



Living History

Finding myself in the reflection of my elders

Carol Brooks

Cultural Sustainability Capstone Reflection Paper

Advisor, Lisa Rathje

July 8, 2016

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Introduction

For me, this is a very personal journey.

My childhood memories are as tattered and faded as the photograph on the cover of this document...one of only two that I know of that captures an image of me as a baby, or with my father.

I would often say, half-jokingly, half not, that I thought I had to have been adopted since there was no proof of me even existing until I was a toddler... sort of like a Cabbage Patch doll, complete with a tuft of hair on top of my head and a certificate of authenticity that obligated the owner to take care of me.

There are some vague images that for no particular reason are indelibly etched in my mind, as if they are moments forever frozen in time:

I have a vivid image of one singularly magical Christmas; perhaps in reality its many of them blended together in my mind. I don't think I could have been older than 2, maybe three at the most. I have distinctive memories of the wonderfully unique toys that my father brought home for me and my brothers; the oddest little trinkets from around the world or perhaps he made them with his own creative hands. I remember music boxes with castles, hand carved cuckoo clocks and a Dr. Doolittle pop-up book. I especially remember a large shiny red apple on a string...a pull toy that had smiling green worms that alternated poking out their heads as I toddled along dragging it behind me.

I remember bright, glittering tinsel, warm glowing lights, magical miniature snow covered villages with trees and ice skaters and carolers. When I grew older, I learned that my father was a talented carpenter, but he's probably best remembered for the wondrous displays he created at Hutzler's Department Store in downtown Baltimore. I'm sure many families kicked off their holiday festivities by visiting the beautiful Christmas scenes in the windows and taking their children to see Santa. I do remember Daddy bringing special treats home from Lexington Market – tangerines and strange looking nuts; pastel colored coconut bon-bons and ribbon candy in bright red stockings. Yes, I remember that so very well.

I remember the smell of my mother's cookies baking in the kitchen; wafer thin butter cookies that melted on your tongue and bumpy chocolate chip cookies with black walnuts. Those aromas mingled with the strange scent of the incense cone that made smoke come out of the pipe on a small wooden carved figurine. He was a jolly fat man enjoying an opportunity to recline comfortably in his chair.

He brings to my mind vague images of being a toddler and sitting on my father's lap...he would call me "Punkin", and I'm sure I must have locked my arms around his neck and laid my head close to his cheek, because I still remember the fragrance of Old Spice mixed with the sweet scent of his Cherry Blend tobacco that still wafted from his extinguished pipe in the ashtray on the side table.

And I remember my sister...she was and still is a beacon of light for me whenever things seem dark and scary. Fifteen years my elder, I often think of the fact that of all of the chores she could have been assigned, she chose taking care of her 3 youngest siblings for my Mom, and I gladly accepted the role of the baby and the only other girl in the family. I think so fondly of the adventures she took me on – like my first trip to the Enoch Pratt Free Library downtown, which seemed like a huge castle filled with sunshine to me at the time. She would carefully find books to read to me like Big Sister, Little Sister and "La Maison que Jacques a Batie" (The House that Jack built...she was teaching me French as she learned it). We laugh today about the lullabies that she sung to me that still make me cry.

She was very much a mother figure to me in my youth and young adulthood, and I had placed her high upon a pedestal far beyond my reach. As I grew older, she told me she was so glad when I finally took her down from there, so that we could be sisters and now the closest of friends. She was my window to the world back then, and now she has become one of the few glimpses I have into my childhood, telling me stories of her life, my mother and father and the memories she has of our family from her youth.

Perhaps what's most troubling to me is not the limited memories that I do have, but the things that I don't remember. I don't remember having grandparents on either side of the family. I don't remember ever hearing my mother and father engaged in conversation, even though they were in the same household until I was probably 10 or 11 years old. What I remember is the silence.

I don't have a memory of ever seeing my parents together...not in the home, not in a social setting. I remember the silence.

I don't really have any distinctive memories of my mother until I am in my pre-teenage years. In her defense, I know she was there and that she did what she could to care for me; she simply wasn't necessarily a nurturer by nature. Still, it makes me sad that I don't remember ever talking with her about the things that mothers and daughters talk about, or words of wisdom she might have shared with me hoping to teach me about life. I remember silence.

I lost both of my parents to cancer nearly 30 years ago; all of us far too young to say goodbye – they were only in their 60's, and I in my 20's. My father passed away in 1988, and my mother only 2 years later. Shortly after she was gone, my family discovered a box of photos that she had tucked away in the top of her closet...beautiful photos and painful memoirs. Photos of my father – a handsome man with a boyish face and his seemingly carefree battalion mates in their military uniforms who served together on the shores of Normandy on D-Day. My mother in her youth, with a smile so bright you might think she was a movie star. A letter with words of prayer and consolation from Father Robert Hiltz, a Catholic priest who had sent them Sacred Heart of Jesus badges to ease their pain in the loss of a baby. From what I've pieced together, I think I might have been the youngest of 9 children if my 3 other older brothers had lived beyond their infancy or term of pregnancy. I so wish I could have offered my parents some token of comfort, and perhaps mourned their loss as well.

There were so many memories tucked away in the box in the closet. Memories that neither my father nor my mother ever shared with their children; at least not with me. It was at that point I began to grapple with a sense of feeling totally disconnected...from my family, from my history, from having a place in the world.

Seeking Answers in the Silence

As I start on this path to better understand the reasons behind my parents' intentional silence, I began to question whether this was unique to my family's experience, or if it was somehow characteristic of many African-Americans living during this era in a segregated homeland. The WWII generation has been called "The Greatest Generation"¹, but the veterans who served are also characterized as being silent with their memoirs. The clouded memories of my father have become my hazy window into this world, giving only glimpses of what life might have been like for him, my mother and so many others during this era in history.

Were their memories so painful that they needed to be hidden and never to be spoken of? Obviously the photos were important to them or they wouldn't have kept them. Were they markers of times of happiness and pride for them, or regret for love lost and mistakes made? Did they feel as disconnected from family, history and the world as I do now? Did they think they were somehow protecting us from repeating their past by not sharing it with us? Or perhaps I simply grew up in an era in which children were seen and not heard, and memories were reserved for the grown folks. Every new revelation produces another piece of the puzzle for me, and I've decided that I'll just have to create my own

¹ The Greatest Generation" is a term coined by journalist Tom Brokaw to describe the generation who grew up in the United States during the deprivation of the Great Depression, and then went on to fight in World War II, as well as those whose productivity within the war's home front made a decisive material contribution to the war effort. (Wikipedia)

memories through research, inquiry and personal interpretation. This will become my story, my foundation, my truth.

Today, I find myself sadly regretting the questions I was never able to ask them, the appreciation I'd never shown them and the honor and admiration I was never able to bestow upon them for the things they'd accomplished in their lifetimes and just for being who they were. How I wish I could have heard the stories of their lives from their lips – their dreams, their triumphs, their disappointments, as well as those of their parents. I can't help but feel the pain that the generations before me have endured, while at the same time being completely awestruck by the beautifully resilient spirit of my forefathers and mothers to whom I owe a debt of gratitude for my very existence. I often wonder, had their stories been shared and their voices valued, would the outcomes of their lives and their children's somehow have been different? At one time I had more than 20 aunts and uncles between both of my parents' siblings. Today, they are all gone, and their voices too are lost to me forever.

For me, this is a very personal journey. In one of our theoretical discussions on identity during my Master's Degree studies, a colleague noted that in each of the two photos that I shared of my father and me, he is holding me close, lovingly looking over my shoulder; he reassured me that he still is. I cherish that thought as I seek to find myself in the reflection of my elders.

[Project Background and Context:](#)

Although my original intent for this research project was purely motivated by a personal interest in my family history, I was also seeking to understand the root causes for my feelings of disconnection from a sense of kinship, heritage or belonging. While I attribute much of the weight of this emotional baggage to my unique family experiences, my frustration was compounded by the difficulty I had finding any information about them; their stories were unrepresented in family chronicles that I am aware of, and misrepresented or undocumented as being a part of conventional historic accounts with broader social application in publicly available reference materials.

My preliminary research efforts have revealed fascinating details of great historic significance about both my father and mother that cried out to have their stories told. For purposes of my coursework and to support the premise of my capstone and future documentation efforts, I focused my studies on how I could best incorporate ethnographic methodologies to research, chronicle and better understand the stories of the elders of the African-American community – starting with my own father's life path in the context of being part of "The Greatest Generation" as a young Black man from the

rural South. While his experiences living during this economically depressed, institutionally segregated, racially divided era of American history may have been the same as so many others in the Black community, I am curious to know more about the reasons behind the life choices he made, his personal struggles with identity and belonging, and ultimately the emotional, psychological and social impact these internal conflicts had on him, his family and future generations. In order to have a balanced frame of reference for my research, it was important that I also understand the stories of others who were a part of the same communities and cultural groups as my father, who identified themselves with similar values and symbols of belonging.

Research, Rediscovery & Restoration

*"His story is history. My story, a mystery."
Sun Ra*

Reclaiming my Father's Legacy as an African-American Man

The most notable historic detail that serves as the crux of my initial documentation project is his service in the military during World War II. The photographs and documents hidden by my mother provided evidence that my father, along with several other young men from his home town in Roanoke, VA, served this country in their youth during WWII. They were members of the 320th Anti-Aircraft Barrage Balloon Battalion, presumably one of the few, if not the only, all Black military units in the D-Day landings on Normandy, Omaha and Utah beachheads assigned to American forces.

My research began with my father's military papers that had been saved along with the photos. They were equally as fragile as the photographs – perhaps even more so; they were yellow and faded with age, some beginning to tear at the creases from being folded in the box for so long. The lettering is fading in places, and some of the documents appear to be copies of the originals, but still serve as proof for me. We have a copy of what I have gleaned to be a selective service classification card and his honorable discharge and separation of service papers which indicate he was a Crew Chief supervising a team of four men, and that during the course of the war he was decorated with six ribbons and medals for meritorious service.

As I studied these photographs and artifacts, they generated personal questions about my father, his experience, and the story behind his story that needed to be told:

- My father thought it was important enough to document his experience in the military through photographs. What caused him not to share these memoirs with his children?
- What happened to my father's ribbons and other memorabilia? Are there more photos somewhere?
- My mother kept the photographs of my father secretly stored for more than 40 years, well after their divorce and subsequently his death in 1988. We didn't find the photos until after her death in 1990. What caused her not to share them?
- When my father passed away, he was buried in a veterans' cemetery and his obituary notes his service in Normandy in the 320th. Who wrote it, and why had I never asked what this meant before?
- Many of the other men in my father's photographs were all from the same town in Virginia. What was their relationship prior to enlisting in the military? Did they remain a band of brothers when they returned home from the war?
- What was the 320th Anti-Aircraft Balloon Battalion's mission and how did it support the war effort? How many were in the whole unit? Were there others who were killed in the line of duty? What else had they done during their tour of duty?
- Is there statistical data or documentation of their missions? Are there historic artifacts somewhere? If so, where are they and why is it so hard to retrieve them? If not, why not?
- What were their experiences as Black men upon coming home to the United States after proudly serving their country? Did they receive the same heroes' welcome and veterans' benefits as their White counterparts?
- How did this compare to their experiences abroad?
- How did their time in the military impact them physically, mentally, emotionally? Did it impact their relationships? Their families?
- What were these men's stories after the war? When and why did they migrate further north?

Widening the Lens – Seeking to understand the complexities and commonalities of the African-American experience amongst the elders of my father's generation

After forming the questions that would frame my personal ancestral research, I subsequently began to wonder about my father's story in the context of the shared experiences of a community, a cultural group or a race of people during this era of history. This brought to mind questions regarding the broader social implications of the denial of heritage, human and civil rights to people of color through

practices of colonialism and institutionalized racism in this country; more specifically for my project, I want to learn of the experiences of members of the African–American or “Black” communities central to my family’s stories in Roanoke, VA and the Greater Baltimore Metropolitan area where I was raised:

- As these men fought for a “double victory”² by advancing the cause of integration both in the military and at home, what were the psychological, sociological and economic impacts on Black servicemen of having their military service go unrecognized (and in many ways refuted) in the U.S.? What are the residual effects on the generations that followed? The Black community? Society?
- What were their experiences specific to practices of “redlining”, “Jim Crow” segregation, institutional racism and violence against people of color between the 1940’s and the subsequent civil rights movements in the 1960’s?
- How did these policies and practices evolve throughout the generations after slavery and why were they allowed to become systemic? What policies and practices still exist today? Are we better off or worse?
- What are the origins of being categorized as “Black” or “African–American”? Does accepting these monikers benefit the cultural group or does it “overwrite” one’s true ethnicity and individuality? Does it establish an infrastructure for legalizing discriminatory practices?
- Was my father treated differently among Whites because he had fair skin, light eyes and wavy hair? How about amongst other African–Americans? Was this somehow an advantage?
- What are the arguments for and against integration and assimilation? Is it beneficial or detrimental to preserving one’s own unique culture and heritage?
- How have institutionalized discriminatory practices in the U.S. against African–Americans impacted the stability and strength of their families, communities, cultural values and sense of inclusion throughout the generations? What will the impact be on future generations?

I am painfully aware that many of these questions may forever go unanswered for me, particularly as related to the experiences of my father and other African–American soldiers who fought with him in World War II, as they are no longer with us to share their memoirs. I am fortunate to have access to various collections of oral histories and other memoirs that have been preserved through efforts such as the “Veteran’s History Project”³ website repository curated by the Library of Congress and Tom Brokaw’s collection

² Takaki, Ronald. 2000. *Double Victory: A Multi-Cultural History of America in World War II*. Little, Brown and Company. July 2001 Paperback. Back Bay Books. New York, NY

³ “Veteran’s History Project.” Last modified March 11, 2016. <http://www.loc.gov/vets/>

documented in *The Greatest Generation*⁴, *The Greatest Generation Speaks: Letters and Reflections*⁵ and *An Album of Memories: Personal Histories from the Greatest Generation*⁶. In his books, *Double Victory: A Multicultural History of America in World War II* and *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America*⁷, author Ronald Takaki portrays a vivid picture of not only the African–American experience during and after the war, but also tells the stories of people of diverse ethnicities who have served this country valiantly during the conflicts abroad but returned only to fight the same battles against racial persecution and oppression on the home front⁸.

My desire to understand more about the 320th was only a passing curiosity for me until by chance, or more likely divine providence, I stumbled upon an obscure news story online on MSNBC.com, June 5, 2009, about President Obama’s travels to France to join in the commemoration of the 65th anniversary of the D–Day Invasions on the shores of Normandy⁹. However, during that year’s ceremony they would pay tribute to the 320th Barrage Balloon Battalion for their service, presenting the French Legion of Honor to William Dabney, an African–American veteran from Roanoke, VA presumed to be the last living member of the unit. I found it sad and profoundly ironic that these men were recognized and memorialized by the French government for their sacrifice and contribution as allies to the war efforts in Europe, but not here in the United States.

A photo including a young Mr. Dabney is in my father’s collection, as well as pictures of others whose names were mentioned in the numerous articles and interviews that followed subsequently. There were many other accounts of African–American veterans finally being honored or even acknowledged decades after their military service was over; there were equally as many reactions from those honored, both positive and negative, as to their experiences during and after the war and being denied their just due at home. Although I had lost my father many years ago, I thought perhaps it was not too late to learn of the remaining members of the battalion, or meet their children who were also the keepers of their fathers’ stories.

This turn of events was the next catalyst provoking my desire to expand upon my knowledge and technical skills pertaining to research and documentation, but now with

⁴ Brokaw, Tom. 2005. *The Greatest Generation*. Random House Trade Paperbacks, a division of Random House, Inc. New York, NY

⁵ Brokaw, Tom. 1999. *The Greatest Generation Speaks*. A Delta Book. Dell Publishing, a division of Random House, Inc. New York, NY

⁶ Brokaw, Tom. 2001. *An Album of Memories: Personal Histories from the Greatest Generation*. Random House Trade Paperbacks, a division of Random House, Inc. New York, NY and simultaneously Random House of Canada Limited, Toronto.

⁷ Takaki, Ronald. 2000. *Double Victory: A Multi-Cultural History of America in World War II*. Little, Brown and Company. July 2001 Paperback. Back Bay Books. New York, NY

⁸ Takaki, Ronald. 1993. First revised edition December 2008. *A Different Mirror: A History of Multi-Cultural America*. Back Bay Books/Little, Brown and Company/Hatchette Book Group. June 1994 Paperback. Back Bay Books. New York, NY

⁹ The Associated Press. June 5, 2009. “France Honors D-Day vet from all-black unit.” Article. MSNBC.com <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/31128174/>

an intensified sense of urgency because of the age of the population I would engage. I knew that realistically this was perhaps far too overly ambitious a goal for me to pursue while facing multiple life transitions; I was a mature student in my early 50's returning to graduate school in hopes of making a career change while attempting to maintain some semblance of balance between my personal, academic and full-time professional lives. It was important for me to pace myself carefully and to take a practical approach to prioritizing which aspects of this multifaceted project I could tangibly expect to address as a student versus what I would explore as an ongoing passion for myself personally and professionally.

Personal and Family Goals:

As I was not certain whether the two remaining members of the 320th who were interviewed shortly after the 65th Anniversary D-Day commemorative event are still alive today, I chose to make the pursuit of learning more about them and my father's military history part of a more long-term personal family project. It is still my hope to connect my family with theirs to collectively share our fathers' stories and retrace the history of our families' lives together in our hometown of Roanoke, VA, and to request my father's honors posthumously from the White House Commission on Remembrance.

Fortunately, a great deal more research and documentation of the 320th has been taken on by other historians and descendants of the members of the battalion since the 65th anniversary, as well as the stories of other African Americans' service during this country's wartime effort. I have access to significant resources to support my research and build upon my own work. In conducting my ethnographic research efforts to answer the questions I was considering, I found that the resources teetered between two extremes. In some regards, information seemed to be few and far between, particularly when you don't know what you don't know. Historic documentation of these men's service and stories were fragmented, misrepresented or often not included in recognized military or American history references.

Conversely, there have been numerous attempts (with varying intentions, methodologies and outcomes) to capture and document the stories of Black military servicemen from this era; however, these projects ranged from small family-tree genealogy projects on Ancestry.com, to oral history projects commissioned by the US Library of Congress, to published books and documentary series authored by world renowned historians and media personalities. It has been frustrating to comb through all of the fragmented bits and pieces, and determine methodologies that were used to produce them, the context in which they have relevance, and the validity and veracity of the source.

Professional Aspirations:

As the remaining elders of the African–American community who are of my father’s generation are in their eighties and nineties, it is tragic to realize we will soon lose all of their voices for posterity. I would like to explore opportunities that allow me to engage with or initiate ethnographic research and documentation projects that capture their stories through oral histories, video interviews and storytelling activities. Additionally, I am extremely interested in learning more about cultural organizations and institutions that are focused on historic preservation and interpretation through interactive community engagement efforts, particularly those that foster connections between the elder and younger generations.

Capstone Work:

The concepts I have learned in the Cultural Sustainability program have given me the impetus to continue my research on unknown facets of my unique cultural identities, while further exploring my theories on the detrimental impact of decades of structural racism and denied heritage on our shared cultural identity and communal values as African–Americans. I am also interested in understanding the correlation between the struggles, victories and mass mobilization strategies of civil and social justice movements originated by the former generations and those of today’s more youthful activists. One might assume that the progress and accomplishments achieved by our ancestors would have created a firm foundation to continue the unified struggle against the same social issues that persist today. Yet, there seems to be a prominent gap in unity and communication between the generations within the African–American community, compounded by a deplorable lack of mutual understanding and respect for one another. I would hope that my efforts will ultimately contribute to what seems to be a burgeoning resurgence of grass roots movements locally and around the country envisioned to rewrite our histories, restore our communities and recreate our historic legacies.

Clarifying the Premises of my Capstone Project

At this phase of determining the scope, depth and objectives for this specific research project, I made a conscious decision to shift the focus and intended subjects of my cultural documentation and interview activities over the course of 14–months. It was important for me to establish for myself a sense of continuity and context between the original premise of my research studies about my father (the “why” behind the work) and the practical application in the field of my recently learned knowledge and technical skills.

As I found it was not feasible to research, travel, engage with and interview family members and descendants of other members of the 320th Battalion within the two semesters allotted for my final capstone, I chose instead to better hone my ethnographic capabilities by documenting stories of elders in the local African–American community,

while having the benefit of shadowing individuals with extensive experience and demonstrated successes in historic preservation, research, storytelling and community based participatory research initiatives. My objective was to use what I learned in the field to establish a framework for my future ambitions in ethnographic and cultural sustainability initiatives.

Identity, Representation and Belonging

What Defines the African-American Community?

From my perspective, the feelings of disconnection that are part of the theoretical groundwork for my research could plausibly be considered the inherited result of my parents' own social disengagement. Perhaps these traits were also characteristic of many Black Americans from generations past; the sad consequences of years spent coping with harsh living conditions, protecting themselves, their families, their very existence in a country where they weren't accepted or recognized as having even the most basic human rights. Mere survival, for many, often meant conforming to disparities imposed within fabricated social constructs that defined their "place" of inferiority, denying their worth as anything more than an economic commodity – cheap labor and indentured servants with no social significance.

In order for any culture or privileged social group to reinforce or justify the tenets of an inequitable caste system, you will find the intentional denigration and dehumanization of those who have been subjugated. The strength and rootedness of family bonds that identified a person with their lineage and ethnic origins are dismantled, creating weakness in cultural and communal attachments. Consequently, the generations that would follow, subconsciously or perhaps willingly, become heir to the same world view, accepting these racial and socio-economic differences as status quo for their lives.

The result is what I perceive to be a disturbing malaise and a subliminal social detachment from one another, particularly within impoverished Black communities today which reinforces a sense of hopelessness regarding established societal hierarchies. We exist in what I call parallel dimensions of the same universe. We are governed by the same Constitution, but the amendments are interpreted differently for people of color. As citizens, we have symbolically pledged allegiance to a flag and to the Republic for which it stands that implies there will be liberty and justice for all; is there, or is there only liberty for a privileged few? And, for African-Americans (particularly boys and men of color) the nation's justice system is simply a repackaged manifestation of the slave trade, serving as an economic driver for the municipalities or states where these penal institutions are prevalent.

As a point of clarification, I use the terms “African–American”, Afro–American” and “Black” interchangeably throughout this paper only as a means of providing context to the reader as to the specific group of people I am referencing in my research and documentation efforts, which spans multiple generations. However, I am cognizant of and sensitive to the importance of the many meanings behind the monikers. They (along with many other more derogatory epithets) have been used and redefined in this country for decades to somehow categorize a specific enclave of citizens or residents of the United States as having total or partial ancestry from any of the ethnic groups of Africa, and later were more inclusive of peoples from the Pan–African diaspora. However, in stark contrast, they have also been used by some to delineate exclusively those individuals who are directly descended from enslaved Africans.

These terms have also been used as a means of institutionalizing historic practices of structural racism¹⁰ and segregation by categorizing one’s identity through a man–made social construct of “race”¹¹, for example, in the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* which upheld the constitutionality of a state’s rights to provide “equal but separate accommodations for the white and colored races”. And yet, by identifying ourselves with these terms individually and collectively as an ethnic group, we are provided with our only limited means of tracking subjective data to expose and address legal and civil issues of diversity, equity, cultural competency, racial disparity and social injustice.

Latter generations created and used these terms to reclaim a sense of cultural unity and ethnic pride by consciously choosing to identify themselves with both their Pan–African heritage and American citizenship as a means of establishing (or re–establishing) status from a place of economic power and cultural enlightenment. The alternative was to try to assimilate into a predetermined social order within an inequitable infrastructure dominated by White Eurocentric cultural norms, in hopes of using legal means to someday achieve equality. This was an equally valid and easily understandable decision on the part of many other African–Americans who lived throughout each era of this country’s struggle for human and civil rights, and can rightfully lay claim to having been a part of a movement that changed the course of history.

Therein lies one of the greatest challenges of my research and the work I hope to do in the future – how does one even attempt to reconnect a community or group of people whose cultural identities have evolved so significantly and whose unifying values are fragmented at best? In my passionate fervor to bring people together to celebrate what we potentially share in common, aren’t I equally as guilty of forcing those I assume to be

¹⁰ Better, Shirley. 2008. *Institutional Racism: A Primer on Theory and Strategies for Social Change*- 2nd Edition. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. Lanham, MD

¹¹ Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change. 2004. “Structural Racism and Community Building.” Keith Lawrence, Stacey Sutton, Anne Kubisch, Gretchen Susi and Karen Fulbright-Anderson, authors. Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute.

a part of this “group” to recognize only one singular aspect of their identity, to satisfy my own personal longing for a sense of kinship? Is there merit in my narrowly focused approach to unifying a small group of people who may share a common story, or does this methodology miss an important opportunity to better understand the beautiful diversity and messy complexity of the African–American narratives past and present yet to be told as part of a larger story?

The Search for Self: Finding Kinship in my Local Community

With each individual, family, community and social group having such incredibly disparate experiences bringing us to who and where we are as a people today, perhaps in reality the only true common bond we have as a culture collectively is our shared co–existence in a society that still systemically denies civil and human rights to citizens because of one single element of our ethnic identities. For purposes of my capstone project, I sought to better understand how this common thread had manifested itself in the lives of those who were still alive and willing to tell their stories. I established relationships with a few elders within local African–American communities who were close to the age that my parents would have been today had they lived, spending time with them and observing them in action. In getting to know them, I was comforted to find that we shared a passion for telling the little known and untold stories of the amazing contributions and accomplishments of African–Americans in this country, as well as a sense of urgency in passing this knowledge on to younger generations.

As a novice to conducting this kind of cultural documentation field work, I mistakenly assumed that my purpose was to somehow make good use of the skills and knowledge I had acquired at school to provide much needed support to sustain or give voice to this fragile community of men and women and their historic preservation efforts. What a wonderfully humbling experience to be welcomed in and taken under the wings of these awe inspiring, resilient pillars of strength in the African–American community who have been doing this work for three decades (sans any recognized academic credentials in the field), who show no signs of ever slowing down.

With both of my new found mentors in their mid–80’s when I began this project in 2014, I soon realized how blessed I was to be given an opportunity to be an apprentice within a community of experts who had been passionately fighting to preserve their ancestors’ legacies for the greater part of their lives, simply because they knew it needed to be done. By just being present with them, I not only learned of their life experiences, joys, struggles and triumphs, but I felt as though I could hear the voices of my ancestors speaking to me through their shared stories and wisdom. Every hug and tear shared was

an embrace extended from my lost loved ones through their caring arms. I was in real school now.

As I was at the beginning of my studies, I was still learning, exploring and engaging in philosophical debate with my student colleagues and the knowledgeable, experienced faculty. My mind was absorbing and attempting to critically examine multi-dimensional theoretical principles and abstract concepts such as “culture”, “identity”, “community”, “documentation” and “representation”. Simultaneously, I also had to demonstrate academic progress in my proficiency and understanding of the rigorous technical expertise and ethical integrity that is required for doing ethnographic work of any kind, whether it be for:

- Research – academic, scientific, social, personal, etc.
- Literary prose – biographical, fiction, creative non-fiction, technical/academic writing, journaling, storytelling, editorial, social commentary
- Interpretive planning for exhibition, remembrance, commemoration, celebration
- Documentation of people, places, things, events, traditions, cultures through various media and methodologies – photography, film/video, oral history, storytelling, artistic interpretation
- Preservation of history and culture – cataloging, archiving, protecting and memorializing tangible fragments of significance and meaning: human memory, sound/voice/language, artifacts, photographs, ephemera, video, oral histories, digital media, architecture, spaces, landmarks, etc.
- Creating space, forum or opportunities for knowledge sharing and transfer – educational platform or media, interactive experiences, dialogue, mediation
- Community building and organizing – restoration, healing, empowerment,
- Artistic and personal expression
- Making impactful social commentary to support mass movements that foster awareness, understanding and positive change

The ethnographic projects that I have identified as being part of my life’s work intertwine through each of these areas of interest and expertise. However, I recognize that I will not achieve mastery in any of them until I am totally immersed in the field, actively engaged in these kinds of undertakings and allowed to experience first-hand all of the bumps, bruises, mistakes, failures, joys, successes, achievements and triumphs that are inherent to it.

In light of this, the question that I ask of myself, academics and those who are in the field is, when has one truly earned the right or the credentials to call themselves an ethnographer? A storyteller? A historian? A genealogist? A cultural worker? Are these personal and professional “titles”, “roles” or “identities” open to broad interpretation and

therefore subject to harsh critique and scrutiny by others in this arena? I have come to believe that if one's work is to have value and meaning for its manifold contributors, the researcher must skillfully balance their use of scientific methodology (anthropologic), technical expertise (recognized standards for documentation and preservation) and thoughtful representation of significant aspects of our shared humanity (ethnographic). To better inform my capstone work and to satisfy my sense of inquiry, I looked to a diverse cross-section of literature and technical resources in each of these aspects of this ever-evolving field. I found inspiration in the writings of those who have paved the way along the many possible paths that I now see before me.

[Review of Literary Resources and Reference Materials](#)

At this point in my research, I realized that between my experiences in the classroom and the field, and the volumes of literary, academic and field-tested resources I'd learned of, I had amassed an extensive reference library. These resources would be foundational to further developing my own theories on the questions and concepts in my mind and creating a framework to inform my approach to the work ahead. In many regards, while it bolstered my confidence (in my program studies and myself) to know that such a comprehensive body of scholarly work and technical resources are available to me, it was overwhelmingly challenging for me to compartmentalize the countless, often contradictory, theories of practice and the practitioners, and then synthesize that knowledge into somehow constructing meaning and a cohesive correlation or contrast between their work and mine.

[Literature that influenced my perspective on the power of the creation, interpretation and representation of shared narratives](#)

- Radner, Joan N., Editor. *Feminist Messages – Coding in Women's Folk Culture*
- Lawless, Elaine J., *Women Escaping Violence – Empowerment through Narrative*
- Shapiro Perl, Nina., Film: *Through the Eye of the Needle – The Art of Esther Nisenthal Krinitz*

How do we best interpret narrative data? In reading "*Women Escaping Violence – Empowerment through Narrative*"¹² by Elaine Lawless and "*Feminist Messages – Coding in Women's Folk Culture*"¹³ edited by Joan N. Radner, there were several common concepts and themes specific to the interpretation of narrative data that really resonated with me. While the stories recreated in both works were very clearly focused on feminist subject matter and shedding light on the nuances of both the explicit and hidden messages

¹² Lawless, Elaine J. 2001. *Women Escaping Violence – Empowerment through Narrative*. University of Missouri Press. Columbia, MO

¹³ Radner, Joan N., Editor. 1993. *Feminist Messages – Coding in Women's Folk Culture*. Publication of the American Folklore Society. Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois. University of Illinois Press.

revealed through expressed feminine perspective, I gained a great deal of understanding as to how the use of narrative has a far more universal importance in the realm of ethnographic documentation. The process in and of itself is cathartic for both the subject of the interview and narrator, validating them both by giving voice to a topic of social, historic, personal or cultural depth.

I was particularly struck by a theme common to both of these works as related to narrative becoming a platform for self-construction (or reconstruction) for the individual at the heart of it. It not only empowers the narrator with agency over their own story and voice, but in asking a person to share their life stories with another human being, they are intentionally placed in a position of conscientious self-reflection. It requires them to define meaning behind and an interpretation of their life experiences – in some cases for the very first time. For many of the women in Lawless' collection of narratives of abused women, this process was troubling, painful, healing and liberating. The women expressed their stories from a place of disassociation from their lived realities, because of their feelings of shame, fear, anger, remorse, low self-esteem and denial of the abusive situations in which they found themselves. They had been living their lives as if they were an outside observer, or playing the role of an object or character in someone else's narrative. This perception places them in a position of powerlessness; a victim of their circumstances. By sharing their stories (through ethical, thoughtfully facilitated ethnographic methodologies), they are given a safe space to confront those perspectives and reframe their perceptions of personhood and identity in the context of their past, present and future.

“One thing I am not particularly interested in is trying to determine whether or not the accounts the women gave to me are “accurate” or “truthful” in some historical “factual” sense. By saying this, I am actually contesting the notion that “truth” exists or that one account might be more “truthful” than another. I honor the stories I receive as gifts of their imagination at that moment in time. I believe the narratives reveal a “truth” about how the women view themselves and their world as reflected in these narratives. How they “see” themselves on that day clearly directs their narrative. As far as we are concerned there is no other truth than that one.”¹⁴ (Lawless 2001, 6)

In *Feminist Messages*, Radner expands upon theories of the vital importance of narrative. She explores hidden messages and coding revealed in women's folk culture and tradition as a non-verbal yet vivid self-expression of their voices, perspectives and identities. There is often symbolic meaning found encoded between the lines of a seemingly obvious

¹⁴ Lawless, Elaine J. 2001. *Women Escaping Violence – Empowerment through Narrative*, 6. University of Missouri Press, Columbia, MO.

visual narrative that creates an important subtext by which the women in these stories share another dimension of their “true” selves. The subtlety of this subtext creates a safe space for expression, as the narrator’s hidden message may only be perceptible to others who identify with it; almost as a secret language or inside joke between close friends. Outsiders would perceive only the traditional, non-threatening aspects of their cultural norms, while feminist messages are communicated through various coding methodologies. This to me says that self-expression and having agency over one’s own voice is critical to any form of narrative, and that the symbolic coding found in hidden messages can be as powerful and palpable as spoken tradition. For these women, what is not said has a far more significant impact than what is.

“At the other end of the spectrum from such esoteric coding lie situations in which a potentially antagonistic home audience is able to decode a woman’s message but is unwilling to do so. In such a close and enduring group as the family, it can be dangerous not only for a woman to express anger or frustration but also for a man to admit that his partner is frustrated or angry. To pay attention to women’s subversive feelings is, in a sense, to validate them – and potentially to lose power or self-esteem; acting as if one is not receiving their messages, on the other hand, is a way of silencing women, of screening out their power to disrupt.”¹⁵
(Radner 1993, 32)

An ethnographer working towards a goal of social advocacy could substitute any subject population wherever the word “women” was referenced in either of these works, and the theories would still accurately convey the importance of the narrative voice. For my work, this could apply broadly to the men who served in the 320th and other African American World War II veterans and their families, elders and youth of the African American community, people of color who have experienced the traumatic effects of social exclusion or racial injustice and a host of other thematically and culturally significant groups of people.

The presentation or re-presentation of the narrative perspective requires a willingness on the part of both the narrator and the subject to reveal their vulnerabilities. Lawless makes reference to an ethnographer’s need to understand the silences and help the individual fill in the gaps that surface when sharing the narrative of a painful memoir. I would dare to say that when creating a narrative exposition of topics as sensitive as physical and emotional abuse, (or any other subject matter in which there are issues of dominance and powerlessness), the narrator’s reasoning most likely stems from a

¹⁵ Radner, Joan N., Editor. 1993. *Feminist Messages – Coding in Women’s Folk Culture*, 32. Publication of the American Folklore Society. Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois. University of Illinois Press.

deeply-rooted personal connectivity (whether experiential, observational, or from a position of advocacy).

While providing a single individual with a forum to speak about the unspeakable could be viewed as having minimal impact on the greater good, collective voices can draw attention to the issue and strengthen the message calling for awareness, compassion and empathy. The voices of the victims become fortified by the growing voices of concern, unified by mass movement toward social change. Lawless affirms, "*It is the collective story we need to expose, to speak and to hear, recognizing at the same time that each story in and of itself is significant, different and personal.*"¹⁶ (Lawless 2001, 4)

As the audience – recipients of the gift of a shared narrative – we are needed as witnesses, as opposed to being voyeuristic spectators of phenomenon. As a witness, we then become an active participant in the story. It could be simply the act of providing much needed validation of the subject's existence, or becoming the receptacle for cherished or hurtful memories that need to be expressed. We are then complicit in having heard the narrative – it becomes our choice as to what we do with the knowledge, either ignoring it, preserving it, sharing it or challenging/supporting it.

This same idea resonates throughout the film "Through The Eye of a Needle", in which Holocaust survivor Esther Nisenthal Krinitz captures her memories through intricate needlework tapestries. It was both a way for her to express her testimonial and also pass her story down to the next generation. She poignantly expresses this philosophy of becoming witness to an injustice, and as the audience being accountable for a response to what was seen.¹⁷

Literary works that influenced my understanding of the ethical considerations and visceral effect of ethnography

- Behar, Ruth. *Traveling Heavy- a memoir between journeys*
- Behar, Ruth. *The Vulnerable Observer – Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart*

I experienced remarkably incongruent feelings of comfort and trepidation, excitement and despair, confidence and uncertainty, discrepancy and corroboration in reading several books written by Ruth Behar. As a renowned professor of anthropology, I had every expectation that her writing would be of the highest academic caliber, exuding technical mastery of anthropologic technique. I assumed that every word and concept would fly over my head, never making a pit stop in my brain. I was immediately drawn in

¹⁶ Lawless, Elaine J. 2001. *Women Escaping Violence – Empowerment through Narrative*, 4. University of Missouri Press, Columbia, MO.

¹⁷ Shapiro Perl, Nina. Film: Through the Eye of the Needle – The Art of Esther Nisenthal Krinitz. An Art and Remembrance Production. <http://artandremembrance.org/our-work/film/>. YouTube Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCvIhYCKruQ>

by the very first pages of *Traveling Heavy – a memoir between journeys*¹⁸; her writing style being the exact opposite of my fears. Behar uses her own story to share a personal narrative of seeking and finding identity; she poignantly presents her memories – of her childhood in Cuba and America; of aspects of embracing her diverse, sometimes tumultuous, ethnic heritage – having inherited traits of both her mother’s Ashkenazi roots and father’s Sepharti lineage; of her family’s experiences of Cuban exile and her desire find belonging in her place of birth; of her husband, son and home life in the United States; and, of her journey into the world of anthropology.

I read so much of myself between the lines of Behar’s accounts of her first attempts at anthropologic research work, merging in poetic detail the experience of the people and places that surrounded her, and her personal reflections about those experiences. She, too, experienced the technical and ethical quandaries one goes through when first doing this kind of work, of balancing the documentarian, historic preservationist, social scientist and humanitarian within, each playing a critical role.

What I found particularly compelling about Behar’s memoir is her raw vulnerability and candor with regard to her experiences of documenting and writing about the cultural traditions observed by her parents, family and elders, coming from very distinctive ethnic and religious heritages – each commanding equal respect and observance over the other. While Behar was careful to honor as many of the many cultural traditions that encompass her diverse background, she also took license to rebel against and question them in establishing her own unique sense of identity. This at times caused dissention and in some instances created distance or severed close familial relationships for many years throughout her life. Her family was particularly dismayed by an innocent article that she had written about her experiences with them. It was in no way intended as scandalous, but the family’s perception of being misrepresented caused feelings of shame, resentment and anger towards her for exposing their personal memoirs to the world. Heart-wrenching issues stemming from perceptions of a right to ownership of memory, culture, tradition and one’s own personal “truth” become a central theme in Behar’s often painful self-reflection.

Therein lie the questions that I must ask myself as I begin a quest to research and document my family’s history – how will this work be perceived and received by my remaining siblings and family members? Were there silences in my past that have been that way for a reason? By taking license to decipher and reveal the mysteries of my family’s history, will I unintentionally be causing pain to others, or perhaps disrespecting their memory? Do I own the rights to my personal truth, formed out of my memories and perspective? The answers to these questions for me remain to be seen; however, it is

¹⁸ Behar, Ruth.2013. *Traveling Heavy – a memoir between journeys*. Duke University Press. Durham and London.

comforting to know that Ruth Behar has navigated these issues through her own work, providing a pathway in this field for those of us who will come behind her.

In her book, *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart*¹⁹, Behar explores questions about narratives and ethical responsibility. She proposes arguments that demonstrate how narratives and emotions affect others and your work. Her philosophy advocates for a more humanistic form of anthropology that is lived out and written in a personal voice. This new theory and practice should guide those of us in the field towards a more meaningful understanding of feeling – not only in anthropology but also in all acts of witnessing.

Behar draws from a robust collection of wisdom to compile this book, which asks the ethnographer or anthropologist to consider their role in documenting painful memories or the tragic – at what point should the ethnographer put down the camera and pen, and just be present in the moment? She questions the writer’s responsibility not only to those they represent, but to those who are moved by the writing – the experience of the audience. She poses provocative questions, including: “If one has an emotional response to the work, does it lessen or enhance our intellectual understanding of it?” (*Behar 1996, 16*)

Behar’s book presents an effective argument about the importance of narratives and how our research and presentation of that narrative affects the ethnographer, the narrator and the audience that receives it. This is of particular importance for ethnographers and writers presenting the narratives of vulnerable individuals or populations, and the importance of the reciprocal impact and responsibility of both collaborators in creating it.

*“An anthropologist’s conversations and interactions in the field can never again be exactly reproduced. They are unique, irrecoverable, gone before they happen, always in the past, even when written up in the present tense. The ethnography serves as the only proof of the anthropologist’s voyage, and the success of the enterprise hinges on how gracefully the anthropologist shoulders what Geertz calls the “burden of authorship”.*²⁰
(*Behar 1996, 7*)

¹⁹ Behar, Ruth. 1996. *The Vulnerable Observer – Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart*. Beacon Press. Boston, Massachusetts.

²⁰ Behar, Ruth. 1996. *The Vulnerable Observer – Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart*, 7. Beacon Press. Boston, Massachusetts.

Literary works that informed my theories of using narratives for restoration, healing and social justice

- Shapiro Perl, Nina., Film: *Through the Eye of the Needle – The Art of Esther Nisenthal Krinitz*
- Fraden, Rena. *Imagining Medea: Rhodessa Jones and Theater for Incarcerated Women*

As referenced previously, Esther Krinitz Nisenthal used folk art to share her narrative, pass her story and the tradition of her craft down to her daughter and to make an important social commentary about the Holocaust. By creating these needlework tapestries and giving voice to her experiences, Nisenthal experienced a sense of healing and restoration within. Her art represents both beautiful symbols of hope and cautionary reminders of a painful past. The film that documents her work, “Through the Eye of the Needle”, is an Art and Remembrance Project which is specifically intended to share this story with future generations while inspiring hope for healing in others:

“Through the Eye of the Needle explores the capacity of the human heart to heal. Through these reflections, we are reminded that genocide and other acts of baseless hatred are still with us, and that Esther’s story, and those like hers, compels us to build a just and peaceful world for all.”²¹

Another interesting example of how art can be a powerful tool for creating narrative to evoke social change is The Medea Project: Theater for Incarcerated Women based in San Francisco, CA. In her book, *Imagining Medea – Rhodessa Jones and Theater for Incarcerated Women*²², Rena Fraden provides a close-up look at a community based participatory action project established by Rhodessa Jones that uses theater as a creative medium to give incarcerated women an opportunity to express themselves and reflect on life decisions they have made that placed them in prison. Jones’ central claim is that theater is a religious experience, a place of communion which includes everyone. Her use of Greek, African and Asian myths and of folk stories is one way she insists on making her theater inclusive, using various concepts of drama, spoken narratives, dialogue, poetry, rap and unrehearsed audience participation.

Her theater depends on bringing together people who normally wouldn’t find themselves in one place at any one time, thinking about what they have in common. The incarcerated are, for the evening, no longer hidden or silent. And for those evenings, the work is no longer drama as therapy or arts as correction: it is no longer only for incarcerated women. It becomes theater about why some women end up incarcerated and some do not; it is about what should connect communities and what does not

²¹ Shapiro Perl, Nina. Film: *Through the Eye of the Needle – The Art of Esther Nisenthal Krinitz*. An Art and Remembrance Production. <http://artandremembrance.org/our-work/film/>

²² Fraden, Rena. 2001. *Imagining Medea – Rhodessa Jones and Theater for Incarcerated Women*. University of North Carolina Press. USA

connect them at present. It calls into question the boundaries of what is public and free and what isn't and it exposes the violence that connects us all. Jones uses her art to build bridges in order to make even the most protective and privileged of spectators feel their connections with those who are not.

Jones wants theater to be a call to the community to think about what a proper community should look like and what sorts of social action would have to take place to bring that community into being. The Medea Project is interested in an investigation of the plots that lead to imprisonment – the causes for addiction, rage, recidivism – in hopes that by asking certain questions, the women might not count on miracles, but instead plot a different course in life. The Medea Project means to make us not only recognize that we share common plots but to find ways for all of us to change them by becoming more socially active citizens. Collaboration and partnerships are critical to making it happen and sustaining the work.

Literary works that informed my knowledge of the history of African Americans in the military

While the potential sources for oral histories and other documentation projects on military history are innumerable, I have selected only one to provide further analysis in this paper. There are several more referenced in the bibliography. Some that are of greatest interest to me that are relevant to my research include:

- Hervieux, Linda: *Forgotten – The Untold Story of D-Day's Black Heroes, At Home and At War*
- Journalist Tom Brokaw's book, video and audio CD series:
 - *The Greatest Generation*
 - *The Greatest Generation Speaks – Letters and Reflections*
 - *The Greatest Generation – An Album of Memories*
- Historian Ronald Takaki's book series:
 - *Double Victory: A Multi-Cultural History of America in World War II*
 - *A Different Mirror: A History of Multi-Cultural America*
 - *A Larger Memory: A History of Our Diversity, With Voices*
- The Library of Congress Veterans History Project
 - *Voices of War: Stories of Service from the Home Front and the Front Lines*
 - *Veterans History Project Website: <http://www.loc.gov/vets>*

I chose to focus on *“Voices of War: Stories of Service from the Home Front and the Front Lines”* in this section because it was one of the most comprehensive resources that I found at the time I began my family research. It is a collection of personal narratives in the form of audio and video taped interviews and written memoirs, correspondence such as letters, postcards and personal diaries, and visual materials such as photographs, drawings and scrapbooks that document first person accounts of the experiences of United States servicemen and women from various military branches, and others who contributed to the war effort during the five major wars of the 20th century (World War I, World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War and The Persian Gulf). Published in 2004, this book was the first print resource emerging from The Veterans History Project, which originated through a legislative act which in 2000 received unanimous bicameral support and was signed into law in October of that same year by President Bill Clinton as a means to document and preserve the valuable memoirs of American veterans throughout the generations.

While this book only contains the stories of approximately 60 of the original contributors, The Library of Congress, through its American Folklife Center, collects these histories and curates a companion website that features these personal accounts as well as the stories of thousands of veterans and civil servants in a searchable database, extending the history from the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts to the current day. The intent is to make this information easily accessible to the public for a variety of purposes, and to give voice to firsthand narratives that reveal the realities of war from a wide range of perspectives.

The sections of the book are thematically categorized, with oral history narratives interspersed between photographic images, letters, journals and postcards within the topic’s chapter. The reader is guided through a myriad of experiences and reflections as related to the categories and relevant subsections depicting wartime themes:

- “Answering The Call”
- “A Day In The Life”
- “Under Fire”
- “They Also Serve”
- “World War II Home Front”
- “Coming Home”
- “Reflections”

While oral history transcripts were used as only part of the collage of ethnographic artifacts of memory presented in each chapter, it is unclear to me if this was an intentional choice on the part of the The American Folklife Center, or if at the time that this was written, this was the extent of the materials that had been collected, documented and properly vetted for inclusion in the print publication.

In critiquing this work through the lens of oral history practice and methodology, I found the text's formatting to be a little confusing in distinguishing which pieces of written prose were transcribed recordings, original journal entries written by the narrators, or an autobiographical piece written by an unknown author. Since the text is formatted consistently throughout the book, there is no differentiation between a "memoir", an "interview" and an "autobiography"; therefore, it is not clear to me which portions of the book are actually transcripts of recorded oral history interviews versus the person's own personal written account. In the cases of those that were labeled "*Interview, Memoir*", which is it? Why did some accounts provide additional detail as to where the person was stationed, or less information as to what type of firsthand account it was? If the person's story had multiple pages dedicated to it, what was the methodology for documenting it?

There were a few other points as to the organization of the materials that I felt would have made the book a little more cohesive:

- Categorizing the chapters by the themes listed above could create a disjointed perspective for the reader; these stories from soldiers and supporters from five separate wartime eras during the 20th century are randomly interspersed under the broad notion of them all having common themes. Additionally, instead of presenting the stories of each individual as a cohesive package, segments of their stories were broken apart and presented in various sections throughout the book. I think it would be interesting if the book was instead organized by the war being documented according to a historic timeline, with each individual's full story fitting within the retelling of their war experience. The reader would have a much greater understanding of the commentary from the narrators if viewed within the context of the war that was being fought, alongside the era in American history, global politics and the sociopolitical considerations at home.
- There is not a clear understanding as to the depth of material that was available at the time the documentation for this book was compiled and written; therefore, what was the methodology used to determine whose stories were included, and how prominently they were featured in this storytelling and educational historic resource? Who made those decisions and what were their criteria? For the most part, I found the overall tone of the memoirs to be pretty much positive in nature...were there stories (particularly of Black soldiers) that were not as pleasant and therefore not included? How much influence did the ethnographers have over the representation of the voices that were included in this work? Did congress have undue influence over the project since it was their brainchild that was passed as a law?

- It was very difficult for me to identify the ethnicity of those whose stories were included; unless there was a photo included, or some specific reference to a groundbreaking accomplishment (such as “John Doe was the first African–American lieutenant...”), one may tend to assume that all of the other accounts are those of white soldiers. However, in reading the accounts very carefully, you will find that because the various war eras are co–mingled in the storytelling, there are perspectives from soldiers of color throughout the chapters due to increasing numbers of them serving in Korea, Vietnam and The Persian Gulf than previously. From a historic perspective, I would like to have seen this book provide insights on the progression of integration of the armed forces throughout the five major war eras, and document the experiences of Blacks in the military as related to the different conflicts.

Given the fact that these documentation resources and subsequent publication were created by the American Folklore Center, a respected leader and noted authority in this arena, I have a few hypotheses as to why some of the concerns I address may have occurred:

- It is very possible that at the time that this was produced, the American Folklore Center was the best possible and most logical government–based entity to take on this massive congress–driven historic preservation project, and they employed methodologies that aligned with established best practices in the field at that time.
- Time constraints and government pressure to produce a deliverable may have forced them to work within the parameters of their funding allocation, and collate any and all materials that they had available to them at the time to create a final product. Congress may have had additional influence over the tone of the book, and final authority.
- I can imagine that this was a huge undertaking and required a collaborative effort of teams of many people conducting interviews, transcribing recordings, cataloguing and archiving artifacts, writing and editing the copy, etc. This may account for the discrepancies and inconsistencies in the notations and documentation methodologies used to produce this quantity of interviews and memoirs over a relatively short period of time.
- The American Folklife Center may have intentionally organized the collection of materials as described above so as to let the reader experience the various forms of ethnographic documentation in this book on a personal level, and draw their own conclusions as they interpret what it means to them. They may have wanted to avoid being overly influential in skewing how this raw data from so many people should or could be represented to those internal and external to the community.

Even though the book itself pretty much became outdated as soon as the ink dried (since there will always be new stories), I still really enjoyed reading the stories and viewing the personal testimonials in correspondences, oral histories, photos and journals. The Veterans History Project website and searchable archival database will live on as a dynamic virtual resource which is constantly updated, refined and improved upon. It is an invaluable resource and will help give a voice to veterans past, present and future for generations to come.

[Framework for the Capstone Project: “Living History”](#)

Scope of Research

One of the most critical aspects of planning and conducting this ethnographic research and cultural documentation project was establishing genuine relationships and a bond of trust amongst the targeted community or population. The population of people that I hoped to work with would possess a combination of characteristic traits that I was interested in studying, with the intention of documenting not only their stories through video interviews and written narratives, but our shared experiences during our time spent together:

1. Elder generation – 70 and older
2. African–American
3. Experience or interest in storytelling, research or historic preservation of culturally relevant aspects of African–American heritage
4. Actively connected with younger generations through educational experiences, interactive learning opportunities or social/cultural events and activities

The next important consideration for me was to be able to clearly articulate the purpose for my intrusion as an outsider and observer into the lives of these elders and their communities. At the outset of working with them, my motives for engaging them in a collaborative project were purely personal; I had selected them to fulfill the requirements of my cultural documentation and field lab coursework. It hadn't even occurred to me that these initial encounters would eventually become foundational to my capstone work as well as my personal ambitions after graduation. Yet, I still recognized the importance of establishing a means of reciprocity with these people; I had to bring some value to these special collaborations, and not just take what they so generously shared with me without giving something back in return. I also had to be careful that in my passionate exuberance as a graduate student still wet behind the ears, that I did not establish a misleading sense of my capabilities and then disappoint them by not living up to their expectations or delivering on promised commitments.

In the case of Adelaide Bentley, an amazing woman and dynamic leader in the community of Historic East Towson, I wasn't sure what I could possibly bring to the table. She was the first person that allowed me to practice my non-existent interviewing and documentation skills on her and, admittedly, I was scared to death. My first communications with her were over the phone, and I could tell immediately that she was a no-nonsense kind of person whose time was valuable and there was no room for foolishness on her agenda. She actually had no reason to trust me, as I was employed by Baltimore County Government, with whom for years she had been working with, through and around in her historic preservation efforts and in fighting the eminent impacts of gentrification on her beloved community. How could she have been certain of my motives for asking so many questions and documenting her responses?

The more I engaged with Miss Adelaide and this community the more apparent it was to me that there was nothing that I could add to her impressive accomplishments in historic preservation and leadership that hadn't already been done. She is already well known for her work, and her story has been documented and told by others. And yet, I learned in my time spent with both Ms. Bentley and Mr. Diggs that the very act of listening to someone and placing value upon their "voice" is both cathartic and healing for the narrator and the recipient of the gift of their wisdom. The best contribution that I could make was to acknowledge and honor her for being who she was.

My experience with Mr. Louis Diggs was different in that I was fortunate to be able to engage with him and his Board at a time when his dream of restoring a church dating back to the 1800's as the Diggs-Johnson Museum came to fruition. It was easy to identify many more tangible ways that I could help to support them in their efforts by volunteering to assist at their events, and taking photos and videos to document Mr. Diggs in action as well as this incredible milestone in his life. I was hopeful that the media I produced would be something that he could use at the museum, but that being said, I had to be very transparent that I was only a student shadowing Mr. Diggs as part of my cultural documentation studies and in no way a professional photographer or videographer.

In both cases, my inexperience and technical limitations in using the camera, video and audio equipment and editing software became a source of frustration for me on several occasions. There were many missed moments that I did not document (or captured poor quality media) because of lack of practice with my equipment, or because I made a conscious decision not to set it up appropriately out of respect for my narrators' requests. However, these technical difficulties and ethical dilemmas also forced me to better hone my active listening, note taking and journaling skills, helping me to understand the most important aspect of being

present in the moment with people who had made themselves available to me and to appreciate the experience of time spent with them.

Preliminary Research and Work Plan

The next few pages are details excerpted from my preliminary research and work plan which outlined my original goals, planned actions and anticipated outcomes for this project (see full plan). It is important to note that while I was able to collect ample photos, video, audio and ephemeral materials to inform my work on multiple levels, it was extremely challenging to process, catalogue and analyze it all. The difficulty was not in the gathering of volumes of ethnographic media to support my project; on the contrary, the ability to use digital technology gives you almost limitless capacity, provided you have functional equipment, batteries, chargers and storage options at your access. The issues lie in deciding which pieces of your hard work will remain on the editing room floor – whether creating your written documentation or choosing the photos, audio and video segments that best represent the message you hope to convey to your audience. During the course of this project's research and documentation processes, I found myself struggling to whittle through my materials to find only the most precious gems in my collections that both captured the essence of my subjects and had a direct correlation to the broader theme of the work. In this regard, less would definitely have been more for me and I took this as a tough lesson learned through this work.

As a result of these challenges, you will find that my work plan and project scope was revised three times over the course of my capstone studies. The original premise of the work took a broad stroke approach to presenting the stories of the elders I had met during the course of my fieldwork, correlating their work with what I hope to do in the future. However, this was not at all compelling in that I was merely re-presenting what had already been documented by many others before me; there was nothing insightful about my documentation efforts, and it would have just served as practice in the field for me.

I then narrowed the focus of my project to feature the work of Mr. Diggs as the central theme of my project, tying his work to that of the others I met within this community of elders who are striving to preserve their history and honoring their legacies through my documentation efforts. Once again, I found myself re-stating the obvious, devoid of highlighting any additional nuances to their stories.

The final scope (which only became a revelation to me in the last few months of the project) was the most difficult for me to conceive in that it required taking a totally reflexive approach to documenting my work with these incredible group of people, using both my words and select media to capture and interpret this transformative experience

for the potential benefit of any number of audiences. As I had spent the majority of my two semesters intentionally in the background of my documentation efforts, I found it particularly challenging to now review all of my work in the field with a lens focused on my role as an active participant in the process, and to assess the personal and professional impact these interactions had on me. The result is what I believe to be a capstone proposal that provides several concepts for consideration and future research, and at a minimum demonstrates the incredible importance and healing attributes of intergenerational dialogue.

The Griots

Living Treasures – Adelaide Bentley and Louis Diggs

Over the course of my activities in the field, I realized that not only was I learning so much about the legacy of African-American communities in Baltimore County, but that I now have access to two phenomenal living historic treasures in Ms. Adelaide Bentley and Mr. Louis Diggs. There was a profound quote written in the forward of Mr. Diggs' book, "Since The Beginning: African-American Communities in Towson", by Lenwood Johnson, writer, former Urban Planner for Baltimore County government and the first elected Vice President of Baltimore County's branch of the NAACP (1998):

"In Africa our villages had griots, people who could recite the history of their people going back over hundreds of years. They could in the telling of their stories call out the names of their ancestors. Thus by calling out their ancestors' names, they (the ancestors) would live in the hearts and minds of those present. Mr. Diggs' books are serving the same function of the griot. Not only do the books contain numerous photographs and narratives, they also contain lists of names of family members long since gone. People are using his book to establish or re-establish family ties. They are personally able to now capture some of their long lost past and help in the finding of themselves. I feel that this is the greater good that Mr. Diggs and these books do."²³



This project has been an incredible experience for me, and further confirms my convictions regarding my future capstone work to develop an "Intergenerational Griot Project" to capture and document these precious artifacts of memory from our elders, and make them accessible for reconnecting our historic roots to the legacies that will be established by future generations. I learned in my time spent with both Ms. Bentley

²³ Diggs, Louis S. 2000. *Since The Beginning: African-American Communities in Towson*. Uptown Press.

and Mr. Diggs that the very act of listening to someone and placing value upon their “voice” is both cathartic and healing for the narrator and the recipient of the gift of their wisdom. Despite the aches, pains and infirmities that can be devastating to an elderly population, both Ms. Bentley and Mr. Diggs demonstrated throughout my encounters with them how they were revived and energized when they are engaged in their passions of preserving our rich heritage as African-Americans. Additionally, while the community members were initially reserved in their communications with me, when they began to fondly recount their memories of Historic East Towson, they came to life with exuberance. I am awe inspired by them all, and feel honored to have been in their generous presence.

“It is the individual only who is timeless. Societies, cultures, and civilizations – past and present – are often incomprehensible to outsiders, but the individual's hunger, anxieties, dreams, and preoccupations have remained unchanged through the millennia. Thus, we are up against the paradox that the individual who is more complex, unpredictable, and mysterious than any communal entity is the one nearest to our understanding; so near that even the interval of millennia cannot weaken our feeling of kinship. If in some manner the voice of an individual reaches us from the remotest distance of time, it is a timeless voice speaking about ourselves.” ²⁴

Work Plan History and Context

I first met Mr. Diggs in the fall of 2014, when I was working on my first cultural documentation field lab project in Historic East Towson community. Historian, genealogist, storyteller, published author and educator, Mr. Diggs personifies the concept of the “Intergenerational Griot Project”, an initiative I would like to launch as a contribution to the growing movement around the country to learn of the untold stories of African Americans from generations past and to preserve that historic legacy by sharing it with generations present and future.

Bio

Portions of Louis Diggs' biography were excerpted from his website www.louisdiggs.com and have been edited to fit within the context of this paper. The biographical information on Mr. Diggs' historic preservation work after his retirement was excerpted from the transcript of his narrated Emancipation Day Historic Tour of Slave Safe Houses and African American Communities, November 1, 2014.

Louis S. Diggs was born in Baltimore, Maryland on April 13, 1932 to George and Agrada Diggs. Though he was born on Dewey Avenue in Hoes Heights in northern Baltimore, MD (a little known African American community nestled between the historic predominantly white communities of Hampden and Roland Park), he spent most of his young life on Stricker Street in the Sandtown area, most recently known as the site of racial tensions

²⁴Hoffer, Eric. 1973. *Reflections on the Human Condition*, 183. Hopewell Publications, New Jersey.

and civil unrest. He attended Douglass High School, quitting school in 1950 to join the all-Black Maryland National Guard (726th Transportation Truck Company of the 231st Transportation Truck Battalion) when they were federalized to support the Korean War. He saw action in the Korean War from 1950 until 1952.

Mr. Diggs decided during the Korean War to continue his service in the military as a career, making several trips to Korea, two trips to Germany, and one trip to Japan. His



Emancipation Day Historic Tour of Slave Safe Houses and African American Communities, November 1, 2014

most notable assignment was his appointment as Sergeant Major of the ROTC Detachment at the then Morgan State College in Baltimore, where he was assigned from early 1957 to late 1964. He was then stationed in Stuttgart, Germany where his family joined him and they resided from 1964 to 1967. He remained in the US Army until 1970 when he retired with more than twenty years of service. ²⁵Upon his retirement, Mr. Diggs entered civil service, working as a substitute teacher in the public school system. He was encouraged by his family to become a role model for the children in the community, now residing and teaching in Catonsville in Baltimore County, MD. His cultural documentation efforts began humbly, when he taught a class on “Researching Your Roots” starting with his own community – Winter’s Lane in Catonsville. By the end of

the semester-long class, the children who also lived in this neighborhood approached Mr. Diggs with tears in their eyes asking him to help them learn about their history. This inspired him to dig deeper into his research efforts, discovering the deep roots he shared in Baltimore County even though he had been born and raised in the city. He also found that there was very little historic information documented about African-Americans and their contributions to founding the communities in which they lived.

Over the course of several years, Mr. Diggs’ work gained momentum and the support of the students, teachers and faculty at Catonsville High School. The librarian at the time took note of the significance of his accomplishment, encouraging him to share his work with the Maryland Humanities Council. Between 1990 and 1991, Judy Dobbs (Deputy Director and state folklorist with the Maryland State Arts Council) provided grant funding to sponsor Mr. Diggs’ research and the authoring of his first book and supplemental educational materials. At the time, it was unprecedented to have the Council commission a published work of this kind. With no formal training or experience, Mr. Diggs embarked upon the most important historic preservation efforts for African American communities in Baltimore County, MD and continues that work today. Published in 1995, “It All Started On Winter’s Lane” was the first in a series of books chronicling the

establishment (and loss) of 40 historic African American communities in Baltimore County and the significant contributions of the men, women and families who lived there. The rest is history – twenty years later at 83-years young, Mr. Diggs is now working on his 12th published work, researching the lives of African Americans from Baltimore County who served in World War I, and has completed his historic restoration efforts of perhaps one of the oldest African American churches known in Baltimore County, converting it into The Diggs-Johnson Museum.

Work Plan – People and Place:

Much of the information I am using to frame my work is rooted in the intersection between what I've learned on tours during MACS residencies and my research work and introduction to several key people and historic communities through my Cultural Documentation and Field Lab courses. Mr. Diggs has documented the historic context of 40 African American communities in Baltimore County, as well as the contribution of African Americans in military service over the course of centuries. The purpose of my documentation project is not to reproduce or re-present his research materials, but rather to learn more about this passionate man and pay tribute to the significance of his cultural preservation efforts and the incredible legacy he's provided us.

While the majority of my video project will focus on candid footage of Mr. Diggs in action, it will also highlight some of the communities and cultural markers that have the greatest significance for him as expressed when he is telling his stories. Much of the B-roll



Courtesy photos of the Cherry Hill AUMP church before, during and after renovation. (Top Left) an undated photo of the church, originally built in 1827, (Top Right) Mr. Diggs standing in front of the church for the last photo before renovations began in 2012, (Bottom Center) the newly renovated Diggs-Johnson Museum – April 23, 2015

materials will simply include a montage of photos from the communities with Mr. Diggs' animated narratives (as well as other community members and historians) voiced over. I plan to incorporate slightly more substantive detail about three specific communities that are near and dear to his heart to include, Granite (home of the Diggs–Johnson Museum), Historic East Towson and Turner Station. This will include historic and current photographs, video footage, interviews and narratives of the key members of the community who know Mr. Diggs' and share his passion for preserving their history.

Work Plan Methodology and Analysis

As a novice to oral history and cultural documentation, I found it necessary to identify industry recognized standard practices that provided the methodological framework that guides the work of the professional researcher or ethnographer. This allows me to establish benchmarks by which I can comparatively assess the quality of the various materials and resources I will be using in my research and understand the methodologies that were used to create them. They include:

- Yow, Valerie Raleigh – *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*
- Denzin, Norman K. – *Interpretive Autoethnography*
- The Library of Congress – *Folk Life and Field Work: An Introduction to Field Techniques*

I had to take a three-tiered approach to pulling together all of the elements needed to implement my capstone work plan:

1. Review – Assessing the documentation and media I had available to me from the previous semester to incorporate into my final work product
2. Fieldwork – reconnecting with the elders, conducting supplemental interviews and getting additional photos and videos as necessary
3. Technical – practicing with my audiovisual equipment and learning to use video editing software

Identified Themes and Shared Narratives

Review and Fieldwork:

As I processed and catalogued the volumes of information and resources this community had shared with me, and compared and contrasted this information with numerous photographic images and recorded interviews I have collected to date, there are several significant themes that seemed to resurface amongst the elders that resonated with me in my endeavors:

A Longing to Reconnect Younger Generations to their Resilient Roots:

For each of the members of this community of elders that I interviewed or worked with, the predominant impetus and inspiration behind their tireless efforts in historic preservation and legacy building were tied to assuring that the younger generations, particularly young children, were educated about their true history. This was especially true for Mr. Diggs, whose inspiration to begin this work were the pleadings of the children in his local community who couldn't find information about their ancestry and history, and the encouragement of his sons to be a mentor to youth. They too felt a sense of concern that the younger generation has no interest in engaging with the elders and don't recognize the importance of knowing their history.

The Artifact of Memory – Reminiscence and Storytelling:

I observed in each of the elders I interviewed a certain transformation when asked to share their memories with me. The residents of Historic East Towson all expressed a sense of longing for the way things used to be, and this was common to many of the elders of this generation that I worked with. They reminisce about a time when neighbors were bound by love and caring for one another. As children, they recall the entire community was a wonderful playground for them to safely explore; as their children grew up, they were raised, nurtured and mentored by the entire community. It was a time when you didn't have to lock your doors, and you knew everyone who lived there; a stranger in the community would be quickly identified and questioned as to their purpose for being there. There were lasting bonds of unity amongst community members, and it was a source of strength and support for all who were a part of it. The common thread of Christian faith and the church were at the core of memories of individual and family blessings and community strength.

I also noticed a youthful exuberance that manifested itself within them whenever they were engaged in storytelling or sharing little known facts about their community or unrecognized African-Americans. Although frail in health and suffering the aches and pains associated with aging, these amazing pioneers would come to life immediately when sharing their stories, guiding a tour or proudly speaking of their accomplishments or interesting topics of historic significance.

Heritage Preservation – Cultural Performance and Markers:

Adelaide Bentley and Historic East Towson – While Historic East Towson's history is rooted in the dark past of slavery, you recognize that its true legacy has been the resilience of its people after emancipation. This theme is echoed throughout the accomplishments and perseverance of each generation that has lived here since the 1800's; it is still palpable amongst the faithful few members of the community association who have fought to preserve this history. The preservation of the historic

structures and landmarks is not intended to memorialize the pain of slavery; instead it pays homage to an extremely intelligent people, whom through their years as laborers had been gifted as wise artisans and craftsmen. It is awe inspiring to think that without any formal education or modern equipment, they became the engineers, architects, planners, designers and journeymen who constructed every home and edifice in this community that are still in existence today; sadly, many of these treasures were torn down prior to the remaining few that have been preserved as national historic landmarks.

Louis Diggs and The Diggs–Johnson Museum – Mr. Diggs wrote the book, figuratively and literally, when it comes to researching and documenting the 40 historic African–American communities of Baltimore County, MD and little known military history facts. He developed a passion for this work in historic preservation when he retired more than 30 years ago. Without any formal education, he has authored 10 books and is recognized as the local authority on African–American history, which prior to his work was primarily non–existent. He boasts a collection of thousands of photographs which he has sorted by community, and displays at the museum and cultural events. His 20–year partnership with Lenwood Johnson brought The Diggs–Johnson Museum into existence in November 2015.

It was sad to me that Mr. Johnson is currently in an assisted living facility and did not attend the grand opening event; that stirred up yet even more potentially poignant questions to be answered about Mr. Johnson’s feelings about his own legacy and the important contribution he made to this amazing accomplishment. However, I was grateful to have at least had the pleasure of bringing the two of them together for an interview and informal chat between great friends whose mutual respect and deep admiration for one another was tangible. In an interview shortly before the grand opening, Mr. Diggs said proudly with a gleam in his eyes, “The Diggs–Johnson Museum...now that’s the legacy I’ll leave for my children.” I’m so happy to have been able to capture that one golden moment of his essence on video, to share with his loved ones and future generations.

Finding Our Voice: Silenced Stories of African–Americans Past and Present

One of the qualities that I most admired about this community of elders was their unwavering commitment to keeping these obscure stories of African–American accomplishment and triumph alive in their memories and passing them down to the next generation. Our stories have been so diluted and misrepresented in the annals of American history that I feel like we are forced to accept the Euro–centric perspective of who we are and where we have come from. An African proverb says, “Until the lioness can tell their story, the hunter will always be the hero.” Their persistence in sharing this knowledge broadly gives voice to another perspective of our world and demonstrates our

refusal to be silenced any longer. This to me is the same driving force behind the “Black Lives Matter” and “Say Her Name” campaigns and other small grass-roots movements today of people who have been pushed to their limits of being dismissed or ignored, and they refuse to be silenced any longer.

Passing the Baton – Seeking the Next Generation of Storytellers

A common concern that was expressed by the elders during our time together was the fact that they didn’t know who would carry on the work after they were gone. They each are rare gems, exhibiting a passion that will be difficult to ever replace. I found it interesting that the majority of people who took on this work only approached it after they were retired from a “real” career and had free time to devote to it, or only contributed to these efforts on a voluntary basis as an extra-curricular activity. My thought is that particularly for the African-American community, this work is critical to restoration and reconnecting the generations. It requires more than just a passing effort on the part of a select few. There has to be a sense of urgency in these efforts, particularly among Baby-Boomers and the following generations.

Project Limitations and Ethical Considerations

Technical Considerations of Capturing One’s Essence through Imagery and Voice – Visual Ethnography and Oral History

It was my ambition to create a documentary video for my capstone project, despite the fact that my experience with photography and videography were limited to my ethnographic methodologies coursework; my use of video editing software is even less impressive. While the initial intent was to prominently feature the elders that I’ve worked with over the past 2 years as the subjects of the film, I was cognizant that there needed to be a greater context for how their words and images are represented in my work. At the midpoint of my capstone project, it became clear to me that I needed to re-work the premise of my video project to be more reflexive of my experiences in engaging with this population, and the transformative power of storytelling and simply being present for another human being.

Later iterations of the video’s premise shifted from being a documentary highlighting the work of Louis Diggs as a central figure to the preservation of historic information on African-American communities in Baltimore County, to a more personal narrative which highlights the importance of capturing the stories of our elders and reconnecting subsequent generations with their rich heritage. It will correlate the relevance of hearing the voices of generations past with current social movements that demand that “Black Lives Matter”. My intention for the final documentary is for it to be used to engage

families, cultural groups and communities through “The Intergenerational Griot Project”, and perhaps to leverage funding in the future to support the work going forward.

Presenting Ethnographic Research As Social Commentary

*“There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.”
Maya Angelou*

Ethnographic media is continually evolving into multi-media platforms in which the creator is able to present their subject matter in ways that purposely coalesce documentation, social science, and artistic creation to express a personal perspective that will evoke a specific response from the audience. The ethical questions over the authenticity of these works as having ethnographic credibility and anthropological merit is strongly debated by those who would critique the media for a lack of scientific methodology, versus those who value the social and cultural implications for those captured in the work and the potential viewing audience. There are valid arguments that support and refute both points of view, giving both perspectives equal ownership of that “authenticity”.

As I considered all of the ethnographic methodologies that would best inform and ultimately showcase my work in the future (Oral Histories? Literary Work? Documentaries? Exhibit? Interactive Educational Platform?), I found myself questioning how to balance the biographical and narrative, documentary and fiction. This documentary piece as well as other proposed projects push the boundaries of traditional ethnography, as they would be created with the specific intention of artistic expression, historic documentary and social commentary. For example, as introduced earlier in the paper, according to my world view we are not seen or accepted as an integral part of an equitable American society. Recognizing that this is my perception, I have to carefully consider my selection of narrative content and documentation choices to avoid the inclination to offer a re-presentation of stories from the heart of African-American families and communities solely through the lens of my personal sense of injustice, without a context inclusive of their voices and experiences.

In our Cultural Documentation class, we were asked to consider how usefulness can be constructed – both positively and negatively – for the community we are working with. We were challenged to explore what is “the need”, to consider how our work could potentially be misused or misconstrued, and how we can put strategies in place to minimize potentially negative impacts.

For my capstone project (as well as the work that I hope to be doing in the future) I am cognizant of the fact that there are several ethical considerations and potential limitations

concerning the demographic of the people that will be the focus of my documentation projects:

Elderly Population – my work encompasses capturing the essence and wisdom of people from the elder generation. I have to be extremely sensitive to the physical, mental and emotional characteristics of this population and plan my activities by engaging with them wherever they are on the spectrum at this phase of their lives. This was particularly relevant in working with Mr. Diggs as he had been caring for his elderly wife for several years when we first met, and she passed away this year when I re-established my connection with him to begin my capstone activities. Amazingly, he constantly reiterated his apologies to me for feeling like he had disappointed me or did not fulfill his commitment. I want to be careful to not put undue obligation on my narrators, and to not take advantage of their vulnerability due to their sense of loyalty.

African American Communities – the desire to research and document historic details of the African American experience (pertaining to a multitude of subject matters) is fraught with the potential of misrepresentation, personal bias, and inaccuracy. I have to be careful to try to frame my work so that it encourages the audience to ask more questions of their own as they interpret the work from their perspective. I also want my work to pay tribute to our cultural pioneers for providing a foundation for future generations. I don't want to simply re-present the hard work that others have already accomplished, and I want to be careful to include diverse perspectives in my documentation.

Friends of the Cherry Hill AUMP (Diggs–Johnson Museum) – as part of my capstone's final work product, I hope to create materials that will not only provide a foundation for my future work (the Intergenerational Griot Project), but would be perceived by Mr. Diggs and the CHAUMP Board members as having value for the museum. They would be given edited video clips that can be used in the museum, on the website and within the historic African American communities he has documented. My hope is to preserve the images and sounds that capture Mr. Diggs in action, so that we can present his incredible storytelling gift to generations present and future.

Given these considerations, there were specific frustrations for me with regard to two areas of my work:

1. Ethnographic research and documentation activities – personally and for my capstone
2. The technical difficulties in attempting to produce a documentary video as a novice

If there is such a thing as “over-documentation”, I was guilty of it during my field work and capstone research activities. It will require a lot more practice and hands-on work in

the field for me to develop a more intuitive sense of only capturing what I need in a particular moment of time. I am concerned that I don't have a filter that helps me to discern the most relevant aspects of a project or experience, and how to communicate that information clearly and concisely to my audience. I think that my own internalized fear of missing something or a need for perfectionism hindered my ability to fine tune my skills in this area. I also think that my tendency toward "analysis paralysis" causes me to edit my work in my head before it even has a chance to be a draft concept on paper or video.

I also found that although I had lots of thoughts about my experiences in the field, I sometimes didn't allow the appropriate amount of time to process them and document my reflections through journaling and field notes. This activity must be planned as an integral part of the overall project work plan, and given equal priority.

My ambition to create a documentary video was perhaps more than I should have attempted as my capstone product, however, I greatly appreciated the immersive learning experience of working with audiovisual equipment and video editing software. I was able to create one introductory segment of what will ultimately become my documentary, and the feedback that I received from my review team has motivated me to continue my pursuit of working with video and audio as a means of documenting collaborative ethnographic projects.

For Future Consideration and Exploration

- Although I was unable to create a final documentary video product through my capstone project, I feel that I have a comprehensive framework, work plan and all of the media components I will need to produce compelling videos that can be shared as a value-added for the communities I worked with, as well as an advocacy tool for future community dialogue work in the field.
- The work plan that I created will serve as a template for future ethnographic research and documentation projects, beginning with my family's ancestral research activities to tell the story of my father's military history with the 320th. I have at least two additional project requests from communities that are interested in documenting their history and the stories of their elders
- I would like to study the correlation between structural racism specifically as it relates to the denial of heritage and the generational impact of the resulting sociological trauma, stigma, discrimination, disconnection and economic disparity prevalent within the Black community

- I am interested in knowing what work is being done in the area of restoration in the African–American community using a trauma–based approach to healing and understanding. A recent article by Phillip Seitz in *The Journal of the National Council on Public History* entitled “What Happens When African Americans Confront Their Difficult Past”²⁶ studies the results of a recent interdisciplinary project called *History and Reconstruction*. This project assessed the impact of African American history education on formerly incarcerated men, and utilized a support team of leading scholars, psychologists, cultural experts and a storyteller. This program was funded by the Pew Center for Arts and Heritage.
- I intend to reconnect with The Diggs–Johnson Museum to support their on–going efforts to document and preserve local African–American history, and continue to practice my ethnographic and cultural documentation skills.
- There is an opportunity to understand the gaps in social justice and civil rights movements of decades past and those that are in progress today. We are fighting the same battles today, and there is knowledge and power within each generation that if brought together could create a platform for unity amongst African–Americans towards a common cause.

“The Intergenerational Griot Project” – Reflections on Cultural Sustainability

After graduating, I would like to continue my research and use the findings to create opportunities for facilitated dialogue within the Black community as a means of education, restoration and healing. It is my intention to use what I’ve learned in the course of this process to initiate the first “Intergenerational Griot Project” (IGP); it entails coordinating a community based participatory research project (with the community being four generations of my family connected through a Facebook genealogy page) to tell the story of the 320th through my father’s artifacts. Subsequently, I have two additional cultural groups that have approached me with interest in using the IGP platform to document their history and record the stories of their elders.

The tools, resources and successful methodologies that have been developed by forerunners in the realm of community building, cultural competency, creative place–making, facilitated dialogue, or matters of social reform or support, will provide me with a sound foundation to build my platform, or allow me to add my voice to these efforts that may already be in progress. There is a deep well of knowledge, experience and best practices from which to draw upon. I have read of many models (with a similar premise, but different audiences and methodologies) that speak to the challenges but also positive

²⁶ Seitz, Phillip. 2016. “What Happens When African Americans Confront Their Difficult Past.” *The Public Historian – The Journal of the National Council on Public History*. Volume 38, Number 2. May 2016. 10-22.

outcomes; they further support my premise that this kind of caring engagement with communities or individuals who have suffered negative or traumatic experiences would encourage healing and restoration in the African–American community.

*The Community Toolbox*²⁷: <http://ctb.ku.edu/en>

The Community Toolbox is a comprehensive online portal of resources provided as a service of the Work Group for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas. It features offers training materials, templates, supportive services, instructional guides and much more to launch or sustain community based participatory action research projects and other community engagement activities.

*The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience*²⁸: <http://www.sitesofconscience.org/>

The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience defines itself as “A global network of historic sites, museums, and memory initiatives connecting past struggles to today's movements for human rights and social justice.” Similar to The Community Toolbox, this organization offers intensive training, templates and support resources.

I recently attended a working session on “Facilitating Civic Engagement Dialogue – How to Make It Work” presented by representatives of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience²⁹. Sarah Pharaon and Chuck Arning walked the group through a series of interactive exercises to help us to better understand the four truths that influence the narratives that surface in the course of dialogue, particularly as related to concepts that have the potential of moving people from memory to action:

- Forensic – artifacts, structures, legacies, scholarly knowledge
- Social – puts all contextual elements into the mix of information – media increases the complexity; the aspects of what we remember are indivisibly individual and multifaceted
- Personal – oral histories, diaries
- Reconciliatory – “never again” – a continual lesson of why things occurred before and what we need to remember so it doesn’t happen again

This organization’s focus is to develop and sustain sites, primarily museums and establishments on culturally relevant landmarks, that initiate civic engagement actions and facilitated dialogues as a means of cultivating acts of remembrance, healing and restoration in places of historic significance or that seek reconciliation after tragic past events.

²⁷ The Community Toolbox – a service of the Work Group for Community Health and Development. University of Kansas. <http://ctb.ku.edu/en>

²⁸ International Coalition of Sites of Conscience. <http://www.sitesofconscience.org/>

²⁹ Pharaon, Sarah et al. 2016. “Facilitating Civic Engagement Dialogue – How to Make It Work.” Workshop presented by representatives of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience at the joint meeting of the National Council on Public History and the Society for History in the Federal Government, Baltimore, MD.

The Aspen Institute: <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/>

The Aspen Institute is a non-partisan policy organization that provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and leadership development activities to address a broad spectrum of humanitarian and social concerns. The programs and resources that they offer that most closely align with the work I will pursue in the future are within the areas of Justice and Civic Identity, Philanthropy and Social Enterprise and Opportunity and Development. The resources that I think will be most useful for me include the extensive work that has been done with regard to “Structural Racism and Community Change”³⁰. Through the efforts of the *Roundtable on Community Change*, Aspen Institute has developed tools and resources such as “Structural Racism and Community Building”³¹, a reference guide to help people to understand the premises of structural racism and navigate their approach to engaging meaningful dialogues around this critical yet divisive subject matter.

Another program through the Aspen Institute is Ascend³², a policy program that develops and sustains a national forum for innovative ideas and collaborations that foster the principles of moving children and adults (namely, their parents) toward educational success and economic prosperity. I am most interested in their approach to developing leaders who are taking a two-generation approach in their efforts to create solutions that lead to positive outcomes for children and their families, with a specific commitment to gender and racial equity.

Final Reflections:

When I first considered Cultural Sustainability as a course of study several years ago, I honestly only expected that it would help me in my pursuit of my family history – perhaps having the makings of great storytelling. Or, perhaps it could help me with a career change, hopefully working in a cultural heritage or artistic environment. During this time, there have been several major catalysts that have impacted me so deeply that I am now confronted by my conscience daily, forcing me out of my comfortable seat of complacency regarding matters of civil rights and social justice.

The Trayvon Martin/George Zimmerman trial and verdict was the catalyst that pushed me over the edge during my first residency; my conscience could no longer remain a silent witness on society's sidelines. But why was his death different for me than all the other social injustices that are so prevalent in our world today? Why had this incident had such an impact on me? The Trayvon Martin incident is symbolic to me, not as the poster for racial injustice, gun violence, ethnic profiling, or white privilege – those are all too obvious.

³⁰ Aspen Institute – Roundtable on Community Change <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/search/Roundtable%20on%20Community%20Change>

³¹ Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change. 2004. “Structural Racism and Community Building.” Keith Lawrence, Stacey Sutton, Anne Kubisch, Gretchen Susi and Karen Fulbright-Anderson, authors. Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute.

³² The Aspen Institute. 2016. The Ascend Program. <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/programs/ascend/>

It instead depicts a far more universal theme that is still prevalent within our American society. The visual imagery of this and so many other horrific incidents played out in mass media and the public trials resulting in “not-guilty” verdicts should be indelibly etched in our brains as this generation’s reminder that we have not yet overcome. His face, and the faces of every other victim of brutality and gun violence since then (whether at the hands of supposed figures of authority or because of members within our communities whose moral standards have no regard for human life) represent every male of color in the United States; he could have easily been my father, my husband, my brother, my son, my nephew, my neighbor, my child’s classmate – they are all seen interchangeably as “just another Black boy”...voiceless, invisible and disposable.

I also remember the March(es) on Washington 2013, a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the historic March in 1963. These events were symbolic of the fragmented voices of today’s Black leadership – two separate events on two different days with two completely different agendas, with neither having the intention of mobilizing a commitment of the masses to continuing the movement toward social change. While I could not attend, I was able to stream live video of the speeches that were given as a tribute to the pioneers of the Civil Rights Movement and Dr. King’s “I Have A Dream” speech. It was clear that these influential frontrunners – civic leaders, entertainers, political figures and the original Freedom Riders, were restricted in what sound bites they could convey within the limited 3–5 minute time constraints they were allotted to say something profound. I was struck in this event and in other interviews with the pioneers of the movement by the recurring theme that they reiterated; they have fought their part of the struggle, but the battle is not yet won. Our champions of civil rights are standing with the baton of social justice outstretched to us; they have run their leg of this marathon race – it is our responsibility to continue the relay to the finish line. Their words of wisdom included:

- *“We can no longer afford an individual approach to justice.”; “Our efforts tend to focus on our youth and our elders – I am looking for those among the generation in between to continue this fight.”[...] “The victory will be collective.” – Myrlie Evers-Williams*
- *“The children of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. will fight their battle with James Crowe Jr., Esquire.”[...] “The dream was not just for one generation.” – Reverend Al Sharpton*
- *“Progress can only be measured by seeing how far we have to go.” – Bill Russell*

Now, as I find myself at the last few months of my academic studies, the most recent catalysts convincing me that I have a purpose within the realm of cultural sustainability were attending two conferences in 2016: The Joint Meeting of the National Council on Public History and the Society for History in the Federal Government themed, “Challenging

the Exclusive Past”³³ as well as “The Future of the African–American Past” Conference sponsored by the National Museum of African–American History and Culture, History and the American Historical Association.³⁴ As a newcomer to this arena and admittedly still very much wet behind the ears, it was both intimidating and exhilarating to engage with professionals at all levels from the fields of public history, anthropology, archaeology, museology, heritage preservation and related disciplines. The theme of challenging the exclusive past resonated throughout each session, with engaging discourse that questioned the traditionally exclusionary practices and methodologies of recording history. Attendees grappled with tough issues in sessions addressing topics such as:

- “Uncomfortable Truth”
- “Museums and Civic Discourse – Past, Present & Emerging Futures”
- “Exhibiting Gentrification – Documenting the History of an African American Neighborhood in Richmond, VA”
- “Change Starts Within: Challenging Cultural & Structural Barriers to Inclusive Public History”
- “Painting Dangerous Memories on Historic Landscapes”
- “Using Ethnography in Public History to Challenge the Exclusive Past”
- “Facilitating a Civic Engagement Dialogue: How to Make It Work”
- “Interpreting the History of Race Riots and Racialized Violence in the Age of “Black Lives Matter”

Each working group and panel of presenters shared the challenges, lessons learned and successful examples of how practitioners around the country are rethinking the power and purpose of public history and examining the crucial role they play by bearing the awesome responsibility of carefully navigating the ethical considerations and complexities of representation. There were many dialogues that addressed the need for a far more inclusive, multidisciplinary approach to collaborative ethnographic work with the intent of “creating knowledge” about the past and preserving the historic relevance of events, people, places, cultures and traditions.

The intersubjective nature of ethnography requires a willingness to change on both sides of participatory research to find spaces of shared concern to frame the work and to assure multiple “truths” are taken into account...that marginalized and unrepresented voices are heard, given equal relevance and most importantly, valued as an integral part of the beautifully diverse and complex society that we share.

This joint conference also sparked thought–provoking ideas challenging our public education systems and institutes of higher learning to examine their credentialing

³³ “Challenging the Exclusive Past”. National Council on Public History and the Society for History in the Federal Government Joint Meeting. March 16-19, 2016. Baltimore, MD. <http://ncph.org/past-meetings/annual-meetings>

³⁴ “The Future of the African-American Past” Conference sponsored by the National Museum of African-American History and Culture, History and the American Historical Association. May 19-21, 2016. Washington, DC. <https://futureafampast.si.edu/>

programs and curricula with a lens toward reimagining the outdated ways that the knowledge of history is taught in the classroom and public settings, as well as finding ways to better prepare current and future generations of public historians to be versatile enough to adapt to the shifting philosophies of work in this field.

At “The Future of the African–American Past” conference, it was encouraging to know that the issues of identity and many facets of representation of the African–American experience have been carefully considered in preparation for the grand opening of the new Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture in September 2016. More than three decades in the making, this conference expanded upon the critical work that was launched at Purdue University in 1983 through a collaboration of senior historians; it was foundational to understanding what had been learned about the African–American past and identifying those issues at that point in history that still needed to be explored.

The goal of the 2016 conference and this initiative was to generate a new dialogue to explore how the landscape has evolved over the past 30 years, and how the contextual knowledge and understanding of our complex narratives of the histories and cultures of the African diaspora, fraught with struggles and achievement, have changed as well. Although the narratives of slavery, emancipation, civil rights and recurrent themes of oppression, struggle and liberation will always resonate deeply across our cultural and ethnographic differences, our continued discourse and debate must address our common understanding of African American history as it relates to the broader context of American history.

There were many distinguished scholars who spoke brilliantly on their panels, engaging with audience members through meaningful question and answer sessions. This conference launched a platform for the next generation’s discussion and dialogue around those critical issues that were at the heart of the work done in 1983. It creates a wonderful opportunity to learn more about the topically relevant public history studies and work that has been done over the past several decades in the areas of understanding the struggle for civil rights and Black freedom, identifying who represents Black America, the impacts of race, power and capitalism on Black America, the restorative power of history, preservation and public reckoning and so much more. It also provides a much needed forum to think critically about how we as cultural workers and public historians can bridge the gap between understanding the contextual relevance of our history as a diverse people and its correlation to the struggles and issues of African–Americans that are still prevalent today. It brought to mind the adage that those who do not know their history are destined to repeat it.

I took note of the fact that with the exception of one panel session, there were very few historians of a younger demographic among the panelists. This is totally understandable in that this event was designed not only to celebrate the eminent grand opening of the new museum, but to thank and pay tribute to the historians and scholars who have been working diligently towards making that dream a reality. I am grateful that they have provided such a strong foundation for future generations to build upon, and the National Museum of African American History and Culture will be an amazing space for growing our knowledge of the African American experience.

As students, recent graduates and young people were well represented amongst the attendees, it made me curious about opportunities for new entrants into the public history arena, as well as what pedagogical methodologies might encourage younger people of color to consider careers in public history. One of the key premises of my work in Cultural Sustainability is to provoke our younger generations to recognize the importance of heritage and the key role they play in preserving the memory of the historic times they are living through right now.

Much like our civil rights pioneers, our elder historians are standing before us with an outstretched baton, waiting for the next generation to take it and run with it. That is where my work begins. Goucher's Cultural Sustainability program has immersed me in a world that I never knew existed, and has given me the theoretical and practical knowledge I need to pursue a career path that was previously only a passion-fueled dream. I am part of that generation that Myrlie Evers-Williams is calling out, to remember and pass on the legacy of the accomplishments and triumphs of our African American elders, continue the struggle and to reconnect younger generations to their resilient roots. I am one of the next generation of cultural workers who will be actively engaged in the dialogue that creates a framework to better understand "The Future of the African American Past".

For me, this is a very personal journey – and my path has come full circle through this program. I can now clearly see how to align my work in Cultural Sustainability with these shifts in rethinking how going forward we influence, shape and record public history, and find ways to use this knowledge to restore health, prosperity and wholeness in our African American communities. It is indeed desperately needed for this historic time of transition that I am witnessing during my time here on this earth.

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Resources for Community Engagement and Civic Discourse

The Aspen Institute

<https://www.aspeninstitute.org/>

Aspen Institute – Roundtable on Community Change

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"The Future of the African-American Past" Conference sponsored by the National Museum of African-American History and Culture, History and the American Historical Association. May 19-21, 2016.

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[Appendix B](#)

Field Notes Summary

CSP 610 - Cultural Documentation Field Notes - Carol Brooks

Field Notes – October 20-24, 2014: Historic East Towson in Baltimore County, MD

On Monday October 20th I met with both Adelaide Bentley (86 years old) and Louis Diggs (83 years old) at the Carver Community Center.

Ms. Bentley only works at the center 2-3 hours a day as needed, between the hours of 9 a.m.-12 p.m. My appointment with Ms. Bentley was scheduled for 10:00; Mr. Diggs would be joining us later after he took his wife to a dialysis treatment that morning. I was a little delayed in getting to the center, because I didn't realize that the streets surrounding it were either one-way or dead-ends within the community. I took several wrong turns getting there since I was coming from home as opposed to from my office (which takes me on the Towson Bypass through the community). Once I arrived, I was confused by the on-street parking; the signs seemed to be zoned for residential permits, or had specific hours when you could not park. There are a few spaces immediately in front of the playground area, which had all been taken up...since there were no lines to delineate the spaces, cars took up a great deal of space between them. I parked on the side street further away from the center and hoped I would not be ticketed. Lesson learned – always scope out your space and travel plans prior to your appointment to be respectful of the person's schedule and to give you ample time to compose yourself prior to meeting them. You don't want to give them the impression that you are unprofessional or that their time is not valued as important to you.

Upon arrival at the center, I could immediately tell that this was an old school building. It is painted white on the outside, but the paint is chipping/peeling badly and looks weather-worn. There is a small bronze placard on the wall to the far left of the entrance as you enter; you can't really see it with the trees that are next to the door and you have to stand very close to it to read it. The placard tells the remarkable story of this building and denotes that it is an historic landmark.

Entering the building gave me flashbacks to elementary school, but in an even older building than the one I attended. The walls were tall white painted concrete or cement – I don't even remember if there were windows, so the entry space felt somewhat sterile and claustrophobic. You are immediately confronted by a steep stairwell that goes 3 stories up; on the landing of each stairwell is a thick, heavy metal door with a small rectangular window on the left to peer through. It looked like there were classrooms decorated for small children in the hallways beyond the door and I didn't think that was where I should have been going. There was no reception area to announce myself and no directional signs for visitors, so I traveled up the next flight of stairs. On the second landing, I passed an elderly man who was coming out of the door from the hallway on the second level. I asked him where I could find Ms. Bentley's office, and he directed me up the third flight of stairs to the first office on the left, but not without first asking me questions about who I was (I was glad about that...he seemed very protective and wanted to know who this stranger to the community was). I was so thankful that I did not have heavy equipment or rolling briefcase with me...I was winded by the time I got to the top of the third flight of stairs.

There was a larger outer office space that led into Ms. Bentley's very small office space, where she was seated behind her desk facing the entry, intently focused on whatever she was reading. There was a large window looking out over the community behind her. The desk surfaces and shelving surrounding her were completely covered with books, files and tall stacks of papers. There was one office chair with worn upholstery in front of her desk for a guest and it was wedged tightly between the desk and the bookshelves around it. This was supposed to only be a simple introductory meeting, but I wouldn't have had anywhere

to place a recording device in this office anyway; I had to hold my journal in my lap, and it was really difficult to write notes. I began to try to scope out the space for a future interview, but determined it was way too small to establish a well-framed shot (even though seeing her in the space said a lot about her character and personality). She had a very small opening to get out from behind her desk...I could immediately tell this was a very busy, no-nonsense lady. On the telephone, she has a very deep voice and is very direct with her words. She was still a little tired and under the weather from the week prior...I wasn't sure what to expect, but I wanted to be mindful of her time and planned to be finished within the one hour we had allotted.

I introduced myself and apologized for being late, and then asked if I was alright where I had parked. She looked out the window and pointed out to me where I could park for future reference, although it still seemed to be only a few spaces open before a visitor would be taking up residential parking. I will admit that I was a little intimidated, and hoped I had not already made a bad impression. It was the kind of "fearful respect" that those of my generation hold for their parents, grandparents and elders (you immediately mind your manners and use words like "yes, ma'am", "please", "thank you"). We sat down to begin our conversation; I established the parameters for this meeting as being an informal opportunity to get to know one another and to talk a little more about my schoolwork and this project, and to hear her thoughts on how best to proceed and schedule an interview with her and members of the community. I could tell that initially she was unsure of my motives since I work in Baltimore County Government; she even went so far as to say that she wasn't sure what she should or should not be sharing with me. I reassured her that my work was specifically related to my class work and potentially my capstone project; however, I was also excited that there might be ways in the future that I could contribute to the current preservation efforts by the County to preserve and recognize historic African-American communities both as part of my job and my studies.

I opened the conversation up by explaining that although I passed this community every day in my commute home from work, that it was completely invisible to me before I was given a little bit of information by my colleague in the Dept. of Planning. Ms. Bentley indicated that this "invisibility" was planned intentionally when the original residential community was far larger and more established, to protect them from the increasing student population and associated crime in the area. Subsequently, being invisible has only worked to their disadvantage with the encroachment of commercial development and the amount of student housing that has been integrated into the community to accommodate nearby college campuses. These changes have pretty much decimated the cultural heritage and identity of this established African-American community, which at one time housed multiple family generations for the residents living in the greater Towson area.

While this was supposed to be just a short introductory meeting, Ms. Bentley had prepared some information for me which included an East Towson Community Conservation Plan ("The East Towson Enhancement Area Action Plan") that appears to have been written in mid-1970's and presented to the County Council, Office of Planning & Zoning and the North East Towson Community Improvement Association. This document was produced over a 10-month period as a final response in this community's struggle to preserve their historic identity as an African-American community, as well as the oldest existing community in Towson. It is absolutely heart-wrenching to read the values and vision that this community once established for itself, and to see what little remains of it today.

"Although zoning changes were made in 1971 to encourage commercial redevelopment in our community, the residents have remained steadfast to our roots and values, and still residents have been displaced by the "ring road." A constant reminder of the past is what East Towson is. Many want to erase from our memories and not allow future generations to accept our many cultural differences.

Not until we can collectively accept where we came from, will we be able to grow forward as one. We are no different in some respects to other communities. We raise our children to love who and whose they are; to have self-respect, dignity, and pride, to teach them to become productive, upstanding moral citizens. Can we do this living someplace else? Yes, but shouldn't we have the choice?

As you examine this document, examine your hearts. Ask yourselves, how you would feel if you lived in East Towson, or your parents, grandchildren or children. Would you not want them to have the opportunity to pursue liberty and happiness in the place of their choosing?"

As Ms. Bentley began to talk, she was clearly more comfortable in sharing her thoughts with me (and I immediately regretted not having my recording devices cued up and ready to go...2nd lesson learned – always be prepared for an interview; you never know when something incredible will happen). We were about 30 minutes into our conversation when Mr. Diggs arrived and joined us.

Mr. Diggs, a historian and published author of 9 books about the history of African-American communities in the County, had climbed the same steep steps that I had (I didn't know how). He appeared to be very tired and frail; he couldn't pick up or push the chair from the outer office in to join us, so I quickly pulled in one of the other hard wooden chairs in and offered him the cushioned office chair where I had been seated. He thanked me but sat in the wooden chair and explained he was in some degree of pain having had multiple surgeries on his hips, knee, back). He was so apologetic for being late and mentioned that his wife's dialysis treatment that morning was very problematic and he couldn't leave her. I expressed how incredibly horrible I felt that he had placed so much priority on our meeting, but he said it was not a problem and that he made sure his wife was settled and taken care of prior to coming. I then tried even harder to be succinct in facilitating the conversation so as to expedite this introductory meeting, allowing the two of them to get back home and take care of themselves. At this point it was very tight and uncomfortable in the office and it was now even more difficult to write notes or hold any recording devices or reading materials in my lap.

Then, just when I thought this meeting was the most poorly-planned, worst idea I ever had and was feeling really guilty for being so demanding of this elderly duo, something phenomenal happened. As they began to greet one another and catch up on the status of their lives, loved ones and mutual friends, they came to life. Their eyes were bright and sparkling and you could feel how close and caring this extended circle of friends was. As they engaged in conversation (sans any prompting or questions from me...I tried to fade into the background) they got increasingly animated and excited as they recounted their memories and stories about the community, the people, the good, the bad and the ugly. I was so captivated by each of them as storytellers, I couldn't have written down a single note if I wanted to...I wanted to just sit in their presence and absorb everything that I could from them – their joy, their enthusiasm, their love, their pride, their pain. They are both absolute treasures; completely humble and unassuming, yet powerful and unwavering in their convictions to preserve the historic legacy of African-Americans in Baltimore County. I could tell that at some point I had somehow transitioned from being an outsider to being taken under their wings and lovingly taught. I felt like I could have been in the presence of my own grandparents, whom sadly I never knew on either side of my family. It was an amazing feeling.

I had not intended to use video at this juncture, but I regret that I would not be able to recreate the dialogue with the two of them; we were well beyond our one-hour meeting schedule and the conversation had shifted from an introduction to an intensive interview. Out of respect, I intermittently reminded them that I wanted to be mindful of their time, but they waved their hands at me and said that they were fine. Ms. Adelaide, who previously had been adamant that she leaves by twelve, had willingly lost track of

time. After we shared in a wonderful conversation, she was excited to take me on a tour of The Jacob's House Museum; I think she is proudest of this single accomplishment. Both were now comfortable with my intentions; at this point I shared a copy of the release form for their signatures, and requested permission to take pictures and transcribe notes from this meeting and future recorded interviews for this community documentation project.

Here are highlights of the memories and thoughts they shared with me during this meeting:

- Ms. Bentley remembered the community as being a loving, caring community...everyone knew everyone and the whole community raised the children
- Mr. Diggs gave me a copy of his book entitled "Since the Beginning: African-American Communities in Towson" (January 1, 2000) which prominently features Historic East Towson, as well as the other neighborhoods that existed adjacent to or within close proximity of downtown Towson.
- The community was once exclusively African-American; now almost every other home is owned by white residents.
- Subsequent generations did not have access to homes to purchase so that they could stay within the community, so they moved away. Younger generations who have inherited homes from their parents don't want to live there and sell the homes to the highest bidder or development companies. Therefore, there are no longer multiple generation African-American families there, but an elderly population from that group.
- Community boundaries used to be far more expansive – down York Road going south; Towsontown Blvd used to be Hillen Road extending through Towson; Joppa Road; Pennsylvania Ave; Virginia Avenue.
- Commercial Development has gone on continuously without regard for their community and has taken much of East Towson's land/homes...many did not own the homes (rented), and property owners would sell them as opposed to being given an opportunity for home ownership.
- The Community Development plan (see paperwork from Ms. Bentley) included their vision for the community including walkability, landscaped green spaces, and gated entry with community signs. The small community signs that are currently there have been vandalized several times, with the community absorbing the expense of repair and replacement.
- The worst thing that could have ever happened to the community was in the late 1950's when the gas and electric company built a huge substation in the middle of the community; there was also a railroad that ran through as well.
- Ms. Adelaide is very complimentary of the past three County Executives with regard to accessibility...the best administration was under Dutch Ruppberger when Mary Harvey worked in Community Conservation. Currently, she is in constant communication with a representative from the County Executive's office, the County Executive (Kevin Kamenetz) and their Councilman (David Marks); they visit her and the community often, and have invested millions of dollars into preservation efforts.
- The former Assoc. President did not have community interests at heart, but rather her own efforts to open a licensed daycare center. Ms. Adelaide stepped up to the role on behalf of the community, but never felt like a leader. She just did what she believed to be "right". When she did most of her advocacy activities on behalf of the community, she herself did not own a home. It was much later when she was the recipient of one of the newly renovated energy efficient homes and is now a home owner.

- Although the Carver Community Center has been established as a national historic landmark, the facility itself is not specifically dedicated to Historic East Towson. The majority of the space in the building is a privately run child daycare center (not associated with Ms. Bentley or the community group). Ironically, because of the aging demographic in the community, the children who are there are from outside of the area; there are other intermittent tenants include the Baltimore County Chapter of the NAACP and occasionally representatives from small Baltimore County agencies. She has less space and sometimes has to compromise her access to the board room.

- The Community Association consists of a small group of the faithful few. There are other African-American residents who don't participate in any way in bettering the community, but complain when something is wrong or blame her for whatever is happening. There is a meeting on November 4; I was invited to meet/interview others.

- She doesn't really have any relationship with the community across the street (Towson Green) except when they want to use the community center board room for a meeting. Ms. Bentley was upset when she was promised \$50K for community improvement, but later have it divided in half to give \$25K to Towson Green (which clearly has no need of it)

- Mr. Diggs offered me an opportunity to take a Historic Tour of African-American communities on Saturday November 1; He has a 501c3 Historic Society organization with a board that is working to renovate a very old building (Pest House) to be a small museum to house and display his hundreds of photographs and artifacts he has collected over the years during his research. He is working on the restoration of an old church while simultaneously writing his 10th book about the process. The County has provided him grant money to publish each of his books and to support his cultural preservation efforts; this work is very important to the County Executive.

- We ended our visit with a tour of the Jacob House Museum, Ms. Bentley's pride and joy. At this point, Mr. Diggs and Ms. Bentley are completely participatory and asked if I would send them some of the pictures I had taken of them together. We left the center at approximately 12:20 p.m. with Ms. Bentley giving me a huge hug. I contacted her to schedule a formal interview on Tuesday October 28 at 10:00 a.m.

CSP 610 - Cultural Documentation Field Notes - Carol Brooks

Field Notes – October 27 - November 1, 2014: Historic East Towson in Baltimore County, MD – Scheduled Formal Interview with Adelaide Bentley

On Tuesday October 28th I returned to the Carver Community Center to conduct a formal interview with Ms. Adelaide Bentley. I borrowed video camera equipment and a tripod from Goucher to record my interview subjects during this phase of my coursework. I tried to practice and familiarize myself with the equipment prior to using it in the field, but I still had some level of concern that due to my inexperience that I may not produce quality video. I also did not take a microphone, so I wasn't certain of the camcorder's capabilities with regard to capturing sound and how to adjust the sensitivity level depending upon my distance from the speaker. I took my personal digital recorder and my iPad with me as well, but the issue that I struggle with most in conducting ethnographic research have to do with being able to master using multiple pieces of equipment gracefully and efficiently, while still taking notes and being fully present with the subjects during the interview. I'm not sure that practice would make perfect in these scenarios; despite lots of technical planning and preparation, you can never anticipate what may or may not happen when in the field, and you should always have an alternate back up plan and equipment in the

wings to make best use of the subjects' time (and yours). I hope to purchase my own equipment for my work during my capstone so that it becomes an extension of me and I can be confident in its capabilities as well as my own.

Once again, my appointment with Ms. Bentley was scheduled for 10:00. I hadn't yet seen other space in the center, but was hoping we would be able to use either the conference room or the outer office area to frame the shot. While this was scheduled to be a one hour interview, I wasn't certain that I would be able to recreate the same incredible dialogue as had flowed so freely at our introductory meeting. I was fully prepared to edit my scripted questions as needed to ask her to elaborate only on a few specific themes; I also expected that I may only get a half hour to forty-five minutes maximum of quality interview recorded material.

When I arrived at her office, I was greatly concerned for her. She was not feeling well at all and looked terrible physically. She couldn't explain what it was, but she seemed to think it was gastrointestinal in nature (but was pointing to her mid-chest area downward. She sat behind her desk with her head held down or in her hands; her voice was very deep and her speech was very quiet and slow. She kept shaking her head slowly saying she didn't know what this is, but kept apologizing for not being 100% for the interview. She offered to still do it even though she didn't think it would come out well; she had stayed home the day prior, and only came in because she didn't want to disappoint me or further delay my schoolwork. I made sure that she still had my cell phone number and could me at any time if she is unable to keep an appointment; I reassured her that her health was my only concern and that we could reschedule the interview.

I honestly wanted her to let me take her home or to a medical facility, but she adamantly refused and said that she would be okay and that it would pass. She just wanted to sit quietly and drink her tea. I asked her to explain what she was experiencing just to be sure it wasn't something more serious. I kept her engaged in friendly conversation just to gauge how serious her condition was; I asked her if she had been to a doctor (since this had been recurring since before we first met), or if it felt like indigestion or some kind of stomach virus. She was so tired and seemed worried; I lightened the conversation and talked about herbal remedies like ginger or peppermint tea to settle her stomach. She actually perked up a little as she spoke about her daughter using ginger, but it being too spicy for her; she reminiscently said she hadn't had peppermint since she was a little girl (she actually smiled when she thought about that).

I didn't want to leave her alone, so I sat quietly with her for a while as she composed herself; I offered to go get something for her if that would help. There was someone else in the office across the hallway; but, Ms. Adelaide hadn't made her aware she wasn't feeling well. She told me that she had a doctor's appointment the following week; I suggested that perhaps she should call her doctor to explain her symptoms, and see if he/she recommended that she come in sooner. I was really happy when she took that advice seriously and said that she thought that was a good idea...she was going to do that as soon as we were done; I felt badly that she had come in just for me, so I began to prepare to leave so she would make that call. However, she seemed to want to continue talking and was genuinely appreciative of my concern for her and simply having me there with her.

It was difficult to see Ms. Adelaide like this...during our first encounter she was a feisty, no-nonsense, energetic, vibrant woman; today you could tell she was desperately trying to put up a good front, but the infirmities, frailty and limitations that are part of aging clearly had her concerned. I was confronted again with the reality of how fragile the elderly population is within my community of interest both for this class and my capstone work.

Then, *deja vu*...just when I thought this meeting was the worst idea I ever had and was feeling really guilty for being so demanding of this sweet woman, the magic happened again. I had put my camera and recording equipment under my chair long ago, having no intention of going through with an interview. However, the more Ms. Adelaide and I engaged in general conversation about how she felt, the more she shared her memories about the community and its history and values. She literally came to life, and

gradually she was no longer aware of the pain that had her so puzzled. I was still cognizant of the fact that I wanted her to connect with her doctor as soon as possible, and that I was the only impediment to her doing so. We had been engaged in conversation for close to 45 minutes already, and so I had no intention of trying to now set up for a formal interview; and, I could tell that while the complaint was subsiding, it would still come and go in waves of shorter duration while she was sitting there drinking her tea.

Once again, she had totally captivated me in recounting her memories and sharing her thoughts. It was not a moment for stopping everything and pulling out a notepad or camera and I wished I'd had the presence of mind to at least pull out my voice recorder and just hit the record button. It came out of the blue and was totally unexpected...I watched her face and body transform in front of me from a woman who might have been on death's door into Miss Addie, the spunky lady I had gotten to know the week prior. Her voice was still a little weak, and her energy ebbed and flowed, but whatever was holding her down was passing and getting better. By the time she was through, she was fully recharged. It seemed that the whole process of the dialogue between us, the opportunity of sharing her story and having someone listen, was healing for both her body and spirit. I laughed and told her how sorry I was that I hadn't turned on my camera, and how amazing she was.

She had answered my interview questions without me asking a single one of them. More importantly, she began to ask me questions; she reiterated from our previous conversation that she didn't understand why people called her a leader, or why she was selected to be honored by the NAACP. I expressed my admiration for her, and told her that it was her humble, unassuming spirit, her loving care and concern for the community and people within it, and her unwavering conviction to do "what was right" that made her such an incredible leader for all these years. She said her granddaughter had told her the same thing, and spoke of a great deal of spiritual faith that has kept her. She truly touched my heart in saying, "I thank you...you're teaching me something about myself."

That is what confirmed for me that the premise for this project and ultimately my capstone work is right on target...that it is crucial that we listen to and capture the voices of these treasured elders and honor them for their contribution to our lives. Adelaide Bentley is the essence of "The Intergenerational Griot Project"...I am so grateful to have had an opportunity to sit in her presence and absorb the transfer of her energy, spirit and wisdom; I am sad for those who never will. We have to document their stories before they are no longer here to share them...it would be tragic to lose their voices forever.

Ms. Adelaide pulled herself up to the desk, intertwined her fingers in front of her, slowly lifted her head with her eyebrows raised and a smile saying, "I'm feeling better now." We discussed possible dates for the formal interview and said she would make herself available whenever it was best for me...although I knew we would never recreate what had just happened. She invited me to their next community meeting on November 4th and has already told them about my project, so it will be interesting to see their level of engagement.

We walked out of the office together, and she showed me the showcase where she had proudly displayed her awards and honors, letting me take a quick photograph before we went our separate ways. She gave me a huge hug once again, and promised she would call the doctor as soon as she got home. I had to go back to the office and compose myself.

CSP 610 - Cultural Documentation Field Notes - Carol Brooks

Field Notes – October 27 - November 1, 2014: Preserving the History of African-American Communities in Baltimore County, MD – Emancipation Day Tour with Louis Diggs

Over the course of my activities in the field, I realized that not only was I learning so much about the legacy of African-American communities in Baltimore County, but that I now have access to two phenomenal living

historic treasures in Ms. Adelaide and Mr. Diggs. There was a profound quote written in the forward of Mr. Diggs' book, "Since The Beginning: African-American Communities in Towson", by Lenwood Johnson, writer, former Urban Planner for Baltimore County government and the first elected Vice President of Baltimore County's branch of the NAACP (1998):

"In Africa our villages had griots, people who could recite the history of their people going back over hundreds of years. They could in the telling of their stories call out the names of their ancestors. Thus by calling out their ancestors' names, they (the ancestors) would live in the hearts and minds of those present. Mr. Diggs' books are serving the same function of the griot. Not only do the books contain numerous photographs and narratives, they also contain lists of names of family members long since gone. People are using his book to establish or re-establish family ties. They are personally able to now capture some of their long lost past and help in the finding of themselves. I feel that this is the greater good that Mr. Diggs and these books do."

I took some time this week to read through, process and compile the information found in the numerous resources the two of them had shared with me, to supplement the documented research in my site plan.

Here are some additional highlights of interest:

Adelaide Bentley, President of the North East Towson Improvement Association: Adelaide Bentley has been a trailblazer in her church, her lodge and the community of Historic East Towson. She has lived here all of her life and her family has called it home for more than 125 years. She is the granddaughter of the Founding pastor of the Mount Olive Baptist Church, another historic landmark in the community founded in 1888. Her parents, the late Reverend William C. Williams and Catherine Williams were both born and raised in East Towson. In 2014, Ms. Bentley was given the "Keeper of the Flame (Patricia Ferguson) Award" by the Baltimore County branch of the NAACP. At 86 years old, she is affectionately known as "The Mayor of East Towson". Her leadership roles include:

- President of the North East Towson Improvement Association, Inc. for 16 years
- Leader in the preservation efforts of key architectural and community assets, having them designated as national historic landmarks; in addition to the houses, protected landmarks include St. James A.U.M.P. Church, Carver School (community center) and Jacob's House (log cabin)
- Director of the Carver Day Camp for 15 years
- President of the Missionary Ministry for Mount Olive Baptist Church for 20 years
- Member of the Benevolent & Protective Order of the Elks, Esther Progressive Temple #586 for 53 years, serving as treasurer for 30 years
- Member of the Myra Grand Chapter of MD Eastern Star, Adah Chapter #8 for 10 years

Community Support and Celebrations: Among Ms. Adelaide's proudest accomplishments are the two community-based events that she and members of the community association sponsor. This includes "Christmas in April" in which residents within the community are selected to receive free home improvement services to include repair work, maintenance, beautification and new roofs. They also host community parties with the theme of "Come Home To Historic East Towson", attracting multiple generations of family, neighbors and friends back to the community for reunion, fellowship and celebration. These events are held annually at Christmas, and on an intermittent schedule over the years.

The Importance of the Church: The cornerstone of East Towson and all of the 39 other historic communities has been the church. The churches were a source of faith, strength and power for each of these neighborhoods, most of which still remain as landmarks today.

Louis Diggs Historic Tour of African-American Communities in Baltimore County, MD

On Saturday November 1st, I attended Louis Diggs' guided tour of historic African-American Communities in Baltimore County. This event was sponsored by Baltimore County's Office of Promotion and Tourism celebrating Emancipation Day. This momentous event marked Maryland as the first slave state to voluntarily free its enslaved people by popular vote. One hundred fifty years ago on November 1, 1864, the Maryland State Legislature adopted a new state constitution, which emancipated Maryland's slaves. President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863 had only freed slaves in states of rebellion, of which Maryland was not one. During the Civil War, Maryland was a Union State in which slavery was legal.

While Mr. Diggs is 83 years old, he was truly in his element and full of energy and enthusiasm on this tour. It was evident that he, his assistant tour guide (Betty Stewart), and the bus driver had experience conducting this tour; it was well synchronized, very professional and extremely educational. He is a captivating storyteller and made the history come to life as he directed the driver through the neighborhoods on the tour. He is a humble, gentle soul; he barely had strength to hold the microphone up to his mouth and remain standing for extended periods of time as he narrated the tour stops. But, like Ms. Adelaide, he comes to life when he is sharing his passion for preserving the history of the African-American communities in Baltimore County.

Highlights of the tour include:

Baltimore County has 40 historic African-American settlements; Historic East Towson is part of what were once four settlements in the Towson area encompassing Lutherville, Schwartz Avenue and Sandy Bottom. Sandy Bottom is no longer in existence.

Historic landmarks on the tour included:

- 9:00 – 9:45 a.m. Photographic displays at the Hubert V. Simmons Museum of Negro League Baseball at the Owings Mills Public Library; this collection of artifacts belongs to Ray Banks, curator of the exhibit. We were joined on our tour by him as well as one of the surviving players from the Satchel Page All-Stars.
- 10:00-11:00 a.m. Oella – We visited Mt. Gilboa AME Church, the oldest, still active African-American church in Baltimore County, as well as the Benjamin Banneker Historical Park and Museum; we then drove through Winters Lane, a Historic African-American community in Catonsville
- 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Slave Safe Houses – Union Bethel AME Church, The Emmarts UM Church, and Bethel A.U.M.P. a slave church in Granite that Mr. Diggs is working on preservation of the facility and converting it into the Diggs-Johnson mini-museum.
- 12:00-2:00 p.m. Turner Station – Since 1887, the largest historic African-American community in the county; we had presentations on the life of Henrietta Lacks during lunch at Union Baptist Church hosted by the Henrietta Lacks Legacy Group and Kingdom Economic System and met two members of the Lacks family. We then took a bus tour of the community, guided by Ms. Courtney Leigh Speed. We ended at the newly dedicated Sollers Point Multipurpose Center and saw the Turner Station History Center.
- 2:20-3:00 p.m. – Return to Owings Mills Library

During the return trip to the library, Mr. Diggs used this time as an opportunity to remind us of the importance of researching, documenting and educating the next generation of their history. He has written nine books and is currently working on his tenth, all funded by grants from Baltimore County government. His passion for this subject matter was evident, and he encouraged the audience to get involved with these preservation efforts in various ways. He is looking for support for his many projects, and opportunities to pass his knowledge along to the next generation.

Technical aspects of the trip:

- Once again, I had a difficult time managing multiple pieces of equipment, especially on a very tight motor coach. I used the video camera equipment from Goucher, my iPad, my cell phone and my digital recorder to capture photos, video and sound.
- The seating on the bus (or at least the seat where I was located) was not conducive to getting some of the shots that were on the opposite side of where I was sitting, or toward the front of the bus where Mr. Diggs was seated. I also had to use both my digital voice recorder and the recorder on the camcorder in case the camera had difficulty in picking up the sound. There was a speaker overhead that helped project the voice of the narrator.
- It was absolutely impossible to take written notes. I tried to pay careful attention to all that was being taught while keeping the video camera ready for anything.
- I went back to the Negro League Baseball Museum upon our return to the library to see if I could get better photos than I had taken in the morning. There were no crowds of people standing in the way of the most important exhibit information.

New Bibliographic Resources:

Diggs, Louis S. 2000. *Since The Beginning: African-American Communities in Towson*.

Hoffer, Eric. 1973. *Reflections on the Human Condition*. Hopewell Publications, New Jersey aph. 183: *"It is the individual only who is timeless. Societies, cultures, and civilizations - past and present - are often incomprehensible to outsiders, but the individual's hunger, anxieties, dreams, and preoccupations have remained unchanged through the millennia. Thus, we are up against the paradox that the individual who is more complex, unpredictable, and mysterious than any communal entity is the one nearest to our understanding; so near that even the interval of millennia cannot weaken our feeling of kinship. If in some manner the voice of an individual reaches us from the remotest distance of time, it is a timeless voice speaking about ourselves."*

CSP 610 - Cultural Documentation Field Notes - Carol Brooks

Field Notes – November 3 - 8, 2014: Historic East Towson in Baltimore County, MD – North East Community Improvement Association Meeting

On Tuesday November 4th at 5:45 p.m., I returned to the Carver Community Center to conduct the rescheduled formal interview with Ms. Adelaide Bentley, and to attend their community meeting to meet some of the residents. For this interview, I am using the video camera equipment and a tripod from Goucher for recording, my iPad for photographs, and my voice recorder for notes. At this point I had used the equipment fairly extensively on the historic tour, and am more familiar with its capabilities and how to download the video and audio to my computer for cataloguing and transcription purposes.

I called Ms. Bentley while on my way to the center to confirm that she was feeling well and that we were still scheduled to meet for our interview prior to the community meeting. I was told the week prior that the meeting started at 7:00, so I scheduled the interview with Ms. Adelaide at 6:00. Even though I planned for this to be a half hour interview, and I still needed to see the space we would be in so that I could best frame it, so I arrived 15 minutes early to set up. As I doubted that I would be able to recreate the same level of dialogue as had flowed so freely at our preliminary meetings, I edited my scripted questions to ask her to

elaborate only on a few specific themes. I also wasn't sure yet how we might conduct interviews with any of the community members if they agreed to it; it wasn't clear whether or not Ms. Bentley would be allowing me a portion of the meeting to record the group and ask a few questions as part of a panel interview, or if this would be just a preliminary introduction of the project to the community members, with me scheduling interviews with those who were interested on another day. I was appreciative of the access to the community afforded me by Ms. Adelaide, and I did not want to impose the objectives of my project deadlines, superseding the group's extremely important discussion of the impending community development project (Towson Mews).

When I arrived at the center, Ms. Adelaide was in her office with one other member of the group (Mr. Charles Johnson, Jr.). She had explained my project to him and suggested that he would be a good person to interview; it was interesting to observe the various personalities among the community members, but I should have anticipated that I would have to start at the beginning to establish a rapport with them so that they felt comfortable sharing their thoughts and trusting my motives. Mr. Johnson was very expressive and was ready to immediately begin talking, but was also very clear that he did not want to be on camera. I immediately realized that I would need to figure out a way to accommodate recording the interview(s) and portions of the meeting while still honoring his request not to be photographed or filmed. Ms. Adelaide then mentioned that the rest of the group usually begins coming in around 6:30, which meant for me that it would also be difficult to capture my individual interview with her without being interrupted or cut short. I got the sense that while she is wonderfully expressive when engaged in conversation, she lacked confidence in herself about doing a good job on camera. I think she wanted to bring the others into the process to divert the attention away from her, saying that other members had a greater recollection of historic detail and personal stories. I reassured her that she would do fine, and tried to move things along so that I could at least get a few good minutes of a recorded interview (simply to meet the goals of the assignment).

Ms. Bentley took us into a tiny meeting room which had a large rectangular table with seven mis-matched chairs around it in the center, taking up the entire space. There were tables, file cabinets, folded chairs and stacked boxes lined up along three of the walls surrounding the table, with additional chairs for seating against the fourth wall. It was a very tight, cluttered, confining space, and there were empty boxes, large papers, binders and materials piled up on the surfaces along the perimeter of the room (as well as on the conference table) that would become part of the background of any shot that I tried to frame. There was only one angle that I could set the camera up to get what I thought would best frame Ms. Adelaide for her interview; as I felt pressed for time, I didn't explore other options.

As she sat in the chair across from my camera, Mr. Johnson sat in one of the chairs behind her, off to the side. He clearly wanted to contribute to the dialogue, but I could not convince him to join her at the table and be filmed, so that I could pan between the two of them as they responded to of one another. This made for an awkward situation, because as I began recording the interview and asking Ms. Adelaide specific questions from our previous conversations, you could hear him contributing to the dialogue without any reference to him being a part of it. Ms. Adelaide also forgot she was on camera at times, turning to engage him in the conversation without him being in the frame of the interview. I was actually somewhat amused, because I was fully aware of these potential "snags" in working with this targeted group of aging or elderly interview subjects; I was grateful that they were curious and open to participating in some way, and chalked it all up to learning from the experience.

As anticipated, Ms. Adelaide was not quite as animated when on camera as she had been in previous conversations; I was unable to get her to simply recount her memories and let me record her musings. Instead, I found that I had to guide her responses by asking probing questions that required a little more than just the one line answers she was giving (hoping she would repeat some of the stories she had shared in the past with the same passion). In my opinion, this unfortunately meant that my voice was

heard on the interview recording much more frequently than I would have liked. It seemed very coerced and uncomfortable for everyone, and there was nothing I could do at this juncture to create an environment that would be more conducive to having the conversation flow.

Note to self...fifteen minutes is not enough time to scope out the space for a formal interview - lessons learned:

- Ask in a pre-meeting or schedule an appointment to be shown the space in advance as time allows
- Ask for their recommendations as to using a location that has significance to them as the background for their interview
- Ask permission to scope out multiple options, and choose the best of what's available
- Arrange the space and camera angle paying careful attention to detail of framing, lighting and sound quality in the room; if using natural light in the space, consider the time of day you conduct your interview
- Work collaboratively; assure them that the objective is to frame their interview/photographs such that they will be proud of how they are represented as part of a high quality final product about their community

As time progressed, the rest of the members of the community began to file in to the room...and unfortunately it meant they either had to walk through the frame of the interview to get to a seat, or they became a part of the recording by joining into the conversation without being arranged as part of the shot. I already knew that this would not be the best piece of work in my project portfolio, but I continued to record what I could. Ms. Adelaide introduced me to Mr. Michael Miller, Sr., who is himself a wealth of historic information and was very comfortable on camera. However, he began to share so much information, that it took the interview off the topic of Historic East Towson, and began to encroach upon time to get the meeting's agenda started. I ended the interviews, and then sat on the sidelines to observe Ms. Adelaide and her "faithful few" in action.

The meeting opened with The Lord's Prayer. As soon as the meeting got going, Ms. Adelaide shifted gears and got into character. She was back to her strong, no-nonsense self and conducted the meeting professionally, observing Roberts Rules of Order in going through the agenda. She began by introducing me and again explaining the purpose why I was there; although she told them I was working on a school project for Goucher, she was also sure to reference that I work for Baltimore County. I did not want them to feel that I was representing (or spying on behalf of) the County or be guarded in their dialogue; I reiterated my intentions as related to my coursework as well as my future capstone efforts in the preservation of African-American history. At this point of the meeting, I tried to fade into the woodwork to be unobtrusive; I put away my video camera and just took a few photos with my iPad. I did turn on my digital voice recorder to help me with my field notes. I made sure that I had Ms. Adelaide's permission to use recording devices and take photos during the meeting, solely for the purposes of my class assignment.

It was very interesting to watch the dynamics of the meeting and observing the personalities of these faithful few. There are four women and three men, who appeared to range in age from the mid-to-late fifties to Ms. Adelaide's age of 86. All of the members are African-American with the exception of one of the men who is of Italian descent. It was obvious that these residents cared deeply for the community and its legacy, and are disheartened by the fact that so few in the community participate in the association's efforts. You could tell from the discussion that they are all highly intelligent, bring a wealth of skills and talents to the group, and have very different ways of processing information and expressing themselves.

- Mr. Michael Miller (mentioned above) served in the role of secretary and recorded the minutes; therefore he was not quite as vocal as some of the others, but carefully listened and took notes. You could tell he was a wealth of historic knowledge, and this role was perfectly suited for him

- Mr. Michael Ventura (our Italian resident) is not only a resident, but established his insurance business in the community within his historic home structure; he was very vocal throughout the meeting and has represented the community's interests within local politics, community planning efforts, and neighborhood improvement efforts. He was very candid about those interactions, his stance and responses from advocates and adversaries. It made for really dynamic debate and discussion between him, Ms. Adelaide (both having the strongest personalities in the room), and the other women at the table.

- Ms. Florence Fields seems to serve in somewhat of an administrative capacity at the community center working with Ms. Adelaide. Her responses and recommendations to the discussion topics seemed to incorporate identifying the most important details, action to be taken, and who would be responsible. She seems to have organizational skills that contribute to the coordination efforts of association's activities.

- Mr. Charles Johnson, Jr. (mentioned above) has a very quiet, caring spirit, and is very protective and watchful over the community. As he contributed to the discussion, I realized that he was the gentleman whom I encountered on the stairwell upon my first visit to the community center. Both he and Ms. Adelaide have reiterated that the community takes pride in knowing and looking out for one another; they are quick to identify and communicate when there are strangers in the area, and what their intentions are (good and bad). The group reminisced about a time in the community when you didn't have to lock the door. It was amusing to me that during my time there, he had made his assessment of whether or not he could trust me; in the course of an hour, he transitioned from not wanting to be on camera (but was watching intently from the sidelines), to asking to participate in subsequent interviews with the rest of the group.

- Ms. Doreatha Davis Carr and Ms. Cleo Cole are two sweet, soft-spoken ladies who listened to what everyone else had to say before they uttered a single word. They processed everyone's commentary; and when they did speak, they were articulate and expressed a clearly thought out statement or response to the discussion topics on the agenda. You could sense a great deal of experience and wisdom in the both of them, but they are careful about how they share this knowledge with others and communicate with their colleagues.

The first agenda topics were simply discussing requests for funding from local schools and community groups to help supply clothing to those in need, and for a prize for a writing contest. I was impressed at the fact that as small as this group was, they had a healthy treasury and contribute to causes beyond their community efforts. The majority of the agenda was spent discussing the Towson Mews project and the upcoming planning meeting for community input on Monday November 17th.

As you might expect, the discussion became very heated and passionate; the consensus is that despite any voices of concern that residents of East Towson might have, the planned development is already approved and will move forward without negotiation or consideration. Mr. Ventura reminded the group that the time for the community to raise concerns or give input was at the meeting that was held earlier this year; he said that he was there, but only saw maybe one or two other people from the community in attendance. Ms. Adelaide, on the other hand, said that she had no knowledge of the previous meeting and felt as though only certain people were informed that it was their opportunity to weigh in. She had only recently received a packet of information from the developers in preparation for the upcoming meeting. They opened up the blueprint and artist's rendering of the community and had a discussion around that. Ms. Adelaide is hopeful that any planned community development projects that are approved by the County would incorporate a plan for the revitalization and beautification of East Towson as a part of

the new construction/development. There is still a great deal of resentment behind the fact that they were promised \$50K for these kinds of community improvement projects when Towson Green was built, only to have that amount divided in half to give Towson Green a portion of those funds (when they didn't need it...it is a brand new community). The group is investigating if there is anything in writing that documented the promise of the full amount of \$50K, so that they can press the issue with those who made the commitment. The most immediate action to be taken by the group is to encourage every resident in the community to come out in force to the meeting on the 17th, so that they have first hand knowledge as to what is happening adjacent to their homes. Ms. Adelaide asked if I would be able to attend...I am planning to do so.

The meeting closed with preliminary planning for upcoming social events and activities for the holidays, ending in a circle of prayer. This put the group in a wonderful frame of mind, and they began sharing memories and reminiscing. Of course, it was the perfect conversation to have captured in an interview...but it wasn't going to happen tonight. Both Mr. Ventura and Mr. Miller offered to sit for a formal interview, perhaps at Mr. Ventura's business office. Mr. Johnson approached me and said, "I'm o.k. with being on camera now...can I be in your interviews?" I smiled as the ladies became increasingly animated as we walked down the stairs; they were sharing such great memories, and my brain couldn't process one more thing. They also wanted to be a part of any future interviews. We all shared warm hugs, and Mr. Johnson made sure I got safely to my car...everyone else watched out for one another as they walked home. I truly enjoyed my time getting to know this amazing, caring group of people.

Field Notes - Field Work: November 30 - December 6, 2014

I am attempting to schedule one final interview panel with a few of the community members, however, my schedule has not been conducive to solid follow up work. However, even if I do not schedule the interview, I will do a final follow up with all of my contacts on this project to update them on the status of the project and to thank them for their participation. I hadn't heard from Mr. Diggs since the tour on Nov. 1st with the exception of his request of some of the pictures I took. I responded and sent several electronically, but I was concerned they didn't get to him when I didn't hear back from him. He sent me an email on December 1st apologizing for not following up sooner and to let me know he has been tied up with the church preservation project, and is now in Myrtle Beach until the end of December taking care of his wife and working on his book. He offered to stay in email communication with me while away; I will be reaching out to him as a part of my project wrap up and thank you's, and to further establish a relationship with him and his non-profit in preparation for my capstone project to support him in his historic preservation efforts in Baltimore County.

Appendix C

Capstone Project: Preliminary Research and Work Plan

15FA CSP 675/675Y Master Course

Capstone Research & Work Plan Proposal - Carol Brooks

September 13, 2015

Preserving History: Louis Diggs, A Living Legacy

History and Context

I first met Mr. Diggs in the fall of 2014, when I was working on my first cultural documentation field lab project in Historic East Towson community. Historian, genealogist, storyteller, published author and educator, Mr. Diggs personifies the concept of the “Intergenerational Griot Project”, an initiative I would like to launch as a contribution to the growing movement around the country to learn of the untold stories of African Americans from generations past and to preserve that historic legacy by sharing it with generations present and future.

People and Place:

Much of the information I am using to frame my work is rooted in the intersection between what I’ve learned on tours during MACS residencies and my research work and introduction to several key people and historic communities through my Cultural Documentation and Field Lab courses. Mr. Diggs has documented the historic context of 40 African American communities in Baltimore County, as well as the contribution of African Americans in military service over the course of centuries. The purpose of my documentation project is not to reproduce or re-present his research materials, but rather to learn more about this passionate man and pay tribute to the significance of his cultural preservation efforts and the incredible legacy he’s provided us.

While the majority of my video project will focus on candid footage of Mr. Diggs in action, it will also highlight some of the communities and cultural markers that have the greatest significance for him as expressed when he is telling his stories. Much of the B-roll materials will simply include a montage of photos from the communities with Mr. Diggs’ animated narratives (as well as other community members and historians) voiced over. I plan to incorporate slightly more substantive detail about three specific communities that are near and dear to his heart to include, Granite (home of the Diggs-Johnson Museum), Historic East Towson and Turner Station. This will include historic and current photographs, video footage, interviews and narratives of the key members of the community who know Mr. Diggs’ and share his passion for preserving their history.

Cherry Hill African Union Methodist Protestant (AUMP) Church (now the Diggs-Johnson Museum)

2426 Offutt Road, Woodstock, MD 21163

Friends of Historical Cherry Hill AUMP/Diggs-Johnson Museum / Diggs Alliance Center - 501(c) (3) Non-Profit



Courtesy photos of the Cherry Hill AUMP church before, during and after renovation. (Left) an undated photo of the church, originally built in 1827, (Center) Mr. Diggs standing in front of the church for the last photo before renovations began in 2012, (Right) the newly renovated Diggs-Johnson Museum – April 23, 2015

The mission of the 501(c)(3) Diggs Alliance Center is to create and promote awareness and appreciation of Baltimore County's African American Heritage through educational activities including the preservation and protection of the Baltimore County designated historical African American communities and other structures, artifacts, etc., considered a part of the history and heritage of African American life in Baltimore County.

Cultural Markers:

- Cherry Hill AUMP Church
- Diggs-Johnson Museum
- Photos and artifacts from Historic African American Communities and Landmarks in Baltimore County
 - Negro League Baseball Museum – Owings Mills, MD
 - Mt. Gilboa AME Church – oldest still active African American Church in Baltimore County - Oella
 - Benjamin Banneker Historical Park and Museum – Oella
 - Union Bethel AME Church and Emmarts UM Church – Slave Safe Houses on the Underground Railroad
 - Military history – Buffalo Soldiers, Military Regiments, Artifacts from those who served in the Civil War and World War I

Key People:

- Historians and Founders – Louis Diggs, Linwood Johnson
- Board Members
 - Betty Stewart – Secretary
 - Richard Lee
 - Noreen Goodson - Treasurer
 - Adrienne Jones – Congressional Delegate (secured major grant funding for the project)
 - Angela Walton – Raji - Genealogist
 - Kelly Carter
 - Blair Diggs – Mr. Diggs’ son; marketing and graphic design
- Elizabeth Glenn – Baltimore County Department of Planning (secured grant funding for the project; also worked extensively with Adelaide Bentley in Historic East Towson)
- Representatives of the historic landmarks and communities

Historic East Towson

Cultural Markers:

- Jacob House Museum
- Carver Center
- HET Community Signs

Key People:

- Adelaide Bentley – 86 year old community leader; President of the Association and responsible for the designation of East Towson as a national historic landmark
- North East Towson Improvement Association – Members
 - Michael Miller, Sr.
 - Florene Fields
 - Cleo Cole
 - Charles J. Johnson, Jr.
 - Doreatha Davis Carr
 - Michael Ventura – (non-African American community resident and business owner)

Turner Station

Cultural Markers:

- Turner Station History Center
- Thomas and Martha Allmond Economic Development Center
- Community Post – former VFW
- Historic Marker – Lacks Family Residence
- Annual Lacks Day and Heritage Celebration
- Union Baptist Church

Key People:

- Courtney Speed, community leader and local historian
- Members of the Henrietta Lacks Legacy Group

Approach, Methodology and Timeline:

A vast majority of the research and relationship building activities critical to a documentation project of this kind have been in progress since last year. I have established a great rapport and level of trust with the primary subjects of the final film project, and in return they have opened the door for me to connect with others in their inner circles. Over the course of my MACS studies, I have been fortunate to collect and catalogue a large number of photographs, videos, interviews, transcripts, and ephemeral pieces from these communities, providing me with a robust archive of potential B-roll material. I intend to continue this same approach to my work throughout the Fall semester, further engaging with Mr. Diggs and key members of these communities while determining a structure and outline for the documentary film.

July – August 2015:

- Preparatory work to re-engage with Mr. Diggs to determine status and get his buy-in on capstone premise (in planning/scheduling, need to be particularly sensitive to recent loss of his wife and physical limitations)
- Participate in Cultural Documentation class over Summer residency to prepare for interview(s)
- Determine camera and audio recording equipment/accessories to purchase or borrow from Goucher; familiarize myself with equipment

September 2015:

- Attend Cherry Hill AUMP Board meetings and Diggs-Johnson Museum planning meetings for grand opening
- Secure signatures on Goucher project release forms for use of documentation materials in capstone project
- Ascertain new dates for 3 upcoming major events and attend as appropriate:
 - Historic Tour (one held September 12th; next one to be rescheduled to November)
 - African American Cultural Festival – (September 19th) – attended and recorded interviews and photos
 - Museum Grand Opening (originally scheduled for August 22nd; rescheduled November 14th)
- Create a draft treatment/script for the film to identify and plan for:
 - Photographic Images - posed and candid shots of key people in the context of their relationship to the project; determine what photos already exist and additional photos needed
 - Photographic Images - framed shots of communities, edifices and significant cultural markers taken in context of project; determine what photos already exist and additional photos needed
 - Events - attend to take photographs and video images
 - Interviews – determine interview subjects, length, format (audio, video, both), formal/informal, location, staging, context, and question list
- Create a visual narrative, voicethread or storyboard using a combination of photographic and video images to establish the preliminary framework for my documentary for review and commentary of capstone advisor(s) and approval of Mr. Diggs.

October – November 2015:

- Schedule subsequent meetings/visits with key people in the communities where I am lacking usable images and interview footage:
 - Mr. Diggs at the Diggs-Johnson Museum (1 hour formal interview; shorter recorded narratives on his research topics to get better quality audio for previously recorded video footage)
 - Mr. Linwood Johnson – Mr. Diggs' partner in the museum, as well as his colleague and mentor; he is very elderly and currently lives in a nursing home and of poor health. Hoping for at least a 30 minute video recorded interview (at the recommendation of Mr. Diggs)
 - Cherry Hill AUMP Board – 15 minute formal interviews with the members of the Board with a specific focus on their relationship to Mr. Diggs and the historic preservation work at CHAUMP; this includes an interview with Liz Glenn who is not a Board member, but has supported the work with grant funding from the Baltimore County Department of Planning
 - Adelaide Bentley (Historic East Towson) – 30 minute video recorded interview; may capture informal video interviews with other residents who previously indicated interest in participating

- Courtney Speed (Turner Station) – 30 minute video recorded interview; may capture informal video interviews with member of the Henrietta Lacks Legacy Group and curators of the Turner Station History Center
 - Jeff and Martha Supik – Owners of the Emmarts UM Church property; not African American, but are passionate about their work to preserve and tell the story of their ancestors and this slave safe house as docents of the history. They have recently formed a non-profit to sustain the work. I need to get photographs of the actual property and better quality audio to accompany interview footage obtained at the African American Cultural Festival
 - Benjamin Banneker Museum and Historic Park – need photos
 - Museum Grand Opening Attendees – short on-the-spot interviews with attendees on November 19th to get their perspective on why they attended, their relationship to the artifacts (if any) and the importance of preserving history; I will also capture audio and video recordings of the ceremony and behind the scenes footage of the preparation for the event.
- Schedule time for recording field notes as well as review and transcription of recorded interviews.
 - Review photos and other ephemeral research materials and provide detailed captions to catalogue them.
 - Review audio and video materials; use editing software to catalogue audiovisual recordings and formulate ideas for how to incorporate the best segments of them into final film project.
 - Finalize subsequent fieldwork in the community as needed (rescheduled interviews, follow-up meetings, etc.)
 - Update visual narrative/Voice Thread/storyboard treatment as appropriate to share progress on and revisions to my film project with capstone advisors.
 - Create and store separate files of the footage of Mr. Diggs’ narrated videos and recordings as well as the footage from the Cultural Festival and Grand Opening Ceremony; they will be edited later and formatted to be used at the museum and on their website to share with museum patrons and future generations. This would be a tangible outcome and product from my capstone that would have meaningful value for both the people I am documenting and the community as a whole.

December 2015:

- Create and edit first cut of documentary film and submit to capstone advisor(s) for review and commentary
- Complete documentation and transcription of field narratives (to include log forms and cover)
- Add to visual narrative/Voice Thread/storyboard recording if needed; use this along with field notes and documentation to begin the initial draft of my reflection paper for this semester’s work
- Update the annotated bibliography of reference materials
- Make revisions to the documentary film based on the feedback from capstone panel
- Submit final edited draft of film and all supplemental documentation by end of the semester

Comprehensive Questions - Internal question set to frame my documentary film:

Interview Questions - For Mr. Diggs and other elders/leaders who are doing this kind of work

1. What do you hope to accomplish by researching and documenting family, community and cultural aspects of African American history?
2. What do you feel have been your most significant achievements in these efforts?
3. What have been your greatest challenges?
4. What motivates you to do this work?
5. Who have been the greatest influences in your life?
6. What audience(s) are you trying to reach with your work and why?
7. Have you had success in reaching those audiences? What is their response to your work?
8. What do you perceive to be the cultural and social impacts of your work?
9. What is needed to sustain this work going forward?
10. If you could summarize your many words of wisdom into one final thought to leave as a legacy for future generations, what would you say?

Interview Questions (for CHAUMP Board members and others who support these efforts in other communities):

1. How are you affiliated with Mr. Diggs and his work?
2. Were you a part of the historic preservation efforts? Tell me about your experience.
3. What motivates you to do this work?
4. What is your connection to the historic African American communities in Baltimore County?
5. Were you aware of the historic significance prior to connecting with Mr. Diggs' research and documentation efforts?
6. What is the most rewarding part of this work?
7. What has been the most challenging about this work?
8. What is needed to sustain this work going forward?

Interview Questions (for community members and event participants):

1. What aspects of this community's historic legacy are most significant to you?
2. Did you grow up here? If not, what made you decide to move here?
3. What are your fondest memories of this community?
4. Have there been negative experiences living here?
5. How has the community changed since you've been here?
6. Do residents have a shared set of cultural and community values? How has this changed over time?
7. Have you been a part of the historic preservation efforts? If yes, tell me about your experience.
8. In your opinion, why was it important to preserve this community's identity and heritage?
9. Have you shared or celebrated this community's rich heritage with others? If you were telling the story of your community, what would you want people to know?
10. What is your vision of this community in the future?

Ethical Considerations for my Capstone Project -

In our Cultural Documentation class, we were asked to consider how usefulness can be constructed – both positively and negatively - for the community we are working with. We were challenged to explore what is “the need”, to consider how our work could potentially be misused or misconstrued, and how we can put strategies in place to minimize potentially negative impacts.

For my capstone project (as well as the work that I hope to be doing in the future) I am cognizant of the fact that there are several ethical considerations concerning the demographic of the people that will be the focus of my documentation projects:

Elderly Population – my work encompasses capturing the essence and wisdom of people from the elder generation. I have to be extremely sensitive to the physical, mental and emotional characteristics of this population and plan my activities by engaging with them wherever they are on the spectrum at this phase of their lives. This was particularly relevant in working with Mr. Diggs as he had been caring for his elderly wife for several years when we first met, and she passed away this year when I re-established my connection with him to begin my capstone activities. Amazingly, he constantly reiterated his apologies to me for feeling like he had disappointed me or did not fulfill his commitment. I want to be careful to not put undue obligation on my narrators, and to not take advantage of their vulnerability due to their sense of loyalty.

African American Communities – the desire to research and document historic details of the African American experience (pertaining to a multitude of subject matters) is fraught with the potential of misrepresentation, personal bias, and inaccuracy. I have to be careful to try to frame my work so that it encourages the audience to ask more questions of their own as they interpret the work from their perspective. I also want my work to pay tribute to our cultural pioneers for providing a foundation for future generations. I don’t want to simply re-present the hard work that others have already accomplished, and I want to be careful to include diverse perspectives in my documentation.

Friends of the Cherry Hill AUMP (Diggs-Johnson Museum) – as part of my capstone’s final work product, I hope to create materials that will not only provide a foundation for my future work (the Intergenerational Griot Project), but would be perceived by Mr. Diggs and the CHAUMP Board members as having value for the museum. They would be given edited video clips that can be used in the museum, on the website and within the historic African American communities he has documented. My hope is to preserve the images and sounds that capture Mr. Diggs in action, so that we can present his incredible storytelling gift to generations present and future.

Materials Available From Previous Community Documentation Projects:

September 2014 – Historic East Towson

- September 19, 2014 - Canvassed community via driving/walking tours and informally engaged the residents in conversation and dialogue

References:

Field Notes – September 19, 2014: Historic East Towson in Baltimore County, MD

Photo Log - Historic East Towson – Preserving the Legacy of African American Communities in Baltimore County, MD

- 2014.HET.CB.001 – Series of 17 images: Driving Tour of Towsontown Blvd. via Historic East Towson Community Residential Streets
- 2014.HET.CB.008 – Series of 27 images: Historic East Towson Signs and Markers
- 2014.HET.CB.009 – Series of 24 images: Historic Architecture

October 2014

- October 20, 2014: Scheduled and conducted introductory meeting with Adelaide Bentley and Louis Diggs to gain their insights and ask for assistance in connecting me with other people I should talk to and providing resources that might help me in my research.

References:

Field Notes – October 20-24, 2014: Historic East Towson in Baltimore County, MD

Interview Documentation and Notes (see Field Notes)

Photo Log – 2014.HET.CB.001 – 076: October 27, 2014 – Series of 77 images taken of The Carver Community Center, Jacob House Museum, Adelaide Bentley and Louis Diggs, and house with historic architecture being moved for new development.

Ephemera Log – 2014.HET.EPH.CB.003 - Jacob House Museum; 2014.HET.EPH.CB.001 - Adelaide Bentley – NAACP Award

Bibliographic Materials: Diggs, Louis S. 2000. *Since The Beginning: African American Communities in Towson*. Uptown Press.

- October 27, 2014: Scheduled and conducted 1 hour interview with Adelaide Bentley (Community Leader) – At Ms. Bentley’s request, the interview was not recorded due to her infirmities that day. However, as substantial amount of insight was shared and the notes are used to supplement the subsequent recorded interview.

References:

Field Notes – October 27 - November 1, 2014: Historic East Towson in Baltimore County, MD – Scheduled Formal Interview with Adelaide Bentley

Photo Log – 2014.HET.CB.001-076: **October 27, 2014** – Series of 77 images taken of The Carver Community Center and Ms. Bentley with her numerous awards and citations as an outstanding community leader.

November 2014

- November 1, 2014: Scheduled and attended Baltimore County Emancipation Day Tour with Louis Diggs (Baltimore County Historian) – produced 11 audio/video recordings of varying length of Mr. Diggs’ narration of historic African American communities and cultural markers in Baltimore County. His final tour wrap up answered the majority of my interview questions and served as my second interview for historic context of my research.

References:

Field Notes – October 27 - November 1, 2014: Preserving the History of African American Communities in Baltimore County, MD – Emancipation Day Tour with Louis Diggs

Photo Log – 2014.HET-LD.001 – 156 November 1, 2014: Series of 157 images taken during Tour of historic African American Communities in Baltimore County with Louis Diggs (LD).

Video Log – 2014.HET-LD.VLOG.000-008: November 1, 2014: Series of 9 videos recordings taken during Tour of historic African American Communities in Baltimore County narrated by historian, Louis Diggs (LD). Includes the communities of Owings Mills (Hubert Simmons Museum of Negro League Baseball), Winter’s Lane, Granite, Oella, Catonsville, and Turner Station as well as historic churches and slave safe houses.

Audio Log – 2014.HET-LD.AUDLOG.001-010: November 1, 2014: Series of 14 audio recordings taken during Tour of historic African American Communities in Baltimore County narrated by historian, Louis Diggs (LD). These are backup audio files of the video recordings listed above.

Ephemera – 2014.HET-LD.EPH.CB.001-010: November 1, 2014: Series of 14 scanned images (.pdf format) of handouts and materials distributed and collected during the historic tour with Louis Diggs.

- November 4, 2014: Attended North East Improvement Association Community Meeting at the invitation of Ms. Bentley. Rescheduled and conducted third interview with Ms. Bentley (video) and was introduced to other residents to record or schedule subsequent individual or panel interviews with community members. Recommended interviews included representatives of:
 - Original African American members of the community (senior demographic)
 - Current African American residents (younger families)
 - Residents of other races/ethnicities

References:

Field Notes – **October 20-24, 2014: Historic East Towson in Baltimore County, MD**

Photo Image Logs

Audio Log – 2014.HET.CB 001 – Community Meeting

Video Log – 2014.HET.CB.001-002 – Interviews, Adelaide Bentley and Michael Miller

Ephemera Log – 2014.HET.EPH.CB 010-011 – Towson Mews



Documentation Release Form

I, _____, agree to be a participant in the documentary film chronicling the work and historic legacy of Mr. Louis S. Diggs as part of Carol Brooks' capstone project. I understand that the purpose of this documentation project is to highlight Mr. Diggs and his work by interviewing him and a diverse cross-section of his family, colleagues, supporters and community members to gain insights on their connection to the work, and the significance of his contribution to the historic preservation efforts of African American culture. I further understand and grant permission to Carol Brooks, a student in the Masters of Cultural Sustainability program of Goucher College to photograph, videotape and otherwise document as a part of this research project.

I understand that Ms. Brooks plans to retain the product of my participation in the research, including but not limited to my interview, presentation, video, photographs, statements, name, images or likeness, voice, and written materials ("My Collection") as part of her graduate school portfolio and that it may be used for the research purposes described above.

I hereby grant to Carol Brooks ownership of the physical property comprising My Collection. Additionally, I hereby grant to Carol Brooks, at no cost, the perpetual, nonexclusive, transferable, worldwide right to use, reproduce, transmit, display, perform, prepare derivative works from, distribute, and authorize the redistribution of the materials in My Collection in any medium for educational, non-commercial purposes. By giving this permission, I understand that I retain any copyright and related rights that I may hold.

I hereby release Goucher College's Graduate Programs, and its assignees and designees, from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of My Collection, including but not limited to any claims for copyright infringement, defamation, invasion of privacy, or right of publicity.

If I have any questions, I may reach *Carol Brooks* at: carol.brooks@mail.goucher.edu.

ACCEPTED AND AGREED

Participant Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name _____

Address _____

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name _____

Goucher College, Welch Center for Graduate Studies, 1021 Dulaney Valley Road, Baltimore, MD 21204

Appendix D

15FA CSP 675/675Y Master Course

Carol Brooks

Capstone Project: Midterm - Documentary Film Treatment – Revised December 27, 2015

Preserving History: Louis Diggs, A Living Legacy

Film Premise:

This documentary film will chronicle the past, present and on-going cultural documentation and historic preservation efforts of Mr. Louis Diggs, an 83-year old local historian in Baltimore County, MD. Genealogist, researcher, storyteller, published author and educator, Mr. Diggs personifies the concept of the “Intergenerational Griot Project”, an initiative I would like to launch as a contribution to the growing movement around the country to learn of the untold stories of African Americans from generations past and to preserve that historic legacy by sharing it with generations present and future. This film will highlight the key accomplishments, challenges and ambitions of Mr. Diggs’ and his co-laborers in this work over the span of the past 25-years, giving the audience a glimpse of this man’s passion for connecting people, family and community through strong bonds of heritage.

Planned Scenes:

The entire documentary (length TBD) will be tied together by the themes presented by the keynote speaker, Steven Lee, Baltimore County Commissioner for the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture, at the Diggs-Johnson Museum Grand Opening. These key themes will be used as voiceover to introduce the various segments of the documentary, interspersed with b-roll footage, photographs and highlights of the narratives from formal interviews with Mr. Diggs, and other key people that I have encountered during the course of this research project (see list on schematic). I plan to open each scene with the image and narrative of Mr. Lee’s speech, then incorporate photo and video imagery of the subject matter with quality audio of the narrative voiced over.

Opening Image of the Film: Quote from Lenwood Johnson in the forward of Mr. Diggs’ first book:

“In Africa our villages had griots, people who could recite the history of their people going back over hundreds of years. They could in the telling of their stories call out the names of their ancestors. Thus by calling out their ancestors’ names, they (the ancestors) would live in the hearts and minds of those present. Mr. Diggs’ books are serving the same function of the griot. Not only do the books contain numerous photographs and narratives, they also contain lists of names of family members long since gone. People are using his book to establish or re-establish family ties. They are personally able to now capture some of their long lost past and help in the finding of themselves. I feel that this is the greater good that Mr. Diggs and these books do.”

Lenwood Johnson, excerpted from the forward to “Since The Beginning: African American Communities in Towson”
by Louis Diggs

SEGMENT I – A PERSONAL INTRODUCTION TO LOUIS DIGGS AND LENWOOD JOHNSON

Note: I may preface and end the documentary with my own personal narrative about my experiences in doing this project and my reflections on why this work is important to me. Working on how to incorporate it seamlessly into the documentary as “book ends”.

Segment I/Scene I

- Open with segment of Steven Lee’s keynote address that speaks of when he first met Mr. Lenwood Johnson (“...I had just met a griot of the African tradition...”)
- Cut to scene from video interview with Mr. Lenwood Johnson, reflecting on his thoughts about the importance of understanding our heritage and insights on Mr. Diggs and their work together.
- Cut to voiced over narrative with a montage of photographic and video images of Mr. Diggs and Mr. Johnson together
- Cut back to Mr. Johnson’s interview, making a prolific statement that provides a segue into the first images of Mr. Diggs

Segment I/Scene II

- Open with segment of Steven Lee’s keynote address that speaks of when he first met Mr. Louis Diggs (“a man with a vision...a man on a mission.”)
- Cut to scene with first segment of Mr. Diggs’ formal interview to include him introducing himself and sharing some of his personal background (family history – father/mother, military service, wife, sons, grandchildren, where he grew up, etc.)
- Cut to voiced over narrative with a montage of photographic images that depict what he is talking about

Segment I/Scene III

- Open with segment of Steven Lee’s keynote address that speaks of Mr. Johnson and Mr. Diggs work together (“...Truly a dynamic duo and that that something great had to come from their combined efforts...”)
- Cut to scene with segment of Mr. Diggs’ formal interview (or from his narrated tour) that includes his story of how he got started in historic research and preservation work; he was encouraged by his sons to teach and to be a role model to the kids in the community
- Integrate segments of interviews with Lenwood Johnson and Louis Diggs together, reminiscing on the work that Mr. Johnson had done to document African American communities and get public resources to them (“...this was in the 70’s and many of them were living in conditions right out of slavery...”)
- Cut back to Mr. Diggs and Mr. Johnson talking about the importance of understanding your heritage and doing this kind of work. Voice over narrative with video footage of attendees of Cultural Festival, Historic Tour, Grand Opening of Museum, etc.

SEGMENT II – “IT ALL STARTED ON WINTERS LANE”: MR. DIGGS RECOUNTS HIS EXPERIENCES IN RESEARCH, DOCUMENTATION AND PRESERVATION

Note: Segment from Steven Lee’s key note address still TBD within this section; will incorporate the call to action for others to support these efforts as Mr. Diggs cannot carry the work forward through time by himself.

Segment II/Scene I

- In this segment, Mr. Diggs will talk about the twelve books that he has written including his most recent research on African Americans who served in World War I.
- Cut to voiced over narrative throughout, Integrating photos of the books, selected images from the communities or video footage of interviews with people that he is talking about.
- Integrate a montage of photos from Mr. Diggs collections

SEGMENT III – HIGHLIGHTS OF SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC PRESERVATION EFFORTS IN BALTIMORE COUNTY; MR. DIGGS & HIS WORK WITH COLLEAGUES IN THE FIELD

Note: Segment from Steven Lee’s key note address still TBD within this section; will incorporate the theme that Mr. Diggs and others who do this work recognized that “Black Lives Matter” long before the phrase was coined.

Segment III/Scene I

- Historic East Towson – Incorporate photos and video of Adelaide Bentley and community members
- Turner Station – Incorporate photos and video of Courtney Speed and Historic Center
- Integrate segments of interviews and photos from the African American Cultural Festival and other events/locations/historians into this segment where appropriate (Jeff and Martha Supik - Emmarts UM Church; Buffalo Soldiers, Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, Historic Community Photo Boards, Military Battalion Displays, etc.)

Segment III/Scene II

- Cherry Hill AUMP Church Restoration – Diggs Johnson Museum – incorporate before and after courtesy photos and video images (if available from beta archival film); include interviews with Lenwood Johnson, CHAUMP Board, event attendees, myself and others

Segment III/Scene III

- Grand Opening of the Diggs Johnson Museum – incorporate photos, video images and interviews with CHAUMP Board, event attendees and others
- Incorporate segments of Steven Lee’s key note address to include the covenant between the attendees and the museum (signing of the scroll), and the dedication of the time capsule.

SEGMENT IV – REFLECTIONS AND WORDS OF WISDOM FROM THE ELDERS

- Open with closing remarks of Steven Lee’s keynote address that speaks of the importance of establishing institutions large and small to preserve African American culture and history (“...each one is a blessing...let’s continue the legacy in Baltimore County.”)
- Incorporate a montage of final thoughts from Mr. Diggs and the other elders doing historic preservation work on the importance of the work and what is needed to sustain these efforts going into the future
 - Jeff and Martha Supik
 - Courtney Speed
 - Adelaide Bentley
 - Lenwood Johnson
 - Louis Diggs
- End with my final narrative reflecting on what a humbling, transformative experience and great honor it was to be in the presence of these remarkable people, and acknowledging my appreciation for their willingness to be so generous with their time and wisdom. A call to action for others to pick up the baton and capture the stories of our elders while we still have them in our midst.

Closing Image of Film: Montage of photographic images of the elder narrators featured in this film, (with the last one being Mr. Diggs), interspersed with images of community members and the younger generation being taught about their heritage. Images would fade in and out in between lines of the quote below by Eric Hoffer, excerpted from the forward written by Lenwood Johnson in “Since The Beginning: African American Communities in Towson” by Louis Diggs. If possible, I would like to have Mr. Johnson give me a voice recording of the quote and have it voiced over during the photo montage.

“It is the individual only who is timeless. Societies, cultures, and civilizations - past and present - are often incomprehensible to outsiders, but the individual's hunger, anxieties, dreams, and preoccupations have remained unchanged through the millennia. Thus, we are up against the paradox that the individual who is more complex, unpredictable, and mysterious than any communal entity is the one nearest to our understanding; so near that even the interval of millennia cannot weaken our feeling of kinship.

Last Image on the screen would be last line of the quote:

If in some manner the voice of an individual reaches us from the remotest distance of time, it is a timeless voice speaking about ourselves.”

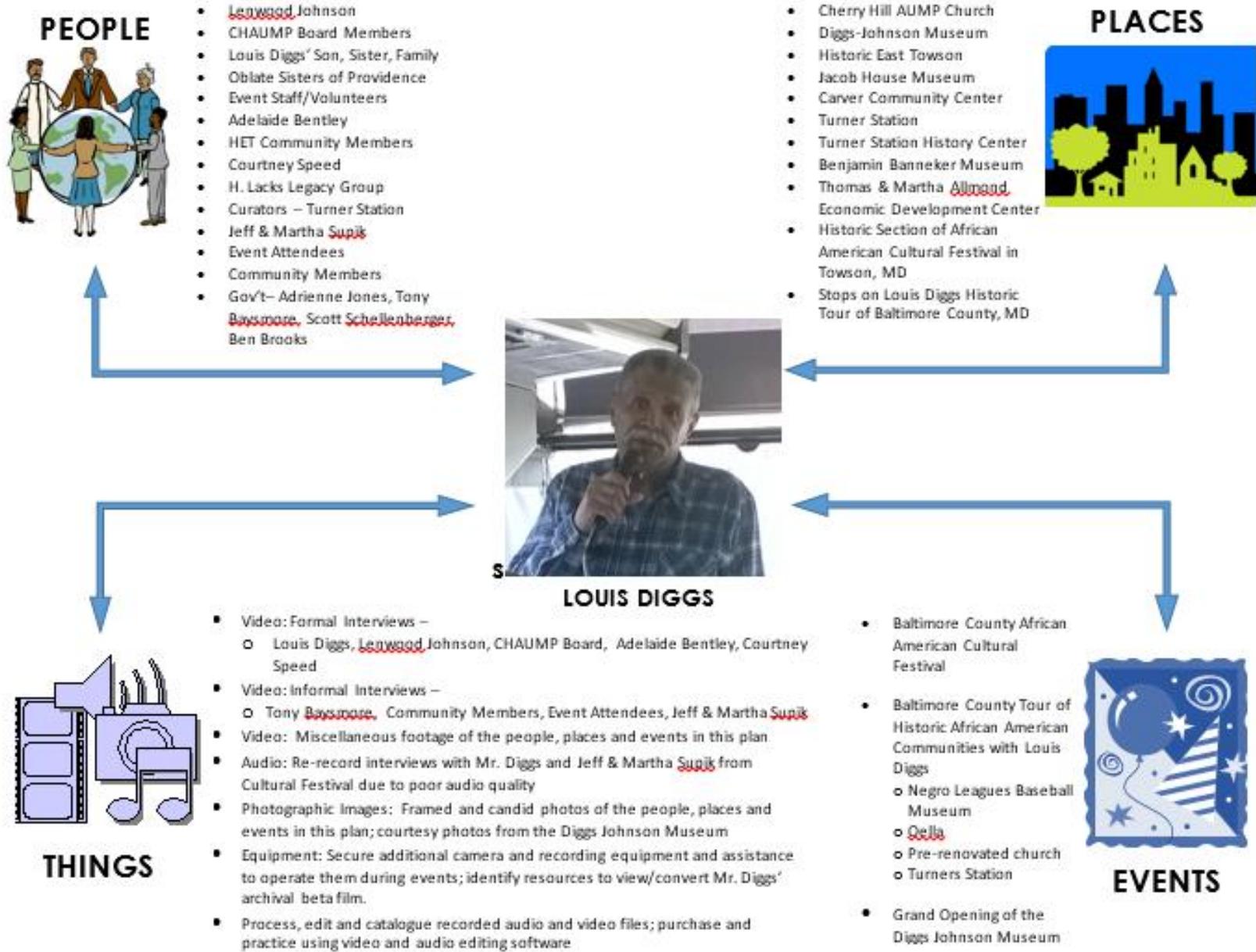
Eric Hoffer - Reflections on the Human Condition

Footage Available:

- Photographic images, video and audio from Historic East Towson, Turner Station, and 2014 Historic Tour with Louis Diggs
- Photographic images, video and audio from 2015 African American Cultural Festival
- Courtesy photographic images and video from Diggs Johnson Museum
- Formal interviews with Mr. Diggs and Lenwood Johnson, Courtney Speed and Jeff & Martha Supik; may still need short segments from CHAUMP Board, Adelaide Bentley
- Photos, video and audio footage of Grand Opening of Diggs Johnson Museum

Still Need:

- Archival photographs and footage of pre-renovated Cherry Hill AUMP Church (pre- Diggs Johnson Museum) as well as some of Mr. Diggs favorite photographs from the various communities he has documented or books he has written
- A photograph of all of the items being placed in the time capsule



[Appendix E](#)

Index to Selected Media

- Audio/Visual Log Sheet – Historic East Towson Project: Emancipation Day Tour With Historian Louis Diggs, Baltimore County African American Cultural Festival and the Diggs Johnson Museum Grand Opening Event
- Audio/Visual Log Sheet – Historic East Towson: Interview with Adelaide Bentley & North East Towson Improvement Association Community Meeting
- Ephemeral Material Log Sheet – Miscellaneous
- Carol Brooks Google+ Profile: Links to Video Segments and Online Presentation Media <https://plus.google.com/109101176460912567412>
 - Capstone Video Segments – Preliminary drafts of selected video and interview footage
 - Introductory Segment <https://plus.google.com/109101176460912567412/posts/UA8EtZxkrRk>
 - First Interview Segment with Adelaide Bentley (Google+) <https://plus.google.com/109101176460912567412/posts/Lj5K9UD1Y8K>
 - Raw Interview Footage – Segments of the MACS Cultural Documentation Class practice interview with Carol Brooks with selected photographs and video interviews to be used in final documentary video project <https://plus.google.com/109101176460912567412/posts/gWrNWqMEY64>
 - VoiceThread Presentations – Links to VoiceThread Documentation Projects <https://voicethread.com/myvoice/#owned>
 - The Community of Historic East Towson – Part I: The Disappearance of a Historic African American Landmark in Baltimore County, MD <https://plus.google.com/109101176460912567412/posts/TUh2X8QsPYR>
 - The Community of Historic East Towson – Part II: Cultural Symbols and Community Values <https://plus.google.com/109101176460912567412/posts/HnWdPVa1vvc>
 - Interpretive Planning – The Reginald F. Lewis Museum – Recommendations for Better Engagement with African American Communities in Baltimore City and the State of Maryland <https://plus.google.com/109101176460912567412/posts/8BRmsJ2wL5b>
 - Photo Narrative – Historic East Towson: Adelaide Bentley and Louis Diggs <https://plus.google.com/109101176460912567412/posts/HPUpJFAYWYv>

Appendix E

Audio/Visual Recording Log Sheet

Researcher: Carol Brooks

Project Name: Capstone Project: Living History – Finding Myself in the Reflection of My Elders

Date Logged: December 3, 2014

December 20, 2015

File Name Root: 2014.HET-LD.CB.VLOG
2014.HET-LD.CB.AUDLOG

2015.BCAACF.CB.VLOG
2015.DJMUSEUM.AUDLOG

of Recordings in Series: Video – 11 Audio – 11

Video - 19 Audio - 19

Source of Materials: Adelaide Bentley, President – North East Towson Improvement Association
Michael Miller, Sr. – Community Member
North East Improvement Association Community Meeting
Hubert V. Simmons Negro Leagues Baseball Museum
Louis Diggs – Baltimore County Historic Association, Emancipation Day Tour
Henrietta Lacks Legacy Group and Turner Station History Center
Baltimore County Blog and Website
Local News Media
Baltimore County African American Cultural Festival
Diggs Johnson Museum Grand Opening

Format: Video Recordings: AVCHD Video – Frame Width:1920/ Frame Height: 1080
Windows Media Audio/Video MPV File

Audio Recordings: MP3, MP4

Camera Make/Model: Sony Video Camcorder (Goucher College)
Nokia Lumia 822 (Windows Phone 8.0)
Apple iPad
Fujifilm Finepix

Color space: ___ Grayscale Color

Date(s) of Material Collection: November 1, 2014

Location(s): Baltimore County, MD Historic African American Communities Including: Randallstown, Owings Mills, Oella, Catonsville, Winters Lane, Turner Station, Granite

Type of Documentation: Portrait ___ Landscape ___ Object ___ Other:

Subject(s): Keywords, Event(s), Names:

Baltimore County, Louis Diggs, Emancipation Day Historic Tour- November 1, 2014, Turner Station, Courtney Speed, Henrietta Lacks Legacy Group, Winters Lane, Oella, Historic African American Communities, Slave Safe Houses, Cherry Hill AUMP, Historic Churches, Randallstown, Granite, Catonsville, Negro Leagues Museum, Belltown, Tour Wrap Up – Louis Diggs, Diggs Johnson Museum Grand Opening, Diggs-Johnson Museum Time Capsule Dedication Ceremony

Summary: Audio and Video recordings collected during interviews and narratives given during a tour of other historic African American Communities in Baltimore County, MD with Historian, Louis Diggs.

Copyright Holder: Carol Brooks

Restricted? No, Yes, details:

Historic East Towson – Emancipation Day Historic Tour with Louis Diggs Video Log

2014.HET-LD.CB.VLOG

RECORDING #

CONTENT DESCRIPTION

2014.HET-LD.CB.VLOG 000 Tour Welcome TBaysmore

2014.HET-LD.CB.VLOG 001 Tour Intro - LDiggs

2014.HET-LD.CB.VLOG 002 Randallstown New Union Bethel AME

2014.HET-LD.CB.VLOG 003 Granite Church AUMP

Historic East Towson – Emancipation Day Historic Tour with Louis Diggs Video Log (Cont'd)**File Name Root: 2014.HET-LD.CB.VLOG**

RECORDING #	CONTENT DESCRIPTION
2014.HET-LD.CB.VLOG 004	Call to Action Hist Preservation of African American Cemeteries
2014.HET-LD.CB.VLOG 005	Rolling Rd Emmarts UM Church Runaway Slaves
2014.HET-LD.CB.VLOG 006	Turner Station Courtney Day
2014.HET-LD.CB.VLOG 007	Turner Station History Center
2014.HET-LD.CB.VLOG 008(MPV)	Tour Wrap Up – Louis Diggs

Historic East Towson – Emancipation Day Historic Tour with Louis Diggs Audio Log**File Name Root: 2014.HET-LD.CB.AUDLOG**

RECORDING #	CONTENT DESCRIPTION
2014.HET-LD.CB.AUDLOG 001	Tour Welcome - TBaysmore
2014.HET-LD.CB.AUDLOG 002	Negro Leagues Museum Tour Narration
2014.HET-LD.CB.AUDLOG 003	Tour Conversation and Send Off
2014.HET-LD.CB.AUDLOG 004	Tour Intro
2014.HET-LD.CB.AUDLOG 005	Belltown (OM) Randallstown UnBeth AME Baltimore County Support
2014.HET-LD.CB.AUDLOG 006	Rolling Rd Emmart UM Church Slave Safe Houses
2014.HET-LD.CB.AUDLOG 007	African American and Slave Cemeteries Winters Lane
2014.HET-LD.CB.AUDLOG 008	Frederick Rd Catonsville Greenwood Park Antebellum Churches
2014.HET-LD.CB.AUDLOG 009	Turner Station - LDiggs (Conversation)
2014.HET-LD.CB.AUDLOG 009a	Turner Station Union Baptist Church
2014.HET-LD.CB.AUDLOG 009b	Turner Station H Lacks Legacy Group
2014.HET-LD.CB.AUDLOG 009c	Turner Station Tour Courtney Speed
2014.HET-LD.CB.AUDLOG 009d	Turner Station Tour Courtney Speed 2
2014.HET-LD.CB.AUDLOG 010	LDiggs Tour Wrap Up

Baltimore County African American Cultural Festival - Interviews with Louis Diggs and Historians Video Log**File Name Root: 2015.BCAACF.CB.VLOG**

RECORDING #	CONTENT DESCRIPTION
2015.BCAACF.CB.VLOG.001	Mr. Diggs Narration – Slave Safe Houses and Underground Railroad
2015.BCAACF.CB.VLOG.002	Mr. Diggs Narration – African Americans in the Military
2015.BCAACF.CB.VLOG.003	Mr. Diggs Narration – Historic Churches
2015.BCAACF.CB.VLOG.004	Mr. Diggs Narration – Author of 10 Books
2015.BCAACF.CB.VLOG.005	Buffalo Soldiers and other Exhibitors
2015.BCAACF.CB.VLOG.006	Jeff and Martha Supik – Emmart Pierpont Safe House
2015.BCAACF.CB.VLOG.007	Footage of Festival Attendees and Activities

Baltimore County African American Cultural Festival - Interviews with Louis Diggs and Historians Audio Log**File Name Root: 2015.BCAACF.CB.AUDLOG**

RECORDING #	CONTENT DESCRIPTION
2015.BCAACF.CB.AUDLOG.001	Mr. Diggs Narration – Slave Safe Houses and Underground Railroad
2015.BCAACF.CB.AUDLOG.002	Mr. Diggs Narration – African Americans in the Military
2015.BCAACF.CB.AUDLOG.003	Mr. Diggs Narration – Historic Churches
2015.BCAACF.CB.AUDLOG.004	Mr. Diggs Narration – Author of 10 Books
2015.BCAACF.CB.AUDLOG.005	Buffalo Soldiers and other Exhibitors
2015.BCAACF.CB.AUDLOG.006	Jeff and Martha Supik – Emmart Pierpont Safe House
2015.BCAACF.CB.AUDLOG.007	Footage of Festival Attendees and Activities

Diggs-Johnson Museum Grand Opening Ceremony Video Log**File Name Root:** 2015.DJMUSEUM.CB.VLOG

RECORDING #	CONTENT DESCRIPTION
2015.DJMUSEUM.CB.VLOG.001-007	Interview Series with Louis Diggs and Lenwood Johnson
2015.DJMUSEUM.CB.VLOG.008	Ribbon Cutting
2015.DJMUSEUM.CB.VLOG.009	Welcoming Remarks and Program Occasion
2015.DJMUSEUM.CB.VLOG.010	Keynote Address – Steven X. Lee
2015.DJMUSEUM.CB.VLOG.011	Time Capsule
2015.DJMUSEUM.CB.VLOG.012	Closing Remarks and Call to Action
2015.DJMUSEUM.CB.VLOG.013	Benediction – Oblate Sisters of Providence
2015.DJMUSEUM.CB.VLOG.014	Attendee Interview 1 – TBaysmore – County Execs Office
2015.DJMUSEUM.CB.VLOG.015	Attendee Interview 2- Former Resident from CA & Courtney Speed
2015.DJMUSEUM.CB.VLOG.016	Attendee Interview 2 – Gentleman with historic artifact from community
2015.DJMUSEUM.CB.VLOG.017	Footage – Eldest member of the community signs the scroll
2015.DJMUSEUM.CB.VLOG.018	Footage – Eldest member of the community playing piano

Diggs-Johnson Museum Grand Opening Ceremony Audio Log**File Name Root:** 2015.DJMUSEUM.CB.AUDLOG

RECORDING #	CONTENT DESCRIPTION
2015.DJMUSEUM.CB.AUDLOG.001-007	Interview Series with Louis Diggs and Lenwood Johnson
2015.DJMUSEUM.CB.AUDLOG.008	Ribbon Cutting
2015.DJMUSEUM.CB.AUDLOG.009	Welcoming Remarks and Program Occasion
2015.DJMUSEUM.CB.AUDLOG.010	Keynote Address – Steven X. Lee
2015.DJMUSEUM.CB.AUDLOG.011	Time Capsule
2015.DJMUSEUM.CB.AUDLOG.012	Closing Remarks and Call to Action
2015.DJMUSEUM.CB.AUDLOG.013	Benediction – Oblate Sisters of Providence
2015.DJMUSEUM.CB.AUDLOG.014	Attendee Interview 1 – TBaysmore – County Execs Office
2015.DJMUSEUM.CB.AUDLOG.015	Attendee Interview 2- Former Resident from CA & Courtney Speed
2015.DJMUSEUM.CB.AUDLOG.016	Attendee Interview 2 – Gentleman with historic artifact from community
2015.DJMUSEUM.CB.AUDLOG.017	Footage – Eldest member of the community signs the scroll
2015.DJMUSEUM.CB.AUDLOG.018	Footage – Eldest member of the community playing piano

Appendix E

Ephemeral Materials Log Sheet

Researcher: Carol Brooks
Project Name: Capstone Project: Living History – Finding Myself in the Reflection of My Elders
Date Logged: Historic East Towson and Louis Diggs Tour – 9.17.14 – 12.3.14
 BC African American Cultural Festival & Diggs-Johnson Museum: 9.10.15 – 3.30.16
File Name Root: 2014.HET.EPH.CB
 2014.HET-LD.EPH.CB
 2015.BCAACF.EPH.CB
 2015.LD-DJMUSEUM.EPH.CB

Number of .pdf files in Series: Historic East Towson -12 / Louis Diggs Historic Tour – 13 / Baltimore County African American Cultural Festival – 11 / Diggs-Johnson Museum - 3

Source of Materials: Adelaide Bentley – North East Towson Improvement Association
 Simmons Negro Leagues Baseball Museum
 Louis Diggs – Baltimore County Historic Association, Emancipation Day Tour
 Baltimore County African American Cultural Festival
 Diggs-Johnson Museum Grand Opening and Time Capsule Dedication Ceremonies
 Henrietta Lacks Legacy Group and Turner Station History Center
 Baltimore County Blog and Website
 Local News Media – Avenue News

Format: JPEG TIFF RAW Other: PDF

Color space: Grayscale Color

Date(s) of Material Collection: September 17 – November 31, 2014

Location(s): Baltimore County, MD Historic African American Communities Including: North East Towson, Owings Mills, Oella, Catonsville, Winters Lane, Turner Station, Granite

Type of Documentation: Portrait Landscape Object Other:

Subject(s): Keywords, Event(s), Names:

Historic East Towson, Adelaide Bentley, North East Towson Improvement Association, East Towson Design Standards, East Towson Community Survey, East Towson Case Study, Towson Mews, Jacob House Museum, Carver Community Center, Baltimore County, Louis Diggs, Emancipation Day Historic Tour, Turner Station, Winters Lane, Oella, Historic African American Communities, Slave Safe Houses, Cherry Hill AUMP, Louis Diggs Research Center, Henrietta Lacks Legacy Group, Turner Station History Center, Historic Landmarks, Diggs-Johnson Museum,

Summary: Ephemeral materials collected from the community of Historic East Towson, and on a tour of other historic African American Communities in Baltimore County, MD. 2015 additions to the collection came from the Baltimore County African American Cultural Festival and the Digg-Johnson Museum Grand Opening and Time Capsule Dedication Events. Includes exhibit brochures, research and historical documents, community planning documents, architecture renderings, print news media, Baltimore County blog posts and press releases and event programs. All documents were scanned into Adobe .pdf files as electronic documents.

Historic East Towson Ephemeral Materials Log

Copyright Holder: Various **Restricted?** No, Yes, details:
File Name Root: 2014.HET.CB

IMAGE #	CONTENT DESCRIPTION
2014.HET.EPH.CB.001	Adelaide Bentley – NAACP Award
2014.HET.EPH.CB.002	East Towson Community Center

2014.HET.EPH.CB.003 Jacob House Museum

Historic East Towson Ephemeral Materials Log (cont'd)

File Name Root: 2014.HET.CB

2014.HET.EPH.CB.003a Jacob House Museum- Preservation Nation.org Marylands Miracle Cabin
 2014.HET.EPH.CB.004 East Towson Design Standards
 2014.HET.EPH.CB.005 East Towson Community Survey – 1940’s
 2014.HET.EPH.CB.006 East Towson Case Study - SAHF
 2014.HET.EPH.CB.007 Baltimore County Blog – HET Designated Historic Landmark
 2014.HET.EPH.CB.008 HET Interview Transcript – Around Town BaltimoreSun.com
 2014.HET.EPH.CB.009 Towson Designated Sustainable Community – Baltimore County Press Release
 2014.HET.EPH.CB.010 Marks to introduce PUD for Towson Mews - Baltimore Sun
 2014.HET.EPH.CB.011 Towson Mews first area project for Virginia developer - Baltimore Sun

Louis Diggs Historic Tour Ephemeral Materials Log

File Name Root: 2014.HET-LD.CB (Louis Diggs Historic Tour)

2014.HET-LD.EPH.CB.001 LDiggs Tour Avenue News Article – Commemorating Freedom in Maryland
 2014.HET-LD.EPH.CB.002 LDiggs Tour Agenda
 2014.HET-LD.EPH.CB.003 Negro League Baseball Museum
 2014.HET-LD.EPH.CB.004 Historic Church Photo
 2014.HET-LD.EPH.CB.005 Cherry Hill AUMP Church
 2014.HET-LD.EPH.CB.006 Slave Safe Houses and Havens
 2014.HET-LD.EPH.CB.006a Slave Safe Houses and Havens Map
 2014.HET-LD.EPH.CB.007 Balto County Historic AA Communities
 2014.HET-LD.EPH.CB.008 Towson Turner Station HLacks Legacy Group
 2014.HET-LD.EPH.CB.008a Towson Turner Station History Center
 2014.HET-LD.EPH.CB.008b Towson Turner Station CE Kamenetz Article
 2014.HET-LD.EPH.CB.009 Freed Slaves in the Civil War
 2014.HET-LD.EPH.CB.010 LDiggs Research Center

Diggs-Johnson Museum Ephemeral Materials Log

File Name Root: 2015.LD-DJMUSEUM.EPH.CB (Diggs-Johnson Museum Grand Opening)

2015.DJMUSEUM.EPH.CB.001 Friends of the Cherry Hill AUMP Membership Brochure
 2015.DJMUSEUM.EPH.CB.001 Diggs-Johnson Museum Grand Opening Souvenir Journal
 2015.DJMUSEUM.EPH.CB.002 Diggs-Johnson Museum Grand Opening Program
 2015.DJMUSEUM.EPH.CB.003 Diggs-Johnson Museum Time Capsule Dedication Ceremony Program

Baltimore County African American Cultural Festival Ephemeral Materials Log

File Name Root: 2015.BCAACF.EPH.CB (Baltimore County African American Cultural Festival)

2015.BCAACF.EPH.CB.001 Baltimore County African African Cultural Festival Souvenir Brochure
 2015.BCAACF.EPH.CB.001 Negro League Baseball Museum
 2015.BCAACF.EPH.CB.002 Buffalo Soldiers
 2015.BCAACF.EPH.CB.003 Cherry Hill AUMP Church
 2015.BCAACF.EPH.CB.001 Slave Safe Houses and Havens
 2015.BCAACF.EPH.CB.001 Slave Safe Houses and Havens Map
 2015.BCAACF.EPH.CB.001 Balto County Historic AA Communities
 2015.BCAACF.EPH.CB.001 Towson Turner Station HLacks Legacy Group
 2015.BCAACF.EPH.CB.001 Towson Turner Station History Center
 2015.BCAACF.EPH.CB.001 The Historic Emmart Pierpont Safe House – Underground Railroad
 2015.BCAACF.EPH.CB.001 Fredrick Douglas Museum
 2015.BCAACF.EPH.CB.001 LDiggs Research Center

Appendix F

Selected Transcript – Louis Diggs Historic Tour Wrap Up

Cultural Documentation Field Lab: Historic East Towson Project

Recording Transcript: Baltimore County Emancipation Day Historic Tour

Date: November 1, 2014

Interview Subject: Louis Diggs, Historian – Baltimore County Historic African American Communities

Documentarian: Carol Brooks

To inform my field research for the Historic East Towson project, Mr. Louis Diggs invited me to attend a tour of several historic African American communities throughout Baltimore County, MD. The tour took place on Saturday, November 1, 2014 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

I am recording Mr. Diggs’ narrative and commentary throughout the tour, as the subject matter directly correlates with the historic preservation efforts in Historic East Towson, and provides an in depth response to interview questions previously posed to him and Ms. Adelaide Bentley, President of the North East Towson Improvement Association, in prior conversations. This is a transcription of the first 15 minutes of the final 32 minutes of the tour while en route back to the Baltimore County Public Library in Owings Mills where it originated. Mr. Diggs provides a summation of the importance of preserving the stories and artifacts of this little known African American history, and the dire need for greater support from the community in these efforts.

Baltimore County Emancipation Day Tour: 11/1/14 – 2:35 – 3:07 p.m.

Key: Louis Diggs – LD Tour Group: - TG

00:00 – 00:42	LD:	Do you know what I’ve been doing for the last 25 years? You, uh...Can you hear me back there?
	TG:	<i>Various responses from the tour group indicating their answer. One person asks Mr. Diggs to hold the microphone closer to his mouth.</i>
	LD:	I can’t get it no closer! What Courtney did was the keyboard so the sound popped up. Can you hear me back there? <i>(Mr. Diggs attempts to fix the audio projection speaking off the microphone with his assistant) Its on...</i>
	TG:	<i>Laughter and additional responses...background conversations.</i>
	LD:	<i>To assistant: That’s alright...I’m sittin’ down now.</i> Returns to speak to Tour Group: I think that’s a little better.
	TG:	<i>Various responses: Yeah...That’s a lot better.</i>
00:43 – 02:13	LD:	Okay like I said this is a history tour. This is really like going into the classroom today though. Well, a lot of you know that here in Baltimore County, we had no documented history of African American life out here...none at all. County’s been in uh in existence for over 350 years. And um After I retired from the uh Army spent 20 years... 50 to 70... in the Korean War (it looks like I’m advertising up here) when I retired in 1970 I went to work for BC Public Schools under Civil Service thank goodness. They didn’t have a mayor and all then, so I was able to retire civil service. So when I retired from the military in um 1989...for sure this time; I ain’t gonna mess it up...I uh...do y’all remember when we start with them big 10 foot dishes in the yard? Well I had a nice yard out there in the county had me a big10 foot dish and got me HBO and things up there didn’t cost you a dime...and I said 47 years working and I’m ready to sit back and relax myself. Only trouble was I was 57 and my children insisted

		that I go down to Catonsville High and be a role model for the kids, it was fine...I ended up a substitute teacher.
02:14- 03:04	LD	And once I was teaching this class on researching your roots researching communities and I was Living in Winters Lane; I was teaching this class on...the kids on Winters Lane they simply could not find any history at all. They knew about their families but they couldn't find anything about their community...where did Winters Lane come from? How did it start? How did it happen to survive? So when the class was over, it was a semester class, when it was over the kids from Catonsville, I mean they really approached me with tears in their eyes they said, "Mr. Diggs we simply could not find anything on our history". And they asked me said "could you help us find our history?" And my wife is living proof to this, I'm not kidding.
03:05 – 04:12		So I said, "Son, I..uh..I'm from Baltimore City I really don't know anything about Baltimore County. Even then, I didn't know how deep my own roots were in Baltimore County. No, I'm serious. My mother and father were married and I never lived a day in my life under his roof...never knew the man. Never knew the man had roots out here in Baltimore County since 17 whatever...I got all the roots some seven generations. So anyhow, I had to say yes to this boy...had to say yes. And uh, one of the reasons I said yes because my wife worked in the library and I knew I could get some help from my wife, and of course I got tremendous help... [Bose? Unclear] library...they really showed me what to do. As I captured all this history, uh when it was all over, took me years to do it, and uh, when I finally captured it all...and the kids were just carried away with it. Some of the teachers were bringing them into our classes where the guys had learned and, and young ladies had learned a little bit about their history.
04:13 – 06:04	LD	Well anyway, when it was all over I had uh I don't know how much paperwork, but the librarian said, "Mr. Diggs we want you to take this down to the Maryland Humanities Council because we really feel you've done something significant". So anyhow, off I go to Judy Dobbs, never will forget her...I think she's Deputy Director down there...this was 1990 maybe 1991. So she sits me down and looked at my materials. Had um, she was a state folklorist from the Maryland State Arts Council. So <i>(pauses to address bus driver)</i> ...so anyhow...anyhow, uh, Miss Dobbs said, "Mr. Diggs you put this in a booklet form we'll give you a \$5,000 grant so that people can see this history that you've collected". They do not commission books...you look at my book today, the first book called "It All Started on Winters Lane", on the spleen of it you will say its a " book sponsored by the Maryland State Arts Council". Well, the gentleman from the State Arts Council said uh well we don't think that's enough...we'll give you an additional \$2,000. So that's \$7,000 to produce a book, a booklet, that I had no idea how to put it together. So I said, boy...you know here you are almost 60 years old, and I'm a paper man anyhow. And uh, I said I was going to go on down to the Catonsville Community College take a class on how to and I said to help me, came up with a format and, uh, it was really, it was really good. It was definitely really good.
06:05 – 07:34	LD	And so the Catonsville Historical Society asked me in uh that February if I would come up and make a talk about what I had uncovered. And I said uh, fine, I would do that. Somehow the Sun Paper got hold and up comes, pops this big article in the Sun Paper about this Black man talking about the only

		<p>known history of Black life in Baltimore County. I mean it...it impressed me what it said but I didn't talk with the paper.</p> <p>So when we had the activity at this...I mean it was so many people, there wasn't enough people in the...the room couldn't hold all the people; they were outside in the freezing cold listening to what I was saying about this book. The books all sold immediately; uh the reason I sold them is because \$7,000, I had no idea what it costs, I ended up paying something like \$11,000. Cause to get all the artwork, whatever I needed done. So the Humanities Council at this stage says you can sell the book...What was it Shirl...\$3.00? \$4.00? I mean I had a thousand copies made and um, they bought immediately...they just disappeared. And uh of course I was impressed that people were interested in this kind of history and uh it didn't take long for me to realize, you know, except in my research that there's no more documents, no history of our life out here.</p>
07:35 – 08:38	LD	<p>That motivated me to do my second book. And I made a lot of money off the first book, paid for my second book on my own, I took my own family to...to...to start with. And like I said, my family's been here since the 1700's and they would come from this old community called Piney Grove up in Boring, Maryland. that's in Uppercoe 'bout 5 miles up above Reisterstown. And my church, Piney Grove United Methodist Church, they took care of the people in, on Bond Avenue in Reisterstown until they built their own church around uh 18...1880, 1870. And, um...so I took these two communities did my second book, and I tell you, I mean I...that, that sold for what the price would bear which I think at this time was something like \$9.00 maybe...back then didn't do a thousand copies. But they all wanted me. While I was doing that then I was impressed myself, and said this could be something to do, and 'cause Shirley said "I ain't going to have you sitting home looking at television."</p>
	TG	<p><i>Laughter amongst tour group passengers.</i></p>
08:41 – 10:23	LD	<p>That's when...that's when Baltimore County took an interest in what I was doing. And I wish I could think of this guy's name. He had Mary Harvey's job...what was his name? He spoke with a strong English accent. Uh, he was before Mary Harvey. And this is a department in Baltimore County government that takes care of communities and homes and all. Community Conservation is what it was called, saving the community. So he approached me one day after he heard me talk somewhere, he said "Mr. Diggs you know, maybe we should give you some grants on what you're doing"...I looked at him rather inquisitively...he said "you know you are preserving history and that's what we're all about."</p> <p>So, the second...the third book on, Baltimore County began to pay what ever it cost to publish the book. And that was the real motivation for me, 'cause yes, I was making, making some money off if it 'cause the deal was that I do the research and I keep the profits from the sale of the book.</p> <p>So I found that Baltimore County had already designated 40 communities - Black communities in Baltimore County...Baltimore County that they considered historic. And that was just a way for the County to step in and help these Black communities out, 'cause a lot of them were really failing. Well, I said I want book, two books, three books...I want all 40 of them covered, everything in the 350 square miles of Baltimore County.</p>

10:24 – 11:45	LD	<p>Now, I just received a grant, um, last month to do my tenth book, and this is the one that I wanted to talk with you guys about and share a little bit of history with you, because I think myself, that I have taken the history of African American life here in Baltimore County to a different level. Take my word for it, even today if somebody wants to know information about one of these communities or Black life, they always have to go to one of my books.</p> <p>So, for the last 4 years I have been researching, uh, the slaves in Baltimore County...a new book coming up on the Civil War...I don't know where I got this notion from; someone said you know probably some of the slaves here served in the Civil War, and I thought it was a good idea...I knew we were getting close to the 150th anniversary, so I began to track them down. I bought the white programs, I went into the actual national archives, I went into every man's records...uh, copied every one of them. And what I did was, and it was pretty interesting...I didn't realize that I could do all this sitting at home working at my leisure.</p>
11:46 – 12:21		<p>But these programs, one was called Fold3.com and the other was called Ancestry.com. Lot of people I know deal with Ancestry.com, but Fold3 deals specifically with those that served in the military in every war that we have participated in. So basically when I went in, let's take my name...Louis Diggs...so I found Diggs and it told me what regiment that I was located in and what company I was located in and it gave my whole military record.</p>
12:22 – 13:07		<p>Now bear in mind...bear in mind everybody knows the Civil War began in 1861 and ended in 1865 but because of the complication of dealing with Black soldiers in the [unintelligible...], they did not form these regiments called United States Colored Troops until 1863. 1863 and 1864 were the two heavy years; the average person had about 25 records in his file. The key record was the/his enlistment record...its called a company descriptive fold. And what this told the reader, it gave his name, his height, his weight, the color of his eyes and the key one, where was he born.</p>
13:09 – 14:23		<p>Now, my first goal was to pick out everybody who said they were born in Baltimore County. 6 regiments, 1863, were formed in the state of Maryland...1863 of United States called troops... 6 of them...4th, 7th, 9th, 16th, 30th and the 39th regiments. Each one had about 1200 men, and I went through 1200 men, each of those records, looked at them; first I was just looking to see who was born in Baltimore County... Pulled them all out, okay? Like I said, each one had that record plus every month they had a, like a financial record they called a muster roll. If he was paid, then there would be on there how much he got paid. If he lost a piece of equipment, you know, what they had to take from him. All these little notes...there was an average of about 25 records per person, on average. If nothing went wrong with that person, if he signed in 1863, was mustered out in 1865, never got hurt, never ran away, no problems, he would have exactly those 25 records, okay?</p>
14:24 – 15:34	LD	<p>After I captured all of the data, then I said, sure just by coincidence, but one guy had uh Baltimore County, then he lined it out said - no, Baltimore City...and all this piqued my interest. Then I was, see when I found out...that's when I found out that there were slaves that had run away from their masters and joined the Civil War. They ran away. I was able to go to the Sun Paper and other places to find advertisements that their masters had put into The</p>

		<p>Sun Paper primarily and not to the, of the Towson paper, The Jefferson...what ever was in effect during those years. And sure enough, quite a few of them had ran away and [unintelligible...] So as I was doing this research I said what the devil, why would someone that held me in bondage and then I would go fight a war to save them. There was a little more to it I found even from the get-go...</p>
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Appendix F

15FA CSP 675/675Y Master Course

Carol Brooks

Capstone Project: Midterm - Documentary Film Treatment – Revised December 27, 2015

Transcript – Keynote Address by Steven Lee, Diggs Johnson Grand Opening - November 14, 2015

File and Runtime	Transcript of Keynote Address Theme Segments (to be used in documentary)
TASCAM 151113_0091 11.14.15	Speaker: Steven X. Lee, Baltimore County Commissioner – Maryland Commission on African American Culture and History/ Diggs-Johnson Museum Grand Opening Event
	<i>(not used) Introduction</i>
01:12:44 – 01:13:57	“I first met Lenwood in the 80’s. A mutual friend, a historian, Bill Joyner – some of you may remember, insisted that I meet Mr. Johnson and proceeded to take me to his home in Randallstown one afternoon. Bill Joyner introduced me as a fellow historian and that was all that he needed to say. Lenwood then proceeded for the next few hours to tell me the complete story of African Americans in Baltimore County. When we left his home late that evening I felt as if the entire set of encyclopedias had been downloaded into my head and that it might explode from trying to process all that data. But I also knew that I had just encountered a real griot of the ancient African tradition. Yeah, he was dressed in modern day clothing, living in an American suburban house...but an African griot nonetheless. A vessel and storyteller of the full history and legacy of a people.”
01:13:58 – 01:14:32	“I came to meet Mr. Louis Diggs about a dozen years later at the Banneker Historical Park. I knew then at that first encounter that this was a man on a mission. He had already published his book on Winter’s Lane and was in the midst of writing a new one, and was telling me of the urgency of recording Baltimore County’s African American history as it was being lost each day - being lost for our children and our future and that it had to be saved. That was a man on a mission.”
01:14:32 – 01:14:52	<i>(not used) “Our discussions soon led to our first project together, Faith, Hope and History. That was an exhibition of the historic churches of Baltimore County at the Banneker Museum and of course this church was included...”</i>
01:14:54 - 01:15:31	“...this was 13 years ago, so I don’t know if you recall what this church looked like then. And when I photographed it to use a picture in the exhibition little did I realize I’d be returning here this day to a building that’s fully restored and now reborn as a repository of the faith, of hope and the history of African Americans. But I’m sure Mr. Diggs realized it even then. A man with a vision...a man on a mission.”
01:15:32 - 01:16:08	“At first I didn’t know way back then that these two gentlemen knew each other, but when I saw their exchange at an event I knew this was trouble...double trouble. Truly a dynamic duo and that something great had to come out of their combined energies. And so we’re all here today. And Mr. Diggs – he’s still on a mission. Committed to preserving into perpetuity the legacy of the African American in Baltimore County.
01:16:10 - 01:16:56	<i>(not used) “In the tradition first established in the mid-1800’s by that godfather of African American institution founding, Mr. Fredrick Douglas, Maryland’s own...In the tradition of John Henry Murphy, Sr. who in 1892 founded the institution of the Afro American Newspaper in Baltimore City...In the tradition of Carter G. Woodson who founded in Chicago in 1915 “ASAALAH” the now nationwide Association for the Study of African American Life and History...”</i>
01:16:57 - 01:17:30	“...we are indeed blessed to have here in our own time in our own place Mr. Louis Diggs, who founds, gives birth this day November 14, 2015 to the Diggs-Johnson Museum dedicated to the life and history of African Americans in this County.” <i>(applause...not used: “That’s not the end!” - laughter)</i>
01:17:32 - 01:18:24	“You see, to Mr. Diggs and Mr. Johnson and all these soldiers, Black lives mattered long before the slogan was coined. And they understood that at its most fundamental level, for they saw in the 1800’s, in the 1900’s and in the 21 st century that the stories and the lives of African Americans were systematically, institutionally being vanquished. And that the only way this could be counteracted would be to establish African American

	institutions by African Americans for the preservation and documentation of our history and for our future.”
01:18:25 - 01:15:58	“Black lives matter. I ask our young people, where does that value in Black lives begin? With you? Nah...it begins with all of our parents, grandparents and great grandparents back through time, and what they did so we could be here. Those old lives, old stories, as Ms. Cockey was telling us, matter, and have to matter to us. For if they don’t count, nor will we count.”
01:18:00 - 01:19:38	“It begins with our brother and sister servicemen, teachers, craftsmen, scientists, politicians (pause...laughter), cooks, preachers, constructions workers and street sweepers. Their lives, their stories mattered. They are the foundation on which we all, Black and White, in America stand. It is in the value, the importance that we give and invest to those of the past that bestows value upon us today.”
01:19:39 - 1:20:34	“It is indeed a very high value that Louis Diggs and Lenwood Johnson placed on African American lives and history. They have more than done their part to make Black lives matter. They have virtually saved our Baltimore County legacy, and through the years of fortitude have created this new born institution for it. And Mr. Diggs strives further to forge it into a fully accredited, fully recognized museum institution. But it takes a village to raise a child. And even the indomitable, indefatigable Mr. Louis Diggs, of whom I will always be in awe, cannot alone carry this museum through time.
1:20:36 - 1:21:42	“For this museum to grow there is a part we all have to play. We all must help raise it, look out for it, contribute to it. After all, it’s here for us to preserve our legacy. Its very existence exemplifies how and why Black lives matter. This is the day of the Diggs-Johnson Museum’s founding; all of us here are the people, the community of its founding. How special is that? A glorious thing to see and be a part of...but I ask a little more than that. I ask for a covenant between the museum and its founding community; that the museum would be true to the community goals set by Mr. Diggs and Mr. Johnson, and that its founding community stay steadfast in support of this museum.”
1:20:43 - 1:22:38	“In homage, I offer a time capsule to keepsake this moment in history between museum and community. A little time capsule, for a little church (pause to uncover capsule...applause) to be buried here... <i>[not used: I wish there was an attic you know like Ms. Cockey was talking about...there is? Awesome...that’s so cool! OK, let me get back into character]</i> ...and be opened in 100 years or so for all to see when our young institution is all grown up, who and how we all its founders be.”
1:22:39 – 1:24:34	“Inside this capsule will be placed:” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1:22:44 “One of my favorite things; this is...remember this Mr. Diggs? ...Buffalo Soldiers cap of Mr. Louis Diggs, of our founder. I had to put that in there... He gave this to me, but its going in our capsule...” ○ 1:23:04 “I’m also proposing we include a relic of the church. Ms. Betty Stewart has one that was found in the rafters or the walls of the building...” ○ 1:23:17 “I’m going to include all the materials that you have here of our program...” ○ 1:23:23 “We’re going to get an item from Mr. Johnson to put in...” ○ 1:23:30 “One of the last existing copies of the Faith, Hope and History Guide that also has a photograph of this church before it was restored...” ○ 1:23:43 “And we’re going to include photographs of the Board and Founders, of course, but also of the event.” <i>[not used: “So, I’m going to be clicking because I hope to get a shot of everyone’s face here to include.”]</i> ○ 1:23:58 “And last but not least, will be the founding scroll in which signing we each agree to support the museum, and you know I’m hoping everybody will sign. As we each are a brick in the building of its history, and when it is rediscovered and opened, let it be that our children and grandchildren will find our names upon it and better understand what it means to be a part of a legacy.”
1:24:35 - 1:25:45	“In my service as a Museologist and as a State Commissioner its been a very great and humbling honor to participate and support in the development of so many cultural centers of the African diaspora. From projects like the new Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, and the old “L’Ecent Botsue”, the little

	community cultural center in Paris for African and Caribbean ex-patriots, big or small, together in their organization – or not quite, here or abroad, each one is a blessing. An important link helping to sustain the chain that is our world heritage. Let’s carry forward in Baltimore County. <i>[not used: “Thank you”]</i>
1:25:49 - 1:26:04	Louis Diggs: “Steve, I’d like to make a donation to that (points to capsule)...this is the last copy that I have of the history that I wrote about this community - “Surviving in America”. I hate to give that up, but I want that read 100 years from now!” (applause)

[Appendix G](#)

Community Engagement and Civic Dialogue Tools and Resources:

- **The Community Toolbox – A Model for Getting Started**
- **The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience**

THE COMMUNITY TOOL BOX

Tools to Change Our World



WHAT DOES THE COMMUNITY TOOL BOX DO?

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- Assess community needs and resources?
- Develop a strategic plan?
- Build leadership?
- Advocate for change?
- Evaluate community efforts?
- Sustain the work?
- Find guidance on almost any community topic?

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- How-to Guidance: 300+ how-to instructional modules, covering the full spectrum of community building
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We can build a Web-based platform for recording, analyzing, and reporting on your organization's progress. Use real-time data to better understand and improve the initiative's efforts to achieve outcomes and document accomplishments for funders and other stakeholders.



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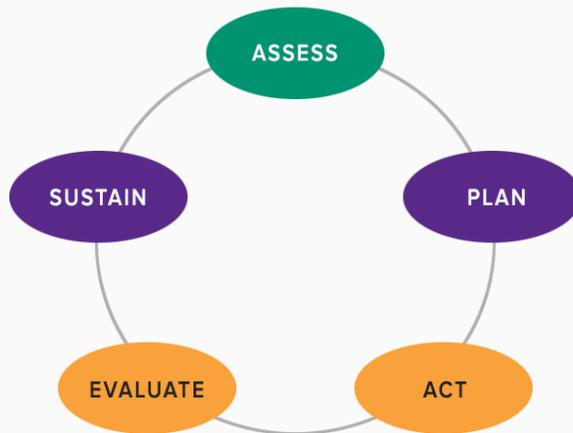
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COMMUNITY TOOL BOX

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A Model for Getting Started

HOW DO WE BEGIN TAKING ACTION IN THE COMMUNITY?



Here's a simple model for taking action you can use, to give you some general guidance. You'll find more details in the toolkits and other resources in the bulleted points below. Best wishes for success as you work to bring about positive change in your community!

ASSESS

Begin by learning what issues matter to the community, and what resources may be available.

These resources from the Community Tool Box will help you do your assessment:

- [Toolkit: Assessing Community Needs and Resources](#)
- [Developing a Plan for Identifying Local Needs and Resources](#)
- [Identifying Community Assets and Resources](#)

PLAN

Planning provides overall direction on the road that leads from where things are now to where we hope they will be. It can be helpful for a group to develop a clear vision, a mission statement, objectives, strategies, and an action plan.

Resources for planning include:

- [Toolkit: Developing a Framework or Model of Change](#)
- [Toolkit: Creating Strategic and Action Plans](#)
- [An Overview of Strategic Planning or "VMOSA:" \(Vision, Mission, Objectives, Strategies, and Action Plans\)](#)

ACT

You have identified something that you and your community care about, and it is time to take action. This involves mobilizing people around the effort and implementing some sort of intervention.

Supports for implementation include:

- [Toolkit: Developing an Intervention](#)
- [Toolkit: Increasing Participation and Membership](#)
- [Conducting a Direct Action Campaign](#)

EVALUATE

How do you know that your initiative is working? It's important to monitor what is happening and make adjustments as necessary.

Here are some resources for evaluating your efforts:

- [Toolkit: Evaluating the Initiative](#)
- [Introduction to Evaluation](#)
- [Choosing Evaluation Questions and Planning the Evaluation](#)
- [Methods for Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives](#)

SUSTAIN

Some important work has been started. How do you keep your efforts going?

Here are some resources to help you sustain what you started:

- [Toolkit: Sustaining the Work or Initiative](#)
- [Strategies for Sustaining the Initiative](#)
- [Planning for Long-Term Institutionalization](#)



International Coalition of
SITES of CONSCIENCE

memory to action

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INTERNATIONAL COALITION OF SITES OF CONSCIENCE

From past to present, memory to action

"We hold in common the belief that it is the obligation of historic sites to assist the public in drawing connections between the history of our sites and its contemporary implications. We view stimulating dialogue on pressing social issues and promoting democratic and humanitarian values as a primary function."

-Founding Coalition Members

WHAT IS THE INTERNATIONAL COALITION OF SITE OF CONSCIENCE?

Gulag Museum at Perm-36, Russia



We are a worldwide network of "Sites of Conscience" – historic sites, museums, and initiatives specifically dedicated to remembering past struggles for justice and addressing their contemporary legacies. The International Coalition advocates for every community's right to preserve sites where struggles for human rights and democracy have taken place, to talk openly about what happened there,

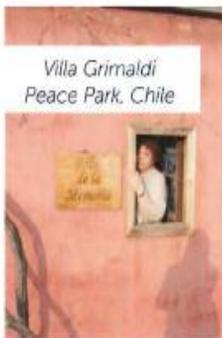
and to confront their contemporary legacies.



Constitution Hill, South Africa

The Coalition was founded in 1999, when nine museums from four continents came together with a common commitment: to foster civil engagement by using their powerful places of memory as catalysts for new dialogue on contemporary issues. Today, the Coalition is led by 17 Core Founding Members and includes more than 200 members in 55 countries.

Coalition is led by 17 Core Founding Members and includes more than 200 members in 55 countries.



*Villa Grimaldi
Peace Park, Chile*

WHAT IS A SITE OF CONSCIENCE?

A Site of Conscience is a place of memory – such as a historic site, place-based museum, or memorial – that confronts both the history of what happened there and its contemporary implications. Whether remembering an era centuries or decades ago, Sites of Conscience begin by facing all aspects of our history: stories of great cruelty, great courage, or everyday life. But we go a step further, activating the historical perspective with public dialogue on related issues we face today and what we can do about them.

Sites of Conscience are places that:

- interpret history;
- engage in programs that stimulate dialogue on pressing social issues;
- promote humanitarian and democratic values as a primary function; and
- share opportunities for public involvement in issues raised at the site.

WHAT DOES THE COALITION DO?

The Coalition's goal is to provide every community with a place to confront their pasts, however difficult, and identify how they can act to prevent injustice from recurring. Supporting each other, we have the opportunity to open the social and political space for Sites of Conscience, present and future, to flourish. Connecting sites from



Argentina to Alabama, the United Kingdom to Uruguay, the Coalition supports Sites of Conscience by providing them with direct funding for civic engagement programs, organizing leadership and program development opportunities, and conducting strategic advocacy for individual sites and the Sites of Conscience movement as a whole.

Support for Program Innovation: The Coalition's Project Support Fund provides financial and technical assistance to members to develop and implement new programs that foster public dialogue on contemporary social issues.

Regional/Thematic Networks: Members build local networks of Sites of Conscience that collaborate to address common contemporary issues. Our current Regional/Thematic Networks are:

- [*African Sites of Conscience*](#): using histories of citizen action to develop post-colonial and post-conflict democracies
- [*Asian Sites of Conscience*](#): promoting cultures of peace and pluralism in the wake of ethnic and religious conflict
- [*European Sites of Conscience*](#): encouraging active citizenship and public dialogue on issues of discrimination and exclusion
- [*Immigration and Civil Rights Sites of Conscience*](#): stimulating conversation on immigration and related issues
- [*Latin American Sites of Conscience*](#): promoting debate through the construction of memory of the recent past
- [*Middle East and North Africa Sites of Conscience*](#): documenting societies in transition
- [*Russian Sites of Conscience*](#): building an anti-totalitarian culture



Learning Exchanges: The Coalition is dedicated to developing new



Tools and Resources: Through its website, e-newsletter, publications, and more, the Coalition disseminates program designs, dialogue techniques, planning documents, and other resources for building and strengthening members as Sites of Conscience.

Becoming a Coalition Member:

As museum professionals and human rights advocates, we all have an important choice to make about the role we will play in civic life. The Coalition's members recognize the importance of dealing with difficult legacies and asking difficult questions about those legacies. Many made this choice in the most challenging of political circumstances and in the process envisioned a new role for historic sites and museums in society.

For more information on membership, please contact coalition@sitesofconscience.org.



International Coalition of
SITES of CONSCIENCE

10 West 37th Street, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10018 | 1.646.397.ICSC (4272) | www.sitesofconscience.org

memory to action

Partner Museums

- Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, Alabama
- Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site, Kansas
- Borderlands Public History Lab
- Eastern State Penitentiary, Pennsylvania
- Levine Museum of the New South, North Carolina
- Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, Tennessee
- Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site, Arkansas
- National Civil Rights Museum, Tennessee
- Museum of International Folk Art, New Mexico
- Museum of Tolerance, California
- Missouri History Museum, Missouri

Partner Community Organizations

- Birmingham Mayor's Office Division of Youth Services, Alabama
- Topeka Public Schools Equity Council, Kansas
- Art Sanctuary, Pennsylvania
- Studio 345, North Carolina
- Arkansas Cradle to Prison Pipeline, Arkansas
- Gordon Bernell Charter School, New Mexico
- FOCUS St. Louis, Missouri
- Facing History and Ourselves, Tennessee
- La Mujer Obrera, Texas

About The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience

Founded in 1999, The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience is the only worldwide network dedicated to transforming places that preserve the past into dynamic spaces that promote civic action. With 200 member sites in 55 countries, the Coalition is building the global movement to connect past to present, memory to action. For more information about the Coalition please contact Ashley Nelson, Director of Communications, at anelson@sitesofconscience.org.

About The Institute of Museum and Library Services

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 35,000 museums. Our mission is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. Our grant making, policy development, and research help libraries and museums deliver valuable services that make it possible for communities and individuals to thrive. To learn more, visit www.imls.gov and follow IMLS on Facebook and Twitter.





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memory to action

From Brown v. Board of Education to Ferguson: Fostering Dialogue on Education, Incarceration and Civil Rights

In July 2014, on the 50th Anniversary of the passage of the Civil Rights Act, US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan declared education “the civil rights issue of our time.” Sixty years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, which ended legal segregation in public schools, education equity remains elusive. Schools often remain segregated in practice, and Black and Latino students face unequal educational opportunities. A large contributing factor to the racial achievement gap is the rate of Black and Latino students being suspended and expelled from school. Some are even arrested on school grounds, referred to the juvenile justice system and sent to correctional institutions. This trend is so common it has come to be known as the “school to prison pipeline.”



This phenomenon highlights the broader issue of police, or government-sanctioned, violence directed at minorities, in particular young Black men. The cases of Trayvon Martin, Jordan Davis, and Michael Brown have ignited a national conversation on the abuses young men of color endure and the debate on its motivation and validity have reached a vitriolic pitch.

Museums and similar institutions grounded in historic truths – sites of conscience – are uniquely positioned to serve as civic spaces where all members of the community can engage in dialogue on the racial achievement gap, disproportionate levels of incarceration, school discipline of young people of color, and related civil rights issues.

In October 2015, in collaboration with the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, leaders from member sites and their community partners launched a three year initiative, *From Brown v. Board of Education to Ferguson: Fostering Dialogue on Education, Incarceration and Civil Rights*, with generous support from the US Institute of Museum and Library Services. Under this grant, participating sites and their community partners will create dynamic public engagement programs focused on youth that foster much-needed community dialogue on race, education equity and incarceration in the context of civil rights history. Additionally, the program will train and empower young people (ages 15-25) to establish their own civic engagement programs at museums in their communities. This project will build on the Coalition’s 15-year history of leveraging the expertise of its core members to develop and model programs that can be shared throughout the broader Coalition network and beyond.

For more information, contact Tramia Jackson, Program Associate for the United States Network, at tjackson@sitesofconscience.org