Monuments* (Charleston, S.C.: The History Press, 2015).

329. "Report, Michigan Andersonville Monument Commission" (Lansing: Robert Smith Printing, 1905, p. 19, *HathiTrust*, accessed March 20, 2019, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015022399904.

330. Ibid., 16.

331. "Report of the Iowa Andersonville Monument Commission" (Des Moines: Emory H. English, State Printer, E. D. Chassell, State Binder, 1908), Juanita S. Brightwell Special Collections, Lake Blackshear Regional Library, Americus, Georgia, p. 10.

332. Cloyd, Haunted by Atrocity, p. 83.

better and reunited country," southern Blacks would have surely felt otherwise.[333] One speaker on the Maine dedication program faced squarely what many other memorialists made invisible—the role of slavery and race in the Civil War and its aftermath. Edward E. Chase, a lawyer, judge, and Republican politician from the state, noted he was in the presence of "those who wore the blue, those who wore the gray, and for those whose freedom that awful war was fought." Chase went on to outline the causes of the war, including the expansion of slavery into western territories. "The Civil War," he concluded, "threw to the winds every selfish consideration in the universal uprising of a great and prosperous people, ready to make every sacrifice for the country, for home, and the freedom of the colored people."[334] A speaker in the Indiana dedication ceremony in 1908 echoed Chase's sentiments, noting that the Union dead in Andersonville fought for "liberty for an alien, helpless race. They died to give freedom to the slave that the freedom of the free might be secure."[335] Though "helpless" does not apply to ways in which African Americans self-emancipated, the orator clearly framed the war as one of liberation. Sentiments like these would have affirmed that African American meanings given to the site were shared by at least some northern Whites, and doubtless drew disapproval from White southern listeners.

Figure 4.2. Maine Monument, no date. Courtesy of the National Park System, Open Parks Network, Monuments Collection.

333. "Report of the Maine Andersonville Monument Commissioners," 1904, Juanita S. Brightwell Special Collections, Lake Blackshear Regional Library, Americus, Georgia, p. 4.

334. Ibid., 9.

335. "Report of the Unveiling and Dedication of Indian Monument at Andersonville, Georgia (National Cemetery)" (Indianapolis: Wm. B. Hurford, Contractor for State Printing and Binding, 1909), Juanita S. Brightwell Special Collections, Lake Blackshear Regional Library, Americus, Ga., p. 19.

After the flurry of monument building at the park and cemetery, the Women's Relief Corps (WRC) donated the Prison Park to the War Department (later the Department of the Army) in 1910.[336] The Women's Relief Corps and Grand Army of the Republic, however, would continue to organize and oversee Memorial Day celebrations. Black attendance did not cease entirely, though it is hard to know the exact numbers they held at the Memorial Day exercises. In June 1916, just shy of a year before the U.S. entered into World War I, the *Americus Times-Recorder* noted that "thousands of people, mainly Negroes, are expected to visit Andersonville" for Memorial Day. Though the newspaper's language was not as acidic as in earlier years, it reminded White readers of the "notable trouble" from past pilgrim crowds and assured Whites that local police would be present on the day.[337] The newspaper reports, though sporadic in these years, suggest that despite the United Daughter of the Confederacy's attempt to craft a narrative that absolved Commander Henry Wirz of any wrongdoing (in the erection of the Wirz memorial in 1909), historical memory of the prison and cemetery remained contested indeed.[338] Several weeks after the June 1916 Memorial Day event, however, William Redding was lynched in Americus in front of "Bailey's store" and shot, according to one woman, 200 times. Blacks, when they decided to sojourn to Andersonville and Sumter County, put their lives at risk during the years of the lynching epidemic.[339]

Figure 4.3. A group of Whites in front of the Women's Relief Corps cottage and the Andersonville prison site, no date. These men and women are likely members of the WRC and Grand Army of the Republic, the latter of which organized segregated units in the South in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Courtesy of the National Park System, Open Parks Network, Monuments Collection.

The Women's Relief Corps continued to organize Memorial Day celebrations at the cemetery, though in the 1930s they invited the Georgia Federation of Colored Women's Clubs to participate. Beginning in 1933, the group of African American women, who were organized into local chapters across the state, began to journey to the site and, in the early 1930s, provided

336. "History of the Andersonville Prison," *Andersonville National Historic Site*, National Park Service, accessed March 23, 2019, https://www.nps.gov/ande/learn/historyculture/camp_sumter_history.htm.

337. "Every Grave Has a Flag of the U.S.A.," *Americus Times-Recorder*, June 1, 1916.

338. See Domby, "Captives of Memory," p. 271; "Shaft to Wirz," *Americus Times-Recorder*, May 13, 1909.

339. Laura to Charles M. Hale, June 25, 1916, letter in possession of Lee Kinnamon, Americus, Georgia.

music for the WRC program.[340] The Georgia Federation was the state affiliate of the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), founded in 1896, that continued African American women's long tradition of activism in social, civic, and political life.[341] In Georgia, Black clubwomen, most often from the middle- or upper-class, had a history of working for political, economic, and social betterment for African Americans—including focusing on issues like urban poverty, Jim Crow disenfranchisement, and earlier, woman suffrage.[342] At Andersonville they pursued the work of memorialization. In the 1930s and the 1940s, the clubwomen took part in Memorial Day exercises—along with the Women's Relief Corps but also in individual programs. In 1934, the Georgia Federation of Colored Women's Clubs held a picnic after Memorial Day exercises and used the gathering to dedicate time to statewide business. In 1939, "a large number of women were in attendance" at Memorial Day celebration.[343] A year later, the women were asked to "bring a green wreath to be placed on the grave[s]" of men who "fell...fighting for the freedom of Black folks in this country."[344] Several years later, in 1943, the program included a speaker, Dr. Horace Mann Bond—a historian of African American descent and then president of Fort Valley State University (and father of later civil rights activist Julian Bond).[345] Though the content of Bond's speech has not been uncovered, his addresses from the time period include eloquent oration about Black history and, especially in the middle of the second World War, the ways that African Americans had served the country in prior wars.[346] No doubt that he spoke with authority on the meaning of Black history as related to Andersonville National Cemetery and Prison Park.

AFRICAN AMERICAN WORKERS AT THE NATIONAL CEMETERY

Black visitation to the site continued into the 1950s, as chapter six will make clear. But African Americans came to the site not only as pilgrims; they also worked for and built a community around the cemetery and prison. Carrying on a tradition since the creation of the cemetery, African American workers continued to dig graves by hand and maintain the landscape of the park, thus contributing to its use as a site of memory. Many of those workers lived in or near the small village of Andersonville, and some were part of a group of some dozen Black landowners whose holdings surrounded the site and made up a vibrant community.

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340. "Pilgrimage to Andersonville this Week," *Atlanta Daily World*, May 27, 1934. The articles notes that 1934 was the second year in a row for the African American women to join forces with the WRC.

341. See Stephanie J. Shaw, "Black Club Women and the Creation of the National Association of Colored Women," *Journal of Women's History* 3, no. 2 (Fall, 1991): 11–25.

342. For a contemporaneous survey of the work of black clubwomen in Atlanta, for example, see Louie Davis Shivery, "The Neighborhood Union: A Survey of the Beginnings of Social Welfare Movements Among Negroes in Atlanta," *Phylon (1940–1956)* 3, no. 2 (2nd Qtr., 1942): 149–162.

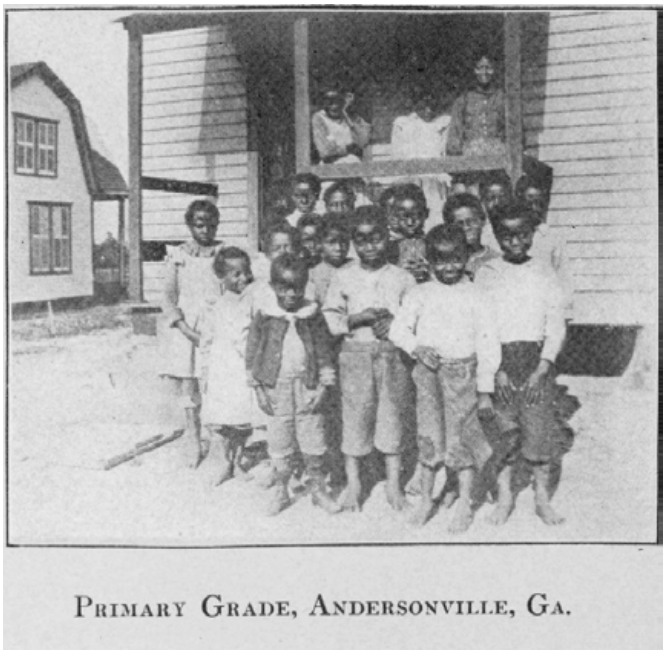
343. Rebecca Stiles Taylor, "Activities of Women's National Organizations," *The Chicago Defender* (national edition), July 15, 1939.

344. Rebecca Stiles Taylor, "Activities of Women's National Organizations," *The Chicago Defender* (national edition), May 18, 1940.

345. Rebecca Stiles Taylor, "Activities of Women's National Organization," *The Chicago Defender* (national edition), January 16, 1943; 1943 Engagement Book, Sun. May 30, 1943, Series 3: Subject Files, Horace Mann Bond Papers, 1839-1979, University of Massachusetts Amherst Special Collection and University Archives, accessed September 14, 2018, http://credo.library.umass.edu/view/collection/mums411.

346. See: Addresses, February 15, 1935 to February 17, 1945, Series 6: Writings, Horace Mann Bond Papers, 1839–1979, University of Massachusetts Amherst Special Collection and University Archives, accessed September 14, 2018, http://credo.library.umass.edu/view/collection/mums411.

Figure 4.4. The Prison Park and National Cemetery were surrounded by a vibrant, if small African American community. Pictured here are young children in the local Black school. The image was originally published in H. Paul Douglass's *Christian Reconstruction in the South* (1909). Courtesy New York Public Library.



Work at the national cemetery and stockade offered opportunities for few, but these held promise for an otherwise rural region. Sumter and Macon Counties remained largely agricultural until the 1940s when smaller industries moved in (and people moved out in search of better opportunities). A quick overview of farm statistics of the two counties illuminates this reality, and bears witness to the difficulties Black southerners faced in climbing the agricultural ladder. In 1900, for instance, out of a total of 2,332 farms, only 79 were owned by African Americans, representing 5.4% of the Black farming population. By contrast, 53.0% of White farmers owned their farms. Most Black farmers were landless: 43.0% were cash tenants (those who paid cash to rent farmland from another landowner) and 48.5% were share tenants (those who paid rent using a share of crops grown, usually a half to a third).[347] Macon County tells a similar story. Out of 1,332 farms, African Americans owned 45. Forty percent of Black farmers were cash tenants; 49.0% worked on shares.[348] Those in both counties who rented for cash were normally better off economically and could sometimes save enough to buy land, but the vagaries of weather and environment might yield a bad crop season and push farmers into debt.

Twenty years later the same imbalance of Black- and White-owned farms persisted in the two counties. The 1920 census shows that 84 of 3,040 farms in Sumter were Black-owned, making Black landowning farmers only 2.8% of the farming population. Sixty-eight percent of Black farmers operated in some form of tenancy (the 1920 census does not break down tenancy type

347. 1910 U.S. Census, Sumter and Macon Counties, Georgia, agricultural schedule, Social Explorer, https://www.socialexplorer.com/data/Census1910/documentation/, accessed February 2, 2019.

348. Ibid.; see Charles L. Flynn Jr., *White Land, Black Labor: Caste and Class in Late Nineteenth-Century Georgia* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), pp. 70–71.

by race); only 13.0% of White farmers did so.[349] In Macon County, the number of Black farm owners was statistically better—6.4%, or 123 out of 1,912 farms—but still, numbers were extremely low. Fifty-six percent of African Americans farmers operated in tenancy in Macon County, compared to 15.0% of White farmers.[350] Few were able to climb the ranks to landholding wealth. Sociologist Arthur Raper, in his 1930s study of tenancy in Green and Macon Counties, summed up the obstacles for Black farmers in Macon and, more broadly, the Jim Crow South:

> . . . it is very difficult for dependent agricultural workers to accumulate any cash; moreover, many local white people still feel that the Negro should remain a tenant, and that he is getting out of "his place" when he attempts to become independent through the ownership of land. This attitude explains why the Negro seldom buys land on the open market, why he must have the personal assistance of some landed White man to become an owner, why he usually purchases the less desirable land.[351]

Land was wealth in the South's agrarian society, and in Raper's estimation, Whites effectively barred African Americans from attaining economic solvency.

Figure 4.5. A young farmer, denoted in the original caption as a sharecropper, captured in Sumter County by photojournalist Dorothea Lange in 1937. Courtesy Library of Congress.

The African American men who came to work for Andersonville National Cemetery in the early 20th century were heirs of this unequal system. Eugene Childs worked at the cemetery in 1910, possibly starting earlier. The census of that year lists Childs as a 28-year-old single man working

349. 1920 U.S. Census, Sumter and Macon Counties, Georgia, agricultural schedule, *Social Explorer*, https://www.socialexplorer.com /tables /Census1920/R12087193, accessed February 2, 2019.

350. Ibid.

351. Arthur Raper, *Preface to Peasantry: A Tale of Two Black Belt Counties*, New Introduction (Columbia: South Carolina Press, 2005), 22.

as a laborer for the cemetery.[352] Ten years prior, Childs resided near Andersonville with his parents Cary [Carry] and Fanny Childs, three brothers and sisters, his grandmother, and two nieces, Eula and Pearl. His father was a farmer who rented, and Eugene a "farm laborer," likely working on the family tenant farm.[353] The evidence hints that Eugene Childs may have joined rank at the cemetery through kinship networks, for in 1910 Childs worked at the cemetery alongside Thomas Porter, his brother-in-law. Porter was 45 in that year and lived on Jones Hill Road in a home he owned outright with his wife Alberta, stepdaughters Pearlie and Eula Childs (the girls had taken their mother's surname), and father-in-law Cary Childs.[354] Though unclear when he began his tenure, Porter was working as a teamster at the cemetery in 1903; the U.S. Register of Civil, Military and Naval Service lists him as part of the Quartermaster's Department at Large at Andersonville and making $25 a month.[355] Perhaps the more established Porter secured a position for the younger Childs. George H. Kennedy worked alongside Porter as a laborer at the same pay rate.[356]

It is unknown when Porter and Childs left their positions at the national cemetery, but they did not continue into the mid-1920s. The Department of the Army continued to hire African Americans in that decade, and we know a great deal more about these men and working conditions at the cemetery. To start, the men were veterans of the recent Great War. Though no extant records state that military service was a requirement of hiring, it makes sense that the U.S. Army would give preferential treatment to those who served.

One of these men, Cleve Asberry, began work at the cemetery in August 1923 and continued into the 1930s; a 1924 inspection report notes that he (unnamed) and another "colored worker" made $40 a month with a $20 bonus.[357] Asberry, an Andersonville native, had served during World War I, first in the 157th Depot Brigade and then in Company B, 314 Service Battalion, Quartermaster Corps, until he was honorably discharged in 1919. African Americans who were drafted into World War I largely did not serve in battle and most remained stationed in the United States for the duration of the war. Asberry did serve overseas—not with the 157th, which began its tenure at the segregated Camp Gordon near Atlanta, and remained stateside, but with the Service Battalion. Asberry served overseas from July 26, 1918, to July 27, 1919.[358] He married Laura Brown sometime in the 1920s and by 1930, was living on the Dixie Highway with her and

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352. Census, 1910, Sumter County, Ga., Militia District 993, population schedule, p. 2B, dwelling number not listed, family 50, Eugene Childs; citing NARA microfilm publication T624, roll 213, digital image, *Ancestry.com,* accessed March 12, 2019.

353. Census, 1900, Sumter County, Ga., Militia District 993, population schedule, p. 3, dwelling number not listed, family 44, Carry [*sic*] Childs; citing NARA microfilm publication T624, FHL Microfilm 1240222 [in lieu of roll number], digital image, *Ancestry.com,* accessed March 12, 2019.

354. Census, 1910, Sumter County, Ga., Militia District 993, population schedule, p. 3A, dwelling number not listed, family 3, Thomas Porter; citing NARA microfilm publication T624, roll 213, digital image, *Ancestry.com,* accessed March 12, 2019.

355. Official Register of the United States, Containing a List of the Officers and Employees in the Civil, Military, and Naval Service, p. 380, digital image; Ancestry.com, accessed March 10, 2019.

356. Ibid.

357. For Asberry's start date see Harlan L. Mumma to The Commanding General, Fourth Corps Area, n.d., Folder 333.1, "Andersonville Nat. Cemetery," Box 53, Entry 1891 (NM 81): General Correspondence Relating to Places, 1922–1935, RG 92, National Archives and Records Administration [hereafter NARA II], College Park, Md.; for note on pay rate see J. L. Parkinson to The Inspector General, Washington, D.C., May 4, 1924, Folder 333.1, "Andersonville Nat. Cemetery," Box 53, Entry 1891 (NM 81): General Correspondence Relating to Places, 1922–1935, RG 92, NARA II.

358. Georgia Adjutant General's Office, World War I Statements of Service Cards, Georgia State Archives, Morrow, Georgia; Georgia, World War I Service Cards, 1917–1919; digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed March 2, 2019.

two stepsons, John W. and James B. Brown.[359] In 1933, at the height of the Great Depression, Asberry's salary had jumped to $780 per year, the same amount as his White co-worker, Dewey Gwynes, who had begun work at the cemetery two years after Asberry, in 1925.[360] As with Porter and Childs, the end of Asberry's tenure is not known, nor why he stopped work at the cemetery. He is not listed with other personnel in an inspection of 1936.[361]

Asberry was a contemporary of Calvin Pride Sr. (1892–1960), who began his long career working for the national cemetery in 1925. Pride's son, Calvin Pride Jr., would also work at Andersonville National Cemetery and stockade even after the site became a national park—chapter six tells his story. The elder Pride was a World War I veteran; he spent his entire service, from February 1918 to December 1918, in the 157th Depot Brigade at the segregated Camp Gordon.[362] Serving in the same unit for a time and native to Andersonville, Pride very likely knew Cleve Asberry before they joined the same workforce in the 1920s. Pride's father and mother, Frank and Rhoda Pride, were tenant farmers at the turn of the 20th century; in 1900, Calvin, then 8, was attending school.[363] In 1910, then 19-year-old Pride was living at home as a laborer on his parents' farm.[364] By the time of his entry into the army, Pride, at 27, had married his second wife Tommie (his first wife was Myna). When he returned home, Pride was a laborer who "worked out" in Andersonville, likely meaning that he was nonfarm hired help.[365] He undoubtedly got a more secure economic foothold when he began working at the national cemetery. By 1940, 15 years into his tenure, Pride Senior was making an annual salary of $840, $80 more than his White coworkers, Dewey Gwynes (who had seniority by two years), Jordan Brown, and Euylas Williams (the latter two worked at the prison park).[366] By 1944, Pride senior made $1,020 a year.[367] He then owned a home on Church Street in Andersonville, what his granddaughter, Velma Pride, recalled lovingly as "the home house" for the Pride family.[368]

Records from the 1930s and 1940s tell more about the duties of cemetery and prison park workers in those decades. In 1942, the elder Pride's duties at the cemetery were described as "cutting grass, raking leaves, cleaning headstones, digging graves and any other work required of a laborer." His White coworker Dewey Gwynes, who by this time made a salary equal to Pride's ($840 per year), completed the same tasks except also "operating motor truck, tractor and hand

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359. Census, 1930, Sumter County, Ga., Andersonville, population schedule, p. 1B, dwelling number 22, family 24, Cleve Asbery [sic.]; citing NARA microfilm publication T626, FHL 2340120 [in lieu of roll number]; digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed March 10, 2019.

360. Not listed to Commanding General, Fourth Corps Area, Atlanta Georgia, June 30, 1936, Folder 333.1, "Andersonville, Ga.," Box 13, Entry 1892A((NM-81): General Correspondence "Geographic File," 1936–1945, RG 92, NARA II.

361. Ibid.

362. U.S. World War I Draft Registration Cards, Sumter County, Ga.; digital image, *Ancestry.com*, accessed February 27, 2019.

363. Census, 1910, Sumter County, Ga., Militia District 993, population schedule, p. 4, dwelling number 78, family 78, Frank Pride; citing NARA microfilm publication T623, FHL microfilm 1240222 [in lieu of roll number]; digital image, *Ancestry.com*, accessed March 9, 2019.

364. Census, 1910, Sumter County, Ga., Militia District 993, population schedule, p. 2A, dwelling number 30, family 30, Frank Pride; citing NARA microfilm publication T624, roll 213, digital image, *Ancestry.com,* accessed March 11, 2019.

365. Census, 1920, Sumter County, Ga., Andersonville, population schedule, p. 2B, dwelling number 40, family 40, Calvin Pride; citing NARA microfilm publication T625, roll 278, digital image, *Ancestry.com,* accessed March 11, 2019.

366. Census, 1940, Sumter County, Ga., Andersonville, population schedule, p. 2B, family 36, Calvin Pride; citing NARA microfilm publication m-t0627, roll 00710, digital image, *Ancestry.com,* accessed March 11, 2019.

367. Estimate of Funds, Andersonville, Ga., National Cemetery, Fiscal Year 1944, Folder 687, "Andersonville Nat. Cem. Ga.," Box 14, Entry 1892A (NM81): General Correspondence, "Geographic File," 1936–1945, RG 92, NARA II.

368. Velma Pride, interview with Ann McCleary and Keri Adams, March 19, 2019, Andersonville National Historic Site, Andersonville, Georgia.

mower."[369] The more skilled labor tools seem to have been denied to Pride; similarly, the only other African American man on the roster, Joel D. Hill, who worked at the prison park, used the "hand mower" but not the "motor mower," to which the White workers at the prison park had access. While this disparity may not solely have to do with race, it bears mentioning as a pattern that everywhere defined the southern economy during this time—White employers reserved unskilled labor for Black men and women. In this case, however, salaries were equal between the men (by 1944 all prison park and cemetery laborers made $1,020 per year).[370] For Pride, the work was hard. Velma Pride, who was born in 1942, remembered from her youth that her grandfather "used to dig the graves. They used to dig them with shovels. They didn't have the equipment that my daddy and them had" [her father was Calvin Pride Jr., who later worked for the cemetery].[371]

By the 1940s, the economic and social landscape of Sumter and Macon Counties was shifting, if only in fits and starts. Bauxite mining (used to make aluminum) had come to Andersonville in 1914, two years after a landowner near the small village discovered a vein on a property near the Flint River. The Republic Mining and Manufacturing Co. operated for 16 years until the American Cyanamid & Chemical Corporation bought the small operation. The latter remained in operation through the 1940s and employed Black men throughout that time.[372] By the 1930 and 1940 censuses, Black men and women were also employed in other small industries—canning, basket factories, a kaolin mine, a peanut mill, and a nearby shirt factory, for example. These new opportunities were not farming but neither were they lucrative. Pride's contemporaries in Andersonville made very little from the new industries or from domestic service, the latter of which employed a disproportionate amount of African American women. Tom Hodge, for example, Calvin Pride's neighbor on Church Street in 1940, made $50 a year at age 73 working as the caretaker for the canning factory. Pride's neighbor Jennie Clark, 29 and a washerwoman, made $74 a year. Both Hodge and Clark reported working 52 weeks a year.[373] William Justice, a 27-year-old school bus driver who lived on Oglethorpe Road, made $225 a year, and Nettie Allen, a 49-year-old cook, made $104 (also for 52 weeks a year).[374] African Americans in Andersonville came nowhere close to making the salaries that Pride and Joel Hill, employed by the federal government, made by 1944. These men (and their White coworkers) found good salaries and what seems to have been stable employment at the national cemetery and prison park.

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369. Estimate for Funds, Andersonville National Cemetery and Prison Park, Fiscal Year 1942, Folder 687, "Andersonville, Ga.," Box 14, Entry 1892A (NM81): General Correspondence, "Geographic File," 1936–1945, RG 92, NARA II.

370. Estimate of Funds, Andersonville, Ga., National Cemetery, Fiscal Year 1944, Folder 687, "Andersonville, Ga.," Box 14, Entry 1892A (NM81): General Correspondence, "Geographic File," 1936–1945, RG 92, NARA II.

371. Pride, interview, 2019.

372. William A. Beck, "Investigation of the Andersonville Bauxite Mine, Sumter, Macon, and Schley Counties, Ga." (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of Mines, 1949), 2, *HathiTrust*, accessed March 1, 2019, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015078486217. For records of Black laborers in the mine see the 1920, 1930, and 1940 U.S. population census.

373. Census, 1940, Sumter County, Ga., Andersonville, population schedule, p. 2B, family 38, 39, Tom Hodge, Jennie Clark; citing NARA microfilm publication m-t0627, roll 00710, digital image, *Ancestry.com,* accessed March 11, 2019.

374. Census, 1940, Sumter County, Ga., Andersonville, population schedule, p. 2B, 3A, family 43, 51, William Justice, Nettie Allen; citing NARA microfilm publication m-t0627, roll 00710, digital image, *Ancestry.com,* accessed March 11, 2019.

Figure 4.6. African American women working on an assembly line in the Easterlin Packing Company in Andersonville, circa 1946. Courtesy, Georgia Archives, Vanishing Georgia Collection, sum119.

The district surrounding Andersonville, and indeed most of the South, remained rural and agricultural until after World War II. It is important to note that not all African American farmers near Andersonville struggled; some prospered in the region for generations. One such family is the Wiggins family, the head of which was Randall and his wife Hannah, both born around 1857, before the end of slavery. The Wiggins built a large landholding on Ellaville Road [Ellaville Street]; tax records and census data illustrate that beginning in the late-19th century and through the 1940s, when the elder patriarch died in his 80s, the Wiggins farm grew to 303 acres and was valued, in 1935, at $2,745.[375] In 1900, Randall and Hannah, in their early 40s, lived with their large family on the farm: Minnie (23); Lucious (21); Earnest (16); Dallas (14); Agnes (12); Ealiah (8); Ulysses G. (4); and an unnamed daughter who had just been born.[376] A few decades later, Juanita, the daughter of Ernest Wiggins and his wife Bessie, would marry James Pride, the son of Calvin Pride and his first wife, Myna (Pride's second wife and mother of Calvin Pride Jr., was Tommie).[377] These genealogies establish what was common throughout the South

375. Sumter County Tax Digest, 1935, Georgia Archives, Morrow, Georgia.

376. Census, 1940, Sumter County, Ga., Militia District 993, population schedule, p. 4, dwelling number 74, family 74, 39, Randal [*sic*] Wiggins; citing NARA microfilm publication T623, FHL microfilm 1240222 [in lieu of roll number], digital image, *Ancestry.com,* accessed March 11, 2019.

377. Keri Adams, photograph of gravestones of Juanita and James Pride, Freeman Hill Cemetery, by Keri Adams. In author's possession; James Pride lived with his mother Myna Cauley and stepfather John in 1930. See Census, 1930, Sumter County, Ga., Militia District 993, population schedule, p. 2A, dwelling number 42, family number 43, John Cauley; citing NARA microfilm publication T626, FHL microfilm 2340120 [in lieu of roll number], digital image, *Ancestry.com*, accessed March 10, 2019.

and elsewhere—that well-to-do families intermarried. But they also make the clear tight-knit and established Black community that surrounded Andersonville National Cemetery.

Other Black families passed down intergenerational wealth through landownership, and some of this land directly surrounded the national cemetery and stockade. In fact, there were a number of Black landowners with contiguous lands to what would become Andersonville National Historic Site (NPS purchases of land from these families in the 1970s is one focus of chapter six). Some of these landowners, like the Kennedy family, stretched back to the 1870s. George Washington Kennedy's landholdings discussed in chapter three and elsewhere.[378] The elder Kennedy died in 1900; the *Americus Times-Recorder*, whose editors showed little humanity in covering the lives of African Americans, noted his death in its pages. Editors called Kennedy "one of the best-known colored citizens of Sumter," noting that he built "a snug competence" as a farmer because of his "industry and honest dealings."[379] His children inherited land from that estate (and still have some holdings as of this writing).

Though Kennedy sold the main parcel of land that included the Camp Sumter stockade to the Grand Army of the Republic in the late 19th century, a 1932 map shows that his children, and other African Americans, held portions of land on what is now Georgia State Route 49 directly west of the stockade. In that year, the state had begun to reroute and modernize the Dixie Highway to accommodate tourists who wanted to visit the historic cemetery and prison park. National cemetery staff sent Georgia highway maps to the Quartermaster General's office that were created for the purpose of gaining right-of-way to federal land west of the cemetery.[380] The map shows that Will Kennedy held land just south of Prison Park Road and on the eastern side of the new road; presumably this is William Kennedy, George Kennedy's son born in 1865. In 1900, the year of his father's death, William lived with his wife Katie (Catherine) Kennedy and their seven children, renting a farm in Andersonville militia district 993; where he lived until 1936.[381] G. H. Kennedy held a parcel of land a few plots north of Will Kennedy. This owner may have been the George H. Kennedy who was employed by the cemetery in the early 20th century. If so, it might suggest a pattern of former employees owning land near the site (or nearby landowners having better chances at employment at the site); one of the most northerly parcels noted on the map, and one that abutted Prison Park Road on the east side of 49, belonged to the estate of Eugene Childs.

Other landowners noted on the map were Bertha Burkes, Pearly Ford, and Sam Holton (a minister and married to teacher Bertha Kennedy Holton, daughter of William Kennedy)—all African American men and women. From the 1870s to the mid-20th century, Black land-owning families from Andersonville encompassed the cemetery and prison site. Their livelihood was sometimes directly tied to the site, and it constituted their immediate surrounds. Black men and women shaped the course of the site's development and it shaped their world economically, certainly, and perhaps served as a sustained site of memory.

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378. See Domby, "Captives of Memory," p. 267.

379. "Death of Well Known Negro," *Americus Times-Recorder*, September 21, 1900.

380. "Sketch Showing Proposed State Highway Location Thru U.S. National Cemetery," 1932, Folder 680.43, "Andersonville National Cemetery," Box 53, Entry 1891 (NM 81): General Correspondence Relating to Places, 1922–1935, RG 92, NARA II.

381. Census, 1900, Sumter County, Ga., Militia District 993, population schedule, p. 3, dwelling number 10, family number 60, William J Kennedy; citing NARA microfilm publication T623, FLH microfilm 1240222 [in lieu of roll number], digital image, *Ancestry.com*, accessed March 11, 2019; "William Jesse Kennedy, Sr.," *Find A Grave*, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/150272241, accessed February 15, 2019.

As visits from the Georgia Federation of Colored Women's Clubs make clear, African Americans continued to visit and pay homage to the Union dead through the 1940s. We do not know if local Blacks during this time did the same. It is certain, however, that by the time of World War II, local African Americans were querying Superintendent William Coats about the possibility of burying Black veterans within the walls of the national cemetery. In a 1942 letter, Coats informed the Quartermaster General that

> Several local colored people who have sons in the service, have asked if the remains of colored soldiers can be buried in this cemetery. No requests have ever been made for burial of colored soldiers. No plot has been set aside for the interment of the colored. It is believed in the near future such requests will be made.

He went on to ask, "In the event a request should be made . . . should they be interred in the regular burial section, or should burials be refused for the above reasons?" He added, "there is a plot in the northeast portion of the cemetery that could be made available for this purpose [separating Black burials]." He assured the Quartermaster General that the northeast section would not come into contact with the trench burials and would allow for "sufficient space for a grass walk between the old trench grave and the proposed section."[382] Coats' superior C. C. Reynolds wrote back reminding him that "all persons who have served in the armed forces of the United States and who were honorably separated from such service are entitled to burial in a national cemetery <u>without regard to their race or religion</u> [emphasis original]." Yet, he went on to designate the northeast section be "reserved for colored interments."[383] In 1946, a study on the capacity for World War II burials in national cemeteries noted that Andersonville National Cemetery offered a burial service for Whites and Blacks, both with a fee of $20.[384] The cemetery, in which lay the co-mingled dead of Black and White Union soldiers, was officially segregated, and would remain so until 1960.

Only six years before the official desegregation of the armed forces and in the midst of a national media campaign to remind Americans that Black soldiers were fighting for victory at home and victory abroad, Andersonville National Cemetery began to segregate its burials. It had seen few burials since the Civil War—only 50 between 1890 and 1939.[385] Now, Coats was faced with questions from local African Americans, perhaps parents of young men going to fight, like Calvin Pride Jr., or workers leaving their job at the prison park to enlist during World War II, like Joel D. Hill. In other national cemeteries, the parents of soldiers were making the same inquiries—and even pushing for the War Department to take a stand. At Arlington National Cemetery, for example, a place that had segregated the burials of its U.S. Colored Troops (USCT) troops, African American mothers of veterans and veterans themselves pushed the Quartermaster General to desegregate burials. Arlington did so in 1948, in accordance with

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382. William Coats to Quartermaster General, May 12, 1942, Folder 293, "Andersonville," Box 13, Entry 1892A (NM-81): General Correspondence "Geographic File," 1936–1945, RG 92, NARA II.

383. C. C. Reynolds to William Coats, May 16, 1942, Folder 293, "Andersonville," Box 13, Entry 1892A (NM-81): General Correspondence "Geographic File," 1936–1945, RG 92, NARA II.

384. Lt. Norman S. Wiggs, QMC, Report of Official Travel, January 14, 1948, Box 14, Entry 1892A (NM81): General Correspondence, "Geographic File," 1936–1945, RG 92, NARA II.

385. Liz Sargent, Deborah Slaton, and Tim Penich, "Andersonville National Historic Site Historic Resources Study," September 2017, National Park Service, Southeast Region, 77.

President Truman's Executive Order 9981 that desegregated the military.[386] As some within the Department of War used a racially liberal burial policy after World War II to bolster U.S. Cold War claims of superiority, others allowed for the southern custom—racial apartheid—to stand.

Reynolds' decision was undoubtedly a blow to those who wanted to honor the service of their family members. Local African Americans had their own cemetery, Freeman Hill that was the final resting place of Black veterans. Many families who are part of this study—the Kennedys, the Wiggins, the Prides—are buried in Freeman Hill. Velma Pride's grandfather and long-time national cemetery worker, Calvin Pride, chose Freeman Hill over the national cemetery when he died in the early 1960s. Though she mentions that her grandmother Tommie wanted it that way so Pride could be among other family members, it is not difficult to speculate that Pride, a World War I veteran who had given his life's work to the national cemetery, would not want the dishonor of a segregated burial on federal land, away from other family members.[387]

CONCLUSION

In 1942, the same year that the national cemetery decided to segregate burials, two young, White Baptist ministers began an experiment in what they saw as a kind of rural salvation. In southern Sumter County, on 400 acres of land, Martin England and Clarence Jordan began Koinonia Farm to, in the words of historian Andrew S. Chancey, "offer an alternative to the southern tenant farmers and sharecroppers who were so rapidly deserting the rural South. . . ."[388] They thought by doing so, they might also upend entrenched forms of southern economic and social oppression. The experiment was slow to gain followers but quick to ignite the ire of local Whites (although Baptists too), who were scandalized that Jordon and England dared to eat meals with Black workers. Koinonia connects to Andersonville in its later participation in the Americus Movement and in 1970s peace protests held at the national cemetery.

Five years later, Rosa Lee Ingram, a widowed farmer who lived on the Sumter-Schley County line just west of Lacross Road, some 10 miles from Andersonville, was confronted by a White neighbor who complained that her stock was in his corn crib. John Stratford, according to Ingram, threatened her with a gun.[389] Several of Ingram's 12 sons came to her aid and joined in the confrontation, and, in the ensuing melee, Stratford died from blows to the head. The local sheriff, warning of "some possibility of mob violence," arrested Ingram and her sons Charles (17), Wallace (16), Sammie Lee (14), and James (12).[390] Held in separate jails and without legal representation, all but Charles were tried on January 28, 1948, by all-White juries, convicted of murder, and sentenced to death. Charles Ingram was later acquitted, bizarrely, due to lack of evidence.[391]

386. Micki McElya, *The Politics of Mourning: Death and Honor in Arlington National Cemetery* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), 126, 219, 252; see Harry Truman, "Executive Order 9981: Desegregation of the Armed Forces," *OurDocuments.gov*, https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=84#, accessed March 27, 2019.

387. Ibid.

388. Andrew S. Chancey, "Race, Religion, and Agricultural Reform: The Communal Vision of Koinonia Farm," in *Georgia in Black and White: Explorations in the Race Relations of a Southern State, 1865–1950*, edited by John C. Inscoe (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 246.

389. Sumter County [Ga.] Deed Book 31, pg. 199, Sumter County Courthouse, Americus.

390. Charles H. Martin, "Race, Gender, and Southern Justice: The Rosa Lee Ingram Case," *The American Journal of Legal History* 29, no. 3 (July, 1985): 252.

391. Ibid., 253–254.

The case was an immediate sensation in the Black press, from the *Atlanta Daily World*, who covered the case in detail, to the *Pittsburgh Courier* and *Chicago Defender*. It struck a nerve among justice seekers as it was reminiscent of the mockery of justice made by the Alabama-based Scottsboro Boys trial a long decade earlier. Like the Scottsboro Boys, the Ingram case catalyzed action; the National Association for Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) came quickly to the Ingrams' aid, providing support to the family's defense lawyer, S. Hawkins Dykes, in appealing the case. The Civil Rights Congress (CRC), an organization that represented African Americans sentenced to death, created its first national campaign fighting for the Ingram case.[392] Though the Ingrams were not paroled until 1959, their case called attention to the inequities of the carceral system (relating to jail or a prison) in the South.

Figure 4.7. The Civil Rights Congress, a group that advocated for the freedom of Rose Lee Ingram, created a Mother's Day card campaign in 1950. These cards, once signed by the sender, were sent to President Harry S. Truman. Courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

MOTHER'S DAY CARD • MAY 14, 1950

MRS. ROSA LEE INGRAM, now 42, is a mother of fourteen children (two dead) and a widow since August, 1947, when her 64 year-old husband died. May 14, 1950, will be the third Mother's Day Mrs. Ingram has been in prison with her two young sons. This mother is in prison because she defended her honor and her home. The sons are in prison because they defended their mother.

On Mother's Day—May 14, 1950—we honor and revere this widowed sharecropper and mother of fourteen children for her dignity and courage. Make 1950 Freedom Year for Mrs. Ingram and her two sons.

Issued by the National Committee to Free the Ingram Family
Hotel Theresa, 125th St. & 7th Ave., Room 108, New York

Dear Mr. President:

On this Mother's Day, May 14, 1950, we fervently hope you will proclaim Freedom for Mrs. Rosa Lee Ingram and her two sons who have been in a Georgia prison since November 4, 1947.

Declarations of Human Rights and the observance of Mother's Day have no meaning as long as an innocent mother remains in prison.

A Proclamation of Freedom for Mrs. Ingram will be a genuine Mother's Day greeting for all mothers and will resound throughout the world.

Sincerely yours,

Name .....
Address .....
City..... Zone..... State.....

STAMP

The Honorable Harry S. Truman
President of the United States
White House
Washington, D. C.

Koinonia Farm and the Ingram case point to the strained reality for Blacks in the 1940s in Sumter County. African Americans continued to struggle under the yoke of Jim Crow but, by the end of World War II, driven in part by Black veterans, a new energy of activism was making its way to south Georgia. What residents of Sumter County could not have foreseen, perhaps, was that they would come into the national spotlight again in 1963, as new civil rights organizations worked to dismantle Jim Crow, drawing upon nonviolent civil disobedience and a strong corps of youth activism, the focus of chapter five.

Andersonville National Cemetery and Prison Park is part of the mixed legacy of the early 20th century. It continued to represent an exalted ideal of the Civil War—Black freedom—though Blacks struggled to maintain a toehold in the commemorative jostling between northern and southern Whites. As a place of employment, it offered better material resources than most work to be found by Blacks in the region, and seems not to have discriminated in pay. And yet, by the end of this period the cemetery had gone against the national grain by segregating Black burials

392. Emma Rountree, "Rose Lee Ingram Case," *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/rosa-lee-ingram-case, accessed January 2, 2019.

and would practice such segregation until the 1960s. Through this, however, we see that a rich and rooted African American community surrounded the cemetery and stockade, holding fast to formal and affective ties to the site. These men and women represented generations-deep connections to the park, a claim that might well be honored.

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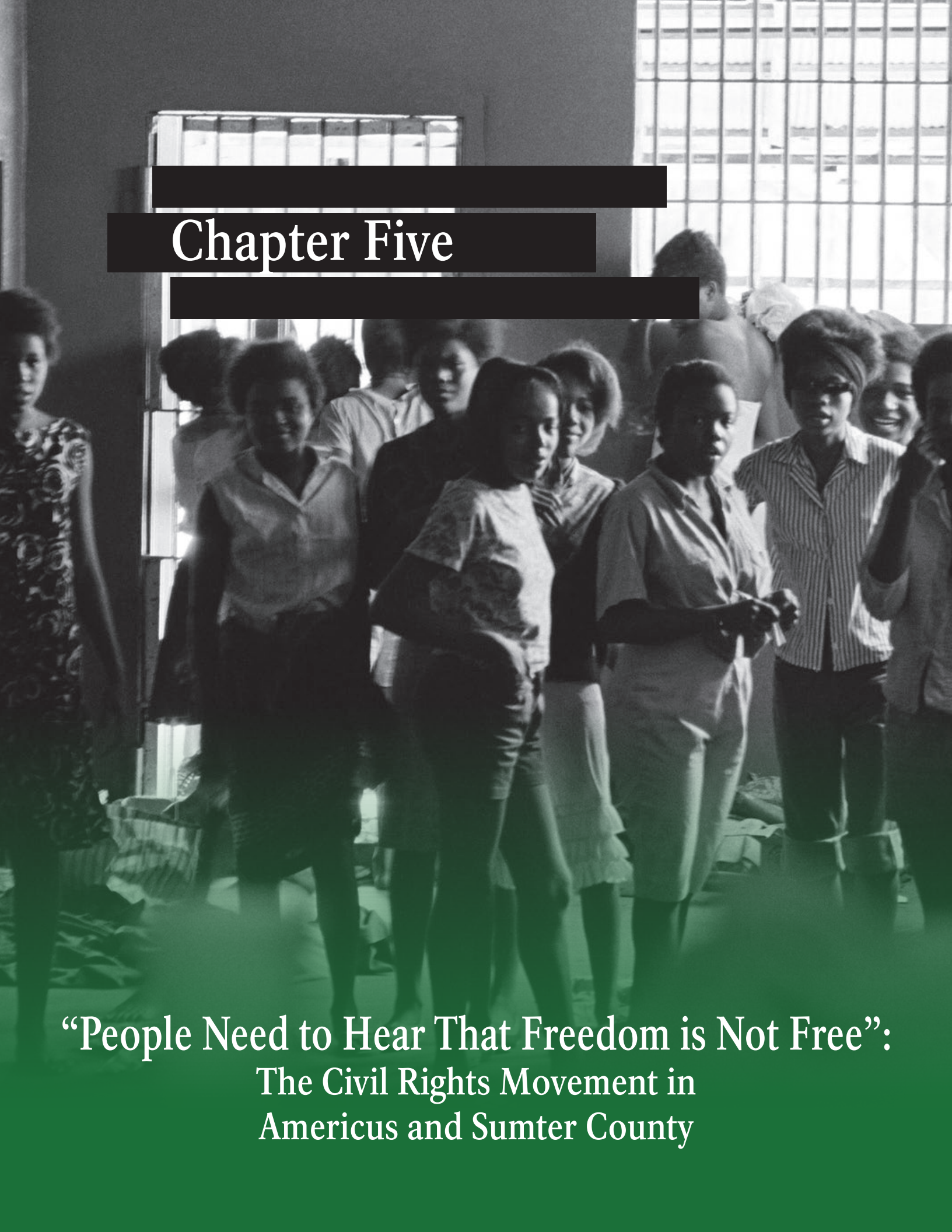

Chapter Five

"People Need to Hear That Freedom is Not Free": The Civil Rights Movement in Americus and Sumter County

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CHAPTER FIVE: THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN AMERICUS AND SUMTER COUNTIES

"People Need to Hear That Freedom is Not Free"

In 1963, a 12-year old Carol Barner-Seay was one of approximately two dozen "Stolen Girls" who found themselves locked inside the Lee County Stockade, a small cinder block jail 30 miles south of Americus. Fifty-three years later, she and some of the other survivors recounted their experience to *The Albany Herald*, which reported: "The girls were fed raw burgers and lightly-cooked egg sandwiches, and there were no cleaning or hygiene supplies. There was a drippy, contaminated and rusted shower that was unable to produce enough for drinking or bathing. No faucets or sinks were available for sanitation purposes, and the rusted and molded toilet would not flush. No protection was given against mosquitoes or roaches, or even the rattlesnake that made it in one morning. The girls slept on the cement floor with no blanket or pillow, and there was asbestos visible."[393] Some of the girls were held in these conditions for as much as 45 days. Their imprisonment in the "Leesburg Stockade" in Lee County, Georgia, followed a series of marches in Americus, including the protest at the Martin Theater. As Andersonville's centennial neared, the struggle for freedom continued in southwest Georgia. As one of the "stolen girls" later reflected about her involvement, "People need to hear that freedom is not free."[394]

The Martin Theater was a popular teenage hangout for locals, both Black and White, but the proprietors required Black patrons to enter through the back entrance of the theater where they were then ushered to a segregated balcony. When protesters stood up against this unjust and unequal treatment, local law enforcement officials jailed them on charges of "failure to obey an officer" and "disorderly conduct."[395] According to *The Albany Herald*: "The girls ended up in the stockade after their involvement in a 200-strong peaceful march from Friendship Baptist Church to the Martin Theater in Americus on July 15, 1963, to purchase tickets at the theater's White entrance to protest its segregational practices, inspired in part by the efforts of the Rev. Martin Luther King to use nonviolent methods to advocate for civil rights."[396]

Recalling the traumatizing incident, Carol Barner-Seay asked, "Can you imagine [being] in there with girls and you were there this long with no bath, no toothbrush, toothpaste to brush your teeth?"[397] A 2006 article in *Essence* magazine reported that "The Leesburg Stockade, a low-slung white structure with steel doors, looked as if it hadn't been cleaned in decades."[398] The author

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393. Jennifer Parks, "Women incarcerated in Lee County stockade in 1963 share their story," *The Albany Herald*, February 6, 2016. According to Juanita Freeman Wilson, an "old white guard" threw the snake into Leesburg Stockade. Juanita Freeman Wilson, interview by Cliff Kuhn, March 6, 2004, Sumter County Oral History Project, Georgia Southwestern State University. A note on the name of the building: "Lee County Stockade" vs. "Leesburg Stockade." The inscription on the building states, "Lee County Stockade," but it is usually referred to as "Leesburg Stockade." Robertiena Freeman Fletcher, interview by Cliff Kuhn, March 6, 2004, Sumter Oral History Project, Georgia Southwestern State University, Americus, Georgia (hereafter SOHP).

394. Grant Blankenship and Bradley George, "The Girls of the Leesburg Stockade," Georgia Public Broadcasting News, July 19, 2016, accessed April 1, 2019, http://www.gpbnews.org/post/girls-leesburg-stockade.

395. Ansley L. Quiros, God with Us: Lived Theology and the Freedom Struggle in Americus, Georgia, 1942–1976 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018), 102.

396. Parks, "Women incarcerated in Lee County stockade in 1963 share their story."

397. Blankenship and George, "The Girls of the Leesburg Stockade."

398. Donna Owens, "Stolen Girls," *Essence* 37 (June 2006): 165.

also detailed the following account that seemed more like a prisoner-of-war camp than a place for children arrested during a peaceful protest:

> Several of the girls began throwing up or suffering from diarrhea. The only toilet was a broken commode in the corner that couldn't be flushed. It was soon clogged to the top. With no other options to relieve themselves, the girls took to squatting over the shower drain, which quickly developed a suffocating stench. To wipe themselves they used the paper cartons from the burger deliveries. When their menstrual cycles came, they tore strips off their dresses and fashioned them into napkins. Bathing wasn't an option. There was a showerhead, but its slow perpetual drip proved useless, though the girls could get a sip of warm water by standing under it with cupped hands. One of the guards later gave them a few tin cups to share. Rickety bunks with thin, soiled mattresses stood in a corner of the cell, but nobody dared sleep on them. Instead, the girls huddled on the concrete floor with no pillows and some stained army blankets full of cigarette burns… Some guards poked the girls with sticks and called them "pick-a-ninnies," "jungle bunnies" and "nigger." They told them Dr. King had gone to jail. "Who's going to be your savior now?" they taunted.[399]

No wonder then that some of the jailed young women believed that Leesburg Stockade, a 20th-century building, had actually been a Civil War prison. The trauma of the 19th century became a living metaphor for the inhumanity of the present.

After being a regional symbol of emancipation and Black political activism in the Reconstruction era, Andersonville played only a tangential role in the civil rights era. Few activists in southwest Georgia envisioned Andersonville as a place to organize or march. While plenty of rural country churches became meeting places, it was the cities like Americus and Albany that became the local flashpoints where protesters, policemen, hecklers, and reporters converged. And yet, when the Georgia Historical Society placed a marker at the Sumter County Courthouse on the civil rights movement, the organization erroneously described the Lee County Stockade as "a Civil War-era stockade." The historical error, though significant, also suggests the shadow that Andersonville cast over the region into the 20th century. Despite direct connections, then, the civil rights movement in southwest Georgia offers important context for Andersonville in the 20th century.

399. Ibid., 165–166.

Figure 5.1. The Leesburg Stockade historical marker from the Georgia Civil Rights Trail. Also created by the Georgia Historical Society, this updated marker does not identify the stockade as Civil War-era. Courtesy Evan Kutzler, 2020.

THE MOVEMENT IN AMERICUS

The "modern civil rights movement," according to sociologist Aldon D. Morris, "refers to the Black movement that emerged in the South during the 1950s, when large masses of Black people became directly involved in the economic boycotts, street marches, mass meetings, going to jail by the thousands, and a whole range of disruptive tactics commonly referred to as nonviolent direct action. The word that best expresses the spirit of this period is confrontation."[400] One notable event that helped launch the movement was the 1954 landmark U.S. Supreme Court *Brown v. Board of Education* case, in which the justices unanimously overturned the "separate but equal" doctrine established by the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* case. As part of the ruling, the court ordered the desegregation of public schools throughout the United States. Many southern states and communities, however, engaged in "massive resistance."[401] In response, civil rights activists used nonviolent direct action to combat racial injustice in areas such as education, public accommodations, and suffrage. Such activism helped lead to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1957, the Civil Rights Act of 1960, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 during the civil rights movement (1954–1965).[402]

During the 1960s, Americus became a notable site of confrontation between civil rights activists and segregationists. Led initially by local activists who relied heavily on the support of African American businesses and churches, the movement in Americus focused on voter registration. Building on this existing local movement, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) came to Americus from Albany in 1963 as part of their broader Southwest Georgia Project. Local activism both predated and outlasted SNCC. After SNCC left in 1965, local

400. Aldon D. Morris, The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change (New York: The Free Press, 1984), ix.

401. See *Numan v. Bartley*, The Rise of Massive Resistance: Race and Politics in the South During the 1950s (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969).

402. On the "classical Civil Rights Movement," see Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang, "The 'Long Movement' as Vampire: Temporal and Spatial Fallacies in Recent Black Freedom Studies," *Journal of African American History* 92 (Spring, 2007): 267.

women and men continued to fight for their rights, particularly the goal of integrating the public school system.

Memory is an active process of making the past usable in the present. Historians Leigh Raiford and Renee C. Romano defined memory as "the process by which people recall, lay claim to, understand, and represent the past. These memories may be personal and individual; they might be collective and widely shared. Frequently, they are public as well, manifested in official monuments and documents of a state."[403] The way in which something is remembered can reveal much about the perspective of an individual or group of people in a particular community. It shows how men and women seek to utilize the past.[404] The memory of the Andersonville prison had a powerful presence among the African Americans who fought for social justice during the Americus-Sumter County Movement. Two SNCC leaders "suggested a march to Andersonville" in 1963, although the proposed demonstration ultimately did not take place.

Additionally, the decision to imprison the "Stolen Girls" in the Leesburg Stockade likely reminded some of the women of how the Confederate Army used the Andersonville prison site, which was about 40 miles away from the stockade, to hold Black bodies against their will as it violently defended the institution of slavery. Chris Barr, then a park ranger at Andersonville National Historic Site, made this connection during a "Fiftieth Anniversary Symposium" that commemorated the Americus struggle. His address referenced the Black soldiers from the 54th Massachusetts Infantry, some of whom the Confederacy captured in February 1864 and imprisoned at Andersonville. "In July 1863, almost one hundred years to the day before some of you were arrested and incarcerated in the Leesburg stockade," Barr said, "the all-Black 54th Massachusetts Infantry made its assault at Fort Wagner near Charleston."[405]

FROM ALBANY TO AMERICUS

In memory, the civil rights struggle in Albany has overshadowed the one in Americus. This is at least partly because Martin Luther King Jr., was a key figure in the former city's protests. According to *The Martin Luther King, Jr. Encyclopedia*:

> Formed on 17 November 1961 by representatives from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People [NAACP], the Ministerial Alliance, the Federation of Women's Clubs, and the Negro Voters League, the Albany Movement conducted a broad campaign in Albany, Georgia, that challenged all forms of segregation and discrimination. King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) temporarily joined the coalition, attracting national publicity to Albany. Although the Albany Movement was successful in mobilizing massive protests

403. Leigh Raiford and Renee C. Romano, "Introduction: The Struggle Over Memory," in Renee C. Romano and Leigh Raiford, eds., *The Civil Rights Movement in American Memory* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006), xiii.

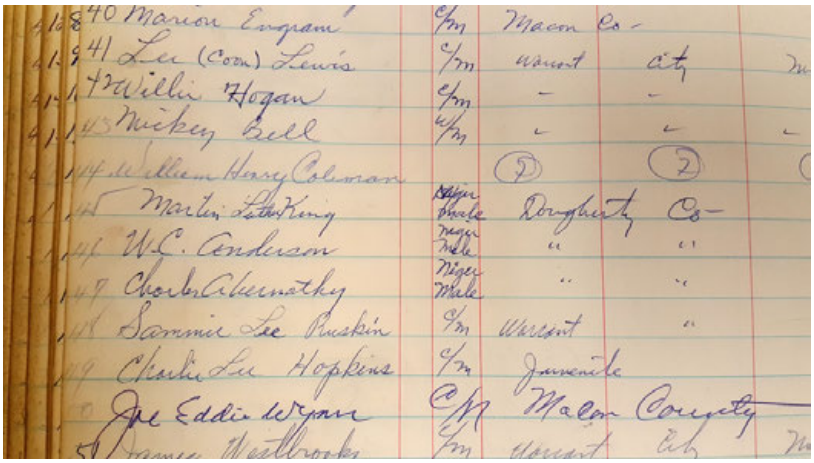
404. Alon Confino, "Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method," *American Historical Review*, 102 (December 1997): 1391.

405. See Carol Seay, *Up Above My Head: I See Freedom in the Air* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2015).

> during December 1961 and the following summer, it secured few concrete gains.[406]

Yet King was also briefly in Americus. After arresting him in Albany in December 1961, Dougherty County jailors transferred King, Ralph Abernathy, and William Anderson to the Americus jail on December 16, 1961. The keeper of the jail book jettisoned the typical "C/M" initials that meant "colored male" and instead wrote "nig[g]er male" in the ledge next to all three names. Abernathy left the same day. The jailors discharged King and Anderson two days later.[407]

Figure 5.2. The Americus jail ledger containing the names of civil rights activists Martin Luther King, W. C. Anderson, and Ralph Abernathy in lines 45–47, dated December 16, 1961. Courtesy Evan Kutzler.



Although King left Albany in 1962, SNCC staffers continued their efforts. "Now I can't help how Dr. King might have felt," SNCC staffer Charles Sherrod said. "But as far as we were concerned, things moved on. We didn't skip one beat."[408] King believed that the demonstrations the SCLC supported helped lead to the desegregation of the city. "After the 'jail-ins,' the City Commission repealed the entire section of the city code that carried segregation ordinances," he said. "The public library was opened on a 30-day 'trial' basis—integrated. To be sure, neither of these events could be measured as a full victory, but neither did they smack of defeat."[409] Additionally, the *New Georgia Encyclopedia* noted that, "From Albany, SNCC workers and others led protest actions in nearby Americus and Moultrie, and African Americans in other southwest Georgia towns and counties were inspired to challenge their local white power structures."[410]

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406. Clayborne Carson, Tenisha Armstrong, Susan Carson, Erin Cook, and Susan Englander, eds., *The Martin Luther King, Jr., Encyclopedia* (Westport, CT : Greenwood Press, 2008), 6.

407. "Jail Record 2," 190, Sumter County Courthouse, Americus, Georgia. This record is currently located on a shelf in the room with county deed records.

408. Lee W. Formwalt, "Albany Movement," *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, December 2, 2003, https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/albany-movement.

409. Clayborne Carson, ed., *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Warner Books, 1998), 168.

410. Formwalt, "Albany Movement."

Before SNCC workers arrived in Americus in January 1963, there were already organizations engaging in civil rights work in Sumter County.[411] Two examples were the local NAACP branch and the Americus Voters League. A Baptist fellowship commune in the county called the Koinonia Farm also challenged local segregation customs. Founded in 1942, it operated on the belief that the principles of the Christian religion called for all people, regardless of race, to be treated with dignity. Koinonia was an integrated community of Black and White workers who lived as equals, regularly worshipping and sharing meals together.[412] Historian Ansley L. Quiros wrote that, "Occasional visits from Klansmen aside, during the early years of the farm, the people of Americus largely dismissed the Koinonians as inconsequential crazies."[413] But Quiros found that after the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision "Koinonia was seen as a radical, subversive, un-Christian display of Southern heresy."[414]

As Quiros suggests, the farm was a target by the 1950s and 1960s. Charles S. O'Connor wrote that, "In 1956, the farm became the focus of an extensive boycott accompanied with vitriolic reprisals targeting commune property and later, white members and their African-American employees."[415] Local merchants, including banks, stopped selling and providing services for Koinonia. The boycott "forced the farm to reduce crop cultivation," including peanuts and corn, and turn its efforts to pecan processing, "because markets were outside of Georgia, meaning members could bypass the sanctions against them."[416] That boycott, O'Connor noted, "continued throughout the 1960s, even though Jordan assured that the sanctions were of "little economic consequence" due to his ability to secure supplies in nearby Albany."[417]

Koinonia drew the ire of Sheriff Fred Chappell, a feared man worthy of inclusion in the pantheon of racist southern sheriffs. Quiros described Chappell as "the prototype" of that character—"the cigar-smoking, politeness-be-damned, profanity-spewing enforcer present in so many Southern towns. Chappell feared no retribution since members of his family held numerous governmental positions in Americus."[418] Martin Luther King Jr., after leaving Americus in 1961, thought Chappell was "the meanest man in the world."[419] It was no secret around Sumter County that Chappell was the man most people wanted to avoid angering at all costs. Koinonia Farms fell victim to Chappell's wrath numerous times due in large part to the farm's integrated setting. One documented case of Chappell's vitriol against Koinonia involved the destruction of the farm's roadside market in a bombing in early 1957. Chappell was not said

411. "Minutes of the SNCC Executive Committee Meeting," 6–9 September 1963, Field Reports--Georgia, Americus, Ser. VII, SNCC Papers, Atlanta University Center Library, Atlanta, Georgia.

412. Tracy Elaine K'Meyer, *Interracialism and Christian Community in the Postwar South: The Story of Koinonia Farm* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1997), 5–6, 42, 76.

413. Quiros, *God with Us*, 31.

414. Ibid.

415. Charles S. O'Connor, "A Rural Georgia Tragedy: Koinonia Farm in the 1950s," (Master's thesis, University of Georgia, 2003), 1.

416. Ibid., 78.

417. Ibid., 91.

418. Quiros, *God With Us*, 228n87.

419. Jim Auchmutey, The Class of '65: A Student, a Divided Town, and the Long Road to Forgiveness (New York: Public Affairs, 2015), 77.

to have been responsible for the bombing, but he and several other members of the community offered no assistance as they watched the market burn to the ground.[420]

As the Koinonia Farm continued to resist attacks from opponents like Chappell, it became a critical ally to the Americus-Sumter County Movement and SNCC. Historian Tracy Elaine K'Meyer wrote, "Koinonia Farm was an attempt to build the beloved community. Koinonians shared that goal with the civil rights movement, as they also shared a religious basis and a belief in nonviolence."[421] SNCC held a retreat at Koinonia in 1962. One year later, Don Harris and John Churchill made Koinonia home when they began their voter registration drive. Koinonia was one of the gateways that brought SNCC to Sumter County and one of the links between local and national activism.[422]

AFRICAN AMERICAN-OWNED BUSINESSES AND THE MOVEMENT

The strength of local African American-owned businesses set an important foundation for the future successes of the Americus-Sumter County Movement. Melinda Merritt, a young protester marching at the Martin Theater in July of 1963, was the daughter of Hope Merritt, a prominent local business owner. She described her family as affluent because her father owned several local businesses including a grocery store named Merritt and May's Grocery Store. Owning a business in Americus in the 1960s, in the midst of the civil rights movement, afforded some Black families a degree of power and respect among both Blacks and Whites. In Merritt's case, the patriarch, Hope, was well known and respected according to his daughter. She stated, "[My daddy] was also the 'man.' And when I say the 'man,' in a small town, I mean the man… So, everybody knew who my daddy was… and if you were a Merritt, you were somebody in particular."[423] Business owners such as Hope Merritt were the backbone of Americus' Black community and ultimately would use their wealth and resources to help the activists who fought for racial equality.

The local "Negro Business League" was an organization through which many local Black business owners met, strategized, and implemented plans for social change. Sam Mahone, another veteran of the movement, attributed the inception of the Negro Business League to a Black business owner in Americus named Sam Weston, who owned a tailor shop in town. Weston, according to Mahone, introduced him and many others to activism and political activities such as voter registration drives. Weston taught them that the most effective way to enact change was to register to vote so they could elect officials that had their best interests at heart.[424] Merritt also echoed the same sentiments by stating that her father and his "crew" of businessmen around Americus played an influential role in the movement's origins.[425] She noted that her father "was more about planning and funding. We did the marching and the demonstration, but he and Dr. Martin Luther King were in the planning, strategizing, and my

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420. Garret A. Moye, "White Actors in the Civil Rights Movement: Social Progressives in Americus, Georgia" (Master's thesis, Georgia Southern University, 2017), 18.

421. K'Meyer, Interacialiasm and Christian Community, 6.

422. Ibid., 152.

423. Melissa, Merritt, October 19, 2018, interview by Keri Adams, Julia Brock, and Ann McCleary, Andersonville National Historic Site.

424. Sam Mahone, interview with Ann McCleary, Julia Brock, Keri Adams, September 2018, Andersonville National Historic Site Archive, Andersonville. Georgia.

425. Melinda Merritt, *Merritt Magic* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2017), 114.

daddy did a lot of money funding, because he had a lot of money coming through all the time. So he kind of. . .backed the movement a lot."[426]

Along these same lines, both Merritt and Mahone acknowledged the significant role John and Mable Barnum's funeral home played in Americus struggle for freedom. Mahone called it "ground zero for the Civil Rights Movement" in Americus.[427] Many Black business owners placed their establishments in jeopardy by supporting the movement. In contrast, the funeral home–because it catered only to the African American community–had a degree of insulation and could afford to take a leading role. The funeral home served as one place that protesters went to have their affidavit taken after release from jail. Mahone also mentioned that when activists came into Americus, the Barnum Funeral Home was often the first stop and a place of orientation.[428] Economically successful Black families in Americus used the influence they possessed to try and achieve social changes that would benefit the larger Black community.

Figure 5.3. The Barnum Funeral Home as it appears today. Courtesy Evan Kutzler, 2020.

Based on Merritt's account, her father's wealth afforded her a degree of insulation from the White oppression that plagued Blacks in Americus. She recalled, "The segregation was horrible in the sense that's how it was, but like I say, I was sheltered because my family didn't want us to be subjected to that, so we had everything we needed and more, all around."[429] Her father did everything he could to ensure his children did not have to experience the hate of White aggressors on a regular basis. Merritt also said that the south side of Americus was called "Young Korea" because of the way in which the Black men who lived there controlled and regulated it to ensure the community's safety.[430] This part of Americus consisted of a close-knit group of African Americans, and the men of the community prided themselves on protecting their neighborhood. Merritt acknowledged that she was aware of the racial inequality that took place during her childhood even if she did not have to face it on a daily basis. Sam Mahone, in

426. Melinda Merritt, October 2018.

427. Sam Mahone, September 2018.

428. Ibid.

429. Melinda Merritt, October 2018.

430. Ibid.

recounting his upbringing in Americus, remembered that "[Americus] was a typical southern town where everything was segregated, and we grew up as second class-citizens and [got a] second-class education."[431] White citizens widely humiliated African Americans on a daily basis. Mahone noted that, "You had to defer to any white person, no matter how young they were. Even grown black men deferred to young children five and six years of age. And that's just how stark the system was."[432]

A YOUNG PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT

Robertiena Freeman-Fletcher (Robertiena Freeman), one of the "Stolen Girls," participated in a number of key events of the Americus-Sumter County Movement. In 2004, when historian Cliff Kuhn asked her about the Albany Movement's influence on the youth of Americus, Freeman stated, "You start hearing rumors about it's time for all this to stop in Americus" and that "[the young people] just started talking and then the NAACP started calling the mass meetings."[433] Lorena Barnum Sabbs, another of Americus's civil rights movement veterans, proclaimed that while the words of Martin Luther King Jr. and other adults helped inspire her and many others, Americus's movement was uniquely "a young person's movement." She remarked, "I remember the first time I ever heard Dr. King speak. I remember being mesmerized."[434] Barnum Sabbs continued, "It was a young person's movement, you know, it really was. . . and if you look at who got jailed, very few older people spent any time. It was all students for the most part. It was all students. You know?"[435] The momentum of the Albany Movement helped guide the attitudes and actions of Americus's young activists.

431. Sam Mahone, September 2018.

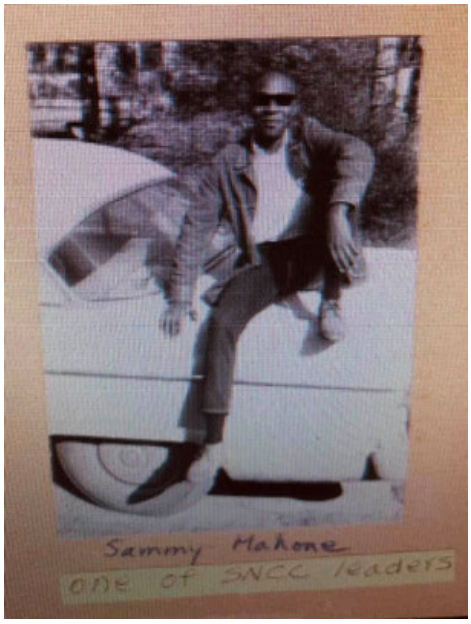
432. Ibid.

433. Robertiena Freeman-Fletcher, interview with Cliff Kuhn, 2003 Sumter Oral History Project, Georgia Southwestern State University, Americus, Georgia (hereafter SOHP).

434. Lorena Barnum Sabbs, interview with Cliff Kuhn, 2003, SOHP.

435. Ibid.

Figure 5.4. A young Sam "Sammy" Mahone, undated. Courtesy Sam Mahone.



Even before the Albany Movement made an impression on southwest Georgia, the Americus Voters League gave teenagers in Americus important roles. When asked how his peers received his requests to join the Americus Voters League, Sam Mahone recalled that "some of them responded quite positively. And then, those that did took it as a challenge, you know." The existing work in Americus laid the foundation for the arrival of SNCC. "There was a very short time between that time [of the Americus Voters League] and when SNCC activists came into Americus," Sam remembered. "And so, that further galvanized those people who had been receptive in the first place. And so, it was at that time that we sort of moved from that right into that activism within the Movement, which later became the Americus Movement."[436]

Local, familial, and national influences pushed local activists to action. Robertiena Freeman recalled the influence her father, Reverend R. L. Freeman, an activist and member of the NAACP, had on her willingness to protest. The NAACP had an active branch in the Americus area long before the start of the Americus-Sumter County Movement. Despite the fact that Freeman and the other teenagers of Sumter County did not always work directly with SNCC, the influence Martin Luther King Jr. and his words had on the young people was evident. When historian Cliff Kuhn asked her about her role in the movement, she stated, "I truly would [do it all over again] because we as a people needed to stand up for our rights… That's right, we did it by helping Martin Luther King and his vision guiding us…"[437] Freeman, as well as many other activists who did not work directly with King, were inspired by his words about fighting Jim Crow.

A willingness to make personal sacrifices is another recurring theme in the recollections of the women and men who participated in peaceful protests in Americus and Sumter County.

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436. Glenn M. Robins, "Americus Movement," *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, February 29, 2008; Tuck, *Beyond Atlanta*, 176; Sam Mahone, interview by Hasan Kwame Jeffries, March 9, 2013, Civil Rights History Project, Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/afc2010039_crhp0063/, accessed February 22, 2020.

437. Robertiena Freeman-Fletcher, 2003.

Activists understood that they would likely face physical violence and/or incarceration. Upon SNCC's arrival in January of 1963, the group quickly went to work in its attempts to register as many Black voters as possible in Sumter County. SNCC leaders noted that "Negroes make up more than 50% of the rural county's population."[438] In addition to voter registration, SNCC also worked to help local Black residents as they sought to integrate the Martin Theater.[439] The nonviolent direct action protests that SNCC led in Americus would be the beginning of mass arrests of many Black citizens.

Figure 5.5. Charles Sherrod [right], Field Secretary for SNCC, and civil rights activist Randy Battle speaking to potential supporters and voters in 1962. © Danny Lyon/Magnum Photos.

TERROR IN AMERICUS

Segregationists, including local law enforcement agencies and much of the White civilian population in Sumter County, met SNCC's efforts with fierce opposition. Reprisals worsened when SNCC resisted pressure and defiantly remained in Americus. A document titled, "Fact Sheet Americus, Georgia" laid out a chronological list of events that took place in Americus during SNCC's tenure. On March 18, 1963, Sheriff Chappell arrested and detained two of SNCC's field secretaries, Don Harris and John Churchville and threatened to charge the men with vagrancy and loitering.[440] SNCC reported this matter to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), as it perceived the act to be an abuse of power by Chappell. Though the men were not held long as the letter stated–they had been released from custody after an hour–SNCC was determined to push back against any action it considered to be an injustice. One month later, on April 25, 1963, two unnamed White men attacked SNCC field secretary Ralph Allen after Allen

438. SNCC, "Minutes of the SNCC Executive Committee Meeting," 6–9 September 1963.

439. Ibid.

440. Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), "Fact Sheet Americus, Georgia," n.d., SNCC Social Action vertical file, circa 1930–2002, Archives Main Stacks, Mss 577, Box 47, Folder 8; WIHVS3310-A, Freedom Summer Digital Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI.

accompanied a "Negro" woman to the registrar's office near Americus street.[441] SNCC again responded by notifying the FBI.

Retaliation against protesters intensified as SNCC members and local activists continued to challenge racial injustice. In July 1963, at least 33 teenage girls were jailed in response to their protest at the segregated Martin Theater in downtown Americus. That morning, the local police had begun enforcing a new ordinance that had been enacted at an impromptu city council meeting. The ordinance declared any protest after 6:00 p.m. to be unlawful and said that any participants in such a protest would be subject to arrest.[442] The police apprehended the teenage girls who protested at the Martin Theater and detained some at the city juvenile center. Officers took others to the Leesburg Stockade.[443]

The girls imprisoned in the stockade were kept for different amounts of time; some were there for months, others got out in as few as 10 days. According to Juanita Freeman-Wilson, sister of Robertiena, their father regularly visited the stockade and kept himself constantly informed about their conditions and whereabouts in order to ensure their safety.[444] Robertiena Freeman described the state of the stockade, a concrete public works facility called the Lee County Stockade, as being unfit for human beings. There were, for example, a lack of reasonable sleeping accommodations and filthy, nonfunctioning toilets. The fact that the girls were as young as 11 years old and were accustomed to being protected by individuals such as family members and teachers made the ordeal all the more frightening for them. Juanita Freeman-Wilson recalled her encounter with her mother while she was still in the stockade: "I cried. She was at the bars holding on, and I was up there holding on, and I was like, 'Mama I love you. I don't know what I did to deserve this, but I need to get out of here.' And she was like, 'Just keep your spirits up baby. Your daddy is working on it.'"[445]

Melinda Merritt was among the protesters who were taken to the new jail for youth in Americus. She said she ended up in the cleaner, newer jail because she was arrested early on in the demonstration. After the new jail reached its capacity, the protesters who were arrested later in the night were taken to the stockade.[446] Merritt proclaimed that her time in the juvenile facility was comparable to a stay in a hotel: "...my jail experience wasn't as bad as most people, and like I say, that's because I was a Merritt. My daddy brought me food every night, because I didn't want the food in the jail…So at night [a guard] would meet Daddy outside, and Daddy would give him the food for me and the four girls. He always fed everybody, and whatever we wanted… So it was more like a hotel for us."[447] Merritt's relative privilege, in part, helped make her experience much different than the majority of jailed young people in Americus.

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441. Ibid.

442. Merritt, *Merritt Magic*, 158.

443. Schwartz, Locked up for Freedom, 29.

444. Juanita Freeman-Wilson, interview with Cliff Kuhn, 2004, SOHP.

445. Robertiena Freeman-Fletcher, 2004.

446. Melinda Merritt, October 2018.

447. Ibid.

Figure 5.6. The Lee County Stockade as it appears today. Courtesy Evan Kutzler, 2020.

In the days following the arrests at the Martin Theater, there were several more arrests of Black citizens who protested the detainment of the "Stolen Girls" in Leesburg. A letter written by an unnamed source called for the African Americans to unify and help to free their sons and daughters from the local jails. The letter lacks a date but can be reasonably inferred that it took place within the time frame of the "Stolen Girls" detainment as it specifically called for their release. While the heading of the letter read, "An Appeal to All Citizens of Americus & Sumter County," the wording throughout the letter appeared to be directed to the Black citizens of the town.[448] One excerpt from the letter pleaded that, "If there is any race pride in you, then you will agree with the other Americus and Sumter County Negroes that it is time to act NOW. Our boys and girls from the 1st through the 12th grades will stay out of school until every child who is in jail is free to go to school."[449] Juanita Freeman-Wilson bolstered the statements made by the letter when she told historian Cliff Kuhn that, "It was about them getting out." Her recollections revealed that Black citizens of Americus used collective action as a means of leverage to fight for the release of the children who were imprisoned. "We won't go to school unless all of them can go to school," Freeman-Wilson said. "The ones that you got—they had hundreds of us locked up."[450]

Danny Lyons, a White photographer and a member of SNCC, traveled to Americus to uncover the story behind the girls' disappearance. He took numerous pictures of the "Stolen Girls." Author Heather E. Schwartz said that once Lyons' photos made it to press outlets in the North,

448. Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), "An Appeal to All Citizens of Americus & Sumter County," Z: Accessions, M82-445, Box 1, Folder 20, WIHVK1420-A, Mary E. King Papers, Freedom Summer Digital Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI, http://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/p15932coll2/search.

449. Ibid.

450. Juanita Freeman-Wilson, 2004.

it led to public pressure that helped result in the release of the children.[451] Although the conditions of the juvenile facility were not nearly as nauseating as those in the stockade, the children in the juvenile facility were still held unjustly and against their will. Merritt asserted that the release of her and the others held in that facility was a direct consequence of Martin Luther King Jr.'s relationship with President John F. Kennedy, which she said was "closer than people realized."[452] Merritt recalls, "John F. Kennedy called [Sheriff] Fred Chappell on the phone… And John Kennedy was so angry, he says, 'This is not how you treat citizens; you don't arrest them because they protest.' He just was angry. He said, 'You have one hour to release those people or I'm flying an F-1 down to your place.' We were out in 35 minutes. No bond. Out."[453] The activists involved in the civil rights movement regularly made sacrifices that jeopardized their safety, livelihood, and well-being. Nonetheless, Robertiena Freeman said she believed that most, if not all of them would do it all over again if necessary. She stated, "All that [sacrifice] was necessary. Not an ounce of it was too much. It was necessary for our people to move forward and for us to start getting some of the rights that we have."[454]

Figure 5.7. The "Stolen Girls" inside the Lee County Stockade, 1963. © Danny Lyon/Magnum Photos.

The release of the "Stolen Girls" and other Martin Theater protesters did not mark the end of the struggle in Sumter County. In a SNCC press release dated September 24, 1963, the organization documented a list of hardships it had encountered since its arrival in Americus. One section of the statement said: "On the night of August 8, police and state patrolmen dispersed 250 Negroes singing in front of a Negro café by shooting into the air and brandishing

451. Heather E. Schwartz, *Locked up for Freedom: Civil Rights Protestors at the Leesburg Stockade* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Millbrook Press, 2017), 47.

452. Melinda Merritt, October 2018.

453. Ibid.

454. Robertiena Freeman-Fletcher, 2004.

billy clubs. They slugged their way through the group…"[455] It then detailed how the law enforcement officials beat and arrested three SNCC field secretaries: Ralph Allen, Don Harris, and John Perdew.[456] The SNCC "Fact Sheet America, Georgia" document further explained that:

> The three SNCC workers—and CORE worker Zev Aelony—were charged with "attempting to incite insurrection," "inciting to riot," "unlawful assembly," "assault and battery," and "obstructive arrest." Two local Negroes, Sallie Mae Durham and Thomas McDaniel, were also charged with "inciting insurrection," "assault and battery' and 'obstructing arrest.' McDaniel and Miss Durham were held under $20,000 bonds each. Twenty-four peace bonds total $120,000 were lodged against the SNCC workers. Since the insurrection charge carries the death penalty in Georgia, no bond could be set on that count.[457]

Allen, Harris, Perdew, and Aelony came to be called "the Americus Four."[458] Historian Ansley L. Quiros explained that, "Dating back to 1871, Georgia's Anti-Treason Act, also known as the Sedition Act of 1871, stipulated that anyone arrested for attempting to incite rebellion against the state could be put to death."[459] According to SNCC, Americus Solicitor General Stephen Pace used the insurrection charges as a means to "ask the courts to deny these defendants bond" in order to "[assure] that we can maintain the peace."[460] The "Fact Sheet" noted that, "All six remained in jail for 85 days until a three-judge federal panel set them free" after ruling that "Georgia's insurrection law was unconstitutional."[461] Even after their release, the men went through "a near-endless line of appeals and retrials."[462]

As the Americus Four languished behind bars, police brutality against protesters continued. For an 11-day stretch from August 9 until August 20, a number of incidents flared up between local police and numerous Americus citizens. SNCC reported that the first event took place when "a group of 75 demonstrating Negroes was dispersed by state troopers and cattle-prod wielding city and county officers. Most of that group was arrested." Four protesters sustained injuries.[463] Of the four, three required stitches while the fourth, James Williams, was left with a broken leg due to an officer attacking him with a baseball bat, then jumping on the man's already broken leg.[464] Williams' sworn affidavit stated: "I fell down and two state patrolmen started hitting me upside the head they hit me with something like a baseball bat. I can't describe the pain… The

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455. Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), "Americus Georgia," September 24, 1963, SNCC Social Action vertical file, circa 1930–2002; Archives Main Stacks, Mss 577, Box 47, Folder 8; WIHVS3310-A, Freedom Summer Digital Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI.

456. Ibid.

457. Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), "Fact Sheet, Americus, Georgia," n.d., SNCC Social Action vertical file, circa 1930–2002; Archives Main Stacks, Mss 577, Box 47, Folder 8, Freedom Summer Digital Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI.

458. Quiros, *God With Us*, 106.

459. Ibid.

460. SNCC, "Fact Sheet Americus, Georgia," n.d.

461. Ibid.

462. Quiros, *God With Us*, 233n186.

463. Ibid.

464. Ibid.

policemen with them said 'let me have him,' and he stomped me on the leg."[465] SNCC asked Georgia Governor Carl Sanders to investigate the matter and appropriately handle the behavior of Sumter County law enforcement.

ANDERSONVILLE AS SYMBOL

In the midst of this steamy, intense protesting and excessive police violence in August 1963, Andersonville National Cemetery became a symbol for the freedom movement. During the demonstrations and "organized racial brutality" in Americus, a White police officer shot James Lee Brown in the back of his neck at a protest in Americus on August 20 and killed him. Born in 1930, Brown joined the military and fought in the Korean War. Afterwards, at age 33, he was living in Americus and had joined the civil rights protests that summer.[466]

Figure 5.8. The gravesite of James Lee Brown at Andersonville National Cemetery. Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site.

How he came to be buried at Andersonville is unclear. What is certain, however, is that his burial in a newly integrated cemetery promised this young man who had fought for his country overseas a measure of equality in death that he could not have in life. The Barnum family arranged the burial through their funeral home; as leaders in the Sumter County Movement, they understood the symbolism of burying Brown in Andersonville National Cemetery.[467] On the day before the March on Washington began, a small gathering took place at the cemetery to celebrate Brown's life as a veteran, as a freedom fighter, and as a man entitled to a burial that recognized his contributions to his country.[468]

The next week, Andersonville National Cemetery was on the minds of several SNCC workers from around this region. At the September 6–9 SNCC Executive Committee Meeting in Atlanta,

465. SNCC, "Americus, Georgia," September 24, 1963.

466. Tuck, *Beyond Atlanta*, 176; Quiros, *God with Us*, 107.

467. NPS Division of Interpretation and Education, "Andersonville Civil War to Civil Rights: How Andersonville Became a Site and Symbol of the Struggle for Equality," February 2013, Andersonville National Historic Site, https://www.nps.gov/ande/planyourvisit/upload/CW2CR.pdf, accessed February 20, 2020.

468. Andersonville National Historic Site, "Fifty years ago today, thousands gathered in Washington, D.C. in the famous march for jobs and freedom," August 26, 2013, Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=Andersonville%20National%20Historic%20Site%20James%20Brown&epa=SEARCH_BOX, accessed February 20, 2020.

committee members bemoaned the lack of progress in Americus. Mike Sayer reported that the "situation there is serious," that three SNCC workers faced the death penalty, that "police brutality has been serious," and that the press would not report the story. To continue to build momentum in Americus, Albany lawyer C. B. King proposed a march to Andersonville "in protest."[469] Quite likely, SNCC's awareness of Andersonville came from Brown's memorial service in the national cemetery only a few weeks earlier. Andersonville National Cemetery likely had two meanings to these civil rights workers. First, the newly integrated cemetery symbolized opportunity for African Americans. Second, it drew on almost a century of local tradition of honoring Union soldiers who helped bring an end to slavery.

A more detailed plan for the "Pilgrimage" survives in the SNCC papers. The stated objective was to release the Americus Four. The "declaration of concern" would begin on October 5 with a special SNCC committee meeting at the Atlanta SNCC office in Americus. There, "big name people" would meet the committee, and they would walk the 10 miles together from Americus to Andersonville, "the Civil War Cemetery." If some of the "big names" could not walk the 10 miles, they could "speak at the rally in the cemetery." Those invited to speak would include "the big ten representative [*sic*]," as well as "Prominent persons in the state and local area and movie actors and actresses," all of whom would "speak out against the situation in Americus." In addition to the Americus march, the proposal called for pilgrimages across the country in colleges and universities, particularly colleges "where these four persons have matriculated." SNCC would produce a pamphlet to pass out to demonstrators and spectators "in this country and the world." Under additional ideas, the proposal instructed readers to "seek refuge in the cemetery."[470]

Ultimately, SNCC did not pursue the Andersonville march. On October 5, Robert Mantz and Dave Bell went to Albany to plan the Andersonville rally, but the SNCC staff there were "busy doing nothing," reported Mantz. "Only a few of us were working on the program. The others were not concerned. Some claimed for various reasons that they could not work full time on the 'rally'." He and Bell walked out of the meeting "disgusted, disappointed, and angry." Wrote Mantz,

> We had been telling them for weeks that there will be a mass rally in Andersonville to focus the eyes of America on Americus, the police brutality, the 'Americus Four.' But typical of the Southwest, Ga., project, we were supposed to go back and tell our people that again, as times before, we aren't going to have a rally. The people would be highly disappointed. Their hopes were high and the need to release their emotions was high.

Mantz believed that the rally would not be successful without support from the Atlanta SNCC office. "They had dumped the rally on our shoulders and said, 'You do it, we don't have time. Selma is our pet now. Any help that you might need, we'll assist you.' We came to the point of agreement: the Andersonville thing would most definitely be a flop without Atlanta's full

469. Minutes of SNCC Executive Committee Meetings, September 6–8, 1973, Field Reports--Georgia, Americus, Ser. VII, SNCC Papers, AU.

470. "Pilgrimage," folder 252253-037-0423, Subgroup A: Atlanta Office, Series XV, State Project Files, 1960–1968, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) Papers, 1959–1972, Martin Luther King Jr., Center for Nonviolent Social Change, Inc., Atlanta, Georgia, pp. 55–56, ProQuest History Vault, https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=252253-037-0423, accessed February 20, 2020.

support." Bell reported the response to his cancellation of the event at a mass meeting as filled with audience "sh's and boos."[471]

CONTINUING REPRISALS AGAINST PROTESTERS

When Don Harris succeeded Charles Sherrod as the Southwest Georgia Project (SWGP) Director, he took a different approach from Sherrod on the question of the movement's relationship with White supporters. Harris stated, "I disagreed with [Sherrod] that we should have integrated teams working wherever we worked simply to show that integration could work… It became increasingly difficult to house white students in that local community. People would be much more inclined to house a black student than a white student."[472] In an interview by former SNCC field worker Pete de Lissovoy, John Perdew and Randy Battle discussed events that took place in nearby Dawson, Georgia, in 1963. The two revealed how the debate about White participation proved to be a real issue within the larger civil rights movement. Battle mentioned an African American woman named Carolyn Daniels who assisted with the Southwest Georgia Project. While not a formal member of SNCC, her association with the organization resulted in her home being attacked with a barrage of bullets from machine gun fire in late 1963. Both Battle and Perdew suspected that Z. T. Mathews, the sheriff of Terrell County, was responsible for the attack. Battle went on to explain that this attack was in part the result of her allowing the White members of SNCC to use her home as a safe haven for their meetings.[473] The fact that White and Black individuals were regularly in and out of Daniels' home allowed Sheriff Mathews to easily identify her as a civil rights activist.[474] Battle further stated that Charles Sherrod, who was responsible for sending individuals to Americus to assist with the Southwest Georgia Project, left because of a dispute over the insistence by some SNCC members that Whites not be allowed to use Daniels' home, even after she moved away to New York. Perdew mirrored Battle's sentiments as he stated that after Sherrod left SNCC, "the guys took over that felt SNCC should be all black."[475]

Furthermore, Battle explained that Sherrod and SNCC's local members disagreed on the issue of White involvement from the beginning. He stated, "Sherrod had been the instigator of getting white folks involved in the very beginning… I mean all them powers that be, black folks, intellectuals and so forth in SNCC, they didn't like it back then."[476] In the years following the Americus-Sumter County Movement, Harris sat with Harvard graduate Emily Stoper and answered several questions about SNCC and the Southwest Georgia Project. He candidly states that at the time, his intentions were pure but that did not take away from his ability to later see where his decisions may have cost the movement in terms of potential gains. Harris stated:

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471. Tuck, *Beyond Atlanta*, 174–175; Robert Mantz Jr., Report: Americus, Georgia, September 30–October 5 and October 5–7, 1963; Pilgrimage," folder 252253-037-0423, Subgroup A: Atlanta Office, Series XV, State Project Files, 1960–1968, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) Papers, 1959–1972.

472. Donald Harris, interview with Emily Stoper, 1967–1968, *Civil Rights Movement Archive*, https://www.crmvet.org/nars/harrisd.htm, accessed February 20, 2020.

473. John Perdew and Randy Battle, interview with Pete de Lissovoy, October 2005, *Civil Rights Movement Archive*, http://www.crmvet.org/nars/perdew1.htm, accessed February 20, 2020.

474. Ibid.

475. Ibid.

476. Ibid.

> We may have lost some publicity in the long run. It may have lost us some of the technical and skilled kind of things that happened in Mississippi that didn't happen elsewhere, i.e., development of credit unions, cooperatives, although this was done in Southwest Georgia… You know, these kinds of things where they got a student from MIT down to actually set up the radios, or they got a white student from some place else to set up the Southern Courier, maybe, from Harvard. You know, these kinds of technical things with these kids, and they recruited kids for these exact purposes.[477]

Law enforcement officials continued to respond violently each time Harris and others elected to hold public protests. In March of 1964, the Americus police attacked and beat Harris for showing up to a segregated polling station.[478] SNCC again protested the brutality, this time bringing it to the attention of U.S. Senator Richard Russell of Georgia. Harris's attack was followed by the attack of John Perdew in July of the same year. Perdew's first attack took place on July 4th by a mob of White citizens because he and other Blacks attempted to eat at a White restaurant under the freshly enacted Civil Rights Act of 1964. A mere 20 days later, Perdew would be attacked again upon leaving the county courthouse for attempting to register to vote.[479]

The arrest of the "Americus Four" took a number of the movement's key leaders out of the field. Some individuals within SNCC saw this as a fatal flaw of the Americus-Sumter County Movement. Specifically, David Bell and Bob Mants argued that the dissipation of protest after the arrest of Don Harris and the rest of the Americus Four should lay squarely on the shoulders of Harris because he left a group of followers without the ability to lead after his departure.[480] In 1963, while still incarcerated, Ralph Allen wrote a letter to Bob Mants and Dave Bell that proclaimed that SNCC had a chance to do for Americus what they could not achieve for Albany. He stated that "there are strong folks in Americus" and that he never heard anyone in Americus say "what-if."[481] Allen offered high praise to the people of Americus and words of opprobrium for fellow SNCC field worker Don Harris, telling Mants and Bell that:

> Look there's one dead damn straight fact: if yall die, the movement dies. Dave most. This is no Albany… The SCM [Sumter County Movement] is run entirely differently from the Albany M[ovement]. Main difference is individualism. There is no weeping sessions at mass meetings, nor any wild and fantastic plans, prayers, hopes or schemes propounded for the disillusioned to clap and amen to. The truth is stated and then boom, someone will take it from there and you'll hear—if you listen—what the folks want. To get back to individualism. I never heard anyone in Americus [say] "but what if…" with the idea in their mind what if I wind up in jail lose my house job restaurant etc. For my implication they are expected to suffer without whimpering. [And] Don. Don Harris is a big prick and

477. Donald Harris, 1967–1968.

478. SNCC, "Fact Sheet Americus, Georgia," no date.

479. Ibid.

480. Tuck, *Beyond Atlanta*, 174.

481. Ralph Allen to Bob Mantz and Dave Bell, August 1963, *Civil Rights Movement Archive*, https://www.crmvet.org/lets/6308_sncc_allen_ltrxjail.pdf, accessed February 20, 2020.

> everyone in town knows it. He is not the kind soft-hearted mother [Charles] Sherrod is...[482]

The fight in Americus continued into 1965. Historian Stephen Tuck argued that many Blacks felt the protests in the summer of 1965 were as successful if not more successful than the protest in the infamous summer of 1963. However, Reverend J. R. Campbell noted that at some point the people of Americus had to take a break from the protest. Campbell stated, "The majority of the adults—the old people—is very tired."[483] Although the Americus-Sumter County Movement had met many of its goals, some activists recognized that it was time to take a step back and recuperate from the years-long campaign.

INTEGRATING THE SCHOOLS

In the meantime, African Americans worked to integrate the local public school system. At the start of the 1964 school year, Americus City Schools introduced the freedom of choice plan that gave African American students the opportunity to integrate the previously segregated Americus High School.[484] The freedom of choice plan was not unique to Americus; similar measures had been introduced across the South by many school districts after the *Brown v. The Board of Education* decision of 1954. *Atlantic* contributor Will Stancil notes that,

> By the late 1960s, about 90 percent of southern districts operated using something called a ..."freedom of choice" plan. Under this system, students were automatically re-enrolled in the same school every year, but had the option to change their enrollment if desired, which meant that a black child could enter a formerly all-white school. The hard racial barrier between schools was now permeable. This satisfied, at least in the most minimalistic sense, the requirements of Brown: No child was prevented from attending any school because of his or her race.[485]

With the newly awarded freedom for African American school children to decide which school they wanted to attend, Robertiena Freeman, Dobbs Wiggins, David Bell Jr., and Minnie Wise became the first four Black students to integrate Americus High School.

Unsurprisingly, the freedom of choice plan was met with staunch opposition from the White citizens of Americus. Despite the hardships that Freeman-Fletcher saw firsthand in Americus, she still approached the idea of integrating Americus High with a great deal of optimism:

> I remember telling my dad that I want to go [to Americus High School]. I'm going to tell you what: I don't know why I thought that [I was] fixing to desegregate the school and the white people are going to be our friends and I'm going to go to

482. Ibid.

483. Tuck, *Beyond Atlanta*, 185.

484. Robertiena Freeman-Fletcher, 2004.

485. Will Stancil "The Radical Supreme Court Decision that America Forgot," *The Atlantic*, May 29, 2018, https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2018/05/the-radical-supreme-court-decision-that-america-forgot/561410/, accessed February 20, 2020.

> school and I'm gone have these white friends and I'm going to still have these black friends and the world is just gone be wonderful.[486]

SNCC, however, reported that, "When four Negro students integrated Americus High School in the fall of 1964, they were greeted by white students with rocks and bottles while 10 state troopers and Sheriff Chappell watched."[487] Freeman's poignant hope for herself and the other students was dashed by White intransigence.

Figure 5.9. The segregated White Americus High School in 1948. Courtesy Kellette Heys Wade Sr.

The emphasis on education was prevalent in the Black community and significant to the integration of Americus High School. For example, Lorena Barnum Sabbs, also one of the first Black students to attend Americus High School, remembered her family's insistence that she attend the school despite her trepidation. In recalling her mother and grandmother's reaction to the opportunity to attend the school, Barnum Sabbs stated, "I remember… when I decided I would go to Americus High, my grandmother was the one with her foot in my back saying, 'You need to go, you need to go.' My mother too… she made me understand that [I was not doing it for myself]. [I] represented a whole lot of folks who couldn't do it."[488]

Subsequent studies of the integration of Americus High School sought to examine other individuals' roles in the monumental event such as White teachers and White students. Author and *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* journalist Jim Auchmutey pointed out in *The Class of '65* that the four children chosen to integrate Americus High School, especially Freeman, were excellent candidates to deal with the struggles they would face because of their past involvement in the Black freedom struggle. Auchmutey reflects, "All [four] of them were veterans of the 1963 protests and had been arrested, so they had a clear idea of what white people could do when they were challenged."[489]

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486. Robertiena Freeman-Fletcher, 2004.

487. SNCC, "Fact Sheet Americus, Georgia," n.d.

488. Lorena Barnum Sabbs, March 6, 2004.

489. Auchmutey, *The Class of '65*, 97.

One of the focal points of Auchmutey's text was the treatment of one White student, Greg Wittkamper, who lived on Koinonia Farm. Wittkamper, who was influenced by the farm's staunch insistence on equality, chose to embrace the Black students that integrated into Americus High, including Robertiena Freeman. Though Freeman understood the risks that would accompany the integration of Americus High, Auchmutey explained that Freeman was excited about the desegregation in part because she wanted to have White friends. Although this was Freeman's hope, Auchmutey highlights that the reality was, "[Freeman] would only have one white friend," Wittkamper, and "…he was as unwelcome at the school as she was."[490] Undoubtedly, the treatment received by the Black students at Americus High had an everlasting effect on how they would view their time at the school. When asked about not returning to Americus High School for almost 30 years despite class reunions and opportunities to speak during Black history month, Robertiena Freeman stated, "That's right. That is how long they never invited me to a class reunion. Never. Whatever. I wouldn't say I was bitter, but a little hardened about the school. I had moved on in life."[491]

Melinda Merritt was a member of the second wave of Black students to attend Americus and her approach to handling the treatment she received was vastly different from Barnum and Freeman's. She credited her mother's connections with other Black women who worked in the homes of the White families as being a source of personal information about her White classmates. Merritt exclaimed in an interview,

> When I went to [Americus High] school I had the advantage. [The white kids] didn't know me, but I knew anything and everything I needed to know about them. So when they came with the bullshit… I zapped them with it… they used to call us 'nigger'… When they got on my nerves, I'd say "well at least my mama ain't no pill head… at least I don't have to go home and have sex with my daddy before I can eat dinner.[492]

In Merritt's mind, she mirrored the behavior of her aggressors giving herself a level of control over her situation.

Some of these differences were apparent in the other interviewees of the *Sumter Oral History Project*. In Kuhn's interview with J. R. and Mamie Campbell, the fact that Mamie was a transplant to Americus appeared to affect her views of Americus years after the movement. When asked about the effect the movement had on the present-day community of Americus, Mamie Campbell stated, "You can't make people love you… And so as a whole, I got no quarrel with our community now. They roll out the red carpet for me wherever I go." There is no doubt that a person should not be condemned for their choice to not harbor resentment. Examining Lorena Burnam Sabbs' interview further revealed her acknowledgement of how the negative treatment by Whites affected her relationship with Americus years after the movement. When Kuhn asked if she harbored any resentment toward the city and its residents all those years later, Sabbs stated, "Yeah. I still do carry some of that [resentment]. It was hard coming back here. The people that still live here did those things."[493] Sabbs expressed the struggles of revisiting the

490. Ibid., 97.

491. Robertiena Freeman-Fletcher, 2004.

492. Melinda Merritt, October 2018.

493. Lorena Barnum Sabbs, March 6, 2004.

place that both raised her and haunted her as a child while reiterating that she did not need or want the acceptance of those individuals that tormented her in the past.

Following the integration of Americus High, Robertiena Freeman found herself targeted by local law enforcement officials once again. In 1965, she and a boy named Alex Brown were arrested and charged with fornication for kissing in a parked car after school. Freeman stated, "My dad took me to the jailhouse, they booked me, and they locked me up. I cried and cried. My mama came to see me. I must have been locked up for three or four days. It was just a haze to me because I just cried."[494] According to a SNCC field report, the two teenagers were sentenced in a closed-door hearing despite the fact that both had taken and passed lie detector tests in an effort to prove their innocence in the matter.[495] Freeman would eventually be released and would go on to take her final exams at school, which she proclaimed she passed without having to study due to her confinement in a jail cell.

CONCLUSION

The activism that predated SNCC also outlived it. In July 1965, four Black women, including the first "negro woman" to run for public office in Sumter County, Mary K. Fishe Bell, suffered a fate similar to the activists who came before them. The local police arrested the women for standing in the voting line designated as "white female" only.[496] Upon their arrest, the women refused to accept their release until all charges against them were dropped, opting to stay in jail until they were given their just due. They stood on the principle that racial segregation in the United States was no longer tolerable under the freshly minted Civil Rights Act of 1964. Belle would eventually lose the campaign for public office but her historic role in Sumter County history was not made any less significant by her loss. It would take more years of sacrifice to push the Americus and Sumter County governments to comply with the Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1960, and 1964.

The Andersonville site was controversial among African Americans in Americus during the civil rights movement. On the one hand, it became a symbol to some in the movement. Its history of racial exclusion, especially in the cemetery, combined with its history of Black patrons using the grounds for celebration throughout the 1900s made it a polarizing location. Melinda Merritt's interview revealed that her family, and her mother in particular, embraced Andersonville as a place near and dear to the Black community. This type of hope and optimism gave many Black families something to look forward to despite the hardship they faced in the fight for their dignity and civil rights. Of course, African Americans in Americus did not all share the same sentiments. While Andersonville meant something positive to some Blacks in the Americus-Sumter County area, to others it was simply another White establishment that deserved no significant recognition in their eyes.[497] Sam Mahone asserted that Andersonville meant absolutely nothing to him as he grew up in Americus. Mahone stated that to him and the people

494. Robertiena Freeman-Fletcher, 2004.

495. SNCC, "Fact Sheet Americus, Georgia," n.d.

496. Ibid.

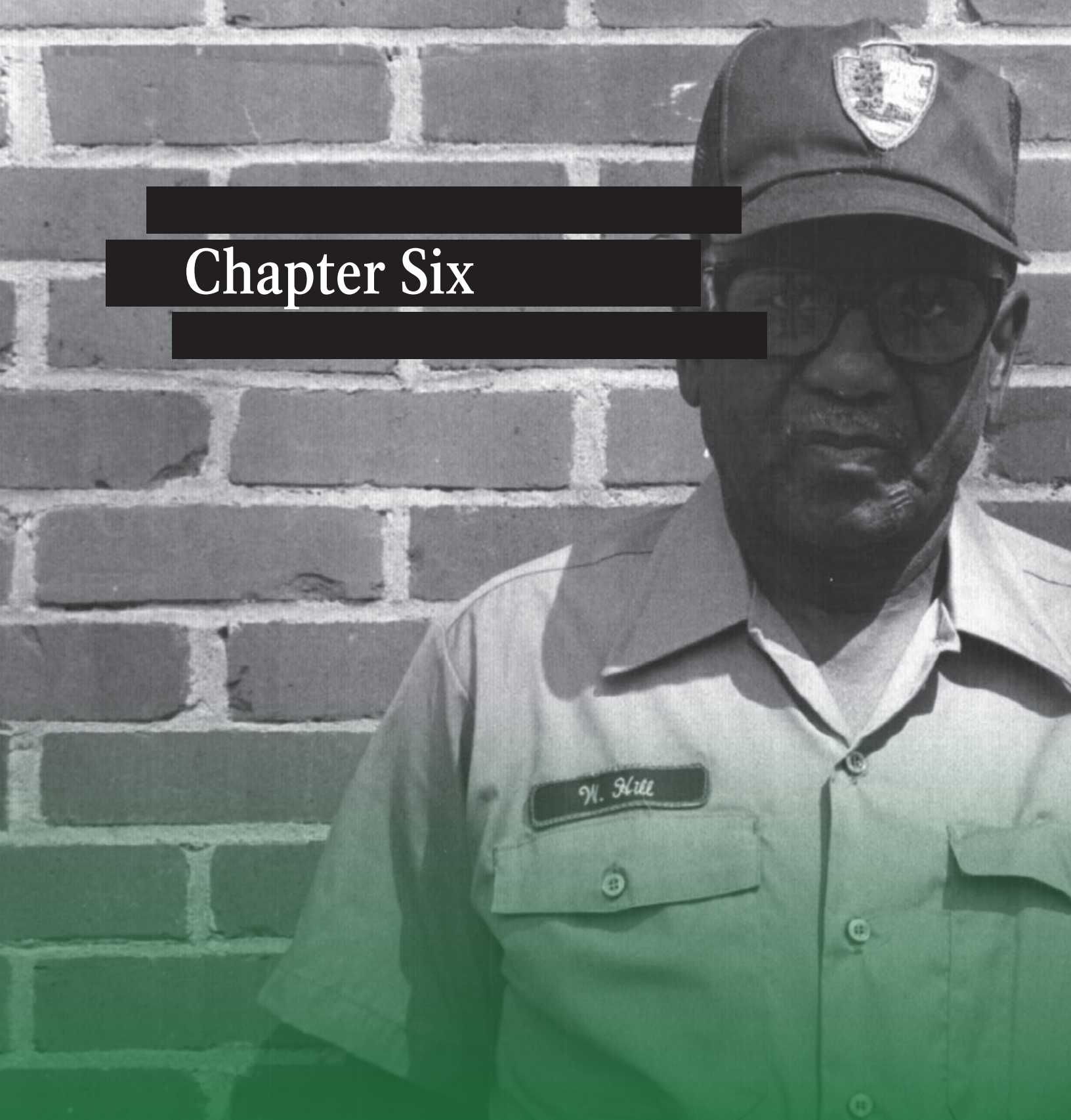
497. Merritt, October 2018.

he knew, Andersonville was nothing more than another place near town that was not meant for African Americans.[498]

Figure 5.10. These bars of the Lee County Stockade represent the complicated connections in historical memory of the Americus Movement and Andersonville. Courtesy Evan Kutzler, 2020.

One hundred years separated the Emancipation Proclamation from the beginning of the Americus-Sumter County Movement. Yet the history of the 1960s civil rights struggle in Americus shows several points of comparison with that of the 1860s Civil War prison in Andersonville. First, both involved African Americans who were fighting for liberation. Black enlistees in the Union Army battled to eradicate slavery; civil rights activists commonly saw themselves as nonviolent soldiers fighting against Jim Crow. Second, both involved incarceration. Blacks imprisoned at Andersonville stood behind a wall and a "dead line," while protesters in Americus did time in facilities such as the county jail, a local juvenile detention center, and the Lee County Stockade that was often mistakenly referred to as a Civil War prison. Third, violence upon Black bodies occurred in both cases. But that brutality could not stop Blacks in either period of Georgia's history from their continued pursuit of freedom.

498. Sam Mahone, September, 2018.



Chapter Six

Creating a National Park, Displacing an African American Community

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CHAPTER SIX: CREATING A NATIONAL PARK, DISPLACING AN AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

In October of 1959, the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments "resolved that (it) go on record as recommending the addition of Andersonville Prison site to the national park system should administrative considerations make it appear desirable."[499] Interest in Andersonville prison site had grown dramatically with the popularity of MacKinlay Kantor's novel, *Andersonville*, published in 1955, and continued to increase with planning for the Civil War Centennial. Local and state politicians and many community leaders believed that making the prison site and cemetery into a national park would bring visitors to this southwest Georgia community at a time when Georgia was beginning to embrace tourism for its economic development potential. Over the next 10 years, during a time of great expansion for the National Park Service, local and state boosters worked to ensure that Andersonville would be so designated.

That same month, Velma Pride Coley was starting her senior year at the Sumter County High School, riding the bus 11 miles every day from her Andersonville home to Americus. Born in 1942, Velma was the first child of Calvin Abraham Pride and his wife Willie Mae Pride. Velma's grandfather, Calvin W. Pride, worked at Andersonville National Cemetery, and her father started work there when her grandfather retired. She recalls going to the cemetery every weekend with her friends: "They had a little section there with lilies and water in there, and we'd go down in there and throw our pennies in." She attended grammar school across the road from the prison park; after the one-room African American schoolhouse burned in Andersonville, classes moved to the two churches near the prison park entrance gates. Velma remembers going to the cemetery with her teacher and Girl Scout leader Bertha Kennedy Holton, who lived at the entrance to the prison park, to put flags on the graves for Decoration Day. "It took us about a week or so to do that, but we did it! We had sore hands for about two weeks. We had to put them *down* on in the ground!"[500]

Coley described a "real lively" African American community here along the Dixie Highway around the cemetery and prison site when she was growing up. "We had a lot of people during that time in Andersonville." Multiple generations of African Americans had lived here since the early years of the 20th century, some even earlier. Many proudly described how their families had been here since soon after the Civil War. Besides the Ebenezer Baptist Church and St. Paul's African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, which housed the grammar school classes, Coley remembers many homes and businesses lining the road. A filling station and grocery store stood across the road from the entrance to the prison park, at the intersection with Ellaville Road and Church Street, which both led into Andersonville. "It had a little restaurant, and she would sell hamburgers and hot dogs in the back." The filling station was a busy place, recalled Coley, "The road was coming from Americus, coming from Montezuma… Everybody conjugated right down there." The truckers for the mining company stopped to eat lunch as they carried

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499. Andersonville Master Plan, National Park Service, Southeast Region, October 18, 1971, 3; Planning Study Report, Andersonville Prison Park, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington Planning and Services Center Office of Resource Planning, 8, in West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission Papers, Identifier 2124875, Containers 20 and 21, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, Atlanta, Georgia.

500. Velma Pride Coley, interview with Keri Adams and Ann McCleary, March 19, 2019, digital recording, Andersonville National Historic Site, Andersonville, Georgia.

materials out of the nearby kaolin and bauxite mines. Dirt roads extended from the Dixie Highway to houses and farms off the main road, including one road through the prison site to connect families working the land beyond. Several members of the Black community worked at the cemetery. "That was one of the main places that you could get a decent job," Coley commented. Some from this community and other Black families from the region buried their loved ones here after the cemetery began to allow African American burials in 1946. And at least some African Americans visited the cemetery to attend services and to memorialize those who had died. The creation of the Andersonville National Historic Site so desired by local business leaders and boosters would ultimately displace this stretch of the Black community along the Dixie Highway. "The Interior Department bought all of that, and the people had to move," she remembers.[501]

The planning and establishment of a new national park at Andersonville National Cemetery and Prison Park occurred during a decade that witnessed significant events in civil rights history in Georgia and the United States. The Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments decided to create a park at Andersonville only five years after the Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education*. Race relations in this southwest Georgia region had become increasingly tense, as they were throughout the state. Georgia Governor Marvin Griffin and the state legislature passed what became known as "massive resistance" legislation opposing the 1954 and 1955 Supreme Court decisions on civil rights. According to Griffin, "Come hell or high-water, races will not be mixed in Georgia schools, no matter how much the Supreme Court seeks to sugar coat its bitter pill of tyranny, the people of Georgia and the South will not swallow it."[502] Hence, Velma Coley attended a segregated Black high school in Americus in 1959. Nor would they mix in Andersonville National Cemetery. Even after Truman's 1948 executive order to integrate the U.S. Army, which led to the integration of some national cemeteries, Andersonville National Cemetery remained segregated. In 1956, in response to the *Brown* decision, Georgia voted to change the state flag by adding an image of the Confederate battle flag. Blacks formed plans to organize, protest, and resist. Martin Luther King Jr. became president of the new Southern Christian Leadership Conference in Atlanta in 1957. By the early 1960s, Americus would become a center of protest in southwestern Georgia.

In this highly charged political climate, it is not surprising that very little discussion was had about the role African Americans played in the Andersonville prison story or of African Americans becoming engaged in the park planning process. All the boosters, community leaders, and planners in the project were White. Further, these leaders found themselves in an ideological battle about what story should be told here. Some southern Whites worried that a national park at the prison would be used to blame the Confederacy for the terrible treatment of prisoners at this camp and shed a negative light on the South. White southern heritage groups actively engaged in conversations about the future of the cemetery and prison site.

Four sets of actors came together to create the park: (1) local and state leaders advocating for the park, (2) National Park Service staff planning the park, (3) Confederate heritage groups opposing the park but trying to at least shape the story that would result, and (4) African American community members who sold their land to the government to create the park. Given the heated tensions during the civil rights movement, the National Park Service ultimately chose

501. Coley, interview.

502. Stephen G. N. Tuck, *Beyond Atlanta: The Struggles for Racial Equality in Georgia, 1940–1980* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001), 99.

a safe interpretive route to gain support for the park: a focus on the prisoner of war experience across time, an idea in American minds during these years of the Vietnam War. The African Americans who had lived here and tended this space for almost 100 years had no voice in developing the park story or even in its creation.

ANDERSONVILLE IN THE POPULAR IMAGINATION

Andersonville sparked new interest in the prison site after its publication in 1955. Over the next 15 years, this Pulitzer-prize winning novel, a play, then later a movie titled *The Andersonville Trials*, and the Civil War Centennial increased awareness of this place in American popular culture. Tourist visitation to the prison site and national cemetery increased dramatically, building popular support for the creation of a national park.

MacKinlay Kantor's work was a powerful and dramatic retelling of the Andersonville prison experience, a culmination of 25 years of research drawing on memoirs written by surviving prisoners. Historian Henry Steele Commager wrote in the New York Times Book Review at the time of its publication: "Onto the warp of history Mr. Kantor has woven with the stuff of imagination an immense and terrible pattern, a pattern which finally emerges as a gigantic panorama of the war itself, and of the nation that tore itself to pieces in war. Out of fragmentary and incoherent records, Mr. Kantor has wrought the greatest of our Civil War novels." Commager wrote that the story Kantor tells is a universal experience about life in the most difficult of circumstances, one that resonated with an audience who had lived through World War II and recalled the horrors of the Holocaust and war crimes trials at Nuremberg and Tokyo. "There is neither hero nor villain here, nor narrative nor plot in the ordinary sense, but the prison embraces them all, submerges them all in a common humanity or inhumanity, reduces them all to agonized parodies of men."[503]

Andersonville's rise to popularity was dramatic. The 700-plus page novel soon became the *New York Times* book-of-the-month in 1955 and it won the Pulitzer Prize the following year. Some historians argued that his book perpetuated the "northern myth" about the war. But historian and Emory Professor Bell Wiley considered the novel to be an accurate portrayal of the Andersonville story, reflecting reports compiled by Confederate inspectors who visited there.[504] *Atlanta Constitution* editor Ralph McGill wrote that the novel was a historically accurate picture of how Union soldiers fared at the camp. "It can only make us hate war the more and cause us to know that always the eternal struggle goes on between the best and the worst in mankind," observed McGill, "and that war gives free rein to brutality as well as to courage and kindness."[505]

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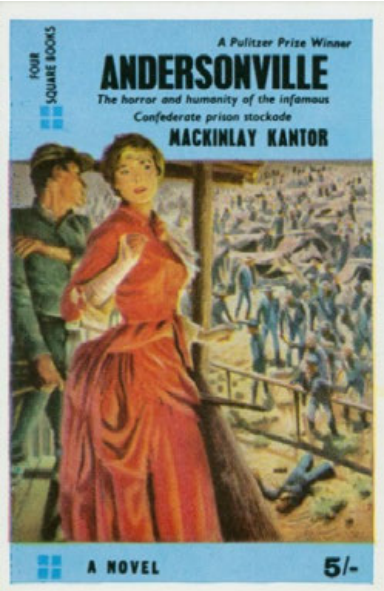
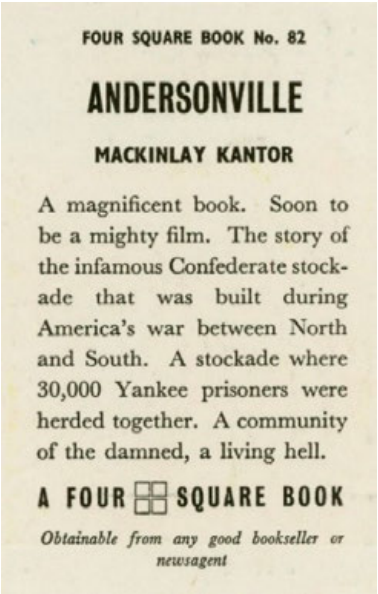
503. Henry Steele Commager, "A Novel of an Infamous Prison in the Civil War," in *The New York Times Book Review* (New York: New York Times Company, October 30, 1955) 1, 32, https://www.enotes.com/topics/mackinlay-kantor , and "Using the Film Andersonville in the Classroom," https://www.nps.gov/ande/learn/education/upload/film_guide.pdf.

504. Bell I. Wiley, "Southern Historian Agrees with Writings of Kantor on Life at Andersonville Prison," *The Atlanta Constitution,* November 3, 1955.

505. Ralph McGill, "'Andersonville,' A Big Novel." *The Atlanta Constitution,* November 1, 1955.

Figures 6.1a and 6.1b. MacKinlay Kantor's Andersonville depicted on a cigarette card. Courtesy New York Public Library.





Still, some southerners bristled. "It is no doubt a fair appraisal of the literary quality of the work, and of the historical accuracy of the same," wrote Arthur E. Ramsaur in response to McGill's review. Ramsaur, whose stepfather worked at the prison, took offense to so much blame being placed on the Confederacy, and he denied that Wirz was the monster Kantor depicted. "It is a terrible and pitiful page of history; the unavoidable truth is that the federal government deserted its own."[506]

506. Arthur E. Ramsaur, "Stepson of Witness at Wirz Trial Says Andersonville Horror was Fault of North," *The Atlanta Constitution,* November 4, 1955.

The novel's popularity generated increased popular interest in Andersonville and Civil War prisons. Newspaper articles throughout 1957 and 1958 describe the growing popularity of the prison site. On May, 28, 1957, the *Atlanta Journal* observed that up until the book's publication, visitors seldom visited the prison site, which he claims was also "ignored by nearby residents," but now the park was preparing for "the increasing influx of visitors."[507] In June 1957, journalist W. S. Kirkpatrick wrote that "The Bitterness is Gone" and Andersonville "is being rediscovered." Kirkpatrick added that "revival of interest in this once highly controversial spot began with the recent publication" of *Andersonville*, and that "Andersonville Prison Park and Cemetery has long been one of the South's most underrated tourism attractions." Many Georgia agencies are hoping to "awaken public interest in this unique historic spot," and their efforts "are just beginning to bear fruit."[508] By October 1957, another reporter described how *Andersonville* "has attracted wide interest and stirred considerable debate."[509]

Several years later, in 1959, dramatist Saul Levitt wrote a play about the prison focusing on the trial of Captain Wirz, further fueling the popularity of the story. The award-winning play opened in New York on December 29, 1959. Using the official war records, the play documents the conditions at Andersonville while also exploring the ethical dilemma of Wirz's behavior at the prison.[510] Levitt proclaimed that he wrote the play because "the Wirz story impressed me as rich dramatic material," not that he was interested in the Civil War or that he wanted to comment on the recent Nuremberg Trials. Still, interest continued to grow.[511]

The emerging Civil War centennial put Andersonville even more clearly on the map. In 1959, the national Civil War Centennial Commission urged each state to create its own commission and included Civil War prisons as an area that needed further attention.[512] Georgia created its Civil War Centennial Commission on April 10, 1959, to coordinate events around the state, and Andersonville was noted as an important place connected with this history. According to Laura McCarty, the state commission used the centennial "as a means for education and reflection on the war and its legacy, as an opportunity for the collection and preservation of materials and documents related to the war, and as a vehicle for encouraging cultural tourism and economic development throughout the state." Georgia events, held between 1961 and 1965, occurred in the midst of intense civil rights activities, and most of the official activities sponsored by the all-White commission took this opportunity to "glorify the Confederacy, adopting its leaders, rhetoric, and symbols as a means for expressing resistance to civil rights ideals." The centennial events largely "upheld an idealized vision of antebellum plantation culture, celebrated Confederate military heroes, and omitted references to slavery as a cause for the war, all of which are characteristics of Lost Cause ideology." McCarty concludes that, "most of the official centennial activities in Georgia took place entirely on the white side of the color line [so] the

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507. Benjamin Cloyd, *Haunted by Atrocity: Civil War Prisons in American Memory* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Press, 2010), 136–8.

508. W. S. Kirkpatrick, "The Bitterness is Gone at Andersonville," *The Atlanta Journal and the Atlanta Constitution,* June 2, 1957.

509. Daniel Frank, "He Owns the Key to Andersonville Prison," *The Atlanta Journal and the Atlanta Constitution,* October 6, 1957.

510. Barton Myers, "*The Andersonville Trial* (Play) and *Andersonville* (Film)," *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, last updated September 20, 2016, https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/arts-culture/andersonville-trial-play-and-andersonville-film.

511. Jack Gaver, "Civil War Play Off the Record," The *Atlanta Journal* and the *Atlanta Constitution,* January 31, 1960.

512. Cloyd, Haunted by Atrocity, 146.

effort to encourage the public to reflect on the war's legacy of slavery and emancipation remained incomplete."[513]

What part did Andersonville play in that story? A July 1965 advertisement for the centennial in the *Atlanta Constitution*, entitled "See Georgia First," encouraged Georgians to "relive history" at the state's Civil War sites and "participate in this year's Civil War Centennial." The ad included Andersonville with several other Civil War sites, including Fort Pulaski National Monument, Stone Mountain Memorial Park, Chickamauga National Battlefield (now called Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park), Fort McAllister, and Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park. The entry for Andersonville explained that the "more than 50,000 Union soldiers were impressed in this Confederate stockage," and that Kantor's "best-selling novel… recalls this dramatic and tragic story."[514]

Former Andersonville Superintendent Fred Boyles noted that visitation to Andersonville—both the cemetery and the prison park—increased significantly after both the publication of Kantor's novel *Andersonville* and the centennial of the Civil War. The army started rethinking whether it could and even should continue to manage the site. According to Boyles, the army thought "we've got to take care of all these visitors and they're just getting in the way. They're getting in the way while we're digging graves and cutting grass. These pesky visitors who keep wanting to learn about this Andersonville thing. And the army also is saying—because most of the people are coming out of—there's a tie at Fort Benning, just because it's nearby, and the Fort Benning upper management, are like, why are we running a historic site? This is not our job. Our job's the Army, not historic site management. We can cut the grass and dig the graves," but managing visitors and giving programs and interpretation about the site is "not what we do."[515]

The army was not prepared for the many visitors and their probing questions," Boyles writes. "By the mid-1960s the Department of the Army began suggesting relinquishing responsibilities at the site," explaining that "preservation was not their job." Local individuals would come to push for development of Andersonville as a park, though Boyles adds, "It was a challenge to gain local support for a site that still angered a majority of the population."[516]

PROMOTING TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The growing interest in Andersonville in the late 1950s paralleled the development of a stronger, state-supported effort to increase tourism and promote economic development. In 1959, Bill T. Hardman became the first director of tourism in the state. Governor Vandiver wanted a tourist division, and he asked Hardman to create one in six to eight weeks. Hardman stayed in this position for 12 years, developing a strong tourism program throughout the state. His primary goal was to transform Georgia "from a place to drive through on the way to a beach destination in Florida into a 'stopover' destination." Hardman initiated a study to identify what tourists wanted, and then he used that study to push a bond project to widen and pave some of the

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513. Laura McCarty, "Civil War Centennial," New Georgia Encyclopedia, last updated September 9, 2014, https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/civil-war-centennial.

514. "See Georgia First," The *Atlanta Journal* and the *Atlanta Constitution*, July 26, 1964.

515. Fred Boyles, interview with Keri Adams, Julia Brock, and Ann McCleary, October 9, 2018, digital recording, Andersonville National Historic Site, Andersonville, Georgia.

516. Fred Boyles, "Andersonville: A Site Steeped in Controversy," typed manuscript, no date, Park Archives, Andersonville National Historic Site, Andersonville, Georgia.

major highways in Georgia. "Everyone was going to Florida," along the new Interstate 75, and Hardman wanted them to stop in Georgia.[517] The 1960s became a period of road improvement and highway expansion throughout the state.

Conveniently, Andersonville was close to the major new interstate to Florida. Construction of Interstate 75 began in 1963. By 1966, the highway was complete between Florida and the south end of Macon; by 1977, the finished highway extended through north Georgia. Improved highways running east and west were also being planned near Andersonville. A June 1967 "Phase One Study Report" for the proposed park, completed by Traffic Planning Associates, noted the "feasibility of an east-west limited access highway across south Georgia," from Kansas City to Jacksonville, "following a corridor which would place the highway very near Andersonville."[518] Clearly both of these highways would make this site more accessible for tourists to visit.

The growing tourism climate in the state and the planning and construction of better highways to transport visitors encouraged many communities to survey their existing cultural, historic, and natural resources. Then State Senator Jimmy Carter, who represented the 14th District from 1963–1967, believed that tourism was a significant opportunity for economic development in his region. He and other local boosters lobbied for Andersonville to become a national historic site. The prison park and national cemetery were only 20 miles from his home in Plains.[519] Much of this early local planning period occurred during the Civil War Centennial.

The Georgia Historical Commission (GHC) was also interested in this idea. In January 1964, Commission Secretary Mary Gregory Jewett wrote Senator Carter asking to meet and discuss his ideas for Andersonville. The GHC was created in February 1951 to "promote and increase knowledge and understanding of the history of state" and assisted local historical societies engaged in restoration projects by providing financial and technical support. In 1952, the GHC became a state agency—the first time that state government became involved in historic preservation activities in Georgia. The GHC accomplished pioneering work across the state, including "acquiring, restoring, excavating, and developing twenty historic sites" and erecting 1,800 historical markers. The GHC played an active role in the Civil War Centennial by erecting 750 historical markers around the state.[520] Jewett had heard of Carter's desire to develop Andersonville Prison Park as a "tourist attraction," and wrote to him that "I am anxious to know just what has developed since the meeting in South Georgia."[521]

At the time, Carter represented and served as president of the West Central Georgia Planning Commission (WCGPC), which had proposed a "long range program for full development of

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517. Southeast Tourism Society, "Our Founder," https://southeasttourism.org/our-founder/; Bill Hardman, Reflections on Georgia Politics, interviewed by Bob Short, February 4, 2013, University of Georgia, accessible at https://kaltura.uga.edu/media/t/1_qq954y3j ; Kaylynn Washnock, "Bill Hardman (1926–2013)," *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, last updated July 15, 2016, https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/bill-hardman-1926–2013.

518. Master Plan, 5.

519. Gary M. Fink, "Jimmy Carter (b. 1924)." *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, last updated August 10, 2018, https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/government-politics/jimmy-carter-b-1924.

520. Joseph B. Cumming, "Georgia Historical Commission," *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, last updated April 26, 2013, https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/arts-culture/georgia-historical-commission.

521. Mary Gregory Jewett to Jimmy Carter, January 12, 1964, West Georgia Development Committee, West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission Papers, Identifier 2124875, Containers 20 and 21, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, Atlanta, Georgia.

Andersonville and Lake Blackshear" that proposed these sites as major tourist attractions in its region. The WCGPC met December 16, 1963, at Andersonville National Cemetery to "inspect the area which includes the old prison grounds" and to discuss how to transform this site into a tourist attraction. The WCGPC hoped to reconstruct some of the stockade and breastworks, to enlarge the headquarters building, and to "supervise the orderly construction" of motels and restaurants nearby. Commission members believed that the proposed site would attract both a national and state audience. Among those attending this December meeting was Bill Hardman, the director of the Tourist Division of Georgia Industry and Trade.[522] Carter reached out to other potential partners as well, inviting representatives from the Georgia Art Commission at the University of Georgia to participate in the meeting.

Local community leaders played a key role in helping push this Andersonville idea forward, and they sought to maximize all available resources in this effort. Jimmy Carter acknowledged the support of Joe Hill, from Georgia Electric Membership Corporation in Millen, adding that "we could not have done this nor very much else without your help."[523] Hill served as the "area development coordinator" on the Commission. Joe Tanner suggested to Carter that the Andersonville Research Development proposal could help "reacquaint the community leaders in the area with the concept and objectives of area planning," noting that the Flint EMC of Reynolds and Sumter EMC of Americus would be happy to sponsor a dinner in relation to the meeting.[524] The WCGPC also drew on government resources to bring additional expertise. On January 29, 1965, the commission reported to the Office of Economic Development in Atlanta that it had employed two program developers for their specialized training: "Robert Bailey (White) and James N. Hamilton (Colored) from Americus," although there is no reference as to what these two men produced at this time.[525]

CREATING THE FIRST PARK PLAN

The Andersonville project needed a more detailed written proposal that could propose and analyze options for what to do with this historic site. In 1965, Carter asked the University of Georgia to prepare a preliminary developmental study of Andersonville Prison Park and national cemetery.[526] The newly established Institute of Community and Area Development, founded by former extension agent J. W. Fanning in 1961, took the lead on the project.[527] Robert J. Hill, a landscape architect with the Institute of Community and Area Development, and William B. Keeling, a professor of economics in the College of Business Administration at

522. "Our Planning Group May Take Over Andersonville," undated newspaper article, West Georgia Development Committee, West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission Papers, Identifier 2124875, Containers 20 and 21, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, Atlanta, Georgia.

523. Jimmy Carter to Joe Tanner, December 21, 1964, West Georgia Development Committee, West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission Papers, Identifier 2124875, Containers 20 and 21, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, Atlanta, Georgia.

524. Joe Hill, EMC Area Development Coordinator, to Jimmy Carter, March 3, 1965, West Georgia Development Committee, West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission Papers, Identifier 2124875, Containers 20 and 21, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, Atlanta, Georgia.

525. Hugh W. Davis, WGCPDC, to Lucious Teasley, Office of Economic Development, January 29, 1965, West Georgia Development Committee, West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission Papers, Identifier 2124875, Containers 20 and 21, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, Atlanta, Georgia.

526. Liz Sargent, Deborah Slaton, Tim Penish, Andersonville National Historic Site Historic Research Study, September 2017, Draft, 82.

527. "History," J. W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development, University Georgia, 2019, https://www.fanning.uga.edu/about/history/.

the University of Georgia, co-authored the study, in association with the Bureau of Business and Economic Research and the Institute of Community and Area Development. Bill T. Hardman contributed as well.[528]

The Preliminary Development Study of Andersonville Historic Site, completed in February 1965, focused primarily on the "park site."[529] The report describes the prison park, then administered by the Department of the Army, as containing the remains of the original earthworks around the prison compound and site, the "white stakes which outline the prison compound and the 'dead line' within that compound, the escape tunnels and wells dug by the prisoners, the Providence Springs memorial, and a number of monuments" erected to the dead by various states as well as service roads, a service station with restrooms, and cannons at the star fort. The cemetery was still in use at this time, although the authors noted that "there have been few burials there in the past several years." While the cemetery had 40 acres planned for expansion across the highway, the army did not expect to need that land. "Current Department of Defense economy programs" challenged efforts to continually keep up the park, so the authors suggested that the army might consider disposing the land along with the 40-acre tract across the road.[530]

Admittedly, the authors noted, the story at the park "is not a pleasant one." The report suggested the uneasiness that the "local community" felt about telling a story about the prison camp which the Confederacy maintained, noting that "there are books, pictures, and stories to emphasize this aspect." There was a "temptation to rationalize conditions in the camp," but the report recommended that this approach should be resisted. "Whatever story is selected to be told should be told with historical honesty and integrity," a phrase that Carter underlined in his copy of the report, "without undue emphasis on the reasons for the conditions in the camp being as they were." The report advised against concentrating too much of the "South's side of the prison story" as it "would soon cause visitors to treat the development as a farce, and it would not have wide appeal."[531]

Determining how to tell the story "with integrity" would be a challenge. The authors noted that an emphasis upon "a presentation of the prison camp story" would have "real limitations as a development theme," adding that this approach would have a "depressing effect upon visitors and attendance might be limited to those with somewhat morbid appetites or with a particular interest in the camp, perhaps because an ancestor was imprisoned there." Instead, the report proposed the interpretation focus on "the last year of the war," which would enable the prison camp story to be told within its proper context. "The authors believed that because Andersonville's story is part of "both Union and Confederate activities during the last year of the war, there is need neither to minimize happenings at the camp nor to attempt to rationalize

528. Robert J. Hill and William B. Keeling, Preliminary Development Study Andersonville Historical Complex, prepared for the West Central Georgia Area Planning and Development Commission by the Bureau of Business and Economic Research and the Institute of Community and Area Development, the University of Georgia, February 1965, in West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission Papers, Identifier 2124875, Containers 20 and 21, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, Atlanta, Georgia.

529. Preliminary Development Study, 4.

530. Preliminary Development Study, 1.

531. Preliminary Development Study, 4.

or excuse them. They can be presented with historical accuracy because they will be balanced by the larger story of what was happening outside the stockade."[532]

The report observed that tourism was growing in Georgia, especially tourism connected with Georgia's history, which has "tremendous appeal to the out-of-state visitor," perhaps more so than other southern states. With the proposed theme of exploring the last year of the war it "should be possible to create a complex with wide appeal, one that will have the pulling power to attract visitors from all over the southeast," especially those traveling on Interstate 75 only 25 miles to the east. However, the report also emphasized that it would be essential to "control all future development around the site" and to create appealing attractions and activities along the routes leading to the park.[533]

The authors proposed programming related to the park, none of which related to African American history. They wrote that the "complex places certain restrictions upon the types of activities which should be encouraged there," adding that "normal recreational pursuits should appear incongruous when carried on in the vicinity of a prison park and national cemetery… There can be no place in or near the complex for raucous activities or carnival atmosphere."[534]

To develop the story, the authors proposed a museum "immediately" inside the park to provide enough background to make the visitor experience meaningful but not to answer all questions that visitor must have. Visitors would then tour the site, by car or foot, with several directed group tours offered each day. After visiting the prison site, visitors would return to the museum "for the major historical presentation of the 'Last Year of the War,'" interpreted through an audio-visual presentation or a diorama with lights behind translucent panels and a dramatic "taped commentary in an almost fully darkened room." During the summer, the park could offer evening programs that included "songs of the North and of the South, stories and legends of heroes of both sides, etc." Last, the report suggests that the park incorporate "special ceremonies on historic dates."[535]

In addition to the museum, the report proposed a gift shop selling specialized "quality" merchandise, a snack bar or restaurant, and an outdoor area to exhibit Civil War objects including both transportation and military artifacts. The area across the road should include support facilities—tent and trailer camping space and a small grocery store.[536]

The 1965 report proposes a park for the prison site and discusses the need to acquire the land currently under cultivation between the prison and the cemetery. In the section on "planning the physical complex," the authors suggest four key elements: (1) the parkway with appropriate entrances, (2) the prison park with a partial restoration of its structure and an educational museum, (3) the land lying between the prison park and the cemetery, and (4) the national cemetery. Any activities or structures not related to the historical complex "could be incongruous and destructive to the atmosphere which this development program seeks to

532. Preliminary Development Study, 4–5.

533. Preliminary Development Study, 4–5, 9.

534. Preliminary Development Study, 6.

535. Preliminary Development Study, 7, 9, 12.

536. Preliminary Development Study, 8.

create." Instead, this land should be developed as an "aesthetic garden area" with a "quiet, restful, garden-like sector with attractive plantings for visitors' enjoyment."[537]

One of the key issues for the authors was who could and should develop and manage a park here. Ultimately, the report suggests several alternatives for administration of the park. The first was the National Park Service, but the writers were unclear if the prison park would meet the developing national register criteria, since it did not have "unusual or unique landforms of vegetation" and "does not involve enough acreage" to qualify as a national recreation area. The report further notes that it is uncertain if the site would meet the criteria established by the national historic landmark program for national park system unit eligibility as "exceptional value in the same theme or period of history" and whether it would "stand out in national significance." Another concern was whether the site might "fill gaps in a theme or period of history so that a well-rounded representation of America's historical and cultural heritage may be achieved."[538]

The authors suggested several other options. The first was the Department of State Parks, which already administered "a number of historical sites." However, they believed that this department's main responsibility was more about providing opportunities for outdoor recreation than preserving and interpreting historic sites. The second option was the Georgia Historical Commission, which had expressed interest in the park but had limited funding for development of such sites. Additional proposed alternatives included creating an Andersonville Memorial Park Commission, a "separate development commission" like Warm Springs and the Little White House. This would be a "separate state agency" that would finance its own operations, although the Little White House received some initial developmental funding from the state. One last possibility was an "area park and recreation commission." Still, funding from a local government might be more uncertain.[539]

After outlining the economic advantages of the park to community, region, and state tourism efforts, the report noted that any development of the site must be "first-class and quality" to survive and to attract the "discriminating" visitor. With the improvement of highways and a growing number of attractions, the authors write, Andersonville would need to be competitive. Adequate funding must be secured to construct the necessary facilities and to provide professional staff.[540]

In the end, the authors concluded that "to realize its potential, the appeal of the park must be broadened," again describing the suggested development theme of the last year of the Civil War.[541] No doubt the most significant challenge to establishing the park was funding, and the report suggested first contacting the National Park Service with a "formal request to make the park a national historic site."[542] The report did not reference the African American history associated with the prison site. However, an attached report, "Andersonville Prison Park—National Cemetery," undated, also in the same collection with the Carter papers provides a brief

537. Preliminary Development Study, 13–15.

538. Preliminary Development Study, 20–21.

539. Preliminary Development Study, 22–24.

540. Preliminary Development Study, 30–32.

541. Preliminary Development Study, 36.

542. Preliminary Development Study, 25.

history of the prison park. This report acknowledges that "a labor force of negro slaves requisitioned for the work from plantation owners of the area began clearing the tall Georgia pines," and their work continued during the winter of 1863 and 1864.[543]

Shortly after receiving the report, the West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission (WCGPDC) sponsored an "Andersonville Development Conference" on May 12, 1965, with support from the Flint EMC in Reynolds, the Middle Georgia EMC in Vienna, and the Sumter EMC in Americus.[544] Jimmy Carter hosted the meeting, stating for the press release: "It has long been the feeling of middle Georgians that Andersonville National Cemetery and Prison Park, visited annually by thousands of tourists, could be the nucleus of a historical attraction second to none in the Nation. They have felt that the Andersonville story, 100 years later, could be told without emotional rationalizations if it became a part of a greater and more dramatic story, that of a Nation struggling for Rebirth."[545]

Dr. Keeling and the University of Georgia partners presented the results of the study, and J. W. Fanning moderated the meeting.[546] The consultants submitted a proposal, "The Last Year of the War," with the subtitle "A Tourism Potential for West Central Georgia." Keeling told participants that the site could attract between 150,000 and 200,000 visitors annually, if it met the "highest standards of design and construction."[547] Responses to the proposal, both during and after the meeting, emphasized the economic impact that the Andersonville Prison Park would have on the region. Both Georgia Power Company and J. W. Fanning wrote Carter to thank him for advocating this project. Statewide support was clearly emerging.

REQUESTING A NATIONAL PARK

The WCGPDC advocated for a national park at Andersonville, the first alternative in the University of Georgia proposal.[548] Boosters worked the political angles. An agenda for the Commission's Director's Meeting on August 25, 1965, included discussion about the

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543. "Andersonville Prison Park—National Cemetery," n.d., in West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission Papers, Identifier 2124875, Containers 20 and 21, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, Atlanta, Georgia.

544. Joe Hill to Hugh Davis, April 1, 1965, West Georgia Development Committee, West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission Papers, Identifier 2124875, Containers 20 and 21, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, Atlanta, Georgia. By this time, the Planning Commission had a Tourism and Recreation Committee, chaired by L. H. McKenzie, of the "Andersonville Project.

545. West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission Release, Montezuma, Georgia, May 12, Capsule History of Andersonville Prison, West Georgia Development Committee, West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission Papers, Identifier 2124875, Containers 20 and 21, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, Atlanta, Georgia.

546. Joe Hill to Hugh Davis, April 1, 1965, West Georgia Development Committee, West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission Papers, Identifier 2124875, Containers 20 and 21, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, Atlanta, Georgia.

547. "Andersonville Seen as Tourist Attraction," *Atlanta Journal*, May 13, 1965, in West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission Papers, Identifier 2124875, Containers 20 and 21, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, Atlanta, Georgia.

548. There had been a previous opportunity to consider Andersonville National Cemetery for inclusion in the National Park Service in 1933. National Park Service Director Horace Albright had advocated for transfer of the War Department parks to the National Park Service soon after President Franklin Roosevelt became president. On June 10, 1933, Executive Order 6616 proposed that all national cemeteries—along with public buildings, reservations, national parks, and national monuments—be incorporated into one department.

Facing some opposition, Albright suggested that Arlington and other national cemeteries still open for burials remain with the War Department. Executive Order 6228 clarified the first order to postpone transferring cemeteries still open for burial, but still including cemeteries "associated with historical areas" to be included with the new Division. Albright later reflected that the National Park Service "failed to include some sites it should have," and among those was Andersonville Prison Site and Cemetery.

For more, see Harlan D. Unrau and G. Frank Willis, *Expansion of the National Park Service in the 1930s: Administrative History,* (Denver Service Center: National Park Service, September 1983), Chapter Two: Reorganization of Park Administration, C. Reorganization of 1933, accessible at https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/unrau-williss/adhi2c.htm.

"Andersonville Steering Committee meeting with Governor Sanders."[549] The activity report prepared by Hugh Davis for the August 1965 meeting noted that State Senator John McKenzie wrote a letter to U. S. Senator Richard Russell, from Georgia, requesting a meeting to discuss the Andersonville Project. Enlisting senators and legislators would be essential to pass any legislation for a national park in Georgia through Congress.

On December 1, 1965, Senator Richard Russell met with Commission Tourism Chair L. H. McKenzie, State Senator John McKenzie, Representative Janet Merritt of Sumter County, and Andersonville Mayor and businessman Louis Easterlin. The group discussed how to fund development of the park. Senator Russell suggested that a delegation from the Steering Committee meet with him and Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall in Washington on January 4th or 5th. At that time, Russell promised to "explore the possibility of having the prison complex declared a national park," as proposed in the University of Georgia plan. The commission encouraged other members to attend this meeting as well. [550]

This was not the first time that the National Park Service had been discussed as a potential owner for the site. Two years earlier, in 1963, when the army declared 40 acres near the park as "surplus," the Middle Flint Planning and Development Commission recommended that the property be transferred to the National Park Service.[551] On November 1, 1965, after the Andersonville Study was completed, the Department of the Army requested that the National Park Service consider adding the national cemetery and prison park to the national park system.[552]

But this new request came at a time when the National Park Service was experiencing substantial growth under the leadership of Director George B. Hartzog Jr. Appointed by President Lyndon B. Johnson at the request of Secretary Udall in January 1964, Hartzog embarked on one of the most ambitious expansion programs in National Park Service history. As Assistant Director William C. Everhart later recalled, "I think that with the coming together of President Johnson, Stewart Udall, and Hartzog for the Great Society, there was really sort of a revolution… During that time all things were possible, and the Park Service started looking where it had never looked before for parks and for activities."[553]

Hartzog proclaimed a new agenda for the National Park Service, one "that could achieve goals of basic importance to a Great Society."[554] He argued that the National Park Service needed new historic, natural, and recreational areas to create a more accurate representation of America's treasures. During Hartzog's directorship, from 1964 through 1972, the National Park Service added 69 new parks. Hartzog advocated for parks to interpret a wider segment of American life.

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549. Agenda, Commission's Director's Meeting, August 25, 1965, West Georgia Development Committee, West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission Papers, Identifier 2124875, Containers 20 and 21, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, Atlanta, Georgia.

550. West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission Minutes, December 22, 1965, West Georgia Development Committee, West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission Papers, Identifier 2124875, Containers 20 and 21, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, Atlanta, Georgia.

551. Historic Resource Study, 82.

552. Master Plan, 3; Planning Study Report, 8.

553. Janet A. McDonnell, oral history interview with George Hartzog, National Park Service, 2007, 23–4 at http://www.nps.gov/history /history/online books/director/hartzog.ped ; William Everhart, *The National Park Service* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), 46.

554. [George Hartzog] "Introduction," January 15, 1965. Hartzog Papers, Project Zip File, Harpers Ferry Center, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia.

One-quarter of the sites were presidential homes, along with a few new military sites, but the majority reflected the new thematic structures established by the National Park Service. [555] While the Civil War had plenty of coverage through battlefield sites, no prison site was included in the National Park Service.

Still, opinions varied—even in the National Park Service—as to whether the prison site should be added to the system. Upon reviewing the "inquiry" from the Department of the Army, Southeast Regional Office Director Elbert Cox opposed the addition. In a letter dated January 13, 1966, he argued that, as the University of Georgia study shows, this is an "extremely unpleasant chapter in the Civil War." He posed the question of whether the "negative aspects of our history ought not to be confined to written works and not given commemorative treatment." He believed that Andersonville's "controversial past would create complex problems of interpretation that would make commemorative treatment for it of dubious value," especially given that its operation was deemed a "war crime." Cox argued that the more recent interpretation suggesting the prison suffered "unavoidable war-time conditions" would seem like Southern apologetics and invite controversy." [556]

Park advocates were relentless. Senator Russell, Third District Representative Howard "Bo" Callaway, and State Senator Jimmy Carter met with Secretary Udall in Washington on March 24, 1966, "to discuss Andersonville." [557] Russell informed Udall that there was "general support" across the state for the project. Secretary Udall responded that "staff members had some reservations about development of the memorial" and suggested it be a joint state-federal project. Carter assured Udall that the planning commission "does not want to reconstruct a one-sided version of what took place at Andersonville," but he believed that the site had national significance. Udall told the Georgia delegation that he still liked the idea despite the "atrocities" at the site, adding "History contains many things that are pleasant and unpleasant… That is the story of life." [558]

Local boosters were enthusiastic and optimistic about the tone of the meeting and the support Udall expressed. State Senator Jimmy Carter wrote to Russell expressing thanks for his support of the Andersonville Project, adding that, "All of us appreciate your meeting with us and Senator Talmadge and Secretary Udall concerning the development of Andersonville as a National War Memorial, and we feel very encouraged that this dream of ours will become a reality." But Carter's letter also suggested a slight change in focus for the park, perhaps as a result of meeting discussions. Carter now described the park as a "National War Memorial," that would become

555. Barry Macintosh, *The National Parks: Shaping the System* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1985), 62–8.

556. Elbert Cox, Regional Director, Southeast Regional Office, to Director, National Park Service, January 13, 1966, West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission Papers, Identifier 2124875, Containers 20 and 21, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, Atlanta, Georgia.

557. Master Plan, 3.

558. "Georgians Call on Udall for Andersonville Shrine," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 25, 1966.

its ultimate interpretive focus.[559] Russell responded that he thought Secretary Udall "was interested and impressed by the idea."[560]

Clearly, Udall felt strongly enough to investigate the idea further. Only two months later, during the week of May 23, 1966, the National Park Service sent a planning team to the area to review the site and prepare a report on management alternatives for the area.[561] The goal of the resulting Planning Study Report, printed in October 1966, was to determine "what possible sources of planning action can best be taken to preserve Andersonville Prison Park as a prime example of Civil War prisoner of war camps as they existed in the North and the South." Why Andersonville? According to the report, it was the "best known" and the only one still preserved as a historic site, due to its as association with the national cemetery.[562]

The key story proposed in the planning document was Andersonville's significance as a Civil War prisoner of war camp: "The story of Andersonville, like most prison camps North and South, demonstrates one aspect of the senseless tragedy that characterized the Civil War. Since many people tend to think of the Civil War in terms of gallant charges and nostalgic battle songs, it is, perhaps appropriate that they have an opportunity to see a side of the War that was only too familiar to the men who fought in it."[563]

The NPS report recommended three management options. The first was a continuation of the status quo with the Department of the Army managing the cemetery and the prison park, although the National Park Service could work with the army to plan visitor use and interpretation of the area. As a second option, the report suggested that the Georgia Historical Commission, which was "interested in the preservation of the historical integrity of the prison park, would be willing to participate in the development of the park," though funding would need to come from either the national or state governments and the army would need to continue to operate the national cemetery. The third option was to create a national historic site, which, the report noted, "can be justified since the Andersonville Prison Park complex meets the standard criteria for national historic sites within the national park system."[564]

Several questions arose around the first option. First, who would maintain the cemetery? Most importantly, who would manage the cemetery? According to the first option, the army would continue to manage the cemetery, but Alfred B. Fitt, from the Department of the Army, thought otherwise. He admitted to Raymond Freeman, Acting Assistant Director of the National Park

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559. Jimmy Carter to Richard B. Russell, March 28, 1996, West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission, Minutes, December 22, 1965, West Georgia Development Committee, West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission Papers, Identifier 2124875, Containers 20 and 21, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, Atlanta, Georgia.

560. Richard Russell to Jimmy Carter, April 4, 1996, West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission, Minutes, December 22, 1965, West Georgia Development Committee, West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission Papers, Identifier 2124875, Containers 20 and 21, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, Atlanta, Georgia.

561. Theodor Swen, Assistant Director, NPS to Richard Russell, no date [June 1966], West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission, Minutes, December 22, 1965, West Georgia Development Committee, West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission Papers, Identifier 2124875, Containers 20 and 21, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, Atlanta, Georgia; Master Plan, 3. As an additional note, this planning team would have been on-site the week before the funeral of Jimmy Williams, discussed in chapter five. The cemetery staff would have already been aware of issues and planning regarding the burial for Williams, who had been killed on May 17. Chris Barr, personal communication with author, April 2019.

562. Planning Study Report, 4.

563. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Planning Study Report, Andersonville Prison Park, Georgia, WASO, Office of Resource Planning, October 1966, in West Georgia Development Committee, West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission Papers, Identifier 2124875, Containers 20 and 21, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, Atlanta, Georgia.

564. Planning Study Report, 3.

Service in a June 1, 1967, letter that the army did not have the funds "to encourage greater visitor use and interpretation of the area." At the time, the army was more focused on the Vietnam War than on managing a historic site such as Andersonville. Fitt noted that the National Park Service had both the "staff and experience to develop the Prison Park into a worthwhile venture."[565] A second question was whether the National Park Service already had too many sites representing Civil War history. However, the report later noted that the "significance of the prison camp in the Civil War has been overlooked," according to Theme XIV of the NPS Historic Theme Studies." The Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments ultimately endorsed the alternative that "called for the establishment of a national historic site" at its November 1967 meeting.[566]

The planning report reflected an emerging point of view advocated by historian W. B. Hesseltine, that while conditions were poor at Andersonville prison, there was "new information about the causes of this tragedy." The authors wrote that, "the Confederacy suffered from three fundamental weaknesses that crippled its military operations and made the operation of an efficient prisoner of war camp system virtually impossible:" (1) inadequate industrial output, (2) an inability to get supplies for the prisoners, and (3) "crippled" rail and water transportation.[567]

The report, once again, does not suggest or reference any stories about African American history. It says nothing about the enslaved African Americans who built the prison or the United States Colored Troops imprisoned there. Even in the background section, when discussing the removal of buildings after the war, neither the Sumter School nor the African Americans who built homes and "placed the area under cultivation for various crops" are mentioned.[568]

Planning continued into 1967, as the list of documents the National Park Service needed to establish a new park was checked off. In May 1967, Frank Harrison, Assistant to NPS Director George Hartzog, and Mr. Robert R. Jacobsen came to Andersonville to meet with Jimmy Carter and others.[569] Although Hartzog was unable to come, he wrote Senator Russell that he had arranged for a master plan study team for Andersonville to determine boundaries, developments, and staffing, with the goal of completing the report in time for congressional hearings in the fall of 1967. Hartzog offered to provide a draft bill at that time to give to Senator Russell.[570]

The three-member NPS planning team visited the site in September 1967. They toured the site for two days "to get acquainted with the people and assemble the material in anticipation of an early master plan study team." The National Park Service hoped to present the master plan to Georgia Senators Richard B. Russell and Herman Talmadge, U.S. Representative Jack Brinkley,

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565. Alfred B. Fitt, Department of the Army, to Raymond L. Freeman, National Park Service, June 7, 1967, cited in Draft Administrative History, 37.

566. Planning Study Report, 5–6, 12; Master Plan, 3.

567 Planning Study Report, 10.

568. Planning Study Report, 8.

569. Frank E. Harrison, Assistant to the Director, NPS, to Senator James Carter, May 12, 1967, 1965, West Georgia Development Committee, West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission Papers, Identifier 2124875, Containers 20 and 21, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, Atlanta, Georgia.

570. George Hartzog to Richard Russell, May 17, 1967, West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission, West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission Papers, Identifier 2124875, Containers 20 and 21, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, Atlanta, Georgia.

and other members of the Georgia delegation to introduce in Congress "this fall" for authorization.[571] The team completed the Master Plan in December 1967, and it became the basis for the final legislation.[572] In November 1967, the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments made the formal recommendation that Andersonville be established as a national historic site under the control of the National Park Service."[573]

Still, it would take several years for the bill to pass. Third District Representative Jack Brinkley of Columbus introduced a bill in the House of Representatives to establish the park in the fall of 1968. The scope of the proposal and purpose of the park was widened to include not only the story of Camp Sumter but also "the prisoner of war story for all America's wars, not just the Civil War." As Americans reflected on World War II and the Korean War and as they experienced the Vietnam War firsthand, the National Park Service anticipated that the expanded focus on all American POWs would have more appeal than a southern Civil War prison. However, after a series of congressional hearings, the legislation failed to pass. Brinkley introduced the bill again in 1969, but it failed a second time.[574]

Finally, on June 2, 1970, the House Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs held a hearing on Brinkley's bill, H.R. 140, to create the park. Brinkley proclaimed, "It has been on the top of my personal priority list since entering Congress." He hoped "to honor the memory of the men who gave their lives for the preservation of the Union but who sleep in the soil of their then-alienated countrymen." Brinkley added that the site would be an "outstanding tourist interest that would attract many thousands of visitors each year," and that there was "no opposition to this proposal. Indeed, it has been enthusiastically supported by all of the local communities."[575]

Hartzog advocated for the proposal during the hearing, noting that Andersonville "had the greatest amount of remaining archaeological and historical data for the presentation of the prison story during the Confederacy." He also supported the need to acquire and purchase more land at the site "to control the environment." As other planners and historians before him had expressed, Hartzog believed that the story would be a "very difficult interpretation."[576] Roy Taylor, Chair of the Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation, recognized Brinkley's passion for the property that he visited as a youth and added, "It is a story of man's inhumanity to man and we can learn a lesson from it today."[577]

Brinkley submitted his proposal for authorizing the creation of Andersonville National Historic Site before a Senate subcommittee in September 1970. He asked for "quick passage for the measure" which would "clear the way for appropriations later to buy additional land around the camp and to develop the prison grounds with an information center and other facilities."[578] On

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571. "Andersonville Shrine a Step Nearer as Park Service Prepares for Action," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 22, 1967.

572. Master Plan, 3.

573. Historic Resource Study, 83.

574. *Americus Times-Recorder,* November 21, 1968, cited in Draft Administrative History, 38; Historic Resource Study, 83.

575. Congressional Hearings on H.R. 140, June 2, 1970, cited in Draft Administrative History, 39; Master Plan, 19.

576. Congressional Hearings on H.R. 140, June 2, 1970, cited in Draft Administrative History, 40.

577. House of Representatives Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation Minutes, Tuesday, June 2, 1970, on H.B. 146 to Authorize the Establishment of the Andersonville National Historic Site in the State of Georgia.

578. "Andersonville Plan Pushed," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 25, 1970.

October 7, 1970, the Senate passed the bill, noting that the park would "pay tribute to the painful sacrifices of those who preceded us." The memorial would recognize "all Americans who have served their country, at home and abroad, and suffered the loneliness and anguish of captivity. It is the undaunted spirit of men such as these that keeps America the Nation that it is." As historian Benjamin Cloyd writes, the Senate statement did not acknowledge the Vietnam War, but advocates clearly evoked that experience to gain support for the bill.[579]

Public Law 91-465 officially authorized the establishment of Andersonville National Historic Site on October 16, 1970.[580] The law merged the prison site with Andersonville National Cemetery to create the new park. On July 1, 1971, the army officially transferred the cemetery and prison park to the National Park Service at a ceremony on the site.[581] John Jensen began his tenure as the park's first superintendent.

TELLING THE STORY

While establishing the national park proved to be the first significant challenge, determining the story to be told proved quite difficult as well. The enabling legislation declared the purpose of the park as four-fold: "to provide an understanding of the overall prisoner of war story of the Civil War, to interpret the role of prisoner of war camps in history, to commemorate the sacrifice of Americans who lost their lives in such camps, and to preserve the monuments located therein."[582] The authorizing legislation reflected the hope of community boosters and government leaders that White southerners would be less opposed to a national park if the National Park Service interpreted the Andersonville experience in the context of the broader prisoner of war story, including northern Civil War prison camps as well as prisoner experiences during all wars. As historian Adam Domby has argued, Andersonville became a "universal story of sacrifice" so the "narrative of Confederate barbarity became less remarkable. But more important to this narrative, these interpretive goals would mean that the story of African Americans would not be highlighted here.[583]

Former Superintendent Fred Boyles recalls that the legislation "was given language to add that the park would interpret how southerners suffered in northern camps as well. But the most unusual addition," Boyles adds, "came from a reported conversation" between Russell and his protege, President Lyndon Johnson. According to this account, Johnson "suggested to Russell that the bill should include language that designated the site as the memorial to all POWs in America[n] history," a change "allow[ing] for the bill's passage yet pacifying southern interests." At this time, with POWs in Southeast Asia, this focus seemed timely, relevant, and less threatening.[584]

Not surprisingly, opposition to the park quickly emerged from southern heritage groups who sought to protect their stories and memories of the prison and to support the Lost Cause

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579. Cloyd, *Haunted by Atrocity*, 167.

580. Master Plan, 3.

581. *Americus Times-Recorder*, July 3, 1971, cited in Draft Administrative History, 41.

582. Historic Resource Study, 83.

583. Adam H. Domby, "Captives of Memory: The Contested Legacy of Race at Andersonville National Historic Site," *Civil War History* 63, no. 3 (September 2017): 251–254, 280.

584. Fred Boyles," Andersonville: A Site Steeped in Controversy," no date, Park Archives, Andersonville National Historic Site.

ideology. They worried about how the park would interpret Confederate involvement and activities in the camp. Would the South be blamed for the treatment and high death rate of the prisoners? The United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) and the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) led the opposition to the park. They worried that the new Andersonville National Historic Site would tell the northern side of the story and ignore the suffering of Confederates in northern prison camps.

The United Daughters of the Confederacy sought to repeal the park's new designation, believing that this action to create the park was an attack on their southern heritage. Mrs. J. G. Madry of Atlanta, the chair of the UDC's Andersonville committee, claimed that the UDC did not know about the passage of the bill because it occurred quickly, "without publicity or public hearings," and that the UDC did not hear about it until seeing the Brinkley statement in the Congressional Record. It was Jack Brinkley "who got our dander up in the first place," Madry proclaimed. His statement "sounded like he was turned against the South."[585]

An article in the Atlanta newspaper noted that Brinkley "is catching it from both the North Carolina and Georgia divisions of the UDC, which are jump up mad about his bill to preserve the infamous Andersonville Confederate prison." The UDC used phrases such as "malicious and libelous" and "insulting and injurious to the South" to describe the "popular view of the Civil War prison." The reporter noted that Brinkley was "caught off-guard by the ferocity of the UDC attack, but he has rallied with a gentle rejoinder. Brinkley claimed that the park will not 'rebuke the South,' but will serve to remember all who died in prison camps, adding that Southern states can still erect memorials at the park."[586]

At its 78th general convention in November 1971, the UDC continued to "battle" over the site, stating that its organization would "go all out" to repeal the legislation. Madry, who worried that the South would not be allowed to tell "its side of the story" led the effort. She stated that "we'd rather they wouldn't establish the site at all. It was only done to bring government and tourist money into that area. We feel there are a lot of other ways to get money without stirring up hatred and all that kind of business."[587]

If it could not repeal the bill, the UDC proposed that its organization receive "equal treatment in the allocation of federal funds, the right to place monuments and markers giving the South's position leading up to the war, and to include any historical speeches or recordings of the South's side of the historical background of the war."[588] The UDC wanted a role in telling the story at the park and requested that one of its members serve on the park's history committee. In response, Jimmy Carter, who was Georgia's governor at this time, suggested that the state create a memorial at Andersonville for native sons who died in northern prisoner of war camps and in all wars since. He provided initial funding for what would become the Georgia monument (see chapter seven).[589]

The UDC protest in 1971 occurred at a time when southerners were still feeling under attack from civil rights activities that had impacted many communities. As chapter five illustrates, the

585. G. Stephens, "UDC pledges battle against Andersonville site," *The Atlanta Constitution,* November 12, 1971.

586. "Aid bill title prompts ax by Georgians?" *The Atlanta Constitution,* November 7, 1971.

587. "UDC Pledges Battle Against Andersonville Site," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 12, 1971.

588. *Americus Times-Recorder*, November 2, 1971, referenced in Draft Administrative History, 43.

589. *Americus Times-Recorder*, January 20, 1972, referenced in Draft Administrative History, 44.

movement had been particularly hard-fought in the Albany and Americus regions. The desegregation of public schools heightened the racial tension. Between 1969 and 1971, Georgia communities were required to fully integrate their public schools.

After this controversy subsided, the park hosted a second ceremony in May 1972, when the U.S. Army passed the keys of the park to Sam Weems from the Southeast Regional Office of the National Park Service.[590]

IDENTIFYING AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AT THE PARK

One of the first planning documents to incorporate the African American experience into the park's history was the Andersonville National Historic Site Historic Resource Study (HRS) and Historical Base Map prepared by NPS historian Edwin Bearrs and submitted on July 31, 1970. This 184-page report, plus illustrations, provided a historic context for the prison from the Dix-Hill Cartel by the establishment and development of the prison park and ending with Gratz's 1918 visit to Andersonville. Bearrs included African Americans in the report and the roles they played in the prison's history. These stories would ultimately become the basis of early park interpretation.

The first mention of African Americans comes when Bearrs writes that both free and enslaved Blacks built the stockade and the buildings there. "After resorting to impressment" to build the stockade, Bearrs notes that Captain Dick Winder "turned a gang of blacks to fell trees for the stockade" and dig a ditch. Bearrs adds that Winder enlisted a former plantation superintendent and "impressed teams, slaves, free blacks and tools," and for the next six weeks they built the stockade "with the shouts, songs, and laughter of the blacks."[591]

African Americans appear as "negro work gangs" in the narrative as they helped to expand the stockade and assist with construction projects. At one point, with fear of a raiding group nearby, Confederates fortifying the site were assisted by "about 500 Negroes rushed to Andersonville by planters in response to a plea from General Winder" and "organized into round-the-clock work gangs."[592]

Bearrs describes the African Americans living and working on-site after the war, when Clara Barton visited the cemetery and found W. A. Griffin of Fort Valley and "20 Negroes" at work on the grounds "after learning from one of the blacks that the bodies were becoming exposed and were rooted up by animals." These African Americans were in the process of placing the bodies deeper and covering them to a proper depth. While Clara Barton worked at the site, Bearrs describes how African Americans came much more frequently to visit the prison and cemetery; he notes that they were forbidden to come while it was a prison. Bearrs describes the Freedman's School established in Andersonville in 1867, the African Americans who worked at the cemetery, and the two African Americans who were growing cotton on the prison site according to visitor accounts in 1884.[593]

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590. *Americus Times-Recorder*, May 29, 1972, referenced in Draft Administrative History, 44.

591. Edwin Bearrs, Andersonville National Historic Site Historic Resource Study and Historical Base Map (Washington, D.C.: Office of History and Historic Architecture, Eastern Service Center, July 31, 1970), 24.

592. Bearrs, Historic Resource Study, 80, 97.

593. Bearrs, Historic Resource Study, 146, 165-170.

Under recommendations for further research, Bearrs suggests that the story the park should interpret is "the unhappy fate and condition of prisoners held in military prison camps since the beginning of recorded history," adding that a general background study on the origin and development of prison camps will be given a high priority." Bearrs concludes by saying that a study of Union prison camps should be completed, which "will demonstrate, despite the notoriety given Andersonville by a novelist such as MacKinlay Kantor, that there was little difference in the way prisoners were treated by the belligerents."[594]

The final 1971 Master Plan, approved on October 18, 1971, confirms the interpretive focus of the park. The plan reflects "minor modifications" from the earlier draft, "consisting of updating and changes resulting from legislation." In the introduction, the plan notes that the park will tell "the story of life and death in military prisons throughout the ages of man. To tell such a story, with understanding and concern yet without repelling or agonizing the public will call for our best efforts."[595] Again, the Master Plan does not mention African Americans in the prison's history or any African American associations with the park, though most of the land the park would seek to acquire was owned by African American community members.

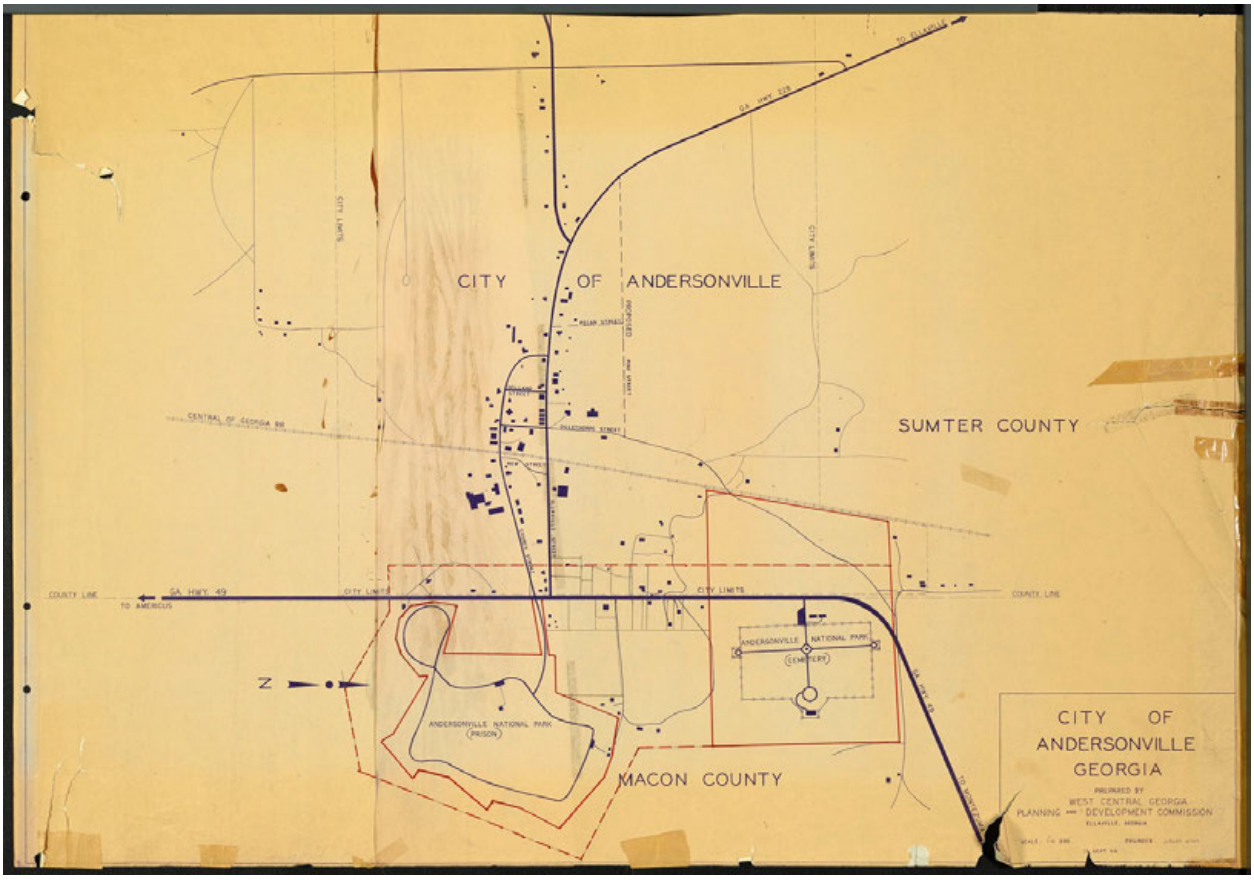
AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY AROUND THE PARK

Just as park planning documents seldom mentioned the ways in which African Americans participated in the history or continued use of the cemetery and prison site, they do not reference the Black community that Velma Coley describes around the park. As chapter four reveals, the area along the old Dixie Highway (now Highway 49) and the section of East Church Street off the prison entrance, leading to the village of Andersonville, was primarily an African American community by the early 20th century.

594. Bearrs, Historic Resource Study, 176.

595. Master Plan, 3.

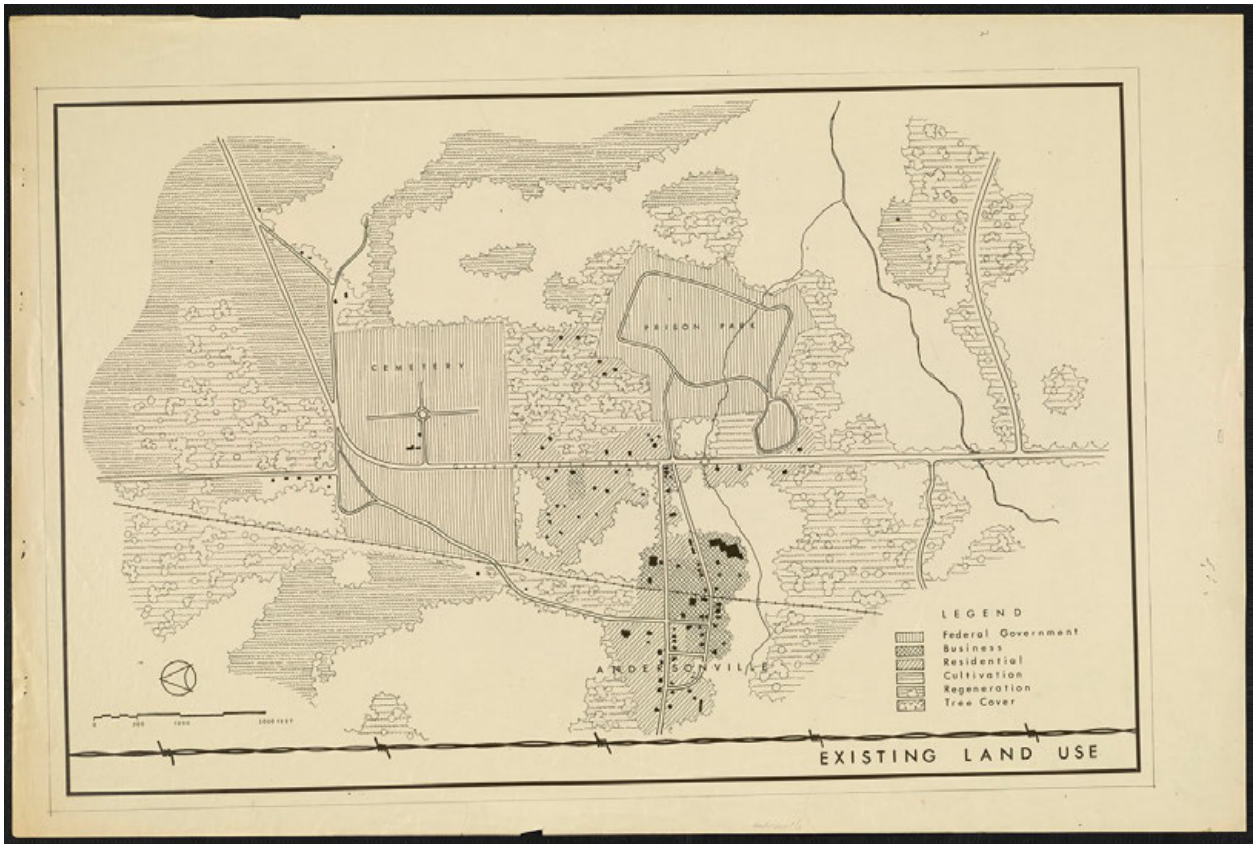
Figure 6.2. This 1966 City of Andersonville map shows the proposed park boundaries as well as the homes and businesses located in the area of the park. City of Andersonville, Georgia, prepared by the West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission, September 15, 1966. Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site.



The Master Plan of 1967 (revised and printed in 1971) describes the land surrounding the park as primarily agricultural. Farm size had increased by this time, the report notes, as had livestock production, with dairy, poultry, cotton, beans, pecans, and peaches being the primary crops. Landowners had been turning large tracts into "pulpwood farming," with loblolly pine and hardwood. The American Cyanamid Company actively mined kaolin and bauxite on the edge of the proposed park.[596] African Americans worked in all these agricultural occupations.

596. Master Plan, 7.

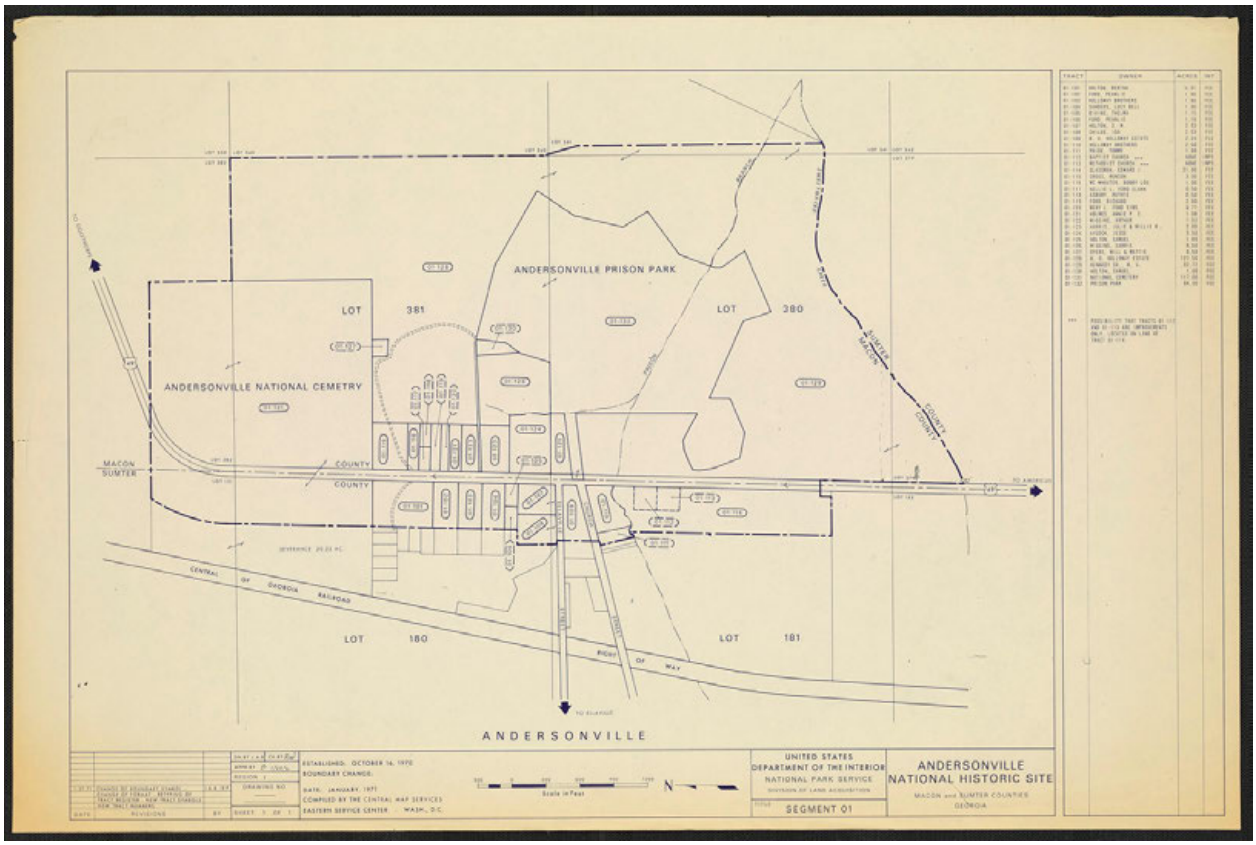
Figure 6.3. This existing land use map of the land that would become the national park shows the buildings in the area the park acquired and indicates business, residential, agricultural, and forested lands. Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site.



The Master Plan identifies land the National Park Service should acquire to create the park. The planning team felt it imperative to acquire what it called "this now idle land" for fear it could be "converted to a use which would compromise the park setting." While NPS planners noted that the cemetery was relatively protected "on all sides by a forested zone of federal lands," they urged the National Park Service to acquire a "bordering zone of privately owned forested land for physical and aesthetic protection of the prison park." Altogether, the report proposed acquiring 104 acres of private land "for historical value and development purposes," 135 acres for "forest buffer about the prison park," and 55 acres "for aesthetic improvements of park setting."[597]

597. Master Plan, 30.

Figure 6.4. The Andersonville 1971 land survey illustrates the proposed boundaries for the park, noted as January 1971 Boundary Change, and reveals the many tracts of land within the proposed boundaries when the park was being considered. Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site.



The Master Plan describes this land as occupied and used, although there is no reference to the primary residents being African American. The plan notes that unpaved access roads extended through the proposed park area, connecting private homes and a cultivated field to Highway 49. Aerial maps depict this landscape. According to the report, the area on the east side of Highway 49, described as in Macon County and located between the cemetery and prison park, had 11 small tracts of 0.5 to 3.5 acres, with four homes, outbuildings, and an "abandoned" service station. Two additional parcels bordered the prison park but were not on the main highway: an occupied one-acre tract and an unoccupied 8.5-acre tract. The largest piece of land, however, was a 127.5-acre tract that extended "clockwise around the east side of the prison park to meet a 93.0-acre tract which itself continues clockwise around the prison park to its entrance," which was the property still owned by the Kennedy family. Eleven small tracts on the west side of Highway 49, across from the cemetery and prison park, featured "homesites, garden plots, a liquor store, and a general store" and two churches.[598]

The park's enabling legislation authorized the Secretary of the Interior to designate "not more than five hundred acres in Macon and Sumter Counties, Georgia, for establishment as the Andersonville National Historic Site" and authorized the park to acquire this acreage "by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, transfer from a Federal agency, or

598. Master Plan, 20.

exchange lands and interests therein for the purposes of this Act."[599] "After the Park Service acquired lands up to a limit of 500 acres, it would be allocated $1.6 million to spend in developing the park."[600]

Testimony for the park in the Congressional Record acknowledged that there were homes on the land the National Park Service sought to buy. Representative Brinkley described them as "modest frame homes along here and it was just woody land out there." Brinkley described "one large landowner" as well as many small landowners, and he anticipated about two dozen homes there altogether. The area, part of which was incorporated into Andersonville, already had water lines. Brinkley added that some of the area was commercial and included a service station and liquor store. Hartzog provided more detail in his testimony: there are "eight residential units, there are 12 classified as year-round residents, and there are three stores."[601]

Figure 6.5. A 1953 aerial map shows the buildings and African American community around the Andersonville National Cemetery and prison site. Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site, Open Parks Network.

Several committee members worried about whether the price of the land would be too high and if property owners would be willing to sell, but Brinkley assured them that the Andersonville "community" was cooperative and supportive of the plan, though he was likely referring

599. Bearrs, Historic Resource Study, 83.

600. Draft Administrative History, 40.

601. House of Representatives Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation Minutes, Tuesday, June 2, 1970, on H.B. 146 to Authorize the Establishment of the Andersonville National Historic Site in the State of Georgia.

primarily to the White members of the community. "While there are some improvements on the area there are not a whole lot of them and I believe we can succeed," Brinkley stated. Local governments, convention and visitor bureaus, chambers of commerce, planning commissions from throughout the region, and Governor Lester Maddox submitted support letters for the proposed park. The Park Service proposed $362,000 for this land acquisition and $100,000 for demolition of the buildings. Director George Hartzog admitted that "a great many of them will probably have to be condemned in order to clear title. The titles are not in great shape down here. And my lands people advised me this morning that they do anticipate more than the normal number of condemnations." He hoped that it would be "condemnations with prices. We would make an attempt to negotiate the price and then institute the condemnation in order to clear the title."[602] Hartzog's "lands people" must have understood the complicated family land ownership patterns that had developed here in this African American community. It is unclear from this testimony how much residents knew about these plans.

Figure 6.6. Another map from 1962 shows the African American community located here, much of which is now within park boundaries. Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site, Open Parks Network.

Questions ensued about the use of the land to the west side of Highway 49, since it was not contiguous to the historic site. Hartzog noted that the National Park Service might exchange land with some property owners by using the tract declared surplus west of the cemetery. In discussions, other questions arose about whether the park would demolish the structures on the west side of the property, and then whether the county would impose zoning along this road to avoid unwelcome businesses: "hotels, honky-tonks, snake pits, miniature golf courses, liquor

602. House of Representatives Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation Minutes, Tuesday, June 2, 1970, on H.B. 146 to Authorize the Establishment of the Andersonville National Historic Site in the state of Georgia.

stores, etc., along the boundaries of the park." Local business leaders assured the Committee that they would do so. [603]

Superintendent Jensen focused on acquiring land the first year after the park was established. A draft administrative history notes that the government purchased "30 to 40 parcels totaling 300 acres," demolished houses on these lots, and built homes on other land for those who had been moved.[604] NPS land records document that the park acquired 32 tracts from private individuals to create the park, with most purchases made between 1971 and 1973. On the east side of Highway 49, the park acquired 12 small lots between the cemetery and prison site entrance. A larger tract behind the street lots and between the cemetery and prison park was purchased from Carey (likely Carrie Kleckley) Wiggins, inside which was a small parcel owned by Wattie Dyess. William Jesse Kennedy Jr. sold a 75-acre piece of the Kennedy farm that stretched from the west side of the prison site, beginning at the prison park entrance, around the southern part of the prison site, and then slightly north along the eastern side. On the west side of Highway 49, across the road from the prison site and cemetery, the park acquired 15 tracts of private land. Many tracts along Highway 49 between the prison park entrance and the cemetery were still owned by the same African American families that owned them in 1931, including Kennedy, Holton, Ford, and Childs.[605]

The 75-acre William Jesse Kennedy Jr. farm, which the government purchased in 1973 for $31,000, was part of the original 455-acre farm that Kennedy Jr.'s once enslaved grandfather, George Washington Kennedy, acquired and began farming soon after the Civil War ended. In 1890, the elder Kennedy sold part of this original family farm to the Grand Army of the Republic to create the initial prison park (see chapters three and four). By 1930, George Washington Kennedy's grandson, 64-year-old blacksmith William Kennedy Sr. and his wife Catherine, were still living on part of the original farm in a substantial house valued at $1,500.

In 1940, William Kennedy Sr.'s widowed daughter, Nannie Lou Kennedy Hill, was raising her family on this property. She lived in the family home with her brother Massey O. Kennedy (sometimes listed as General Maceo), who farmed the land, and her son Willie, who would later work for the national cemetery and the national park.[606]

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603. House of Representatives Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation Minutes, Tuesday, June 2, 1970, on H.B. 146 to Authorize the Establishment of the Andersonville National Historic Site in the state of Georgia.

604. Draft Administrative History, 42. Coley suggests that residents who sold their property to the National Park Service purchased or built their own homes when they had to move, so it is unclear to what extent the Park Service actually built homes for those displaced from the property. Coley, interview.

605. Map, Andersonville National Historic Site, including Acreage Summary, Legislative Summary, and Tract Register, June 3, 2014, Land Resources Program Center, National Park Service Southeast Regional Office, Atlanta, Georgia. Subsequent references to land purchases in the following pages come from this map, which also includes the owner, the date the park acquired each piece of property, and the amount paid for each tract.

606. Census, 1930, Macon County, Georgia, Population Schedule, Sheet 11A, dwelling 228, family 223, William J. and Catherine Kennedy, digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com, accessed March 19, 2019), citing NARA microfilm 2340110, roll T626; Census, 1930, Macon County, Georgia, Population Schedule, Sheet 8B, household 132, Nannie Lou Hill, , digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com, accessed March 19, 2019), citing NARA microfilm m-t0627-00692; Map, June 3, 2014.

William Jesse Kennedy Jr. was living in North Carolina and working for what the *New York Times* described as "one of the largest black-owned and black-managed companies in the country."[607]

An autobiographical account of Kennedy Jr.'s life from the Durham newspaper when he became president of the company in 1952 explains his humble beginnings on the Georgia family farm where he was born in 1898. Kennedy Jr. describes his family as "unique." His grandfather was a "huge, six-foot, eight-inch slave craftsman" who continued to build bridges after emancipation. Over time, his grandfather "was able to develop a substantial family farm of some 400 acres." William Jesse Kennedy Jr. learned the carpentry trade from his grandfather (George Washington Kennedy), but he "worked his way through" the Americus Institute, an African American Baptist school in Americus, and graduated in 1912. Kennedy Jr.'s mother was a schoolteacher, and she encouraged him to pursue his education. In 1916, he began selling insurance in Athens, Georgia, and married a "home office clerk" the following year. Only three years later, Kennedy Jr. moved to Savannah to direct the company's district agency. After a brief stint in the army during World War I (seven months and two days), he moved to the main office of the North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company in Durham, North Carolina, in 1919. Kennedy Jr. worked his way up to vice-president/secretary, then he served as president of the board of directors from 1952–1958, then became chairman of the board until 1961. In addition to this prestigious position, Kennedy Jr. also served as either president, vice-president, or board member for several city banks, illustrating his role as a prosperous and leading African American businessman in Durham.[608] In addition, he founded the Durham Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, served as a member of the North Carolina State Board of Higher Education, and was a member of the Board of Trustees of Howard University. These and other accolades were included in his obituary, which appeared in *The New York Times*.[609]

One of the newspaper articles about William Jesse Kennedy Jr., from when he took over as president of the company, provided some background into his interest in business through an account he shared with the reporter. Kennedy Jr. spoke to his pride of growing up in Andersonville in a prosperous and progressive African American farming family. "Born of industrious stock, his early introduction to business was with his grandfather and father, who were influential traders in early post-reconstruction" Andersonville, the reporter wrote. Kennedy Jr. worked as a clerk in his father's grocery store and learned "how to keep books there." The article said his grandfather (George Washington Kennedy) bought a "322-acre tract of land" on which the "historic Confederate Andersonville prison was previously located." The park summary of deed records show a total of 455 acquired acres. [610]Kennedy Jr. described Union soldiers returning to hold reunions on his family property on Decoration Day. "These men came from all parts of the United States to relive some of their experiences in the old

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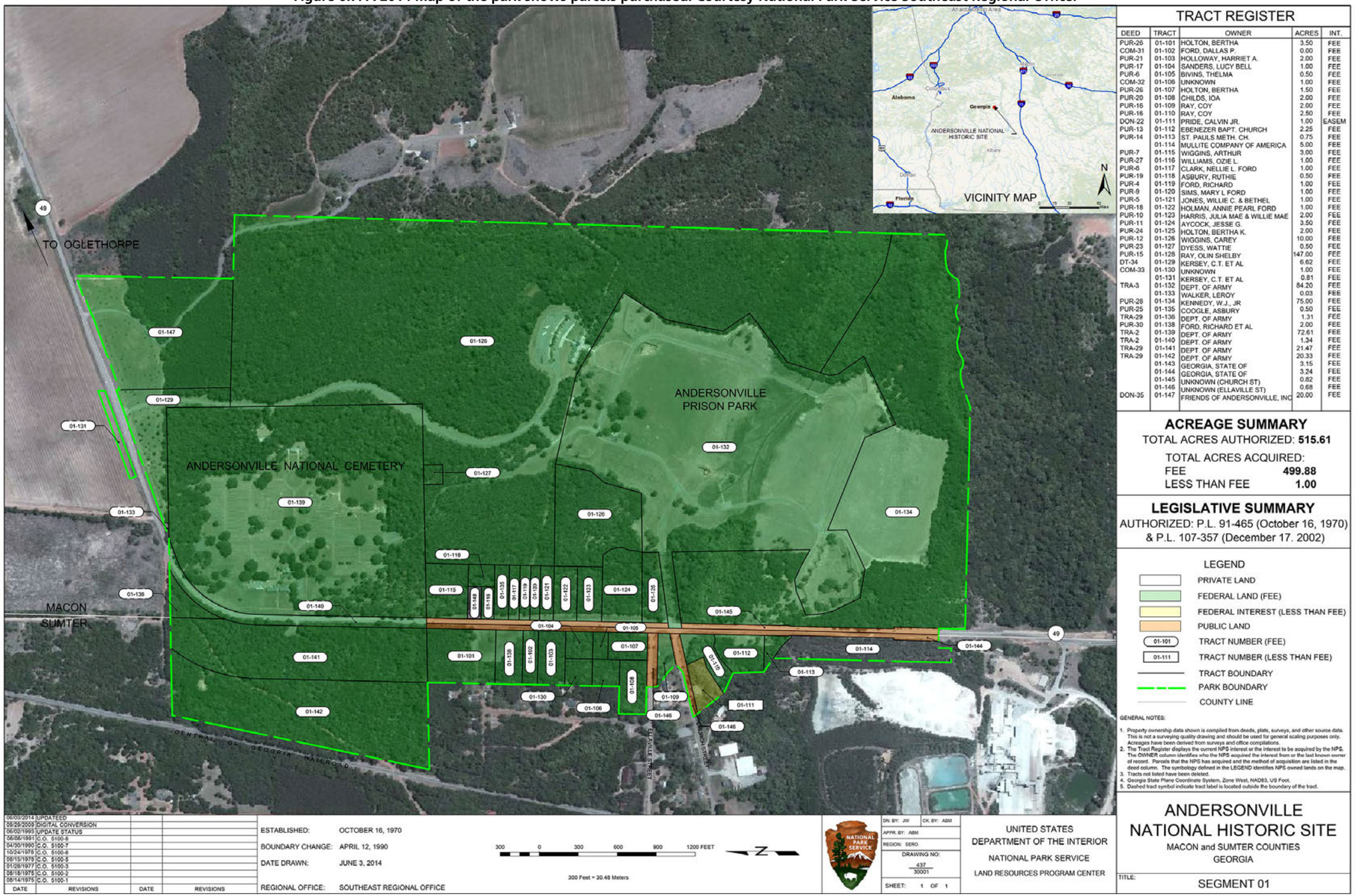
607. Joan Cook, "William J. Kennedy Jr. 96, Headed Insurance Company," *New York Times*, July 13, 1985. The quote was in his obituary. Kennedy served as the president from 1952–1958, then became chairman of the board of directors until 1961, when he stepped down and was named an honorary member for life. At the time of his death, the company had assets of more then $200 million and an annual income of $79 million. His son William Jesse Kennedy III served as president from 1972–1990.

608. "Kennedy in Pledge to Continue Path Laid by Spaulding," no date, North Carolina Mutual Clippings, Black Freedom History Vault; John N. Ingham, Lynn B. Feldman, *African American Business Leaders: A Biographical Dictionary* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1994), 394.

609. Jean Cook, "William J. Kennedy, Jr. 96, Headed Insurance Company."

610. Prison Park Andersonville National Historic Site (Main Parcel). Vertical Files, Andersonville National Historic Site.

Figure 6.7. A 2014 map of the park shows parcels purchased. Courtesy National Park Service Southeast Regional Office.



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prison," Kennedy Jr. explained. "They would come to our house to talk to my parents and to purchase relics that we have found about the place." The "souvenir business" became so popular that his family "took down the pine logs that formed the prison compound wall and made walking canes from them." Kennedy Jr. became "mildly interested in insurance as a lad in his father's store," but he was "smitten" when he sold insurance for an uncle when he was in high school. This experience led him to his first insurance job in Athens, Georgia.[611]

Aerial photographs of the property suggest a substantial home still stood when the National Park Service purchased the 75-acre tract in 1973. Kennedy Jr.'s grandson, William Kennedy IV, still owns two remaining tracts totaling 22 acres of the family farm, adjoining the park, suggesting the strong ties the family still has to the property that William Jesse Kennedy Jr. so proudly described from his youth.

Figure 6.8. Detail of the George Kennedy house, later home to William Jesse Kennedy Jr. and his children, from an undated aerial map before the park was created. Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site, Open Parks Network.

The park also purchased three tracts totaling 7.0 acres and likely from the original Kennedy homestead, from Bertha Alicia Fostina Kennedy Holton, the oldest of William Kennedy Sr.'s children. The largest tract of 3.5 acres netted $12,550, suggesting another considerable house on the property at the time. This piece of land was located on the east side of Highway 49, immediately south of the army property and across the street from the cemetery. Holton also owned the 2.0-acre tract on the north side of the prison park entrance, where she is shown as living on a 1931 map and in the 1950s, as confirmed by Velma Coley's interview. This property

611. "What Makes Kennedy Tick? Six Month Progress Report of New President of North Carolina Mutual Insurance Company," 142–4 in North Carolina Mutual Clippings, Black History Freedom Vault.

was north of the old Kennedy family home where Holton's parents lived, on the south side of the prison entrance.[612]

Figure 6.9. Detail of the Samuel and Bertha Kennedy Holton property, from an undated aerial map before the park was created. Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site, Open Parks Network.

Bertha Kennedy Holton was a schoolteacher who married Baptist preacher Samuel Holton. The 1930 census shows the Bertha Holton family living on the Old Dixie Highway, two houses away from her father William Kennedy Sr., in a house valued at $1,000. She and her husband lived near the two army personnel managing the site. They were next to William Kohtz, the White caretaker of the national cemetery, who lived just south of William Justin, the White caretaker of the "national stockade." In 1940, both Bertha and her 23-year-old daughter Naomi were listed as teachers at the grammar school in the census. Bertha continued to teach through the 1940s and 1950s and was the leader of the African American Girl Scout troop in the community. For "Miss Bertha," as Coley recalled her, decorating the cemetery had a strong personal and familial meaning—her family had long engaged with the cemetery and prison site.[613]

Her husband, Samuel Holton, preached at the Ebenezer Baptist Church, which organized in the spring of 1880 under Rev. Joseph McGrady. The white, wood frame church with one large room was located directly across the highway from the Kennedy farm. The land on which it sat was likely donated by the Kennedy family, who attended the church. The park bought the 2.75-acre church property for $16,425 in 1972. Ebenezer Baptist Church relocated to East Church Street in Andersonville in 1972, the year the property was sold, with Rev. J. G. Allen as pastor. The congregation reportedly moved the old building to the new site.[614]

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612. Map, June 3, 2014; Coley, interview; Sketch Showing Proposed State Highway Location Thru U.S. National Cemetery," 1932, Folder 680.43, "Andersonville National Cemetery," Box 53, Entry 1891 (NM 81): General Correspondence Relating to Places, 1922–1935, RG 92, NARA II.

613. Map, June 3, 2014; Census, 1930, Macon County, Georgia, Population Schedule, sheet 11A, dwelling 230, family 235, Bertha K. Holton, , digital image, Ancestry.com (http://ancestry.com, accessed 19 March 2019), citing NARA microfilm 2340110; Census, 1940, Macon County, Georgia, Population Schedule, sheet 8B, household 134, Bertha Holton, digital image, Ancestry.com (http://ancestry.com, accessed March 19, 2019), citing NARA microfilm m-t0627-00692.

614. Map, June 3, 2014; Coley, interview; Alan Anderson, Local Black History Chronology, no date, accessible at http://www.sumtercountyhistory.com/history/BlackHx.htm.

Figure 6.10. Detail of the Ebenezer Baptist Church and the St. Paul's AME Church, from an undated aerial map before the park was created. Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site, Open Parks Network.

Just south of Ebenezer Baptist Church, on a 0.75-acre tract, stood St. Paul's AME Church. A St. Paul's AME Church was established in Americus in 1890, but it is unclear if the Andersonville congregation was part of that church. Velma Coley remembers this was also a frame structure, facing the Ebenezer Baptist Church and sharing the parking lot. The National Park Service bought this tract in 1972 for $8,550, and the church was moved into Andersonville near the Freeman Hill Cemetery and "incorporated other buildings around it."[615]

The Richard and Pearly Wiggins Ford family sold five tracts of land along Highway 49 to the National Park Service, including two tracts on the west side owned by Richard Ford et al., and their son Dallas Ford and three tracts directly opposite on the east side, owned by daughters Nellie Ford and Annie Ford Holman and also by Richard Ford. Pearly (or Pearlie) Wiggins Ford was living on the west side of the highway in 1931, with her husband Richard. Born in 1888, Pearly, who had completed a high school education, and Richard farmed on rented property in 1920, but by 1930 they lived on their own property. In 1940, Pearly was listed as a laundress, and Richard owned his own cross-tie cutting business, where his two sons worked. Ford's business employed other African Americans in the community. Pearly died in 1962 and was buried in

615. Map, June 3, 2014; Coley, interview.

Freeman Hill Cemetery with her husband, who died in 1981. They were members of Ebenezer Baptist Church.[616]

Figure 6.11. Detail showing the location of the Richard and Pearly Ford house and property, from a 1962 aerial map. Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site, Open Parks Network.

Pearly's maiden name was Wiggins, and Arthur Wiggins and Carrie (Carey is the name on the property record but Carrie appears in the census) Wiggins also sold land on the east side of Highway 49 adjacent to her family's property to the park in 1972. Arthur owned a small lot on the road, but Carrie (or Carey) had more extensive property behind the street lots and situated between the cemetery and the prison. Carrie Wiggins's property had several buildings, and some earlier aerial maps show the land was farmed. These contiguous lots owned by the Wiggins family, with the road crossing through, may have been part of the Randall Wiggins farm described in chapter four, which had been divided between family members.[617]

616. Richard Ford is also listed as an employer for other young men on several local World War II draft cards. Map, June 3, 2014; Sketch Showing Proposed State Highway Location Thru U.S. National Cemetery," 1932, Folder 680.43, "Andersonville National Cemetery," Box 53, Entry 1891 (NM 81): General Correspondence Relating to Places, 1922–1935, RG 92, NARA II; Census, 1920, Sumter County, Georgia, Population Schedule, sheet 6A, dwelling 74, household 74, Richard and Pearlie Ford, digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com, accessed March 19, 2019), citing NARA microfilm Roll T624_278; Census, 1930, Sumter County, Georgia, Population Schedule, sheet 1A, dwelling 4, family 6, Richard and Pearlie Ford, , digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com, accessed March 19, 2019), citing NARA microfilm 2340120; Census, 1940, Sumter County, Georgia, Population Schedule, sheet 1B, household 8, Richard and Pearlie Ford, , digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com, accessed 19 March 2019), citing NARA microfilm m-t0627-00710; Freeman Hill Cemetery Records, African American Cemeteries and Obituaries, 2020, www.BlackCemeteries.com; Alan Anderson, Freeman Hill Cemetery Records, no date, accessible at http://www.sumtercountyhistory.com /cemetery/frhice.htm

617. Map, June 3, 2014.

Figure 6.12. Detail showing the Carrie Wiggins tract, with multiple buildings and much of the land under cultivation, from an undated aerial map before the park was created. Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site, Open Parks Network.

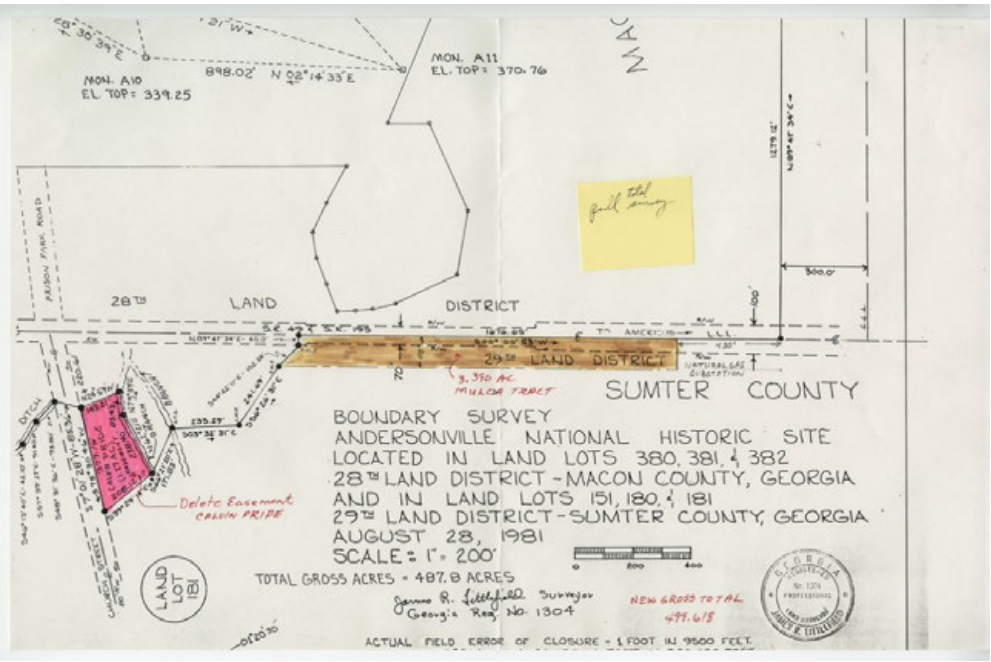
The park purchased 2.0 acres for $4,085 from Ida Childs. Twenty-eight-year-old Eugene Childs worked as a laborer at the national cemetery in 1910 (see chapter four). In 1931, the Eugene Childs estate owned property just south of the cemetery boundary. Ida Childs lot, a narrow street lot located in this general area likely had a home based on its value.[618]

The park acquired three tracts through condemnation, two of which list the owner as unknown. The only identified owner was Bobby Lou McWhauter (correctly spelled as McWhorter), an African American woman who died in April 1973 and was buried in Freeman Hill Cemetery. The park acquired her land in 1975, one of the last acquisitions in that time period. In addition, the Calvin Pride family donated a 1.0-acre easement to the park in 1971 over his house lot on Church Street.[619]

618. Map, June 3, 2014; ; Sketch Showing Proposed State Highway Location Thru U.S. National Cemetery," 1932, Folder 680.43, "Andersonville National Cemetery," Box 53, Entry 1891 (NM 81): General Correspondence Relating to Places, 1922–1935, RG 92, NARA II; Census, 1910, Population Schedule, Sumter County, Georgia, sheet 2B, dwelling 50, household 50, Eugene Childs, digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com, accessed 19 March 2019), citing NARA microfilm T623, roll T-624_213.

619. Map, June 3, 2014; Freeman Hill Cemetery Records.

Figure 6.13. This map shows the location of the Calvin Pride family easement on Church Street. Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site, Open Parks Network.



As these land sales illustrate, a tightly knit community of African Americans owned property here by the early 1970s. Other names on the list of property acquisitions at this time reference African American family names that appear in this community earlier in the century, based on census records and burial records at the African American Freeman Hill Cemetery. These, include Williams, Asbury, Jones, Harris, and Coogle, many of whom are related or connected to community members already discussed so far.[620]

A few of the landowners selling to the park were White. The Aycock family, tucked in between the Kennedy and Holton households in the population censuses from the early 20th century, were White. In 1940, Jess Aycock was listed as an interior designer, his son a painter, and his daughter an operator at a peanut plant. Jess Aycock's son, J. B. Aycock, sold three lots, each 3.0 acres, to the National Park Service in 1972. Each lot was on the north side of the Holton property. Coy Ray sold two small tracts of land to the park. Ray and Louis Easterlin owned the filling station, grocery store, and restaurant across from the prison park entrance. Easterlin also owned a mining operation. Olin Shelby Ray, who sold a tract northeast of the prison park, owned the trucking company that serviced the mining operation.[621]

This Black community made a lot of its own entertainment, recalled Coley, as would residents in most rural communities. "We would just communicate with each other, play with each other, have good times with each other. People would have house parties." In addition, there were Christmas and Easter programs at the church and "different things like that. We were

620. Map, June 3, 2014.

621. Coley, interview; Map, June 3, 2014; Census, 1940, Sumter County, Georgia, Population Schedule, sheet 8B, household 113, Jess Aycock, digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com, accessed March 19, 2019), citing NARA microfilm T627, roll m-t0627-00692.

entertained, we did the entertainment. It was good." Community members also went outside the village to places like Americus, Montezuma, or Oglethorpe for entertainment. When she went to high school, Coley remembers that "there was a lot of activities that I did down here in Americus."[622]

Coley did not remember any "problems" related to race relations in Andersonville when she was growing up here in the 1940s and 1950s. "Everybody knew everybody," she recalled. "Everybody could call everybody by their name, their first name… Everybody worked together, everybody was working for each other. We had farming people that worked together." Blacks and Whites engaged with each other in informal ways as well. As an example, she described how her grandfather would play checkers in front of his store on Church Street with White farm owner Marvin Slappy. "He was white, and my granddaddy was a very fair-skinned man. But they used to play checkers half a day… and drink Coca-Colas… That's where everybody would congregate, and they would play checkers. All the people would play checkers. I tended the store while my granddaddy played checkers."[623]

After graduating from high school, Coley attended Spelman College, where she participated in civil rights activities. She does not remember such activities here in Andersonville during her youth, "but [she] didn't know everything that was going on in Sumter County." She does not recall any civil rights activities in her home church of Ebenezer Baptist or any other churches in Andersonville. "It all happened out here in this area in Americus." Nor does she remember hearing stories from her younger siblings. Americus civil rights activist Bobby Fuse reflected that Andersonville wasn't segregated like Americus and that African Americans living around Andersonville did not have restrictions about places they could go in the community, although they still needed to be careful as they would anywhere. These reflections on race relationships in Andersonville by both Coley and Fuse reflect the findings of historian Mark Schultz in *The Rural Face of White Supremacy*, who theorizes that race relations were based more on what he calls "personalism," though still full of racism and violence.[624]

In his study of rural Hancock County, Georgia, Schultz argues that "the face-to-face nature of rural communities… allowed greater flexibility than was found in areas where Black and White people related to one another primarily as impersonal abstractions." His research suggests that "the security of the planters, localism, and the culture of personalism help explain why powerful whites sometimes tolerated a surprising degree of interracial intimacy and black assertiveness." As a result, in his case study, some African Americans bought land and established successful farms and businesses without challenge from the White elites.[625]

Black families who had to sell land to the National Park Service in the early 1970s were upset at leaving land that had been in their families for several generations. The National Park Service tore down their homes which held memories dear to them. This included the old Kennedy family home where Willie was raised. "That's where everybody was born," remembered Velma Coley, referring to the many Kennedy family members. "Most of the folks that had to move had been there ever since I can remember. Some people don't like to move… It was home," reflected

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622. Coley, interview.

623. Coley, interview.

624. Coley, interview; Bobby Fuse, personal communication with Keri Adams, March 20, 2019; Mark Schultz, *The Rural Face of White Supremacy*: *Beyond Jim Crow* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2006).

625. Schultz, Rural Face of White Supremacy, 7.

Velma Coley. "The Department of Interior or what have you said that they had to have that land, so wasn't nothing else they could [do]. They paid them for the land, and then other people could buy another place they could go. People didn't want to move, but there was no public resistance."[626] If they did not sell their property, their land could be condemned. Certainly, local African Americans knew that there was no way to avoid selling their family homesteads to the federal government.

The community was already changing by 1970, recalled Velma Coley. Some residents had already left the community to find better work. "A lot of them moved away, like families. A family would die and then someone would move to the northern states," says Coley. And there were fewer jobs in Andersonville by then; other than the cemetery and prison site, the only place to work in Andersonville by the 1960s was the Cyanamid Mining Company. Those who sold their land to the National Park Service and moved off the property scattered around the region. Remaining homes and buildings were torn down, and the neighborhood disappeared.

Fred Sanchez recalls that "there were hard feelings" among residents when he arrived in 1978. Perhaps it was due to this sense of loss. He remembers that some of the older families he encountered, including the Wiggins and Kennedy family descendants, took great pride in being long-time landowners here. When the National Park Service purchased the land, Sanchez believes that some people took their money and left the community, although some remained around Andersonville.[627]

WORKING AT THE PARK

When the National Park Service took control of the site, the staff included Superintendent John Jensen and five maintenance men who had been working there with the Department of the Army.[628] Fred Sanchez remembers that a small number of African Americans from the community continued to work at the national cemetery in maintenance positions, digging graves and caretaking the grounds. These were hard jobs, Sanchez recalls, as they were still digging the graves by hand with shovels and picks. An early administrative history draft for the park notes that the army took most of the equipment used at the national cemetery, which led to some lingering disgruntlement among the maintenance staff.[629]

Still, these jobs were valuable. During times of segregation, the jobs at the cemetery paid more than many other positions available to African Americans in the community, as illustrated in chapter four. Velma Coley reflects, "That was one of the main places that you could get a decent job, was right there. Because like I said, my granddaddy worked there, and then my daddy worked there. So, it was a decent job, it sure was." The good salaries provided by the army allowed her family to send children to high school and college and heightened their reputations in the community. Calvin Pride Sr. served as a deacon at the Ebenezer Baptist Church and had

626. Coley, interview.

627. Coley, interview; Fred Sanchez, interview with Keri Adams, Julia Brock, and Ann McCleary, October 16, 2019, digital recording, Andersonville National Historic Site, Andersonville, Georgia.

628. Draft Administrative History, 42.

629. Draft Administrative History, 42; Sanchez, interview, October 16, 2018, 19.

the opportunity to send his son to high school to ensure a good education. Pride Sr. gained an education as well.[630]

Coley remembers that her father Calvin Abraham "Ham" Pride Jr. was "real elated about getting a job there, and I guess it's because he was following in my granddaddy's footsteps. So, yeah, it was good. It helped raise us, because there were seven of us."[631] Born in 1921, Calvin A. "Ham" Pride registered for the World War II draft in February 1942, when he is described as working for Richard Ford, a local landowner and Black businessman in the community, as a cross-tie cutter. Pride enlisted at Fort Benning in the Branch Immaterial Warrant Officers, USA. His papers stated that he had four years of high school and had been a fruit and vegetable gardener. He married Willie Mae Davis and they lived on Church Street in Andersonville, next to his parent's home, where they raised their seven children. Pride retired only a few years before he died in August 1989, and he was buried in Andersonville National Cemetery. When asked why there and not with his parents at Freeman Hill Cemetery, his daughter Velma Coley recalled that "My daddy worked there [Andersonville National Cemetery], and that was a place that I knew he wanted to be. He loved that cemetery. He loved working there, and so then that tree he's under was one of the main things that he would always tell us. 'I'm going to be buried right there under that tree,' and that's where my mom put him." Willie Davis was buried there with her husband.[632]

Community resident and Kennedy family descendent Willie Edward Hill also worked at the cemetery (see chapter four). In 1940, when he is first listed as an employee there, Hill lived on the property south of the prison entrance, on land acquired by his grandfather, George Washington Kennedy. Born in 1915 to Nannie Lou Kennedy, George Kennedy's daughter, and Bennie James Hill, Willie lived in his family's old Kennedy homeplace with his mother and eight siblings in 1940. His father had died in 1937, a year after his grandfather William Kennedy died, so it appears that the family moved back to the Kennedy family home, and they were living with his Uncle Massey, sometimes referred to as General Maceo Kennedy. Willie enlisted in World War II on June 30, 1942, at Fort Benning, and he entered the Branch Immaterial, Warrant Offices, the same branch as Calvin A. Pride, his co-worker at the cemetery. At the time, the draft records list him as being divorced with no children, and his occupation as "unskilled sawmill."[633]

After the war, Willie Hill married Annie Bell, and they had nine children. He returned to work at the park as a groundskeeper on the prison property that his grandfather William Kennedy Sr. once farmed. Tax records show that J. D. Hill and Willie Hill purchased a 3-acre tract of land in 1965 on the west side of Highway 49 from his Aunt Bertha Kennedy Holton's house, across from the cemetery. The family still owns that property today. Hill retired in 1986 with 40 years of

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630. Coley, interview.

631. Coley, interview.

632. Coley, interview; Calvin A. World War II Draft Card, The National Archives at Fort Worth, Texas; Fort Worth, Texas; *WWII Draft Registration Cards for Georgia, 10/16/1940-03/31/1947*; Record Group: *Records of the Selective Service System, 147,* digital image, *Ancestry.com,* (http://ancestry.com, accessed March 19, 2019).

633. Willie Edward Hill World War II Draft Card, The National Archives at Fort Worth, Texas; Fort Worth, Texas; *WWII Draft Registration Cards for Georgia, 10/16/1940-03/31/1947*; Record Group: Records of the Selective Service System, 147, digital image, Ancestry.com, (http://ancestry.com, accessed March 20, 2019); Census, 1940, Macon County, Georgia, Population Schedule, sheet 8B, household 132, Willie Hill, digital image, Ancestry.com (http://ancestry.com, accessed March 19, 2019), citing NARA microfilm m-t0627-00692.

combined experience at the cemetery and national park. He died September 29, 1993, and like his co-worker Calvin A. Pride, was buried in Andersonville National Cemetery.[634]

Figure 6.14. Willie Hill, ca. 1986, upon retirement.
Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site .

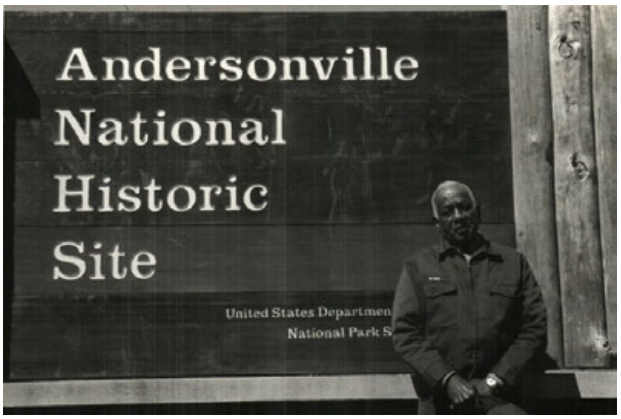

Figure 6.15. Willie Hill in front of cemetery, ca. 1986.
Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site.

Maintenance worker Oscar English grew up on an adjacent farm on the west side of the park property, land that his family had owned for several decades. Born in 1913 in Andersonville, Oscar Benjamin English was working as a laborer on his family's farm in 1930. By 1940, he had married and is described on the census as a farmer "on his own account," living with his wife Arti Zell and six children ranging from 11 months to 8 years old. Census records and his World War II draft card reveal that he was working for his father, "Dock" Nathaniel English, on the family farm. While Oscar English is listed as "Negro" on the draft card, it describes him as "light

634. Andersonville National Cemetery Records, Andersonville, Georgia; Sumpter County Tax Accessors Office Records, accessed January 1, 2019.

brown" rather than dark brown or Black, which is consistent with the 1920 Census that describes him as mulatto.[635]

Figure 6.16. Oscar English working at the park, no date. Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site.

Figure 6.17. Oscar English working in the park, no date. Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site.

Oscar English began work as a laborer for the Maintenance Division of the Department of the Army in 1941. The regular cash wages provided more financial security for his growing family and supplemented his farming income. In 1971, English transferred to work for the National Park Service. He continued his employment in maintenance there until 1976, ultimately working

635. Census,1930, Macon County, Georgia, Population Schedule, sheet 11B, dwelling 246, family 251, Oscar B. English, , digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com, accessed March 19, 2019), citing NARA microfilm 2340110; Census, 1940, Macon County, Georgia, Population Schedule, sheet 9A, household 138, Oscar English, digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com, accessed 19 March 2019), citing NARA microfilm m-t0627-00692; Oscar Benjamin English World War II Draft Card, The National Archives at Fort Worth, Texas; Fort Worth, Texas; *WWII Draft Registration Cards for Georgia, 10/16/1940-03/31/1947*; Record Group: *Records of the Selective Service System, 147*, digital image, *Ancestry.com*, (http://ancestry.com, accessed March 20, 2019).

35 years at the site. Fred Sanchez recalls that English walked to work; a path from his house led directly through the trees to the prison park (see figure 6-18). Sometimes, a pig or a cow from his farm would get loose in the park, Sanchez remembers, and someone would say, "One of Oscar's cows is out, and he is out in the cemetery!" When English retired, he reported that he and his wife "will continue to live on their 300-acre farm adjacent to the site" and "pursue his hobby of gardening" and "learn how to fish."[636]

Although the English property was on the north and east sides of the current park boundaries, the family did not sell property to the park, and it is also not known if the park had hoped to purchase any of this land. Oscar English Road now leads into the family farm, on the road just north of the cemetery. "All that land as you're coming around is farmed," recalls Sanchez. Descendants of the family still own and live on several tracts along the road. "These big houses, they all belong to the children of Oscar, the family of Oscar… Oscar owned all that land." Mulcoa, a Bauxite Mining company, "wanted to buy the land from him and he refused to sell." After Mr. English passed, "everybody" thought that his children might sell it, but "even before he passed away, the kids started to come back. He put his kids through college, and I think a couple of doctors and an attorney in Chicago, they all came back to the land. And all those big houses that you see back there" belong to the family, again suggesting the great pride that the family still has in the home farm.[637]

Owning this land was clearly important to the English family. A 2017 obituary for Oscar English's daughter, Doris Elizabeth English Snead, proudly states that she was the second of 11 siblings, born in February 1933, and reared "in a loving and faith-based home on property purchased shortly after the days of slavery, constituting the English Family homestead now for more than a century." Tracing the family back through census records reveals that Oscar English's father, "Dock" Nathaniel English, was living here in 1900, though it shows that he rented the land at that time.[638]

Calvin A. Pride, Willie Hill, and Oscar English were working at the park in 1978, when Fred Sanchez arrived. They were employed as maintenance workers who helped dig graves and maintain the grounds. Calvin A. Pride received a slightly higher pay because he was an equipment operator; he used a large tractor and backhoe to dig the graves. Both Sanchez and Pride's daughter recall that the updated machinery was a big improvement over digging graves with shovels, as Pride's father had done. Coley reflects, "During that time my grandfather was a maintenance person also, but they did more the manual work than my daddy did. They had equipment when my daddy started working, like they had backhoes and all of that, and during the time that my granddaddy was there, I can remember when my grandfather used to come home, he had been down digging, they would dig graves with the shovels and a pick."[639] The park employed two White workers in more skilled positions: Mike Robinson, worked as a

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636. "Retirees: English," in *Courier*, National Park Service Newsletter, August 1981, 17; Fred Sanchez, interview with Keri Adams and Ann McCleary, March 20, 2019, digital recording, Andersonville National Historic Site, Andersonville, Georgia. Sanchez's interview indicates that English was already a good fisherman.

637. Sanchez, interview, October 18, 2018, 22; Sanchez, interview, March 20, 2019.

638. Obituary, Doris Elizabeth Snead, December 13, 2017, https://www.bivensfuneralhome.com/notices/Doris-Snead; Census, 1900, Sumter County, Georgia, Population Schedule, sheet 3, house 43, family 61, Dock N. English, digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com, accessed March 19, 2019), citing NARA microfilm T623, 1240222.

639. Coley, interview.

carpenter, and "Chief" Justice as a mechanic, given that nickname because he was a chief in the U.S. Navy.[640]

Sanchez observed tension among the African American workers who were required to perform hard labor without some of the more modern equipment. Under John Flister, there was only one small tractor, so the African American workers still dug most of the graves by hand—including Calvin A. Pride, Willie Hill, Oscar English, and Jimmy Harris. "There was a lot of resentment that the majority of the hard labor was being done that way.... You figure that the army would have had the top of the notch equipment there."[641] Tension would also build in later years when African Americans were not promoted to higher-level jobs.

Sanchez recalls that the maintenance workers did not socialize much with the largely White professional staff that came to work at Andersonville National Historic Site. As a Latino man, Sanchez found that he could work with and relate to the African American workers more so than the White park staff. Sanchez had grown up in Texas, but he had still not experienced the tense race relations that he saw at the park. Superintendent Flister reminded Sanchez that "this is the South." Sanchez recalls this conversation, because "I was never exposed to those feelings before." Sanchez had many "great discussions" with the African American staff, and he socialized with them and their families. This complex relationship between maintenance and professional staff also reflects the National Park Service trend of hiring local people for maintenance positions. Besides the racial divide, many parks experienced a division of sorts between the professional who came from out of town and the maintenance staff who were from and understood the community. As these Andersonville examples indicate, many of the maintenance workers had strong ties to the immediate community and, at this park, some had strong family connections to the land on which the park was located.

640. Coley, interview; Sanchez, interview, March 20, 2019.

641. Sanchez, interview, October 16, 2018.

Figure 6.18. A 1988 aerial map shows the path between Oscar English's house and the old prison site. This is the path that he followed as he walked to work. Note the tree cover over lots along the road that formerly belonged to members of the Black community. Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site, Open Parks Network.

Sanchez noticed the lack of engagement or "involvement" between the park and its staff and the African American community at the time. "It just had to do with the attitudes of the South" and "what happened there for the black community… It was just literally a division between black and white. This is not too long after Civil Rights." Sanchez also attributes it to the times. "The '60s, and all this must have been fresh in their mind, and they [African Americans] just didn't want to have anything to do with the Park and the white employees. John Flister said, 'Fred,

when people go home, you got to understand that they don't want anything to do with each other, they just want to go home."[642]

Figure 6.19. African American staff working at the national cemetery, no date. Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site.

AFRICAN AMERICANS AND THE NATIONAL CEMETERY

African Americans engaged with Andersonville National Cemetery in two major ways during the 1950s and 1960s. First, they began to bury their dead here in increasing numbers after 1946. Second, they continued to come to memorialize the military men and their families buried here. African Americans had long had a connection to the cemetery as visitors who appreciated the efforts of Union soldiers who fought for the Civil War. While large commemorations of these dead had declined by the 1950s and 1960s, some African Americans still participated in showing appreciation to those who fought.

The most significant change for Andersonville National Cemetery during this time was an increase in the number of African Americans being buried there. In 1946, after the end of World War II, the cemetery created a segregated section "G" for African Americans, at the request of local Black residents (see chapter four). According to 2019 Cemetery Administrator Charles Barr, it is unlikely that Andersonville had any African American burials between the U.S. Colored Troop burials after the Civil War and the creation of the segregated section. When Truman integrated the army in 1948, through executive order, his action opened national cemeteries to integrate their burial spaces (see chapter four). However, according to Barr,

642. Sanchez, interview, October 16, 2018.

Andersonville National Cemetery did not integrate until after the segregated section was full in 1960.[643]

The cemetery has 176 burials in section G, primarily veterans but also some spouses. Fifteen of those deaths predate the interment of the remains, suggesting that families chose to bring their loved ones back here to be buried. Most of the names on the burial list in section G note an unknown birthplace, but those that are known include many southern states: Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Louisiana, and Florida. A few birth states are farther north such as Maryland, New York, and Illinois. The men served primarily in World Wars I and II, a few served in Korea, and two served in the Spanish-American War, although some military service locations are not included in the official records. The list for this section contains a few last names found in Andersonville's African American community, but it does not appear that this section was used as a burial ground for Blacks who lived in Andersonville before 1960.[644]

Many local African American veterans chose to be buried in other places, both community and church cemeteries. Calvin Pride Sr. died in July 1960 and chose to be buried, along with his wife Tommie, at Freeman Hill Cemetery, an African American community cemetery in Andersonville, alongside his parents Frank and Rhoda and brother Frank Jr. His family requested and received a military marker for his grave. Pride died just as the segregated section of the cemetery (section G) filled. The last burial there was World War I veteran Sam Overstreet on May 5, 1960.

Figure 6.20. Calvin Pride Sr.'s gravestone, Freeman Hill Cemetery, Andersonville. Courtesy Keri Adams, 2018.

643. Kelly Merrifield, "From Necessity to Honor: The Evolution of National Cemeteries in the United States," NPS.gov, accessible at https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/national_cemeteries/Development.html; Charles Barr, personal communication with Ann McCleary, March 4, 2019.

644. Cemetery Records, Andersonville National Cemetery, Andersonville, Georgia.

Freeman Hill Cemetery was the burial ground for many members of Andersonville's Black community. Its picturesque ambiance—with winding paths and trees covered with Spanish moss—resembles a landscaped cemetery design from the late 19th century. Velma Coley recalls hearing "that piece of land was donated to the citizens of Andersonville, for the Black community to be buried up there, and it was donated by L. A. Rouse."[645] The earliest surviving gravestones date to the 1880s, and the cemetery continues to be used today. Large groups of family plots share the same names as many of the residents who lived along the Old Dixie Highway near the park. Since neither of the local churches, Ebenezer Baptist or St. Paul's AME Church, had their own cemeteries, this community cemetery is the final resting place for many deceased African American residents.[646]

Figure 6.21. Freeman Hill Cemetery, Andersonville. Courtesy Keri Adams, 2018.

African American servicemen are buried here, their graves highlighted with marble military markers. The first was William Hamson in 1940, followed by WWI veteran Joe Stones in 1941, both buried before the Andersonville National Cemetery had created a segregated section in 1946. After that date, African Americans continued to be buried here, including World War I veteran Idus Clemens in 1949 and Marion Smith in 1955. Three stones mark military graves at Freeman Hill Cemetery after the segregated section at Andersonville was full and veterans could have been buried there: World War II veterans Calvin Pride Sr. and George Asberry in 1960 and Korean War veterans Booker Hill in 1965 and Lewis Mathis Jr. in 1988.[647]

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645. Velma Coley, interview. The 1900 U.S. population census records show Lucy Ann (Hardin), Rouse, a White widowed woman aged 44 living in Andersonville. Lucy could possibly be the one who donated the land, as the census records during the late 19th century do not show a male with these initials. In 1910, she lived near the community under discussion here, adjacent to the Easterlin family but near many African American families. Census, 1910, Sumter County, Georgia, Population Schedule, sheet 6B, dwelling 84, family 85, Lucy A. Rouse, digital image, *Ancestry.com* (http://ancestry.com, accessed March 19, 2019), citing NARA microfilm T624, 1240222. In 1910, she lived with her son and his family on the Andersonville-Americus Public Road, again near many African American families.

646. Coley, interview.

647. Alan Anderson, Freeman Hill Cemetery Records, no date, accessible at http://www.sumtercountyhistory.com/cemetery/frhice.htm.

Andersonville National Cemetery records do not identify the race of the interred, so it is difficult to know if African Americans were buried outside the segregated section before 1960. Similarly, the name of the first African American buried outside section G after it was full is unknown as well. But several important examples reveal the pride that African Americans had in burying their loved ones in the newly integrated national cemetery after 1960, especially during the height of the civil rights movement. The fact that African American servicemen and their wives would be buried alongside White servicemen in an integrated cemetery in the 1960s stood in stark contrast to segregated life in nearby Americus.

The burial of Jimmy Laverne Williams reflects the desire for African American veterans to be buried in integrated cemeteries, intensified by the fact that Black soldiers were fighting for their country alongside White soldiers. Williams was born February 12, 1947. He enlisted as a Private First Class in the Light Weapons Infantry in the U.S. Army in 1964, after he graduated from high school. In May 1966, 19-year-old Williams had been assigned to "Operation Hardihood" in Vietnam, when his company encountered enemy forces. He was wounded by a grenade on May 17, 1966, and "his buddies, both black and white" carried him to a medical evacuation helicopter, where he died.[648]

His mother, Mrs. Johnny Williams, wanted to bury him in his hometown city cemetery in Wetumpka, Alabama, 100 miles from Andersonville, which is what she thought he would have wanted. The city told Mrs. Williams that her son would have to be buried in a separate cemetery, claiming that "there were no lots available in the 200-year-old cemetery for five years," and instead offered her a plot set aside for "emergency burials." Another newspaper account claimed that the cemetery used these plots at the rear of the cemetery for paupers. But Mrs. Williams, a civil rights worker and practical nurse, told the city no. "I did not want my son buried in an out-of-the-way place for unknown people. He was not an unknown. He died for you and many other people." She proclaimed, "My son was not a shoeshine boy like his father, he was a soldier, a paratrooper in the Green Berets. He was not fighting a second-class war and did not die a second-class death."[649]

Mrs. Williams instead arranged to bury her son at the now integrated Andersonville National Cemetery. On May 30, 1966, she, her husband, and their five children participated in a small, quiet service with full military honors amidst a sea of American flags from the local Memorial Day recognition.[650] It was likely Bertha Kennedy Holton's Girl Scout troop who placed the flags on the graves that year. Local African American residents still played a role in remembering the people who died and were buried in the cemetery until the National Park Service took over the property in 1971.[651]

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648. "No Room in the Cemetery," *Afro-American* (Baltimore), June 4, 1996, accessible at http://storyoftheweek.loa.org/2014/08/no-room-in-cemetery.html; Chris Barr, "Jimmy Williams: A Story in Stone," National Park Service, May 18, 2014.

649 "No Room in the Cemetery," *Reporting Vietnam: American Journalism 2959–1969* (The Library of America, 1998), 259–61, accessed at https://loa-shared.s3.amazonaws.com/static/pdf/No_Room_Cemetery.pdf.

650. "Negro Soldier Buried in National Cemetery as Mother Requested," *Indianapolis Star,* 31, May 1966; "No Room in the Cemetery," *Afro-American* (Baltimore), June 4, 1996.

651. Coley, interview.

Figure 6.22. Jimmy LaVerne Williams grave, Andersonville National Historic Site. Courtesy Keri Adams, 2018.

Other African Americans from outside Andersonville also came to the cemetery to memorialize the dead. Americus resident Melinda Merritt, born in 1950, remembers coming to the park with her mother, siblings, and some of her mother's friends and their families around Memorial Day. This would have likely been in the early 1960s, in the heat of civil rights protests in southwest Georgia. "It would be summer, and we would come and have picnics," both at the park and at nearby Lake Blackshear. At that time the cemetery had picnic tables "and it'd be crowded, black and white… So that's what we would do sometimes." When asked if her family talked about the history of the cemetery, she replied, "Oh my family always talk about history." Her mother would remind her, "You know, slavery ended 100 years ago in 1865, so you are doing something."[652]

Merritt had special memories of walking through the cemetery and "praying over the graves." She recalled, "A lot of people were buried here who were unknown," and her mother "told us there were a lot of Black people buried here with no name. And we would come and pray over their graves, and she would say her little thing, and that would be that. Passed her blessing on to the people who were here, and sometimes a group of people would have prayer." Merritt added that her mother believed "the unknown graves were black people. So, we would walk around the headstones and she just would tell us about things, how it was in the Civil War. She told us about the Civil War, what it is."[653]

The people who visited the park during the 1960s would come as families or church groups, Merritt recalled. "Black folks get together with families on holidays, so they would have come out to the park, a lot of them families." They connected the stories of the park with the

652. Melinda Merritt, interview with Keri Adams, Julia Brock, and Ann McCleary, October 20, 2018, 20, digital recording, Andersonville National Historic Site, Andersonville, Georgia.

653. Merritt, interview.

"mistreatment" of African Americans. This would have been in the early 1960s, Merritt added. As Merritt got older, and once she started high school at the White school, she became less interested. "After I started going to the white school, I didn't really want to be bothered too much with anything. Just get out of school."[654]

Fred Sanchez described hearing similar accounts that the unknown graves were African American burials from some of the maintenance workers at the park. "A lot of the black community in Andersonville, they were all under 100 percent the true belief that all the 'unknowns' that were in Andersonville were the black prisoners... You could not get them to understand that was not the case. Could there have been and is there maybe some unknown USCTs there? Of course. But we know for fact that's not the case." Sanchez claims that these beliefs and attitudes were "generational." African Americans "knew that the Confederates and the Yankees, the Union prisoners, that were doing the burials, refused to identify the blacks that died there, that are buried there." Sanchez claims that this was one of the "points that led to the animosity that existed between the residents at Andersonville" and the army.[655]

The extent to which African Americans outside the community visited the national cemetery is hard to measure and was probably influenced by a variety of factors. Melinda Merritt grew up in what she describes as "an affluent Black family." Her father, Hope Merritt Sr., owned several businesses, including Merritt and Mays Grocery store on the south side of Americus, in a community known as Beale Street. Her mother kept house and raised the children. The Merritt family was involved with the civil rights movement, and Martin Luther King Jr. visited her family and often stayed at their house while he was in the area. She and her siblings participated in some of the protests in the city. Merritt described her mother "as a progressive kind of woman," someone who would raise her children to understand the world in which they lived. She had time and transportation to bring her children to the cemetery.[656]

By this time—the early 1960s—other African Americans focused more on the civil rights activities that were evolving in the region and that would erupt in Americus and Albany (see chapter five). These events had the unintended consequence of pushing the Andersonville National Cemetery site off the radar of many in the Black community. Americus resident Sam Mahone, born in 1945, recalls little connection with Andersonville cemetery. He grew up in this "very segregated city," the sixth of seven children, where he completed his education from grade one through high school. "We grew up as second-class citizens, and [got a] second-class education." Mahone became involved in the civil rights movement in Sumter County around 1960 or 1961, recruited by the Negro Business League, and he helped register African Americans to vote.[657]

"Andersonville was not on the radar screen at the time," Mahone recalls. "When we grew up, we knew that it was a prison camp. We knew that it was run by the white southerners, and so it was kind of off the radar... It was a place where we knew what had happened, but it was like a little southern institution run by southerners. We knew about the history of it, what had taken place there, but there was little or no interaction with Andersonville." As a child, he had "learned

654. Merritt, interview.

655. Sanchez, interview, October 16, 2018.

656. Merritt, interview.

657. Sam Mahone, interview with Keri Adams, Julia Brock, and Ann McCleary, December 12, 2018, digital recording, Andersonville National Historic Site, Andersonville, Georgia.

about the Civil War, that legacy still permeated in people's minds, particularly in African Americans, of what it actually meant and what it stood for. And so, I think that had a lot to do with us distancing ourselves from it." For Mahone, Andersonville during his youth was "a place where we didn't feel that it was no connection."[658]

Unlike Merritt, Mahone did not visit the cemetery during those years. "Despite after all those years after the Civil War, that legacy still permeated in people's minds, particularly in African Americans, of what it actually meant and what it stood for," Mahone says. He did not know of "anyone who had that kind of connection to the cemetery." During the 60s, "blacks were concerned about how they were going to make it through the next day, and the living conditions, jobs, trying to get some sense of dignity. And so, Andersonville was just another place, a white institution."[659]

Historian Adam Domby argues that by the 1970s there were other more contemporary sites connected with the civil rights movement, and so African Americans did not come to Andersonville National Cemetery as much as they had before. The historic prison site no longer had the same appeal as modern civil rights sites.[660] Even today, Mahone speaks fondly of the places in Americus that nurtured the local civil rights movement, and he is working with other local residents to preserve those. Only recently, he attended a funeral of Jimmy Lee McGarrah at Andersonville, a friend who participated in the civil rights movement with him. McGarrah worked as a volunteer with the Negro Business League and canvassed neighborhoods to encourage African Americans to register to vote. He entered the army before SNCC came in Americus, and he was not living there during the SNCC protests. More recently, Mahone buried his brother Willie Lee Mahone, a U.S. Navy veteran, at Andersonville.[661]

Mahone recalls that Andersonville National Cemetery has become a more "welcoming place now," and he knows people who have "insisted on having" their relatives buried there. "It's something that the country owes them," Mahone says. "I think more than any particular allegiance to the cemetery itself and the history of the cemetery. They died serving this country and so what better way to culminate that service than to have them buried with military honors at a site like that, despite the hard history that comes with that." He adds, "why not take advantage of the honor of being buried at Andersonville, in a place where they may have gotten a sense of citizenship that they didn't have while they were living."[662]

CONCLUSION

These two narratives—one of White local boosters, politicians, and National Park Service planners advocating for a national park and the second of rural Blacks building and sustaining community around the historic cemetery and prison site—occurred at the same time, but there was little interaction between the two groups. Both Whites and Blacks engaged with the prison site and cemetery in their own ways during the 1950s and 1960s, but the paths of the planners seldom crossed with those of most African American residents. The White boosters and NPS

658. Mahone, interview.

659. Mahone, interview.

660. Domby, 284.

661. Mahone, interview.

662. Mahone, interview.

planners shaped the direction and story of the park, but they worked in response to the loud and often angry voices of southern heritage groups who opposed the idea and worried about how the federal government would interpret their history. No one engaged the African Americans who lived there to ask what they thought or to inquire about their history with the site.

Even the White community was divided on whether to turn this historic site with a difficult past into a national park. Fred Boyles recalls, "Within the white community, the people who were in the minority, who wanted to see this become a unit of the national park system, were mainly motivated for tourism and economic benefit, the economic benefit of it."[663] White southerners who previously had little interest in or involvement with the cemetery or prison site now came forward to ensure that their perspective on the story would be told. Ultimately, local boosters and then state politicians and NPS staff had to shape a narrative that would quell the fears of White southerners in order to gain their support. The National Park Service and state politicians created authorizing legislation that would downplay any discussion on topics that might appeal or connect to an African American audience—the motives for the war, Union sacrifice to end the war, or even the role of African Americans and U.S. Colored Troops at the site. The final product focused on a more generic prisoner-of-war experience responsive to a post-World War II America agonizing over its involvement in the Vietnam War years.

Meanwhile, the African American community, which had been interacting with these two historic sites literally in some of their backyards, had to sell their land to create the new national park. They had tended to these historic places for generations. Sanchez recalls, "When Clara Barton came down, she actually found local blacks that were ministering to the cemetery. They were taking care of those graves, because nobody else was doing it. And you've got to remember that it was just there. The cemetery was just a cemetery, and then what was the prison site, the people that had been the owners, took back their land, and they farmed that land again for, I think, it was 25 years that they farmed that land. So, you know, the only people that were taking care of the cemetery were the residents of Andersonville. And it wasn't the whites, it was the blacks that were coming in and taking care of the cemetery. So, I don't know, maybe there was some ownership, they felt there was some ownership to the cemetery that was taken away from them."[664]

The African American community lost land, homes, and part of their physical community. The National Park Service razed most of their homes, although Sanchez recalls that the park left some of the houses on the west side of the road to fall into ruins. Residents moved their churches, and they had to find new places to live. Although the community was already declining as people left Andersonville for urban areas with better opportunities, losing their land to the park provided yet another push for residents to move to nearby towns like Americus, to larger Georgia cities like Columbus or Atlanta, to northern states, or sometimes to Florida. Coley reflects, "The majority of people died out and then the rest of them moved away, you know, like families. A family would die and then someone would move to the northern states."[665]

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663. Boyles, interview with Keri Adams, Julia Brock, and Ann McCleary, October 19, 2018, digital recording, Andersonville National Historic Site, Andersonville, Georgia.

664. Sanchez, interview, October 16, 2018.

665. Coley, interview.

In the decade following the park's establishment, the African American community became less engaged with the cemetery and prison site. Velma Coley's stories about the pride her Girl Scout troop took in placing flags on the graves gave way to the park's observance of this special day. After the park was established, "Then after they got the soldiers and folks to come in and put them [the flags] out. It took them probably about a day or so, where it took us about a week."[666]

Figure 6.23. Group of African American Girl Scouts placing flags on graves at Andersonville National Cemetery on Memorial Day, Sumter County, May 1976. Courtesy, Georgia Archives, Vanishing Georgia Collection, sum119.

At the same time, the voices of the Lost Cause ideology grew louder, which likely continued to push African American community members away from the park, as Sam Mahone expressed. A revival of celebrations in the late 1970s by the Sons of the Confederate Veterans and United Daughters of the Confederacy included an annual ceremony to commemorate Wirz's execution. These activities peaked in the mid-1980s, attracting White southerners "asserting" their historical accounts. By the 1990s, historian Benjamin Cloyd writes, 40 "neo-Confederates" showed up in town as part of this commemoration.[667] As of this writing, the Wirz ceremony continues to be held annually by the town of Andersonville.

When Superintendent Fred Boyles came in 1989, he observed that African Americans "didn't generally care. There wasn't much interest in the park. Most of the folks in the black community had lost touch with what happened here and how crucial this was in the story of blacks in the Civil War."[668] If so, that was likely due, at least in part, to the exclusion of African Americans and their role at Andersonville in most of the NPS planning documents. But more than that, African Americans in the surrounding community lost land they had held dear for generations. They likely still knew the stories of Andersonville, but they no longer felt welcome.

666. Coley, interview.

667. Cloyd, Haunted by Atrocity, 170.

668. Boyles, interview.

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Chapter Seven

Interpreting African American History at Andersonville National Historic Site

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CHAPTER SEVEN: INTERPRETING AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AT ANDERSONVILLE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

The Civil War Centennial presented south Georgia with an opportunity to capitalize on a growing interest and emerging object memory of Civil War prisons in which the Union and the Confederacy received equal blame for atrocities against POWs. Activities and events of the civil rights movement and active supporters of the Confederacy's Lost Cause, such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Sons of Confederate Veterans, complicated celebrations around the centennial.[669] Yet new tourism initiatives of the 1960s and 1970s, like those discussed in chapter six, provided opportunities, not just for economic development, but for the reshaping of the painful historic narrative surrounding the town of Andersonville and Andersonville National Historic Site.

The national historic site had a complicated relationship with the town before its legislative authorization, but particularly after its proposed mission threatened the Lost Cause narrative. The 2018 Andersonville National Historic Site HRS used August 1971 *Columbus Enquirer* and November 2, 1971 *Americus Times-Recorder* articles and written correspondences to document the discourse among southern heritage groups and U.S. Congressman Jack Brinkley, who proposed and sponsored the historic site's legislation, just over a year after the establishment of the park:

> Congressman Jack Brinkley indicated that Southern states would be allowed to place monuments at Andersonville, and that Georgia had already been encouraged to build its monument there. In a letter to National United Daughters of the Confederacy President Mrs. G. A. Moore, Jr., Brinkley wrote that he was interested in 'preserving and protecting our Southern heritage at every opportunity,' and hoped that the South might find a way to honor 'our native sons who died in northern prisoner of war camps.'[670]

As discussed in chapter six, a November 12, 1971, article in *The Atlanta Constitution* reported the general convention of the United Daughters of the Confederacy agreed to "go all out to seek repeal" of the park's enabling legislation. The national chairman of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, Mrs. J. G. Madry, commented on the newly established Andersonville National Historic Site and condemned the site as "propagating the 'malicious and libelous, insulting and injurious myth' that the Andersonville camp was more inhumane than Union (POW) camps." Madry explained that the UDC wished for the establishing legislation to be amended to "allow the South to tell its side of the story" and that the bill had not received adequate publicity or enough time for public response before it was passed into law. Alternative to a bill repeal, the UDC requested an amendment that would allow "southern states and patriotic organizations" to erect memorials for Confederate POWs at the site. The UDC and the SCV asked to be on a historic marker committee as well. In the same article, Madry accused U.S. Congressman Jack Brinkley of turning "against the South" when he told the U.S. House of Representatives, "It would seem to be right and proper to establish this site in order to honor the memory of the men

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669. Benjamin G. Cloyd, *Haunted by Atrocity: Civil War Prisons in American Memory* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010), 144–145.

670. Liz Sargent, Deborah Slanton, and Tim Penich, Andersonville National Historic Site Historic Resource Study (National Park Service: 2018), 151.

who gave their lives for the preservation of the Union but who sleep in the soil of their then-alienated countrymen."[671]

The vocal UDC made their opinions of and priorities for the new national historic site known to the public. Fears of the federal government opposing the Lost Cause narrative or betraying the South's Civil War heritage were apparent in communications with local and regional media sources. The 2018 Historic Resource Study found the actions of both the UDC and the SCV aimed "to intercede in the process of establishing Andersonville as a national historic site by writing letters to the Congressman and working with the press to prevent the 'cruelly unfair reflections on the Confederacy…[which] most of the published histories of Andersonville have done.'"[672] The superintendent spent much of his first year addressing the concerns of Georgia Congressmen, vowing that the site would "tell the Andersonville story without reviving old antagonisms," and promising to "welcome the touring history buff and provide an oasis of serenity for urban citizens."[673]

Figure 7.1. Part of the town prior to improvements made by the Area Planning and Development Commission. At left is Child's Grocery and Market. Courtesy, Georgia Archives, Vanishing Georgia Collection, sum119.

The town, and perhaps the prison park and national cemetery, may not have been an "oasis of serenity" for people of color after the displacement of African American citizens allowed for the transformation of the downtown area into a Civil War village in the 1970s (see chapter six). The first annual Andersonville Historic Fair began in October 1976 and featured a performance of the famous play *The Andersonville Trial*. Historian Benjamin Cloyd's 2010 *Haunted Atrocity* found that the town's entanglement of its difficult history with Lost Cause heritage, along with the popularity and success of the annual fair, helped the town accept, transform, and mask its

671. Gene Stephens, "UDC pledges battle against Andersonville site." *Atlanta Constitution* November 12, 1971. Retrieved from https://search.proquest.com/docview/1613107649?accountid=15017.

672. Sargent, Slanton and Penich, HRS, 151.

673. Sargent, Slanton and Penich, HRS, 151.

association with the infamous prison site on the other side of Highway 49.[674] "The selective manipulation of the past, especially in the name of tradition, is, by its nature, exclusionary," Cloyd explained in *Haunted Atrocity*. There was no documented acknowledgement or consideration given to local Black experiences and histories by town and event organizers in the years following the tumultuous events of the civil rights movement (see chapter five), the creation of the Civil War village, and increased interest in the town by Confederate heritage groups. The groups went so far as to create and co-sponsor an annual commemorative ceremony Memorial Day service in the town-center to mark the execution of the Commandant of Camp Sumter, Captain Henry Wirz.[675]

Figure 7.2. Street scene in Andersonville, 1971.
Courtesy, Georgia Archives, Vanishing Georgia Collection, sum119.

The pro-Confederate sentiment surrounding the town of Andersonville brought with it a rise in Civil War reenactments associated with the national historic site and reflected the increasing popularity of reenactments at Civil War battlefields and other sites across the country. During a 2018 oral history interview, former park Chief of Interpretation and Resource Management Alfredo "Fred" Sanchez said of the national historic site's popular "Torchlight Tours" programming and reenactments, "And, of course, during the '70s and '80s, you're talking about being the peak."[676] Sanchez remembered, "Because you're talking about the '70s and early '80s, you're talking about prime reenactments—where you had these reenactments throughout the Civil War battlefields. A lot of the fields that were not park service. A lot of the park service's places, they were not allowed to do that."[677]

The years of Civil War centennial planning and activities (1950s–1965), and perhaps the disproportionate influence of Confederate heritage groups, created a lasting interest in Civil War commemoration and American patriotism in the town of Andersonville. This patriotism was steeped in the Lost Cause narrative and Confederate heritage only to be exacerbated by

674. Cloyd, *Haunted*, 151–153.

675. Cloyd, *Haunted*, 153–156.

676. Alfredo "Fred" Sanchez, interview with Keri Adams, Julia Brock, and Ann McCleary, digital recording, October 16, 2018, Andersonville National Historic Site, Andersonville, Georgia.

677. Sanchez interview, October 2018.

local opposition to the establishing legislation of the national historic site. The pro-Confederate sentiments of the town's leaders and expulsion of many African American families from the town created a space for the exclusion of African American stories and experiences associated with both the prison site and the national cemetery. The national historic site and its staff had many obstacles in fulfilling their mission to interpret the Camp Sumter story and experiences of Civil War POWs, along with that of all American POWs across all time. The lack of known or available historical resources, along with the park's early narratives, studies, and plans, either ignored or diminished African American experiences or roles in shaping the history of Camp Sumter and the national cemetery. Records also ignored the site's commemoration, preservation, land use, and caretaking over the course of 150 years before the establishment of the national historic site.

Figure 7.3. The town of Andersonville was restored as a Civil War-era village. Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site.

By examining both Andersonville National Historic Site's and related National Park Service's planning documents, as well as interviewing former park staff, this chapter will explore how the era in which Andersonville National Historic Site was founded and the resulting restrictive enabling legislation led park staff to exclude a more comprehensive and inclusive interpretation of the presence of African Americans at Camp Sumter and Andersonville National Cemetery for the greater part of its history. Lastly, this chapter will review how NPS initiatives, as well as congressional actions, led the national historic site's participation in and contributions to an evaluation and revision of how all Civil War sites interpret slavery and the cause of the American Civil War.

THE CAMP SUMTER STORY

Chapter six provides details of land acquisitions—"one of the immediate issues of concern was adequate management and maintenance of the property"—to the lone park staff at Andersonville, Superintendent John Jensen, and the five cemetery personnel.[678] It was not until 1972 that the park had 11 permanent employees and a small library and collections that focused on the site's Civil War history, specifically the POWs and guards.[679] New park staff would have

678. Sargent, Slanton and Penich, HRS, 151-–52.

679. Sargent, Slanton and Penich, HRS, 152.

had access to or knowledge of National Park Service Historian Edwin Bearrs's Historic Resource Study for the park in July 1970. As suggested in chapter six, this study provided narrative interpretation with footnotes that included information about African Americans as related to history of the site: the Dix-Hill Cartel (a prisoner exchange system during the Civil War); land preparation and construction of the original stockade by use of teams of both free and enslaved labor; total numbers of Black prisoners upon opening the prison; backfilling discovered tunnels; treatment of Black soldiers commanded by White officers; rations for "negro laborers" at the prison; employment of area enslaved labor gangs to fortify the prison; purchases by Confederate soldiers of watermelons and peaches from local Blacks; labor detail at the hospital and dead house; labor detail of Black soldiers and enslaved laborers in the cemetery; and reburial efforts in the cemetery following the end of the Civil War—mere mentions among the rich narrative of the prison's and cemetery's histories.[680] There were two paragraphs dedicated to Mary A. Shearman's observations of the Freedman's School at the site in 1867 and one short paragraph about the school's abandonment by 1873. This information, along with over 170 pages of details about the prison and cemetery, provided descriptions of the places in which African Americans lived or worked at Camp Sumter and later, the Freedman's School. In his study, Bearrs adds that Shearman noted mostly Black laborers at the cemetery, an employment trend for the next 150 years. Other stories of local African Americans appear in the study, including Black families occupying old prison buildings and dismantling the stockade for timber or fuel.[681] Then, the name of a Black land tenant appears, that of George W. Kennedy. Not just his name, but also Kennedy's use of the land; however, this detail is in reference to the state of the stockade in 1883 rather than details of Black life in Andersonville.[682] Bearrs's study contained many details about the need for, establishment and construction of, and nearly three decades of postwar existence about Camp Sumter. The final paragraph of the study supplements, perhaps mirrors, the same sentiments of the UDC in 1971:

> As the story to be interpreted at Andersonville is to focus on the unhappy fate and condition of prisoners held in military prison camps since the beginning of recorded history, a general background study on the origin and development of prison camps will be given a high priority. In addition, a study of a typical Union prison pen, such as Point Lookout or Elmira, should be programmed. This will demonstrate, despite notoriety given Andersonville by novelists such as Mackinlay Kantor, that there was little difference in the way prisoners were treated by the belligerents.[683]

Early documents published by the park, such as the 1971 Master Plan, failed to detail the ethnicity or race of landowners and tenants surrounding the prison site and cemetery, which this study documents as being primarily African American. Instead, the plan describes their properties in objectiveness as lands necessary to create a single, cohesive park unit with protective buffer zones.[684] For over a century, African Americans had labored on this land by force of enslavement or to earn a living in the Jim Crow years, yet these stories were not

680. Edwin Bearss, Andersonville National Historic Site Historic Resource Study and Historic Base Map (National Park Service: July 31, 1970), 1–5, 23–24, 28, 49, 53, 60, 80, 95, 97–98, 124, and 146.

681. Bearss, HRS, 163, 165–166, and 169.

682. Bearss, HRS, 170–171.

683. Bearss, HRS, 175–176.

684. Robert Steenhagen et al., Andersonville National Historic Site Master Plan (National Park Service: 1971), 7, 16, 20, and 29–30.

represented in much of the national historic site's interpretation and education programs through the 1990s.

The master plan lightly upholds the rosy southerness of Georgia that might appeal to the traveling White tourist, "the Florida bound traveler on Interstate 75 passes 27 miles to the east of Andersonville. To the out-of-state visitor, Georgia is peaches, pecans, and *Gone with the Wind*, and the historical past of the State has undeniable appeal for him." In addition, the plan described the town's atmosphere "in serene contrast to the stir of modern America visible elsewhere in Sumter and Macon Counties."[685] Contrary to the enabling legislation of the national historic site, the master plan's description of interpretation focuses solely on that of the history of Camp Sumter and Andersonville National Cemetery rather than the Civil War POW experience at the site, along with the experiences of all American POWs across all time.[686] The forthcoming interpretive plan was no different in respect to ignoring the Black population or their history in Andersonville, the latter of which was likely not well-documented leading to a lack of interpretation about local African American history.

Figure 7.4a. Paul Gordon, the first historian at Andersonville National Cemetery, gives a talk at the Wisconsin Monument, 1972. Courtesy, Georgia Archives, Vanishing Georgia Collection, sum119.

685. Steenhagen et al., Master Plan, 7–8.

686. Steenhagen et al., Master Plan, 33–35.

Figure 7.4b. Paul Gordon, the first historian at Andersonville National Cemetery, gives a talk at the Wisconsin Monument, 1972. Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site, Open Parks Network.

In 1973, a short interpretive prospectus of the national historic site was published. The theme of pro-Confederate revision or sympathy emerges early in the prospectus, "The specific subject of our Civil War is a touchy one," it continued, "Because the North had equally bad prisons, and Southerners suffered equally bad treatment, because of the horror of war, any war, anywhere, it is felt that the emphasis on this prison as the main theme of interpretation would be in poor taste."[687] Immediate displays and interpretation called for "the few remaining pathetic objects" of the Andersonville prison, but the document provided the details and direction for exhibits and other spaces interpreting the prisoner of war experience through the 20th century, including audio-visuals.[688] The planning team, which included park Superintendent John Jensen, recommended wayside signage and walking tours to tell the story of Andersonville prison at the historic site. "Comparison with Northern Camps" was the title of stop number four of the outdoor walking and driving tour. Although sites and activities that had intimately involved both free and enslaved African American labor were included on the tour stops, there was no specific mention of Black history at the site.[689] The team emphasized research and location of known collections about Andersonville prison and its POWs, specifying, "A study should be made, either of Camp Douglas, Illinois, or Elmira, New York, in the course of planning the exhibits for Andersonville."[690]

Following recommendations from the 1971 prospectus, Superintendent John Jensen worked with Bobby L. Lowe of the Middle Flint Planning Commission to create a 75-mile tourism route known as the Andersonville Auto Loop Tour or the Andersonville Trail, from Interstate 75 in Perry to Andersonville, then through Cordele to return to Interstate 75.[691] Around the same

687. Jean R. Swearingen et al., Andersonville National Historic Site Interpretive Prospectus (National Park Service: 1971), 3.

688. Swearingen et al., Interpretive Prospectus, 4–7.

689. Swearingen et al., Interpretive Prospectus, 7–18.

690. Swearingen et al., Interpretive Prospectus, 20–24.

691. Sargent, Slanton and Penich, HRS, 152; Cloyd, *Haunted*, 2010, 150; and the Georgia General Assembly designated the Andersonville Trail in 1980.

time, in 1973, the town of Andersonville began to market itself as a Civil War-era village.[692] The 2018 Historic Resource Study for the park found:

> In the town, residents formed the Andersonville Guild, concerned with work to 'preserve, restore, beautify and promote Andersonville as a Georgia community during the era of the Civil War.' Peggy Sheppard, a long-time resident and a culinary columnist in *Georgia Magazine*, published a book entitled *Andersonville, Georgia, USA*. Georgia Lee, an artist with the Middle Flint Area Planning and Development Commission, painted a 'mural size representation of what the town should look like, right down to store fronts and paint colors.'[693]

These concurrent efforts were enough to increase park visitation, which prompted the park to create a visitors gazebo with panels and audio components near the prison site and wayside signs with a supplementary map and self-guided tour brochure near the entrance to the prison site.[694] Archaeological investigations of the prison site during the 1970s supported this new interpretation, as well as ensured that future interpretive replicas would not be built over the original stockade.[695]

Figure 7.5. People demonstrating at Andersonville National Historic Site against the memorializing of war, 1975. Courtesy, Georgia Archives, Vanishing Georgia Collection, sum119.

Economic development efforts of the town, new interpretive attractions at the park, and the presidency of southwest Georgia native Jimmy Carter provided a boost in tourism to Andersonville. The increase in visitation created a perception of acceptance of the town's difficult past and a sense of healing among Andersonville's White community. The park's recent historic resource study documented town resident and Tourism Director Peggy Sheppard speaking to the *Detroit Free Press* in February 1977, "For many years, the people wanted nothing

692. Sargent, Slanton and Penich, HRS, 152.

693. Sargent, Slanton and Penich, HRS, 152.

694. Sargent, Slanton and Penich, HRS, 152.

695. Sargent, Slanton and Penich, HRS, 152.

to do with Andersonville, because it made them angry and a little ashamed. Now the people here no longer pretend there was no such thing as Andersonville prison. You can see the scars healing in a place like this. We're all looking at our history a little more squarely now!"[696] That growing pride continued as Georgia Secretary of State Ben Fortson commended the townspeople and the Andersonville Guild when he dedicated the new Easterlin Square during the Andersonville Historic Town Fair in 1978.[697] Of the same occasion, Mayor Lewis Easterlin remarked that the town had to live with the memory of the prison, but also depended "on that history to revitalize the town."[698] According to the park's 1977 Historic Resource Management Plan, the Town of Andersonville had "established a program to restore itself as a Civil War Village, which had been approached in large part by local civic leaders and the Middle Flint Area Planning and Development Commission."[699] The 1977 Historic Resource Management Plan accredited the "special relationship between the town and the park" in attracting visitors to the national historic site. In addition, the Andersonville Guild and the Andersonville Trail had "been instrumental in fostering a good image for both the town and the park."[700]

The national historic site's limited staff and resources, including lack of historic interpretation, may have contributed to the narrow focus on the Andersonville story—and exclusion of local black history—rather than a more total or complete American prisoner of war story. The 1977 Historic Resource Management Plan found, "The Park at present has neither funds, space, nor personnel to adequately care for a large study or display collection. For that reason, the scope of our collection has been narrowed to items with a strong association to events that occurred at Andersonville."[701] The 1977 plan described the park's library as small yet well rounded, but still not supporting the mission of the national historic site. "It should be noted that few books or artifacts have been located that are pertinent to the overall prisoner-of-war story."[702] In the year after the historic resource management plan was completed, a new interpretive ranger transferred to Andersonville. "When I got there in '78, all they were doing was Civil War history and the story of Andersonville prison," remembered Fred Sanchez about arriving to the national historic site.[703] Sanchez remembered the small visitor and interpretive center that was inside what is now the cemetery chapel and collections storage facility, "The front area had a small desk. We called it a visitor center desk, and then there were a few exhibits that the old superintendent had done and that was it. That was the only exhibits. They dealt mostly with Andersonville. You know, there was basically—The best way to describe it, we've all been to what, I like to call it, the 'mom and pop' museums. Light labels and a few artifacts and some pictures on the wall, and that's all there was up there."[704] At the time of Sanchez's arrival in July of 1978, park rangers and seasonal rangers engaged visitors through prepared slide shows in the chapel building, led cemetery and prison site tours or talks (depending on the season or

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696. Sargent, Slanton and Penich, HRS, 153, cites Saul Friedman, "Seeking Truth, Healing Scars at Andersonville," *Detroit Free Press*, February 6, 1977, 1-E.

697. Sargent, Slanton and Penich, HRS, 154, cites *Americus Times-Recorder*, October 9, 1978.

698. Sargent, Slanton and Penich, HRS, 154, cites *Columbus Inquirer*, October 3, 1978; and Administrative History—Andersonville (National Park Service: not dated), 56.

699. Andersonville National Historic Site Historic Resource Management Plan (National Park Service: 1977), pages unnumbered.

700. Historic Resource Management Plan (HRMP) (1977), pages unnumbered.

701. HRMP (1977), pages unnumbered.

702. HRMP (1977), pages unnumbered.

703. Sanchez interview, October 2018.

704. Sanchez interview, October 2018.

weather), and conducted Torch Light Tours in September, which were later held in July and August beginning around 1980.[705]

Figure 7.6. Torchlight Tour, 1977.
Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site.

Figure 7.7. Prisoner of War Museum, undated.
Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site.

705. Sanchez, October 2018; and Sargent, Slanton and Penich, HRS, 170; the chapel building was known as the Cultural Resources Building at the time of this publication.

Torch Light Tours were first introduced under Superintendent John Flister in July 1975. The program brought in historical Civil War reenactors from all over the country to work as first-person interpreters, referred to as "living historians" by Sanchez, who interacted with park visitors near the northeast corner of the prison site. Park rangers dressed as Confederate soldiers as well as Union prisoners. The interpreters set up camp as Union POWs and as Confederate soldiers from the 4th Georgia Reserve, for example, that guarded the site and walked the historic "deadline."[706] In preparation for their roles, the reenactors conducted their own research that was supplemented by use of the NHS collection, including original diaries of prisoners and first and second editions of published accounts of Camp Sumter.[707] In the evenings, park rangers and seasonal staff dressed in period-appropriate clothing (1860s–1890s) to reenact as members of the Women's Relief Corps and the Grand Army of the Republic that introduced park visitors to the Torch Light program, taking place at the prison site at night.[708] "No. No. It was very rare," Sanchez recalled when asked about the inclusion of interpretations in Torch Light of enslaved African Americans that constructed the prison camp or African Americans that were POWs at Camp Sumter or even those that celebrated Decoration Day at the prison site.[709]

Inclusion of Black experiences and histories at the site became more common for rangers to interpret in their interactions with visitors beginning in the late 1970s and on through the 1980s.[710] Occasionally, Sanchez said, staff included stories in their cemetery talks and walks of U.S. Colored Troops (USCT) that were buried at the national cemetery with an emphasis on the 54th Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry and, later, stories of local African Americans that cared for the cemetery after the Civil War.[711] African American burials in Civil War period sections of the cemetery surprised some NHS visitors, Sanchez recalled.[712] Sanchez and later the chief of interpretation reviewed each interpreter's prepared storyline and programs, but Sanchez remembers that there was not as much research available to incorporate African American stories into interpretation.[713]

EMPHASIZING THE MISSION

The early 1980s brought significant change to historical interpretation at the park as focus shifted from primarily the Civil War era to incorporate a more complete American prisoner of war story as defined in the enabling legislation.[714] A draft administrative history of the park stated, "In 1982 a greater emphasis was placed in the park interpretation efforts on the mission Congress had given the site to tell the story of prisoners of war throughout history, rather than just from the Civil War period."[715] Sanchez recalls a shift in the stories that the park interpreted,

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706. Sanchez interview, October 2018; Sargent, Slanton and Penich, HRS, 153, cites *Americus Times-Recorder*, June 1, 1975.

707. Sanchez interview, October 2018.

708. Sanchez interview, October 2018.

709. Sanchez interview, October 2018.

710. Sanchez interview, October 2018.

711. Sanchez interview, October 2018.

712. Sanchez interview, October 2018.

713. Sanchez interview, October 2018.

714. Sargent, Slanton, Penich, HRS,155, no direct citation provided, possibly the 1983 Superintendent's Annual Report.

715. Administrative History—Andersonville, not dated, 64.

"It tells you exactly why the Park was established. In the case of Andersonville, it wasn't really established for the story of Andersonville; it was basically established as a national memorial for all prisoners of war, which it kind of just didn't dawn on people."[716] In 1983, Sanchez created a temporary prisoner of war exhibit in the brick storage building located southwestwardly of the prison site.[717] That same year, meetings commenced between NHS staff and the American Ex-Prisoners of War, Inc. (AXPW), specifically the organization's southeastern and southwestern directors and its national historian, Helen Smith. Out of these discussions came use of the visitors center for a POW exhibit and the need to seek private funding to support an ex-POW museum or exhibit.[718] Sanchez fondly recalled, "I was blessed to take that story up and establish a relationship with American ex-prisoners of war," adding, "I met a wonderful lady at the time, Helen Smith, who was a historian, and [...] agreements and memorandum of agreements and understandings were signed and fundraising, and that led to the establishment of the National Prisoner of War Museum."[719]

Though the national historic site and its interpretive staff had begun to think more broadly about their mission and worked to collect new POW stories and materials, the interest and significance of Camp Sumter remained prominent at the park and in the town. Over the past decade, the Andersonville Guild successfully transformed the town to resemble an 1864–1865-era Civil War village by the removal of 20th century structures and relocation of some period-appropriate structures, including a late 19th century train depot and log church.[720] For its efforts, the Society of American Travel Writers awarded the town their Phoenix Award in 1984, one of nine awards given in the United States and Canada that year. The Guild's work increased annual visitation from zero to 50,000 over a 10-year period. The undated Administrative History draft suggests that the town's tourism recognition caused changes at the park, "While the townspeople were being recognized for bringing visitors in, there was a push to build a visitor's center that might better carry out its mission of interpretation."[721]

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716. Sanchez, October 2018.

717. Sanchez, October 2018; Alfredo "Fred" Sanchez, interview with Keri Adams, Julia Brock, and Ann McCleary, digital recording, March 19, 2019, Andersonville National Historic Site, Andersonville, Georgia; and Sargent, Slanton and Penich, HRS,156, cites SANR 1983.

718. Sargent, Slanton and Penich, HRS, 156, cites SANR 1983.

719. Sanchez, October 2018.

720. Sargent, Slanton and Penich, HRS, 156, cites *Americus Times-Recorder*, April 26, 1984.

721. AH (undated), 67.

Figure 7.8. Clara Barton living history program, 1990.
Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site, Open Parks Network.

During this time of increased visitation to Andersonville, Sanchez and a seasonal ranger wrote a theatrical script for a program called "Clara Barton's Legacy" that replaced the Torch Light Tours from the mid-1980s through at least 1989 when the late-summer heat had become overwhelming. The program told the story of Andersonville through the retrospective storytelling of Barton and incorporated reenactors for Confederate prison guards and Union POWs, including U.S. colored troops.[722] Though stories of African Americans had been incorporated for some site interpretation, the national historic site focused primarily on fulfilling its original purpose of telling the story of all American POWs, in addition to the POW experience at Andersonville. The national historic site's 2018 Historic Resource Study documents the increasing need for a museum space to house the planned National Prisoner of War Museum:

> By 1985, the need for the new prisoner of war interpretive venue had become a larger concern. National Historian [for AXPW], Helen Smith, in a letter to Secretary of Interior, Donald Hodel, called a new visitor center at the park a 'must.' She pointed to the inadequacy of the present building, saying, 'There is no way the Park Service can display all the memorabilia that Ex-Prisoners of War have donated at the museum.'[723]

Between 1985 and 1987, Smith and her husband, Gordon Smith, worked with Ranger Fred Sanchez to establish a new POW museum in the old carriage house, sometimes referred to as the brick storage building(s), constructed in 1923.[724]

722. Sanchez interview, 2018. Sanchez believes that the seasonal ranger's name was Brenda Landrum.

723. Sargent, Slanton and Penich, HRS, 156, cites Helen Smith to Donald Hodel letter, May 6, 1985.

724. Sargent, Slanton and Penich, HRS, 156–157; Sanchez interview, 2018; Sanchez interview, 2019; and Andersonville National Historic Site, Annual Narrative Report for Fiscal Year 1996 (NPS Southeastern Regional Office, Atlanta, Georgia: 1997), 1.

The environmental assessment of the approved 1988 General Management Plan / Development Concept Plan defined interpretive themes that matched the park's legislative mission—not just the Camp Sumter story—more so than previous studies and plans. The themes were: (1) To provide an understanding of the overall prisoner-of-war story of the Civil War, (2) To interpret the role of POW camps in history, (3) To commemorate the sacrifice of Americans who lost their lives in such camps, and (4) To interpret the monuments as elements in the Andersonville story.[725] In addition, the 1988 plan noted an agreement between the park and the town to "allow the Mayor of Andersonville or his designee to participate in the development of park interpretation action plans to assist in the correct and adequate interpretation of the town" citing the town's historic resources and the location of the original railroad depot as being significant to the story of Camp Sumter.[726] Balancing the relationship and maintaining trust between the park and the town was important to the vitality of a rural, off-the-beaten-path tourist destination in south Georgia. The significance of local partnerships and relationships may have been especially crucial to Andersonville NHS staff as they took on the new Jimmy Carter National Historic Site in nearby Plains beginning in 1987. Former NHS Cultural Resource Specialist Alan Marsh cited the additional duties and needs of the Andersonville staff in an era of "aggressive tourism industry in southwest Georgia" in a 1992 Statement of Interpretation report, "A significant additional workload has been added to the park staff with the establishment and management of the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site." The report specified management and operational concerns of both parks, "Planning must begin as soon as possible to provide guidance and address the management and interpretive goals outlined in the park's enabling legislation to ensure a professional NPS presence at Plains and ensure the continued quality operation at Andersonville."[727] Adding to what may have been an overburdened workload for park staff, the same report detailed the concern of park resources needed to honor the agreement with American Ex-Prisoner of War, Inc., in collecting oral histories and objects for the planned National Prisoner of War Museum, "The historic site needs to be prepared to receive these items and provide the museum collection with perpetual professional care as outlined in NPS Management Guidelines. The continued growth of the collection will place an even greater burden on the already inadequate facilities."[728]

Upon arriving at the Andersonville and Jimmy Carter parks as superintendent in 1989, Fred Boyles remembered in a 2018 oral history interview, "The real challenge was that both of them [the two parks] were in development stage and both of them had huge private fundraising programs that they had to do. So that was awkward and challenging, but exciting as well."[729] Similar to when Fred Sanchez had arrived over 11 years earlier, when Boyles arrived, the buildings near the cemetery told the Andersonville story; however, in 1987 the park converted the brick buildings to the southwest of the prison site to house an updated POW museum.[730] Former Superintendent Boyles recalled that fundraising efforts for the planned POW museum were slow and park staff focused on the site's history in the late 1980s, "The main thing we did

725. John Fischer et al., General Management Plan (National Park Service: 1988), 7.

726. John Fischer et al., General Management Plan (GMP), i.

727. Alan Marsh, Annual Statement for Interpretation and Visitors Services, Andersonville National Historic Site, December 18, 1992, 7.

728. Marsh, Annual Statement (1992), 8.

729. Fred Boyles, interview with Keri Adams, Julia Brock, and Ann McCleary, digital recording, October 19, 2018, Andersonville National Historic Site, Andersonville, Georgia.

730. Boyles interview, 2018.

was tell the Camp Sumter story. It took up most of our time, and you know, it's what we did."[731] The trauma of the prison site and the history that followed remained in Andersonville. "The local community still looked on this place negatively because it's the whole Confederate/Union thing that's still very much...especially with the old white community of Sumter County and Macon County. I mean, you still had people that just didn't like that this was even a unit of the National Park system," Boyles said of local tensions during his time at the park.[732] Boyles held the belief that the local African American community did not have much interest in the site's or cemetery's histories, "I think most of the folks in the black community had lost touch with what happened here and how crucial this [site] was in the story of blacks in the Civil War."[733] However, former NHS Chief of Interpretation Eric Leonard described a 1991 exterior review of the existing museum in, "The National Park Service and the Afro-American Experience" by Richard E. Miller, written for the Afro-American Institute for Historic Preservation and Community Development. Leonard noted that the review explained that museum visitors may not receive an "inclusionary perspective" unless engaging with NHS staff.[734]

Figure 7.9. Ranger leading interpretive program for young visitors, Andersonville National Historic Site, Georgia, 1991. Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site, Open Parks Network.

The national historic site gained interest in its increased efforts to tell a more complete American prisoner of war story. In the early and mid-1990s, POW museum fundraising efforts and designs gained momentum through the leadership of former World War II POWs and Friends of Park the President Carl Runge, and with efforts from Superintendent Boyles as well as the nonprofit and museum partner organization the American Ex-Prisoners of War, Inc.,[735]

731. Boyles interview, 2018.

732. Boyles interview, 2018.

733. Boyles interview, 2018.

734. Eric Leonard, e-mail to Keri Adams, November 19, 2019. See also Richard E. Miller "The National Park Service and the Afro-American Experience 1990: An Independent Assessment from the Black Perspective" (Atlanta, Ga.: Afro-American Institute for Historic Preservation and Community Development: 1991). https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/npsg/afro_american_experience.pdf.

735. The nonprofit organization Friends of the Park was known as Friends of Andersonville at the time of this publication.

Boyles recalled the ease in garnering interest and support for the planned POW museum, "I would go to Kiwanis Club or something and say, 'Here's Carl Runge. He was a prisoner of war in Germany. And here's Bill Fornes. [...] He was a guest of the North Koreans for two years in a little cage. And here's this Vietnam prisoner of war.' And, all of the sudden, it was like, 'Maybe it isn't about all them Yankees out there…' You know, it's the bigger story. They could get behind it."[736]

Former Cultural Resource Specialist and later, Chief of Cultural Resources Alan Marsh, who arrived at the Andersonville National Historic Site in 1992, recalled that many of the area locals did not always embrace NHS interpretations of the site, "I would venture to say that most of the folks here have ties going back in the community and not being transplanted recently. I think it's just a defense mechanism to kind of—to stand up for something that happened so bad here, in your backyard, but it's true that bad things were happening at Elmira and other places. It's easy to come back with a defense: 'This is something that happened right here in my home area. They criticize me all the time and I wasn't here myself.'"[737] Marsh remembered that Civil War programming at the prison site, including *The Andersonville Trial* adaptation and Andersonville Revisited tours, seemed popular with Andersonville and Americus residents.[738] As for the play, the Sumter Players, a local acting troupe, put on a theatrical performance of "The Trial of Captain Wirz" at the park with the technical support of NHS staff. A 1992 Individual Service Plan for the play explained, "[The] program will present a different view to the Andersonville story," continuing, "The story of Andersonville has been tainted since its conception. The play brings to light the other side of the story, the views of the Confederate Captain Wirz. The play will allow the viewer to argue with his own morals as to the rights or wrongs of Wirz." This program was in coordination with the Andersonville Fair every other year.[739] Presenting a play with local actors was likely a draw for Sumter and Macon County residents. Even more appealing may have been the presentation of "the other side of the story," a side that White town residents and the National United Daughters of the Confederacy were once concerned with at the founding of the national historic site 20 years prior.

The 1992 Annual Statement for Interpretation and Visitors Services report contained the same primary interpretive themes outlined in the 1988 General Management Plan / Development Concept Plan, but had now added secondary themes: (1) Memorialization period 1890–1938, (2) Civilian Conservation Corps projects 1934–1936, and (3) Special interest programs such as living history, evening tours, Officer Candidate School programs.[740] In addition, the primary and secondary interpretive goals and objectives broadened the focus of the park's programming:

> <u>Primary</u>
>
> To foster public understanding of the role of the Andersonville Prison in the Civil War, to promote appreciation of the sufferings endured by the Union soldier imprisoned

736. Boyles interview, 2018.

737. Alan Marsh interview with Keri Adams, Julia Brock, and Ann McCleary, digital recording, October 19, 2018, Andersonville National Historic Site, Andersonville, Georgia.

738. Marsh interview, 2018.

739. Marsh, Annual Statement (1992), 17.

740. Marsh, Annual Statement (1992), 4 and 17.

> therein, and to emphasize in a broader sense the role of prisoner of war camps in the military history of the United States.
>
> Secondary
>
> To encourage preservation and understanding of Andersonville's history after the Civil War as a long-term memorial to all American prisoners of war.[741]

Programs and demonstrations for fiscal year 1993 listed "Building the Stockade Wall" under Formal Education Programs, which was presented upon request, and a Log Hewing Program twice a day for the summer months. The Individual Service Plan for the Log Hewing Program did specify that an understanding of 19th century day-to-day life, particularly physical labor, could be "expanded to include how impressed labor had to use their skill and toil to build Andersonville Prison," adding, "This program would also further fulfill our black history interpretation of Andersonville Prison." The plan suggests program interpreters become familiar with the 1970 Bearrs Report and a 1987 archeological report, as well as the *History of Andersonville* by Ovid L. Futch.[742] The Individual Service Plan for the children's program on log hewing was very similar to the "regular" log hewing demonstration, yet it did not include any emphasis on enslaved African American labor used to construct the stockade.[743]

During the preparation, planning, and execution of Andersonville National Historic Site's new POW museum, park rangers continued to interpret the prison site and the national cemetery in the context of Civil War history. Though the POW story is easily told at the prison site, Georgia's schoolchildren are required to learn about Andersonville or Camp Sumter as contextualizing Georgia during the Civil War. Georgia's educational performance standards required eighth graders to understand the impact of the Civil War on Georgia as a part of their "Georgia Studies" curriculum focus even prior to the 2010 change from Georgia Performance Standards to Common Core State Standards, called Georgia Standards of Excellence by the State of Georgia.[744] The state's standards for eighth grade Social Studies historical understanding states, "Explain Georgia's role in the Civil War; include the Union blockade of Georgia's coast, the Emancipation Proclamation, Chickamauga, Sherman's Atlanta Campaign, Sherman's March to the Sea, and Andersonville."[745] During the mid-1990s under Fred Boyles' tenure as park superintendent, he recalled the many school field trips visiting the park to meet the Georgia Performance Standard requirements, "We'd get lots and lots of kids–school groups–that would come and, of course, [the groups were] very, very heavily African American."[746] The visiting eighth graders watched the films and walked through the exhibits at the visitor center before taking a tour of the prison site and national cemetery.[747] Interpretation during cemetery

741. Marsh, Annual Statement (1992), 4.

742. Marsh, Annual Statement (1992), 14 and 32.

743. Marsh, Annual Statement (1992), 36.

744. Georgia Department of Education, State of Georgia, U.S., "Georgia Standards of Excellence," 58–59. https://www .georgiastandards .org/Georgia-Standards/Documents/Social-Studies-K–12-Georgia-Standards.pdf, accessed March 6, 2019; and Boyles interview, 2018.

745. Georgia Department of Education, 57.

746. Boyles interview, 2018.

747. Boyles, interview, 2018; 1990 U.S. Federal Census data lists 14,045 Black residents out of a total 30,168 Sumter County residents, see U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, Bureau of the Census, 1990 CP-1–12, 1990 Census of Population, General Population Characteristics, Georgia, 76.

walks would vary from ranger to ranger and sometimes vary depending on classroom needs, but this part of the tour would include the most African American history out of the entire school group visit.[748] Boyles included information about Dix-Hill Cartel, the prisoner exchange system during the Civil War, but did not typically include stories of African American Decoration Day celebrations that occurred at the national cemetery in the years following the war.[749] What was "always pointed out" during tours, whether school children or other visitors, were USCT graves, particularly that of John Gooding of the 54th Massachusetts, and the segregated section of the cemetery.[750]

In addition to hosting school groups, NHS staff offered Offsite Programs [sic] from 1974 through at least 1993.[751] This community outreach was meant to provide learning opportunities for students and civic groups within a 50-mile radius that were unable to attend the park. Andersonville staff aimed "to promote better relationships between the park and the community" because "many educational systems are suffering a reduction in budget and are unable to provide field trips to their national parks."[752] NHS staff furthered their efforts to provide learning experiences, both about Camp Sumter and the overall American prisoner of war experience, by sending rangers to school classrooms to share these stories or by simply sending slides, audio tours, special program presentations, VCR tapes, and packets and brochures in hopes of making "available special on-site programs that students may participate in which will reinforce their classroom work."[753]

Stories told at the park and interactions with visitors were sometimes dependent on which ranger was on duty–a full-time interpretive ranger or a seasonal ranger with a training or career in a field other than history, for example. Reflecting on the complexities of interpreting the Civil War, Boyles said:

> As we always used to say, 'Remember that seasonal that's giving the program. Maybe [they have] two years of college or they're an elementary teacher [...] that's got the summer off or something like that. Maybe we don't need them to be talking about some of these very enormous and weighty kind of historical abstractions. They can talk about the playing cards and the hardtack. This story, here, at Camp Sumter is incredibly personal because you can talk to people about starvation and the need to have water, and disease, and all that kind of stuff and kind of get people into this human thing and people can relate to that. [Fred] Sanchez used to always say, 'This is a very personal story.'[754]
>
> The other great thing that [Fred] Sanchez helped me realize was that the prisoner of war story in the American Revolution all the way through to Vietnam—everybody gets captured, everybody gets a journey to camp, everybody doesn't get enough to eat, they don't get enough to drink or maybe they have too much,

748. Boyles interview, 2018.

749. Boyles interview, 2018.

750. Fred Boyles and Alan Marsh, interview with Keri Adams, Julia Brock, and Ann McCleary, October 19, 2018, digital recording, Andersonville National Historic Site, Andersonville, Georgia.

751. Marsh, Annual Statement (1992), 19.

752. Marsh, Annual Statement (1992), 19.

753. Marsh, Annual Statement (1992), 23.

754. Boyles interview, 2018.

> and then all want to escape [...]. Then, at the end they get liberated and there's the joy of liberation. There's the families left behind. All those things are universal throughout the whole process.[755]

New leadership at the park, American Ex-Prisoners of War, Inc., and the Friends groups created momentum for the new museum. The mostly positive support came from local civic groups, state representatives, and former presidents. Yet there was resistance to the new POW museum stemming from ongoing support for the South's Lost Cause and concerns that the national historic site's new POW museum might neglect to interpret or properly feature the suffering of Confederate soldiers and their stories.[756] Before building construction had begun, a woman dressed in 19th century mourning clothes demanded a meeting with the POW museum planners because "we weren't going to tell the story of 'our boys'," recalls Boyles.[757] Upon meeting with Exhibit Design Coordinator, the NPS Denver Service Center, Scott Harmon, and Fred Boyles, the woman commented, "You know, we are on occupied soil." Boyles asked her what she meant and she replied, "We are still occupied in the southern states by the national government. We have yet to concede."[758] The concerned woman added her own interpretation of Civil War Confederate POWs in what she called the National Confederate Prisoner of War Museum in a space provided by the City of Andersonville because she did not believe the park service would tell the "true story."[759] According to Boyles, though this National Confederate Prisoner of War Museum was short-lived, the private museum fit in with the long-running support of the Lost Cause narrative by many in the town of Andersonville. As Boyles remembers, The Little Drummer Boy Museum had "always been there" and the Sons of Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederacy supported the annual Wirz execution memorial celebrations each November.[760] "Every year in November, associated with the Wirz hanging, they have a memorial service for Captain Wirz—or they used to. I don't know if it still goes on. I went to it a couple of times and that was always fascinating. They were always polite and it was always on a Sunday at one o'clock, so everybody was all churched up," Boyles remembered about the Wirz celebrations during his time at the Andersonville National Historic Site.[761] Despite the activities of the United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Sons of Confederate Veterans during the 1980s and 1990s, Boyles said that the groups did not interfere much with the park service's plans for the National POW Museum, stating, "Because the one thing about the Sons—and the UDC, too—it was like, 'Well, this is good for Sumter County. We might get some new restaurants and motels. So, it's ok."[762]

In August 1997, U.S. Senator Jesse Jackson Jr., along with two staff members, requested to tour the Andersonville National Historic Site. Superintendent Fred Boyles gave the small senatorial group a lengthy tour of the park, "One of the things that I was excited to show him [Senator Jackson] is the museum in full construction. He is not at all impressed. He wants to get back out and talk about Camp Sumter." While walking through the construction, Boyles recalled that

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755. Boyles and Marsh interview, 2018.

756. Boyles and Marsh interview, 2018.

757. Boyles interview, 2018, Fred Boyles believes that this woman was from Alabama and her name was Kay Reyes.

758. Boyles interview, 2018.

759. Boyles interview, 2018.

760. Boyles interview, 2018.

761. Boyles interview, 2018.

762. Boyles interview, 2018.

Senator Jackson remarked, "This museum should not be here. It should be in Washington, D.C. This is the National Prisoner of War Museum and it shouldn't be out here in the middle of nowhere Georgia."[763] After Boyles explained the origin of the national historic site and its enabling legislation, he said that Jackson responded, "The two racists: Lyndon Johnson and Richard Russell. They were trying to undermine this story. The story of Camp Sumter. They were trying to take away the sacrifices that were made there."[764] Jackson's visit to Andersonville was one of many trips to Civil War sites across the country in 1997 and he returned to Camp Sumter for a second trip and with more staff in December of that year.[765] When Superintendent Boyles asked Jackson why he was visiting Civil War sites Jackson explained that he had entered into Congress at the same time as Newt Gingrich's "Contract with America," which he believed to have been the federal government's role versus state's rights issues—that Congress was still fighting the Civil War.[766] Jackson also told Boyles that he believed that the park service's efforts in telling a broader American POW story that spanned across time was going to water down the Andersonville story. Boyles disagreed and insisted that the story of what happened at Camp Sumter and Andersonville is "always going to be there" because the prison site and the cemetery were still there to interpret and a major draw for NHS visitors.[767]

Figure 7.10. Congressman Sanford Bishop (left) with ANHS Superintendent Fred Boyles at the grand opening of the National Prisoner of War Museum, Andersonville National Historic Site, Georgia, 1998. Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site, Open Parks Network.

763. Boyles interview, 2018.

764. Boyles interview, 2018.

765. Boyles interview, 2018.

766. Boyles interview, 2018.

767. Boyles interview, 2018.

The park received backlash from Congressional Black Caucus Veterans Braintrust's (CBCVB) Executive Director Ronald Armistead who questioned the inclusiveness of African Americans in the POW museum's planning. Fred Boyles recalled that Armistead believed that the museum planning process and execution had not been "sensitive" and noted that there were no African Americans on the Andersonville Committee of the American Ex-Prisoners of War.[768] Boyles looked to one of the CBCVB's convening members and Andersonville's district representative U.S. Congressman Sanford Bishop Jr. for guidance, which helped ease initial tensions between the national historic site and the organization.[769] Soon after, and at Armistead's request, Cultural Resource Specialist Alan Marsh presented an overview of the Andersonville site's history with an emphasis on African American stories to Civil War enthusiasts and members of the Congressional Black Caucus in Washington, D.C.[770] Marsh said of the presentation, "You can't really tell a good Andersonville story of the history here and leave that out. I mean, you just can't or, if you did, you wouldn't be doing it justice."[771] The following year, Boyles asked Armistead to attend the park's Memorial Day program to help him better understand the purpose of the national historic site and its POW museum. Under the leadership of ex-POWs of World War II and Korean and Vietnam Wars veteran John Edwards, AXPW created the Andersonville Committee, which always had a core member group of World War II Europe, World War II Asia, Korea, and Vietnam veterans.[772] This committee of ex-POWs participated in the design of the museum and contributed to sensitive content of the POW story.[773] "I want the story of women, the story of African Americans, the story of Native Americans, [and] the story of Hispanics to be there in our media and our presentations and everything we do, so that no one criticizes us for leaving groups out," Boyles said of John Edwards' direction in creating the museum. Boyles said, "The exhibit people got that message loud and clear. The film people got that loud and clear."

Former park ranger Marsh[774] recalled how important it was for the park to collect a variety of POW and ex-POW stories to contribute to the new museum:

> The one thing we did during the oral history interviews, which subsequently were used in the movie and in the a.v. exhibits for the National Prisoner of War Museum, is to make sure we covered each war, different theaters of war—World War II Eastern Theater, Western Theater; African Americans, Caucasians; male, female—because the POW experience is not limited to any one person or

768. Boyles and Marsh, interview, 2018; Black News, "Congressional Black Caucus Veterans Braintrust Celebrates Its 30th Anniversary," BlackNews.com, November 18, 2018, http://www.blacknews.com/news/congressional-black-caucus-veterans-braintrust-celebrates-30th-anniversary/. Accessed March 18, 2019; and Congressional Black Caucus Veterans Braintrust, "About Us," Veterans Braintrust Online, no date, http://www.veteransbraintrustonline.snappages.com/home.htm. Accessed March 18, 2019.

769. Boyles and Marsh interview, 2018.

770. Boyles and Marsh interview, 2018; Marsh, interview, 2018.

771. Marsh interview, 2018.

772. Boyles and Marsh interview, 2018.

773. Boyles and Marsh interview, 2018.

774. Marsh interview, 2018; Alan Marsh was the Cultural Resource Specialist for Andersonville National Historic Site beginning in 1992 and later at the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site, Marsh left his dual appointment in 2006, but returned to the Andersonville NHS as the Chief of Cultural Resources in 2009.

> background. So, we specifically, among that, included African American POWs.[775]
>
> Not to take anything away from any of the stories because they're all very emotional, but when you hear Samuel Farrow talk about in the Korean War coming across other—when he was captured and being marched and he sees other African American prisoners who the skin had been stripped off because the Vietnamese—the enemy—had never seen a Black prisoner before. I mean, you hear those kinds of stories and it still puts chill bumps on my arms, even now.[776]

Marsh acknowledges that there is not much interpretation about enslaved laborers constructing Camp Sumter or USCT soldiers, saying, "I think part of that was when we were planning the museum, one, we had an awful lot to cover. We were going to use a lot of African American POW oral histories and objects that they donate, those that we can talk to, we can acquire. It wasn't even knowledge we had on African Americans, so it didn't go too deep beyond, you know, beyond that."[777]

THE "HIGH GROUND" AND BEYOND

In the years following Senator Jackson's visits to Andersonville, Jackson worked to create "a federal law that 'encourages' the [NPS] parks to emphasize slavery as a cause" of the Civil War.[778] The "encouraging" language was "buried in a huge spending bill" in just three short paragraphs—only 228 words.[779] The bill reads:

> The managers recognize that Civil War battlefields throughout the country hold great significance and provide vital historic educational opportunities for millions of Americans. The managers are concerned, however, about the isolated existence of these Civil War battle sites in that they are often not placed in the proper historical context.
>
> The Service does an outstanding job of documenting and describing the particular battle at any given site, but in the public displays and multi-media presentations, it does not always do a similarly good job of documenting and describing the historical social, economic, legal, cultural and political forces and events that originally led to the larger war which eventually manifested themselves in specific battles. In particular, the Civil War battlefields are often weak or missing vital information about the role that the institution of slavery played in causing the American Civil War.

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775. Boyles and Marsh interview, 2018.

776. Boyles and Marsh interview, 2018.

777. Marsh interview, 2018.

778. Kate Masur, "Changes in the Offing for Civil War Sites" in *Perspectives on History* March 1, 2000. https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/march-2000/changes-in-the-offing-for-civil-war-sites. Accessed March 20, 2019.

779. Masha Herbst, "A Longtime Battle Resumes Over Causes of Civil War," in *The Washington Post* September 21, 2000. https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/2000/09/21/a-longtime-battle-resumes-over-cause-of-civil-war/e94d5c9a-5515-4f59-af61-a25c825dcb27/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.8f13d4f493a7. Accessed March 20, 2019; and U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Conference Report on H.R. 2466, Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2000, 145 Cong Rec H 10517, October 20, 1999, Vol. 145 No. 143 Pg. H10517, pages 10,542–10,543. https://congressional.proquest.com/congressional/docview/t17.d18.c49965b418000d64?accountid=15017. Accessed April 1, 2019.

> The managers direct the Secretary of the Interior to encourage Civil War battle sites to recognize and include in all of their public displays and multi-media educational presentations the unique role that the institution of slavery played in causing the Civil War and its role, if any, at the individual battle sites. The managers further direct the Secretary to prepare a report by January 15, 2000, on the status of the educational information currently included at Civil War sites that are consistent with and reflect this concern.[780]

An article in *The Washington Post* began, "For years, Civil War battlefield sites have had almost every kind of chart and diagram explaining troop movements, military strategies and death tolls. However, on one subject, there was precious little information: the cause of the Civil War.[781] Historian Kate Masur wrote in *Perspectives on History*, the American Historical Association's newsmagazine, "The law coincides with ongoing NPS efforts to make the sites appeal to a broader swath of Americans by updating battlefield interpretations." Jackson asked parks to recognize the role of slavery at each individual site, which would have included Andersonville among many others. Jackson's and Congress's call to update Civil War interpretations and "to begin the process of seeing" was shared by NPS Chief Historian Dwight Pitcaithley and other NPS staff "to update the parks for an era that recognizes that reconciliation was for whites only, and at the expense of African Americans; that slavery was central to the conflict; that African Americans were crucial to the war effort; and that the war is best understood not just as a military phenomenon, but as a social and political one as well." Slavery had been treated too lightly and was no longer "too sensitive a topic to discuss."[782] Other Civil War parks updated their interpretation or made plans to do so before the law passed, including Fort Sumter in 1995 and the Nashville Battlefield in 1998.[783] These interpretive changes at Civil War sites seem to have been known to then Andersonville Superintendent Fred Boyles.

According to Boyles, "Eastern theater" parks in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia had already begun to reexamine their interpretations of the causes of the Civil War.[784] Civil War parks and sites in the South were a part of those discussions, but were more reluctant to address slavery as a cause of the war. "It was harder for us because we weren't those kind of urbane, more progressive areas up there [northern sites]," Boyles remembered, "We're down here duking it out with the SCV [Sons of the Confederate Veterans] and the UDC [United Daughters of the Confederacy]. We had to live with these folks."[785] Yet Boyles recalled that incorporating new interpretations for the Civil War after the 1999 Appropriations bill was "really easy," adding, "because we're building a new museum [...] and they [NPS] did a prefab exhibit that got into every southeast region Civil War site."[786] In addition, the park worked to incorporate the African American story into their exhibits for the new POW museum rather than simply rely on the prefabricated exhibit dedicated to African Americans and the Civil War.[787] "The National Park Service mandated–so this is out of D.C.–that Civil War parks would tell in their exhibits, no

780. U.S. Congress, Conference Report on H.R. 2466, pages 10,542–10,543.

781. Herbst, "A Longtime Battle."

782. Masur, "Changes."

783. Masur, "Changes."

784. Boyles interview, 2018.

785. Boyles interview, 2018.

786. Boyles interview, 2018.

787. Boyles interview, 2018.

questions asked, 'You will say in your exhibit the cause of the Civil War was slavery.' And that was a huge thing in itself and something a lot of people are not happy with—being told directly in every park [what] directly you are going to say at the risk of leaving other factors out. So, that was a big thing that all parks, including Andersonville, looked at is specifically saying that somehow in your interpretive exhibit," said Alan Marsh about the 2000 bill.[788] Masur's 2000 article explained, "The NPS hopes to reassure parks' traditional constituents while trying to provide better history and attract more (and different) people to the parks."[789]

The resulting publication "Interpretation at Civil War Sites: A Report to Congress, March 2000" cites what were recent or active reviews of the NPS "approach to interpreting the Civil War for the past several years as part of an educational strategy endorsed by the National Park Service in 1997."[790] In this mandated report, Andersonville National Historic Site was found to have "interpretive programs & exhibits dealing directly with African Americans (and other minorities) and the prisoner of war experience but not very much dealing with slavery as a cause of the Civil War."[791] The reports "Review of Current Conditions" included "Results of the Civil War Site Survey" to which Andersonville was found to only have a "mention or two" of "the overall causes of the Civil War and the broader social, economic, cultural and political context of your site's military story" in its exhibits, films, and website and "moderately" in personal services programs. The national historic site "moderately" addressed "slavery as a cause of the Civil War" in one to two exhibit panels and through personal services programs; however, its wayside interpretation, films, and webpage (if any was in place) did not "address the overall causes of the Civil War and the broader social, economic, cultural and political context of your site's military story" or "slavery as a cause of the Civil War."[792]

Shortly after the National Park Service published its mandated report, personnel from Civil War battlefield and related sites once again convened in 2000. The following year, Eastern National published *Rally on the High Ground: the National Park Service Symposium on the Civil War* edited by Robert K. Sutton, Superintendent of Manassas National Battlefield Park at the time of publication.[793] Each chapter authored by reputable historians covered themes to either help aid the interpretation of slavery and the Civil War or understand its importance and place in the National Park Service. In addition, each chapter included question and answer sections, as well as lengthy bibliographies related to each theme. Historian Edward T. Linenthal's chapter "Healing and History: The Dilemmas of Interpretation" specified the controversy of the context of these Civil War sites:

> The conviction represented in the appropriations bill certainly implies that unless slavery takes its rightful place in our Civil War narratives at National Park Service battlefields, the sites fail their interpretive charge, impoverish the intellectual and moral sensibilities of visitors, and become accomplices in continued processes of consigning to oblivion that which stood at the heart of the death struggle between

788. Marsh interview, 2018.

789. Masur, "Changes."

790. National Park Service, Interpretation at Civil War Sites: A Report to Congress, March 2000 (National Park Service: 2000), 3.

791. NPS, Interpretation at Civil War Sites, 37.

792. NPS, Interpretation at Civil War Sites, 17–24, 27–28, and 32–35.

793. Robert K. Sutton, ed., *Rally on the High Ground: The National Park Service Symposium on the Civil War* (National Park Service, 2001), http://npshistory.com/series/symposia/rally_high_ground/. Accessed March 18, 2019.

> the United States and the Confederate States of America. "Slavery," declared South Carolina planter William Henry Truscott, 'informs all our modes of life, all our habits of thought, lies at the basis of our social existence, and of our political faith.'[794]

Yet Andersonville's story was unique among this call to action from Congress and the Department of the Interior. Camp Sumter was not a Civil War battlefield site, but still a site that was directly shaped by matters of slavery, including the Dix-Hill Cartel, use of enslaved labor, and treatment of African American soldiers. At the time of this study, in January 1998, Andersonville National Historic Site had a cassette tape tour for both the cemetery and the prison site. The cemetery tour had a stop near Section J and K to highlight the graves of USCT soldiers buried at the cemetery, "These are the graves of African-American soldiers, many of them freed slaves, who fought for the Union army." The prison site tour included interpretation about the Dix-Hill Cartel, but not the reason why the system broke down over the treatment of Black soldiers. The tour provided information about "impressed Negro slaves" constructing the stockade, but nothing further that provided context for the use of chattel slavery during the Civil War.[795]

In the 2000s, park staff began to use a central space in the National Prisoner of War Museum for temporary exhibits in a series of cases. These small-scale exhibits, or object displays, featured collection objects that were not included in the permanent exhibit or were recent acquisitions. Marsh remembered that the park did not have enough available research or related objects for a case exhibit or object display on African American history of the site, "It's a huge gap that this study is going to hopefully help close, or at least give some folks some inroads, some avenues and encouragement to pursue it."[796] During the same time, the park and the Friends of Andersonville were preparing for a 2002 amendment to the park's legislation meant to accommodate both the security needs of the park and the road access needs of the English family, whose history was detailed in chapter six of this study.[797]

The National Park Service continued its journey of reconciling incomplete interpretation of Civil War battlefield parks and Andersonville continued to be a part of that conversation. The planning team, consisting of staff from Civil War parks, immediately addressed the context of their publication. "Despite the wide visibility of and interest in the Civil War among Americans, the National Park Service has not sufficiently used its sites to convey the true significance and breadth of America's Civil War experience. Nor has the National Park Service demonstrated the relevance of Civil War resources to educate all Americans, of this and every generation. This unfortunate reality has its roots in both history and tradition." The plan described a challenge that Andersonville National Historic Site seemed to struggle with in the 21st century. "The

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794. Edward T. Linenthal, "Healing and History: The Dilemmas of Interpretation" in *Rally on the High Ground: The National Park Service Symposium on the Civil War* edited by Robert K. Sutton (National Park Service 2001), http://npshistory.com/series/symposia/rally_high_ground/chap3b.htm. Accessed March 18, 2019.

795. Andersonville National Historic Site, "Andersonville National Cemetery Audio Tour," ANDE Collection, Andersonville National Historic Site, Andersonville, Georgia; and Andersonville National Historic Site, "Andersonville National Historic Site Prison Site Tape Tour," ANDE Collection, Andersonville National Historic Site, Andersonville, Georgia.

796. Marsh interview, 2018.

797. U.S. Congress, House of Representatives Committee on Resources, Amending the Act Entitled 'An Act to Authorize the Establishment of the Andersonville National Historic Site In the State of Georgia, And for Other Purposes,' to Provide for the Addition of Certain Donated Lands to the Andersonville National Historic Site: Report (to Accompany H.R. 4692) (including Cost Estimate of the Congressional Budget Office), (Washington, D.C.: U.S. G.P.O., 2002). http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=107congreports&docid=f:hr712.107.pdf. Accessed March 19, 2019.

challenge that faces the National Park Service today is huge: to convey the significance and relevance of the Civil War in all its aspects while at the same time sustaining the Service's invaluable tradition of resource-based interpretation (a concept that is at the very foundation of the National Park Service's mission)."[798] Not only the concept of resource-based traditions, but also how those resources are the foundation of establishing legislation. The plan listed Andersonville National Historic Site as having "relevant major resources" related to the following thematic contexts: The Military Experience: Strategy, Tactics, Technology, and Humanity; The Changing War: Interplay of the Military, Economic, Social, and Political; Ethnicity, Race, and the Military; Women Amidst War; and Reconciliation, Commemoration, and Preservation.[799] Of those five contexts, only two specifically referenced African Americans or race: Ethnicity, Race, and the Military contributing to war efforts and their "quest for social equality," as well as the treatment of Black soldiers and the prisoner exchange system; and Reconciliation, Commemoration, and Preservation. The goals of the plan included improving visitor experience, which tied to use of cultural resources and up-to-date, accurate interpretation at these Civil War sites, and providing "exceptional learning experiences" among many other findings.[800]

The park's interpretive planning had not been formally updated since 1989 with a Statement of Interpretation and 1990 with an Interpretive Prospectus for National Prisoner of War Center / Museum. The 2010 Andersonville National Historic Site Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) became the park's "first broad-based interpretive planning effort" completed since the planning for the National POW Museum.[801] The 2010 plan detailed the four primary interpretive themes and nine subthemes focused around the establishing legislation to "form the backbone of a park's interpretive program."[802] However, African Americans were only mentioned once among the theme descriptions. The first subtheme of Primary Theme 3, to commemorate all American POWs, states, "Camp Sumter itself reflected this diversity, with prisoners of many different ethnicities, including African Americans and American Indians."[803] There are numerous opportunities to interpret the history and specific experiences of African American as POWs at Camp Sumter and all other wars, enslaved or free laborers in the Antebellum period, government employees working at the site and cemetery, attending Freedman's School, owning or renting prison site lands, or celebrating (or attempting to) Decoration Day. This study provides the foundation to incorporate all of those stories and more, which include local Black families and civil rights activities and workers along with collections already held by the park and museum.

Primary Theme 1 interprets POWs during the Civil War with the park's "distinct locations" as the resources in which to tell stories. The experiences of enslaved laborers and Black prisoners working at the prison and cemetery should be highlighted as a distinct form of racism and oppression during this time in south Georgia. How was the Black experience at Andersonville

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798. Kathy Billings et al., Holding the High Ground: A National Park Service Plan of the Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War (National Park Service: May 2008), 3 and 5.

799. Billings et al., Holding the High Ground (2008), 9–12, 14, and 23.

800. Billings et al., Holding the High Ground (2008), 11, 14, and 16–19.

801. Andersonville National Historic Site et al., Andersonville National Historic Site Long-Range Interpretive Plan (National Park Service: 2010), see "Introduction" (page not numbered).

802. Andersonville National Historic Site et al., Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP), 4–5.

803. Andersonville NHS et al., LRIP, 5.

different from that of White soldiers or laborers? There is a story to tell. What are the individual stories of the U.S. Colored Troops that suffered and died at Camp Sumter? These stories can be interwoven with existing interpretive programs or offered as their own program about African American history at Camp Sumter. Primary Theme 4 interprets the memorialization history at the cemetery, but the subthemes and story lines [sic] make no mention of African Americans traveling to the site to commemorate Decoration Day during Reconstruction. The LRIP was published just three months before Benjamin Cloyd's revealing *Haunted by Atrocity* in May 2010. Park staff may have not known the details of African Americans' commemorative pilgrimages to the prison and cemetery before Cloyd's book. In addition, the Primary Themes of the LRIP are foundational by providing key concepts rather than encompassing a total history or all available interpretations.[804] In the "Personal Services" section of the plan, the park identifies areas in which it needed to enhance the presence of on-site interpreters, such as living history practitioners, one of which could be a USCT soldier.[805] Other options, which are not identified in this plan, include that of experienced and well-prepared first- or third-person interpreters acting or demonstrating roles of the enslaved, farmers, cemetery caretaker, or Memorial Day visitor. One of the latter subjects is mentioned as an example of expanding the "program of guest 'host' opportunities. In this example, "a local or social historian could talk about the farm families and enslaved Georgians living in the countryside surrounding Andersonville, and how the prison's needs affected their daily lives."[806] Suggestions were provided for updating web media an example of which included, "Expand the 'People' section, which currently has only one article (on African American soldiers held at Camp Sumter) available." The referenced webpage in the "People" section titled "African Americans at Andersonville" was authored by a park ranger in February 2006 and was last updated in April 2015.[807]

Figure 7.11a. Living History Weekend, 2011.
Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site.

804. Andersonville NHS et al., LRIP, 5.

805. Andersonville NHS et al., LRIP, 21.

806. Andersonville NHS et al., LRIP, 22.

807. Andersonville NHS et al., LRIP, 27; and Don Pettijohn, "African Americans at Andersonville," Andersonville National Historic Site, February 2006. Last updated April 14, 2015. https://www.nps.gov/ande/learn/historyculture/african_americans.htm. Accessed March 21, 2019.

Figure 7.11b. Living History Weekend, 2011.
Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site.

During the time the LRIP was completed, the NHS "was in a state of severe transition entropy," former Chief of Interpretation Eric Leonard recalled. In addition, he surmised that staff transitions and shortages accounted for a lack of focus or direction in developing the 2010 LRIP. Leonard described the status of the NHS research and interpretation when he arrived in 2010 as comforting the Lost Cause narrative, possibly a result of years of deflecting misconceptions and fears of many southern White visitors.[808] Leonard had been hired by new Superintendent Brad Bennett who tasked him with approaching the upcoming Civil War Sesquicentennial with both seriousness and inclusiveness.[809] Systemwide efforts to commemorate the simultaneous events of the Sesquicentennial of the Civil War and Civil War to Civil Rights Commemoration (CW2CR) from 2011 to 2015, whose plans developed in 1998 through the "Holding the High Ground" initiative and in the wake of the 1999 Appropriations bill, were followed by NPS Centennial planning and events from 2016 to 2017. Leonard, along with Rangers Christopher Barr and Stephanie Steinhorst overhauled NHS personal services and education programming to include more recent scholarship and engage new audiences. As Leonard said, "It didn't take me long to realize with a little reading of recent scholarship that the roles of African Americans weres critical to making sense of Andersonville. Not simply the enslaved labor for construction, but the role and treatment of African American soldiers played in the breakdown of the prisoner exchange system during the war."[810] These initiatives and interpretive and educational changes came with support from then Superintendent Bennet as well. Bennett and other NHS staff worked to strengthen relationships with local African American community members by telling new stories that might make them feel more welcomed at the national historic site. Part of these efforts included attending events and presenting talks focused on African American history with the Americus-Sumter County Movement Remembered Committee and the Albany Civil Rights Museum.[811] "The intent was not to only restore the role of African Americans as part of the

808. Leonard, e-mail, 2019.

809. Brad Bennett, phone conversation with Keri Adams, November 13, 2019.

810. Leonard, e-mail, 2019; Bennet, phone, 2019; Christopher Barr, e-mail to Keri Adams, November 6, 2019; and Stephanie Steinhorst, e-mail to Keri Adams, November 7, 2019.

811. Bennett, phone, 2019.

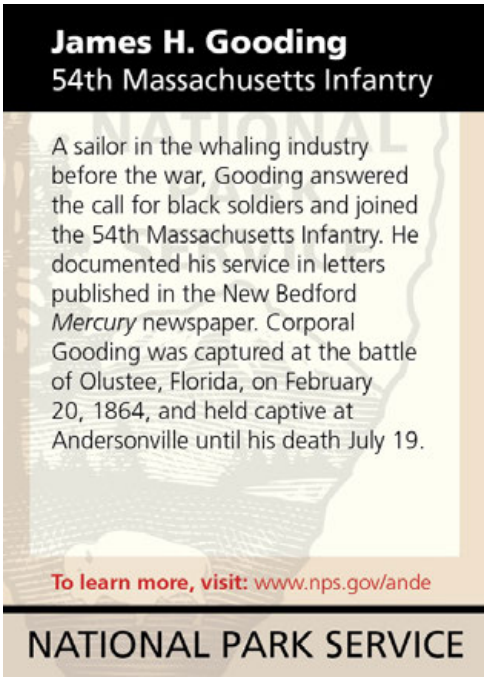
Andersonville story, but to reinvigorate and empower African American history as part of the narrative of southwest Georgia. This history is part of the story that belongs to all of us, and the exclusion of African Americans diminishes us all," remarked Leonard of the NHS's relationship with local Black communities.[812] In 2019, Bennett explained that he did not see a challenge in interpreting the NHS enabling legislation and incorporating the interpretation of slavery as the cause of the Civil War. He explained the similarities of POWs and how African Americans connected their stories—denial of liberties, loss of freedom, survival, sustaining the human spirit, regaining freedom—using the experiences of James Gooding of the USCT 54th[813] Leonard noted his own and other rangers' participation in 2012 on the servicewide team that led the CW2CR trading card program for which the national historic site included the headstone of James Gooding in their collection. Though he said he was proudest of bringing awareness to the academic community of the long-standing Research Grant Program in hopes of supporting new scholarship on Andersonville.

Figure 7.12a. James H. Gooding trading card front.
Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site.

812. Leonard, e-mail, 2019.

813. Bennett, phone, 2019.

Figure 7.12b. James H. Gooding trading card back.
Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site.



Ranger Christopher Barr became a full-time NHS staff around the time he was taking a course on American slavery at Columbus State University. He described his research for the course as the "proverbial 'rabbit hole'" that brought him to research Camp Sumter prisoner James Gooding, African American experiences at the site during the Civil War, and the freed communities at the site following the war.[814] Barr's research interests led to history talks, a new site bulletin for CW2CR, and the incorporation of African American history into his "regular" programs.[815] In 2014, through Barr's work, the national historic site created the "A Story in Stone" video series that featured several African Americans buried at the national cemetery, including Jimmy Williams, killed in action in Vietnam.[816]

New NHS staff connected with local schools during the servicewide commemorative initiatives as well. Ranger Stephanie Steinhorst led the Historic Interpreter Apprentice Program (HIAP), which trained AP History high school students to act in the NHS living history program.[817] Of the program, Steinhorst said, "HIAP was created because annual living history presentations failed to accurately represent the age and impact of imprisonment on young soldiers [at Camp Sumpter]. Most re-enactors were a certain age and while well-meaning, skewed the visual impression. To put it simply, they lacked diversity."[818] HIAP provided both the participating students and NHS visitors with a more accurate representation of the experiences of people of

814. Barr, e-mail, 2019.

815. Barr, e-mail, 2019; Andersonville National Historic Site, "Civil War to Civil Rights: How Andersonville became a site and symbol of the struggle of equality," National Park Service, 2013.

816. Barr, e-mail, 2019, Andersonville National Historic Site, "Jimmy Williams: A Story in Stone," May 8, 2014. https://www.nps.gov/media/video/view.htm?id=84959D40-1DD8-B71C-073C19680DD029F5. Accessed March 1, 2019.

817. Leonard, e-mail, 2019; Steinhorst, e-mail, 2019.

818. Steinhorst, e-mail, 2019.

color during the Civil War.[819] This work earned Steinhorst the Southeast Region's Freeman Tilden Award in 2012.[820] Steinhorst concluded, "I am deeply grateful for the bravery of those students to take on the difficult subjects and attempt to interpret them for the public."[821]

Figure 7.13. Living History Weekend, 2014.
Courtesy Andersonville National Historic Site.

The NPS Civil War to Civil Rights Commemoration Summary Report mentions or describes these new interpretation and programming efforts and accomplishments that took place at Andersonville, which contributed to either the Sesquicentennial of the Civil War or CW2CR. The report noted their youth programs, social media engagement, signature events (Road to Andersonville), and "Story in Stone Videos: Illuminating Lives of Prisoners."[822] The summary report recognized the park as a Site of Conscience and noted, "The 14-month story of the Andersonville Prison provided a unique challenge for the 150th anniversary," adding, "The staff chose an approach that allowed for a big picture approach that could convey the unique story of one individual military prison as well as the wider story of military prisons north and south throughout the war." The report concluded that the goals of coinciding commemorations were to expose new audiences to the park by "using up to date scholarship."[823]

The park's participation or inclusion on broader NPS initiatives helped reflect upon and reshape how Civil War history was told across the system and, later, how and to what quality Civil War battlefields and related sites were telling stories that reflected new and more inclusive, and perhaps even more objective, interpretations in those parks. In 2014, the park published a State of the Park Report to "assess the overall status and trends of each park's resources" and

819. Steinhorst, e-mail, 2019.

820. National Park Service. "2012 Freeman Tilden Award Recipients." Last updated November 17, 2017. https://www.nps.gov/articles/2012-tilden-winners.htm. Accessed February 28, 2020.

821. Steinhorst, e-mail, 2019.

822. National Park Service, Civil War to Civil Rights Summary Report (National Park Service, Washington Support Office: 2016), 15, 45, 51, 66, and 86.

823. National Park Service, Civil War to Civil Rights, 174–175.

demonstrate its stewardship to the American people as a part of the National Park Service.[824] The summary table identified the need and request for an Ethnohistorical Study of African Americans at Andersonville as having been "tentatively selected for cultural resource funds for fiscal year 2017, subject to available funding at that time."[825] Former Chief of Cultural Resources Alan Marsh remembered that he made this study request in the Project Management Information System (PMIS) as early as 2008 before Superintendent Fred Boyles left the park. It was not until the time of this report, and just before Marsh retired from the National Park Service, that the Southeast Cultural Resource Advisory Committee (SECRAC) of the Cultural Resource Division awarded a higher priority number to what is now this study.[826] The park hoped to gain a better understanding of African American communities and people with connections to the park or its cultural resources.[827] The 2014 report included Resource Brief: From Civil War to Civil Rights—Reconnecting African American Audiences to Andersonville, highlighting Black experiences during and immediately following the Civil War and burial practices at the cemetery during the civil rights era. Even with these stories "integrated into interpretive programs through a site bulletin, a Civil War to Civil Rights tour in the national cemetery, the Civil War to Civil Rights Trading Cards," and other unspecified instances, the existing wayside and directional signs, orientation films, and the stockade reconstructions and replica shelters were listed as having been inadequate and inaccurate in supporting park interpretations of African American history at Andersonville. More so, the Civil War Exhibits in the Hallway of the museum were "not consistent with current scholarship and interpretive themes and are the source of numerous visitor complaints." Park efforts in telling Black history stories were easier to accomplish on the park's website and its social media.[828] Lastly, the report identified the NHS's Key Stewardship Activities and Accomplishments, including an oral history with "Shoshana Johnson, the first female African American prisoner of war in U.S. history;" and increased interpretive programs that include African American history, as well as outreach to African American organizations, such as Albany Civil Rights Institute and the Americus Sumter County Movement Remembered Committee.[829]

The 2014 State of the Park Report for Andersonville National Historic Site, along with this Special History Study are important in understanding how much the park has directly or specifically demonstrated a change in its interpretation and how African American history is intrinsic to the mission and themes of Andersonville National Historic Site. The 2014 report provides context for the efforts and inspiration of park staff in "better interpreting African American history at the prison site and national cemetery." The CW2CR Resource Brief explains that park staff was "inspired by researching the January 1, 1869, Emancipation Day service" at the cemetery and features a photograph of Park Guide Chris Barr guiding the board of directors of the Albany Civil Rights Institute on a tour of the experiences of African American POWs confined at Andersonville. The description of the significance of African Americans at the site begins with the use of enslaved labor to construct the prison and the presence of Black POWs there, continues on to preservation and memorialization postwar efforts, then to burial

824. Andersonville National Historic Site, State of the Park Report: Andersonville National Historic Site, Georgia (National Park Service: 2014), page iii.

825. Andersonville NHS, State of the Park Report, page iv.

826. Alan Marsh, March 22, 2019, e-mail correspondence with Keri Adams.

827. Marsh interview, 2018; and Andersonville NHS, State of the Park Report, 11.

828. Andersonville NHS, State of the Park Report, 21 and 23.

829. Andersonville NHS, State of the Park Report, 21 and 32.

grounds segregation in the 1940s and 1950s and the burial of PFC Jimmy Williams, an African American Green Beret killed in Vietnam.[830] Nearly all of those stories and more like them are documented in this Special History Study and will aid park staff in its continued interests of preserving, including, and sharing African American history and experiences at Andersonville.

830. Andersonville NHS, State of the Park Report, 20.

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Conclusion

Telling New Stories

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CONCLUSION: TELLING NEW STORIES

Andersonville National Historic Site and the surrounding region have long and complicated histories. Many of these local and regional stories mirror the broader dramas of the U.S. South and the United States in the 19th and 20th centuries. Telling the history of this park or this region is not a neutral act. Historians, teachers, park rangers, and other custodians of our cultural heritage make choices that open up—or close down—conversation about the complicated past. When a park ranger or a teacher asks for questions, the preceding lesson or program shapes the type and range of likely questions.

The benefit of telling more inclusive histories at Andersonville is the chance to broaden the historic site's relevance to current and future generations. This expands on an existing strength of the park. When Congress established Andersonville National Historic Site 50 years ago, it was more than just another Civil War site because it told the history of POWs throughout U.S. history. In a similar way, the presence of an active national cemetery made—and continues to make—Andersonville unlike other national park units. Telling more African American history at Andersonville is a long-overdue way to reimagine the site's relevance in a diverse region of a diverse nation. African Americans have had a long and significant history with the land on which Andersonville National Historic Site is located, though that engagement has been conflicting and contested at times. While these stories have been "hiding in plain sight," they are beginning to be told.

After 1825, when Georgia acquired this land through the Treaty of Indian Springs, European American settlers arrived with enslaved African Americans to grow cotton and establish plantations on the fertile soil of the Black Belt. Three decades later, on the eve of the American Civil War, southwest Georgia had grown into one of the most productive cotton-growing regions in the U.S. South. During the Civil War, planters sent enslaved African Americans to the Confederate prison site to build and maintain the prison, and more than 100 Black U.S. soldiers experienced captivity and enslavement at the prison. After the Civil War, African Americans began to settle on the prison site, work in the emerging national cemetery, and learn to read at a school established in the former hospital for Confederate guards.

Through the late-19th century and until the establishment of the national historic site, African Americans lived in the area around the cemetery and the prison park. They farmed the land, created businesses, established churches and schools, worked at the national cemetery, and built communities. In the 1950s and 1960s, the local African American community still interacted with the cemetery, even as the civil rights movement attracted more regional and state attention and refocused the attention of African Americans to other places. In 1971, the Department of the Interior purchased most of this land along the Old Dixie Highway to create the new national historic site, erasing much of the physical community from the landscape. Still, local African American men continued to work at the new national park, several of them with deep roots in this community.

Tangible products—interpretive programs, signage, and special history studies—have clearer boundaries than the intangible histories on which these things are based. The completion of a special history study is therefore only one step toward preserving and telling a fuller history. Moments of serendipity in the research process also suggest that this study is only the beginning. While one of this study's authors was getting a haircut in Americus, this research project came up in conversation. Kellette Heys Wade Sr., the barber, mentioned that family lore held that his

ancestor, Samuel Heys, supervised the enslaved work teams that built Andersonville. Subsequent research, presented in chapter one, confirmed the veracity of the family legend. A similar encounter occurred in January 2020, when a librarian at Lake Blackshear Regional Library introduced a member of this team to Dr. Carol Carlton, one of the "stolen girls" arrested in Americus and sent to the Leesburg Stockade in 1963. In telling her story at the circulation desk, Dr. Barner described the mid-20th century cinder block building as an old Civil War-era prison. Once one begins looking for it, the legacy of Andersonville is everywhere. It is gratifying that the National Park Service and local partners will continue building on the work of this study.

This study highlights the many stories that Andersonville National Historic Site could and should tell about the history of the park and surrounding African American communities. As a way of concluding and pointing to next steps, the authors of this study offer a few programming ideas.

The core interpretive theme at Andersonville National Historic Site is capture, captivity, and freedom. While this includes every U.S. war, the essential resource is the footprint of Camp Sumter Military Prison, more commonly known as Andersonville. African American history is central, not secondary or tangential, to the Civil War and Andersonville. Inclusive programming should connect tangible resources—the prison stockade, the earthworks, the graveyard—to intangible ideas such as the causes of the Civil War, the racial politics of prisoner exchange, and prison construction and management. Stand-alone programs on the construction and management of the prison, the experiences of African American prisoners, and the centrality of race to prisoner exchange would move the park toward telling a more inclusive history. So would a commitment to including mention of African American connections whenever topics of prison construction and management are discussed. Why locate a prison in Southwest Georgia? Who built the stockade? Who dug the earthworks? As part of all programming, names should be used when possible. When names are not known, acknowledging this silence in the historical record may also be a useful interpretive moment.

The national park already makes regular use of individual prisoner stories, especially on their social media accounts. In 2019, for instance, the park staff published several popular pieces on James Henry Gooding. He makes for a heroic story. Born into slavery, Gooding became a self-conscious symbol of Black liberation, equal pay, and the war to destroy the slaveholding Confederacy. Yet he also represents only one man. In contrast to the well-educated, politically astute, Gooding who enlisted in the famous 54th Massachusetts Infantry willingly, Irving Hall entered the 8th United States Colored Infantry against his will. Drafted into the service, Confederate bullets felled Hall and Gooding, and both died as prisoners at Andersonville. Acknowledging that Hall, the first known Black prisoner to die at Andersonville, never wanted to enter the U.S. Army and that military service carried far greater risk for him than for an average White man humanizes his experience. Historical figures need not always be heroes. Implying or expecting all Black soldiers to have thought like Gooding overlooks the traumas and injustices endured by men like Hall.

The historical significance of Andersonville went well beyond the final 14 months of the American Civil War. Both the prison site and the national cemetery were local examples of the promises and setbacks of Reconstruction. It is not surprising that Reconstruction is an uninterpreted layer of history at Andersonville. In *The Era of Reconstruction, 1861–1900: A National Historic Landmarks Theme Study,* Gregory P. Downs and Kate Masur identified many existing park properties, including national cemeteries and Civil War sites. Unfortunately, the

two eminent historians overlooked the significance of Andersonville.[831] While nothing remains of the Sumter School and the site itself is not on public property, the park might reconstruct one or two simple houses—perhaps near the stockade—that represent the Confederate guard houses that became freedpeople's houses after the Civil War. This reconstruction would complement reconstructions of the prison gate, stockade, and prisoner tents. Stories of Arnold and Delia Cato, Floyd Snelson, the Sumter School, and the American Missionary Association would fit well into these spaces.

The national cemetery is also a tangible resource that symbolizes the story of Reconstruction. In the late 1860s and 70s, African American men transformed the coarse prison graveyard into an attractive national cemetery that became a place for Decoration Day celebrations for the rest of the 19th century. Wayside exhibits might emphasize the process of transforming the prison landscape: marking the graves with wooden and, then, marble headstones; raising the level of the ground to protect the graves from erosion; planting grass and trees; building a brick enclosure and a caretaker's house. Such signs would open up an opportunity to talk about the knowledge, skills, and the labor required to make a national cemetery.

The story of African Americans at Andersonville goes beyond their labor and imprisonment at the site. For decades, Black pilgrims visited the site to honor the fallen Union soldiers who died, as they saw it, as freedom fighters. The history of Andersonville Day illustrates the role African Americans played in shaping public memory and meaning of the Civil War; Andersonville Day provided, as Fitzhugh Brundage argues, a counter-memory to the White supremacist cast of the Lost Cause. The theme would resonate with park visitors who themselves are making a pilgrimage of sorts, albeit for different reasons perhaps. Interpretive programs on competing public memories at Andersonville during the monument-building era can ask visitors to critically consider the memorial landscape of the cemetery, prison site, and nearby village of Andersonville to more fully comprehend the context in which Black pilgrims came to the site in the early 20th century. Primary sources—newspaper accounts of Decoration Day, speeches from monument dedications, and the monuments themselves—can be employed to ask park visitors to assess the ways that certain interpretations of the war's meaning were inscribed on the landscape and others almost forgotten or erased.

The stories in chapter five connect directly with K–12 school curriculum and provide an ideal opportunity to talk about the civil rights movement in southwestern Georgia. The park could partner with the Americus-Sumter County Civil Rights Movement Remembered Committee to develop this program and to engage community members from throughout the region to share their personal accounts. In October 2019, the National Park Service announced funding for a new civil rights museum at the Americus Colored Hospital, which could be a partner. There are several options for school programming on this topic. First, the park could offer to partner with these organizations to create a school program that would bring children to the park as part of a county program on the southwestern Georgia Civil Rights Movement. The stories told at the park could focus on the role that the national cemetery played in these activities as a symbol, including the proposal by SNCC workers to sponsor a march to the cemetery to keep awareness of the movement alive. Also, the program could incorporate stories about the integration of the cemetery and the burial of African Americans here. This program could include a walking tour of the cemetery that showcases the segregated section and then some of the graves of African

831. Gregory P. Downs and Kate Masur, *The Era of Reconstruction, 1861–1900: A National Historic Landmarks Theme Study* (Washington, D.C.: The National Historic Landmarks Program, 2017).

Americans after the cemetery integrated. Second, the park could develop its own program that highlights the nearby Americus movement and talks about how rural communities responded to these protests in the region. Public programs for all ages could highlight the importance of the Southwest Georgia Movement and engage African Americans who lived here at the time to talk about what they knew of the movement and ways in which they or their families became involved.

Chapter six provides an opportunity to talk about the African American community that existed at the site before the establishment of the national park. One way to highlight the community that was here before the park would be to create a temporary exhibition and related program that shows historic maps and aerial photographs that reveal the buildings that were here prior to 1971. An exhibition could ask community members to bring in and allow the park to share photographs of homes, churches, businesses, and people that were here before the park. A temporary exhibition could include a large base map, and then post photographs and link these to the lots shown on the map. Perhaps images of buildings on the older aerial maps could also be enlarged to suggest these buildings and to show how the property was being used. The park could encourage community members to share stories about these places and families, as a "memory mapping" project. A public program related to the exhibition could invite descendants of the community to the park to share their stories. Another program could include a walk around the park property, highlighting the places that were once here. The park might also create a map and interpretive brochure that could tell these stories and perhaps encourage visitors to walk around the site to find these places. The location of houses could be marked. For school students, the park staff could consider developing a program that focuses on life in rural Black communities during the Jim Crow and civil rights era, which could integrate stories from both chapters five and six. Another option is to create a program held around Memorial or Decoration Day to talk about how this national cemetery has been commemorated over the years, including how African Americans who lived in the community continued to put flags on the graves until the National Park Service took over management of the property. As a final program idea, the park could create a public program about the challenges of creating the national park here and talk about how such sites are created and developed.

Programming that incorporates material from chapter seven may be best suited for park staff and volunteers rather than a public audience. This study in its entirety is a useful tool for understanding not only local Black history as it relates to the Fort Sumter site and the national cemetery, but also for park staff understanding why and how interpretation and education evolved since the historic site's establishment through 2019.

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As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historic places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

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A Special History Study