JUSTICE AND REPRESENTATION AT A FORMER HERITAGE PLANTATION SITE: UNPACKING SUCCESSES, CHALLENGES, AND PITFALLS

By

Hunter Lee McBurnett

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Community Sustainability – Master of Science

2024

ABSTRACT

This study investigated a former plantation site, Arlington House, the Robert E. Lee Memorial (former confederate general), located in the current-day Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C. The National Park Service (NPS) has managed this site since 1933. The house and site are named after R. E. Lee though the structures were built and maintained throughout much of its pre-NPS history by enslaved peoples. Arlington House is a cultural and historical heritage site that has a layered and complex history with multiple narratives of place. On-site interpretation at Arlington House (e.g., information placards, ranger interactions) has shifted recently from interpreting solely the story of Lee to include also interpreting the lives of the formerly enslaved peoples. This 5-chapter thesis used three different methodologies to better understand the site. The first chapter outlines the context of the site and the program of research. Chapter two delves into understanding how this shift in interpretation has been received by the descendants of the enslaved Africans, via two focus groups conducted in summer 2023. Chapter three details an administered on-site visitor survey (n=263) in fall 2023 on visitor heritage identities, expectations, and experiences. Chapter four covers interviews with with interpretative rangers at the plantation site in winter 2023/2024 to better understand how they relay the stories of those who were enslaved. These findings are relayed through the concept Black Abstraction which depicts Black people in an anstract context by removing their humanity and feelings of empathy. The final chapter, chapter 5, reviews main findings from each paper and details contributions to theory and managerial reccomendations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis was by no means a one- woman effort; many contributed and helped throughout. For that, *noo ko bokk* – we share it. I first want to thank Steven Hammond for taking the time to talk with me, coordinate involvement with the descendants, review and contribute to the forming of the survey, and just being available whenever I had questions! Without Steve, we wouldn't have been able to involve the descendants in such a meaningful way. I also want to acknowledge all the work of the descendent groups at Arlington in their journey to be accurately and thoughtfully represented. A huge thank you to the NPS team for their commitment to this project and all the help they provided. Particularly, thank you to Cassie, Scott, and the interpretive rangers who helped with the onsite survey and subsequent interviews. I hope this work can be helpful to the descendants and the NPS as they strive for justice and fuller representation.

The larger GWMP team was wonderfully supportive in the direction we decided to take with this study so many thanks to you all. Maddie and Paige, you both were my steadfast allies and confidants throughout the process, I appreciate you both so much. Aby, thank you for your positivity, guidance, and faith in me as we navigated the focus groups. Nekknga sama magg, sama xarit. Your advice and wisdom helped me dig deeper to write the story without compromise and with deep compassion. You are an inspiration to me! Thank you to the folks in the Parks Connection lab for all the support and love (Lydia, Selby, Madison, Aley)! Erin and Jake, I could not have done this without ya'll to commensurate with. Thank you for the endless validations. Check us out!!

Thank you also to my wonderful family, far and wide! The unwavering support, many calls received, tears, frustrations – you all were there with me every step of the way. Momma, I wouldn't be here without you. The compassion and empathy that you instilled in me is ever present in all my work. Nathan and Alexis, I couldn't ask for more supportive siblings – thank you for being my constant cheerleaders. Thank you to my best friends all over the country (Sophie, Amanda, Katie, Libby, Iggy, Briann) you were always there to receive my calls. To my family in Senegal, Yaay, Baay, Ablaye, Tuddi, Barry and so many more – *Jerejeff, amna solo kay. Sama xole dafa fes ndaxte amna wa cur bu bax. Sunnu xol yup bennen la, barkeallah. Noo ko bokk, denga*.

Thank you to my committee for all your support! Lissy - for the conversations, being a listening ear, and validations! Stephanie - for the insightful readings. And dearest Bess, what a ride this was. I could not have asked for a better advisor. You helped me grow as a researcher and person; you supported me even when the content/process pushed us out of our comfort zones. Your enthusiasm, patience, silliness, general Boss Queen energy - I could say so much more but for now, thank you Bess. I want to

acknowledge the indigenous peoples who resided both in Arlington, VA and in East Lansing, MI where I conducted all of this work. Also, my Master of Puff Sciences, Sylva Sue, the bolt that held it all together.

We collectively acknowledge that Michigan State University occupies the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary Lands of the Anishinaabeg – Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples. The University resides on Land ceded in the 1819 Treaty of Saginaw. Additionally, we collectively acknowledge Arlington, VA occupies the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary Lands of the Piscataway and Nacotchtank (Anacostan) peoples. These lands were taken by colonizers in 1607.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1:

Context of the program of research at Arlington House

Heritage tourism (often used interchangeably with cultural tourism) is a large sector of the tourism industry with close to 40% of the global tourism base related to heritage-based travel (Kiempiak et al., 2017). Heritage tourism brings visitors to historical sites to facilitate a better understanding of a site's specific history, connect people with the past, and experience a unique historical setting (Abraham et al., 2022; Adamkiewicz, 2016; Jackson, 2011; Small, 2013). While heritage can be defined differentially by context, we use it hereon to mean the display of historical objects, representation of history, and narratives pertaining to the cultural significance or influence of a place (see Poria et al., 2006; Nowacki, 2022). Heritage sites include former plantations where many enslaved Africans resided. Plantations can be places where curators explore the racialization process within the US; reveal the dominant racial histories; and tell stories of resistance, identity, and inequality (Alderman & Hanna, 2015). They can also be places where identities, national or otherwise, can be constructed or reinforced, place values on concepts, and foster new memories (Apaydin, 2020). The interpretation of historic plantations stands in a unique position to impact the collective memory of the US by deciding whose stories are told and what is remembered (Hanna et al., 2022a; Modlin et al., 2018). Currently, they remain locations where inequity lingers through skewed narratives (Modlin et al., 2018). The interpretation has historically been centered on the white, wealthy enslavers and the 'charm' of the large plantation house (Modlin et al., 2018). While plantations represent the past, they also have significant implications and meanings for the present. Of the 365 plantation sites in the US, few depict stories of the enslaved Africans (Modlin et al., 2018). Plantation sites that have begun to incorporate their stories have only transitioned in the past two decades (Modlin et al., 2018). This emphasizes the work that remains on how we depict the lives of African Americans versus the white enslavers (Hanna et al., 2022).

Our study site – Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial, in Washington, D.C. – displays historical artifacts, depicts narratives of national and cultural significance, and represents an important part of US history. Additionally, it is a former plantation site where over 100 formerly enslaved peoples resided, having built the house for George Custis (President George Washington's adopted nephew). The site has been managed by the National Park Service (NPS) since 1933 Arlington House follows the national trend of focusing on the enslaver. Until 2021, the interpretation on-site only depicted Lee and his family. Following renovations, there is now greater representation of the formerly enslaved. However, this revamped narrative of place still presents a segregated story. Much attention remains on the enslaver, while the enslaved are represented through single individuals and interpretative materials away from the main house. This representation or lack thereof can affect who visits this site, feels

comfortable visiting, and feels represented.

Arlington House is a well visited site (annual visitation varying from 300,000 to over 1 million in the non-COVID, non-renovation years since 2014) (NPS IRMA, 2023) at the center of Arlington National Cemetery. The site includes the house itself with a museum within, the enslaved peoples' quarters, multiple interpretive features (i.e., plaques, historical readings on display), woodlands, and grounds and gardens. NPS managers were interested in which interpretive narratives resonate broadly and with certain audiences, improving the delivery of these narratives, the value of including additional intersecting narratives, and attending to the visitor experience.

This thesis provides insights into a former plantation site where the NPS has endeavored to relate a more complex and comprehensive narrative in consultation with descendants of the formerly enslaved Africans. It is acknowledged that though the site has made significant changes to their interpretation, it ultimately falls short without the continued and targeted input of those who hold the place closest. It is not a call to reinvent or call to action for the NPS but a reminder and example of how despite efforts, interpretations can still fall short – with significant consequences – by a lack of integration and consultation of the descendant community. This three part study strives to understand how descendants of the formerly enslaved people's view the new interpretation, how visitors feel about the interpretation in relation to their own heritage connections, and finally, how the interpretative rangers view the task of interpreting difficult content among interpretation that erases narratives of those who were once enslaved.

i.) Chapter 2 addresses questions with descendants of the formerly enslaved peoples at Arlington House. The goal of this study was to understand how descendants of the formerly enslaved Africans viewed the revised site interpretation at Arlington House. Specifically, descendants were asked how the current interpretation relates the complexity of multiple narratives and in what ways improvements are still desired / perceived as necessary. Through focus groups, descendants detailed their thoughts on the current interpretation, the message the NPS conveys with such interpretations, and desired improvements to the interpretation the NPS should consider. Though appreciative of the NPS efforts to make improvements, descendants felt that there was a lack of depth, breadth, cohesiveness, and humanity when interpreting their ancestors. This perception lies in stark contrast to the descendents' perception of the depiction of the House residents.

   The guiding research questions were:

   i.) In what ways, if any, does the revised site interpretation relate to the complexity of multiple narratives? And
   ii.) In what ways, if any, are improvements still desired / perceived as necessary?

   We explored these questions from the perspective of an engaged group of descendants of the formerly enslaved peoples at Arlington House. The data relates their perspectives on the current

interpretation, the message the site conveys for visitors, and potential areas for interpretation improvement.

ii.) Chapter 3 helps inform management decisions about potential changes in interpretation and visitor use management for Arlington House, the NPS, and other plantations and similar sites. It also provides insight into how visitors view content at a heritage plantation that depicts difficult stories of US history. We relate data from an on-site visitor intercept survey about visitors' heritage connections to the site and their expectations, experiences, emotions, choices for opportunities and engagement, and perspectives about the interpretation. Through review of the current literature on heritage sites, visitors, and interpretation at these sites and consultation with Arlington House managers, we investigate four hypotheses:

   i.) H1: There are distinct groups of Arlington House visitors based on strength of heritage connection.
   ii.) H2: These heritage groups differ significantly in their a) expectations, b) experiences, and c) change scores between the two.
   iii.) H3: These groups differ significantly in emotional effect of their Arlington House visit.
   iv.) H4: These groups differ in their choices and opportunities for engagement during their visit.

iii.) Chapter 4 focuses on understanding the plantation interpreters' experience as they deliver difficult and often contested interpretation at a nationally recognized and administered former plantation. Much of the onsite interpretation focuses on the white enslaver's narrative. It also exhibits a segregated, shallow depiction of the lives of the formerly enslaved people. Through interviews, rangers relayed their experiences as they interpret these histories. We used interpretation guiding principles, Black Abstraction, and representation as thematic concepts when considering rangers' responses. Considering the three concepts, we formulated two guiding questions:

   i.) Through which interpretive principles, if any, do interpretive rangers at a heritage plantation site relay concepts of empathy, personhood, and/or representation?
   ii.) If they use interpretive principles, what is their goal for the visitor experience post-interaction?

CHAPTER 2:

"Representation matters and name changes matter": Centering descendants' perspectives at Arlington House, a former plantation

Hunter Lee, Elizabeth E. Perry, & Aby Sène-Harper

Michigan State University & Clemson University

Potential Target journal: Journal of Heritage Tourism

Abstract

This study investigated a former plantation site, Arlington House, the Robert E. Lee Memorial (former confederate general), located in the current-day Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C. The National Park Service (NPS) has managed this site since 1933. Arlington House is a cultural and historical heritage site that has a layered and complex history with multiple narratives of place. On-site interpretation at Arlington House (e.g., information placards, ranger interactions) has shifted recently from interpreting solely the story of Lee to include also interpreting the lives of the formerly enslaved peoples. To understand how this shift has been received by the descendants of the enslaved Africans, we conducted two focus groups. Though fuller interpretation has been added, many of the descendants felt it lacks depth and detail in comparison with Lee's exhibits. Specifically, this study synthesized insights from the descendants about the lack of a cohesive, comprehensive narrative, the need to challenge the enslaver's narrative, and specific areas for the NPS to reconsider their efforts. This relates to larger conversations about cultural heritage plantation sites and the evolution of interpretation at such sites. By incorporating insights from those who have direct ties to heritage plantations, managers could ensure a more representative and complete narrative of place that incorporates the values of descendants to increase relevancy. This is important in aiming toward greater relevance across audiences and striving for an inclusive interpretation of previously neglected places and peoples.

Keywords: plantation heritage, descendant perspectives, slavery, representation, national park service

Introduction

Heritage tourism brings visitors to historical sites to facilitate a better understanding of a site's specific history, connect people with the past, and experience a unique historical setting (Abraham et al., 2022; Adamkiewicz, 2016; Jackson, 2011; Small, 2013). While heritage can be defined differentially by context, we use it hereon to mean the display of historical objects, representation of history, and narratives pertaining to the cultural significance or influence of a place (see Poria et al., 2006; Nowacki, 2022). Heritage sites include former plantations where many enslaved Africans resided. Plantations can be places where curators explore the racialization process within the US; reveal the dominant racial histories; and tell stories of resistance, identity, and inequality (Alderman & Hanna, 2015). They can also be places where identities, national or otherwise, can be constructed or reinforced, where values are placed on concepts and new memories are fostered (Apaydin, 2020). The interpretation of historic plantations stands in a unique position to impact the collective memory of the US by deciding whose stories are told and what is remembered (Hanna et al., 2022a; Modlin et al., 2018). Currently, though, they often remain locations where inequity lingers through skewed narratives (Modlin et al., 2018). Interpretation at these sites has historically centered on the white, wealthy enslavers and the "charm" of the large plantation house (Modlin et al., 2018). While plantations represent the past, they also have significant implications and meanings for the present. Of the 365 plantation sites (also referred to as plantation museums) in the US, few depict stories of the enslaved Africans (Modlin et al., 2018). Plantation sites that have begun to incorporate their stories have only transitioned in the past two decades (Modlin et al., 2018). This emphasizes the work that remains regarding how we depict the lives of African Americans versus the white enslavers in these sites (Hanna et al., 2022).

Working toward recognition can encompass legitimizing historical and cultural places where stories are told in an accurate and equitable way. This can help to promote healing and reconciliation with the past (Finney, 2014). As social justice movements gain traction (i.e., Black Lives Matter Movement, George Floyd Protests), there is also an opportunity for radical change, and this momentum could be used to tell a fuller history and form a new identity based on current values and memories (Apaydin, 2020). There have been few studies about the interpretation of plantation sites that work with the descendants of the formerly enslaved people to construct a more complete historical narrative (notable exceptions include: Jackson, 2011; Jackson, 2012; Edwards, 2021). More engaged research like this could provide crucial information and feedback throughout the process with those who have an inherent stake in these places. What heritage management may lack in access to individual stories, descendants could provide by sharing key insights and oral histories integral to encouraging a more

holistic view of the African American community and their history (Jackson, 2011; Chuva et al., 2021; Jackson, 2012).

This paper provides insights into a former plantation site where the National Park Service (NPS) has endeavored to relate a more complex and comprehensive narrative in consultation with descendants of the formerly enslaved[1] Africans. We acknowledge that though the site has made significant changes to their interpretation, it ultimately falls short without the continued and targeted input of those who hold the place closest. This research is not a call to reinvent current efforts or a call to action for the NPS per se; rather it is a reminder and an example of how, despite efforts, interpretations can still fall short – with significant consequences – when it does not integrate the voices and perspectives of key communities like of the descendants of formerly enslaved Africans who built, lived, and worked in these interpreted plantations.

Literature Review

Current Plantation Narratives

Whether former plantations and sites of enslavement should be made into attractions at all is an area of contention (Dan & Seaton, 2008). While those who own or manage these sites have an economic need and cultural desire to share the place with visitors, there is also a reluctance to alienate the predominantly white people who may visit (Dan & Seaton, 2008). Confounding this tension is the duty sites have to represent accurate historical information. With limited to no representation of African Americans[2], most plantations present a biased story.

A study by Eichstedt & Small (2002) reviewed 122 plantation sites and found four different approaches used by site managers to depict slavery. These include annihilation and erasure, trivialization and deflection, segregation and marginalization of knowledge, and relative incorporation (Eichstedt & Small, 2002). In sites that practiced annihilation or erasure (56%), much focus was placed on the enslaver's status, reputation, wealth, and physical possessions (Carter, 2011; Hanna et al., 2018). Another 20% of sites made no mention of slavery or the enslaved people (Eichstedt & Small, 2002). The sites that exhibited trivializing and deflecting interpretation (27%) were likely to depict the enslaved Africans as members of the family, not enslaved (i.e., the enslaved had a good life and were happy in

[1] We use formerly enslaved peoples in this paper rather than the outdated, dehumanizing term "slave" that does not reflect that this relationship was forced bondage. This term is still used in interpretative features at the NPS former plantation site.

[2]Note that African American is the preferred term to refer to the racial group compromising individuals of African ancestry in the US. However, African American and Black American are used interchangeably to remain consistent with the terminology used by the author(s) being cited.

their position) (Carter, 2011). The third category of interpretation included segregated narratives (4%), where depictions had separate tours for the enslaved quarters and the enslaver's "mansion." Visitors could read narratives of the enslavers in one physical place but had to go outside the "big house" (plantation mansion) to find information on the enslaved (Eichstedt & Small, 2002; Carter, 2011; Modlin et al., 2018). The final approach was "relative incorporation," which Carter (2011) redesignated to "complication of the enslaver" narrative (13%). These depicted information on the enslaver and the enslaved and exhibited integration of tours and narratives.

Within the sites that do not complicate the enslaver's narrative, managers frequently use the same, recycled material that centers on the "master narratives" depicting the white enslavers and their possessions (Carter, 2011). Narratives presented historically tend to center on the "Big House" or mansion where the enslavers resided (Adamkiewicz, 2016; Carter, 2011; Carter et al., 2014a; Butler, 2001; Jackson, 2011; Modlin et al., 2018; Harnay, 2022). Visitors read extensive biographies, visit rooms with each artifact depicted, and experience the wealth the enslavers enjoyed (Butler, 2001; Hanna et al., 2022; Small, 2013; Carter, 2011; Harnay, 2022). Little explanation, if any, is given about how the white enslavers acquired their wealth and power (i.e., from the enslaved Africans' labor). Plantation managers aim to provide an enjoyable, distracting, and entertaining visit for their primarily white visitors (Butler, 2001; Carter, 2011; Hanna et al., 2022; Harnay, 2022). This is done by catering to that audience (i.e., the wealthy white) by emphasizing unification, homogeneity messages, and interpretation aligned with the sites' own agendas (Adamkiewicz, 2016). Tours foster a sense of easy, comfortable living that have visitors admiring the quiet beauty of the properties.

By relating history solely from the enslavers' point of view, the interpretation perpetuates systemic ignorance, which is the "knowledge creation practices sustained by the dominant group" (Sprague, 2016, pp. 82). This entrenched way of creating and interpreting what those in power feel is most palatable to a white audience has significant implications on what is remembered and identified as history. It is a stark contrast to the depictions of the lives of the enslaved Africans and reality.

When African Americans are represented, most of the narratives depicted focus on the conditions of slavery or a brief overview of plantation life (Mahoney, 2015). The enslaved peoples' stories are reduced to their suffering and enslavement rather than their cultural traditions and individual lives (Mahoney, 2015; Harnay, 2022). As Finney (2014) described, the Black experience in the US is primarily depicted as a narrative of struggle. This flattening is an example of what novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's describes as the "danger of the single story." By reducing an entire people's experience to just a single narrative (Adichie, 2009), sites preclude visitors' meaningfully engagement with the past

and capacity to understand how these memories inform the present and the future (Finney, 2014; Thompson, 2022). By engaging with whitewashed interpretation and language surrounding slavery, visitors can leave these sites with the idea that the horrors of slavery are long in the past and do not hold repercussions for society today. But African Americans are still facing the repercussions of slavery through systemic racism, which is still alive and overtly expressed in the US (Dan & Seaton, 2008). Systemic racism has a direct impact on the collective memory of Americans and reinforces stereotypes of the African American community (Finney, 2014; Linn-Tynen, 2020, Adamkiewicz, 2016; Alderman & Hanna, 2015; Carter et al., 2014; Butler, 2001; Jackson, 2011). As well, because which stories are shared also impacts how people think of themselves in relation to others (Finney, 2014), portraying complex narratives as simplistic stories can impact visitors' post-visit knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions about slavery (Adamkiewicz, 2016; Alderman & Hanna, 2015).

How to tell these stories

To move past this biased and shallow interpretation, we need to pivot to a more inclusive, representative, and empathy-based approach. The enslaved played critical roles in everyday life on the plantations; in interactions with the enslavers; and through their own cultural practices, stories of resilience, and fortitude. When tasked with answering the need for a more inclusive and representative interpretation, many site managers claim that information on the enslaved peoples is exceedingly difficult to find. This is perpetuated by the ingrained politics of viewing slavery's legacy as something that the country has overcome (Carter, 2011). To counter this trend, there has been a push to include the descendants of the formerly enslaved in narrative building, exhibit structuring, and oral history accounting (Edwards, 2021; *National Summit on Teaching Slavery*, 2018; Wijesuriya et al., 2013; Jackson, 2011; Jackson, 2012).

This approach has been adopted at Montpellier, the former residence of President James Madison. Managers have included the descendants in the interpretation and as co-owners of the property. Site managers and descendants formed a committee to help make this vision a reality and modelled their approach from a rubric entitled "Engaging Descendant Communities in the Interpretation of Slavery at Museums and Historic Sites: A Rubric of Best Practices Established by the National Summit on Teaching Slavery" (Edwards, 2021; *National Summit on Teaching Slavery*, 2018). This rubric leads managers through a series of steps and checks to engage the descendant community, integrate interdisciplinary scholarship in the histories, and move descendants from an advisory group to co-ownership of the process. It thus elevates a richer and more holistic view of history and helps them enhance relevancy. The rubric emphasizes the need to build positive relationships with the descendants,

conduct historical research, and then work to co-create the interpretation of the site (*National Summit on Teaching Slavery*, 2018). Additionally, sites should make an effort to consult with people who have memories and attachments to a place, because their experiences imbue the place with significant meaning, feelings, and emotion. Without this consultation or co-creation, people who once had a connection could lose their attachment to that place (Ujang & Zakariya, 2015)

National Park Service efforts

The NPS has undertaken a process to rethink their approach to interpreting sites of cultural and historical importance, especially those in urban or urban-proximate locations. In their Urban Agenda (NPS Stewardship Institute, 2015), they highlight three principles to emphasize in their pursuit of recognizing urban parks/sites. They want to make these places relevant to all Americans, foster greater collaborations and connections within the NPS, and work toward a culture of collaboration across communities and partnerships (NPS Stewardship Institute, 2015). With over 80% of Americans living in urban areas, 36% of them people of color, there is greater urgency within the NPS to remain relevant with designations and interpretation (NPS Stewardship Institute, 2015). Indeed, these connections between cultural and historic sites, urban populations, and cityscape character are crucial to enhancing the relevance of these places and people woven throughout the fabric of the US (Perry et al., 2024). Some of this work on connecting is done through organizational-level relationships with entities representing justice-oriented concerns (Perry et al., 2019). However, it is also largely important in the connections facilitated on an individual level with site visitors and neighbors (Perry et al., 2024). When the NPS does not engage with stories more fully representing a site and that site's importance to themes of resonance across a cityscape (e.g., ongoing quests for freedom, fortitude), they risk not only appearing insular but also diminishing their relevance with an increasing diverse American audience who increasingly demands such sensitive attention to approach and connection (Perry et al., 2024).

When there is a need for further information about a specific area or historical period the NPS conducts a theme study. This helps address gaps through furthering public education on national heritage (*Theme studies,* 2022). Of the 44 current theme studies completed, six speak directly to African American history. Four are on the Civil Rights Movement, one is on the Reconstruction Era, and another on African American Outdoor Recreation, which details the history of Black Americans' access to NPS sites and the outdoors after the abolition of slavery (*Theme studies,* 2022). Though this theme study was greatly needed to understand the context of African Americans' access to the outdoors, there has yet to be a theme study specifically on the institution of slavery and its role in the founding of the nation.

Responding to concerns about relevance with local communities, the NPS has shown that it is possible to integrate interpretation on plantation sites regarding slavery. For example, the interpretation of the Charles Pinckney National Historic Site in South Carolina works to interpret and preserve the cultural traditions of the formerly enslaved Africans in the area. The site also makes a point to celebrate how African Americans have contributed to the country's heritage while recognizing the racist history of the NPS *(Charles Pinckney National Historic Site,* 2024*)*. These are concrete steps in creating more equitable and representative spaces. The NPS has prioritized making their sites more welcoming and representative of the US, though they still showing the growing pains of change. In a large federal government organization, change takes time, funding, and support. This is challenging with a rapidly changing political environment when momentous events can lead to radical change.

Site context

Washington, D.C., the US capital, has a substantial national and international tourism base. Arlington House lies in the center of Arlington National Cemetery. The cemetery has interred veterans from the Civil War onward and attracts around 3 million people annually who visit graves, services, dedications, and memorials (Arlington National Cemetery, 2019). The House predates the cemetery, constructed between 1802-1818 by the enslaved Africans of G.W. Parke Custis, the adopted grandson of President George Washington (McFarland, 2022; Quigley, 2023; Chornesky, 2015). Custis had one white daughter, Mary, with his wife, and at least one other daughter, Arianna Carter, with an enslaved woman (McFarland, 2022). Mary and her husband, Robert E. Lee (the military general) became the house's inhabitants in 1857 (McFarland, 2022; Chornesky, 2015). Lee resided at Arlington until his 1861 resignation from the Union, when he left the property to join the Confederate army. Mary was subsequently forced to leave the home, entrusting Selina Norris Gray, an enslaved woman, to care for the house and grounds (McFarland, 2022; Chornesky, 2015). By May 23, 1861, Union troops occupied the grounds. Two years later (1863), the US War Department established a Freedman's Village on the property, to contain a smallpox outbreak and provide a place for learning and community for emancipated African Americans. Within Freedman's Village, residents had access to reading, writing, and other trades. Throughout its existence, the Freedman's Village was home to a rich and vibrant community that hosted well known abolitionists such as Sojourner Truth. In 1864, General C. Meigs designated the grounds around Arlington House as a military cemetery for Union troops, so that Lee could not reinhabit the house. Robert E. Lee never owned the house; it passed from his wife to their son, to the government (McFarland, 2022; Quigley, 2023). In 1899, the War Department removed Freedman's Village to enlarge the cemetery, displacing the Black population residing there.

Arlington House Today

Arlington House presents artifacts, embodies histories, and plays a significant role in the nation's history. Restoration of the house and grounds began in 1925, and the property became an NPS-managed site in 1933. In 1948, the cemetery became desegregated. By 1972, the house was officially redesignated (from the Custis-Lee Mansion) by the NPS and became a memorial to Robert E. Lee (officially "Arlington House, the Robert E. Lee Memorial") (Quigley, 2023; Chornesky, 2015). In August 2020, a descendant of Arianna Carter started working with lawmakers to change the name of the house to simply "Arlington House" (Trent, 2020). Descendants of the enslaved (e.g., Syphax, Gray, and Parks families) and the enslavers (i.e., Lee and Custis families) at Arlington House came together and raised their collective voice in support of renaming. The house was re-opened after significant restorations and revamped interpretation in June 2021 (Whelan, 2021; Quigley, 2023). The NPS consulted the descendants when planning the restorations, specifically the updated interpretation, but most of the descendants' recommendations went unheeded. The restorations included updated interpretation that incorporated information on the enslaved community, as historically, it only depicted Lee and his life. In July 2022, a bill was introduced in the US Senate and in September 2022, a joint resolution was introduced to rename the site as the Arlington House National Historic Site (Hart & Hammond, 2022; Sullivan, 2020; Whelan, 2021; Trent, 2020). The bill has yet to be considered as of early 2024. On April 22, 2023, descendants (i.e., Branham, Custis, Gray, Henry, Lee, Norris, Parks, Syphax families) jointly signed a letter of commitment with the NPS to signify both parties' commitment in accurately portraying the site's history (see APPENDIX A for complete timeline of the site).

This study examines these longstanding and recent developments in the interpretation of narratives at Arlington House from the perspectives of an engaged group of descendants of the formerly enslaved peoples at Arlington House on the current interpretation, the message the site conveys for visitors, and the areas for interpretation improvement. The guiding research questions were:

1. In what ways, if any, does the revised site interpretation relate to the complexity of multiple narratives? And
2. In what ways, if any, are improvements still desired / perceived as necessary?

Materials and Methods

Data Collection

We used focus groups to allow respondents to provide unbounded responses and thus generate rich data based on the synergy from the group interaction (Rabiee, 2004). If a focus group is relatively homogenous, its members are more likely to be comfortable interacting with one other, as was the case

in this study (Rabiee, 2004). The focus groups came to fruition through the head of the descendant community contacting the research team to learn more about a larger research project at Arlington House they were conducting. Through this partnership, with this key informant acting as a liaison to the Descendants' Family Circle, the gourp of active descendant members that meet monthly, we contacted via email descendants who might be interested in participating in the focus groups. The Descendants' Family Circle has 26 members with 18 active members that attended the monthly meetings. These members include the families: Syphaxes, Grays, Branhams, Lee's, Henrys, Parks and Custises.

This communication via emails included an introduction, the focus groups' purpose, a consent statement, and the Zoom link to one of the two focus groups held. Each participant was offered a $75 visa gift card as an incentive. Challenges recruiting participants resulted due to member's availability at the scheduled times and time restrictions by members of the research team. With a key research team member travelling during the summer, time was very limited to schedule these focus groups. Seven descendants participated in summer 2023, four in one session and three in another, representing close to 40% of the engaged descendant community.

Participants lived across the US, but all had a direct connection to Arlington House through family member(s). Each 60-90 minute session was semi-structured and facilitated by the third author (a Black, female academic) with the first author (a white, female graduate student) present for assistance, logistics, and note-taking. All participants were asked each question and the third author noted when/if other participants agreed/disagreed with each response (i.e., saying 'I agree', 'yes', nodding).

Questions posed to the groups regarded their connections to Arlington House, their first visit, reactions to the current interpretation, thoughts on what message(s) the park conveys with such interpretation, and how the park could improve the narratives. The intent was to understand everyone's context surrounding Arlington House, histories of interaction with the site, and thoughts on how their ancestors have been portrayed in the current interpretation (see APPENDIX B for consent sheet with questions). The key informant was consulted throughout the research process.

Data Analysis

Both sessions were audio recorded and transcribed into text files; we coded the resulting transcripts. The first author employed emergent, iterative coding to identify major themes conveyed for each area of questioning and across questions, along with representative quotes (Saldana, 2010). Upon compilation of main themes and supporting quotes, the first author and second author (a white, female academic with experience working in the NPS) collaborated on thematic meaning-making, combining similar codes and parsing nuances between others through further thematic definition and data

description. This process resulted in thematic groupings of the codes that encompassed primary areas such as where the current interpretation lacks cohesiveness, lacks comprehensive depth, and could be improved.

We shared these major themes, defined with details and illustrated with participant quotes, with the seven participants and key informant to check for validity and accuracy of representation of the participants' intentions (i.e., member checking; Pratt, 2010). Participants responded quickly and enthusiastically that their perspectives had been captured well in this coding scheme. The themes that emerged were also iterated by the key informant in an interview conducted prior to the focus groups for contextual understanding about the descendants' involvement in the Arlington House restorations (not analyzed for presentation within this work, but used to triangulate our findings), and in their acknowledgement of the major themes sourced in the focus groups, adding additional member checking to the data interpretations. These checks were paramount to our process of ensuring that we faithfully related the individual and collective perspectives shared. Each researcher who reviewed the transcripts wrote a positionality statement to identify what lens they were seeing the transcript through (Clarke and Braun, 2019).

Below, we present the participants' connections to Arlington House and detail three main areas of expression about the current interpretation at Arlington House. Quotes presented were chosen for their strength and clarity of expression, as well as to represent a range of participant voices. These quotes have been lightly edited for enhanced readability as the Zoom transcripts picked up backround nosies. Table 1 outlines major themes found through the emergent coding with an example of subsequent text coded for each theme.

Table 1. Major emergent themes with supporting text to illustrate theme.

Thoughts on Current Interpretation	
Not a cohesive Narrative	House vs Enslaved Quarters - Lack of cohesive story, segregated – house in front and enslaved quarters in the back - Felt interpretation and archeological artifacts were added as an afterthought - Representation of Lee and family in the house vs the lack of representation of the enslaved people's role in the house, in daily life, the work they put in to maintain the estate
Narrative is not comprehensive or deep	- Humanization missing. Does not depict daily life both good and bad, stories of resilience, love, joy, perseverance, fortitude, survival - Needs to be more than superficial - The enslaved people have not been represented in history books but played a major role at ARHO - "Sanitized" depictions, whitewashed, focuses on slavery only and not lives

Table 1. (cont'd).

Recommendations Moving Forward	
Need to move away from tokenism	- The need to highlight the complexities of life not just key figures and families
ARHO name change	- There are multiple narratives and the name does not reflect this
Invitation, Outreach, and more targeted interaction	- Need for specific and targeted outreach for in the AA communities and in general - Continue the work with the descendent group but move beyond just consulting to adding capacity for engagement throughout the process - Adding interpretation of other spaces around the house and the connections

Findings

"Fragments of Stories": On Connections to Place

For historically marginalized groups, memories and stories imbued in places are powerful representations from which they can draw to define their relationship with the broader society and landscape (Savoy, 2015; Sene-Harper et al., 2022). Finney (2014) adds that for African Americans, "memory, both collective and individual, provides a way to name and create a place, which gives or reaffirms the power to re-create ourselves and the place we live in" (p.66). Participants expressed similar sentiments as they recounted their connections to Arlington House and lamented the incompleteness of those stories. One observed that "those stories are what we have to hang on to, but they're fragments. They're just fragments." Yet these fragments of stories revealed the important place of their ancestors in the history of Arlington House, creating a pathway toward a more meaningful relationship to the place, as captured in the following two quotes:

> "I didn't read books mentioning them [enslaved]. The emphasis was, you know put on another group of people. But the enslaved, they play really a major part in it, and in helping the Arlington House, you know, become what it is because of their work that they did, the people they took care of. So, they were a major part of it […] So, it puts a whole different perspective on me, because not only I'm related to, you know, one of the enslaved there and all."

> "I then went into the backyard as saw the slave quarters and then was startled to see that XXXX [name omitted for confidentiality], and then came to learn of the XXXX story, and was interested in that because I had seen that in my family tree."

Participants varied in their connection to Arlington and their journey in learning about their heritage at the site. Some participants were first introduced to the site when their school was studying the Civil War and took a field trip to the Cemetery and House. One noted that the lives and stories of the enslaved people were not in history books. This reflects the retelling of the nation's history with slavery in that

many histories are omitted in key historical places. Later, they realized they had direct connections to some of the enslaved peoples who lived and worked on the property as shared in the quote below.

> "I remember that was the very first time that I had visited the Arlington House, on a school field trip. I had no idea that my great grandfather was buried there in the role that he played over there at the Arlington House."

Some were introduced at an early age by family members who could share their connection directly and talk about their family's history on the site. Others had visited on their own or with friends and happened upon the house. Upon seeing familiar family names on interpretation at the site, they were compelled to begin their own research on their connections to those who lived there. One participant spoke about visiting the grave site of their ancestor and the powerful connection they felt.

> "I have visited his grave site. And I really got a connection, because when you're there and you're walking on that property, you stop and think. You know this is the same property that my great grandfather walked on and all. And you know it's just [a] really, really awesome feeling. And you kind of wonder what things were like back then. Like just that area there, where they were, they lived and stayed."

Overall, the common experiences that participants shared in relation to Arlington House was that of erasure of their history, the discovery of fragments of those stories, and the ensuing deep connections to the place. These experiences help explain the push to improve the interpretation, as attitudes about management of sites vary with the strength of attachment people feel toward an area (Davenport & Anderson, 2005). This provides more reason for familial attached individuals to be invested and push for change at sites they feel are not representative of history because these sites can be central to their identities (Stedman, 2002).

Current interpretation through their lens

Two main themes emerged regarding the current interpretation. All participants agreed and iterated that the overall narrative is neither cohesive, deep, nor comprehensive.

"Segregated narratives": On the lack of cohesiveness

When discussing the lack of a cohesive narrative, participants brought up the "traditional" segregated view of the property itself, with the large mansion in the front with the enslaved quarters in the rear. Furthermore, the inside of the house is highly curated with family portraits, furniture, and other artifacts displayed without significant mention of the enslaved who maintained the house's operation. This typifies the third categorization of plantation sites by Eichstedt & Small (2002), where the site only depicts segregated narratives and visitors must go to separate spaces to read about the

enslavers verses the enslaved. Thereby the NPS maintaining this segregated space through its separation of narratives – the Custis-Lee families in the main house and the enslaved families solely in the enslaved quarters – creates a simple story, whereas integrating more in the main house about the ways the enslaved were present in this space would be more representative. One participant captures this sentiment of segregated narratives:

> "It was strange. I'll just say it. It's very segregated. So, it's like the quarters for the enslaved are in the back. I didn't kind of feel a cohesive narrative that was being shared. You'd go in one, and it's set up as a dwelling. You'd go in another, and there's a video and an exhibit space. And so I was just really trying to figure out what was the narrative that was being shared with me. […] I didn't feel like I was being given a good understanding of how both enslaved people and the Whites were using the house and interacting in the house, and what the labor of enslaved people look like. Did they sleep in the house, you know, did they?"

Participants expressed that the interpretation of the enslaved peoples was felt to be more of an "afterthought," limited in space and scope at the site. This includes the archeological findings in and around the enslaved quarters. Their presentation and interpretation lack a complete narrative, unlike that of the ~~H~~ouse. One descendant observed this "incomplete narrative," expressing that it seemed it "was an attempt to tell the complete story without really being thoughtful about what was being done." Another expressed feeling a similar imbalance, with the "energy of the house" not representing the enslaved and not "[giving] the same kind of highlights that it does to the other information."
Much of the attention has been historically centered on the house and its white former inhabitants. Although interpretation has been added into the enslaved quarters, a narrative about those who worked and maintained the house is still missing. This follows a national trend between former plantation owners and those who were enslaved (Carter, 2011; Hanna et al., 2022; Harnay, 2022). There is a tension for the plantation owners and curators to have the white past inhabitants be shown positively and focus on their role in the country's reunification process, but using this sole lens is neither just nor accurate to the site's stories (Finney, 2014; Harnay, 2022; Thompson, 2022). Enslaved people were integral in the maintaining and overall functioning of the plantations (Adamkiewicz, 2016; Carter, 2011; Carter et al., 2014; Butler, 2001). Interpreting these stories separately from those of the main house inhabitants represents a fragmented and incomplete history. This fragmentation had participants wondering what visitors took away from their experience, as it was an incomplete representation. One participant explored this when they contributed:

> "When they visit the slave quarters and all…I wonder what kind of feelings and if they say, how did these people integrate with these other people? They are all separate. They seem like they

> are all separate. I just wonder, if I didn't know myself the history and if I was to visit there, what kind of feeling I would have after visiting. What kind of questions would I ask, or what I [would] wonder about?"

This query supports past work on those who have been marginalized wanting to make sure their story is fully and truthfully told (Stedman, 2002; Jackson, 2011; Jackson, 2012). Additionally, they are reiterating incongruity and disconnection between the inhabitants of the house and those who lived in the enslaved quarters.

"He was a human being, and with all that complexity": On the lack of breadth and depth

The second major theme on interpretation was the lack of breadth and depth within the narratives of the enslaved people. Many stories of the enslaved are missing or incomplete and what is present depicts sanitized views of slavery. A primary focus on key figures in the enslaved community was perceived by their descendants to be superficial and "whitewashed." As one participant stated, and all others in the group agreed:

> "It's nice to see things on our families up on the walls, pictures and all that sort of stuff. But you know what, I don't want our families and our and their experiences to be reduced to being a bunch of noble negroes who are like on a stamp. You know it's almost the best analogy I can draw is the way that you know Martin Luther King has a holiday and you see them on the stand and but no one reads the words and understand the struggles, the fears. the disappointments, the aspirations. King was a man. He was a human being, and with all that complexity."

Despite the integration of the stories of the enslaved by the NPS, many of participants felt as if there was a lack of humanization. Key members are represented as caricatures and the NPS interpretation does not depict the daily lives of the enslaved: the good, bad, stories of resilience, love, joy, fortitude, and survival. When thinking about what visitors might take away from their experience, one descendant stated:

> "I'd like when they…visit that they would see that the enslaves, you know, they were people. They had contributed a lot. They did have great contributions there but [they] were not really so much, you know, recognized for it. So maybe it'll give people more thought in, you know these, the enslaved. You know, to be, more recognized and more of the feeling that you know they had families. They were just, you know, just like the rest of them. They had families, they had friends, and they had ideas. They had thoughts. I think a more personal life should be, you know, be displayed."

"Humanization" was emphasized in both focus groups, with everyone agreeing that the interpretation failed to interpret the enslaved as meticulously as the Lee family. By only interpreting key figures of the enslaved families and putting them on a pedestal, the interpretation glosses over the day-

to-day workings of the plantation and people's lives. There was consensus among participants that they would like more interpretation about the day-to-day activities and stories of how their ancestors lived and worked. The quote below highlights the aspects that the descendants feel are missing.

> "What was it like to work in the fields and with you know, not holding anything back, negative or positive? What was it like to work in the house? What was the day like? How many hours were you at work? What type of recreation time did you have, if any? How did it look on the plantation? What happened if people fell in love and got married? Were children sold off and sent away? What happened to them? But right now, we're at a surface level that talks about the different families. And there are a few important stories that have come along but I'd like to understand more about the lives of the enslaved. More than just a caricature… "

"How do you rise that far from slavery?": On ways NPS can better honor the memory of the enslaved

When asked how the NPS could improve the site messaging and interpretation, the participants identified multiple avenues to pursue. First, they felt the NPS should highlight the complexities of the lives of the enslaved, rather than just key figures and families. The enslaved people played an integral role in the building, maintaining, living, working, and everyday life of the property. By showing the layers and intertwining of the lives of the wealthy white enslavers and the enslaved, this would give a clearer lens to the story of the property and house. Currently, representation is lacking on how the Lee's and the enslaved families interacted. Some participants expressed positive feelings toward the NPS and the steps taken to move the site to a more representative narrative, but this was paired with frustration too. One participant noted that although they "celebrate" this development, they also feel it is shallow, stating "They're honoring our families by including this into the narrative, but it's got to be more [than] superficial. These were humans." Another captured how the interpretation can better honor the memory of those who rose from slavery to occupy a prominent role in society, giving the example of his great grandfather:

> "My great-great-grandfather […] was the first Dean of Howard University 20 some years later, and he was raised on the property of Arlington from that land that was given to Colbert and his brothers and sisters in that original dowry. How do you rise that far from slavery within a span of 25 years in less than a full generation. And my great grandfather isn't the only one […] So, what do I want to hear? The story of resilience and resistance and perseverance that's missing from a caricature."

Another area of improvement needed is specific and targeted outreach to African American communities in the area. Currently there is sparse, if any, advertisement to visit Arlington House. Participants expressed that even if any marketing exists, it is not directed to the African American community. Adding advertisement and outreach could attract more people to experience the site.

Additionally, having the site named as a memorial to Lee sends a certain message to potential visitors. Because he is most known for being a Confederate general, many area residents, particularly those of color, could have little, if any, motivation to visit.

Participants felt the interpretive exhibits should have an interactive component with some activities for school-aged children. There are no tours or ranger-facilitated interactions beyond a twice-daily ranger talk. Having such tours of the grounds, enslaved quarters, or house could provide an opportunity for deeper engagement if visitors wanted to understand more about the site and connections to today. The NPS should continue to work with the descendant group but move beyond just consulting to adding capacity for engagement throughout the process.

There was also consensus that the name of the house and property should be changed to Arlington House, removing "The Robert E. Lee Memorial." This echoes the current movement to remove Confederate notables from buildings, streets, and monuments around the country (Thompson, 2022) and represents the complex narrative truth of the site as a place remembering more than just one person, family, or story. Names hold power over how we view places and what messages we may expect to encounter. They can impact the daily lives of those who have been marginalized and be a constant reminder of a painful past (Thompson, 2022). One participant spoke about how they were reminded every day when they drove past signage for the site about their "mixed feelings" but ultimately that "representation matters and name changes matter."

Both as an inclusion step and a matter of representation and justice, the removal of Lee's name from the official title could break barriers for people to visit and learn an important part of history. This could also help ease the burden and stress of those who are directly connected to the site but are not reflected, unlike their white counterparts, in the naming. The descendants feel strongly that this should be the next step and have petitioned to do so in Congress.

Conclusion

The goal of this study was to understand how descendants of the formerly enslaved Africans viewed the revised site interpretation at Arlington House. Specifically, descendants were asked how the current interpretation relates the complexity of multiple narratives and in what ways improvements are still desired / perceived as necessary. Through focus groups, descendants detailed their thoughts on the current interpretation present, the message the NPS conveys with such interpretations, and desired NPS improvements for the interpretation. Though appreciative of the NPS efforts to make improvements, descendants feel that there is a lack of depth, breadth, cohesiveness, and humanity when interpreting their ancestors. This is in stark contrast to the depiction of the House residents.

Although the NPS' inclusion of the descendants in the creation of the updated interpretation is commendable (especially for a federal bureaucracy with frequent resource shortages and staff transitions), further improvements are necessary. Arlington House, through renovations, has transitioned from erasure of the enslaved African's stories to a more segregated and marginalized approach. While this is an improvement, the interpretation still aligns with the national trend of not challenging the enslaver's narrative as outlined by Eichstedt & Small (2002) in their classifications of plantation types (Modlin et al., 2018). By integrating descendants throughout the process of creation, implementation, and evaluation of the interpretation, the NPS could move past the segregated, shallow, and limited narratives present. Transitioning toward challenging of the enslaver's narrative categorization is woefully needed and could be powerfully expressed by the major steward of federally protected cultural sites (Eichstedt & Small, 2002). This integration and revision could reveal the full depth and complexity of the stories on-site (Modlin et al., 2018; Hanna et al., 2022). Additionally, including those closest to a place in its maintenance can hopefully increase its relevancy. By increasing relevancy, these sites could promote their longevity and ultimately make them more sustainable moving forward (Perry et al., 2024). By telling history in full with greater representation of the enslaved, the NPS, descendants, and visitors would all benefit. The descendants' deep familial connections to the site have facilitated a dedication to ensuring Arlington House equitably and justly represents all those who lived and worked on the plantation. The NPS managers would have difficulty finding another such dedicated group and should not squander their enthusiasm.

Through heritage tourism, visitors can visit historical sites to better understand history and connect with the past (Abraham et al., 2022; Adamkiewicz, 2016; Jackson, 2011; Small, 2013). Arlington House exemplifies this by being a historical, heritage site, uniquely situated in the US capital. Moving forward, we challenge those tasked with interpreting plantations and heritage places to intentionally include those closest to the site, those who have been underrepresented, and those who have been marginalized in telling their stories of place. Names and stories hold great power in what is remembered and shine a light on what managers elevate as worthy of interpretation. Representation can impact the collective memory of a nation by telling stories of resistance, injustice, and identity. With continued dedication to interpreting inclusive narratives paired with the momentum of social justice movements, this could provide a prime opportunity for managers to rethink their approach to interpretation at plantation sites. By exemplifying the values the NPS holds, this will help move the site toward maintaining relevancy, welcoming those of color, and showing that the NPS is ready to make significant changes to reckon with the nation's history. Descendants and the author team laud the NPS rangers

doing the interpreting at Arlington House. They are taking concrete steps to represent history in their public talks. The next steps of integrated interpretation and name change would further reflect this dedication and commitment to representation.

CHAPTER 3:

Heritage identities impact heritage site experiences: An examination of visitor expectations, emotions, and engagements at Arlington House

Hunter Lee & Elizabeth E. Perry
Michigan State University

Potential Target journal: Journal of Interpretive Research

Abstract

Efforts have increasingly focused on who visits heritage spaces and why (i.e., heritage-based identities and motivations) within heritage tourism. Our study examines this at a National Park Service (NPS) site and former plantation: Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial (Washington, D.C.). This site has a contested history and presents multiple narratives of place. The house and site are named after a Confederate general, though the structures were built and maintained throughout much of its pre-NPS history by enslaved peoples. On-site interpretation has shifted recently in the NPS' tenure, from solely relating the story of Lee to including additional narratives and experiences about the enslaved peoples. We administered an on-site visitor survey (n=263) on visitor heritage identities, expectations, and experiences. Distinct heritage groups were found. Those with stronger heritage connections reported greater engagements from their visit, though those without a heritage connection also reported critical engagement. Though important across NPS sites, understanding connections among interpretation, heritage, and experience is especially important in ones like Arlington House, where visitors usually only visit once and managers have a limited opportunity to relate a breadth of place-specific and place-transcending narratives, aiming to enrich the experience on-site and applicability of themes to experiences beyond.

Keywords: heritage, enslaved people, National Park Service, plantation, survey, visitor experience

Introduction

Heritage tourism (often used interchangeably with cultural tourism) is a large sector of the tourism industry with close to 40% of the global tourism base related to heritage-based travel (Kiempiak et al., 2017). Heritage tourism invites visitors to historical sites to facilitate a better understanding of a site's specific history, help connect people with the past, foster connections with one's own heritage, and/or experience a unique historical setting (Abraham et al., 2022; Adamkiewicz, 2016; Jackson, 2011; Small, 2013). Although heritage can be defined differentially by context, we use it hereon to mean the display of historical objects, representation of history, and narratives pertaining to the cultural significance or influence of a place (see Poria et al., 2006; Nowacki, 2022).

Heritage must also represent both our triumphs and our failures/mistakes (Lowenthal, 2011). Our heritage, and representations of it, informs current practices, causes, mentalities, and ideologies (Lowenthal, 2011). When people visit sites that have historical, educational, emotional, and tangible attractions, they do so for various reasons. There are distinct groups who visit heritage areas with studies classifying the groups in different ways (see Abraham & Poria, 2020; Prayag & Del Chiappa, 2021; Duda-Seifert & Kajdanek, 2022). Understanding these groups' experiences at heritage sites can help shape more nimble and relevant interpretive practices.

Our study provides a lens into a contested plantation heritage site in the US capital, Washington, D.C. We relate data from an on-site visitor survey about their heritage connections to the site and their expectations, experiences, emotions, choices for opportunities and engagement, and perspectives about the interpretation present.

Literature Review

Heritage Importance and Purpose

Scholars have found the concept of cultural heritage difficult to define, with multiple aspects coming into play. Some definitions reference a collection of artifacts and tangibles preserved for current and future generations (Abraham et al., 2022; Adamkiewicz, 2016; Lyn-Tynn, 2020). Lyn-Tynn (2020) asserts that "value and meaning are ascribed to the heritage – object, site, or practice – by the individual or society in which it exists" (pp. 261). Therefore, heritage tourism can hold great importance by helping visitors understand historical periods, contexts, ideas, and people they may not have been exposed to in other settings by displaying tangibles and relating the value ascribed to their context (Abraham et al., 2022; Adamkiewicz, 2016; Jackson, 2011; Small, 2013). It also provides an opportunity for visitors to be immersed in a historical place, make connections to their own lives, understand the past, and connect past to future. This differs from other tourist attractions, as the space is curated specifically for visitor

learning, connection, and development.

As times change and norms shift, so does identifying what is considered heritage, what is worth interpreting, and what is neither (Lowenthal, 2011; Waitt, 2000). Those in power (i.e. legislatures, site managers, political leaders) have traditionally been the ones to decide these questions of importance, and for reasons such as retaining the status quo, funding, time, political agendas, etc. (Lownethal, 2011; Waitt, 2000). Most of the management of US cultural heritage has historically been monopolized by white, male citizens. They represented 93% of those identified as preservation leaders (Lynn-Tyn, 2020). This aligns with heritage spaces interpreting what the dominant culture decrees worth prioritizing. For example, this is starkly evident when looking into heritage sites focused on African Americans. Only 8% of the National Registry of Historical Places' 86,000 listed sites depict African Americans or other minority groups (Lyn-Tinn, 2020). Decisions makers (i.e. site managers, funders) inadvertently exclude or disregard those who are not represented through the selection of the narratives we tell. This fosters inequity by excluding certain narratives, and consequently certain people, from a historical place. The collective memory of a country is also impacted when we choose to only represent a single narrative (Lyn-Tinn, 2020). This challenges the purpose of heritage interpretation overall, where people are provided with pluralistic narratives of the past. Additionally, heritage is linked closely with identity: what is represented as historical past can confirm or deny one's historical identity (Lyn-Tinn, 2020). With certain heritage places reaffirming identity and origin, it can have significant repercussions if identities are not represented. Heritage sites can be places where power is given, affirmed, or lost (Lyn-Tinn, 2020; Low et al., 2002). This is especially relevant when interpreting sites with complex histories, such as heritage plantation spaces.

Grouping Heritage Visitors: Personal Connection to Heritage

The critical factor in understanding visitors' experiences in many heritage studies is the extent that one feels the heritage represented is related or connected to their own personal heritage (see Poria, 2006; Biran et al., 2006; Prayag & Del Chiappa, 2021; Romoalda et al., 2014; Kempiak et al., 2017). A person's experience on-site can vary depending on the *strength* of a visitor's personal connection to the content. Studies have found distinct visitor groups based on the types of personal connections to the heritage presented (Poria, 2003; Poria, 2006a; Poria et al., 2006b; Poria et al., 2008). Poria et al. (2003) introduced eight survey measures to probe visitors' connections to a heritage site, if any, based on their perceptions of the site in relation to their personal heritage and they identified four distinct groups: those who were 1) unaware of the heritage attributes, 2) aware but were motivated by other aspects of the site, 3) motivated by the heritage aspects but do not consider them their own, or 4) both

motivated by heritage and considered it their own (Poria et al., 2003). In subsequent studies (Poria et al., 2006a; Poria et al., 2006b), the team refined their inquiry to focus on visitors' motivations and perceptions of the sites in relation to personal heritage connections and found three distinct groups of visitors: those who 1) did not perceive the presented heritage to be part of their own, 2) somewhat perceived it to be their own, or 3) felt the heritage represents their own heritage. Finally, Poria et al. (2009) revisited these measures to determine if visitors' heritage connection influenced what they gained from the site. Connections were found between visitors' perceptions of the site, interpretation, and motivations to visit based on their connection to the heritage presented.

Poria and colleagues' measures have been confirmed in subsequent studies. Examples include parsing four groups of heritage site visitors based on motivations (Menor-Campos et al., 2020) and examining heritage connection to perceived authenticity and tourist satisfaction in East Asian locations (Nguyen, 2016). This framing has qualitative applications as well. For example, Timoney (2020) found distinct groups of heritage site visitors through an interview approach. In this, Timoney found that heritage tourists include those who have direct connections to the heritage presented, yet those with and without heritage connections can both experience significant emotional connection to a site. Work continues to qualify groupings of heritage site visitors, with studies focused on the perceived importance of the heritage, activities present, motivations to travel, engagement with interpretation, authenticity of experience, and emotional connection (Nguyen, 2014; Parayag et al., 2021; Waitt, 2000; Steriopoulus, 2023; McKercher, 2002; Remoaldo et al., 2014; Moscardo,1996). Research has also found links between emotion, nostalgia, place attachment, and connection with the heritage being presented (Abraham et al., 2022; Abraham & Poria, 2020; Chi & Chi, 2022, Buonincontri et al., 2017, Hosany, 2014; Prayag et al., 2021).

Heritage Site Management: Diversity of Motivations and Engagement Techniques

Heritage site managers are particularly interested in what visitors want to experience at their sites. This can help improve management strategies, interpretation activities, and other facilities (Nowacki, 2021; Kempiak et al., 2017; Poria et al., 2006a). Understanding the site's context and visitor's interests can be disproportionately important for heritage sites where the majority are visiting for the first and/or only time and managers need to capitalize on a single delivery of content (Nowacki, 2021; Kempiak et al., 2017; Poria et al., 2006a). The cultural heritage tourist has previously been viewed as monolithic, in that they are solely interested in obtaining specific outcomes from a site (Poria, 2009; Duda-Seifert & Kajdanek, 2022; Silberman, 2012). But this perception has been refuted as studies progress with focus on engagement and motivations. There are some established motivations for

visiting heritage sites (see Manning, 2011; De Rojas & Camarero, 2008), though in this study we use a few motivations outlined by Poria et al. (2006), as they capture main themes across motivation studies. These include motivations for learning, connecting with my heritage, leisure pursuit, bequeathing for children, and emotional involvement (Poria et al., 2006).

Measures of service quality, perceived value, and satisfaction have been used to understand visitors' connections to sites through visitor surveys (e.g., Chen & Chen, 2010). Increasingly, studies have examined the effect of emotion and willingness to be emotionally involved as drivers for visitors to visit a heritage site (see Prayag & Del Chiappa, 2021; Steriopoulos, 2023; Abraham & Poria, 2020; Abraham et al., 2022; Prayag et al., 2021). Focus historically has been on the positive emotions these sites evoke, but recent inquiries have shifted to include negative feelings, especially related to contentious or difficult heritage (i.e., Holocaust Memorials, places of enslavement, plantations) (Prayag & Del Chiappa, 2021; Prayag et al., 2021; Chi & Chi, 2022).

The extent of engagement in interpretation could influence a visitor's length of stay based on their depth of interest and desire to gain knowledge (Kempiak, 2017). More engaged visitors have been linked to gaining more benefits (knowledge, connection, etc.) from their visit (Duda-Seifert & Kajdanek, 2022; Taheri et al., 2014). Interpretive strategies encouraging all types of visitors to engage include providing a variety of experiences, ensuring visitors have control over their experiences, making connections to personal experiences, increasing awareness, and challenging visitors to approach new topics with curiosity could increase engagement (Moscardo, 1996; Biran et al., 2006; Kempiak, 2017).

Heritage Plantations: Arlington House

Heritage sites include former plantations where many enslaved Africans resided. Former plantation sites are considered cultural heritage sites as they present historical artifacts, provide themes of national and historical significance, and provide a learning opportunity in a unique setting (Alderman et al., 2016; McKittrick, 2013). They can hold power in that curators are able to reveal the dominant racial histories of the US and show the history of racial inequities, but also relate narratives of identity, resistance, and resilience (Alderman et al., 2016; McKittrick, 2013; Dann & Seaton, 2001). New memories can be fostered, values placed on concepts, and identities (national or personal) constructed or reinforced (Apaydin, 2020).

As managers decide which narratives to tell, historic plantations are in a unique position to influence the collective memory of the US and decide which narratives worthy of remembrance (Hanna et al., 2022a; Modlin et al., 2018; Dann & Seaton, 2001). Presently, through skewed narratives centering on the white enslavers and their wealth, historic plantations often remain places where inequity persists

(Modlin et al., 2018). Of the 365 interpreted plantation sites in the US, fewer than half depict stories of the enslaved Africans (Modlin et al., 2018). This emphasizes the work that remains to effectively depict the lives of African Americans versus the white enslavers (Hanna et al., 2022; Dann & Seaton, 2001). There has been a recent push to change how interpretation is approached on heritage plantation sites from solely interpreting the lives of the enslavers to including the lives of the enslaved as well. This would provide greater recognition of the lives of African Americans historically and how that history shapes their experiences to this day (Harney, 2022). Current social justice movements (e.g., Black Lives Matter, George Floyd Protests, Confederate monument removal) highlight the public's greater attention on the history of slavery (Harney, 2022).

Our study site – Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial, in Washington, D.C. – displays historical artifacts, depicts narratives of national and cultural significance, and represents an important part of US history. Additionally, it is a former plantation site where over 100 formerly enslaved peoples resided, having built the house for George Custis (President George Washington's adopted nephew). The site has been managed by the National Park Service (NPS) since 1933 Arlington House follows the national trend of focusing on the enslaver. Until 2021, the interpretation on-site only depicted Lee and his family. Following renovations, there is now greater representation of the formerly enslaved. However, this revamped narrative of place still presents a segregated story. Much attention remains on the enslaver, while the enslaved are represented through single individuals in interpretative materials separate from the main house. This representation or lack thereof can affect who visits this site, feels comfortable visiting, and feels represented by the interpretive materials.

Arlington House is a well visited site (annual visitation varying from 300,000 to over 1 million in the non-COVID, non-renovation years since 2014) (NPS IRMA, 2023) at the center of Arlington National Cemetery. The site includes the house itself with a museum within, the enslaved peoples' quarters, multiple interpretive features (i.e., plaques, historical readings on display), woodlands, and grounds and gardens. NPS managers were interested in which interpretive narratives resonate broadly and with certain audiences, to improve the delivery of these narratives, consider additional intersecting narratives, and attend to the visitor experience.

Research Questions

Our study on heritage tourism, race, and interpretive materials at Arlington House investigated four hypotheses:

1. H1: There are distinct groups of Arlington House visitors based on strength of heritage connection.

2. H2: These heritage groups differ significantly in their a) expectations, b) experiences, and c) change scores between the two.
3. H3: These groups differ significantly in emotional effect of their Arlington House visit.
4. H4: These groups differ in their choices and opportunities for engagement during their visit.

Methods

Data Collection

On-site, tablet-based intercept surveys were administered October 3-10, 2023, by the authors at Arlington House near the trolley stop (where tourists can get off as part of a larger tour of the cemetery) and near the interpretive features between the main house and the enslaved peoples' quarters. Additionally, three sandwich boards with the study purpose and survey QR code were stationed at the House and two alternate approaches to the site to provide opportunities for visitors to access the survey beyond researcher interception. Sampling included a holiday weekend and the weather was mostly pleasant/typical for the early fall. Both authors (researchers on-site) are white and identify as female. Given the sensitivity of the questions and site experience, the researchers neither completed surveys orally for respondents nor stood close by during completion. Respondents and their companions were offered a bench for comfort. Stratified sampling blocks of 4 hours were allotted twice daily during the House's open hours (8:30AM-4:30PM). Effort was made to attend the two daily rangers talks (11AM, 2PM) due to robust attendance at the talks. Rangers introduced the lead author after each talk. The survey was offered only in English, which is a limitation of this study, though given the interpretative materials were also solely in English, it reflects the frame of the study.

The questionnaire was formatted through Qualtrics and contained four blocks of questions exploring different aspects of the visitor's time spent on-site (see APPENDIX C for full survey). Survey participation was voluntary, and every question was optional. Questions asking about how visitors felt about their experience, if they were interested in other sites connecting to Arling house, and if they felt the narratives present were representative of Arlington history were formulated through focus groups with the descendants of the formerly enslaved peoples of Arlington. Additionally, a key liason to the descendant community, helped review the survey and added additional questions that would be pertinent to the descendant community. The following questions relate directly to the four hypotheses of this study.

- Visitor demographics and visit characteristics (previous visitation, primacy of Arlington House in today's plans, etc.): A bank of questions regarding the site's connection to one's personal heritage was adapted from Poria et al. (2003) as relevant for this study's context (see Table 1), and assessed on a 5-point Likert scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree). This bank was preceded by situating text stating: "The National Park Service sites attempt to interpret themes of national significance and encourage personal connections to these themes."

- Motivations and outcomes were framed as “expectations” and “experiences” and the same measures were used for each (presented in Table 3).
- Emotional effect was assessed via five questions (Table 5) with anchors of opposite emotions and a 10-point sliding scale between the extremes. Respondents were also asked about the extent of their engagement with the interpreted content (see Table 7), with response options of Did not engage with AND am not interested in engaging with, Did not engage with BUT am interested in engaging with, Engaged with BUT was not interested in engaging with, or Engaged with AND was interested in engaging with.
- Finally, a space was included for open-ended response about “What, if anything, would you like to share about your experiences at Arlington House and the interpretation of the site?” We have chosen to present some of these responses as illustration of the concepts measured in close-ended form (see APPENDIX D for all comments).

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted in IBM SPSS statistical software version 28.0. Descriptive statistics were determined on heritage data and respondent demographics. International visitors were retained in the sample, consistent with Poria et al. (2003). Next, a reliability analysis was performed for the personal heritage questions. This ensured responses were consistent regarding the variables measuring our latent concept of personal heritage connection (by using Cronbach’s α reliability coefficients) and allowed us to discuss heritage as a cohesive measure (Vaske, 2008). The personal heritage Cronbach’s α (.912) suggests the consistent measuring of this latent concept and is comparable with the Cronbach’s α of the original measure developed by Poria et al. (2003). A K-means cluster analysis, which categorizes responses into groups maximizing similarities within and differences between clusters (Vaske, 2008), revealed three groups of personal heritage connection. Expectations and experiences with change scores (i.e., unmet (-), met (0), or exceeded (+) expectations based on reported experiences) for each heritage group were then calculated and compared using one way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) and post-hoc tests. One way ANOVA also measured differences among the heritage groups for each emotion examined. Chi-square analyses and post-hoc tests compared frequency of engagement with interpreted content among the heritage groups.

Results

Exact response rates are unknown, given the static QR code available without researcher interaction. However, splits within the 349 visitor contacts suggest an 84% survey acceptance rate: 154 visitors completed the tablet survey (44.1%), 139 visitors (39.8%) scanned the QR code for completing on their own device, and 56 visitors (16.1%) declined participation. We received 263 valid responses: 154 (58.6%) from the tablet-based format and 109 (41.4%) from the QR code. Non-response and response format bias checks detected no significant differences between those who did or did not

complete a survey and those who completed on tablets versus via QR codes. Response numbers to each question are provided in their corresponding tables for transparency.

Many visitors (n=232) were visiting the site for the first time (74.1%). When asked where Arlington House fit into their plans (n=254), 48.8% selected Arlington as one of several destinations, 36.2% said it was an unplanned/spontaneous decision, and 15.0% identified Arlington as their primary destination. The length of time spent on-site (n=233) varied from 30 minutes or less (22.7%), 31-60 minutes (39.9%), 61-90 minutes (19.3%), 91-120 minutes (7.7%), and 120 minutes or more (10.3%). Most visitors (n=233) visited with at least one other person (96.9%), typically family (62.2%). Responses to gender (n=226) indicated 55.8% identified as female, 42.0% as male, 0.9% preferred to self-describe, and 1.3% preferred not to say. The majority of the 263 respondents (89.9%) resided in the US. Racial and ethnic composition (n=207) was 90.3% white or Caucasian, 7.2% Hispanic or Latinx, 5.8% Black or African American, 4.8% Prefer Not to Say, 2.9% Asian, and 1.4% multi or biracial, 1.4% Other or Prefer to Self-Identify, 0.5% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 0.5% American Indian, Native American, or Alaskan Native, with 14.5% of respondents selecting multiple categories.

Qualitative Responses – open ended survey question

The final question in the onsite survey was a free response titled 'share lastly, what, if anything, would you like to share about your experiences at Arlington House and the interpretation of the site?" Of the 263 sample size, 171 participants filled in the free response question, close to two-thirds of respondents (65.0%). The first author employed emergent, iterative coding to identify major themes conveyed in the responses (Saldana, 2010). Most prevalent themes included; flattery & platitudes (i.e. great, awesome, thanks), learning history, Lee portrayal in interpretation, inclusion of enslaved peoples, Ranger Talks, and N/A. The comments were overwhelmingly positive with visitors appreciating the inclusion and information about the formerly enslaved peoples as illustrated through the following quote: "I am pleased to know that information is being updated to reflect the lived experiences of the enslaved individuals who lived and served on this property." There was a single comment lamenting the fact the Ranger "solely focused on the enslaved perspective to the neglect of the other history of the site." Those who did convey negative sentiments, in some cases quite passionately, generally referred to the NPS portraying Lee in a positive light. The following quotes exemplify these sentiments: "I was still frustrated, however, by the generally rosy portrait of a man who stands for such odious beliefs and contributed to (in fact, led) such a horrifying chapter in our nation's history.." and "REMOVE ROBERT E. LEE'S NAME FROM THE HOUSE. AS A COUNTRY WE CANNOT MEMORIALIZE PEOPLE THAT COMMITED TREASON." Appreciation of the history told and the beauty of the site was expressed frequently, as

illustrated in the following quote: “Amazing history and beautiful views of the cemetery and Washington, DC.” Given the complexity of the narratives onsite, diversity of visitors, length of time stayed, etc. it was significant to see such a large percentage of respondents leave comments. This shows visitors were invested and engaged in their experience to feel strongly enough to leave comments.

Hypothesis 1. There are distinct groups of Arlington House visitors based on strength of heritage connection.

Participants were asked five measures adapted from Poria et al. (2003) to understand to what extent, if at all, they feel the site represents their personal heritage (Table 2). The highest level of agreement (79.5%) was with the site being representative of the narrative and history at the site, followed by 48.0% agreeing that the site had symbolic meaning for them, and 40.6% agreeing that the site was part of their personal heritage. The remaining two measures on the site representing something about the respondent’s identity or generating a sense of belonging for them had no clear pattern of response.

Table 2. Heritage connection perceived at Arlington House (adapted from Poria et al., 2003).

To what extent do you disagree or agree with each of the following statements... (n)	**Percentages (%), followed by (n)**				
	Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neither disagree nor agree**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
I consider this site to be part of my own personal heritage (246)	16.3 (40)	11.8 (29)	31.3 (77)	32.9 (81)	7.7 (19)
This site is representative of the narratives and history at the site (244)	4.1 (10)	2.9 (7)	13.5 (33)	53.3 (130)	26.2 (64)
This site has symbolic meaning for me (244)	7.8 (19)	8.2 (20)	36.1 (88)	31.6 (77)	16.4 (40)
This site represents something that relates to my identity (242)	12.4 (30)	16.1 (39)	38.4 (93)	21.9 (53)	11.2 (27)
The site generates a sense of belonging for me (241)	11.6 (28)	15.8 (38)	40.7 (98)	21.6 (52)	10.4 (25)

A reliability analysis (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .912$) confirmed that four of the measures related to personal heritage (Poria et al., 2006) and met the requirements for k-means cluster analysis (Table 3). Three discernable groupings emerged and were used for subsequent analyses: no heritage relationship (n=53) 22.1%, somewhat (n=112) 46.7%, and heritage relationship (n=75) 31.3%. Thus, hypothesis 1 is supported, with distinct groups of visitors with different depths / expressions of heritage connection.

Table 3. Reliability analysis of heritage narratives from Poria et al. (2003) as a single concept for grouping respondents (n=240).

Topic & Question	Mean	Item total correlation	α if deleted	Cronbach's α
Heritage[1]				.912
I consider this site to be part of my own personal heritage	3.06	.73	.91	
This site has symbolic meaning for me	3.40	.77	.90	
This site represents something that relates to my identity	3.04	.87	.86	
The site generates a sense of belonging for me	3.04	.84	.87	

[1]One question was omitted, as it reduced the overall Cronbach's α: "This site is representative of the narratives and history at the site."

Hypothesis 2. These heritage groups differ significantly in their a) expectations, b) experiences, and c) change scores between the two.

Examining the frequency of selection with 12 different conditions expected and/or experienced (3-point scales: 1 did not expect, 2 expected somewhat, 3 expected substantially; 1 did not experience, 2 experienced somewhat, 3 experienced substantially), we ascertained which conditions were expected and/or experienced (Table 4). As described in Methods, change scores between the two indicate areas of unmet (-), met (0), or exceeded (+) expectations when compared to experiences. Learning about the site's historic background was the condition most expected (90.0%) and most experienced (97.8%). The least expected and experienced condition was to interact with a place that is important to a respondent's personal identity (32.2% and 52.9%, respectively). Across all groups, most visitors experienced more than they expected. The exceptions were those with no heritage connection expecting slightly more than they experienced in terms of feelings of emotional involvement and a sense of belonging at the site (change scores of –0.09 and –0.08, respectively), though these were functionally close to 0 (expectations met). Those who felt they had a connection to their personal heritage tended to report experiences exceeding expectations to a larger degree than those who do not have a heritage connection or are somewhat connected, and those who are somewhat connected reported experiences exceeding expectations more so than those with no heritage connections. However, these changes were only significant for half of the conditions, with significant differences mainly between those with heritage connections versus those with somewhat or no connections, with small to medium effect sizes (Table 4). Thus, hypothesis 2 is supported, though not for every condition or group examined.

Table 4. Expectations and experiences with elements of the visit, with change scores denoting variation between level of expectation and level of experience by heritage groups.

	Expected %			Mean	Experienced %			Mean	Overall Mean change score by heritage group and overall			
	Did not expect	Expected somewhat	Expected substantially	Overall	Did not experience	Experienced somewhat	Experienced substantially	Overall	No heritage	Somewhat	Heritage	Overall
An overlook of Washington D.C.	39.3	26.7	34	1.95	3.2	27.9	68.9	2.66	0.63	0.52	0.94	0.71
A visit to a famous tourist attraction	20.8	41.6	37.6	2.17	5.6	35.1	59.3	2.54	0.24	0.26	0.54	0.37
An opportunity to relate the importance for my descendants to visit this site	45.0	38.2	16.9	1.72	25.3	41.8	32.9	2.08	0.24	0.35	0.51	0.36
A day's outing	20.9	42.6	36.5	2.16	6.1	37.3	56.6	2.50	0.25	0.34	0.50	0.34
An opportunity to pass the story of Arlington House to my friends and family	28.8	46.0	25.2	1.96	12.8	44.2	42.9	2.30	0.20	0.35	0.40	0.34
A place that is an important part of my personal identity	67.8	25.7	6.5	1.39	47.1	35.4	17.5	1.70	0.08	0.28	0.61	0.31
Contributions to my education	18.8	41.6	39.6	2.21	5.0	38.5	56.4	2.51	0.15	0.28	0.50	0.30

Table 4. (cont'd).

	Expected %			Mean	Experienced %			Mean	Overall Mean change score by heritage group and overall			Mean
	Did not expect	Expected somewhat	Expected substantially	Overall	Did not experience	Experienced somewhat	Experienced substantially	Overall	No heritage	Somewhat	Heritage	Overall
Time spent socializing with my group	40.7	35.1	24.2	1.83	25.2	37.2	37.6	2.12	0.18	0.19	0.51	0.29
Connections with a part of my own heritage	65.3	27.0	7.7	1.42	45.8	38.2	16.0	1.70	0.14	0.27	0.46	0.28
A sense of belonging to the site	54.7	36.8	8.5	1.54	38.7	43.1	18.2	1.80	-0.08	0.23	0.48	0.26
Feelings of emotional involvement	41.3	38.5	20.2	1.79	24.0	47.6	28.4	2.04	-0.09	0.31	0.44	0.25
Learnings about the site's historic background	10.0	36.0	54.0	2.44	2.2	29.5	68.3	2.66	0.10	0.12	0.38	0.22

Table 5. Expectations and experiences with elements of the visit grouped by heritage connection.

Element of visit	Percentages (%), followed by (n)						
	No heritage	Somewhat	Heritage	Overall	F-value	p-value	η effect size
An overlook of Washington D.C.	0.625[a,b] (48)	0.521[a] (96)	0.941[b] (68)	0.679 (212)	4.684	.010	.207
An opportunity to relate the importance for my descendants to visit this site	0.245 (49)	0.347 (95)	0.507 (69)	0.376 (213)	1.606	.203	
A day's outing	0.245 (49)	0.344 (96)	0.500 (70)	0.372 (215)	2.368	.096	
A visit to a famous tourist attraction	0.240[a] (50)	0.265[a] (102)	0.536[b] (69)	0.344 (221)	3.126	.046	.167
A place that is an important part of my personal identity	0.082[a] (49)	0.281[a] (96)	0.606[b] (66)	0.337 (211)	7.761	<.001	.264
An opportunity to pass the story of Arlington House to my friends and family	0.204 (49)	0.350 (100)	0.403 (67)	0.333 (216)	0.899	.409	
Contributions to my education	0.146 (48)	0.277 (94)	0.500 (66)	0.317 (208)	2.697	.070	
Connections with a part of my own heritage	0.143[a] (49)	0.268[a,b] (97)	0.456[b] (68)	0.299 (214)	3.127	.046	.170
Time spent socializing with my group	0.184[a] (49)	0.196[a] (97)	0.515[b] (68)	0.294 (214)	5.577	.004	.224
Feelings of emotional involvement	-0.085[a] (47)	0.309[b] (97)	0.441[b] (68)	0.264 (212)	6.424	.002	.241
A sense of belonging to the site	-0.082[a] (49)	0.235[a,b] (98)	0.478[b] (67)	0.238 (214)	8.053	<.001	.266
Learnings about the site's historic background	0.104[a] (48)	0.124[a] (97)	0.382[b] (68)	0.202 (213)	3.393	.035	.177

Hypothesis 3. These groups differ significantly in emotional effect of their Arlington House visit.

Table 6 depicts the distribution of responses for each of the questions examining elements of how the visit might emotionally validate or challenge a respondent. The highest average (10-point scale) was reported with Dismayed to Heartened (6.64) and the lowest with Frustrated to Relieved (4.84), though all five emotions showed a wide spread of response. Table 7 shows the response means to each emotion pairing by the three heritage groups. Those with a heritage connection responded with a higher value (i.e., more agreement with the second emotion in the pairing) than those with somewhat or no heritage connection for four of the five emotions. This trend was significant for two of these emotions: Dismayed to Heartened and Excluded to Included, with medium (.279) and small-medium (.240)

respective effect sizes. This supports our hypothesis of groups differing in the emotional effect of their visit, though the differences were only significant for two of the five measures.

Table 6. Participants used a 10-point sliding scale to correspond to emotions felt. This details emotional effect of the visit through a distribution of responses. One corresponds to the first emotion, 10 corresponds to the second. Avg refers to average score by participants for each question.

Emotions	Percentages (%), followed by (n)											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Avg	Std Dev
Dismayed – Heartened (189)	3.7 (7)	3.7 (7)	6.3 (12)	10.1 (19)	7.9 (15)	6.9 (13)	16.9 (32)	20.6 (39)	9.0 (17)	14.8 (28)	6.64	2.52
Excluded – Included (154)	14.9 (23)	5.8 (9)	5.2 (8)	3.2 (5)	7.8 (12)	5.2 (8)	14.9 (23)	13.6 (21)	8.4 (13)	20.8 (32)	6.23	3.19
Overwhelmed – Calm (153)	11.1 (17)	5.9 (9)	7.8 (12)	9.8 (15)	5.9 (9)	5.9 (9)	12.4 (19)	17.6 (27)	8.5 (13)	15.0 (23)	6.05	2.99
Uncomfortable – Comfortable (179)	12.8 (23)	5.6 (10)	11.2 (20)	12.3 (22)	7.3 (13)	6.1 (11)	13.4 (24)	12.3 (22)	6.7 (12)	12.3 (22)	5.55	2.95
Frustrated – Relieved (158)	13.9 (22)	6.3 (10)	14.6 (23)	12.7 (20)	14.6 (23)	7.6 (20)	11.4 (18)	10.1 (16)	4.4 (7)	4.4 (7)	4.84	2.60

Table 7. Response means for emotional affect by heritage group through four questions depicted sliding scales relating to which emotion felt by visitor.

Question/items	No heritage	Somewhat	Heritage	Overall	F-value	p-value	η effect size
Dismayed – Heartened (189)	5.711[a] (38)	6.392[a] (84)	7.556[b] (63)	6.64	7.665	<.001	.279
Excluded – Included (154)	4.833[a] (30)	6.277[a,b] (65)	6.9455[b] (55)	6.23	4.500	.013	.240
Overwhelmed – Calm (153)	5.941 (34)	5.621 (58)	6.5536 (56)	6.05	1.396	.251	
Uncomfortable – Comfortable (179)	5.091 (33)	5.605 (81)	5.750 (60)	5.55	0.536	.586	
Frustrated – Relieved (158)	4.211 (38)	5.0597 (67)	4.840 (50)	4.84	1.334	.266	

Hypothesis 4. These groups differ in their choices and opportunities for engagement during their visit.

Table 8 shows the opportunities for engagement with six interpreted features and percentage of reported engagement/desire by heritage group and overall. Five combinations of engagement opportunities and percentages selected by heritage groups were found significant: 'Information about

the physical house and its history' with 1) 'Did not engage with BUT am interested in engaging' differing between those with heritage connections and those with somewhat or no heritage connections (p=.001; V=.237) and 2) 'Engaged with AND was interested in engaging with' differing between these same groups (p<.001; V=.258); 3) 'Information about the history of the land' and 'Engaged with AND was interested in engaging with' differing between these same groups (p<.001; V=.279); 4) 'Interpretation on a diverse and inclusive history of Arlington House' with 'Did not engage BUT am interested in engaging with' between the same groups (p=.001; V=.266); and 5) 'Interpretation of other sites connected to Arlington House' with 'Engaged with AND was interested in engaging with' between the same groups (p<.001; V=.267). In summary, the differences seen were between those with heritage connection versus those with somewhat or no heritage connections, each with a small-medium effect size. Thus, our final hypothesis is supported in that choices of engagement with interpreted site elements varies by heritage group, with the primary difference being the engagement or not with elements 'interested in engaging with.

Table 8. Choices and opportunities for engagement depicted by connection to heritage: heritage connection, somewhat, no heritage connection.

	Did not engage with AND am not interested in engaging with						Did not engage with BUT am interested in engaging with						Engaged with BUT was not interested in engaging with						Engaged with AND was interested in engaging with					
Item "Information about…"	No heritage	Somewhat heritage	Heritage	Overall	p-value	Cramer's V	No heritage	Somewhat heritage	Heritage	Overall	p-value	Cramer's V	No heritage	Somewhat heritage	Heritage	Overall	p-value	Cramer's V	No heritage	Somewhat heritage	Heritage	Overall	p-value	Cramer's V
The main house residents[1]	14.3	5.0	3.0	6.5	.054		18.4	11.9	9.0	12.4	.324		12.2	10.9	16.4	12.9	.581		55.1	72.3	71.6	68.2	.089	
The lives of the formerly enslaved peoples[2]	8.3	6.0	3.0	5.6	.448		14.6	15.0	10.6	13.6	.691		12.5	12.0	10.6	11.7	.943		64.6	67.0	75.8	69.2	.353	
The physical house and its history	4.3	4.0	4.6	4.3	.984		21.7[a]	11.1[a]	1.5[b]	10.5	.001	.237	13.0	8.1	3.1	7.6	.131		60.9[a]	76.8[a]	90.8[b]	77.6	<.001	.258
The history of the land	4.1	4.0	1.5	3.3	.597		24.5	9.1	4.6	11.3	.005	.237	18.4	10.1	7.7	11.3	.203		53.1[a]	76.8[a]	86.2[b]	74.2	<.001	.279
A diverse and inclusive history of Arlington House	6.3	5.1	1.6	4.3	.366		29.2[a]	11.2[a]	4.8[b]	13.4	.001	.266	10.4	8.2	12.7	10.0	.647		54.2	75.5	81.0	72.2	.006	
Other sites connected to Arlington House[3]	14.3	8.2	4.5	8.4	.178		32.7	21.4	13.4	21.5	.046		14.3	9.2	7.5	9.8	.477		38.8[a]	61.2[a]	74.6[b]	60.3	<.001	.267

[1] e.g., Mary Custis Lee, Robert E. Lee, G.W.P. Custis; [2] e.g., Selina Gray, Jim Parkes, the Syphax family; [3] e.g., Freedmans Village, Syphax Corner

Discussion

We examined groups of visitors at a nationally protected heritage plantation site, Arlington House, to help managers better understand visitors expectations, experiences, emotions, and thoughts on improvements. Adapting four measures of personal heritage from Poria et al. (2003), we found that there were three distinct groups of visitors that visit the site: those who do not feel a connection with their personal heritage, those who are somewhat connected, and those who have a heritage relationship. Our finding is consistent with previous studies that groups exist based on heritage connection (Poria et al., 2003; Poria et al., 2006a; Poria et al., 2006b; Poria et al., 2009). This is relevant for management when curating spaces, deciding what content to present, and thinking how to engage with visitors. It also shows that while some people do have heritage connection with the site, the majority may not, yet they are still interested in viewing the site.

Using these groups, we investigated if heritage groups differ significantly in their expectations, experiences, and change scores at Arlington. All groups experienced more than they expected, which is an encouraging sign for Arlington House. With 36.2% of visitors saying this was an unplanned/spontaneous visit, they may have had low expectations and thus gained more than they expected. Among the top expected/expected elements of the visit was the opportunity to pass the story of Arlington to descendants and friends and family. Compounded with 74.1% of visitors saying this was their first visit, this shows managers that, regardless of heritage grouping, visitors are taking away important elements that they wish to share with others.

Only half of the measures tested were significantly different among heritage groups, but four of those were measures specific to heritage connection. Visitors with heritage connections felt higher levels of emotional involvement, sense of belonging, connections with their own heritage, and that Arlington is an important part of their identity. The most significant findings were related to their emotional involvement, belonging, and identity. This is consistent with previous studies looking at emotion and identity (Parayag et al., 2021; Waitt, 2000; Steriopoulus, 2023). This suggests that plantation sites, and Arlington House in particular, could use these general heritage measures to elicit this information and correspondingly craft interpretation that draws on these themes. Our finding is consistent with the literature in that heritage-connected visitors report higher levels of outcomes but adds to our knowledge in that those without a connection can report high numbers as well. Not only can groups without related heritage gain from their visit but they can also do so in an unplanned, first-time visit. This could allude to the importance of the information present at Arlington and perhaps other plantation sites, in that people do not have to be directly connected to understand the relevance of

certain narratives. It could also be due to the quality of interpretation present that leads them to gain more from their visit.

Factoring into the emotional aspect of vistors' experience, we hypothesized that groups would differ significantly in the way Arlington challenged them. We situated our measures of emotion within the literature by having visitors respond with either positive or negative emotions. Those with heritage connection were more likely to respond with the more positive emotion on our scale. This confirms trends in the literature that those more engaged are more likely to gain more from their visit (Duda-Seifert & Kajdanek, 2022; Taheri et al., 2014; Kempiak, 2017). However, it also shows, particularly in a plantation setting, that positive emotions can be evoked regardless of heritage connections. This may be partially contributed to Arlington House's NPS designation and what such federal designation conveys about the importance of such sites and opens further areas for exploration across other federally-designated sites with complex and contentious heritage narratives. Our measurement approach (sliding scale) facilitated visitors' consideration about their whole visit and identification of which emotions best spoke to their experience. Again, we cannot disregard those without heritage connections because they are still feeling emotions aside from connection to the site. With Heartened and Included representing the highest overall average ratings, visitors are perhaps not as upset by the content displayed as one could assume given the location is a former plantation. This could be important for managers to consider as they push interpretive themes toward more full-story framing.

The final hypothesis we posited was that groups differ in their choices and opportunities for engagement. Five significant instances were found, all with the heritage group differing from the somewhat and no heritage groups. These significant instances were all in the question categories stating the respondent may or may not have interacted with but would be "interested in engaging with." Those with heritage connection seem to be more interested in engaging with the information than the somewhat and no heritage groups. This is consistent with the literature in that those who are more engaged tend to gain more from a site (Duda-Seifert & Kajdanek, 2022; Taheri et al., 2014; Kempiak, 2017). This could be because they have a stronger attachment to Arlington than those who do not have heritage represented, and thus feel they could have more at stake. Particularly with underrepresented groups viewing content about those who have been systemically underrepresented, formerly enslaved peoples, this could provide evidence that a more inclusive framework is being adopted by NPS interpretation. Additionally, those with heritage may have been more prepared to engage in more difficult content than those who have a lower connection. This is important for managers when considering future improvements. From our results, managers could target these areas with future

improvements given the significant interest among those who visit Arlington. Areas for improvement include providing more information about other sites connected to Arlington (e.g., Freedman's Village, Syphax Corner), the history of the land, and information about the house's physical history. Thus, these areas give tangible "next steps" for expanded interpretive narratives and collaborations.

Most visitors (90.3%) identifying as white/Caucasian and few (5.8%) identifying as African Americans/Black is consistent with the literature on former plantation sites (Hanna, 2019) and NPS visitation in general (e.g., Xiao et al., 2022). Despite this, groups were still formed based on heritage connections. This could be due to the extensive representation of the enslaver, Robert E. Lee, presented in a positive light with special focus on his supposed work to reconcile the nation after the Civil War. With two-thirds of respondents (65.0%; n=171) leaving comments in the free response section of the survey, this strengthens the point that visitors are invested in the experience they received, in that they felt compelled to further express their thoughts with the researchers and NPS. With 65.0% commenting, more than one heritage group is undoubtedly represented. This is significant because even if visitors do not have a heritage connection or are somewhat connected to heritage sites, in this case a plantation, they can still be mindful visitors by critically engaging in what they see, making connections, and increasing awareness of the subject depicted (Moscardo, 1996; Biran et al., 2006; Kempiak, 2017). For example, comments exhibited personal connections such as one stating they were "happy to see how our conversation and understanding of slavery has evolved even in my lifetime" and another that "While I gained a lot of knowledge while visiting today, I did find the site to be too generous to Robert Lee's legacy."

Additionally, as with the goal of heritage space to encourage curiosity, another visitor commented, "This was an amazing experience, and I can't wait to learn more about the history of it all upon my return home." These show critical engagement with the content present, despite its contentious and difficult nature. As our results suggest, visitors, despite extent of heritage connections, received more than they expected. This was particularly emphasized by the change scores for the questions that related to passing the story of Arlington House to their descendants, friends, and family. It was further emphasized in Table 8, showing that across levels of heritage connection, visitors were interested in learning more, and reiterated in the above quote, as the respondent not only learned on-site, but was now curious to learn even more. Plantation managers could use this information to update their interpretation to be more inclusive of other connected sites and relate the larger history surrounding the physical components of the property since visitors want to pass the story on.

Conclusion

This study helps inform management decisions about potential changes in interpretation and visitor use management for Arlington House, the NPS, and other plantations and similar sites. It also provides insight to how visitors view content at a heritage plantation that depicts difficult stories of US history. We provided information to help understand who visits Arlington, the differences in their expected verses experienced outcomes, and how visitors felt navigating the different interpretative elements. These findings are important for managers to consider when curating materials and narratives at the sites they manage. This shows that visitors have different interests for engagement, whether they have a heritage connection or not. Additionally, despite the study location presenting difficult and contested themes, all visitors engaged with more than they anticipated. This is encouraging, in that visitors are open to learning about difficult history. It further shows that what is presented matters. With visitors on average gaining more than expected from their visit, managers need to consider what information they are presenting for visitor consumption. Furthermore, they should consider what additional or layered themes could be presented, as visitors are interested in learning more through themes and resources not yet interpreted. With few places depicting the lives of the enslaved in an inclusive manner, it is even more important for Arlington House and other plantation sites with high visitation to do the content justice. Encouragingly from our study, visitors of all types of heritage connection may respond in appreciative ways.

CHAPTER 4:

“A non-negotiable”: Interpreters challenging Black Abstraction at a heritage plantation site

By:

Hunter Lee & Elizabeth Perry

Michigan State University

Target journal: Transforming Communities

Abstract

This study centers interviews from interpretative rangers at a National Park Service heritage plantation site to better understand how they relay the stories of those who were enslaved. The site has recently included information on the formerly enslaved peoples on-site, though interpretation is still segregated with the focus on the white enslaver. We introduce the concept of Black Abstraction in which Black lives are abstracted from their humanity in the role they played on the plantation. Through discussion of interpretation best practices and norms of interpretation at a plantation site, we posit that the rangers are using specific interpretative techniques (e.g., relating the subject to the lives of visitors, going beyond providing just information to reveal deeper meaning) to tell formerly erased stories despite the extra burden it places on them. Without the rangers' work, these stories would not be told, given the limited on-site interpretive text about the formerly enslaved peoples. This study provides insight into how site managers can best support their interpretive staff, the importance of the rangers' work to combat Black Abstraction, and how this work ripples throughout society.

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to engage with rangers at a National Park Service (NPS) cultural heritage site to better understand the work they perform on the ground in relating interpretive narratives about formerly enslaved peoples at the site. Studies have tended to focus on either park management or visitors, rarely gleaning the stories of those interpreting at the site day-to-day. In our case, engaging multiple communities and perspectives at this heritage plantation site[3] was of the utmost importance to understand what happens as these rangers strive to interpret difficult and contested heritage on a former plantation site for many first-time and spontaneous visitors (those who happened upon the property without prior planning). The site has traditionally focused on the story of the white enslavers, as can be seen with other plantation sites across the US (see Butler, 2001; Carter, 2011; Dann & Seaton, 2001; Modlin et al., 2018). Recently, the on-site interpretation (e.g., placards, panels, facilities open, videos) was updated to include the lives of the enslaved who lived, worked, and managed the plantation. Though the new interpretation is welcomed by visitors, managers, and descedants of those who lived and worked at Alrington, it falls short through segregated representation and lack of integration to an overarching narrative (according to descedants and rangers), from authentically telling the history of the lives of those who were enslaved. Single stories are pulled out in these static interpretive formats and general overviews of the plantation life are present, but the interpretation represents a segregated narrative with the "Big House" of the enslaver being the focus. The enslaved quarters remain in the back of the house with little integration of their stories to complicate the narrative of the enslaver.

In this paper, we first explore the concept of 'Black Abstraction' (Ross, 1990) and how, through the absence of authentic and inclusive narratives, we continue to uphold this centuries-long frame of viewing African Americans. In this, we detail what abstraction looks like in plantation settings, discuss heritage interpretation history and frameworks, and the role of the interpreter in plantation settings. Second, we show where abstraction is happening in static on-site interpretation in an NPS cultural heritage site but also how the interpretive rangers (also known as interpreters) are actively using their voices in dynamic on-site interpretation (e.g., ranger talks, visitor interactions) to challenge this narrative. We synthesize and relay findings from seven interviews with NPS interpretive rangers working at this site to reveal their collective acts of resistance to the dominant framework of Black Abstraction.

[3] We refrain from naming the site in this study to respect the privacy of those who participated.

Literature Review

Black Abstraction

Black Abstraction is the "rhetorical depiction of a black person in an abstract context, outside any real and rich social context" (Ross, 1990, pp. 6). If society is unable to see them in a familiar social context, it takes away their "humanness" in the eyes of the public (Ross, 1990). Black Abstraction has helped shape laws and rulings in legal cases to deprive Blacks being viewed with empathy (Ross, 1990). Whites have perpetuated this viewing by not having to confront the different ways they exist in the world, with the little to no need to recognize how the color of their skin excuses them from critically analyzing their privilege (Lopez, 2006). An example of this is whites claiming to be "color-blind" (that they do not see color and all are treated equally). By claiming "color-blindness," people are deliberately not recognizing that people of color have been systemically disadvantaged and that this requires targeted/systemic interventions to dismantle such practices (Lopez, 2006). This lack of perceived similarity, recognition of historical disadvantages, and shared humanity has had disastrous repercussions.

For most of US history, people of color have been deliberately excluded from knowledge production systems (Lynn-Tynen, 2020). Additionally, the collective memory of the socially dominant group, those who hold the most power in the US, (i.e., white, male) enjoy the legitimacy of being recognized as "history" compared to the collective memory of minority groups (Eyerman, 2001; Low, 2002; Wang, 2006; Hoelscher, 2003). Resultingly, influence to add to the collective public memory was suppressed through those in power pushing the dominant narrative (Eyerman, 2001). This narrative glosses over the institution of slavery, maintaining that white people today should not be held responsible for the institution or the generational impacts it has on African Americans (Eyerman, 201). As a result, African Americans have formed their own collective memory so as not to have their history erased (Eyerman, 2001; Pinckney et al., 2024). Through the perpetuation of the dominant, white innocent narrative, this has impacted the way US society views the institution of slavery (i.e., it is something of the past with little to do with today). This has normalized ways of viewing history through frames that minimize slavery's impact and misrepresent people of color (Emirbayer & Desmond, 2012; Hoelscher, 2003; Lynn-Tynen, 2020).

It is paramount to recognize how these white ideologies and powers influence institutional arrangements (i.e. who is represented, who holds power, who has access to resources) (Emirbayer & Desmond, 2012; Hoelscher, 2003). As US society maintains systemic racism and views African Americans as monolithic, we are reducing their personhood and continuing the notion of 'nobodyness" (Buckley,

2019). As Buckley (2019) details, one's identity is shaped in some ways by recognition or absence of recognition, often through misrecognition. This is a form of oppression, reducing a person or group to a lower mode of being. Historical representations have abstracted away the pieces of history that make those in the dominant frame uncomfortable (Ross, 1990). Viewing African Americans as "other," who do not share commonalities with white individuals, makes it easier for people within the dominant society structure to feel less empathy (Ross, 1990).

By removing African Americans' humanity, dominant society reduced African Americans' deservingness of empathy and used this lack of empathy to defend the institution of slavery (Krishna, 2001). One way to challenge this is through narrative, bringing attention to the personhood or humanity of a group. Narrative in this context is the act of storytelling. By relaying an individual's story connected to the broader historical context, it makes it more difficult for the person to be separated from their humanity. This is summed by Ross (1990, pp. 40)

> "When the black person is depicted as a fully-rounded human being living within a rich social context in the midst of a culture and a history, the black person's humanness cannot be forgotten or obscured. The reality of stigmatization, humiliation, and pain brought on by segregation and the racism that motivates segregation crushes the rhetoric of formal equality and self-imposed stigmas. Moreover, the innocence of the white person becomes a more complex matter."

Back Abstraction within Plantation Narratives

The concept of Black Abstraction can be seen within the interpretation at heritage plantation sites. The majority of plantation sites do not mention slavery, though if they do it is either deflecting or trivializing (Eichstedt & Small, 2002; Cook, 2016; Dann & Seaton, 2001; Buzinde & Santos, 2009; Butler, 2001; Carter, 2011; Modlin et al., 2018; Eldar & Jannsson, 2022). This omission and misrepresentation serves to perpetuate the active reproduction of white dominance (Eldar & Jannsson, 2022). Focus is on the wealthy, white enslaver and their numerous material possessions (Carter, 2011; Buzinde & Santos, 2009). Acknowledgement of how the enslavers acquired their wealth, possessions, and power, and who built and maintained these plantations, is rarely mentioned. The labor of enslaved peoples in helping to create the base of the nation's wealth is also omitted (Eldar & Jannsson, 2022). The emphasis, through this series of erasures, is instead placed on enslavers' and nation's wealth. Omitting enslaved peoples' full stories within plantation narratives sustains systemic racism and white innocence (Marable, 2011). Additionally, reducing the enslaved peoples' stories and choosing to elevate representation of the white enslavers perpetuates Black Abstraction (Krishina, 2001). To combat this, we must deviate from the

"master" narrative (Marable, 2011; Carter, 2011; Buzinde & Santos, 2009; Eldar & Jannsson, 2022; Bulter, 2001).

Some former plantations include "plantation" in the name of their sites (Butler, 2001; Carter, 2011; Modlin et al., 2018), but there are many that do not (such as the site depicted in this study), which furthers Black Abstraction and erasure (Adamkiewicz, 2016). Names without "plantation" erase the labor, lives, and legacy of the enslaved who lived there. Names send messages, hold power over how we view places, and preview what messages we may expect to encounter. They can impact the daily lives of those who have been marginalized and be a constant reminder of systemic erasure (Thompson, 2022). To combat this erasure, there are movements to rename various monuments, buildings, streets, etc. (Thompson, 2022). While this is woefully needed, we also need to push further in changing the way we interpret these spaces. Interpreters at such sites can help reconcile the present and future by depicting underrepresented and purposefully neglected narratives to provide a more inclusive story of a place (Eldrige, 2004; Hoelscher, 2003).

Heritage Interpretation – History and Frameworks

Heritage interpretation has grown in definitions over the years, with scholars still debating what 'interpretation' itself means. We combine the definitions from the NPS and Association for Heritage Interpretation to convey interpretation's role in creating opportunities for visitors to engage emotions; connect with the meanings/significance of the content/resource to visitors lives; and deepen their understanding of people, places, events, and objects from past and present (Bacher et al., 2008; Association for Heritage Interpretation, 2005). These opportunities are usually manifested in dynamic means with an interpreter or through static displays (e.g., descriptive texts, videos, pamphlets) (Dumbraveanu et al., 2016; Knapp & Benton, 2004). A foundational text in heritage interpretation was Freeman Tilden's 1967 book *Interpreting our Heritage*. This volume outlined six interpretation principles that are still widely used (Ablett and Dyer, 2009; Tilden, 1967; Knapp & Benton, 2004; Dumbraveanu, 2016). They include that the interpretation (1) must relate what is displayed to the experience of the visitor; (2) is revelation rather than information; (3) is a teachable art; (4) provokes rather than instructs; (5) relates parts to an underlying whole; and (6) presents qualitatively different approaches for children and adults (Tilden, 1967). A subsequent, additive set of principles is Beck and Cable's 15 "Guiding Principles for Interpreting Nature and Culture" (2011). They supplement Tilden's six principles with an additional nine: (7) connect the past to the present, (8) utilize technology, (9) conduct focused, well researched interpretation, (10) understand communication techniques, (11) write with humility and care, (12) create programs capable of attracting support, (13) provide uplift and encourage preservation,

(14) design program intentionally and thoughtfully, and (15) evoke passion for the resource and the people. These 15 principles (Beck & Cable, 2011) provide basis for our study. (APPENDIX D contains a full list of principles with subsequent codes.)

Role of interpreter - Plantation Interpretation

The role of the interpreter in heritage tourism includes helping visitors understand the site's context, consider how it relates to broader narratives, and connect with the information present as it may relate to their own lives (Modlin et al., 2018). Interpreters can work to foster "historical empathy," which helps link visitors' experiences with the lives of those in the past, foster curiosity about what they went through, and what their lives looked like (Modlin, 2011). This holds even greater importance when interpreting plantation sites. As interpretation of plantations have traditionally focused on the wealthy, white enslaver's "big house" and material possessions, interpreters usually interpret the enslaver's memory and artifacts with rich detail and emotion (Modlin, 2011) versus how they depict the lives of the enslaved. The enslaved are depicted through factual, emotionless narratives that give a broad, shallow overviews compared to the life of the enslaver (Flewellen, 2017; Eichstedt & Small, 2002; Cook, 2016; Dann & Seaton, 2001; Buzinde & Santos, 2009; Butler, 2001; Carter, 2011; Modlin et al., 2018; Eldar & Jannsson, 2022). This perpetuates affective inequality, where visitors experience unequal emotional involvement for the enslavers versus the enslaved. This reinforces the narrative of the "big house" and reaffirms "the marginality of the enslaved," objectifying the lives of the enslaved (Flewellen, 2017). Interpreters exercise agency in what they choose to relay. This can be influenced by political motivations, institutional standards, comfortability, knowledge, etc. (Modlin et al., 2018). Interpreters at plantation sites largely follow the trend of relaying the enslaver's story in great detail (Carter, 2011; Carter et al., 2014; Eichstedt & Small, 2002; Adamkiewicz, 2016; Cook, 2016; Modlin et al., 2018; Hanna et al., 2022), though some have taken it upon themselves to broaden their narratives (see Butler, 2001; Edwards, 2021).

Research Goals

Our research inquiry focused on understanding plantation interpreters' experiences as they deliver difficult, and often contested, interpretation at a nationally recognized and administered former plantation. Considering Black Abstraction, interpretive guiding principles, and representation, we formulated two guiding questions:

1. Through which interpretive principles, if any, do interpretive rangers at a heritage plantation site relay concepts of empathy, personhood, and/or representation?
2. If they use interpretive principles, what is their goal for the visitor experience post-interaction?

Methods

We (the authors) are two white, female researchers. The first author is a graduate student who has completed previous fieldwork and built relationships with interpreters at the study site. The second author is an academic, who also has work history with the NPS outside of this site. Both authors have examined their positionality in relation to this subject matter and site and have taken care to reduce their biases and assumptions throughout the study. This was done independently through reflections after each stage of the research process. However, we recognize that we still bring our own lenses to this work and our power in communicating particular stories through our approach and reporting (Clarke & Braun, 2019).

The first author conducted 30-60 minute interviews with six NPS interpretive rangers at this heritage plantation site to better understand their roles. Though limited in number, this effort represents a majority of the nine full-time interpreters currently on-site. Rangers were contacted via email, with an invitation for participation in a Zoom-format interview. This correspondence also included the list of six questions to be asked in the interview (see APPENDIX F for interview guide). Participants encompassed varied NPS-wide work histories and tenures, gender and racial identities, and professional backgrounds. Length of time working at the site ranged from 2 months to 3 years, and NPS tenure ranged from 2 months to 28 years (the respondent's whole career). The rest of the participants were involved through volunteering or employment with the NPS, from 6 months to 13 years. Of the six participants, two identified as male and four as female, and four identified as white, one as Hispanic, and one as a person of color. There was representation of those who grew up in the continental US and those who did not. Previous professional backgrounds included work in naturalist interpretation, security, volunteers, local parks/preserves, other NPS sites, and heritage interpretation.

Interviews were voice recorded for accuracy; voice files were transcribed to text files for analysis. The following questions are the ones analyzed for this study:

1. What is the importance of this work to you? Why do you feel it is necessary or not?
2. What message do you want visitors to walk away with after their visit?
3. What do you feel the next steps are in improving/advancing the interpretation and representation of the stories told?

Data analysis

Both authors read the interview transcripts multiple times, conducted a preliminary round of collaborative meaning making, and determined a frame through which to most accurately present major themes of results. Next, the first author used deductive coding with the predetermined 15 interpretive principles (Patton, 2014; Saldana, 2021). In the first round of structured coding, the transcripts were

coded for the principles, with an additional layer of coding if these passages conveyed sentiments of either or both elements of Black Abstraction (empathy and personhood). We found six of the 15 interpretive principles (Beck & Cable, 2011) prevalent in the respondents' answers. Following this, we excluded the nine unwitnessed principles from our coding structure and re-coded / re-confirmed all passages relating to the six present interpretative themes. From this, four principles emerged as most relevant, each with *in vivo* sentiments related to empathy and/or personhood.

Findings

The four most prominent interpretative principles are presented below, with illustrative responses and quotes from the interviews. A consistent theme was the emphasis on individuals represented (which we define as "personhood") and the empathy of the interpreters toward these individuals, the site narratives, and the visitor interactions. Through detailing principles with interpreters' emphasis on personhood and empathy, we show how Black Abstraction is being combatted within this plantation site and, as a federally administered site, may offer national-level points of guidance for interpretive communities across other former plantation sites.

Principle 1. Relating the subject to the lives of visitors: *"[I'm]trying to make it, you know, relate to their lives in some way"*

The first principle recognized by the interviewees as prominent in their telling of their interpretive goals, was to make personal connections with people and the stories they are telling. They do this by having visitors reflect on and synthesize the stories they hear during the Ranger Talks through guided writing and reflection activities. When visitors relate the stories back to their own lives, the rangers hope connections can be made about the way society functions today. They expressed this in statements such as:

> "My job is to help others with a variety of perspectives and identities, and lived experiences connect to and value these stories and find entry points for those stories back into their own lives."

Suppressed stories need to be told. The rangers hope that with representing stories that have not been told before on-site and getting visitors to connect themes with their own lives, visitors will be able to see how this ripples into society. Particularly, how these stories and ripples relate to the struggles of people of color and the generational harm that the institution of slavery continues to perpetuate today. In the continuance of Black Abstraction, the NPS has, for much of its 108-year history, continued a culture of racist narratives (Jackson, 2018). These narratives have real impacts on Americans today and society's

grappling with systemic racism. By relating these stories to broader concepts and the lives of African Americans currently, interpreters are fostering greater empathy through the connection to African Americans personhood. By explicitly making these connections, the suppression of stories and perpetuation of generational harm for people of color, they are directly challenging Black Abstraction. To reconcile with present trends, we must address the difficulties of the past.

Principle 2. Going beyond providing information to reveal deeper meaning: *"We're talking about justice, trauma, healing, love..."*

Another principle recognized by the interviewees was the goal of moving the visitors to uncover deeper meaning from what they are hearing. Due to the nature and location of the site, many visitors will not have heard of its connection to slavery prior to their visit. This can lead visitors to revelations as interpreters relay diverse stories in their daily, highly anticipated Ranger Talks. With racism and white supremacy foundational to US culture and society, the rangers feel the need to broaden the audience's understanding to the contributions of the enslaved, particularly at this site where the stories have been overshadowed by those of the enslaver. One expressed this as:

> "You can't keep sweeping our horror history under the rug. It happened. We people of color, black, white…We collectively, as Americans have to be accountable. We have to talk about it so that we can learn from it and not repeat it and move forward. Because these were people."

The above interpreter connects personhood to the enslaved by emphasizing the need to tell their stories, to show that they were people too. This was also expressed when asked what the interviewee wanted visitors to take away from their visit:

> "The message that I wanted people to get was like, black people were people, too. It was very simple. They were people, too."

They are actively using their position to remove the abstraction from the enslaved, to highlight their humanity and importance. This also shows the connection to personhood and empathy they hope visitors will walk away with when thinking of the formerly enslaved. Interpreters stressed that they want those who visit to think a little deeper about where their information comes from, how are they understanding the content, and with the integration of new information – how does this affect their understanding? They hope visitors will reflect on their knowledge of history and ask themselves, *am I missing any information?*

The interviewee emphasized the need to openly talk about these difficult topics, not only to understand the past but also the present and future. Through facilitating conversations about critically engaging with the content present, the rangers hope to provide visitors a better understanding of what happened at the site. They use empathy when/if visitors become angry about what is or is not presented. Rangers expressed their goal to meet visitors where they are, to get them to think a little more, and to maybe connect the legacy of what happened at plantations in how it still influences society overall. They move past just providing information by looking for connections with the visitors to the information presented. Through the use of empathy in trying to understand how visitors might feel hearing difficult truths, they help reveal deeper meaning and understanding of the site's history.

Principle 3. Presenting a story that informs, entertains, and enlightens: *"History is our understanding of the past"*

The third principle, presenting a story to inform, was apparent when the rangers discussed what they want the visitors to walk away with. They expressed the importance of telling the stories of those who have not been historically represented at the site and more broadly. An important first impression was routinely mentioned: when visitors arrive on the property, they view the name of the site, which includes the name of the white enslaver but omits "plantation," and can choose their extent and depth of interaction with interpretive materials. The rangers felt it is their job to go beyond routine facts and help visitors learn the whole story. This compulsion for a deeper dive was expressed by one ranger in that:

> "It's telling a more holistic story, and it's raising up voices that have been invisible or hidden. For, you know, centuries at this point almost."

They want to challenge the status quo by doing right by those who have been harmed or are being harmed by their omittance from the site narratives. As one interviewee stated, "By being the only federally funded site in the country dedicated to someone who fought against the US, it speaks volumes about what people take away from the site." Also, recognizing this is a NPS site holds additional weight and power. The interviewees recognized this by saying that by working at the NPS, "we're either perpetuating myths or we are using historical interpretation, storytelling, and engagement for justice." They are actively using their power and position to call attention to those who have had their voices buried, and thus they are recognizing these peoples' personhood and opening the door for greater understanding in a leisure and informal learning setting.

Principle 5. Presenting a complete theme and addressing the whole person: *"telling a truthful story requires numerous or multiple perspectives"*

The conversations comprehensively emphasized telling the whole story of the site. The rangers work to challenge the enslaver's narrative by stating outright that the site is a former plantation built and maintained by the exploitation of enslaved labor. This is outlined in the below quote as one interviewee discussed how they begin their ranger talk.

> "I'm like…you're at a historic plantation. We're gonna talk about full accurate history. This means we're gonna talk about chattel slavery. Okay, deep breath, right, you're here. I appreciate you are here. You are opting into this conversation. Here we go."

Through directly naming the site as a historical plantation, the rangers are deviating from what the NPS has named the site. They are also challenging Black Abstraction through stating it was a former plantation by recognizing the lives and labor of those who resided there. That labor and contribution has been erased post-NPS administration though the absence of the narratives of the enslaved. Interviewees expressed the need to add additional stories because the enslaver was only able to live in the way they did because of the enslaved women, men, and children forced to support such a lifestyle. Through the NPS' omission of these peoples' stories, the site depicts an inaccurate and potentially misleading narrative to visitors. This is deeply troubling because as one interviewee stated, "we're [NPS] not giving a historical context. It actually puts that entire burden on the entry level. GS 5, frontline staff." Interviewees relayed how they have taken it upon themselves to do extensive research of other stories present about the peopled history of the site that have been excluded or neglected. Despite this burden, the rangers' goals are to ensure what they are relaying to the public is rooted in intentions of accurate and inclusive depictions. Rangers work to dismantle Black Abstraction by emphasizing the enslaved peoples' personhood in their dedication to thorough research and representation of those previously omitted.

Additionally, in a space between the dynamic and the static interpretive formats is the NPS website. Rangers stated that they update the website to reflect new information they obtain even if they cannot physically change the static interpretive text on-site. Through each of these acts – researching, relaying the work and lives of the enslaved, and continuously updating the information on the website – they are working to recognize the enslaved as full contributors to life on-site and not just in relation to the enslaver. This recognition of excluded peoples and intentionality in re-populating the narrative with their experiences was voiced in expressions such as:

> **"**We don't focus on the people of color. We don't. We're not inclusive….We don't talk about a

lot of groups. and that's what we need to do."

By deliberately incorporating these stories, the interpreters display thoughtful and intentional interactions with the visitors. While the NPS as an institution changes slowly and is risk adverse, the rangers feel the need to propel change by "focus(ing) on the others. The people that don't have as much voice, don't have as much power." They feel the importance of white people stepping up, unpacking assumptions, and educating other white people (most visitors). This supports the literature on Black Abstraction by challenging white people to critically think about their privilege, how these systems of oppression - though may not explicitly negatively impact them – have direct negative, systemic impacts on those of color (Lopez, 2006; Ross, 1990; Emirbayer & Desmond, 2012; Hoelscher, 2003; Lynn-Tynen, 2020). The interpreters explicitly make it their goal to include these voices despite the challenges (i.e., visual/cognitive resistance, verbal pushback, derogatory terms) they face in interpreting difficult content with diverse audiences, stating "it's our job to do this work and to make the change." By taking the initiative (at their own personal expense, i.e., time, capacity) to conduct further research and interpret these difficult topics to challenge the historical interpretation onsite and in the broader NPS context, rangers are utilizing both empathy and personhood to recognize those who were enslaved.

Conclusion

This study helped reveal the work of interpreters as they challenge Black Abstraction through connections to personhood and empathy at an NPS site that interprets a former plantation. They strive to provide inclusive and representative interpretation of the formerly enslaved and those who have not been historically represented. Through the perpetuation of systemic racism and Black Abstraction, African American stories have been erased or misrepresented at heritage plantation sites. By focusing on the wealth and life of the enslaver, plantation managers have erased the recognition of the enslaved peoples' work and individual lives. This also perpetuates the dominant narratives in society based on white ideologies and white patriarchy (i.e., color-blindness, white innocence) (Buckley, 2019; Emirbayer & Desmond, 2012; Hoelscher, 2003; Lopez, 2006). The lives and labor of the enslaved people on plantations helped create the base of the US' wealth but this is rarely told (Eldar & Jannsson, 2022).

Using interpretation frameworks and highlighting the dedication of those interpreting, we see a shift in the portrayals of the formerly enslaved peoples. The plantation interpreter holds a unique position of being able to meet visitors where they are, to help them create connections to their personal lives and broader societal processes (Bulger, 2011; Macdonald, 2006). Through their dedication to inclusion, rangers are exemplifying core interpretive principles to counteract the norms of interpreting plantation heritage. Doing this comes at their own expense as additional labor, to bring empathy and

personhood to the lives of the enslaved. The interpreters at this NPS site have made it a non-negotiable: it is not enough to exemplify interpretive principles, but to enact them through uncompromising dedication to deliberately removing Black Abstraction and telling stories that have been erased.

One could use the principles while interpreting the dominant narratives and stick to the norm, but the rangers at this site help fulfill the NPS priority of making the NPS relevant and welcoming for all (Erickson et al., 2009) by incorporating stories that have been neglected (Jackson, 2018). They face additional obstacles while doing this work because interpretative features on-site still center the enslaver's house and story in name and content (yet omits "plantation") from such references. This adds to the abstraction and erasure of the Black lives who built and maintained the property. If the rangers did not talk about these stories or call the site what it is, a former plantation, visitors would not be exposed to these important yet unstated aspects of the site. Since the site does not relay a cohesive narrative and emotional content throughout, this burdens the rangers themselves to do extensive research, update materials that they can, and work to inform visitors of inaccurate or misleading information.

Moving forward, this contributes to our academic and applied contexts by giving the rangers at a heritage plantation site a voice to relay the work they have done on-site and a call to action for other cultural institutions. Rarely do studies ask those on the front line of NPS sites or other such interpreted spaces what their experience is like, especially regarding difficult topics. For site managers, this provides a lens into the tasks that entry level employees undertake to provide inclusive and representative content. Without the dedication, intentional focus on mitigating erasure, and multidimensional empathy of the rangers, sites like these will continue to tell a white supremacist and power-centric ideology. These rangers exemplify the NPS mission of making these spaces relevant for all and, importantly, promote "justice and racial reckoning with this country and how we [can] move forward together."

CHAPTER 5:

Conclusion

This thesis wove a three-stranded braid about interpretation and representation at Arlington House: perspectives from descendants of the formerly enslaved peoples, current visitors, and interpretive rangers.

To better understand how the shift from solely interpreting the white enslaver's narrative to incorporating stories from the formerly enslaved, we asked descendants how they felt about the new interpretation. Though fuller interpretation has been added, many of the descendants felt it lacks depth and detail in comparison with Lee's exhibits. Specifically, we synthesized insights from the descendants about the lack of a cohesive, comprehensive narrative, the need to challenge the enslaver's narrative, and specific areas for the NPS to reconsider their efforts. This relates to larger conversations about cultural heritage plantation sites and the evolution of interpretation at such sites. By incorporating insights from those who have deep ties to heritage plantations, managers could ensure a more representative and complete narrative of place that incorporates the values of descendants to increase relevancy. This is important in aiming toward greater relevance across audiences and striving for an inclusive interpretation of previously neglected places and peoples.

Utilizing themes from the focus groups to inform a visitor wide survey (i.e. representative narrative, what do visitors feel after viewing the interpretative features, connections to other Arlington sites) we provided information to help understand who visits Arlington, the differences in their expected verses experienced outcomes, and how visitors felt navigating the different interpretative elements. These findings are important for managers to consider when curating materials and narratives at the sites they manage. This shows that visitors have different interests for engagement, whether they have a heritage connection or not. Additionally, despite the study location presenting difficult and contested themes, all visitors engaged with more than they anticipated. This is encouraging, in that visitors are open to learning about difficult history. It further shows what is presented matters. With visitors gaining from their visit, on average, managers need to consider what information they are presenting for visitors to digest and what additional themes they should explore. As shown throughout this study, visitors are interested in learning more through themes that may not be interpreted already. With few places depicting the lives of the enslaved in an inclusive manner, it is even more important for Arlington House and other plantation sites with high visitation to do the content justice. Encouragingly from our study, visitors of all types of heritage connection may respond in appreciative ways.

Finally, we centered interviews from interpretative rangers as a result of connections made during the survey administration, at a National Park Service heritage plantation site to better understand how they relay the stories of those who were enslaved. We introduced the concept of Black

Abstraction in which Black lives are abstracted from their humanity in the role they played on the plantation. Through discussion of interpretation best practices and norms of interpretation at a plantation site, we found that the rangers are using specific interpretative techniques (e.g., relating the subject to the lives of visitors, going beyond providing just information to reveal deeper meaning) to tell formerly erased stories despite the extra burden it places on them. Without the rangers' work, these stories would not be told, given the limited on-site interpretive text about the formerly enslaved peoples. This study provides insight into how site managers can best support their interpretive staff, the importance of the rangers' work to combat Black Abstraction, and how this work ripples throughout society.

Managerial Implications

We challenge those tasked with interpreting plantations and heritage places to intentionally include those closest to the site, those who have been underrepresented, and those who have been marginalized in telling their stories of place. Names and stories hold great power in what is remembered and shine a light on what managers elevate as worthy of interpretation. Continued dedication to interpreting inclusive narratives paired with the momentum of social justice movements could provide a prime opportunity for managers to rethink their approach to interpretation at plantation sites. The next steps of integrated interpretation and name change would further reflect this dedication and commitment to representation.

By integrating descendants throughout the process of creation, implementation, and evaluation of the interpretation, the NPS could move past the segregated, shallow, and limited narratives present. Transitioning toward challenging of the enslaver's narrative categorization is woefully needed and could be powerfully expressed by the major steward of federally protected cultural sites (Eichstedt and Small, 2002).

These findings are important for managers to consider when curating materials and narratives at the sites they manage. Visitors have different interests for engagement, whether they have a heritage connection or not. Additionally, despite the study location presenting difficult and contested themes, on average, visitors engaged with more than they anticipated. This is encouraging, in that visitors are open to learning about difficult history. It further shows what is presented matters. Managers need to consider what information they are presenting for visitors to digest and also what additional themes they should explore, such as places and people that are connected to Arlington but not currently represented. Visitors are interested in learning more through themes that may not be interpreted already. With few places depicting the lives of the enslaved in an inclusive manner, it is even more

important for Arlington House and other plantation sites with high visitation to do the content justice. Encouragingly from our study, visitors of all types of heritage connection may respond in appreciative ways.

This provides a lens into the tasks employees feel compelled to undertake to provide inclusive and representative content. Without the rangers' dedication, intentional focus on voices erased, and empathy, sites like these will continue to tell a white dominant ideology that focuses on those in power. Even if these interpreters connect with only one person a day, they are making significant contributions to the retelling of US history by leaving fewer people out. They are truly exemplifying the NPS mission of making these spaces relevant for all but more importantly, they are promoting "justice and racial reckoning with this country and how we [can] move forward together."

Research and Theoretical Implications

We add to the literature by including the descendants of the formerly enslaved voices into the discussion of how their ancestors should be portrayed on-site. Few studies have integrated descendant perspectives when thinking about how to interpret former plantation sites. We provide an example that even with a small group of descendants, the views they relay are integral to how we should view interpreting these sites.

We advance understanding by adapting four measures of personal heritage from Poria et al. (2003) in our survey design to further strengthen their framework for detailing who visits heritage sites. This adds to heritage plantation literature in that few, if any, studies have adopted these measures to understand who visits plantation sites. Despite having no heritage connection, visitors still experienced more than they expected.

Finally, we provided the rangers at a historic plantation site a voice to relay the work they have done onsite and a call to action for other cultural institutions. Rarely do studies ask those on the front line what their experience is like, especially regarding difficult topics. This is particularly true for National Park Service sites.

Conclusion

Heritage tourism can lead visitors to visit historical sites to better understand history and connect with the past (Abraham et al., 2022; Adamkiewicz, 2016; Jackson, 2011; Small, 2013). Arlington House exemplifies this by being a historical, heritage site, uniquely situated in the US capital. As heritage interpretation evolves, we challenge those tasked with interpreting plantations and heritage places to intentionally include those closest to the site, those who have been underrepresented, and those who have been marginalized in telling their stories. Names and stories hold great power in what is

remembered and can highlight what managers elevate as worthy of interpretation. Representation can impact the collective memory of a nation by telling stories of resistance, injustice, and identity. This could be a prime opportunity for site managers to rethink their approach to interpreting heritage plantation spaces as momentum of social justice movements continues and dedication to inclusion is highlighted. By exemplifying the values the NPS holds, this will help move the site forward in maintaining relevancy, welcoming those of color, and showing that the NPS is ready to make significant changes to reckon with the nation's history. Descendants and the author team laud the NPS rangers doing the interpreting at Arlington House. They are taking concrete steps to represent history in their public talks. The next steps of integrated interpretation and name change would further reflect this dedication and commitment to representation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abraham, V., Pizam, A., & Medeiros, M. (2022). The impact of attitudes, motivational factors, and emotions on the image of a dark tourism site and the desire of the victims' descendants to visit it. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, *17*(3), 264–282. https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2021.1955892

Ablett, P. G., & Dyer, P. K. (2009). Heritage and hermeneutics: towards a broader interpretation of interpretation. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *12*(3), 209–233. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500802316063

Abraham, V., & Poria, Y. (2020). Perceptions of a heritage site and animosity: The case of the West Bank. *Tourism Review*, *75*(5), 765–777. https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-06-2019-0278

Adam, I., & Amuquandoh, F. E. (2019). Ethnic-based motives and experiences at former slave sites. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *36*(4), 497–510. https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2018.1527743

Adamkiewicz, E. (2016). *White Nostalgia: The Absence of Slavery and the Commodification of White Plantation Nostalgia*. https://www.academia.edu/25965386/White_Nostalgia_The_Absence_of_Slavery_and_the_Commodification_of_White_Plantation_Nostalgia

Adichie, C. N. (2009). *The danger of a single story* [Video]. TED Talks. https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en

AHI - Association for Heritage Interpretation - a diverse network. (2005). AHI. https://ahi.org.uk/

Alderman, D. H., Butler, D. L., & Hanna, S. P. (2016). Memory, slavery, and plantation museums: the River Road Project. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, *11*(3), 209–218. https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2015.1100629

Alderman, D. H., & Hanna, S. P. (2015). *Memory, Slavery, and Plantation Museums: The River Road Project*. https://www.academia.edu/17877995/Memory_Slavery_and_Plantation_Museums_The_River_Road_Project

Apaydin, V. (2020). Heritage, memory and social justice: Reclaiming space and identity. In V. Apaydin (Ed.), *Critical Perspectives on Cultural Memory and Heritage* (pp. 84–97). UCL Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv13xpsfp.11

Bacher, K., Interpretive Park Ranger, Rainer National Park, & Baltrus, A. (2008). *NPS–Interpretive Development Program—3/1/07 Professional Standards for Learning and Performance Foundations of Interpretation Curriculum Content Narrative Foundational Competencies for All NPS Interpreters*. https://www.nps.gov/idp/interp/101/foundationscurriculum.pdf

Beck, L., Cable, T. T., & Beck, L. (2011). *The gifts of interpretation: fifteen guiding principles for interpreting nature and culture* (3rd ed). Sagamore Publishing.

Biran, A., Poria, Y., & Reichel, A. (2006). Heritage Site Management: The Link between Visitors' Pre-Visit Perceptions, Motivations and Expectations. *Anatolia*, *17*(2), 279–304. https://doi.org/10.1080/13032917.2006.9687190

Buckley, Brian J. "Racism and the Denial of Personhood." *Quaestiones Disputatae*, vol. 9, no. 2, Mar. 2019, pp. 196–217, https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/16/article/720332.

Bulger, T. D. (2011). Personalising the past: heritage work at the Museum of African American History, Nantucket. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, *17*(2), 136–152. https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2011.541066

Buonincontri, P., Marasco, A., & Ramkissoon, H. (2017). Visitors' Experience, Place Attachment and Sustainable Behaviour at Cultural Heritage Sites: A Conceptual Framework. *Sustainability*, *9*(7), 1112. https://doi.org/10.3390/su9071112

Butler, D. L., (2001). *Whitewashing Plantations: The Commodification of a Slave-Trade Antebellum South*. https://www.academia.edu/7819656/Whitewashing_Plantations_The_Commodification_of_a_Slave_Trade_Antebellum_South

Buzinde, C. N., & Santos, C. A. (2009). interpreting slavery Tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *36*(3), 439–458. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2009.02.003

Carter, P. (2011). Defetishizing the Plantation: African Americans in the Memorialized South. *Historical Geography*. https://www.academia.edu/6643991/Defetishizing_the_Plantation_African_Americans_in_the_Memorialized_South

Carter, P., Butler, D. L., & Alderman, D. H. (2014). The House That Story Built: The Place of Slavery in Plantation Museum Narratives. *The Professional Geographer*, *66*(4), 547. https://www.academia.edu/7472793/House_that_Story_Built_The_Place_of_Slavery_in_Plantation_Museum_Narratives

Chen, C.-F., & Chen, F.-S. (2010). Experience quality, perceived value, satisfaction and behavioral intentions for heritage tourists. *Tourism Management*, *31*(1), 29–35. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2009.02.008

Chi, O. H., & Chi, C. G. (2022). Reminiscing Other People's Memories: Conceptualizing and Measuring Vicarious Nostalgia Evoked by Heritage Tourism. *Journal of Travel Research*, *61*(1), 33–49. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287520969904

Chornesky, M. B. (2015). Confederate Island upon the Union's "Most Hallowed Ground": The Battle to Interpret Arlington House, 1921-1937. *Washington History*, *27*(1), 20–33. http://www.jstor.org/stable/43229914

Chuva, M., Aguiar, L. B., & Fonseca, B. C. (2021). Sensitive memories at a World Heritage Site. In B. T. Knudsen, J. Oldfield, E. Buettner, & E. Zabunyan, *Decolonizing Colonial Heritage* (1st ed., pp. 175–192). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003100102-12

Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2019). Feminist qualitative methods and methodologies in psychology: A review and reflection. *Psychology of Women and Equalities Section Review*, *2*(1), 13–28. https://doi.org/10.53841/bpspowe.2019.2.1.13

Cook, M. R. (2016). Counter-narratives of slavery in the Deep South: the politics of empathy along and beyond River Road. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, *11*(3), 290–308. https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2015.1100624

Dann, G. M. S., & Seaton, A. V. (2001). Slavery, Contested Heritage and Thanatourism. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, *2*(3–4), 1–29. https://doi.org/10.1300/J149v02n03_01

Davenport, M. A., & Anderson, D. H. (2005). Getting From Sense of Place to Place-Based Management: An Interpretive Investigation of Place Meanings and Perceptions of Landscape Change. *Society & Natural Resources*, *18*(7), 625–641. https://doi.org/10.1080/08941920590959613

De Rojas, C., & Camarero, C. (2008). Visitors' experience, mood and satisfaction in a heritage context: Evidence from an interpretation center. *Tourism Management*, *29*(3), 525–537. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2007.06.004

Duda-Seifert, M., & Kajdanek, K. (2022). The experience and satisfaction of visiting a Jewish heritage site in the context of cultural and Jewish heritage tourism. Evidence from Krakow, Poland. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, *20*(3), 419–435. https://doi.org/10.1080/14766825.2021.1956508

Dumbraveanu, Daniela & Craciun, Ana & Tudoricu, Anca. (2016). Principles of interpretation, tourism and heritage interpretation - The experience of Romanian museums. *Human Geographies: Journal of Studies and Research in Human Geography. 10*. 51-63. 10.5719/hgeo.2016.101.4.

Edwards, M. (2021, July 1). *Montpelier to share power with plantation's enslaved descendants*. The Daily Progress. https://dailyprogress.com/news/community/orangenews/montpelier-to-share-power-with-plantation-s-enslaved-descendants/article_9689d524-d9c9-11eb-a5d7-1bf28b62fc04.html

Eichstedt, J. L., & Small, S. (2002). *Representations of slavery: race and ideology in southern plantation museums*. Smithsonian Institution Press.

Eldar, D., & Jansson, D. (2022). Southering and the politics of heritage: the psychogeography of narrating slavery at plantation museums. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, *28*(3), 341–357. https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2021.2009537

Eldridge, M. (2004). Dewey on Race and Social Change. In B. E. LAWSON & D. F. KOCH (Eds.), *Pragmatism and the Problem of Race* (pp. 11–21). Indiana University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt2005x81.5

Emirbayer, Mustafa, and Matthew Desmond. "Race and Reflexivity." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 35, no. 4, 2012, pp. 574–99, https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2011.606910.

Erickson, B., Johnson, C. W., & Kivel, B. D. (2009). Rocky Mountain National Park: History and Culture as Factors in African-American Park Visitation. *Journal of Leisure Research*, *41*(4), 529–545. https://doi.org/10.1080/00222216.2009.11950189

Eyerman, Ron. *Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity*. Cambridge University Press, 2001

Finney, C. (2014). *Black faces, white spaces: reimagining the relationship of African Americans to the great outdoors*. The University of North Carolina Press.

Flewellen, Ayana Omilade. "Locating Marginalized Historical Narratives at Kingsley Plantation." *Historical Archaeology*, vol. 51, no. 1, 2017, pp. 71–87, https://doi.org/10.1007/s41636-017-0005-7.

Haney-López, I. (2006). *White by law: the legal construction of race* (Rev. and updated, 10th anniversary ed). New York University Press.

Hanna, S. P., Alderman, D. H., Potter, A., Carter, P. L., & Bright, C. F. (2022). A more perfect union? The place of Black lives in presidential plantation sites. *Memory Studies*, *15*(5), 1205–1231. https://doi.org/10.1177/17506980221094515

Harnay, M. (2022). Slavery and Plantation Tourism in Louisiana: Deconstructing the Romanticized Narrative of the Plantation Tours. *Mondes Du Tourisme*, *21*, Article 21. https://doi.org/10.4000/tourisme.4595

Hart, L**.** and Hammond, S. (2022, Sept. 6) *"Encouraging a Necessary Name Change at Arlington House, Washington Post, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/09/06/arlington-house-robert-e-lee-name-change/*

Hoelscher, S. (2003). Making Place, Making Race: Performances of Whiteness in the Jim Crow South. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, *93*(3), 657–686. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8306.9303008

Hosany, S., Prayag, G., Deesilatham, S., Cauševic, S., & Odeh, K. (2015). Measuring Tourists' Emotional Experiences: Further Validation of the Destination Emotion Scale. *Journal of Travel Research*, *54*(4), 482–495. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287514522878

Jackson, A. (2011). *Shattering Slave Life Portrayals: Uncovering Subjugated Knowledge in U.S. Plantation Sites in South Carolina and Florida*. https://www.academia.edu/9561316/Shattering_Slave_Life_Portrayals_Uncovering_Subjugated_Knowledge_in_U_S_Plantation_Sites_in_South_Carolina_and_Florida

Jackson, A. T. (2012). *Speaking for the enslaved: heritage interpretation at antebellum plantation sites*. Left Coast Press.

Jackson, A. T. (2019). Remembering Jim Crow, again – critical representations of African American experiences of travel and leisure at U.S. National Park Sites. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, *25*(7), 671–688. https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2018.1544920

Kempiak, J., Hollywood, L., Bolan, P., & McMahon-Beattie, U. (2017). The heritage tourist: An understanding of the visitor experience at heritage attractions. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, *23*(4), 375–392. https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2016.1277776

Knapp, D., & Benton, G. M. (2004). Elements to Successful Interpretation: A Multiple Case Study of Five

National Parks. *Journal of Interpretation Research*, *9*(2), 9–25. https://doi.org/10.1177/109258720400900202

Krishna, Sankaran. "Race, Amnesia, and the Education of International Relations." *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, vol. 26, no. 4, 2001, pp. 401–24, https://www.jstor.org/stable/40645028.

Kudryavtsev, A., Stedman, R. C., & Krasny, M. E. (2012). Sense of place in environmental education. *Environmental Education Research*, *18*(2), 229–250. https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2011.609615

Linn-Tynen, E. (2020). Reclaiming the past as a matter of social justice: African American heritage, representation and identity in the United States. In V. Apaydin (Ed.), *Critical Perspectives on Cultural Memory and Heritage* (pp. 255–268). UCL Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv13xpsfp.21

Low, S. M., Taplin, D., Scheld, S., & Fisher, T. (2002). Recapturing Erased Histories: Ethnicity, Design, and Cultural Representation — a Case Study of Independence National Historical Park. *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, *19*(4), 282–299.

Lowenthal, D. (2011). Why the Past Matters. *Heritage & Society*, *4*(2), 159–172. https://doi.org/10.1179/hso.2011.4.2.159

Macdonald, S. (2006). Mediating heritage: Tour guides at the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds, Nuremberg. *Tourist Studies*, *6*(2), 119–138. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468797606071473

Mahoney, S. S. (2015). 'Faced With Courage': Interpreting and Presenting Sites of African American Heritage to the Public. *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites*, *17*(1), 56–66. https://doi.org/10.1179/1350503315Z.00000000093

Manning, R. E. (2011). *Studies in outdoor recreation: Search and research for satisfaction* (3rd ed). Oregon State University Press.

Marable, M. (2011). *Living black history: How reimagining the African-American past can remake America's racial future* (1st pbk. ed.). Basic Civitas.

McFarland, K. Arlington House. (2020, December 07). In *Encyclopedia Virginia.* https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/arlington-house

Menor-Campos, A., Pérez-Gálvez, J. C., Hidalgo-Fernández, A., & López-Guzmán, T. (2020). Foreign Tourists in World Heritage Sites: A Motivation-Based Segmentation. *Sustainability*, *12*(8), Article 8. https://doi.org/10.3390/su12083263

McKittrick, K. (2013). Plantation Futures. *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*, *17*(3), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1215/07990537-2378892

Modlin, E. A., Alderman, D. H., & Gentry, G. W. (2011). Tour Guides as Creators of Empathy: The Role of Affective Inequality in Marginalizing the Enslaved at Plantation House Museums. *Tourist Studies*, *11*(1), 3. https://www.academia.edu/1033947/Tour_Guides_as_Creators_of_Empathy_The_Role_of_Aff

ective_Inequality_in_Marginalizing_the_Enslaved_at_Plantation_House_Museums

Modlin, E. A., Hanna, S. P., Carter, P. L., Potter, A. E., Bright, C. F., & Alderman, D. H. (2018). Can Plantation Museums Do Full Justice to the Story of the Enslaved? A Discussion of Problems, Possibilities, and the Place of Memory. *GeoHumanities*, *4*(2), 335–359. https://doi.org/10.1080/2373566X.2018.1486723

Moscardo, G. (1996). Mindful visitors. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *23*(2), 376–397. https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(95)00068-2

National Summit on Teaching Slavery. (2018). http://www.montpelier.org/learn/tackling-difficult-history

Nguyen, T. H. H., & Cheung, C. (2014). The classification of heritage tourists: A case of Hue City, Vietnam. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, *9*(1), 35–50. https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2013.818677

Nowacki, M. (2021). Heritage Interpretation and Sustainable Development: A Systematic Literature Review. *Sustainability*, *13*(8), 4383. https://doi.org/10.3390/su13084383

NPS Stewardship Institute. (2015). Urban Agenda: Call to action initiative. National Park Service Stewardship Institute. http://www.nps.gov/subjects/urban/Urban-Agenda.htm. Accessed 27 January 2024.

Patton, M. Q. (2014). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice*. SAGE Publications. https://books.google.com/books?id=ovAkBQAAQBAJ

Perry, E. E., Jewiss, J., Manning, R. E., & Ginger, C. (2024). How to define urban park relevance? Examining and integrating U.S. National Park Service and partner views on the goal of "Relevance to All Americans". *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*. https://doi.org/10.1080/09640568.2024.2303635

Perry, E. E., Krymkowski, D., & Manning, R. E. (2019). Brokers of relevance in present and potential National Park Service urban collaborative networks. *Ecology and Society*, 24(4), 3. https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-11124-240403

Pinckney, H. P., Hicks, A. S., Sène, A. L., & Floyd, M. F. (2024). "We have our own cultural ways of being in nature": New perspectives on African Americans' relationships to U.S. National Parks. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/00222216.2023.2295869

Poria, Y., Biran, A., & Reichel, A. (2009). Visitors' Preferences for Interpretation at Heritage Sites. *Journal of Travel Research*, *48*(1), 92–105. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287508328657

Poria, Y., Butler, R., & Airey, D. (2003). The core of heritage tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *30*(1), 238–254. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(02)00064-6

Poria, Y., Reichel, A., & Biran, A. (2006a). Heritage site management. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *33*(1), 162–178. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2005.08.001

Poria, Y., Reichel, A., & Biran, A. (2006b). Heritage Site Perceptions and Motivations to Visit. *Journal of Travel Research*, *44*(3), 318–326. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287505279004

Pratt, G. (2010). Collaboration as feminist strategy. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *17*(1), 43–48. https://doi.org/10.1080/09663690903522214

Prayag, G., Alrawadieh, Z., & Alrawadieh, Z. (2021). Motivation, emotion and world heritage status in discerning the heritage tourists: A segmentation perspective. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, *40*, 100906. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2021.100906

Prayag, G., & Del Chiappa, G. (2021). Nostalgic feelings: Motivation, positive and negative emotions, and authenticity at heritage sites. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2021.1874000

Quigley, P. (2023). Revisiting Slavery, the Civil War, and Reconciliation at Arlington National Cemetery and Arlington House. *Parks Stewardship Forum*, *39*(3). https://doi.org/10.5070/P539362021

Rabiee, F. (2004). Focus-group interview and data analysis. *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*, *63*(4), 655–660. https://doi.org/10.1079/PNS2004399

Reisinger, Y., & Steiner, C. (2006). Reconceptualising Interpretation: The Role of Tour Guides in Authentic Tourism. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *9*(6), 481–498. https://doi.org/10.2167/cit280.0

Remoaldo, P. C., Ribeiro, J. C., Vareiro, L., & Santos, J. F. (2014). Tourists' perceptions of world heritage destinations: The case of Guimarães (Portugal). *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, *14*(4), 206–218. https://doi.org/10.1177/1467358414541457

Ross, Thomas. (1990). The rhetorical tapestry of race: white innocence and black abstraction. William and Mary Law Review, 32(1), 1-40.

Saldana, J. M. (2015). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications: Thousand Oaks, California.

Savoy, L. E. (2015). *Trace: memory, history, race, and the American landscape.* Berkeley, California, Counterpoint Press.

Sene-Harper, A., Mowatt, R., & Floyd, M. (2022). A People's Future of Leisure Studies: Political Cultural Black Outdoors Experiences. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*. https://doi.org/10.18666/JPRA-2021-11006

Silberman, N. A. (2012). Heritage interpretation and human rights: Documenting diversity, expressing identity, or establishing universal principles? *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, *18*(3), 245–256. https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2012.643910

Small, S. (2013). Still Back of the Big House: Slave Cabins and Slavery in Southern Heritage Tourism. *Tourism Geographies*, *15*(3), 405. https://www.academia.edu/11757618/Still_Back_of_the_Big_House_Slave_Cabins_and_Slavery_in_Southern_Heritage_Tourism

Sprague, J. (2016). *Feminist methodologies for critical researchers: bridging differences* (Second edition). Rowman & Littlefield.

Stedman, R. C. (2002). Toward a Social Psychology of Place: Predicting Behavior from Place-Based Cognitions, Attitude, and Identity. *Environment and Behavior*, *34*(5), 561–581. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916502034005001

Steriopoulos, E., Khoo, C., Wong, H. Y., Hall, J., & Steel, M. (2023). Heritage tourism brand experiences: The influence of emotions and emotional engagement. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 13567667231152930. https://doi.org/10.1177/13567667231152930

Sullivan, P. (2020, September 16). Arlington's county symbol, an image of Confederate Gen. Lee's mansion, may be history. *Washingtonpost.com*, NA. https://link-gale-com.proxy2.cl.msu.edu/apps/doc/A635648985/GIC?u=msu_main&sid=bookmark-GIC&xid=67cd675d

Taheri, B., Jafari, A., & O'Gorman, K. D. (2014). Keeping your audience: Presenting a visitor engagement scale. *Tourism Management, 42*, 321–329.

Tilden, F 1967*, Interpreting Our Heritage*, University of North Carolina Press.

Timoney, S. (2020). 'We should all know where we came from.' Identity and personal experiences at heritage sites. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, *15*(4), 424–437. https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2019.1667999

Thompson, E. L. (2022). *Smashing statues: the rise and fall of America's public monuments* (First edition). W. W. Norton & Company.

Trent, S. (2020, August 24) At Arlington House, a push to remove Robert E. Lee's name from the home he once occupied. *Washingtonpost.com*. https://link-gale-com.proxy2.cl.msu.edu/apps/doc/A633420351/GIC?u=msu_main&sid=bookmark-GIC&xid=3c0b0bd8

Ujang, N., & Zakariya, K. (2015). The Notion of Place, Place Meaning and Identity in Urban Regeneration. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *170*, 709–717. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.01.073

U.S. Department of the Interior. *(n.d.). Arlington House, the Robert E. Lee Memorial (U.S. National Park Service).* National Parks Service. https://www.nps.gov/arho/index.htm

U.S. Department of the Interior. (2024, January 10). *Charles Pinckney National Historic Site (U.S. National Park Service)*. National Parks Service. https://www.nps.gov/chpi/index.htm

U.S. Department of the Interior. (n.d.). *Stats report viewer*. National Parks Service. https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/SSRSReports/Park%20Specific%20Reports/Annual%20Park%20Recreation%20Visitation%20(1904%20-%20Last%20Calendar%20Year)?Park=ARHO

U.S. Department of the Interior. (2022, August 16). *Theme studies*. National Parks Service. https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalhistoriclandmarks/theme-studies.htm

Vaske, J. (2008). Survey research and analysis: Applications in parks, recreation, and human dimensions. State College, PA: Venture.

Waitt, G. (2000). Consuming heritage. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *27*(4), 835–862. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(99)00115-2

Wang, L.-i. (2006). *Discrimination by default: How racism becomes routine.* New York University Press.

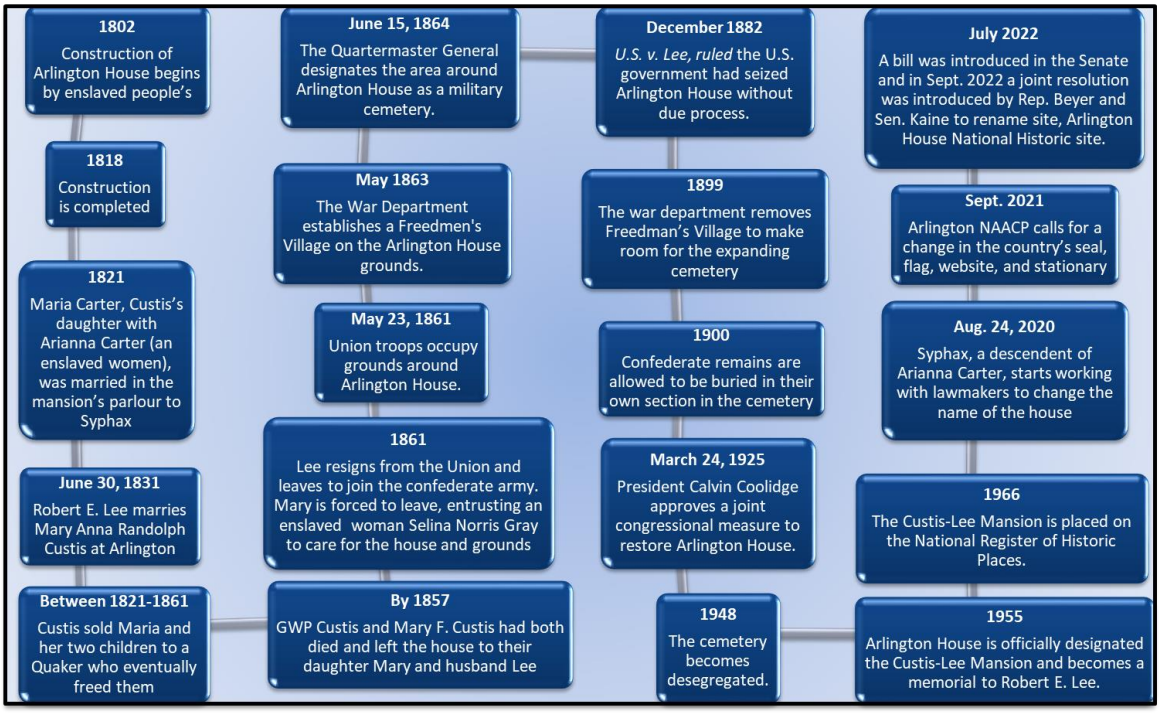
Whelan, C., Kelly, M. *Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial, Reckons With Its History Of Slavery* [Radio broadcast transcript]. (2021, June 10). All Things Considered, NA. https://link-gale-com.proxy2.cl.msu.edu/apps/doc/A665249373/LitRC?u=msu_main&sid=googleScholar&xid=171ad56d

Wijesuriya, G., Thompson, J., & Young, C. (2013). *Managing world heritage sites*. UNESCO.

Xiao, X., Lee, K. J., & Larson, L. R. (2022). Who visits U.S. national parks (and who doesn't)? A national study of perceived constraints and vacation preferences across diverse populations. *Journal of Leisure Research*, *53*(3), 404–425. https://doi.org/10.1080/00222216.2021.1899776

APPENDIX A: ARLINGTON HOUSE FULL TIMELINE

Figure 1: Arlington House Timeline. Compiled by Hunter Lee, written timeline by Stephen Hammond



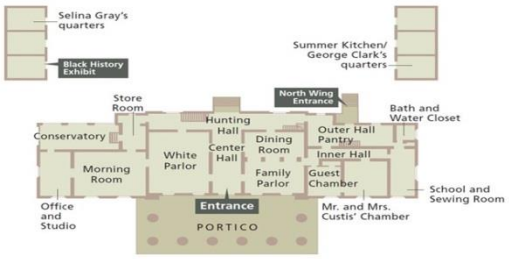
1802 – Clearing and leveling of land and construction of ARHO begins
1803 – Maria Carter Custis is born (dies in 1886) to Arianna Carter and GWP Custis
1808 – Mary Anna Randolph Custis is born (Dies in 1987) to Mary Fitzhugh Custis and GWP Custis
1812 – Construction interrupted by the War of 1812.
1826 – Maria Syphax and two children are sold to Edward Stabler (Pharmacists & Quaker) in Alexandria. Shortly thereafter GWP Custis gives Marial a 17-acres parcel of land near the SW corner of the plantation. Charles remains enslaved. The couple have a total of 10 children.
1857 – The estate is left to Mary Randolph Lee, but R.E. Lee is named executor. Enslaved community to be freed within 5 years. Three members of the enslaved community run away believing they were free at Custis' death. They are caught, returned and punished severely at the direction of Lee.
1861 – U.S. Army occupies Arlington plantation and proceeds to build multiple encampments, including Fort Myer, intended to defend the Capital.
1861 – Lee petitions the court to extend the period of enslavement to permit completion of last will requirements. Request is denied.
1862 – Custis enslaved community, including Lee's brother-in-law Charles Syphax, is emancipated by Lee on Dec 29, 1862
1863 – Arlington property is seized for Lee failure to pay taxes in person. Syphax property is seized also with no proof of ownership.
1866 – As the result of an appeal by Wm Syphax on behalf of his mother Congress passes and Andrew Johnson signs 'A Bill for the Relief of Maria Syphax' to return the property to Maria.
1869 – Charles Syphax dies and is buried on the 17-acre family parcel.
1880 ish – John Syphax is enlisted by the occupants of the Freedman's Villages lead a committee that will represent concerns of the villagers to the Secretary of War. Syphax also is involved in negotiations for the closure of the village.

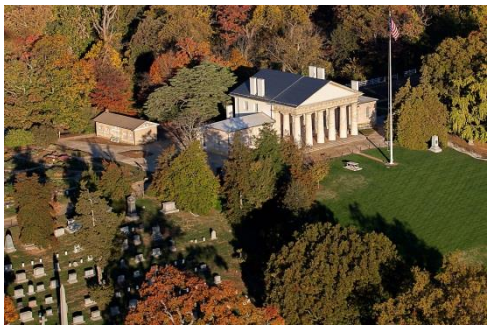
O'Leary, Frank, March 2010, The Electoral History of That Part of Alexandria County Now Known

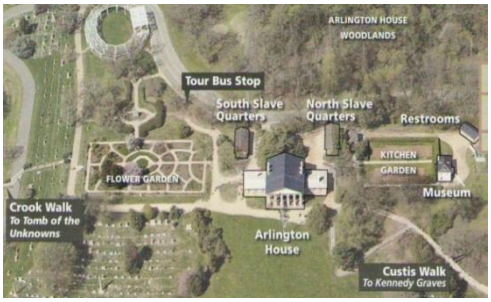
as Arlington County 1870 – 1920,
John B. Syphax (b.1838 – d.1916) is the only person in the history of Alexandria County to win election to four different Constitutional Offices.
Board of Supervisors, May 25, 1872 (Syphax resigned in Dec 1872 to assume Clerk of the Court.)
Clerk of the Court, Nov 5, 1872 (Syphax admitted that his knowledge of the functions of the Clerk's office was nil [his predecessor having failed to instruct him] and he agreed with the Circuit Court that he was "incompetent" to serve. He resigned from the position.)
VA House of Delegates, Nov 4, 1873 (Syphax served a two-year term)
County Treasurer, Nov 2 1875 (Syphax was elected, but was disqualified for failure to produce a bond of $300)
VA House of Delegates, Nov 6, 1877 (Syphax in records is thought to be John B. Election was lost)
VA House of Representatives, Nov 7, 1882 (Syphax in records is thought to be John B. Election was lost)

1886 – Maria Syphax dies and is buried with husband in the cemetery on the 17-acre plot. Son Wm Syphax is named executor. Wm dies in 1890 having not fulfilled the wished of his other to formally distribute the 17-acres among surviving siblings.
1933 – NPS acquired property, name the Custis Lee Mansion
1944 – Land, including the 17-acres once owned Maria is condemned and the Federal Government expands for Fort Myer. Buried Syphax family member are exhumed to reburied in Suitland, MD.
1972 – House redesignated Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial
2013? – David Rubenstein donates $12.35m to NPS to refurbish Arlington House.
2018-21 – House is closed. Family circle of ARHO descendant family members is established in April 2021.
2020 – Rubenstein writes and OpEd calling for a name change. Syphax descendants take up the effort or Congressman Don Beyer (D VA 8th). Bill introduced in 116th, 117th and 118th Congress.

Figure 2: Left to right, Arlington Map of facilities, Arlington House, Arlington grounds







APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUP CONSENT SHEET WITH QUESTIONS ASKED

STAND ALONE CONSENT FORM

Research Participant Information and Consent Form

1. EXPLANATION OF THE RESEARCH and WHAT YOU WILL DO:
This research is designed to inform management decisions about potential changes in visitor services and visitor use management along the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP), a National Park Service unit comprised of distinct sites and features in the D.C. area. This project will provide information to understand visitors and guide future visitation, including identifying appropriate activities, facilities, and services pertaining to visitor use and enhanced opportunities for enjoyment of park resources. Ultimately, outcomes from this proposed work can be used to inform potential management options for changes at the sites and engagement of current and future visitors. \
The National Park Service has recently added new interpretive services at Arlington House to reflect the broader diversity of narratives of place and enhance the visitors' experience. Specifically, stories of the enslaved Africans were added to interpretive services to better capture the complexities and accuracy of their experiences. These focus groups interviews will explore the effectiveness of these new interpretive programs. The information gathered will inform decision about potential changes to the interpretive programs and the overall messaging of the park unit. We will be conducting multiple focus groups interviews to hear about visitor experiences at Arlington House, the Robert E Lee Memorial and to better understand why people choose to visit this park.
These focus group interviews are conducted with people who have familial connections to those historically at the property. There will be two virtual focus group opportunities. These virtual sessions will have a maximum of 10 participants. Focus group sessions will last approximately 90 minutes and will be audio recorded for note taking purposes. These sessions will include interactive discussions. These sessions will help to provide valuable data to inform the research process, while also inform specific action items that could be accomplished within employee and department means. You must be 18 years of older to participate.

2. YOUR RIGHTS TO PARTICIPATE, SAY NO, OR WITHDRAW:
Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You have the right to say no. You may change your mind at any time and withdraw. You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time.

3. COSTS AND COMPENSATION FOR BEING IN THE STUDY
By participating in this study, participants will be volunteering up to two hours of their personal time and internet connection for all virtual focus groups. For participating in any focus group, you will receive a $75 visa gift card as a token of our appreciation for your time.

4. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS:
If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury, please contact:
Dr. Elizabeth Perry, Assistant Professor, Michigan State University
480 Wilson Road, East Lansing, MI, 48824; eeperry@msu.edu; (541) 224-7639
If you have concerns or questions about the logistics of the focus groups, such as modifying your reservation, please contact:
Dr, Aby Sane-Harper, Assistant Professor, Clemson University
abyh@clemson.edu

5. DOCUMENTATION OF INFORMED CONSENT.
By remaining in this session, you indicate your voluntary agreement to participate in this focus group.

Purpose:
This research will be conducting multiple focus group interviews to hear about visitor experiences at Arlington House, the Robert E Lee Memorial and to better understand why people choose to visit this park. The National Park Service has recently added new interpretive services at Arlington House to reflect the broader diversity of narratives of place and enhance the visitors' experience. Specifically, stories of the enslaved Africans were added to interpretive services to better capture the complexities and accuracy of their experiences. These focus groups interviews will explore the effectiveness of these new interpretive programs. The information gathered will inform decision about potential changes to the interpretive programs and the overall messaging of the park unit.
Your participation is voluntary. You can skip any question you do not wish to answer. You can withdraw or leave the focus group at anytime. You must be 18 or older to participate. If you have any questions about the research, please contact Elizabeth Perry at eeperry@msu.edu. If you have any questions about registration, please contact Aby Sane-Harper at abyh@clemson.edu. You indicate that you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study by registering and attending the focus group.
Requirements: In order to qualify and reserve your group discussion spot you must be able to fulfill the following requirements:

1. Able to use/access the Zoom audio, video, and chat functions
2. Join the discussion from a laptop, desktop, or tablet (Not a phone)
3. Have your video/webcam turned on for the entire meeting
4. You must consent to being recorded for the discussion (For later note-taking – completely confidential and not shared beyond research team)

Guiding Questions for Group Conversation:

1. Do you feel the new interpretation more accurately captures the complexity of the history and the diversity at Arlington House? Why or why not? Are there things that are missing or not represented accurately?
2. With the interpretation, do you feel a greater sense of welcoming to more diverse audiences? If so, does it foster a safer and more inclusive environment?
3. What kind of message does the Park convey with these new exhibits?

Arlington House Survey

Start of Block: Project Description and Consent

consent
Project Description and Consent
The purpose of this survey is to understand experiences of visitors to Arlington House, the Robert E. Lee Memorial. Questions in this survey address topics such as your decision to visit the site, your engagement with interpretive facilities and services while here, and your takeaways from today's visit.

You are being asked to participate in a research survey, which will take about 8-10 minutes. Your participation is voluntary. You can skip any question you do not wish to answer. You can withdraw or exit the survey at any time. You must be 18 or older to participate. If you have any questions about the study or the consent process, please contact Dr. Elizabeth Perry, at eeperry@msu.edu.

You indicate that you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study by clicking the "next" arrow below to access the survey.

End of Block: Project Description and Consent

Start of Block: Before Your Visit

plans Where did Arlington House fit into your travel plans today? (select one)

- Arlington House is my primary destination (1)
- Arlington House is one of several destinations for me today (2)
- Arlington House was not a planned destination / was a spontaneous decision while at Arlington Cemetery (3)

hear Where did you hear about Arlington House? (select all that apply)

- Trolly tour (1)
- A friend or family member told me about it (2)
- A Park Ranger or Official told me about it (3)
- While at another D.C. site (4)
- National Park Service Arlington House website (5)
- National Park Service George Washington Memorial Parkway website (6)
- D.C. attractions website (7)
- Did not know in advance (8)

Page Break

siteknow What were your expectations of visiting a site named Arlington House, the Robert E. Lee Memorial? (select all that apply)

“I expected to find information about…”

- The connections between the house and the Arlington Cemetery (2)
- The connections between the house/property and Washington, D.C. (3)
- The history of the property over time (4)
- It's connection to other National Park Service sites (15)
- Its history of the grounds being home to a Freedman’s Village (13)
- Its history as a plantation (14)
- Robert E. Lee’s connection to Arlington House (5)
- The descendants of the Lee family today (6)
- The formerly enslaved peoples that lived and worked on the site, such as Selina Gray, Jim Parkes, the Syphax and Burke families (8)
- The descendants of the formerly enslaved peoples today (9)
- The indigenous / native peoples that once inhabited the land (10)
- Robert E. Lee’s role in the Civil War (7)
- Other (please list) (11)

_____

- None of these (12)

Page Break

expectations People have different reasons for visiting this site. Before you arrived to Arlington House today, to what extent, if at all, did you expect each of the following for your visit?

"I expected to…"

	Did not expect (1)	Expected somewhat (2)	Expected substantially (3)
Visit a famous tourist attraction (1)	○	○	○
Have a day’s outing (2)	○	○	○
Spend time socializing with my group (3)	○	○	○
Overlook Washington D.C. (4)	○	○	○
Contribute to my education (6)	○	○	○
Learn about the site’s historic background (7)	○	○	○
Pass the story of Arlington House and its grounds to my friends and family (9)	○	○	○
Relate the importance for my descendants to visit this site (10)	○	○	○
Feel emotionally involved (11)	○	○	○

Feel a sense of belonging to the site (12)	○	○	○
Connect with a part of my own heritage (13)	○	○	○
Experience a place that is an important part of my personal identity (16)	○	○	○

End of Block: Before Your Visit

Start of Block: Your Experiences Today

facilities Please indicate the site facilities that you or your personal group used/visited today. (select all that apply)

- Grounds / gardens (1)
- Arlington House interior (2)
- South Slave Quarters (3)
- North Slave Quarters (6)
- Museum of Robert E. Lee (9)
- Gift Shop and Bookstore (10)
- None of the these (11)
- Other (please list) (12)

_____

infosources Please indicate the information sources that you or your personal group used during today's visit. (select all that apply; if none, press "next")

- Trolly tour narration (1)
- Ranger talks (2)
- National Park Service website (3)
- Placards and text panels on the grounds / gardens (4)
- Arlington House collection (e.g., historic furniture, portraits) (5)
- Text panels in Arlington House (6)
- South Slave Quarters Museum Exhibit panels (7)
- South Slave Quarters "Smokehouse/Short Film" (8)
- Selina Gray's Quarters information panel (9)
- North Slave Quarters Museum interactive panels and artifacts (10)
- Miss Judy's Quarters interactive artifacts and text panel (11)
- George Clark's Room and Summer Kitchen text panels (12)
- Provided input via sticky notes in response for opportunities to comment (13)
- Information panels in the Robert E. Lee Museum (14)
- Video on Robert E. Lee in the Museum (15)

Skip To: End of Block If Condition: Selected Count Is Equal to 0. Skip To: End of Block.

Carry Forward Selected Choices from "Please indicate the information sources that you or your personal group used during today's visit. (select all that apply; if none, press "next")"

X→

importancehistory How would you rate the **<u>importance / significance</u>** of each of the services used to facilitate your **<u>understanding of the history</u>** of Arlington House?

	Not important (1)	Slightly important (2)	Moderately important (3)	Very important (4)
Trolly tour narration (x1)	○	○	○	○
Ranger talks (x2)	○	○	○	○
National Park Service website (x3)	○	○	○	○
Placards and text panels on the grounds / gardens (x4)	○	○	○	○
Arlington House collection (e.g., historic furniture, portraits) (x5)	○	○	○	○
Text panels in Arlington House (x6)	○	○	○	○
South Slave Quarters Museum Exhibit panels (x7)	○	○	○	○
South Slave Quarters "Smokehouse/Short Film" (x8)	○	○	○	○
Selina Gray's Quarters information panel (x9)	○	○	○	○
North Slave Quarters Museum interactive panels and artifacts (x10)	○	○	○	○
Miss Judy's Quarters interactive artifacts and text panel (x11)	○	○	○	○
George Clark's Room and Summer Kitchen text panels (x12)	○	○	○	○
Provided input via sticky notes in response for	○	○	○	○

opportunities to comment (x13)				
Information panels in the Robert E. Lee Museum (x14)	○	○	○	○
Video on Robert E. Lee in the Museum (x15)	○	○	○	○

Page Break

Carry Forward Selected Choices from "Please indicate the information sources that you or your personal group used during today's visit. (select all that apply; if none, press "next")"

qualityhistory How would you rate the **quality** of each of the services used to facilitate your **understanding of the history** of Arlington House?

	Poor (1)	Acceptable (2)	Good (3)	Exceptional (4)
Trolly tour narration (x1)	○	○	○	○
Ranger talks (x2)	○	○	○	○
National Park Service website (x3)	○	○	○	○
Placards and text panels on the grounds / gardens (x4)	○	○	○	○
Arlington House collection (e.g., historic furniture, portraits) (x5)	○	○	○	○
Text panels in Arlington House (x6)	○	○	○	○
South Slave Quarters Museum Exhibit panels (x7)	○	○	○	○
South Slave Quarters "Smokehouse/Short Film" (x8)	○	○	○	○
Selina Gray's Quarters information panel (x9)	○	○	○	○
North Slave Quarters Museum	○	○	○	○

interactive panels and artifacts (x10)					
Miss Judy's Quarters interactive artifacts and text panel (x11)	○	○	○	○	
George Clark's Room and Summer Kitchen text panels (x12)	○	○	○	○	
Provided input via sticky notes in response for opportunities to comment (x13)	○	○	○	○	
Information panels in the Robert E. Lee Museum (x14)	○	○	○	○	
Video on Robert E. Lee in the Museum (x15)	○	○	○	○	

End of Block: Your Experiences Today

Start of Block: Your Reflections

personalheritage National Park Service sites attempt to interpret themes of national significance and encourage personal connections to these themes.

To what extent do you disagree or agree with each of the following statements?

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither disagree nor agree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I consider this site to be part of my own personal heritage (1)	○	○	○	○	○
This site is representative of the narratives and history at the site (2)	○	○	○	○	○
This site has symbolic meaning for	○	○	○	○	○

me (3)					
This site represents something that relates to my identity (4)	○	○	○	○	○
The site generates a sense of belonging for me (6)	○	○	○	○	○

Page Break

experienced To what extent, if at all, do you feel you experienced each of the following, based on your visit to Arlington House today?

"I experienced…"

	Did not experience (1)	Experienced somewhat (2)	Experienced substantially (3)
A visit to a famous tourist attraction (1)	○	○	○
A day's outing (2)	○	○	○
Time spent socializing with my group (3)	○	○	○
An overlook of Washington D.C. (4)	○	○	○
Contributions to my education (6)	○	○	○
Learnings about the site's historic background (7)	○	○	○
An opportunity to pass the story of Arlington House to my friends and family (9)	○	○	○
An opportunity to relate the importance for my descendants to visit this site (10)	○	○	○
Feelings of emotional involvement (11)	○	○	○
A sense of belonging to the site (12)	○	○	○
Connections with a part of my own heritage	○	○	○

(13) A place that is an important part of my personal identity (16)	○	○	○

Page Break

challenge Thinking about today's visit, please use the sliders below to indicate to what extent you experienced the following emotions.

challenge1

Dismayed Heartened Not Applicable

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

()

challenge2

Frustrated Relieved Not Applicable

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

()

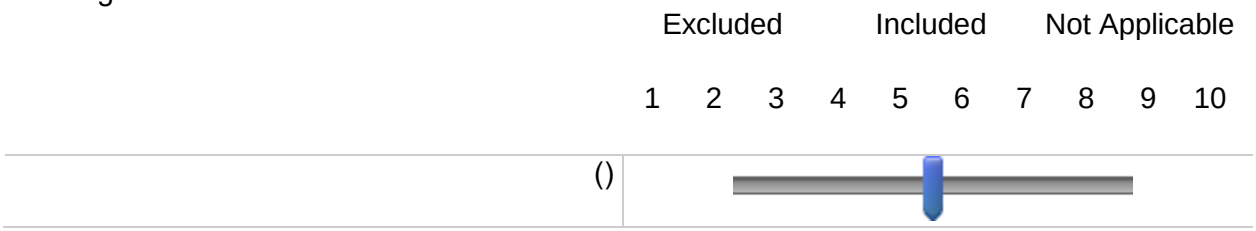
challenge3

Uncomfortable Comfortable Not Applicable

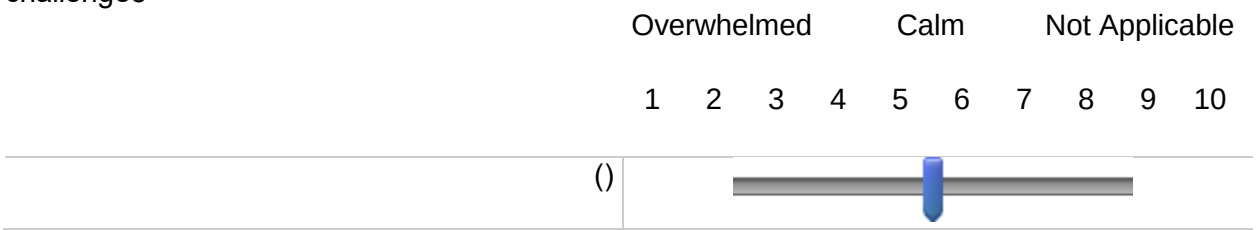
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

()

challenge4



challenge5



engage This site interprets narratives about experiences at Arlington House, on the property, and their connections to life today.

For each of the following, which response best matches your extent of engagement during your visit today? (select one for each)

	Did not engage with AND am not interested in engaging with (1)	Did not engage with BUT am interested in engaging with (2)	Engaged with BUT was not interested in engaging with (3)	Engaged with AND was interested in engaging with (4)
Information about the main house residents (e.g., Mary Custis Lee, Robert E. Lee, G.W.P. Custis) (1)	○	○	○	○
Information about the lives of the formerly enslaved peoples (e.g., Selina Gray, Jim Parkes, the Syphax family) (2)	○	○	○	○
Information about the physical house and its history (3)	○	○	○	○
Information about	○	○	○	○

the history of the land (4)				
Interpretation on a diverse and inclusive history of Arlington House (5)	○	○	○	○
Interpretation of other sites connected to Arlington House (e.g., Freedmans Village, Syphax Corner) (6)	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Your Reflections

Start of Block: About You

frequency Over your lifetime, how many visits have you made to Arlington House, including today? (select one)

- ○ Once / this is my first visit (1)
- ○ 2 - 3 times (2)
- ○ 4 - 5 times (3)
- ○ 6 or more times (4)

staylength How long did you stay or do you plan to stay at Arlington House today? (select one)

- ○ 30 minutes or less (under 0.5 hours) (1)
- ○ 31 - 60 minutes (0.5 - 1 hour) (2)
- ○ 61 - 90 minutes (1 - 1.5 hours) (3)
- ○ 91 - 120 minutes (1.5 - 2 hours) (4)
- ○ 120 minutes or more (over 2 hours) (5)

group Which of the following best describes your personal group at Arlington House today? (select one)

- ○ Solo / by myself (1)
- ○ With friends (2)
- ○ With family (3)
- ○ With friends and family (4)
- ○ With a group tour / educational program (5)
- ○ Other (please list) (6)

Display This Question:
If Which of the following best describes your personal group at Arlington House today? (select one) != Solo / by myself

groupsize Including yourself, how many people are in your personal group today?

_____

year In which year were you born? (YYYY)

_____

gender Which of the following do you identify with? (select one)

- ○ Female (1)
- ○ Male (2)
- ○ Non-binary / third gender (3)
- ○ Prefer to self-describe (4)

_____

- ○ Prefer not to say (5)

race Which of the following best represent your race(s) / ethnicities? (select all that apply)

- American Indian, Native American, or Alaskan Native (1)
- Asian (2)
- Black or African American (3)
- Hispanic or Latinx (4)
- Middle Eastern or North African (5)
- Multiracial or Biracial (6)
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (7)
- White or Caucasian (8)
- Other or Prefer to self-identify (9)

_____

- Prefer not to say (10)

live Do you currently live in the United States?

- ○ No (1)
- ○ Yes (2)

Display This Question:
If Do you currently live in the United States? = No

country In which country do you live?

_____

Display This Question:
If Do you currently live in the United States? = Yes

*

zip What is your 5-digit zip code?

_____

share Lastly, what, if anything, would you like to share about your experiences at Arlington House and the interpretation of the site?

_____

End of Block: About You

APPENDIX D: SURVEY FREE RESPONSE

(N/A'S OMITTED)

I am pleased to know that information is being updated to reflect the lived experiences of the enslaved individuals who lived and servedon this property	I was glad to see the additional QR codes for information about the descendants of the enslaved. I was still frustrated, however, by the generally rosy portrait of a man who stands for such odious beliefs and contributed to (in fact, led) such a horrifying chapter in our nation's history.	It was emotional. Grateful on one handm while deeply saddened on another. Slavery has had a negatively systemic effect on my family.
I saw the signs about reinterpretation of the exhibits and would be eager to return once that is done. It's 2023 and feels like it is time for this site to be redone.	I wrote earlier I was encouraged to see the changes of info about the enslaved here at Arlington House. There was a NPS ranger speaking in the hallway about the realities of the enslaved - we need to hear more of that. And I was encouraged to see the request by some of the displays asking if the public would like to see more info about the enslaved and their descendants.	More reconciliation between the government and the enslaved people. More story telling of how Lee was wrong and how we share history while acknowledging our wrongs. Good start to share info from the enslaved perspective though!
The park ranger was very negative about George Washington and had nothing positive to say about him. He solely focused on the enslaved perspective to the neglect of the other history of the site.	The presentation was fantastic, and the presentation by the Ranger was incredibly thought provoking. I only felt as if there was a slightly bias or agenda toward not tarnishing REL's name. The presentation seemed to tiptoe around the fact that he betrayed his nation and contributed to killing Americans. The presentation seemed to focus on the idea that he pushed reconciliation after the war, but all mentions of such lacked detail and conviction. I am not asking for one agenda to be replaced with another.	While I gained a lot of knowledge while visiting today, I did find the site to be too generous to Robert Lee's legacy. At multiple points, the site emphasized his postwar contribution to rebuilding the nation. However, the site did not emphasize his role in leading the Confederacy as a traitor to the Union. However, I greatly enjoyed learning about Washington's artifacts and I loved the Ranger's talk.
I am a Parks descendant out of King William VA, and there may be a Mt Vernon and Arlington connection	Very beautiful and well preserved historical site. Amazing history and beautiful views of the cemetery and Washington DC	They Arlington Cementery could promote more the location anda story of James Park's grave. I learned about it thanks to the ranger's presentation.
It was lovely and well done and I was overwhelmed by being among so many deceased as usual in a graveyard	It tries to tell the complexities of the Arlington residents and the times in which they lived — good and bad — and that is a good thing	I found very little info or pjctures on the website so I was not interested in visiting the house. Im glad we came anyway
I feel sad bc of the conditions of the slaves versus the family	This was an amazing experience and I can't wait to learn more about the history of it all upon my return home.	I enjoyed the excitement and happy to see how our conversation and understanding of slavery had evolved even in my lifetime
Great visit that all should experience to get perspective.	Ranger John's talk was exceptional. His has been the best presentation if our entire DC trip.	I'm glad we took the trolley your, or we wouldn't have known about Arlington House.
More work needs to be done to convey context and the	REMOVE ROBERT E. LEE'S NAME FROM THE HOUSE. AS A COUNTRY WE CANNOT MEMORIALIZE PEOPLE TGAT COMMITED	It's some pretty well considering the complexity of the topic and how prescient it is today

horrors of slavery	TREASON	
Enlightening	It was awesome!	Thank you
Provided a good piece for the puzzle that is the US history.	Changing my f the guard was very beautiful and moving. Ranger talk at Arlington House was beyond excellent	Slow down when on trolly so you can see what they are describimg
Very educational and surprising to see how much history is tied to this place!	ItEnjoyed ranger talk. Appreciate inclusion of information regarding the life of enslaved people that resided here.	So enjoyed and feel fulfilled by this experience
I dont have anything to share	I really enoyed the Park Ranger talk.	Its a great place to learn about history
Great learning experience	It was extremely informative and I wish I could have stayed longer	The experience was incredible and very fascinating!
Yes i like the history and reconstruction of these events	Our first tram car narrator, talked like she was in a race	Very informative and eye-opener felt sorry for slaves
I have never seen a bill of sale for a person before. It was overbooked.	If the placards have outdated information, why not annotate what that is?	A handheld radio with headphones for those senior who likes to walk and listen to history
Great view over Washington DC	Overwheming education from Park Ranger. Beautiful ground. Incredibly respectful.	Very interesting. Very glad I had the opportunity to visit.
Love the information aboutthe slave quarters	I like that it has been renovated since my last visit in 2005	It was unexpected and very educational.
was a very informative trip!	Very informative historical information	AMERICA HAS COME A LONG WAY
brought history to life	Advertise it more through National Park fans	Amazing presentation of history
Its cool history	Looking forward to seeing the rest of it	Very well done
Beautiful site!	Love it!	Well organized and thorough
Very informative	it was nice	Well worth the visit
Ranger talk sucked	Very interesting, will return	Pro Enjoyed my visit!
Likedut	Awesome	Interesting history
Great site!	Amazing place	Thank you for asking
Great	Great speakers	Interesting
Great site	Impressive	Open the upstairs.

APPENDIX E: 15 INTERPRETATION PRINCIPLES WITH CORRESPONDING CODES

Beck, L., Cable, T. T., & Beck, L. (2011). *The gifts of interpretation: fifteen guiding principles for interpreting nature and culture* (3rd ed). Sagamore Publishing.

1. To spark an interest, interpreters must relate the subject to the lives of visitors. **Relatable, personal connection**
2. The purpose of interpretation goes beyond providing information to reveal deeper meaning and truth. **Deeper meaning**
3. The interpretive presentation – as a work of art – should be designed as a story that informs, entertains, and enlightens. **Story, informs**
4. The purpose of the interpretive story is to inspire and to provoke people to broaden their horizons. **Inspiring, provoke to broaden horizons**
5. Interpretation should present a complete theme or thesis and address the whole person. **Complete theme, whole person**
6. Interpretation for children, teenagers, and seniors – when these comprise uniform groups – should follow fundamentally different approaches. **Group awareness**
7. Every place has a history. Interpreters can bring the past alive to make the present more enjoyable and the future more meaningful. **Connection from past to present**
8. High technology can reveal the world in exciting new ways. However, incorporating this technology into the interpretive program must be done with foresight and care. **Technology**
9. Interpreters must concern themselves with the quantity and quality (selection and accuracy) of information presented. Focused, well-researched interpretation will be more powerful than a longer discourse. **Focused, well researched**
10. Before applying the arts in interpretation, the interpreter must be familiar with basic communication techniques. Quality interpretation depends on the interpreter's knowledge and skills, which should be developed continually. **Communication techniques**
11. Interpretive writing should address what readers would like to know, with the authority of wisdom and the humility and care that comes with it. **Writing with humility and care**
12. The overall interpretive program must be capable of attracting support – financial, volunteer, political, administrative – whatever support is needed for the program to flourish. **Attracting support**
13. Interpretation should instill in people the ability, and the desire to sense the beauty in their surroundings – to provide spiritual uplift and to encourage resource preservation. **Inspiration, encourage preservation**
14. Interpreters can promote optimal experiences through intentional and thoughtful program and facility design. **Thoughtful and intentional programming**
15. Passion is the essential ingredient for powerful and effective interpretation – passion for the resource and for those people who come to be inspired by the same. **Passion for the resource**

APPENDIX F: RANGER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

To NPS Rangers and staff,
After a successful week of data collection at Arlington House, we first wanted to extend our heartfelt thank you to the rangers and volunteers who made us feel supported and welcomed throughout our time at ARHO. I appreciate each person who took the time to talk with me during data collection; your stories and roles are extremely important to the NPS and ARHO.

Purpose

We are currently interested in adding another layer to our data collection by interviewing park rangers who are public facing and interact directly with the public and interpretation at ARHO. After conversations with the rangers during data collection, we felt a strong need to include and offer a platform to share their experiences about the work they do.
The interviews should last between 45-60 minutes, depending on the length of conversation, with rangers being asked 5-6 questions. The intent is to better understand their experiences on the ground. The interviews would be conducted by Hunter Lee, the MSU grad student that conducted the survey, and responses would be anonymous in any write up that would follow. NPS park staff, managers, etc., will not have access to the conversation transcripts or be briefed on what individuals conveyed during these interviews. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or concerns.
Thanks so much,
-Hunter Lee (she/her)

Consent Sheet and Interview Questions

You are being asked to participate in a research interview, which will take between 45-60 minutes. Your participation is voluntary. You can skip any question you do not wish to answer. You can withdraw or exit the interview at any time. You must be 18 or older to participate. If you have any questions about the study or the consent process, please contact Dr. Elizabeth Perry, at eeperry@msu.edu.
Objective: To gain a better understanding of the ARHO Ranger's experience interpreting the history of ARHO and its dynamic relationship with their position and the NPS.

1. Please share briefly with me about your interests and experiences that have led you to be an interpretive ranger at ARHO.

2. I recognize that we bring our individual identities into our work, and that shapes how we interact with the subject matter and those we convey that subject matter to.
    Thinking about your own identity and experiences, in what ways do you feel it shapes how you interact with the subject matter at ARHO? In the ways you convey it in ranger talks and visitor interactions?

3. How, if at all, has your work at ARHO influenced the way you approach interpreting other stories and narratives? What is the importance of this work to you? Why is it necessary or not?

4. What message(s) is the NPS trying to convey with the new interpretation? What message do you want visitors to walk away with after their visit to ARHO (emphasis on the one-time visitor)?

5. What do you feel the next steps are in improving/advancing the interpretation and representation of the stories told at ARHO? What do you feel should be a priority for the NPS moving forward?

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

EXEMPT DETERMINATION
Revised Common Rule

September 22, 2023

To: Elizabeth Eleanor Perry

Re: **MSU Study ID:** STUDY00009724
Principal Investigator: Elizabeth Eleanor Perry
Category: Exempt 2(i)
Exempt Determination Date: 9/22/2023
Limited IRB Review: Not Required.

Title: Research to Inform Visitor Use Management and Planning at George Washington Memorial Parkway

This study has been determined to be exempt under 45 CFR 46.104(d) 2(i).

Principal Investigator (PI) Responsibilities: The PI assumes the responsibilities for the protection of human subjects in this study as outlined in Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) Manual Section 8-1, Exemptions.

Continuing Review: Exempt studies do not need to be renewed.

Modifications: In general, investigators are not required to submit changes to the Michigan State University (MSU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) once a research study is designated as exempt as long as those changes do not affect the exempt category or criteria for exempt determination (changing from exempt status to expedited or full review, changing exempt category) or that may substantially change the focus of the research study such as a change in hypothesis or study design. See HRPP Manual Section 8-1, Exemptions, for examples. If the study is modified to add additional sites for the research, please note that you may not begin the research at those sites until you receive the appropriate approvals/permissions from the sites.

Please contact the HRPP office if you have any questions about whether a change must be submitted for IRB review and approval.

New Funding: If new external funding is obtained for an active study that had been determined exempt, a new initial IRB submission will be required, with limited exceptions. If you are unsure if a new initial IRB submission is required, contact the HRPP office. IRB review of the new submission must be completed before new funds can be spent on human research activities, as the new funding source may have additional or different requirements.

Office of Regulatory Affairs
Human Research Protection Program

4000 Collins Road
Suite 136
Lansing, MI 48910

517-355-2180
Fax: 517-432-4503
Email: irb@msu.edu
www.hrpp.msu.edu

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

EXEMPT DETERMINATION
Revised Common Rule

July 13, 2023

To: Elizabeth Eleanor Perry

Re: **MSU Study ID:** STUDY00008528
Principal Investigator: Elizabeth Eleanor Perry
Category: Exempt 2ii
Exempt Determination Date: 7/13/2023
Limited IRB Review: Not Required.

Title: Research to Inform Visitor Use Management and Planning at George Washington Memorial Parkway

This study has been determined to be exempt under 45 CFR 46.104(d) 2ii.

Funding Title - Research to Inform Visitor Use Management and Planning at George Washington Memorial Parkway
Funding Agency - The Conservation Fund
Funding Status - Pending

Principal Investigator (PI) Responsibilities: The PI assumes the responsibilities for the protection of human subjects in this study as outlined in Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) Manual Section 8-1, Exemptions.

Continuing Review: Exempt studies do not need to be renewed.

Modifications: In general, investigators are not required to submit changes to the Michigan State University (MSU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) once a research study is designated as exempt as long as those changes do not affect the exempt category or criteria for exempt determination (changing from exempt status to expedited or full review, changing exempt category) or that may substantially change the focus of the research study such as a change in hypothesis or study design. See HRPP Manual Section 8-1, Exemptions, for examples. If the study is modified to add additional sites for the research, please note that you may not begin the research at those sites until you receive the appropriate approvals/permissions from the sites.

Please contact the HRPP office if you have any questions about whether a change must be submitted for IRB review and approval.

New Funding: If new external funding is obtained for an active study that had been determined exempt, a new initial IRB submission will be required, with limited exceptions. If you are unsure if a new initial IRB submission is required, contact the

Office of Regulatory Affairs
Human Research Protection Program

4000 Collins Road
Suite 136
Lansing, MI 48910

517-355-2180
Fax: 517-432-4503
Email: irb@msu.edu
www.hrpp.msu.edu

APPENDIX H: PERSONAL STATEMENT

I am writing this reflexivity narrative for the reader of this thesis to understand my positionality, privilege, and purpose for this work. First, it must be brought to the forefront that I am a white woman conducting research surrounding topics of inclusion and belonging with people of color and the descendants of those who were enslaved. Through my position as a white woman, I inherently come from a place of privilege without being able to truly understand the ways in which people of color experience life in the US and abroad. Because of this, I paid the most attention to reflexivity and my own biases throughout this research.

As stated above, I am a white woman. I come from a low income family in the rural Midwest of the U.S. I was raised as a Christian but did not retain that faith into adulthood. I identify as Queer, neither dressing in a strictly 'feminine' nor 'masculine' way. I wear my hair cut short and often get mis-gendered and misidentified as a male. While my upbringing was of lower class, I've had the privilege of travelling extensively through my own means. I have lived abroad where the color of my skin was different than all those around me. I have a passion for DEIJ topics due to my travels and upbringing. Being targeted and ostracized for my sexual orientation, I feel a call to stand beside those who are marginalized and treated differently than a cis, white, heteronormative male. I am well-versed in code switching as I move through different groups and communities. Through the intersectionality of how I identify, I place the heaviest emphasis on honesty, empathy, understanding, and equity in all things.

It also must be stated that the words I wrote should not be taken as the views of the descendants, NPS, or interpreters but rather my interpretation. Through my positionality, this write up has an inherent bias of a female, white researcher who does not know how those of color, differently abled, and of different gender identity navigate the world.

In all aspects of this research, I hoped to lift the voices of those in the focus groups, interviews, and those who have done work similar to this in the past. My advisor (a white woman) and I came up with the research questions based on my own interests. Rather than traditional user data, I had hoped to delve deeper into how people feel about ARHO. This was a rare, unique opportunity to ask questions that may not have been asked before at this site but I admit I did not consult a person of color when deciding these questions. A bias and shortcoming of my work could be me thinking I am being inclusive due to my own marginalization but in reality, failing to see my weak spots. This study is important to the descendants of ARHO and we must be aware of the gravity of being able to conduct this work. The power dynamic of a white researcher conducting research on and with people of color is significant. I hoped to report data that would be acceptable to them and I open myself up to critique and feedback for the works shortcomings. I wrote these pieces not for my own gain but to be used in whatever way is most helpful for the descendants, NPS, and visitor of ARHO.