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Freedom's Paradox:

Negotiating Race and Class in Jim Crow Texas

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Freedom's Paradox:
Negotiating Race and Class in Jim Crow Texas

by

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Dedication

To those who think it is impossible to finish.

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Freedom's Paradox:

Negotiating Race and Class in Jim Crow Texas

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2014

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This dissertation focuses on black Texans and the entanglement of race and class during the Reconstruction and Jim Crow periods. I explore the role that landownership played in freedmen's aspirations for citizenship and autonomy within the racially hostile South. Using the Ransom and Sarah William Farmstead, a historic freedmen's site in Manchaca, Travis County, Texas, I posit that formerly enslaved blacks prioritized landownership not only to escape the sharecropping system but because property held significant symbolic capital. For blacks more than any other tangible possession, real estate signified a form of affluence that deeply influenced the social relations that black landowners had with others, regardless of race. Yet, while it made possible a certain level of socioeconomic and spatial mobility, black landowners simultaneously engendered suspicion and anger among whites. Using a critical race framework, I position black landowners as precariously perched between whites and landless blacks, as intermediaries who constantly (and carefully) had to negotiate a highly racialized, patriarchal, and class-based social world. Using ceramics, space and architecture, I present the realities of a more ambiguous and heterogeneous blackness where the Williamses variously accommodated and resisted dominant norms, and re-envisioned their place in a majority-white farming enclave. This dissertation complicates existing scholarship that either tends to flatten black experiences following emancipation by focusing on sharecropping, or to celebrate black landowners in Texas without seriously considering how racial hegemony still circumscribed their lives.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

"The very first thing every colored man should do is get a home. What we mean by a home is a piece of land… with a house upon it, large or small. A place you can call your own" (*Free Man's Press*, Austin, Texas, August 1, 1868).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Land ownership was freed blacks' highest aspiration following emancipation. Released from small farms and plantations with little but a few personal possessions, blacks linked property ownership to the attainment of total freedom—an avenue towards achieving racial and economic autonomy. While many scholars have noted that most blacks' dreams for land went unfulfilled, revisionist interpretations of the Reconstruction and Jim Crow periods have highlighted blacks steady acquisition of land despite virulent racism, limited education and few economic resources. This portrayal of black landowners has challenged the dominant depiction of black victimhood during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, it has also contributed to the mythologizing of black landowners' success. To be specific, black landowners have often been described as affluent—a label that belies the omnipresence of white supremacy and fails to consider that black landowners were not immune to the experience of racism (Stine 1990: 41; Singleton 1995: 129; Reid 2012: 8).

In this dissertation, I aim to present a more balanced portrayal of the lives and experiences of black landowners after slavery. Through an analysis of artifacts recovered from the Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead, a historic black freedmen's site in

Manchaca, Travis County, Texas, I explore the role that land ownership played in freedmen's aspirations for citizenship and autonomy within the racially hostile south. This study asks how did land ownership help freed blacks negotiate race and class tensions during the Reconstruction and Jim Crow periods? However, I also unpack the meaning of black property ownership to freed blacks, its relationship to race and class and the possibilities it contained for blacks' spatial and socioeconomic mobility.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The story of the Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead presents a narrative of black success against insurmountable odds. Preliminary research on the Williams Farmstead situated the family's land ownership within a rich heritage of black land ownership in Texas. Although very little was known about Ransom and Sarah Williams, archival data revealed that Ransom Williams, a formerly enslaved man from Kentucky, purchased roughly forty-five acres of land in 1871 with $180 in cash and a $20 promissory note (Myers 2013: 120). Prior to the purchase of this property, Williams first appeared in the documentary record in 1869 when he registered to vote in Travis County and then again in 1872 when he registered his horse brand (Myers 2013: 114). Williams was listed in the voter registration and subsequent county directory listings as "mulatto" or "colored" (Myers 2013: 115). Ransom married Sarah Houston between 1871 and 1875; the two had nine children, five who lived to adulthood (Myers 2013: 126-129). Although the Williams household was not counted on the 1870, 1880, 1890 or 1900 population census (Myers 2013:124), the family resided at the farmstead until 1905 and then moved to Austin upon the death of Ransom possibly in 1901 (Myers 2013: 34, 157).

Ransom and Sarah Williams' land ownership was a considerable accomplishment since the Freedman's Bureau had a brief tenure in Texas and did not initiate any land redistribution programs to aid recently emancipated blacks. The study of the Ransom and farmstead presents a more heterogeneous representation of black life because it challenges much of our contemporary understanding of blacks' experiences after slavery. For example, the Williams family purchased land just six years after slavery and held it for almost thirty years thus highlighting an exception to the prevailing image of landless blacks. Archaeological excavations at the site unearthed roughly 26,000 artifacts, which suggested that members of the household were active consumers and enjoyed a level of social and economic status rarely observed on sites occupied by black tenants or sharecroppers. In addition, the Williams family resided in a predominantly white agricultural community. With the advent of segregation, the household stood out as "matter out of place"--blacks surrounded by whites despite increased efforts to maintain strict segregation of the races in most political and social matters (White 2007). The household's property ownership and unconventional location necessitates an attention to the intersection of race and class while begging for an answer to the question of exactly how the household negotiated the race and class tensions of the era. However, it also begs the question of how do scholars contextualize the lives of freed blacks like Ransom and Sarah Williams in light of the esteemed status they held as landowners but the virulent racism they continued to face after emancipation.

This question comes at a particularly important time in the field of African Diaspora archaeology. For African Diaspora archaeologists, the call for scholars to place

greater emphasis on freedom and the post-emancipation period has meant more than a chronological and topical shift from the antebellum period and slavery. It has also raised the concern that the usual approaches to race may not be applicable in the study of black late nineteenth and early twentieth century sites. While the rigid demarcation of space and restricted access to goods on plantations clearly illuminate status differences according to race, studies of the post-bellum period necessitate an approach that reflects the dynamic nature of race and how it evolves over time. This can especially be seen in investigations of late nineteenth and early twentieth century domestic sites that were occupied by occupants of different races but are homogenous in material composition. The inability to ascertain race or class differences at these sites has led archaeologists to interpret this as blacks' successful assimilation of white social ideals or to make simple correlations of wealth or poverty. Theresa Singleton warned archaeologists when she stated that, "Although archaeologists studying the post-bellum south have been unable to discern material differences between blacks and whites who were either tenants or owned small independent farms, this absence of archaeological data must not be interpreted as evidence that the color line did not operate or was a secondary factor in the formation of social relations" (Singleton 1995: 129).

For the practice of archaeology in Texas, this question is important as both academic and cultural resource management archaeologists work together to increase the study of black sites. Efforts to preserve a more inclusive Texas history have highlighted the race and class biases in the selection criteria for the National Register of Historic Places (Barile 2004). The belief that black sites are characterized by material paucity and

poor site integrity have led some archaeologists to inherently assume they were occupied by poor tenants and sharecroppers and lacking little historical information (Barile 2004). The overall implications of this include a limited understanding of how race functioned in southern society—beyond the usual manifestations of segregation, lynching and sharecropping—and the retelling of the same historical narratives that do not reflect the diversity of experiences that defined blacks' lives in the state. Yet, with the preservation of more sites like the Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead, new historical narratives can be told.

The state of Texas is an ideal place to conduct such a study about the relationship between race, class and property. Historian, Loren Schweninger, notes that Texas saw the most precipitous rise in black land ownership after slavery than any other state in the south (Schweninger 1990: 162). He estimates that, "In 1870 only 1.8 percent of the state's black farmers owned land, but by 1890 an astonishing 26 percent of them did. Just after the turn of the century, black Texas land ownership peaked at 31 percent" (Schweninger 1990: 164). As early as 1894, blacks hailed that, "Texas is the Lone Star, to which Negroes would steer, if they would become large owners and happy and prosperous" (*The Herald*, February 17, 1894). The author of this quote boasted that blacks were not only buying property but "going to school longer and doing better than in any southern state" (*The Herald*, February 17, 1894). This proud boast of black prosperity did not fall upon deaf ears; W.E.B. Dubois later noted that rates of land ownership were above average for blacks in Texas and the state contained some of the most valuable farms in the nation (Dubois 1904: 82). This was an accomplishment for

the state that emancipated enslaved blacks roughly two years after Abraham Lincoln's passage of the Emancipation Proclamation. However, it stands in stark contrast to the reality that Texas eventually went on to follow Georgia and Mississippi in the highest number of black lynchings (Ross 2010).

Land has always served as a source of hope and prosperity for black and white Texans. The rise of "King Cotton" in the south and the need for more land to harvest this cash crop saw the western movement of whites in search for more fertile soil. Many whites escaped debt or left well-established farms and plantations to begin anew in Texas. Randolph Campbell notes that they would often write "GTT" or "Gone to Texas" on the doors of their former homes—packing up their families, enslaved blacks and possessions to live a more crude existence on the southwestern frontier (Campbell 2003). For whites, Texas settlement signaled an opportunity for economic prosperity; the frontier conditions necessitated enslaved labor as well as rationalized and protected it from the clamoring calls that it had served its purpose in the United States (Campbell 1989). Yet, blacks had a significant investment in land in Texas, too. Beyond being forced to clear and cultivate it, blacks placed their hopes and aspirations for freedom in the acquisition of land. Leaders used the black press to encourage their readers to buy land and build themselves a home, which was viewed as fundamental to becoming self-sufficient and free of white dominance. As the quote at the beginning of my dissertation states, "The very first thing every colored man should do is get a home" (*Free Man's Press*, August 1, 1868). Written three years after the abolition of slavery, land ownership, education and enfranchisement were key to blacks' exercise of freedom.

OVERVIEW OF DISSERTATION CHAPTERS

In my dissertation, I build upon the argument that black land ownership was linked to aspirations of racial and economic autonomy (Schweninger 1990; Sitton and Conrad 2005). I argue that property ownership was a form of symbolic capital that stood in juxtaposition to the physical condition of black enslavement (Bourdieu 1984). I argue that land ownership represented all that slavery did not; it was embedded with notions of humanity, self-sufficiency, respectability and communal stability. It was also a form of rootedness; the transferal of land across generations preserved family ties to a specific place while serving to ameliorate one of the most humiliating aspects of enslavement—the disintegration of black families (Sitton and Conrad 2005: 30; Dubois 1908: 21).

Land ownership influenced the social relations that black landowners had with others, regardless of race. They were delicately perched in southern society; they enjoyed a range of social and economic privileges that their sharecropping peers lacked and was comparable to landholding whites. For example, black landowners were often described as independent and more inclined towards political involvement than those without land (Nelson 1979: 84). However, black landownership also engendered violence and suspicion from whites because of the threat their socioeconomic status posed to a white supremacist and capitalistic society; they were former property that now owned property and any economic success they enjoyed could sometimes yield white antipathy.

In the coming chapter, I review the historical literature on black property ownership. Although blacks did not obtain land in great numbers, this chapter notes how

land ownership was an important aspiration for blacks. I trace the early studies of Reconstruction, which attribute the low numbers of black landowners to the government's refusal to implement a land redistribution program. I also highlight the revisionist interpretations of the Reconstruction period, which discuss the flourishing of freedman's communities after freedom. Chapter three provides an overview of the Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead Project. This chapter recalls the findings of the archival, oral history and archaeological investigations of this site. It also outlines my involvement with the farmstead project. In chapter four, I examine the ceramics recovered from the Williams Farmstead. This chapter uses a consumption approach to show how land ownership influenced black landowners' performance of a dual class ideology. Using Dubois' notion of double consciousness, I examine the ceramic assemblage to show how the Williams family shared a rural class-consciousness with their white neighbors that also reflected black class aspirations for social and economic development. The fifth chapter of the dissertation looks at the changing nature of race on the post-bellum landscape. Using the Williams family's location in a predominantly white farming community as a focal point, I examine the paradox of former property owning property to highlight how black land ownership challenged hegemonic notions about blacks' "place" in society. I do this by analyzing architecture and the use of space at the site to show how the physical landscape was often modified to reflect whites' racist ideas about blacks "place" in society. Although space was rigidly demarcated to impose notions of black racial inferiority, I argue that black landowners resisted this hegemonic practice by cultivating spaces that helped them gain a level of self-sufficiency and

stability for their families. Chapter six concludes the dissertation with a discussion of the broader implications for foregrounding class in historical studies of race. This chapter discusses the parallels this study has to investigations of the contemporary black middle class.

Chapter 2: Black Freedmen and Property Ownership

"A glimmer of home in a sea of distress" (Petty 2012: 31).

THE FAILURE TO LOCATE BLACK LANDOWNERS IN HISTORY

There have been few studies of black land ownership following the abolition of slavery in the United States. Scholars have often overlooked black property owners, arguing that only a few were able to acquire land after slavery and that the majority remained poor and landless. In an effort to counter this oversight in early studies of the Reconstruction and Jim Crow periods, scholars have begun to highlight the significance of land ownership to blacks' desires for racial and economic autonomy. These studies highlight blacks' successful acquisition of property in spite of racism and poverty as well as its link to the development of rich black family and community life (Bethel 1981; Penningroth 2003; Sitton and Conrad 2004).

Despite the increased efforts to study black land ownership, these works remain disparate and isolated to examinations of freedmen's communities or individual landowners. This has precluded broad comparisons that allow one to understand how the lives of black landowners compared to their white contemporaries or to black landowners residing in areas outside of predominantly black communities. As a result of this gap in the literature, the current historiography of the post-bellum south presents a narrow interpretation of blacks' lives during the post-bellum period. The emphasis on tenancy has failed to consider black socioeconomic heterogeneity and has minimized the inter-

and intra- class diversity that existed amongst blacks and whites during the post-bellum period.

Scholars have typically viewed black land ownership during the post-bellum period pessimistically (Sitton and Conrad 2004; Petty 2012). Adrienne Petty wrote that many scholars avoided the topic of black land ownership because so few were able to acquire land after slavery (Petty 2012: 31). Historians argued that blacks mostly remained landless after slavery because they were trapped by the tenancy system and hindered by racism, poverty and illiteracy (Ransom and Sutch 1977; Marable 1979; Foner 1988; Ayers 2007; Litwack 1998). Loren Schweninger calculated a total of 10,926 black landowners in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina and Texas in 1870 (Schweninger 1990: 164). At the turn of the century, this number increased to 113,437 and rose by an estimated 575 percent from 1870 to 1890 (Schweninger 1990: 164). These numbers were minimal when one considered that roughly four million blacks were emancipated from slavery at the end of the Civil War. As a result, Petty noted that historians believed these small numbers of black land owners "did not seem to rate sustained attention given the overwhelming political, economic and social inequality that marked life in the South" (Petty 2012: 31). She further argued that documenting their lives was akin to "finding a flock of healthy brown pelicans in the Gulf of Mexico's oil-contaminated waters" or searching for "a glimmer of hope in a sea of distress and devastation " (Petty 2012: 31).

THE ORIGINS OF THE MYTH OF BLACK LANDLESSNESS

Scholars have linked black landlessness to the failure of Reconstruction to yield any major land reform or redistribution in the South (Cox 1958; Magdol 1977; Oubre 1978). Claude Oubre wrote that, "Reconstruction historians have generally agreed that one of the great tragedies of emancipation and Reconstruction was the failure to provide economic security for the former slaves, principally by failing to provide them land" (Oubre 1978: xi). He argued that blacks' belief that the government would provide them with forty acres and a mule was "one of the most persistent American myths" (Oubre 1978: 181). Works by historians such as Lawanda Cox and Oubre have highlighted that government efforts to provide land for blacks was frequently circumvented by bureaucracy, legislative squabbles, inadequate funding, racism and outright perplexity about what to do with recently emancipated blacks. While land was certainly linked to blacks' long-term economic security, Cox and Oubre stressed that the federal government developed no effective plans to help blacks obtain it. Blacks were expected to work and acquire the necessary funds to pay for land. Moreover, discussions about the outright provision of land to blacks only began with the acceptance that colonization efforts in the western United States and Panama were not an option (Cox 1958: 413; Oubre 1978: 3-4).

Cox examined whether the United States government ever had any intentions of giving land to blacks. She highlighted the legislative squabbles that occurred between the House and Senate as leaders sought to develop a plan that would put recently emancipated blacks "on the road to economic independence of the type traditional to free men in the nineteenth-century agrarian Republic" (Cox 1958: 413). Debra Reid wrote

that this vision was popularized by Thomas Jefferson and described as a nation of small but independent landowners (Reid 2012: 6). Cox wrote that the United States legislature wrote several drafts of the bill that established the Freedman's Bureau, yet made no clear provisions to provide land to black freed men and women. Proposed bills assigned forty acres of land to every male refugee and freedmen for rental and then purchase from the United States with "such title as it could convey" (Cox 1958: 413). However, Freedmen's Bureau agents had no power or direct mandate to use confiscated southern lands for this purpose and were given more administrative power to direct blacks occupation, labor and cultivation of government lands hence showing more interest in the transition from enslaved to wage labor (Cox 1958: 414).

Oubre continued Cox's examination of the factors that contributed to black landlessness after slavery. He illustrated that the Freedmen's Bureau's efforts to redistribute land to blacks were stymied by various encumbrances, which included a hostile President Andrew Johnson; a sluggish Congress that failed to quickly enact legislation; and a Southern Homestead Act that left mostly unproductive land available for sale and no real provisions for blacks to obtain the needed funds, transportation or tools to acquire and work it. His study of the Freedman's Bureau revealed that it lacked the adequate funds and legislative power to enforce laws surrounding the physical protection of blacks as well as the confiscation and selling of lands to freed persons. Oubre showed that President Johnson's pacification of white southerners furthered weakened the bureau's efforts to help freed men obtain land. Upon entering office, Johnson restored confiscated lands to white southerners, removed essential federal and

military staff from positions that would have provided for the physical security of freed blacks and eventually vetoed legislation that would have extended the bureau's life. Oubre starkly stated that, "Efforts to assist the freedmen to become landowners must therefore be judged a failure" (Oubre 1978: 197). He considered the few instances of successful black landownership as rare exceptions to the norm and a "personal triumph against overwhelming odds" (Oubre 1978: 197).

Studies of Reconstruction that focused on the few instances of black land ownership highlighted the Union army's early experiment at Port Royal in the Sea Islands of South Carolina (Rose 1999; Ochiai 2001, 2004). When the Union army invaded the Port Royal Sound in 1861, white plantation owners fled, leaving their land and roughly 10,000 enslaved blacks. Willie Lee Rose (1999) described the Port Royal experiment as a "dress rehearsal" for Reconstruction efforts. It was a collaborative effort involving northern missionaries, military officials, and the federal government that placed formerly enslaved blacks on southern whites' abandoned and confiscated lands and sought to prepare them for freedom by providing opportunities for education, work, and land ownership. Willie Lee Rose and Akiko Ochiai highlight the strong will and determination of the Sea Islands blacks to acquire land and become self-sufficient. Blacks used funds from their agricultural work on government-run plantations to purchase nearly 2,000 acres of land and established some of the earliest post-bellum all-black communities. They held on to this property despite limited funds, threats of sale from tenuous holds on land titles and ultimately President Andrew Johnson's return of confiscated lands to whites during the start of his presidency in 1865. Ochiai attributed

much of the will and determination of the Sea Islands blacks to a distinct *African American agrarianism* that linked land ownership to economic independence and freedom from white domination (Ochiai 2004: 5). This desire for economic and racial freedom was pervasive amongst blacks throughout the South yet no similar experiments occurred during the post-bellum period.

Ochiai stated that the Port Royal experiment harbored an ambivalence that doomed Reconstruction "long before the ink dried at Appomattox" (Ochiai 2001: 95). She and Rose described how the competing interests of the federal government, missionaries and northern industrialists competed with and often disregarded the stated needs and aspirations of blacks. Ochiai specifically suggested that the conflict over black landownership was a crucial variable in the ambivalence of the Port Royal experiment. She seconded Rose when she argued that, "From the outset… the Port Royal experiment found itself caught between African Americans' desires to own their homelands, on which they expected to operate a sustainable economy, and Northern capitalists' visions of freed people's cheap wage labor on white-controlled commercial plantations, with the prospects of trickle-down prosperity and education for citizenship" (Ochiai 2001: 96).

Cox and Oubre's studies were examples of efforts to reassess the legacy of Reconstruction. The Reconstruction period was commonly described as "an era of unrelieved sordidness in American political and social life" (Foner 1983: 235). This interpretation began with Professors John W. Burgess and William A. Dunning of Columbia University, who spearheaded the earliest studies of the Reconstruction period (Foner 1988: 258). Eric Foner noted that Burgess and Dunning set the course for a body

of scholarship that justified the need for the restoration of southern white rule by painting a picture of unfair northern and military intervention and the erroneous emancipation of blacks who were like children and "utterly incapable of appreciating the freedom that had been thrust upon them" (Foner 1988: 258). The Dunning school highlighted the political clashes between President Andrew Johnson and the Radical Republicans, the corruption of carpetbaggers and scalawags, and the new but incompetent rule of black elected officials (Foner 1983: 235). W.E.B. Dubois' book *Black Reconstruction* challenged the Dunning school's interpretation of Reconstruction and was the foundation to the revisionist scholarship that began in the 1960's with the advent of the Civil Rights Movement. This body of work challenged the arguments that blacks were ignorant, lazy, dishonest and responsible for bad government during Reconstruction (Dubos 1935: 711-712). Revisionist scholarship also highlighted the powerlessness of the Freedmen's Bureau; heightened racism and continued poverty experienced by blacks; and the significant progress blacks made in politics and education. However, scholars also highlighted blacks' slow but steady acquisition of land during the post-bellum period. Despite their poverty, political disenfranchisement and the proliferation of lynching, land ownership was described as an act of agency that reflected blacks' desires to exist autonomously.

CELEBRATING BLACK LANDOWNERSHIP

W.E.B. Dubois was one of the earliest scholars to write about black land ownership. He believed that land ownership was linked to black social and economic advancement, which was essential to helping blacks avoid re-enslavement (Grossman

1974; Dubois 1901: 647-648). From 1899 to 1904, Dubois conducted three studies that highlighted blacks' steady acquisition of land: *The Negroes of Farmville, Virginia: A Social Study* (1898), *The Negro Landholders of Georgia* (1901), and *The Negro Farmer* (1904). Each one of these studies comprised empirical and statistical analysis with a special attention to demographic data, blacks' household composition, dwelling size and occupation. In his studies *The Negro Landholders of Georgia* (1901) and *The Negro Farmer* (1904), Dubois*'* quantitative analyses illustrated blacks' steady acquisition of property but the vast economic disparities they continued to face. For example, in his study of Georgia, he assessed that blacks went from owning 338,769 acres in 1874 to 1,075,073 acres in 1900 (Dubois 1901: 665). Despite this steady increase in acreage, Dubois argued that some holdings in rural areas were "hardly entitled to be classed as farms" as they were too small (less than ten acres) and "might be counted as large gardens" (Dubois 1901: 670).

In a subsequent study done for the United States Census, Dubois conducted a more in-depth investigation of black land holdings. His 1904 study specifically focused on black farmers and examined two classes of agriculturalists—"those who are operating farms they themselves own and those who are operating farms owned by others" (Dubois 1904: 69). Dubois looked at nationwide rates of farm ownership and focused on farmers because this was the dominant occupation engaged in by blacks; his broad definition of a farm allowed for the work and landholdings of independent owners and croppers to be counted and examined thus giving readers an inclusive understanding of blacks' total agricultural endeavors. Dubois estimated that black farms in the country were worth

roughly half a billion dollars (Dubois 1904: 72). However, livestock along with implements and machinery represented little of the percentage towards this value thus indicating the challenges blacks faced both improving their holdings and maximizing their agricultural output (Dubois 1904: 72). The greatest value of this study was the regional comparisons of black farms in he United States. For example, Dubois found that black farms in the west were larger and more valuable than those in the mid-Atlantic and Deep South regions. However, when comparing black landholdings to whites he tallied these sobering statistics:

> The negro farmer conducts 13 percent or about one-eighth of the farms in continental United States and controls 4.6 percent of the total farm acreage, 5.6 percent of the improved acreage, and 2.4 percent of the farm property. He raises 5.4 percent of the total farm products measured by value and 6.1 percent of the farm products not fed to livestock. These figures are small but that is because the country is so large and rich (Dubois 1904: 90).

Although one could not dispute the hard work and accomplishments of black freedmen, it was evident that they did not reap or possess any substantial wealth or capital from their agricultural labors. Dubois' quote from the *Souls of Black Folks* aptly captured the reality of this; he wrote, "To be a poor man is hard, but to be a poor race in a land of dollars is the very bottom of hardships" (Dubois 1903: 12).

Despite blacks' meager land possessions, Dubois still believed that, "it is of the greatest sociological interest to study the steps by which this property was accumulated and to note the tendencies past and present" (Dubois 1901: 648). In these studies, Dubois

was assessing blacks' socioeconomic condition after slavery and challenging the white racism that labeled blacks as a problem that could only be managed through subjugation. His studies used empirical observation to highlight the rich complexity of black social life and to counter interpretations of blacks as ignorant and inferior. For example, Dubois' Farmville study highlighted the significance of land ownership in the organization of social classes within the black community, which he viewed as a positive occurrence. His description of social differentiation in Farmville was important because scholars and "careless observers" often spoke of blacks as a monolith. Dubois argued that they ignored key social distinctions and primarily attributed the worst traits of one group to everyone (Dubois 1899: 234). Yet, in his study of Farmville, he found three distinct classes, differentiated by occupation and disposition. He also documented thriving social institutions such as churches (Baptist or Methodist) and lodges and noted that the people of Farmville "read their own books and papers, and their group life touches that of white people only in economic matters… Thus, instead of the complete economic dependence of blacks upon whites, we see growing a nicely adjusted economic interdependence of the two races" (Dubois 1899: 231).

Although Dubois' *Black Reconstruction* (1935) laid the theoretical groundwork for the revisionist scholarship of the Reconstruction and Jim Crow periods, his early studies of black land ownership set a precedent for the subsequent work on the subject. In these early works, Dubois examined the variables that contributed to black land ownership and paid special attention to historical, social, economic and geographic factors that helped foster blacks' steady acquisition of property. Quantitative analysis

was key in these studies, which relied heavily on documents like the manuscript population censuses and tax records to measure the acquisition of property over time. However, empirical observation was also important; social practices and institutions were recorded in detail. However, his investigation of black land ownership was not limited to one singular place like Virginia or Georgia. According to Stephen Vincent, W.E.B. Dubois highlighted the presence of other communities of black landowners in an article in the *Colored American Magazine* (Vincent 1999: 1). Similar to his study of the Farmville community, he noted these settlements—"segregated, more or less autonomous, going their quiet way unknown to the world" in other places and made regional connections by linking the harsh conditions that blacks faced in urban areas to the uncertainties of rural life (Vincent 1999: 1). The studies of black land ownership that followed the advent of the revisionist interpretations of the post-bellum period contain threads of Dubois' methodological and theoretical studies of black land ownership. They use oral histories and empirical observation extensively to document black social life as well as existing archival records to estimate rates and trends in black property ownership.

For example, second to Dubois' study on black farmers and landowners, Loren Schweninger's work on black property ownership is the most comprehensive historical treatment on the topic (1989, 1990). Schweninger traced a long and largely unknown history of black property ownership in the United States that began as early as 1651, nearly 32 years after blacks arrival in Jamestown, Virginia (Schweninger 1989: 42). Schweninger linked blacks' aspirations of property ownership to a desire to be free from white racial and economic domination and to integrate into American society

(Schweninger 1990: 5). The author also argued that property ownership engendered feelings of self-worth and confidence (Schweninger 1990: 35). The hope for land signified the desire to have something of one's own and was an avenue to "secure freedom, but also a means to attach their paternity—and hence, their identity as person—to something even their masters would have to respect" (Schweninger 1990: 11).

Schweninger counted that, "In the Lower South as a whole, fewer than one out of five Negro farmers boasted land ownership a half-century after freedom" (Schweninger 1990: 163). He noted that blacks "in less densely populated regions like Florida, Arkansas, and Texas were able to purchase farmland more easily, but it was often of poor quality or located in remote sections" (Schweninger 1990: 162). He further complicated traditional images of the segregated South by noting that the vast majority of rural black landholders in the Lower South lived in areas with neighboring white farmers (Schweninger 1990: 165). However, Schweninger also countered the celebratory aspects of the study of black property ownership by maintaining that landowners still faced immense economic challenges. Schweninger referenced Barbara Fields and Eric Foner when he noted that despite the feelings of pride and self-worth that land ownership engendered, most black landowners lived at a bare sustenance level (Schweninger 1989: 49; Schweninger 1990: 163). He also stated that with only a few hundred dollars worth of personal and real property, they lacked access to the necessary capital to either expand or improve their holdings (Schweninger 1990: 162). Black landowners also could not exercise local political authority and were more vulnerable to the crop lien system, tax demands and the vagaries of the national agricultural market (Schweninger 1990: 163).

Schweninger noted that there was a major decline in black land ownership between 1950 and 1974. He attributed this decline to "economic opportunity, more than racial discrimination" (Schweninger 1989: 55). Although many bemoaned the loss of land and blacks' rural traditions, farm ownership supposedly dropped as more educated and upwardly mobile blacks moved away from the countryside in search of better economic opportunities (Schweninger 1989: 55).

FREEDMEN'S COMMUNITIES

Most studies of black land ownership focus on freedmen's communities (Bethel 1981; Sitton and Conrad 2004; Mears 2009). These communities were defined by Thad Sitton and James Conrad as settlements of black landowners that were located in mostly remote, undesirable (at least by whites) areas such as sand hills, creek and river bottoms and county lines (Sitton and Conrad 2004: 2-3). The study of freedman's communities challenged images of black landlessness with the identification and detailed description of many of these communities ensconced in the countryside. Sitton and Conrad noted that freedmen's communities or "freedom colonies" were "dispersed—places unplatted and unincorporated, individually unified only by church and school, and residents' collective belief that a community existed" (Sitton and Conrad 2004: 2). These settlements were also safe places that offered blacks' cultural integrity and race pride (Sitton and Conrad 2004: 2). Blacks overcame illiteracy, violence and the general lack of capital and other resources to buy land. Moreover, the location of freedmen's communities in remote places protected blacks from the daily humiliation of Jim Crow customs, which led to the

development of strong black social institutions that fostered a sense of community and a special connection to place.

Although studies of freedmen's communities are localized, they illuminate broad patterns that can be helpful in understanding the lives of freed black men and women. For example, books by Sitton and Conrad (2004) and Michelle Mears (2009) document hundreds of freedmen's communities in urban and rural locales that reflect their ubiquity across the southern post-bellum landscape. Schweninger identified several well-known freedmen's communities such as "Promiseland, South Carolina; Burroughs, Harrisburg, and Gullinsville, Georgia; Eatonville, Florida; Kowaliga and Klondike, Alabama; Mound Bayou and Renova, Mississippi; and Thomasville, Arkansas" (Schweninger 1990: 165). Sitton and Conrad stated that though "numbers were difficult to estimate, this ubiquitous, unremarked internal 'exodus' to local freedom colonies must have dwarfed the famous move north" (Sitton and Conrad 2004: 3). All of these communities had similar histories in terms of their founding and eventual decline, establishment of churches and schools and efforts to maintain self-sufficiency.

In her study of the Promiseland community in South Carolina, Elizabeth Rauh Bethel wrote that she examined race relations from an unexplored perspective; instead of restating a litany of racial oppression she presented a case study of alternatives to self-hatred, retreat and accommodation (Bethel 1981, 1997: 5). Bethel traced the history of the community from its founding in 1870 to after the Civil Rights movement. Fifty black families bought land from a white seller unable to sell the land to other whites because it was expensive. The families established a tight-knit community comprised of

landowners and tenants, who rented and worked the lands of kin and other landholders. Blacks also divided holdings amongst kin as marriages and births expanded family and household units. This division preserved kinship ties but also complicated chains of title and contributed to the decline in land value as parcels were subdivided into small, unproductive units.

In their study of "freedom colonies" in Texas, Sitton and Conrad argued that black land ownership in these communities was a counter-movement to the rise of sharecropping (Sitton and Conrad 2004: 2). Their work documented a rich history of land ownership in Texas; the authors stated that:

> Landownership rose more precipitously in Texas than in any other southern state. In 1870, only 1.8 percent of the state's black farmers owned land, but by 1890 an astonishing 26 percent of them did. Just after the turn of the century black Texas landownership peaked at 31 percent (Sitton and Conrad 2004: 2).

Sitton and Conrad were especially critical of the focus on black victimhood in southern history that led to such historical oversights of black triumphs. The authors stated that, "this focus…must not blind us to their achievements against long odds" (Sitton and Conrad 2004: 7). Sitton and Conrad's book *Freedom Colonies: Independent Black Texans in the Time of Jim Crow* paralleled Bethel's study of the Promiseland community. The authors illustrated blacks' efforts to be self-sufficient through hard but cooperative work. They also described the pride black landowners had in themselves and their communities; they highlighted instances where blacks armed themselves to protect their communities from white retribution as well as blacks' efforts to maintain holdings despite

protracted economic challenges. However, black landownership in these communities also highlighted the idiosyncrasies of race relations in the post-bellum south; investigations of freedmen's communities revealed that black landowners often acquired and held onto land holdings with the aid of benevolent whites. Sitton and Conrad (2004) and Stephen Vincent (1999) found that the black or mixed race children of white enslavers often received money and other types of assistance and patronage to acquire property. In addition, Sitton and Conrad noted that elderly black landowners relied on their "sharp memories and trusted friends, usually whites, who checked every important document for them before they signed it" to avoid unscrupulous dealings (Sitton and Conrad 2004: 75).

Writings about freedmen's communities have provided readers with the most descriptive portrayals of black life after emancipation and the daily experiences of black landowners. These studies highlight the strategies that blacks employed to acquire land upon the realization that the government would offer no forty acres and a mule to freed men. They have also yielded information about black landowners social relations with whites and other blacks (tenants or landowners). However, these studies have also revealed the vulnerability of black landowners. Historians recounted how whites often swindled blacks out of their land holdings as well as violently attacked them for minor Jim Crow infractions or when they felt threatened by their affluence. These studies also highlighted the gradual decline in freedmen's settlements after World War II. While youth and other residents eventually left these communities in large numbers in search of

greater economic opportunities, black landowners also lost their holdings due to urban sprawl, migration, tax demands and division amongst heirs.

BLACK LANDOWNERSHIP AND CLASS RELATIONS

The study of black land ownership has forced scholars to play closer attention to class in their analyses of the post-bellum south. These investigations have highlighted the presence of social distinctions within black communities as well as attempted to provide historical context for current racial and economic disparities. For example, in the studies of freedmen communities, historians found that black landowners occupied a peculiar position in southern society. Sitton and Conrad noted that black landholders often enjoyed considerable socioeconomic status in their communities; landholders commonly held positions of power in churches and schools. They donated land for the erection of these institutions and sometimes provided a source of work and opportunity for those who needed a place to farm. They also served as arbiters of disputes and earned considerable respect for helping out their less fortunate peers by sharing milk, food or other necessities.

W.E.B. Dubois (1898: 235-236) and Manning Marable (1979: 14) described large or successful landowners as part of a "petty bourgeoisie" that comprised black ministers, teachers, undertakers, grocers, tailors, insurance men and bankers. Although Abram Harris (1936), E. Franklin Frazier (1957), and Manning Marable (1983) questioned the true existence or more specifically economic reach of this bourgeoisie, they played an important role in their communities. The socioeconomic status of black landowners stood in contrast to their sharecropping peers and was said to even compare to smaller

white landowners (Petty 2012: 31-32). In a study of a Mount Vernon black community, Scott A. Casper noted that class distinctions within these settlements could fracture within the same space along time and gender. For example, prior to the Civil War, black women accumulated land at greater rates than black men (Schweninger 1990: 85). After Emancipation, female landholders largely acquired land "through inheritance from husbands or fathers, rather than buying it with their own earnings" (Casper 2012: 45). In addition, Casper's study of landowners within a Mount Vernon community found that blacks who acquired land before the abolition of slavery often enjoyed great socioeconomic status and material affluence within their communities. Their probates listed numerous personal possessions such as clocks, rugs and pianos, and they often had close connections with whites that helped them acquire land and navigate potential challenges to their efforts to expand their agricultural endeavors (Casper 2012: 40). However, blacks that acquired land after emancipation experienced numerous difficulties. They owned few acres, little personal possessions and frequently supplemented their work as farmers with wage labor on nearby plantations (Casper 2012: 40). Many acquired land after working their way up from sharecroppers on the agricultural ladder. Poverty and the threat of land loss through death intestate commonly characterized these individuals' lives.

The failure of Reconstruction to implement any program of land redistribution was proven to have long-term disastrous effects on freed blacks and their descendants. Sociological studies of urban blacks underscored the breakdown in family and social systems, high crime and unemployment, and the ghettoization of blacks following their

mass migration north in search of better economic opportunities. However, as Dubois indicated in his Farmville study, these problems had its roots in the failed promises of freedom for blacks in the rural countryside. Blacks' inability to obtain land immediately following the Civil War left the majority with no economic security or more specifically no basis to establish or accumulate wealth. Stephen DeCanio (1979) stated that the:

> Freedmen's initial lack of property was the most important cause of race-related income differences. The initial wealth gap between the freedmen and the whites was large enough to guarantee that a great deal of income inequality would have persisted long after emancipation, even if all markets had functioned perfectly (DeCanio 1979: 1).

With no land—or in some instances money, tools, or livestock—blacks were forced into an emerging labor system that kept them poor, in debt and confined to small farms or plantations stuck in a backwards mono-crop economy. This was magnified by racial prejudice, which stymied any other aspirations for black advancement. Economic historians have examined the rates which blacks and whites obtained property (Margo 1984) as well as the affects of race and literacy as well as region in shaping rates of black land ownership (Canady and Rebak 2010). According to Neil Canady and Charles Rebak, "African American property accumulation after emancipation varied considerably across the South, but scholars disagree about the reasons why" (Canady and Rebak 2010: 429). While scholars like Dubois and Schweninger found that black landownership was lower in regions characterized by intense cotton production and plantation agriculture, Robert Higgs and Robert Margo have examined factors such as black population proportion, illiteracy, land prices, cotton and other crop production to examine rates of

black land accumulation (Canady and Rebak 2010: 429; Higgs 1982, 1984; Margo 1984). Higgs reviewed tax records from Georgia and found that before World War I, blacks accumulated property more rapidly than whites. He attributed the high rates in accumulation to location in a plantation county, extensive cotton cultivation and high population density (Higgs 1982: 734-735). Canady and Rebak's work found little correlation between race and land ownership but linked illiteracy and educational discrimination to blacks' challenges to obtain real estate (Canady and Rebak 2010: 430). Canady and Rebak further corroborated the importance of literacy in black land ownership. For example, their study of real estate transactions in Tennessee in 1880 found that literate blacks purchased property at a 20 percent higher rate than their contemporaries who could not read and that their literacy often protected them from racial price discrimination (Canady and Rebak 2010: 430). Their study also found that regardless of black literacy, blacks were found to have "paid more than whites for land relative to its assessed value" (Canady and Rebak 2010: 430).

The attention to class in these studies of black landowners' demonstrates that land ownership did not ensure substantial wealth accumulation. Black landowners did not have extensive holdings, and some barely lived at a bare subsistence level (Schweninger 1989: 49). Subsequent studies on the plight of black farmers found that black landholders also lost their holdings at disproportionate rates than whites because of limited access to credit or other forms of federal assistance to improve holdings (McGee and Boone 1979; Gilbert et. al. 2001). Black farmers had less money and smaller land holdings than whites, and Boone and McGee's state that black landowners' migration to

towns and cities took them and their children away from their holdings and left them more open to land sales or loss through tax delinquency. This was compounded by blacks' inability to trust the legal system, which left them aloof of the courts with unclear legal documentation and little recourse to challenge unscrupulous land dealings (Nesbitt 1979; Nelson 2012).

CONCLUSION

Black property owners have been overlooked in the historiography of the Reconstruction and Jim Crow periods. Scholars have viewed them as an anomaly because so few were able to obtain it. Scholars have vacillated in their opinions of this group and put forth a glass half empty versus half full perspective of these individuals. To be specific, some approach the presence of black landowners in the post-bellum period as rare examples of black success in the face of severe racial and economic discrimination, and therefore a testament to black self-determination. Others view black landownership as insignificant when considering the acute social, political, and economic inequality blacks faced following slavery. However, the advent of revisionist interpretations of the post-bellum period has started to shed greater attention to the lives of black landowners. These studies have emphasized the preservation and continuation of family ties and social networks through land. They also highlight the significance of land ownership to understanding internal social differentiation within the black community and protracted racial and economic disparities. A closer look at the lives and experiences of black landholders can present a more comprehensive and heterogeneous view of race and class relations in the south.

Chapter 3: Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead Project: Excavations and Results

"As the project unfolded, it became apparent that our research was not about a single farm or a single family… The Williams family was symbolic of a much larger history, one that is representative of the trials and tribulations of many African American freedmen across Texas and the southern United States" (Boyd et. al. 2013: 654).

The Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead is a historic site in Manchaca, Travis County, Texas (Figure 3.1). The farmstead was located in a predominantly white farming community along Bear Creek and was occupied by Ransom and Sarah Williams, both formerly enslaved, from 1871 to 1905. Archaeologists first recorded the site in 1985 after conducting a survey in response to pending development in the area. Full data recovery efforts began at the farmstead in 2009 and were led by a project team comprised of cultural resource management and academic archaeologists and university students. The study of the Williams Farmstead has spanned nearly five years and has included oral history and archival research along with archaeological excavations. This chapter focuses on the investigations conducted at the Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead and summarizes the findings of the archaeological excavations that occurred at the site in 2009.

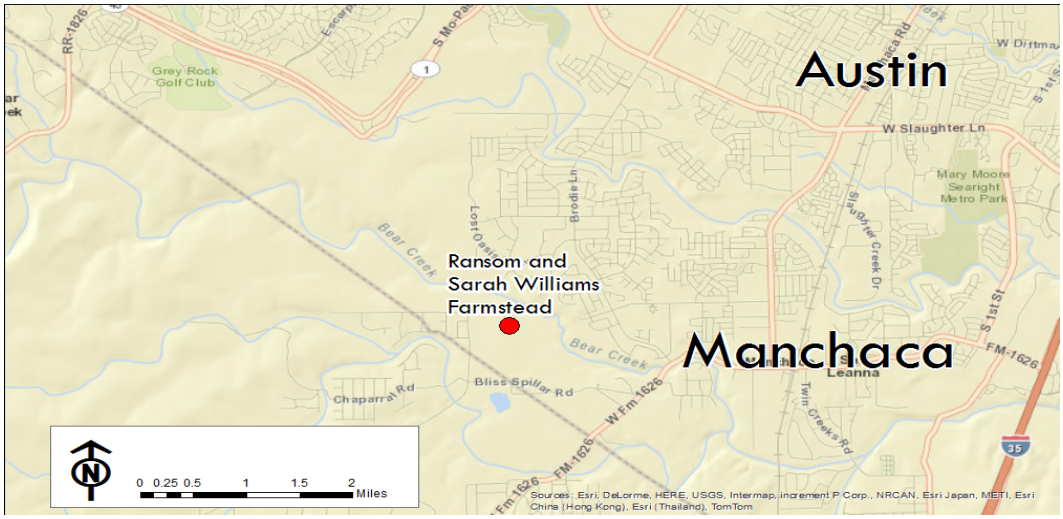

Figure 3.1: Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead, Manchaca, Travis County, Texas (Map by Jannie Scott, The University of Texas at Austin, 2014).

RANSOM AND SARAH WILLIAMS FARMSTEAD PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

The Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead Project was an interdisciplinary effort undertaken by Prewitt and Associates, Inc. (PAI)—a local cultural resource management (CRM) firm-- Preservation Central and The University of Texas at Austin's Department of Anthropology. The project was sponsored and funded by the Texas Department of Transportation in response to the construction of State Highway 45, which was planned to run through the farmstead (Figure 3.2). Research efforts were conducted in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, which stipulates that federal agencies take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties and evaluate sites' historical significance according to the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places (Advisory Council on Historic Preservation 2013; Myers and Boyd 2006: 1). The Williams Farmstead Project was unique because it involved extensive public outreach. Unlike most cultural resource management projects,

the Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead Project involved close collaboration with a local university and descendant community members. This partnership resulted in the development of research goals that went beyond the recording and investigating of the historic site and included close engagement with the public in exchanging ideas and information. The project also expanded extant knowledge of black Texas history; investigations of the farmstead documented a rich history of black landownership in the state and presented an opportunity to understand topics such as black community formation and race and gender relations in the post-bellum south.

Figure 3.2: 2006 aerial photo and map of the Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead with proposed State Highway 45 (Courtesy of Sandy Hannum, Prewitt and Associates, Inc., 2013).

There were many participants in the Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead Project. Doug Boyd, Vice President of Prewitt and Associates, Inc. served as Principal Investigator of the Williams Farmstead Project. Aaron Norment and Jennifer McWilliams served as the Project Archaeologists. Collectively, the three of them coordinated the project's logistics and worked with Jon Budd and Scott Pletka,

archaeologists from the Texas Department of Transportation, to determine a data recovery plan. Norment and McWilliams were specifically tasked with supervising archaeological excavations and data analysis and interpretation. Norment played a particularly important role in the analysis and interpretative aspect of the Williams Farmstead Project. In addition to overseeing the data recovery efforts with McWilliams, Norment was responsible for identifying and cataloguing all recovered artifacts and worked closely with Doug Boyd in authoring preliminary and final reports on the site. Other archaeologists from Prewitt and Associates assisted with the excavation of the site. John Dockall and Robert Thrift assisted with the excavation and mapping of important site features like the stone chimney and hearth as well as associated areas like the corral complex. Thrift also helped map site features and supervised laboratory procedures.

Terri Myers, an archivist with Preservation Central, had a long history with the Williams Farmstead Project. Her work on the Williams Farmstead began as early as 2003 after Archaeological and Cultural Sciences Group (ACSG) conducted additional testing at the site and discovered another historic component (Myers and Boyd 2006: 1). Upon this discovery, Myers did additional research to determine who occupied the site (Myers and Boyd 2006: 1). Her research with Prewitt and Associates included the development of a narrative history of the Williams family. However, her studies greatly contributed to existing knowledge of black history in the area. Myers detailed the history of the freedmen's community, Antioch Colony in Buda, Hays County, Texas and identified several other prosperous black landowners in Hays and Travis counties. She

also documented lesser-known black communities in the area like the Prairie and Rose Colony (Myers 2013).

The examination of the Williams Farmstead joined an increasing number of archaeological projects in the state such as the Dallas Freedmen's Cemetery and the Levi Jordan Plantation that prioritized public outreach to the local black descendant community. Dr. Maria Franklin of the Department of Anthropology at The University of Texas at Austin was invited to work as a consultant to help Prewitt and Associates develop a public outreach component that foregrounded an African Diaspora research agenda. She spearheaded efforts that included outreach with black and white descendants via activities such as site visits and the development of an oral history project (Boyd and Franklin 2009: 7). She also worked to help provide black and minority students an opportunity to learn about archaeology.

The field crew included Bethany Duke (The University of Texas at Austin), Ishan Gordon (Howard University), Felton Pierre (Florida International University), Valerie Prado (The University of Texas at Austin) and Dr. Jodi Skipper (formerly a doctoral student at The University of Texas at Austin and now an Assistant Professor at the University of Mississippi). I was also invited in 2009 to join the Williams Farmstead Project. I worked on the field crew and assisted with additional research efforts such as helping Franklin conduct oral histories and completing laboratory analysis under the guidance of Robert Thrift. As a project member, I interviewed four Antioch Colony descendant community members and completed lab duties such as washing all of the artifacts and completing minimum number of vessel (MNV) counts for recovered

ceramics and glass fragments. However, my greatest contribution to the Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead Project was a study of black Texas newspapers that ranged in date from 1868 to 1917 to help establish additional historical context for the site. I examined 135 newspapers and created a database with roughly 9,000 entries that contained the papers' names, publication dates, volume and issue numbers as well as every article, announcement or advertisement printed within them.

PREVIOUS INVESTIGATIONS OF THE RANSOM AND SARAH WILLIAMS FARMSTEAD

Archaeological testing occurred at the farmstead several years before Prewitt and Associates began their full data recovery efforts during the summer of 2009. Preliminary testing was first conducted in 1985 by archaeologists with the Texas Archeological Survey (TAS), an entity formerly part of the Texas Archaeological Research Laboratory at The University of Texas at Austin. Their investigations were done in anticipation of the development of a housing complex. Their surveys unearthed various bottles, nails, shoe parts and metal pieces but most importantly above-ground components like a concrete trough, fallen sheds and a board and batten house, which were dated to the 20th century. Several rock piles were also noted in relation to old live oak trees in the vicinity, but these early investigations of the site did not reveal any other older features. The Texas Archaeological Survey initially dated the site to the 1930s or 1940s and ruled it ineligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (Brown 1986).

However, subsequent testing at the farmstead conducted by Archaeological and Cultural Sciences Group in 2003 uncovered additional features that warranted closer attention to the site's history. Limited survey and excavation found rock scatter

indicating the location of a possible structure as well as 513 domestic artifacts such as nails, glass and ceramic fragments as well as metal strappings and buckles. Although the Archaeological and Cultural Sciences Group's follow-up work at the farmstead did not amend the belief that the site was not important enough for listing on the National Register, it did result in more testing upon the discovery that its occupants were black. Previous inquiries incorrectly identified the site's occupants as John and Betsey Hughs, a freed black family who purchased land in the Bear Creek community in 1882. This confusion stemmed from archaeologists lacking the farmstead's correct UTM (Universal Transverse Mercator) coordinates. Additional archival research conducted by Terri Myers helped determine the site's precise location. Once this was done, the farmstead's correct occupants, Ransom and Sarah Williams, were identified.

Although the Williams Farmstead was described as "a typical late-19th century farmstead", Prewitt and Associates argued that the site was significant and suitable for more intensive study because of Ransom and Sarah's racial identity and residency in a predominantly white farming community (Myers and Boyd 2006: 3). The emphasis on race in the study was important because of the protracted concern in Texas archaeology about the limited representation of blacks in state historical narratives (Barile 2004; McGhee 2008; Scott 2012). Boyd and Norment referred to a study conducted by The University of Texas at Austin doctoral student, Jannie Scott, when they noted that there were 1,060 historic black sites recorded in the Texas Historic Sites Atlas and the Texas Archaeological Sites Atlas (Boyd et. al. 2013: 524; Scott 2012: 31, 38). Of that number, only 277 were archaeological sites and only 93 of those were domestic in nature,

represented by single residences or rural homesteads and farmsteads--two terms often used interchangeably in site descriptions (Scott 2012: 38). The Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead was considered an important site because it contributed to the study of black Texas history (Myers and Boyd 2006). Boyd and Norment wrote:

> The history of the Williams family and the histories of the nearby freedmen communities are certainly not unique; similar histories probably happened many times in many places. Unfortunately, these types of stories are seldom told… More history has been written about Billy the Kid, an infamous white criminal, than about all of the post-emancipation freedmen communities that ever existed across all of Texas! (Boyd et. al. 2013: 648).

The Williams Farmstead Project was a significant step toward documenting a more inclusive Texas past, which integrated blacks' many contributions to the state's history. Most importantly, the recovered artifacts dated to a tight span of time from 1871 to 1905. There was little site disturbance and modern overprint giving archaeologists an expansive data set to understand black Texans' transition from slavery to freedom. The project would highlight the lives of black landowners during the post-bellum period in contrast to most studies that focus on enslavement during the antebellum era or the rise of tenancy.

IMPLEMENTING THE RANSOM AND SARAH WILLIAMS FARMSTEAD PROJECT

The Williams Farmstead Project consisted of four major scopes of work: (1) archival research; (2) descendant community outreach and oral history research; (3) archaeological investigations; and (4) public outreach activities (Boyd et. al. 2013: 26). While the archival and oral history components served to complement and help aid in the interpretation of the site, the archaeology was pertinent to telling us about the

household's daily lives and experiences since there was little documentary evidence on Ransom and Sarah Williams. Myers' research goals included ascertaining who was Ransom and Sarah Williams, where they came from and what their lives were like while living at the site. She examined numerous sources like tax documents, census records, historic newspapers, residential directories for Hays and Travis counties and W.P.A. Ex-Slave Narratives to document the family's history. As stated previously, her research described a rich history of black land ownership in the state; she linked the Williams family to the nearby freedman's community, Antioch Colony and detailed the rich history of the community's founding in 1869. Myers also discovered three descendants of Ransom and Sarah Williams, who were living in east Austin (Myers 2013: 163). Boyd, Franklin and Myers conducted oral history interviews with three of Ransom and Sarah Williams' great-grandchildren, Corinne (Williams) Harris, Jewel (Williams) Andrews and Lourice (Williams) Johnson . Interviews with the descendants revealed that the family knew little of Ransom and Sarah Williams, however they had vivid recollections of their grandparents, William Williams and Clara Franklin and provided rich information on the family's history after their estimated departure from the farmstead. The Williams descendants recalled that Ransom's son, William had an entrepreneurial spirit; he owned several rental properties in Austin and operated a small store that helped the family accumulate savings and educate their children. Jewel (Williams) Andrews proudly recalled the following about her grandparents, William and Clara (Franklin) Williams:

> They were trustworthy… They loved God… And, they worked for what they got. And, what they got, they did something with it. What little money they made, you'll just be surprised of what they owned. I mean the house, the rent houses, and savings, large savings account (Franklin 2012: 854).

Andrews stated that the Williams name was a good one, and she was raised being told not to do anything to damage it (Franklin 2012: 878). Their long tradition of land ownership, education and adherence to Christianity indicated this.

The Williams family's rich history overshadowed the hardships they experienced. On November 18, 1978, two of Ransom and Sarah Williams' granddaughters, a great-granddaughter and her four children died in Guyana from being forced to commit revolutionary suicide (Myers 2013: 163). Myers noted that many blacks were drawn to join the People's Temple—a social movement led by the white leader Jim Jones that promised racial and economic equality (Myers 2013: 168). Jones' growing paranoia, drug use and ego mania eventually led to the death of 908 people after a visit from Congressional representative Leo Ryan led to numerous people trying to escape (Myers 2013: 163-168). The Williams descendants did not speak about this tragedy in great detail. However, when viewed within the context of blacks' continued quest for political and economic equality, it highlights how land ownership often encouraged black political participation and agitation.

Maria Franklin spearheaded the oral history component of the Williams Farmstead Project. This aspect of the project was important to Prewitt and Associates' goals to engage with the public and local black descendant community as well as to

"explore the history of the Williams family within the broader context of rural black experiences in this region" (Franklin 2013: 402). The oral histories achieved these goals and more. For example, Franklin's research documented the lives of blacks residing in Hays and Travis counties during the Jim Crow period (Franklin 2013: 403). They also served an important role in both interpreting the archaeology conducted at the Williams Farmstead and helping blacks preserve their family's histories for their children. Project participants expressed an interest in participating in the oral histories to have the past lives and accomplishments of their ancestors recorded so their children, according to Robbie Freddie Mae Overton, "could know where they come from" (Franklin 2012: 562). Overton stated:

> I thank God for the legacy of my family… And, I try to instill in my kids to be strong, and be proud of your legacy… Too long that our history has been hidden. But, I think this needs to be known (Franklin 2012: 562).

Black descendant community members knew that they were part of a proud but overlooked history, and they wanted to share this history with their children to educate them and instill a sense of personal pride.

Franklin interviewed a total of 27 individuals; I assisted her in the recording of three interviews and joined her for interviews with Ransom and Sarah Williams' great-grandchildren, Jewel (Williams) Andrews and Lourice (Williams) Johnson (Figure 3.3). Most of the interviews were conducted with black descendant community members who either lived in towns and cities such as Austin, Buda, and Manchaca. However, Franklin also interviewed two white women, Joanne Deane and Lillie (Meredith) Moreland of

Manchaca. Interviewees were asked questions that ranged in topics such as the material organization of farms and homesteads; the nature of community and tradition in settlements like Antioch Colony; the significance of preserving the past; social roles and relationships; and household dynamics and labor (Franklin 2012: 993-997). The oral histories highlighted race and gender relations in post-bellum black rural traditions. Class was also discussed; descendants recalled that land ownership was a significant marker of status among blacks (Franklin 2012: 436). Labor was a commonly discussed topic as well; interviewees recalled household subsistence practices, employment on the local railroad and seasonal work picking cotton. Franklin compiled a two-volume book, *I'm Proud to Know What I Know: Oral Narratives of Travis and Hays Counties, c. 1920s-1960s,* containing the oral histories with the descendant community members. The volume was distributed to the project participants and other descendants at a celebration held at the George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center in Austin, Texas on July 19, 2012.

Figure 3.3: Direct descendants of Ransom and Sarah Williams pictured at the George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center on July 19, 2012 (Photo by author, 2012).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS AND RESULTS

Archaeology occurred at the site during the summer of 2009. The goal of the excavations was to reveal the history of the Williams family through excavations of the house block and surrounding areas as well as a landscape analysis that aimed to document the full layout and organization of the farmstead (Boyd et. al. 2013: 44--see Figure 3.4). Archaeological investigations consisted of 113 shovel tests, 142 excavation units (1 x 1 meters), 6-quarter units (50 x 50 centimeters), 9 backhoe trenches and 3 backhoe scrapes (Boyd et. al. 2013: 45). The backhoe trenches and scrapes were done to identify the extent of the site stratigraphy as well as the possible location of a seep in the corral complex. Excavation units were dug by hand with a trowel and shovel. Units were excavated in both arbitrary and natural layers since site stratigraphy did not go

deeper than 20 to 25 centimeters. The soil matrix at the site largely comprised a sandy clay loam with chert and limestone inclusions. All soil unearthed from the units were screened using a ¼ inch screen. Flotation samples were taken in select areas for an analysis of macrobotanical material. The corral complex was investigated using different data recovery methods. Backhoe trenching and the surface collection of artifacts were largely done in this area. Since this area revealed a large concentration of metal artifacts (for example, barrel bands, nails, barbed wire and thin metal fragments), a metal detector was used to locate artifacts.

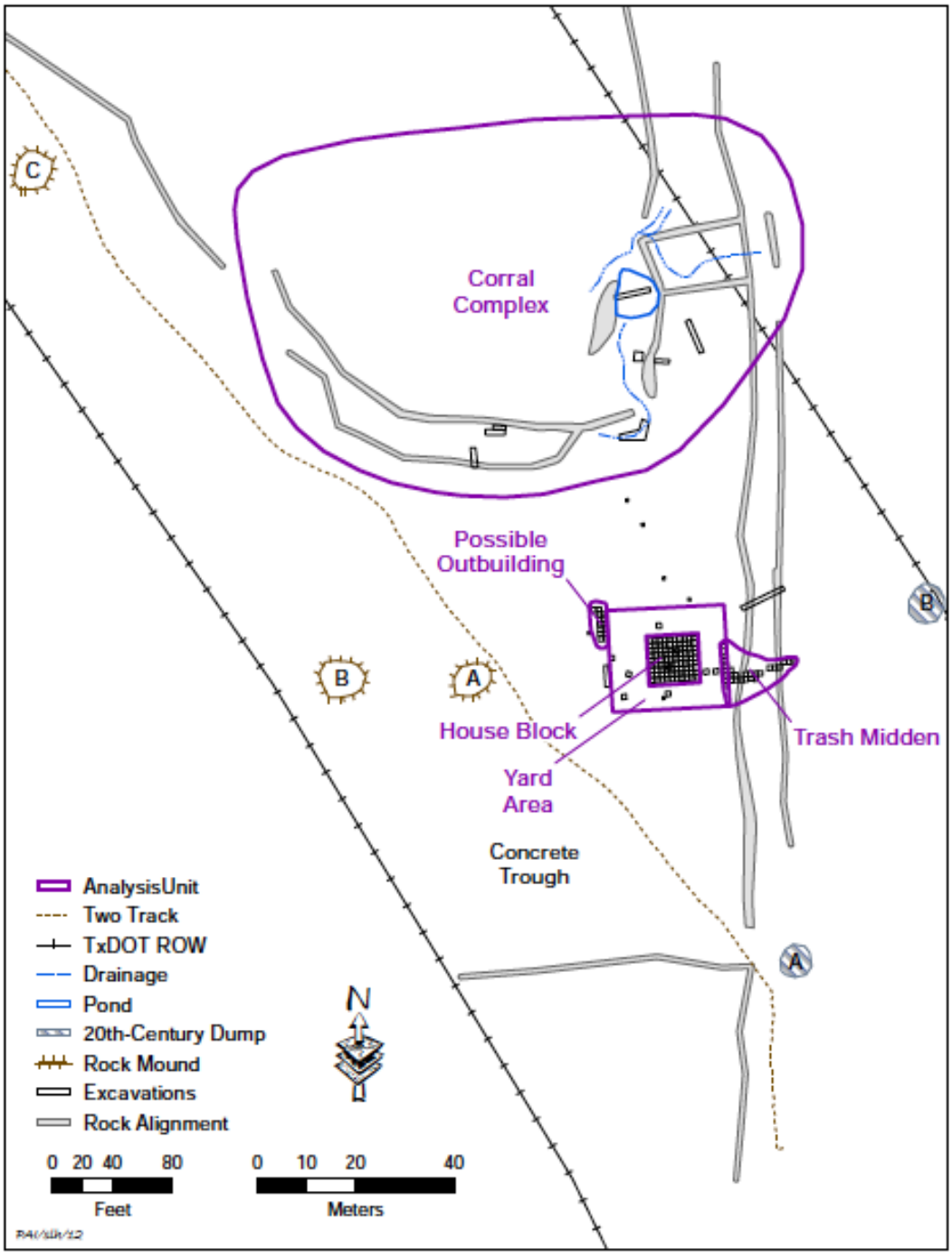

Figure 3.4: Outline of features and components on the Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead (Courtesy of Sandy Hannum, Prewitt and Associates, Inc., 2012).

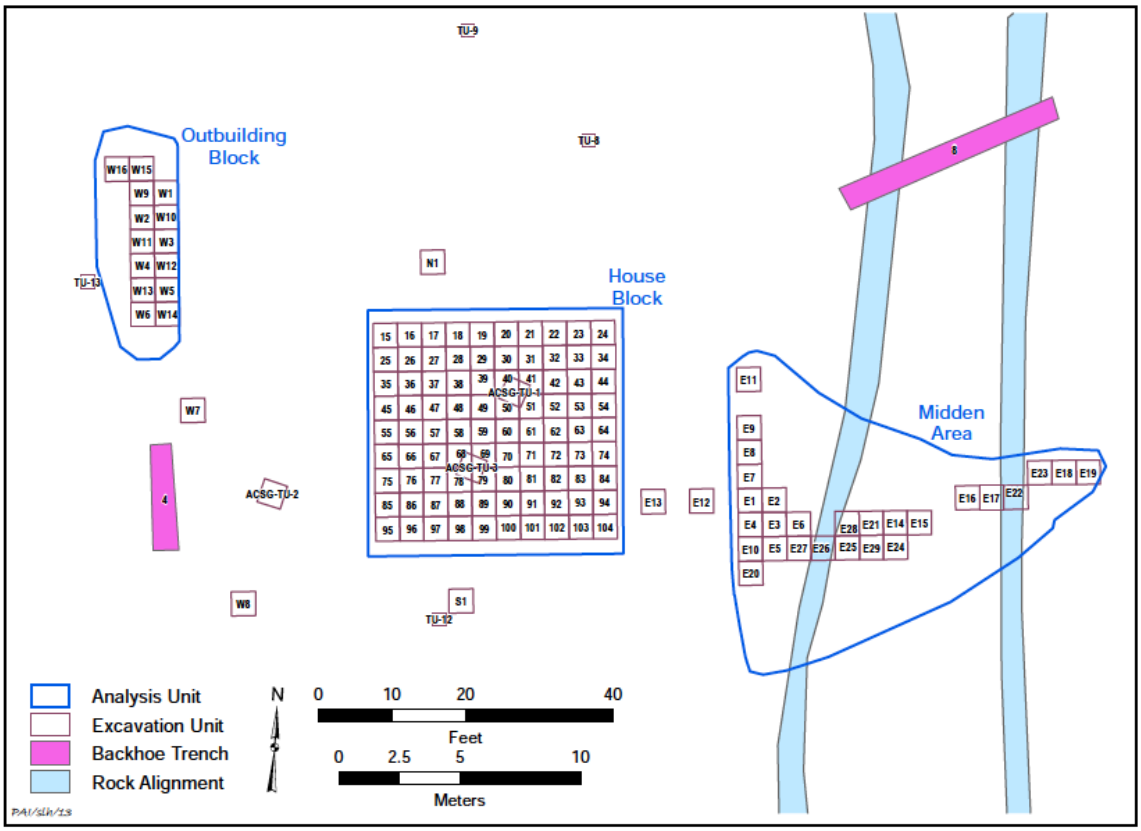

Figure 3.5: Features and ACSG and PAI units of analysis at the Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead (Courtesy of Sandy Hannum, Prewitt and Associates, Inc., 2012).

Excavations occurred in three central areas of the Williams Farmstead, the house block, midden and the location of a possible shed or outbuilding (Figure 5). Preliminary survey and testing did not reveal any other activity areas or farmstead components, except for the corral complex, which was delineated by the rock walls. No well, cistern, or privy was found at the site as well as no other above ground structures such as a chicken coop or smokehouse. Although none of these components were discovered at the Williams Farmstead, we assumed that they were probably erected on the site or used in some other form by the family. These ancillary structures were probably ephemeral and left no trace after the property had been abandoned.

Oral histories with descendant community members from Antioch Colony confirmed that rural households regularly kept chickens and hogs and penned them in separate areas; smokehouses were not always erected on properties. While it was surprising not to find a well, cistern or privy, this was not uncommon in rural Central Texas areas. The shallow and rocky soil of the region—the site sits along the Balcones Fault, which yields large outcrops of limestone—precluded deep digging and would have necessitated much labor and expense. Other studies of rural life in Texas highlight that privies or outbuildings were particularly ephemeral structures because they were moved frequently to avoid bad odors or concerns about sanitation (Sharpless 1999: 94). Rebecca Sharpless noted that even until the 1940s, rural residents used chamber pots, nearby bushes or ditches for waste elimination (Sharpless 1999: 94). The location of a privy was an important issue because it had to be placed far enough to avoid contamination of possible water sources and to minimize infection (Sharpless 1999: 94). However, they had to be in close enough proximity to allow household members easy access (Sharpless 1999: 94). Norment and Boyd estimated that the Williams placed their privy "downslope, to the east or northeast of the house, where the prevailing southerly winds would carry odors from the house and where surface runoff would not impact any household activity areas" (Norment and Boyd 2013: 400). Oral histories also revealed that numerous households hauled water from nearby creeks for their daily use and collected rainwater in barrels. There was evidence of this at the Williams Farmstead. A total of 97 barrel bands were collected during excavations of the Williams Farmstead; Boyd and Norment estimated at least a minimum number of 40 barrel bands (counted by

complete bands and segments), which were found in large numbers in the corral complex and in less frequent occurrences near the house block and surrounding areas.

ARTIFACTS RECOVERED FROM THE RANSOM AND SARAH WILLIAMS FARMSTEAD

More than 26,000 artifacts were recovered from the Williams Farmstead (Boyd et. al. 2013: 49). Prewitt and Associates used a variation of Stanley South, Roderick Sprague and the Sonoma Historic Artifact Research Database's functional categories in forming a classification system for the artifacts (Appendix A). Most of these items were domestic in nature and came from the site's house block and surrounding yard (Norment and Boyd 2013: 209). These artifacts represented the family's efforts to meet their most basic needs for shelter and sustenance (Table 3.1).

Functional Categories	Number	Percentage
Activities	954	4%
Architecture	4586	17%
Botanical	86	0.30%
Clothing and Adornment	638	2%
Faunal	2875	11%
Kitchen and Household	11965	45%
Lithics	784	3%
Personal	599	2%
Unknown--Possibly Identifiable	86	0.30%
Unknown--Unidentifiable	4116	15%
Total	26689	100%

Table 3.1: Total number of artifacts per functional category.

The majority of the items recovered from the farmstead were artifacts related to the site's kitchen and household activities (Table 3.2). Artifacts from this category included ceramics, furniture parts and glass containers (Appendix A). Kitchen and household artifacts comprised roughly 45 percent of the total artifact assemblage recovered from the Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead (Table 3.1). Parts from a bed and wood-stove were discovered along with fragments of cast-iron vessels. The ceramics

from the site were mostly refined earthenwares and stonewares that dated to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Kerosene lamps were also found in large numbers as well as glass fragments from various food containers. Other kitchen and household artifacts included wood and bone handled cutlery as well as pressed glass vessels, some of which were identified as a tumbler and possible candy dish.

Kitchen and Household		
Artifact Category	Number	Percentage
Food Storage and Prepration	937	8%
Food Service and Consumption	10680	89%
Furnishings	138	1%
Locks and Keys	8	0.06%
Miscellaneous Hardware	17	0.14%
Unidentified Glass Fragements	185	2.00%
Total	11965	100%

Table 3.2: Total number of kitchen and household artifacts recovered from the Williams Farmstead.

Architectural items were found in the next greatest amounts at the farmstead. These items included square and wire nails, spikes, bricks, flat glass, wood samples and fencing (see Table 3 and Appendix A). No flat or window glass was recovered during the excavations. Nails comprised the largest number of items within this category. The high proportion of cut nails (n=3241) in relation to wire nails (n=692) recovered from the farmstead led Prewitt to surmise that the Williams family lived in a log-cabin that sat upon large limestone rocks and had a durable chimney made of tabular shaped local fieldstones (Norment and Boyd 2013: 240—see Figure 3.6). According to Terry Jordan, log cabins were an example of vernacular housing constructed by blacks and whites that

remained a feature of the Texas frontier landscape (Jordan 1978: 10). The cabin was small and comprised one to two rooms with a possible loft space that may have been used by the children for sleeping. Excavations also revealed a sub-floor pit or root cellar, which would have held perishable food items like potatoes (Norment and Boyd 2013: 222-224). Although root cellars are commonly associated with enslaved or plantation contexts, oral histories conducted by Maria Franklin confirmed their continued use in rural households for storing food (Norment and Boyd 2013: 223; Franklin 2012: 498; Carlson 1990). The root cellar was carved deep into the limestone bedrock of the site and was located in front of the hearth or chimney area of the house (Figure 3.7). Sub-floor pits would have been a necessary feature in both black and white rural households because landowners and tenants had limited access to refrigeration and other modern conveniences in food preservation (Carlson 1990: 58-59). Macrobotanical analysis revealed the presence of corn, white and sweet potatoes in this feature—all basic staples for the Williams and other rural households. Archaeology at the Williams Farmstead also unearthed parts from an icebox and wood stove, which would have been used by the family in conjunction with the root cellar for storing and preparing their food.

Architectural	Frequency
A. Structural	
1. Square nails	3241
2. Wire nails	692
3. Screws	61
4. Spikes	2
5. Bricks	11
6. Wood samples	7
7. Mortar fragments	31
8. Flat glass	0
9. Miscellaneous hardware	3
B. Fencing	
1. Wire (barbed and smoothed)	411
2. Staples	127
Total	4586

Table 3.3: Total number of architectural artifacts recovered from the Williams Farmstead.

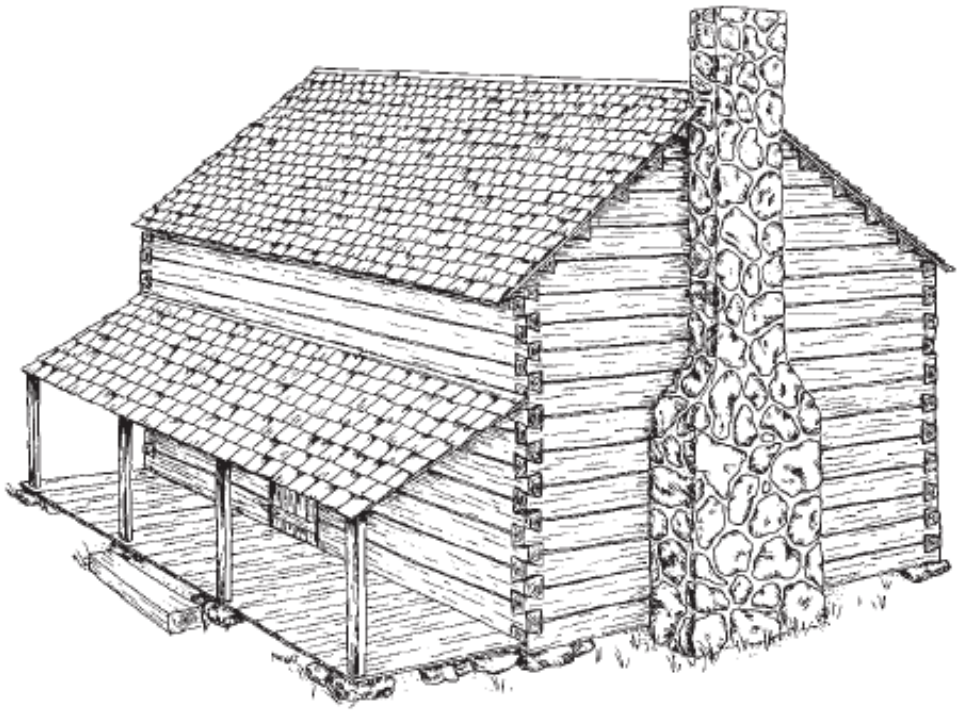

Figure 3.6: The Williams family may have lived in a log-cabin similar to this drawing (Drawing modified by Prewitt and Associates, Inc. from report authored by Susan A. Lebo, 1996).

Figure 3.7: Excavated root cellar at the Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead (Photo by author, 2009).

Faunal remains were the third greatest artifact category of items recovered from the Williams site. Brian Sawyer Shaffer analyzed these remains and found that the Williams family consumed domesticated and wild fauna. Pigs, cattle, chicken and cottontail rabbits were consumed in the greatest quantity (Shaffer 2013: 332). Fish was represented in negligible amounts in the recovered assemblage, but this can possibly be attributed to artifact screening while conducting excavations and poor preservation from the clay and rock filled soil conditions. However, this could also be attributed to the difficulties that the Williams family faced preserving and obtaining fish for consumption.

Fish had to be consumed quickly because of the lack of refrigeration. Fish may have also been hard to acquire because of the family's limited access to water sources or nearby creeks. No more than three fishhooks were recovered during excavations of the Williams Farmstead, and macrobotanical analysis revealed some scales of sunfishes. This confirms that wild fauna like rabbits, possums and raccoons—all specimens identified at the Williams Farmstead—were preferred over fish as dietary options. Franklin noted the frequent consumption of rabbits, squirrels and possums in her analysis of the oral histories and stated it was also an attribute of residing in heavily wooded areas (Franklin 2013: 444).

Following the functional categories employed by Prewitt and Associates, artifacts that fell within the groups of activities, clothing and adornment, and personal items were found in smaller frequencies but were just as instrumental in telling us about the daily lives and experiences of Ransom and Sarah Williams. The activities category largely reflected the daily life as well as household and agricultural chores of the Williams family. Artifacts included tools and implements related to construction, farming, sewing and hunting (see Table 3.4 and Appendix A). However, this category also included leisure items and collectibles like a U.S.S. Maine commemorative spoon. Although fairly small in number in comparison to the kitchen and household (n=11965), architectural (n=4586) and faunal (n=2875) categories, there was much artifact diversity represented within the activities group. Toys like play guns, clay marbles, hematite stones, doll parts and fragments of a recovered tea set demonstrate efforts to provide children with play objects. However, the very small number of these items highlighted the limited funds

and time black children had for leisure. Samuel L. Harper, Sr. recalled, "We worked, mostly. There wasn't too much playing" (Franklin 2012: 164). Children's labor was essential to household subsistence and production. They picked cotton, cared for younger siblings, assisted with the cooking and cared for the livestock. However, black parents also had few options for toys for their children because of the proliferation of racist caricatures on these items. As a result, interviewees recalled playing games -- perhaps the most common form of play for black children--in addition to enjoying the occasional doll, truck or gun. Finally, sewing implements and farm tools were not found in large numbers at the site; writing implements like slate board fragments, pencil erasers and graphite, however were unearthed in significant amounts. The educational items highlight the emphasis on education in the Williams household (Figure 3.8). Although Ransom and Sarah Williams were illiterate, their children could read and write.

Activities	Number	Percentage
Carriage and Wagon	85	10%
Collectibles	12	1%
Construction	42	5%
Farming	21	3%
Firearms and Hunting	1	0.10%
Firearms/Hunting	86	11%
Fishing	4	0.40%
Horse Tack and Harness	145	18%
Miscellaneous Hardware	240	30%
Music	13	2%
Sewing	17	2%
Toys	20	2%
Water Storage	69	9%
Writing	50	6%
Grand Total	805	100%

Table 3.4: Total number of activities artifacts recovered from the Williams Farmstead.

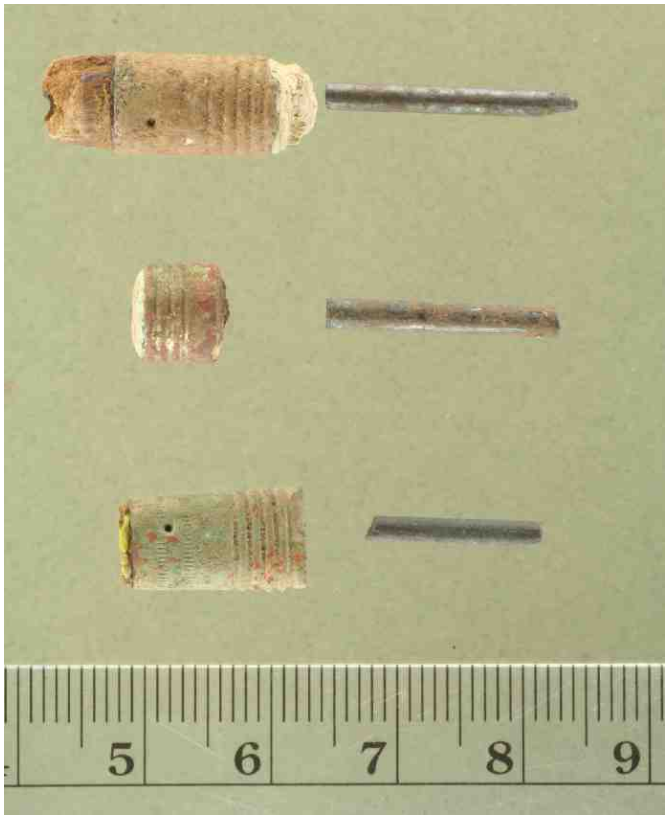

Figure 3.8: Eraser tops and graphite lead from pencils recovered from the Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead (Photo by Doug Boyd, 2010).

The activities group provides clues about the type of work engaged in by Ransom and Sarah Williams. Tax documents spanning in time from 1870 to 1910 note the family's ownership of horses. In 1872, Ransom Williams registered his horse brand with Travis County, suggesting that he possibly worked as a teamster, horse trader, cattle driver or stock hand on one of the many ranches in the area (Myers 2013: 118). Excavations uncovered the "R" from Williams' brand as well as spurs, horse and mule shoes, harnesses and buckles for hitching up livestock. The physical discovery of Ransom Williams' brand along with the large number of horse tack suggest that he may

have participated in a form of skilled labor, which in turn would have helped him obtain the necessary funds to purchase property. Williams' peak years for the ownership of horses were from 1870 to 1873. However, this number dropped to one to two after 1873, indicating that he quickly sold those animals to perhaps finalize payment for his property (Myers 2013: 120). However, it also indicates his full participation in more traditional agricultural labor. Sitton and Conrad note that black landowners frequently worked as horse or mule traders, mustangers (cowboys) or livestock traders but this was dangerous and seasonal work (Sitton and Conrad 2004:146). Horse or mule breaking frequently led to bodily injury (Sitton and Conrad 2004:146). Trading required a sensitivity to the prevailing Jim Crow rules and etiquette (Sitton and Conrad 2004:146). Blacks often turned to other jobs like cotton picking, labor on the railroad or selling produce. Many of the Antioch Colony residents recalled working as day laborers on nearby cotton plantations.

The faunal remains as well as kitchen and household and clothing items highlight the many tasks that Sarah Williams and her daughters engaged in around the farmstead. In addition to cooking and cleaning, women also labored in and out of the home to earn supplemental income. As suggested by the 440 buttons recovered from the Williams Farmstead, Sarah may have washed to earn supplemental income. Washing was a common job done by black women, and it was a laborious task with little financial gain. However, black women could stay home to launder clothes and simultaneously handle their own household's chores. The buttons found at the site were grouped under the clothing and adornment category. White Prosser buttons, suspender buckles, jean

grommets and rivets comprised much of this assemblage along with dressier items like cuff links and various hooks and fasteners for undergarments and feminine ware. These buttons reflect the pretty simple clothes worn by the family; dress items appeared to be limited to a few pieces.

The personal items unearthed from the farmstead were also limited in frequency but diverse in composition. This category included items related to grooming and hygiene, health and medicine, accouterments like eyeglasses, pocketknives, parasol fragments and alcohol (Appendix A). Comb parts were also recovered from the site along with various bottles or containers, which may have held creams or pomades (Norment and Boyd 2013: 314). Neither of these items were found in large number at the site and this can be attributed to the use of non-store bought items for personal hygiene. For example, interviewees recalled using lard for hair and skin care. Soap was often made from lye in the household. Although ads in historic black newspapers advertised black hair care products, Jewel (Williams) Andrews recalled having "a real hard time with that hair business as children" (Franklin 2012: 867). Patent medicine bottles were found in significant numbers at the site; out of the 109 glass containers and bottles identified within the assemblage, at least 39 were medicine bottles. Ill health and high mortality defined rural life for blacks and whites. In the oral history interviews with Antioch Colony descendant community members, freed black persons recalled using home remedies and mass-manufactured medicines to treat colds, scrapes, burns and sicknesses. Interviewees stated using castor oil or turpentine to treat common colds and cobwebs and mud to stop bleeding cuts. The patent medicine bottles also indicated that

the Williams family participated in the local consumer market; medicine bottles from the local distributors Morley Brothers was found at the site. The female members of the household also used medicines like Dr. Bradfield's Female Regulator and McElRee's Wine of Cardui to treat issues related to menstruation and childbirth. Rebecca Sharpless noted that one of the worst aspects of farm life was women's inability to receive proper care during pregnancy and childbirth (Sharpless 1999: 46). These two products were frequently advertised in the historic black newspaper, *The Herald*, suggesting that it was a preferred brand by the Williams family and other black consumers. Alcohol bottles were not found in great frequency but snuff bottles were. Snuff bottles and tobacco plugs hint at regular tobacco consumption within the household and could have been used by both Ransom and Sarah. Excavations unearthed few accouterments, which consisted of artifacts like pocket watch parts, purse fragments, monocle lenses and an 1877-seated Liberty dime.

SUBSEQUENT DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Lab work and preliminary data analysis spanned roughly one year following the excavations. The artifacts were washed, labeled and catalogued, and faunal remains were sent to Brian Sawyer Shaffer for identification and analysis. Robert Thrift did flotation analysis and soil samples were sent to Leslie Bush of Macrobotanical Analysis for additional study. Minimum number of vessels (MNV) counts were done for all ceramics and glass bottles and containers. Robert Thrift refitted the identified vessels. A total of 52 ceramic vessels and 109 glass containers (101 bottles, 3 jars and 5 closures) were counted. Jeffrey R. Ferguson and Michael D. Glascock of the Archaeometry Laboratory

of the University of Missouri to determine clay sourcing for several of the stoneware vessels did neutron activation analysis.

The artifact assemblage recovered from the Williams Farmstead exceeded what we expected from a historic black post-bellum site. Throughout the excavation of the site, archaeologists frequently expressed surprise at the sheer quantity of material recovered from the site. Kerri Barile's study of the criteria for listing historic properties on the National Register for Historic Places highlighted that black sites were believed to largely be tenant sites and characterized by ephemeral structures and material scarcity (Barile 2004: 96-97). The Williams Farmstead stood in direct contrast to this; the site revealed 26,000 artifacts that all fit within the time span of 1871 to 1905 with little modern overprint or disturbance. Investigations also revealed distinct architectural features like the rock walls and stone scatter from the chimney fall. Prewitt and Associates concluded, "There is no doubt that Ransom Williams was a successful freedman farmer in rural Travis County" (Boyd et. al. 2013: 643). Excavations revealed that the Williams family enjoyed a level of socioeconomic status (Boyd et. al. 2013: 643). While the material paucity of black tenant sites has often led to archaeologists to view all historic black sites dating to the post-bellum period within a lens of impoverishment, the Williams household's relative affluence when considered in relation to other documented black sites paved the way for an alternate interpretation of the black past. The excavations revealed that the household actively participated in the consumer market as well as displayed other evidence of socioeconomic mobility with their investment in education, purchase of decorated ceramics and other tablewares. Tobacco, toys and

musical instruments were consumed to break up the monotony of rural life. Moreover, the family enjoyed a level of self-sufficiency; they exploited domestic and wild fauna as well as planted corn, potatoes and other vegetables for their sustenance. Although the family's economic success did not ensure their racial parity in society, their socioeconomic status and aspirations placed them at the pinnacle of the agricultural hierarchy that defined social relations in the south.

CONCLUSION

The Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead Project was an exhaustive effort that comprised archival, oral history and archaeological investigations. Data recovery efforts yielded more than 26,000 artifacts and the documentation of the site's physical landscape. The Williams Farmstead Project offered a comprehensive understanding of freed blacks' lives from the 1870s to the mid-1950s and successfully highlighted subjects such as gender dynamics, race relations, labor, community formation and black land ownership.

The findings of the project have been shared widely. The work at the farmstead was featured in the KLRU television show, Juneteenth Jamboree on June 17, 2010. In addition, an exhibit was prepared for the Public Archaeology Day, which was held in conjunction with the 2011 Society for Historical Archaeology conference held in Austin, Texas. The final site report on the investigation of the Williams Farmstead is forthcoming. The report is more than 1,000 pages long and exceeds most expectations for reports produced in cultural resource management (CRM). Excavations have illuminated a more complex understanding of race and class in the post-bellum south.

Chapter 4: Ceramics and the Production of a Black Rural Identity

How do you contextualize social and economic privilege on a historic black site? Archaeologists have a rather narrow or one-dimensional approach to studying class on historic black sites that largely subsumes class under race. Blacks are inherently assumed to be impoverished because of slavery or in the instance of late 19th and early 20th century sites thought to be poor and landless (Stine 1990: 41; Barile 2004; Reid 2012: 5). This approach acknowledges the intersection of race and class but gives little thought to any other forms of oppression or experiences that result from the confluence of these two variables.

However, black landowning sites present a new set of challenges to examining the intersection of race and class. As landowners, blacks enjoyed a level of socioeconomic status that simply preclude them from being read as poor. For example, black landowners actively participated in the consumer market—an attribute archaeologists consider to be evidence of elite or middle class activity (Barile 2004:93). They also had some form of transferable wealth that could be passed down to descendants. In addition, their children often had greater access to educational opportunities because their parents could forego their labor to keep them in school longer (Schultz 2005: 55). However, black landowners also faced numerous economic challenges; they were relegated to marginal lands and were often unable to access credit or other financial assistance to expand their holdings. As a result, they largely enjoyed socioeconomic status that was relative to their black sharecropping peers. The paradoxical nature of their existence complicates efforts to understand the Williams in tandem to their white neighbors and

calls for a greater attention to more nuanced and structural forms of racial oppression since many may misconstrue the material benefits enjoyed by black landowners as an example of their successful negotiation of racism (Singleton 1995: 129).

This chapter abstains from making any assessment of the Williams family's socioeconomic position. Instead, I examine the ceramics recovered from the Williams Farmstead to explore the relationship between race, class and property ownership. As landowners, the Williams were at the pinnacle of southern society's economic hierarchy or agricultural ladder. However, their race and formerly enslaved status placed them at the bottom rungs of society politically, economically and socially. I argue that black landowners like the Williams family performed a dual class ideology as a strategic tactic to negotiate their uneasy existence at the top of the agricultural ladder but bottom of a racialized society. I use W.E.B. Dubois' notion of double-consciousness to demonstrate how the ceramics from the Williams Farmstead reflected a shared class-consciousness between black and white landowners that foregrounded agrarian ideals as well as highlighted the performance of a distinct black class ideology. I focus on the ceramics recovered from the farmstead to point out how the esteem blacks' held for land ownership went hand-in-hand with their consumption practices to reflect their aspirations for social and economic advancement.

CERAMIC DATA FROM THE RANSOM AND SARAH WILLIAMS FARMSTEAD

Excavations of the Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead unearthed 1,509 ceramic sherds, and from this assemblage 52 vessels were refitted and identified (Table 4.1). The ceramics consisted of refined and coarse earthenwares, stonewares and

porcelain. Refined earthenwares and stonewares comprised the greatest number of ceramic wares excavated at the site, and out of the 52 ceramic vessels recovered and identified both ceramic types respectively made up half of these vessels. The ceramics from the Williams Farmstead followed a pattern that was identified by Randall W. Moir (1987) in his analysis of ceramics recovered from 32 historic farmsteads in the Richland-Chambers Reservoir in Navarro and Freestone counties just south of Dallas, Texas. Archaeologists collected more than 15,000 ceramic sherds from the Richland-Chambers project area and documented a regional consumption pattern where black and white farmers consumed inexpensive, plain to minimally decorated refined earthenwares (Moir 1987: 97). Although stonewares were found to be an important mainstay in these rural households, it was also considered a declining artifact category because of improvements in food storage and preservation at the start of the twentieth century (Lebo 1987: 121). Coarse earthenwares and porcelain were not found in great quantities on any sites (Moir 1987: 97).

Ware Type	Sherd Count	Percentage	Vessel Count	Percentage
Coarse Earthenware	155	10%	3	6%
Refined Earthenware	754	50%	23	44%
Stoneware	569	38%	22	42%
Porcelain/Semi-Porcelain	31	2%	4	8%
Total	1509	100%	52	100%

Table 4.1: Total number of ceramic sherds recovered from the Williams Farmstead

REFINED EARTHENWARES

Twenty-three refined earthenware vessels were identified within the Williams ceramic assemblage (Table 4.1). These vessels primarily consisted of plain and minimally decorated whitewares and ironstones that dated to the mid-19th and early-20th centuries (Table 4.2). Decorations were typically limited to embossed images of figs and tea-leaves (Table 4.2). Four late-style transfer print vessels with the Willow pattern were also identified at the site (Table 4.2—see Figure 4.1). These vessels made up a Kenwood dish set that was manufactured by Alfred Meakin from 1891 to 1897 and consisted of two cups, a plate and a saucer (Figure 4.1). A single sherd of banded annular ware was also unearthed from the site (Table 4.2). The annular ware had the earliest manufacturing date (1785-1840) of all the refined earthenwares at the site.

Ceramic Types--Williams Farmste	Vessels	Percentag
Refined Earthenwares		
Whiteware, plain	13	25%
Whiteware, embossed	5	9.60%
Whiteware, transfer print	4	7.69%
Annular ware, banded	1	1.92%
Coarse Earthenwares		
Rockingham ware	2	3.85%
Coarse (terra cotta)	1	1.92%
Porcelain/Semi-porcelain		
Plain	1	1.92%
Embossed	3	5.77%
Stonewares		
Salt Glaze	9	17.31%
Alkaline	1	1.92%
Bristol Glaze	1	1.92%
Slip Glaze (Albany)	11	21.15%
TOTAL	**52**	**100%**

Table 4.2: Types of ceramic vessels recovered from the Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead

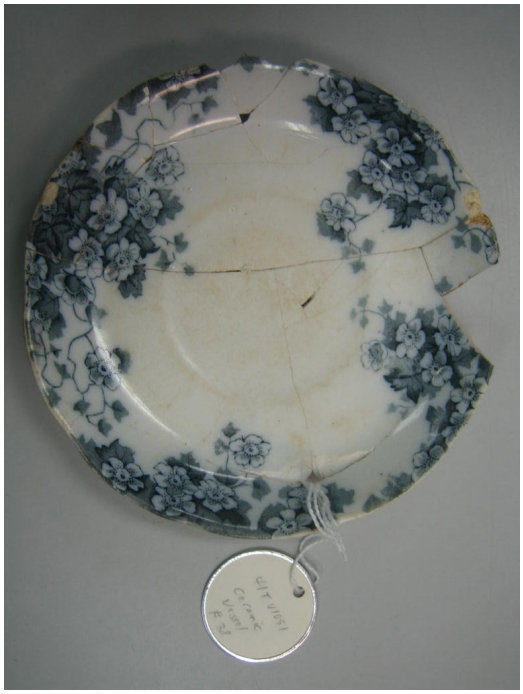

Figure 4.1: Transfer print saucer with late-style Willow pattern recovered from the Williams Farmstead

Maker's marks were found on several of the whiteware and ironstone sherds. In addition to the transfer print vessels manufactured by Alfred Meakin, the following maker's marks were also identified at the site: K.T. & K. (Knowles, Taylor & Knowles), which was manufactured in East Liverpool, Ohio from 1872 to 1931; Thomas Furnival & Sons of Cobridge, which was manufactured in Stoke-on-Trent, England from 1878 to 1890; Wick China Company, which was manufactured in Pennsylvania and China from 1899 to 1913. The small number of refined earthenware vessels and the four identified maker's marks suggest that the Williams family acquired dishes on a sporadic and as needed basis. There is also a possibility that these items may have been gifts to the household. Several freed men and women in the Texas WPA Ex-Slave Narratives stated

that their spouses or benevolent whites gave them gifts of ceramics as wedding presents. For example, Robert Franklin remarked that when he got married, "Folks come from … fer an' near. De w'ite folks liked us so well dey gibed us a shoat, a cow an' calf, some corn an' chickens an' dey gibed Mary a bed an' beddin' an' dishes" (Rawick 1972: 1420). Sometimes isolated pieces were given; Charlotte Beverly recalled that her husband gifted her a "gol' ring 'n' a cup 'n' saucer for a weddin' gif'" even though they were "so poor we couldn' go 'roun d' house" (Rawick 1972: 286).

Cups comprised the largest vessel type of the refined earthenwares. In an analysis of 23 refined earthenware vessels, at least 11 of these vessels were cups; 8 were exactly identified as such and 3 were possibilities (Table 4.3). Although only four whiteware plates were recovered from the Williams Farmstead, they represent the next vessel form found in significant quantity at the site (Table 4.3). Bowls and saucers were also found in small numbers at the farmstead; only two were found amongst the identified refined earthenwares (Table 4.3). While one of these belonged to the transfer-print set recovered, the other was identified as a sugar bowl and may have been part of a set that perhaps contained the three other serving dishes found at the Williams Farmstead. All of these serving dishes were represented by lids-- at least one belonging to a possible casserole dish.

Ceramic Wares	Ceramic Vessel Types	Recovered Number (MNVs)
Refined Earthenwares	Bottle	
	Bowl	2
	Crock	
	Cup	8
	Handles	
	Jar	
	Jug	
	Pitcher	1
	Plate	4
	Saucer	1
	Serving Dish Lid	1
	Unknown	6
	TOTAL	**23**

Table 4.3: Refined earthenware vessels recovered from the Williams Farmstead

COARSE EARTHENWARES

Less than 200 coarse earthenware sherds, representing three vessels, were excavated (Table 4.2). Coarse earthenwares consist of ceramic types like yellowwares and redwares. At the Williams Farmstead, archaeologists recovered two Rockingham ware vessels, which are yellowwares known for their distinct mottled brown and yellow color and a plain, unfinished earthenware item that was yellowish-red and incised with vertical lines. Little is known about this third vessel because it comprised too few and fragmentary sherds to provide any information on the vessel's form and purpose.

Jane Perkins Claney noted the widespread presence of Rockingham ware on rural, urban and industrial sites from the 1830s to 1870s despite their minimal representation in artifact inventories and ceramic assemblages (Claney 2004: 9). Rockingham ware vessels were often manufactured in tablewares and other non-culinary forms (Claney

2004). The most common forms included pitchers, spittoons, teapots and baking dishes, which were usually adorned with nature and hunting scenes or depicted the Biblical story of Rebekah at the Well (Claney 2004). One of the identified vessels from the Williams Farmstead was a pitcher that depicted some type of nature or agricultural scene (Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2: Recovered Rockingham ware pitcher unearthed from the Williams Farmstead (Photo by Doug Boyd, 2009).

PORCELAIN

Minimal amounts of porcelain were found at the Williams Farmstead. Twenty-five sherds were recovered during excavations, and only four vessels were identified

from this ceramic assemblage. Although the vessels were represented through small sherds, two of the identified vessels were tablewares: one was possibly a small plate or saucer and the other a cup. Another one of the porcelain vessels was a knob or lid but nothing else is known about the type of container to which it may have belonged. The porcelain like some of the found whitewares and ironstones contained minimal decoration (Table 4.2). The decoration was embossed but differed in design from the other vessels suggesting that they were not part of one set.

STONEWARES

Twenty-two stoneware vessels were identified at the Williams Farmstead in the following glazes (Table 4.2): Salt Glaze, Natural Clay or Slip (also known as Albany glaze), Alkaline and Bristol. Salt Glaze and Natural Clay stonewares were found in the greatest numbers at the site and comprised 20 out of the identified 22 vessels and sherd groups. Both Salt Glaze and Natural Clay ceramics were common during the late 19th and early 20th centuries and support the established chronology of the site.

The majority of the stoneware vessels found at the Williams Farmstead were crocks and jars—terms which are often used interchangeably--and jugs (Table 4.4). Georgeanna H. Greer notes that these were the most common vessel forms during the 19th and 20th centuries (Greer 1981: 83—see Figure 4.3). Jars were typically used for the storage and preservation of foods and came in a diverse range of sizes and styles to accommodate the storage and preservation needs of rural households (Greer 1981: 83). For example, wide-mouthed jars and crocks often ranged in size from one-half gallon to ten-gallon capacity and held items such as pickled vegetables, sugared fruit, lard and

salted meat (Greer 1981: 83). The smaller-mouth vessels often held butter, cream or items already preserved. Jugs were often used to store liquid items such as water or molasses.

Ceramic Wares	Ceramic Vessel Types	Recovered Number (MNVs)
Stonewares	Bottle	1
	Bowl	
	Crock	3
	Cup	
	Handles	2
	Jar	3
	Jug	2
	Pitcher	
	Plate	
	Saucer	
	Serving Dish Lid	2
	Unknown	9
	TOTAL	**22**

Table 4.4: Recovered stoneware vessels the Williams Farmstead.

Figure 4.3: Large crock from the Williams Farmstead (Photo by Doug Boyd, 2009).

The ceramics recovered from the site were mostly stonewares as well as plain or minimally decorated refined earthenwares. Neither porcelain-- the highest quality and often most expensive ware--nor coarse earthenwares were found in great amounts. This suggests that the Williams family made a minimal investment in ceramics and instead consumed dishes that were most pertinent to their daily sustenance. The household's limited investment in ceramics was further corroborated by the low cream-color (CC) index calculated for the recovered whitewares and ironstones. Although archaeologists

have largely steered away from using such an index to ascertain whether a site was poor or affluent, this number is useful to gain some idea about an estimated value of a household's ceramic assemblage. I used Joni L. Manson and David M. Snyder's variation of George Miller's CC index because Miller's system is only applicable to ceramics that do not date beyond 1881 (Miller 1980, 1991). I calculated an index of 1.44 for the Williams household, which Manson and Snyder noted was common for households of limited financial means. While I do not believe that this inherently means the Williams family was of a low socioeconomic position, Manson and Snyder's CC-index clearly indicated that ceramic dishes were not the household's highest economic priority.

SITE COMPARISONS

I compared the ceramics from the Williams Farmstead to four other post-bellum sites: two landowning households and two tenant sites. The goal of this comparison was to examine how Ransom and Sarah Williams broadly compared to their black and white landholding and non-landholding neighbors. The comparisons were not geared towards addressing whether the Williams family was poor or affluent but to illuminate the lives of black landowners and the nuances of their socioeconomic position. I chose ceramics as a central variable in this analysis because it is a common variable used by archaeologists to examine class relations (Klein 1991; Miller 1980, 1991; Walker 2008; Wall 1991). Ceramics are often found in large quantities on historic sites and have been argued to reflect socioeconomic behavior. Miller noted that ceramics were a valuable tool for measuring status because they "range from being a basic necessity to a high status good" (Miller 1980: 5). While it is no longer common practice to link a household's ceramic assemblage to its specific socioeconomic position, ceramics are still valuable to

understanding how historic households negotiated various subjectivities. Households often used specific ceramic types and vessels to demonstrate knowledge of prevailing aesthetic styles or cultural ideals. Although rural households have been widely found to make conservative choices in ceramics, they were still an important item for signaling knowledge of prevailing notions surrounding gentility, domesticity and respectability thus making it an useful variable for discussing the relationship between land ownership and its influence on socioeconomic status (Moir and Jurney 1987; Klein 1991; Groover 2008; Walker 2008).

Landowners and Landowners

I compared the Williams Farmstead to two other late 19th and early 20th century farmstead sites, the Mingo and Nancy Burleson Farmstead and the Jonas and Nancy Baker Farmstead, located along the Richland-Chambers Reservoir in Dallas, Texas. These sites were excavated as part of the Richland Creek Archaeological Project, which was conducted by Southern Methodist University from 1980 to 1984. The Burleson Farmstead was located in Navarro County, Texas and was owned and occupied by a freed black family from 1873 to 1910. The Burlesons hailed from a nearby planation owned by the early Texas settler, Joseph Burleson. Mingo paid $2,000 for his 250 acres farmstead, and he was reported to have made his first payment of $653.33 towards the property in gold (Moir and Jurney 1987: 103). Jonas and Nancy Baker were a white landowning family who possessed nearly 800 acres in Navarro County (Moir and Jurney 1987: 107). The Bakers resided at the farmstead from 1859 to the late 1870s and were the largest landholders in both my and the Richland Creek study (Moir and Jurney 1987: 107). After

the Bakers departed, their property was subdivided and farmed by tenants until the late 1920s (Moir and Jurney 1987: 120).

Although MNV (minimum number of vessel) counts were selectively done at the Baker and Burleson Farmsteads, all three sites had a large percentage of refined earthenware sherds, which were mostly plain to minimally decorated whitewares and ironstones (Moir 1987: 97). Coarse earthenwares and porcelain were found in negligible amounts at all three sites (Table 4.5). Despite the observation that most of the recovered whitewares and ironstones were plain or minimally decorated, there was quite a bit of diversity in color and patterning on the recovered ceramic sherds and vessels. For example, the Williams family had whiteware dishes with embossed figs, tea leaves and molded edges. Moir found similar decorations on ceramics recovered from sites located within the Richland-Chambers project area. Decorations included vines, leaves and sprigs of flowers (Moir 1987: 103). However, archaeologists also identified six transfer print vessels at the Mingo and Nancy Burleson Farmstead with five different patterns (Moir 1987: 108). Transfer print plates, bowls, and cups from the Baker and Burleson residences were found in colors such as green, purple and blue (Moir 1987: 108).

Sites	Refined Earthenwares	%	Coarse Earthenwares	%	Stonewares	%	Porcelain	%	Total
Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead	754	50%	155	10%	569	37.71%	31	2.05%	1509
Jonas and Nancy Baker Farmstead	1017	68.67%	30	2.03%	410	27.68%	24	1.62%	1481
Mingo and Nancy Burleson Farmstead	610	49.47%	14	1.14%	540	43.80%	69	5.60%	1233
Waverly Plantation--22CL567	354	84.29%	0	0.00%	41	9.76%	25	5.95%	420
Waverly Plantation--22CL569	1407	84.50%	23	1.38%	188	11.29%	47	2.82%	1665

Table 4.5: Ceramic sherd counts for the Williams Farmstead and four other contemporaneous historic sites.

While MNV counts were not done for the refined or coarse earthenwares recovered from the Burleson and Baker farmsteads, they were done for the stonewares. Of these three sites, the Williams Farmstead had the smallest number of stonewares; only 22 vessels were identified (Table 4.6). The Burleson Farmstead had 116 vessels, and archaeologists identified 89 stonewares at the Baker Farmstead (Table 4.6). Jugs were particularly well-represented at the Baker and Burleson sites and may have been indicative of the production of molasses, an important staple in rural households (Table 4.7).

Sites	Refined Earthenwares	%	Coarse Earthenwares	%	Stonewares	%	Porcelain	%	Total
Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead	23	44.23%	3	5.77%	22	42.31%	4	7.69%	52
Jonas and Nancy Baker Farmstead	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	89	100.00%	N/A	N/A	89
Mingo and Nancy Burleson Farmstead	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	116	100.00%	N/A	N/A	116
Waverly Plantation--22CL567	26	68.42%	0	0.00%	8	21.05%	4	10.53%	38
Waverly Plantation--22CL569	80	72.07%	3	2.70%	20	18.02%	8	7.21%	111

Table 4.6: Minimum number of vessel counts for the Williams Farmstead and four other contemporaneous historic sites.

No churns were identified at the Burleson and Williams farmsteads (Table 4.7). Although the lack of any churns at these two sites was surprising, this could suggest how well curated these items were because of their value to rural residents' household economies. Butter production was a task largely within the realm of women's work, and one that proved invaluable to the survival of rural families because it yielded supplementary income. Butter was made for households' personal consumption and individual sale. In Franklin's interviews with descendants from the nearby freedman's community, Antioch Colony, interviewees recalled selling butter with surplus eggs and vegetables to pay down store credit or meet other financial needs (Franklin 2013: 464; Sharpless 1999:140-142). Since landholders worked hard to minimize their need for store-brought goods, the income from butter sales was often used towards the purchase of other necessities like flour, sugar, coffee and lard (Franklin 2013: 440; Sharpless 1999: 140-142).

Vessel Form	Williams Farmstead	Burleson Farmstead	Baker Farmstead
Bottle	1	3	7
Bowl	0	1	0
Churn	0	0	0
Crock	3	0	0
Handle	2	3	0
Jar	3	2	5
Jug	2	42	30
Lid	2	0	1
Pitcher	0	1	0
Other	0	0	1
Unidentified	9	64	45
Total	**22**	**116**	**89**

Table 4.7: Identified stoneware vessel forms at the Williams, Burleson and Baker Farmsteads.

Stoneware bottles were also identified at all three of the farmsteads. Stoneware bottles were an European manufacture that typically held mineral water, ink, molasses or an alcoholic beverage like an ale or beer (Lebo 1987: 138). Seven bottles were recovered from the Baker Farmstead; three of these were manufactured in Britain (Lebo 1987: 133). Archaeologists found three stonewares at the Burleson site, which were produced in Germany (Lebo 1987: 133). Only one bottle was identified at the Williams Farmstead; the bottle had the manufacturing mark "Amsterdamsche" but little was known about the manufacturer or its contents. Boyd and Norment found that twelve "Amsterdam Ale" bottles were found in the 1865-shipwrecked vessel, the Bertrand, which suggests that the bottle recovered from the Williams Farmstead may have also held ale and was possibly of the same brand (Boyd and Norment 2013: 259). It is hard to account for the disproportionate number of stoneware bottles represented on the Baker Farmstead in

comparison to the Burleson and Williams sites. Since the Baker family later rented out their property to tenants, one cannot assume that this household consumed all seven bottles. However, if all of the bottles held alcohol, it is evident that none of the sampled landowning sites consumed beer in great quantities. This can be further seen at the Williams Farmstead where only fifteen (thirteen liquor and two beer bottles) vessels were identified. Prevailing ideas about alcohol consumption or limited funds could have prevented any of the landowning households from partaking in such drink (Boyd and Norment 2013: 601; Stine 1990). Stine noted that deportment was an important factor in determining class position in rural communities (Stine 1990: 41). An unkempt yard, laziness and excessive alcohol consumption could lead one to be looked down upon in rural communities (Stine 1990: 41). Moreover, my review of five historic black newspapers printed in Austin and the greater Travis County region revealed that alcohol was rarely advertised in the papers but write-ups in favor of temperance were commonly included. These papers provided black readers with lessons of morality, which would have been just as important as schools and churches in guiding blacks' social interactions.

The large number of stonewares at the three farmsteads illustrated the significance of food storage and preservation in rural homes. This was an important strategy to help households maintain self-sufficiency and one practiced by all rural households regardless of their economic status to aid them in feeding their families and saving funds. Rural households grew corn, sugar cane, sweet and white potatoes, beans, okra and tomatoes as well as kept pigs, cattle and chicken for sources of food. Prior to the advent of glass canning jars and other improvements in food storage and preservation, stonewares were

used to preserve these items. However, Susan Lebo noted that stonewares became a declining artifact as rural households began to increase their use of new technologies in canning, pickling and refrigeration (Lebo 1987: 121). The stoneware assemblages at the Williams, Burleson and Baker farmsteads highlighted the gradual adoption of these improved technologies. Despite the acquisition of a stove and icebox, the Williams household continued their use of stonewares in conjunction with these and other modern conveniences. For example, crocks and jugs were used along with canned goods at the Williams Farmstead. Excavations uncovered 72 complete metal cans, numerous can fragments and three Schies glass lids--a closure made for an early type of glass canning jar that was patented in 1898. The small number of jars and crocks discarded at the site show that stonewares remained an important artifact in the household. This can also be seen at the Baker and Burleson farmsteads. No crocks and very few jars were disposed at these sites (Table 4.7); no more than five jars were identified in the ceramic assemblages of these three farmsteads. These small numbers hint at the extensive use of stoneware vessels for food storage and preservation in rural households. Although the introduction of new techniques in canning and pickling were widely embraced by these households, some traditional practices in food preservation were a mainstay.

However, the diversity of stoneware vessel forms found at the Williams, Baker and Burleson farmsteads also speak to the practice of preparing and storing varied sources of food at landowning sites. In addition to producing important staples like butter and molasses, black and white landowners raised and slaughtered their own livestock and exploited both wild and domestic fauna and flora. Excavations of the

Williams Farmstead revealed that the household consumed chicken, beef, pork and cottontail rabbits in significant quantities. While pigs and cattle required land for ranging, rabbits and other small game needed no upkeep and could be hunted with little effort; Franklin's interviews with black descendants from Antioch Colony recalled that children and women trapped animals like rabbits, squirrels and armadillos, chased them with dogs or simply killed them with rocks (Franklin 2013: 606—see also Franklin 2012: 486, 753-754). Nuts, peaches and pokeweed (a wild grass) were also gathered and incorporated into meals at the farmstead. Peaches and other fruits were preserved for use as a jam. In an agrarian society, where affluence was determined in part by how much land one owned, self-sufficiency was an important extension of this (Ransom and Sutch 1977: 87). The high number of stonewares at the Baker and Burleson Farmsteads (and the Williams site to a lesser extent) indicated that landowners' ability to meet their own subsistence needs contributed to their socioeconomic mobility by lessening debt and their reliance on country stores or neighbors to meet food needs. The ability to provide for one's self and family would have been key in maintaining a household's economic survival and autonomy.

Landowners and Sharecroppers

I compared the Williams Farmstead to two tenant homes located on the Waverly Plantation in Mississippi. Waverly was once a thriving antebellum plantation owned by George Hamilton Young. In 1860, Young owned 137 enslaved blacks and had more than $102,000 invested in land (Adkins 1980: 86). After the Civil War, Young increased his acreage and divided his land for sharecropping and tenancy. From 1865 to the early

1900s, blacks primarily worked on the plantation, however after that whites comprised the labor force (Adkins 1980: 117). The examined sites, the Belle Scott House (22CL567) and the Aaron Matthews House (22CL569) reflected this shift in the racial demographics of Waverly's labor force as well as the itinerant nature of the tenancy system.

The Belle Scott House (22CL567) was named after its last occupant but served multiple purposes before it was solely used as a residence from 1910 to 1930. No white tenants had ever lived at this site, which had been previously used as a post office and black Masonic lodge. At least three different families and two individuals occupied the Aaron Matthews House (22CL569) between 1880 and 1940. One of these households may have consisted of a white family. Although the tenant sites were not entirely contemporaneous with the Williams Farmstead, they offered an opportunity to compare the material assemblages of not just landowners and tenants but a black landowner to both black and white tenants. This is an important comparison since black landowners were said to possess a level of affluence that exceeded their black sharecropping peers but was similar to white yeomen farmers (Ransom and Sutch 1977: 105).

MNV (minimum number of vessels) counts were done for both the Scott (22CL567) and Matthews (22CL569) homes. Similar to the farmsteads within the Richland-Chambers Reservoir, refined earthenwares and stonewares comprised the largest number of ceramic wares at these sites (Table 4.6). Plates, saucers, bowls, and cups were the most common identified forms at the tenant sites (Table 4.7). The majority of these items were plain whitewares and ironstones despite the advent of colorful

decorative wares like Fiesta ware, decal transfer printing and sponge decorated ceramics (Bartovics and Adams 1980: 526). Coarse earthenwares and porcelain were not found in large numbers at the tenant sites; instead, coarse earthenware vessels were identified only on one site, the Matthews property (Table 4.8). Archaeologists counted three yellowware bowls at this site (Table 4.8). The porcelain vessels recovered from the Scott and Matthews' residences were mostly flatwares and were part of a diverse collection of wares for dining (Table 4.8). Four vessels were identified at the Scott house, and eight porcelain dishes were found at the Matthews site (Table 4.8). The large number of porcelain vessels at the Matthews site was not entirely surprising because they had a larger ceramic assemblage in general when compared to the Williams and Scott households.

Waverly--Scott House	Coarse Eart.	Ref. Eart.	Porcelain	Stonewares
Bottle	0	0	0	0
Bowl	0	4	0	0
Churn	0	0	0	0
Crock	0	0	0	2
Cup	0	1	6	0
Handles	0	0	0	0
Jar	0	0	0	0
Jug	0	0	0	6
Lid	0	0	0	0
Pitcher	0	0	0	0
Plate	0	9	0	0
Saucer	0	5	3	0
Serving Dish Lid	0	0	0	0
Unknown	0	2	1	0
Total	**0**	**21**	**10**	**8**

Waverly Plantation-Matthews House	Coarse Eart.	Ref. Eart.	Porcelain	Stonewares
Bottle	0	0	0	0
Bowl	3	11	0	0
Churn	0	0	0	0
Crock	0	0	0	2
Cup	0	13	2	0
Handles	0	0	0	0
Jar	0	0	0	0
Jug	0	0	0	13
Lid	0	0	0	2
Pitcher	0	0	0	0
Plate	0	24	0	0
Saucer	0	26	3	0
Serving Dish Lid	0	0	0	0
Unknown	0	4	2	3
Total	**3**	**78**	**7**	**20**

Table 4.8: Ceramic types and vessel forms identified at the Scott and Matthews tenant sites on the Waverly Plantation in Mississippi.

Stonewares were not found in large numbers at any of the tenant sites and represented less than a quarter of their total ceramic assemblage (Table 4.8). The

stonewares at the tenant sites showed a greater number of jugs than what was found at the Williams Farmstead; the Scott house had six jugs and the Matthews residence had thirteen (Table 4.8). These jugs were probably used for the storage of liquids and may have held water or molasses. Molasses was an essential foodstuff in rural households and would have been a sweet addition to a rather humdrum diet. Studies of rural community life have noted that tenant farmers and sharecroppers' diets largely consisted of the three M's—meal (corn), meat (salted pork) and molasses (Adams and Smith 1985: 319, 329). While croppers may not have possessed the means to make their own molasses, the jugs from the Scott and Matthews' houses suggest its frequent consumption. Crocks were another common vessel form identified at the two tenant sites. Crocks were ideal for food storage and preservation and would have been useful to preparing or safeguarding items like beans or salted pork. Besides the jugs and crocks, no other stoneware vessel forms were found (Table 4.8).

My comparison of the ceramic assemblages recovered from the Williams Farmstead and two contemporary tenant households revealed that the occupants from all three sites consumed similar ceramic wares and vessels. Like landowners, tenant households made a minimal investment in ceramics. They either purchased or obtained second-hand only what was needed and limited their use to items that helped them meet their most pressing subsistence needs. Neither the Scott nor Matthews households had many decorative ceramics like Rockingham ware; porcelain was also found in such small amounts at these sites that it was safe to assume that these items were a rarity and as suggested by Moir were used as semi-utilitarian and semi-decorative vessels (Moir 1987:

108-109). This suggests that tenants had little interest in class signaling through ceramics and largely did not have the funds to do so. In addition, the tenant households had little diversity in their stoneware vessels when compared to the Williams Farmstead. Only jugs and crocks were identified from the Waverly ceramic assemblages; the Williams household along with the Baker and Burleson sites contained stoneware bottles, jars, jugs, pitchers, flower pots and a sundry of other unidentified vessels, which could represent other significant forms. This corroborates T.J. Woofter's findings that landowners not only canned and consumed more diverse foods but tenant and sharecroppers had limited access to fresh foods (Woofter 1936; Boyd and Norment 2013: 566-567). Tenant farmers and sharecroppers were dependent on their landlords to various extents for shelter, livestock, feed, tools and fertilizer. The ability to grow fresh food would have been constrained by exactly how much leeway they had in using the rented land for other purposes besides cotton production. Fresh foods would have been consumed quickly or supplemented with rations from plantation commissaries.

The ceramics recovered from the Scott and Matthews residences also highlight one key difference in the lives of landowners and tenants: tenants' lives were defined by shifting or constant mobility and the subsequent lack of any permanent stability. Jacqueline Jones described shifting as "short-range geographical movement… defined as a change in residence with little or no change in formal tenure status, in contrast to upward or downward social mobility" (Jones 1992: 105). Tenants frequently moved in search of more favorable working conditions. Landowners largely ascertained their affluence from their permanent residence. Jones states that "residential stability increased

with social status" (Jones 1992: 109) and this was reflected in economic benefits such as landowners' ability to acquire transferable wealth through property ownership and an opportunity to make a living and profit off one's own land holdings. Jones states that, "Throughout the United States between 1870 and 1930, the workers with the highest rates of labor turnover and residential turnover were the poorest people" (Jones 1992: 105). This frequent residential mobility can be seen in the material scarcity that defined tenants' lives. For example, a total of thirty-eight ceramics were recovered from the Scott residence. In addition, neither stonewares nor metal cans or glass jars were represented in large numbers at the site (Riordan 1980: 496). At the Matthews house, 111 ceramics were unearthed at the site, which represent the discarded items of at least three different households and two individuals over a forty-year time span. This suggests that each household may have discarded roughly twenty-two vessels over the course of their occupancy.

PERFORMANCE OF A DUAL CLASS IDEOLOGY

The ceramics analyzed in this study show a wide adherence to an agrarian ideology that structured rural life and defined both blacks' and whites' economic priorities. This agrarian ideology emphasized the acquisition of land, which was essential to maintaining one's independence and self-sufficiency. Land was both blacks and whites highest aspiration in the agricultural south, and they worked hard and saved to obtain and expand land holdings. However, the emphasis on land was not solely about the acquisition of wealth; land ownership was part of an agrarian ideology that articulated a vision for the national body politic. Lisi Krall notes that, "Thomas Jefferson is

recognized as the foremost proponent of the agrarian ideal" (Krall 2002: 131). Jefferson's notion of agrarianism outlined a vision of American society that consisted of a nation of small farmers who remained uncorrupted by their attachment to the land and ability to remain independent and self-sufficient as subsistence farmers (Krall 2002: 131). Linda Stine claimed that this agrarian ideology superseded the prevailing "institutionalized racism in southern society" (Stine 1990: 2). Stine argued that in the post-bellum south one's social status rested upon their ascendency up the agricultural ladder as well as one's work ethic and moral conduct. Stine found that landowners' socioeconomic status was built upon their acquisition of land and autonomy as well as their neighbors' perception that they were honest, hard workers, and willing to help a neighbor (Stine 1990: 39, 45).

The ceramics from the Baker, Burleson and Williams' farmsteads demonstrate the wide adherence to this ideology. The ceramics from these sites show a minimal financial investment in these items and little interest in class signaling through ceramic consumption. Decorative ceramics were limited to a few transfer-print and porcelain vessels or coarse earthenwares, which served an aesthetic and utilitarian purpose. The money these households saved by eschewing conspicuous consumption on ceramics or other luxury items would have been used towards the improvement of outbuildings as well as the purchase of additional acreage or livestock. The improvement of the farm would have been a major priority and would include the gradual addition of rooms and windows to the home, outbuildings and agricultural implements.

Despite the pervasiveness of this agrarian ideology, there were contradictions that existed within it. For example, blacks were largely excluded from Jefferson's idyllic vision of small farmers because their race inherently confined them to slavery. They were a form of chattel property with no rights that any whites had to respect. Moreover, as a form of property they could not own any type of land or capital that could accrue value. Although emancipation offered the promise of citizenship and equality, freed blacks found themselves facing vehement racism and denied economic opportunities. Land was at the foremost of freed blacks' desires after slavery, yet the rise of the tenancy system further precluded their ability to obtain it and stymied efforts to obtain racial and economic autonomy. Freed blacks found themselves confined to the plantation as sharecroppers, toiling under a new form of slavery. As sharecroppers, they faced destitute conditions; they incurred debt, resided in former enslaved quarters, ate poor food and faced high mortality. Therefore, freed blacks' desires for land was political because it was linked to the process of becoming free from white subjugation (Reid 2012: 6; Ochiai 2004: 5; Sitton and Conrad 2004: 2).

The comparison of the ceramic assemblages recovered from the Williams, Baker and Burleson farmsteads to the Waverly tenant sites demonstrate that black landowners certainly enjoyed a level of affluence that was relative to their black and white sharecropping peers. As seen with the recovered stonewares from the Williams Farmstead, black landowners' ability to grow and preserve food probably helped them steer clear of debt and to provide for their families. However, this affluence was not limited to the fulfillment of basic subsistence needs. Black landowners enjoyed a level of

socioeconomic status that allowed them to provide their children with an education and to develop some type of genteel and respectable home life. For example, excavations at the Williams Farmstead uncovered numerous educational items. These items included slate, an inkbottle, pencil fragments and part of an alphabet plate. These items exceeded the number of personal and leisure items uncovered at the site and highlighted how freed blacks' desires for an education mirrored their want for land. Education was linked to the immediate social and economic advancement of blacks. Schools were some of the first institutions constructed in black communities, and both children and adults often attended classes together to learn how to read and write. However, it should be noted that the children of black landowners often went to school longer because their parents could spare their labor and the extra funds to cover their learning expenses. This was an important indicator of socioeconomic status within black communities and would have helped strengthen the economic survival of households as children could build upon agricultural endeavors or help protect their parents from scrupulous business dealings with whites.

In Dubois' study of black rural community life, he noted the significance of land to black class formation. He considered land ownership as evidence of black progress and an important solution to the rampant impoverishment within black communities (Dubois 1908: 37). Landownership was already a privileged position within rural communities, and black landowners were especially known for their leadership and honorable behavior. Black landowners were often community leaders and donated land for the erection of schools and churches. When neighbors lacked food, milk or other

staples, landowners shared with them. Some black landowners even amassed enough property to employ other blacks as tenants and laborers. According to Valerie Grim, black landowners tried to "minimize the exploitation blacks experienced from whites by forming independent communities as well as employing families to work individual parcels" (Grim 1998: 399-400). Unlike white landholders on post-bellum plantations, black landowners had fewer resources than whites but aimed to treat black renters fairly while strengthening black community and economic development (Grim 1998: 403). Black landholders not only engaged in various renting agreements with other blacks, they built syrup mills and cotton gins as well as sold butter, molasses and vegetables to ensure their racial and economic autonomy. Land was a sure way to economic development and to insulate one's self and family from racial indignities.

The actions of black landowners challenged hegemonic ideas about black inferiority and had sure ramifications for black racial and economic uplift. In Dubois' discussion of the formation of a black class hierarchy, these characteristics--land ownership, literacy, education and morally upright behavior—particularly determined who was of elite status (Dubois 1898: 235-236). Since most blacks remained landless and/or in protracted impoverishment, the organization of blacks' socioeconomic classes placed less emphasis on wealth accumulation and more focus on character traits. For example, education, personal respectability, cleanliness of the home and body, chastity and abstinence from alcohol were particularly praised. Thus, the socioeconomic status black landowners enjoyed thus highlighted this blend of economic thrift and entrepreneurship as well as proper social deportment. In Dubois' study of black class

formation, he notes the material correlates of the performance of various socioeconomic positions. With his keen eye for observation, empiricism and detail, Dubois described the material culture from the homes of these individuals. He paid attention to class variations between the households, describing the differences in their material culture based on their tenancy, landowning status or occupation. In this study, he looks at 13 families, noting their annual income, household composition, type of housing, children's disposition, clothing, livestock and other household possessions. For example, for a country family of 11 persons residing in a house of three rooms, Dubois noted details such as:

> They own 165 acres of land, the house in which they live, two mules, two cows and four hogs. The family have lived in this place for sixteen years…. There is no school near for the children to attend….Very few colored people live in the country where these people live, and few who live near are related to them….This family has three meals every day. The food is well cooked, and they have very nice dishes but no silver…. They have tablecloths, but no napkins (Dubois 1908: 137).

For another household, Dubois described a family "in a peaceful community comprised of white and colored people" who ate meals off of plain china and utensils of plated silver (Dubois 1908: 140). This offers incredible context for understanding the ceramic assemblage from the Williams Farmstead because Dubois' description of the above households material culture are similar to the items used by the Williams family. For example, the Williams site was located in a predominantly white farming community where black and white residents resided on dispersed farmsteads and sent their children far away to attend school. Tax records note that the Williams family owned at least one

to two horses following 1873 and an estimated total of no more than two to four hogs during their occupancy of the site. In addition to the plain to minimally decorated whitewares and ironstones, bone handled knives and pressed glass containers were excavated.

While archaeological studies of rural households typically find no link between the recovered ceramics and the socioeconomic status of a site's occupants, my analysis of the Williams Farmstead instead highlights the performance of a dual class ideology. The recognition of such an ideology moves beyond a simple declaration of black affluence and encourages scholars to see the existence of race and class inequalities within homogenous ceramic assemblages that often define late 19th and early 20th century sites. I believe this dual class ideology reflected a shared class-consciousness between black and white landowners that served as a strategic tactic to help black landowners negotiate their uneasy existence at the top of the agricultural ladder but bottom of the racialized southern society. W.E.B. Dubois' notion of "double consciousness" serves as an useful framework to illuminate this tactic. He wrote of this in his work, *Souls of Black Folks* and explained it, "As a sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One over feels his two-ness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two reconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (Dubois 1903 [2003]: 9). Evidence from the Williams Farmstead shows how the household's material culture reflected both agrarian ideals, which could be defined as a sociocultural and economic emphasis on land ownership, the

virtues of an agricultural way of life, and the formation of a distinct black class ideology that prioritized black social advancement through the acquisition of land, education, and the performance of personal respectability. The ceramics recovered from the Williams Farmstead highlight that the household made a minimal investment in ceramics perhaps in order to expand their extant land holdings and agricultural endeavors. However, they also show a desire to signal class mobility through the display of ideas surrounding household aesthetics and domesticity. The Rockingham ware vessels and the small number of transfer-print ceramics at the Williams Farmstead particularly suggest this. Only four transfer-print vessels were identified in the Williams ceramic assemblage indicating that this was an item that was well-cared for and prized. The artifacts of the site suggest that this was a special item because neither furniture items nor bric-a-brac; picture frames, toys or other items of leisure were represented in large numbers at the Williams Farmstead. Instead, fragments of glass tumblers and a candy container dish were found that illustrate that regardless of the crude log cabin the household resided in, there was some concern about domesticity.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I examine the ceramics from the Williams Farmstead to examine the relationship between race, class and black land ownership. The ceramic assemblage from the Williams Farmstead showed an adherence to a regional consumption pattern identified by Moir (1987) in his study of historic farmsteads in Freestone and Navarro counties. Moir found that rural tenant and landowning households in these Texas counties made a conservative choice in ceramics; these households consumed mostly

plain to minimally decorated whitewares and ironstones (Moir and Jurney 1987: 97). Stonewares were found in great frequency at these sites but were a declining artifact category because of the advent of improvements in canning and other techniques in food preservation (Lebo 1987: 121). Using W.E.B. Dubois' notion of double consciousness, I argue that the ceramics recovered from the Williams Farmstead demonstrate the performance of a dual class ideology. The ceramics suggest that the Williams household had a shared class-consciousness with other black and white landowners that reflected the prevailing agrarian concerns for land and self-sufficiency. However, the Williams family's social status as landowners served as the root of the performance of a black class ideology that made them part of a class hierarchy within the black community and emphasized property ownership, literacy and respectability.

Chapter 5: Hiding in Plain Sight

The emancipation of roughly four million blacks brought a radical change in southern society. The abolition of slavery uprooted a social and economic system that made blacks the foundation to white wealth, political privilege, and ideological claims of racial superiority. While slavery served as an economic and ideological source of power that maintained blacks at the bottom rungs of southern society, emancipation abolished this system and offered the promise of citizenship and equality to both free and formerly enslaved blacks that had been denied this. However, the irony of black freedom was that emancipation also yielded the continuation and in some instances an escalation of racial violence. The rise of the Ku Klux Klan, wide scale implementation of the tenancy system and the eventual loss of the right to vote caused some blacks to remark that emancipation brought more challenges than slavery (Rawick 1972).

Perhaps the most visible trace of the continuation of this racial violence was the advent of Jim Crow segregation, which rigidly separated blacks and whites across the region's physical landscape. The common image of separate water fountains and railway cars as well as segregated schools and communities have highlighted the significance of space to imparting notions of racial inferiority. However, the Williams Farmstead stands as a testament to the irrational proxemics of Jim Crow segregation. Despite efforts to use space to maintain a strict racial hierarchy, the Williams family appears to be an example of "matter out of place" (White 2007). They were a black landowning household in a predominantly white farming community, and their status as landowners transcended notions of what was blacks' proper place in southern society.

This chapter asks how did the physical landscape of the Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead help the family negotiate race and class tensions in their predominantly white farming community during the Reconstruction and Jim Crow periods? The Williams family's presence in a mostly white settlement challenges common knowledge about racial segregation during the late 19th and early 20th centuries hence necessitating an analysis of the strategies used by the Williams and similar black landowners to survive rather hostile times. In this chapter, I argue that the Williams family negotiated race and class tensions in their community by remaining physically and socially isolated from their mostly white neighbors. Although recent studies of southern life describe a culture of personalism that fostered rather intimate relations between blacks and whites, blacks were not immune to direct and structural violence. Ransom and Sarah Williams would have exercised great care to maintain their autonomy but to eschew any actions that would result in whites' violent retribution. As a result, the Williams Farmstead was modified to show social cohesion with white neighbors but to ensure the long-term safety of their families.

THE WILLIAMS FARMSTEAD—AN EXAMPLE OF AN ALTERNATE FORM OF BLACK SETTLEMENT

The Williams Farmstead's location in a predominantly white farming community challenges the dominant historical representation of race relations and black residential settlement in the post-bellum south. The advent of Jim Crow segregation is one of the most defining features of the post-war south. Most people's understanding of race in the post-bellum south was that blacks and whites remained staunchly separate in all areas of

life. They lived in different areas, had separate social and educational institutions and were precluded from close interaction in travel and business interactions. Blacks even faced segregation in death and required separate cemeteries and undertakers from whites. It can be argued that racial segregation stands with slavery as one of the greatest scars on American history. Douglas S. Massey and Nancy E. Denton cited the significance of segregation to the "origins of the urban underclass" (Massey and Denton 1993: viii). These authors linked racial segregation to the structural undermining of blacks' well being through highly concentrated poverty, high unemployment and educational failure (Massey and Denton 1993: 2).

Although there is considerable debate about the development of Jim Crow segregation, scholars such as C. Vann Woodward (1974), Eric Foner (1988), Edward Ayers (2007) and Grace Hale (1998) all note that it came about to put blacks into a subservient place. Segregation was not just about the separation of the races; it was about the maintenance of a racial and economic hierarchy. While slavery automatically ensured that blacks would remain a constant source of labor, freedom undermined the ontological relationship that interpolated blacks as slaves (Hartman 1997; Wilderson 2010). Black freedom was dangerous to the small percentage of whites that held most of the South's land and wealth and relied on black bodies and labor for their political and economic supremacy. It was also threatening to the poor whites that comprised a large percentage of the population but enjoyed the benefits of whiteness that rested upon them never facing the threat of enslavement (Dubois 1935; Roediger 1991). David Roediger referenced W.E.B. Dubois when he wrote that, "even when whites received a low wage

they were compensated by a public and psychological wage in white supremacy" (Roediger 1991: 12). He further noted that this white privilege could be used to make up for alienating and exploitative class relationships (Roediger 1991: 13). Although poor whites were also exploited by the vagaries of the southern agrarian economy, they resented any competition that black labor and economic success presented. While slavery had conditioned blacks and whites to maintain a strict separation of their lives socially, this separation could not be maintained in politics, work, commerce and travel (Ayers 2007: 136). Thus, segregation served as a way of policing blacks and whites in these realms and maintaining white control. Grace Hale best explains the link between race and class and the rise of segregation when she states:

> the coming together of those rising ex-slaves, antebellum southern free blacks and the small African American communities of the North had produced a growing group of educated and economically successful African Americans, a new black middle class… Whites created the culture of segregation in large part to counter black success, to make a myth of absolute racial difference, to stop the rising (Hale 1998: 20-21).

As a steady number of blacks became literate and began to form an aspiring middle class through the acquisition of wealth and property, racial violence and segregation was necessary to constrain this. Whites felt anxiety over blacks accessing what was traditionally viewed as privileges reserved only for whites (Ayers 2007: 140-141).

While racial segregation had numerous detrimental effects on blacks, many scholars have noted how it also fostered strong communities. The formation of both

formal and informal black settlements allowed for the establishment of autonomous communities where freed blacks managed their own social institutions and economic enterprises. Segregation contributed to the rise of black churches, schools, fraternal lodges, banks, newspapers and several other businesses that fostered staunch racial pride. Yet, urban areas often saw the most virulent segregation; racial boundaries were sometimes more flexible in rural areas as the nature of rural life and labor frequently brought blacks and whites into contact. Slavery and the agricultural economy precluded physical and social distance as blacks and whites lived and worked together on small farms and plantations. This proximity yielded intimacy and the gross abuse of direct and indirect power to maintain black subservience. It also required limited physical distance to monitor labor and threats of resistance as well as social distance to reify the idea of white supremacy. While emancipation abolished slavery, it did not eradicate the flexibility of these boundaries. Hortense Powdermaker stated that whites' unanimously believed that blacks were necessary to the south and could not leave (Powdermaker 1939: 23). The continued adherence to mono-crop agriculture required cheap black labor. Thus, the majority of freed blacks remained as laborers on small farms and plantations or in whites' homes as domestic servants. Many of them lived in conditions akin to slavery as they inhabited old enslaved cabins and quarters and were subjected to white control and surveillance.

The location of the Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead is another example of the permeability of racial boundaries in the southern countryside. At a cursory glance, the farmstead appears to be an anomaly considering the increased efforts of whites to use

space to marginalize blacks during the post-bellum period. However, Loren Schweninger's study of black landowners found that, "the vast majority of rural black landholders in the Lower South lived in areas with neighboring white farmers" (Schweninger 1990: 165). Schweninger noted that the black landowners in these areas comprised a small portion of the black rural population yet their lives differed greatly from blacks residing in freedmen settlements or working as sharecroppers on small farms and plantations (Schweninger 1990: 166). Black landowners in these areas often forged chilly bonds of friendships with whites according to the harsh needs and vagaries of agricultural life. Mark Schultz argues that rural areas were marked by a culture of personalism that operated on two levels:

> In one sense, it refers to the personal nature of power… in another, it points to the face-to-face nature of rural communities, which allowed greater flexibility than was found in areas where black and white people related to one another primarily as impersonal abstractions. Despite the ways that 'blackness' or 'whiteness' were constructed in the larger culture, rural people regularly encountered them in their non-stereotyped, personalized, corporeal forms (Schultz 2005: 7).

This personalism described the bonds of benevolence and friendship that occurred between blacks and whites despite the history of slavery and the efforts to maintain a hierarchy that strived to keep blacks inferior to whites in all matters political, social and economic. In rural areas, whites and blacks may have worked together in agricultural endeavors, occasionally helped each other in times of need and even found themselves in situations where they fished and hunted together. Yet, the lack of segregation did not

mean integration (Schultz 2005: 67); blacks and whites remained staunchly separated in more formal aspects of their social lives (Schultz 2005: 67). They did not attend the same churches and schools and stemming from slavery would have been in the practice of maintaining considerable physical and social distance in other intimate areas of life. Moreover, racial boundaries were maintained between blacks and whites through demeaning social etiquette that precluded whites from properly addressing blacks with titles like mister or miss and the regulation of childhood play (Schultz 2005: 67). While lynching was commonly deployed in the countryside to keep order, Schultz recalled that blacks did not mention lynching being a frequent occurrence in his study of black and white race relations in Hancock County, Georgia. He argued that these individuals experienced more personal forms of aggression like one-on-one physical assault and personal disrespect. Blacks interviewed in the freedmen's community, Antioch Colony shared similar testimonies. Interviewees claimed that they maintained positive relations with their white neighbors and did not witness forms of racial hostility like lynching. Instead, Jim Crow customs such as having to sit in segregated sections of movie theaters, being refused requests to use public restrooms or not being able to try on personal apparel (Franklin 2013: 422).

The Williams family's life in the Bear Creek community was probably similar to what was described above. The community along the Bear Creek was mostly comprised of disparate farmsteads and settlements where people remained separated by several acres (Figure 5.1). The community lacked a church and school and other major features of agricultural life such as a cotton gin or syrup mill. This probably resulted in blacks and

whites traveling several miles away from their homes to conduct business or to participate in social activities. Isolation and the monotony of agricultural life would have characterized both blacks and whites lives.

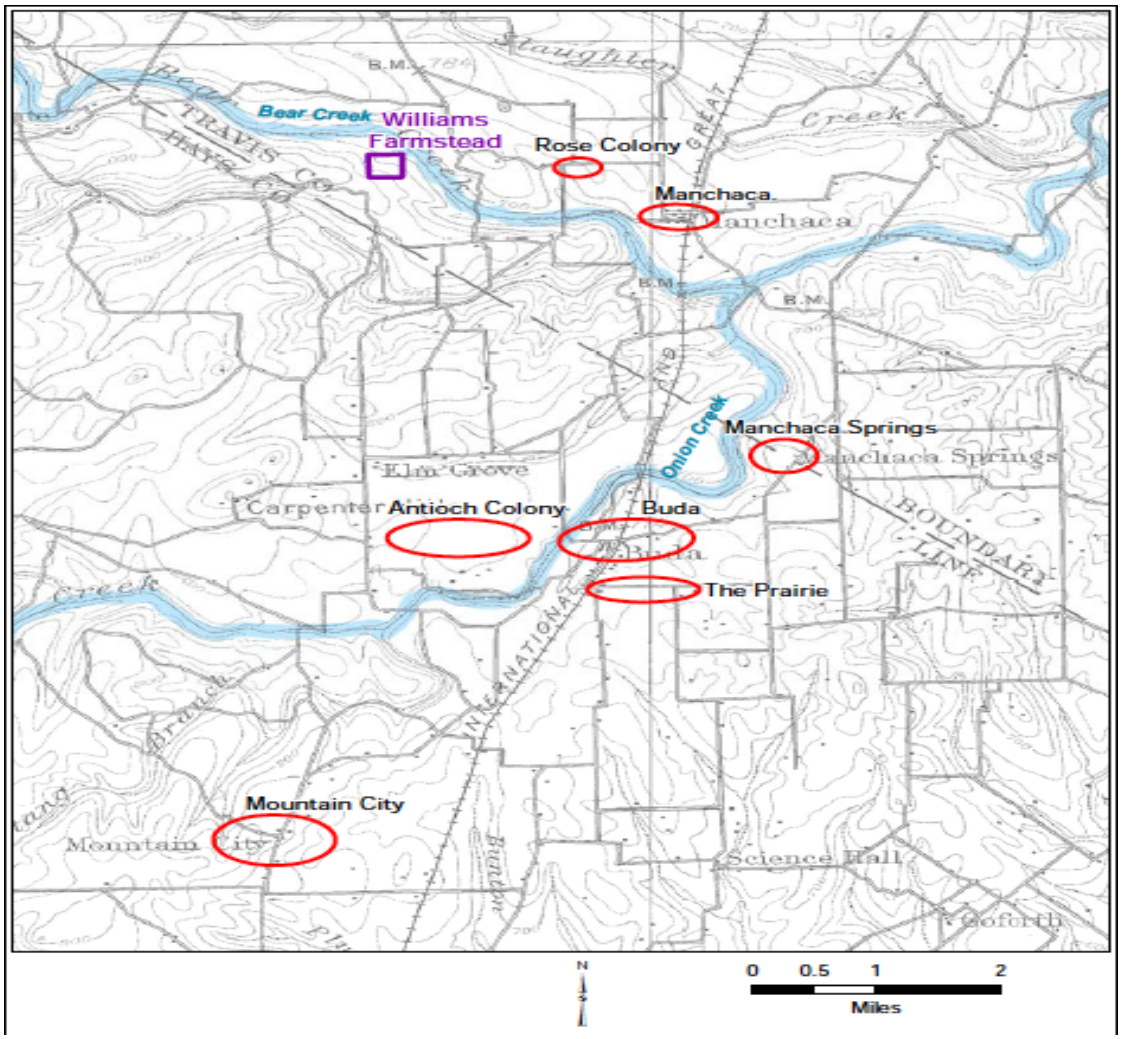

Figure 5.1: Map of Williams Farmstead in relation to other rural communities in Travis and Hays counties. Antioch Colony, Rose Colony and the Prairie were three black communities near the farmstead (Map by Prewitt and Associates, Inc., 2013).

THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF THE RANSOM AND SARAH WILLIAMS FARMSTEAD

Doug Boyd of Prewitt and Associates, Inc. conducted a landscape analysis that followed a framework articulated by William Hampton Adams (1990) and Mary Beaudry (2001-2002). Adams and Beaudry stressed the importance of understanding farmsteads as complex systems (Beaudry 2001-2002; Adams 1990: 93; Boyd 2013: 169). Beaudry encouraged archaeologists to not just see farmsteads as domestic sites; she wanted archaeologists to not overlook farming in their analysis of these sites but to better integrate it into their studies of how these sites operated (Beaudry 2001-2002: 139). She believed that a landscape approach was necessary to understanding farmsteads as places of both domestic life and agricultural labor. She states:

> An archaeology geared to the level of the household is not adequate for comprehending farms as farms; rather what is required is a landscape archaeology approach that examines the farm feature system as an integrated whole. Ideally, archaeology done at the level of the household intersects with and enriches the results of the broader scale of work done at the level of the farm as a whole (Beaudry 2001-2002: 139).

During the 2009 excavations of the Williams Farmstead, archaeologists had the following goals in recording the components of the property: (1) To try to understand the agricultural system that Ransom Williams put in place to utilize his upland farm (2) Examine spatial relationships between components documented on the site and the logic behind the farmstead's layout and operation (Boyd 2013: 169).

Boyd conducted a landscape analysis of the Williams Farmstead using historic and modern maps, aerial photographs and archaeological excavations (Boyd 2013: 170-

171). He concluded that, "Ransom Williams was a knowledgeable farmer who had a good understanding of the topography, hydrology, soils and biotic resources of the Texas Hill Country" (Boyd 2013: 208). Surveys and excavations revealed that Ransom Williams established a relatively successful farm that sustained his household and agricultural livestock despite challenges presented by poor soil quality and limited access to water. His study of the site was valuable because it conceptualized black agricultural labor beyond the normal lens of white exploitation. Black farm labor was viewed as skilled and of great personal value because it necessitated resourcefulness, acumen and a wide range of agricultural experience and personal agency.

The Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead comprised approximately 57 acres of land. The property sat along the Balcones Fault Zone, which yielded large outcrops of limestone and a "thin veneer of Speck Stony Clay loam… six to eleven inches thick" and containing a significant amount of chert pebbles and cobbles" (Boyd 2013: 171). The soil composition had positive and negative consequences for the establishment of the Williams Farmstead; the stone provided a rich source of material for building but made agricultural endeavors difficult. The rocky soil prevented deep digging in the ground as well as hindered intense agricultural production (Boyd 2013: 172; USDA 1975: 38).

Archaeological excavations revealed that the farmstead comprised a house lot, outbuilding, midden and livestock corral (Figure 5.2). Although these appear to be a small number of features, it does not reflect more ephemeral components like a chicken coop that would have surely been located on the property. Excavations also did not reveal a well, cistern or privy. However, the recovery of several barrel bands suggests

that the family collected rainwater and hauled water from Bear Creek. Oral histories with Antioch Colony residents note that black landowners frequently carried water from nearby creeks in their wagons. The Williams family probably had a wooden toilet or outhouse for waste elimination. Since the soil on the property was quite shallow and rocky, it would have been cleaned regularly and moved (Boyd 2013: 555). Slop jars and nearby bushes may have also been used for private needs. Finally, a small garden would have also been located on the property. Macrobotanical analysis found remnants of corn and potatoes, which were staples in rural diets. Peach pits and walnut remains were also found, which suggests the presence of a small orchard of various trees for the household's subsistence (Bush 2013: 354).

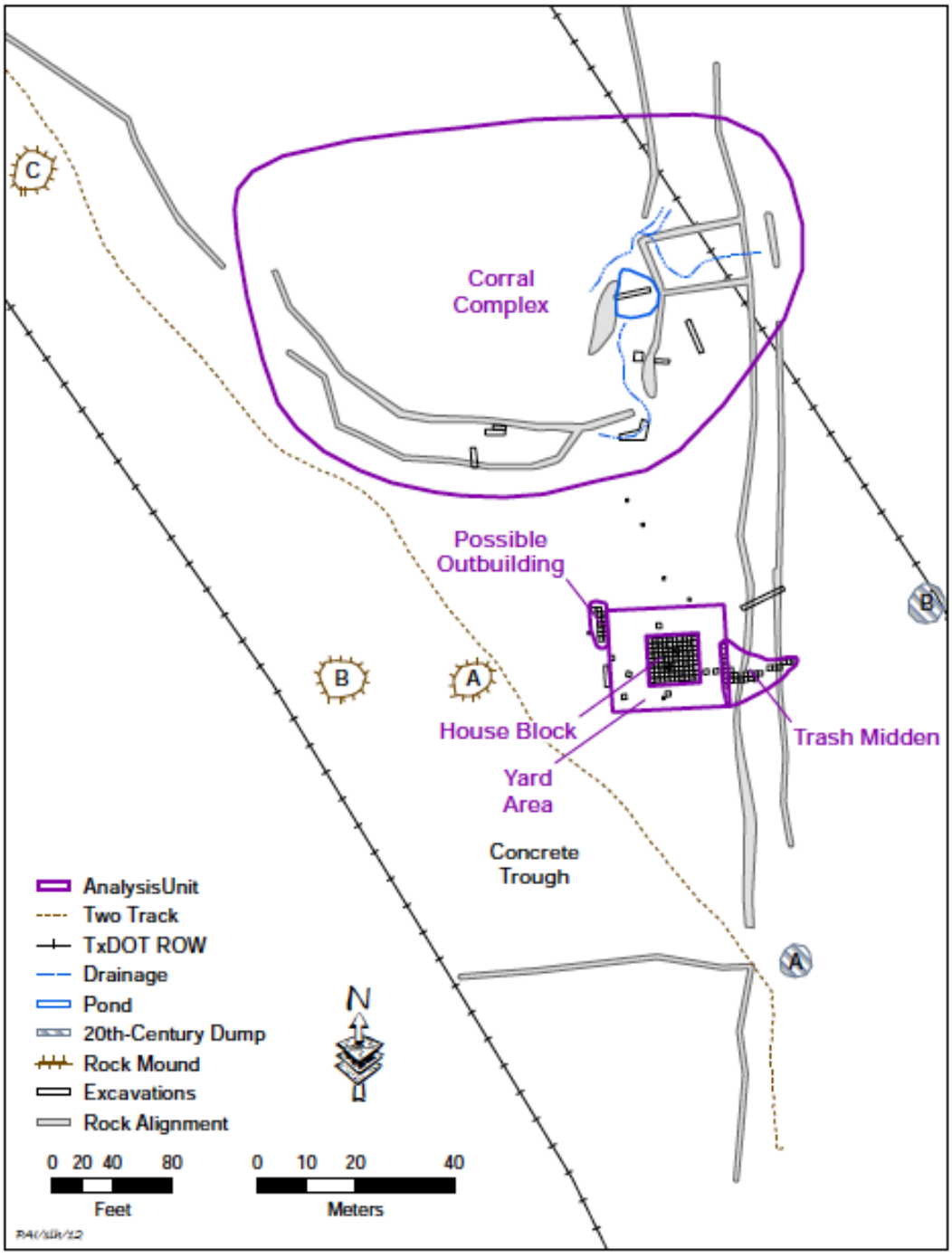

Figure 5.2: Outline of main components of the Williams Farmstead (Courtesy of Sandy Hannum, Prewitt and Associates, Inc., 2012).

Ransom Williams kept more than half of his property in unimproved acreage. The surrounding trees and woodlands would have provided pastureland for his animals and timber for fuel and construction (Boyd 2013: 547, 553). Excavations revealed that the Williams family lived in a single-pen log cabin that comprised one to two rooms (Norment and Boyd 2013: 210). A porch may have also been included for sleeping and other domestic activities. Boyd notes that the Williams family's home, along with other farmstead features, was not random (Boyd 2013: 561). The home was placed near a large oak tree that would have shaded large areas of the surrounding yard (Boyd 2013: 561). It was also located roughly 150 to 200 feet south of the corral complex, providing easy access to the livestock (Boyd 2013: 561). Since the cabin was roughly 16 x 20 feet, the yard would have served as an important extension of the home. Oral histories note that women conducted numerous chores like cooking and the washing of clothes and dishes in the yard. Women and children would have swept the yard to remove the residue of these activities. This practice would have been invaluable to keeping the yard clean and may have helped with pest prevention. Excavations revealed that the Williams family swept their yard and deposited debris and other trash in two middens located along the eastern edge of the farmstead. Boyd speculates that any type of outhouse may have also been located on the eastern part of the property. This highlights a rather orderly plan and place for the elimination of personal and household waste.

The outbuilding identified on the farmstead was also located in close proximity to the family's house. Carriage parts and numerous glass and metal fragments suggest that

this structure was primarily used for storage. However, Ransom and Sarah Williams also relied on other conventional methods for storing items. The discovery of tools such as a hammerhead, drawing knife, ax and augur bits within the house block suggest that Ransom may have kept these tools close. Horse and mule shoes as well as various harness bits and buckles may have been hung on the outside walls of the home. Most importantly, a sub-floor pit or root cellar was found in front of the hearth or chimney. This feature was carved into the limestone bedrock and would have been used to store various dry and perishable goods. Although root cellars have become synonymous with enslaved sites, Shawn Bonath Carlson found that they were a common feature on white rural sites (Carlson 1990). With rural areas slow and limited access to new technologies in food storage and preservation, root cellars remained an important feature in black and white households.

One of the most important and remarkable components of the Williams Farmstead was the corral complex (Figure 5.2). The corral complex extended north to south along the property and was comprised of limestone rocks, wood posts and barbed wire. For example, the rock walls were made of large stones, some stacked several feet to delineate the corral complex (Figure 5.3). The construction of the walls would have also involved the moving and hauling of large rocks for the walls as well as the disposing and stacking of smaller stones for the continuation of boundary lines and markers. Boyd further describes the construction process as follows:

> It is hard to imagine the full extent of the labor that went into building the stone fences. The work involved gathering the boulders and

> cobbles and using horses or mules to drag the rocks to their destination, probably with ropes and skids. Preparing the rock wall foundation meant digging a shallow wall trench to bedrock and laying down a bottom layer of rocks to form a solid base. Each successive layer of rocks had to be carefully chosen… (Boyd 2013: 557).

The construction of the rock walls would have required significant skill and effort. However, it would have been invaluable to the operation of the Williams Farmstead. Livestock were a major investment for landowners. Animals were a source of income and sustenance; adequate enclosure would ensure that they were protected. Moreover, Boyd notes "good fences made good neighbors" (Boyd 2013: 558). Keeping one's livestock from wandering off and possibly ruining other people's crops or fences would have minimized conflict (Boyd 2013: 558).

Figure 5.3: Picture of stacked tabular limestone slabs on one section of the rock walls (Photo by Doug Boyd, 2009).

The landscape of the Williams Farmstead reflects the dialectical relationship between domination and resistance. The Williams family's landownership was a rather exceptional feat for the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1870, most blacks remained landless and confined to whites' small farms and plantations. Ransom Williams, however, was a landowner with horses, tools and other implements to begin improving his holdings and accumulating some wealth. Williams enjoyed success as a landholder. He and his family expanded their initial forty-five acres by an additional twelve. As a family, they held onto their land for nearly thirty years. Although black landowners were often forced to buy the most remote and unproductive lands, the Williamses successfully developed the property to sustain their household and livestock. Faunal evidence suggests that the family consumed good (young and tender) domesticated meat and planted enough corn and potatoes to ensure they had the bare necessities to not go hungry. As a result, the Williams family sometimes yielded extra funds from their labor to obtain ceramics or canned foods as well as to provide a means for their children to go to school.

Yet, the physical landscape highlights the limits that race placed on the family's socioeconomic and spatial mobility. To be specific, the Williams family's farm was smaller and less valuable than the farms of their white neighbors (Myers and Boyd 2013: 584). The rockiness of the soil made it largely unsuitable for any farming beyond a subsistence level. While the Williams family may have planted some cotton for sale, the soil on the farmstead could not sustain cotton production at a major level. This meant that the Williams family had to seek out other forms of work. Sarah Williams may have

kept house as well as took in laundry for supplemental income. While the large presence of horse tack suggests that Ransom may have worked as a horse trader or stock hand, this was both dangerous and seasonal work. Oral histories with descendants from Antioch Colony suggest that the entire household may have earned money by picking cotton on neighboring plantation as day laborers. The tax data suggests that the Williams household remained impoverished throughout their duration on the farmstead. In tax data recorded for the farmstead from 1870 to 1910, the Williams family never had more than $500 in total assets valuated. Although the value of the farmstead peaked in 1890, this increase was perhaps attributed to the arrival of the International Great Northern Railroad and some minor improvements. No additional buildings were added to the property, and there was no substantial increase in livestock. Boyd and Norment note that the around 1900 Ransom Williams purchased some type of steam powered machinery. The possibility that this technology signaled was brief; the acquisition of this equipment coincided with the late peak in prosperity for the household and Ransom's probably death in 1901.

However, the greatest example of how race stymied the Williams family's socioeconomic and spatial mobility is the isolation that the family lived in and their near eradication from local archival and collective memory. Although the Williamses resided on the farmstead for almost thirty years, there was little information on what their life was like at the site. The household was not listed on any census records from 1870 to 1900 and was only recorded twice in the Travis County directory. No marriage certificate or vital information was found pertaining to Ransom and Sarah. Oral history

interviews with descendants of Antioch Colony and the Bear Creek community revealed little about the family. While a descendant of the Labenski family recalled hearing about Ransom and Sarah Williams, she could provide no additional information beyond that.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RACE, CLASS AND LAND OWNERSHIP ON THE POST-BELLUM LANDSCAPE

This balance between steady racial and economic progress but near invisibility in the Bear Creek community reflects the dialectical relationship between domination and resistance. Processes of racial formation have always had an inherent relationship with the landscape in shaping identities and yielding power. For example, in southern society there was a symbolic and physical relationship between race and place. White southerners believed that blacks had a specific place in southern society as a class of laborers. For example, the identification of blacks as chattel stripped blacks of any humanity. Black was inherently linked to enslavement; Frank Wilderson states (2010) that this was an ontological relationship that was believed to be a natural order of society. Blacks were inherently associated with labor and considered inferior to whites. While slavery and the emergent tenancy system ensured that blacks were a constant source of exploitable labor, a series of sociocultural beliefs and practices served to further undergird this. Hortense Powdermaker outlined the "chief articles of faith" in southern society, which outlined not just what was considered blacks' place in society but the mechanisms to ensure it. Powdermaker noted that these articles of faith included the following (Powdermaker 1939: 23-24):

1. Negroes are innately inferior to white people, mentally and morally.

2. Negroes are all right so long as they stay in their place. Their place is in manual work, apart from and below the white person's place.
3. Any attempt at any kind of social equality would result in some disaster so overwhelming that it is dangerous even to talk about it and so terrible that it cannot be thought of concretely, but must remain vague.
4. Negroes are necessary to the south, and it is desirable that they should stay there and not migrate north.
5. Because the whites are so seriously outnumbered, special means must be taken to keep the Negro in his place, and anyone who opposes those means is dangerous.
6. Southerners know the Negro and how to manage him, and must settle the problems arising out of relations between the two races in their own way, without interference from Northerners. Negroes realize this and prefer the southern way and the Southerners.
7. Intermarriage between whites and Negroes should be prohibited by law.
8. There may be good "niggers" and bad "niggers" but a "nigger" is a "nigger" and cannot escape the taint.
9. Negroes are lazy and shiftless, and won't work unless forced to do so.
10. Negroes are congenital thieves and born liars. Being incapable of telling the truth; they will lie even when it would be more advantageous to be honest.
11. Negroes are like children, incapable of self-discipline and forethought, living only in the moment.
12. The Negro smiles, laughs and enjoys himself no matter what straits he is in.
13. The Negro has more patience than the white person.
14. Negroes cannot control their passions, whereas white people can and do. The illegitimate children of Negro women are proof of this; that the father may be white has no bearing on it.
15. There is no chaste Negro woman.

Powdermaker makes it clear that none of these beliefs were based in any fact or logic (Powdermaker 1939: 24). Instead, they were used to justify the past and current status quo (Powdermaker 1939: 24). However, what is interesting about these articles of faith is the several references to place or at least what was viewed as blacks' rightful place. Articles two and five specifically stated blacks' place was in the south, below whites and in manual labor. Therefore, their race tied them to a geographic locale and to a particular position both socially (beneath whites) and economically (always in a position of service

or hard work). These specific links to place, whether in space, labor or in position to whites, were undergirded by what were almost common sense notions about blackness. This is where the material world played an important role in both shaping the conceptualization and perception of the other, specifically blacks. The two actually reinforced social or cultural beliefs.

However, black land ownership disrupted the deployment of such racial ideologies on both the natural and cultural landscape of southern society. To be specific, land ownership represented the ultimate paradox of black freedom: former property owning property. The abolition of slavery and the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment made blacks citizens and legally recognized them as humans instead of objects. However, with the addition of land, blacks now had an avenue for wealth accumulation and social access to a symbol that signified national belonging. This made black land ownership a threat because the acquisition of property—in terms of land, money and human capital—were within the domain of whites prior to the abolition of slavery. The disruption in symbolic discourse about blacks proper place in society placed black landowners in a very precarious position. With articles of faith like "there are good niggers and bad niggers but a nigger is a nigger", black landowners spent their lives negotiating whites' hostility or reticent acceptance of their socioeconomic position (Powdermaker 1939: 24). In fact, black landownership was circumscribed by it being "the result of more largely a personal equation than of a purely business transaction" (Raper 1971: 110). Arthur Raper states that most blacks became landowners with the aid and advice or former enslavers; in his study of planters and tenants in two Georgia

counties, he found that some of the earliest black landholders shared the surnames of the whites that once held them in bondage (Raper 1971: 111). However, the personal equation did not stop here; Raper argues that the process of land ownership also included whites' finding that the prospective owner was acceptable (Raper 1971: 122). The author states:

> Whether a particular Negro can buy a particular tract of land depends upon its location, its economic and emotional value to the white owner and other white people, the Negroe's cash and credit resources, and doubtless most important of all, his personal qualities in the light of the local attitudes: He must be acceptable. Being acceptable… means that he and his family are industrious and that his credit is good. It means that he is considered safe by local people—he knows his "place" and stays in it. Though it varies somewhat from one community to another and one individual to another, the definition of "his place" hedges the Negro landowner about the restrictions similar to those which define and enforce the chronic dependency of the landless Negroes: The Negro landowner is an independent Negro farmer rather than an independent farmer (Raper 1971: 122).

I included the entire quote by Raper to emphasize that black economic progress was not just circumscribed by race but occurred within extant racial ideologies and hierarchies. In addition, the above quote illustrates that black economic prosperity largely rested upon their inability to obtain full equality in society. Raper's emphasis on the "Negro landowner is an independent Negro farmer rather than an independent farmer" is key in demonstrating this (Raper 1971: 122).

I believe the Williams family negotiated race and class tensions within their predominantly white farming community by both accommodating and inverting the

qualifications within Raper's described "personal equation". For example, the material culture recovered from the farmstead suggests that the Williamses were active consumers. They made frequent trips to acquire patent medicines and as indicated by the Meakin transfer-print ceramics ordered goods from the Montgomery Ward or Sears and Roebuck catalogues. Their farmstead was also well-maintained; the construction and maintenance of the rock-walls showed a concern for neighborliness. The sweeping of the yard may have also challenged any notions of blacks' laziness or filthiness. According to Linda Stine, cleanliness was a particularly important trait in the determination of social status. Stine states (1990: 45) that farmstead facades were not adequate predictors of families' wealth, ethnic background or social status. However, "unkempt homes, yards and fields did help neighbors stratify others into lower positions on the social scale" (Stine 1990: 45). Perhaps the most significant form of this negotiation was the log cabin. Boyd and Norment attest to the pervasiveness of this vernacular structure on the Texas landscape when they note that the Williams family and several of his white neighbors lived in log cabins. Continuing with this construction tradition may have been a way for the household to express social cohesion with the other Bear Creek community members. It may have also been a means to avoid harsh or unnecessary white surveillance. The log cabin would have masked any outward signs of affluence and would have signaled that the Williams family's was staying in its rightful "place". Sitton and Conrad (1994: 158) note that freed blacks often employed a similar tactic when they wore their field clothes to go shopping in town and wanted to avoid white hostility.

However, in his study of black farmers, Dubois notes that black landowners' initial decisions to construct log cabins were also out of necessity. He states:

> …the one room cabin is still the typical farm home of the negro… he naturally built a slave cabin with some improvements, such as putting a porch on the front, cutting one-or-two windows, and adding a lean-to at the back for a bedroom… In the course of time, then, some progress has been made. The dirt floor has practically disappeared, a large proportions of the log cabins have been replaced by frame houses, and glass windows have been introduced here and there. But on the whole, the improvement is slow (Dubois 1901:72).

Considering the protracted financial struggles that many black landowners faced, it is also no wonder that so few improvements were made. Similar to Dubois' description, Williams never upgraded to glass windows but did use timbers to have wooden floors. However, the Williams family appears to have largely constrained their improvements to the interior of the structure. In addition to the wooden floors, Ransom and Sarah made several investments in personal possessions such as an icebox, wood stove and ceramic plates. This attention to the interior of the log cabin represents an important relationship between race and notions of public and private. While the Williams family showed their adherence to an agrarian way of life through their log cabin, the inside of their home also became a place where they could truly enact their freedom.

As stated previously, freed blacks' aspirations for land was rooted in the desire for social and economic autonomy. While studies of rural community life have highlighted the efforts of all farmers to maintain self-sufficiency, few have distinguished exactly what this meant to blacks and whites. For blacks, self-sufficiency was an economic

concept that stood in juxtaposition to slavery. Despite the impoverished or landless condition many whites faced, they were secure in knowing that their whiteness meant they were not and never could be enslaved. Furthermore, they were immune from the social baggage that accompanied this position. Dubois articulates the nuances between this condition beautifully when he writes/wrote:

> What did it mean to be a slave? It is hard to imagine today. We think of oppression beyond all conception: cruelty, degradation, whipping and starvation, the absolute negation of human rights… But there was a real meaning to slavery in 1863 different from that we apply to the laborer today. It was in part psychological, the enforced feeling of inferiority, the calling of another master… It was the helplessness…the defenseless of family life. It was the submergence below the individual will of any sort of individual (Dubois 1936: 8-9).

Blacks ideas about self-sufficiency was not just a means towards an economic end; instead it was a link to living in full freedom and control over one's lives with some means for securing family stability and a sense of personal respectability.

Land ownership played an important role in fostering cohesiveness amongst black families. Land ownership bound families together in space and time, which then led to the creation of communities. Freedmen settlements are the best example of this as they began with the settlement of land by either siblings or multiple kin groups and then expanded through the increase in family units and purchase of land by additional settlers. The black Diasporic experience writ large is defined by the forced removal or dispersal from Africa for the purpose of labor. Paul Gilroy and others have further highlighted the

underlying significance of violence in maintaining the black Diasporic condition. Yet, I posit that land ownership and the establishment of a home were important acts of resistance to counter this condition. Critical scholars like Frank Wilderson note Orlando Patterson (1982) who noted that natal alienation from one's homeland was the most defining feature of slavery. Yet, freed blacks, many who were aware of their connection to Africa, sought to ameliorate this alienation by forging new lives in the places to which they were dispersed. While President Abraham Lincoln and other black groups had considered colonization efforts, many blacks felt some connection to American soil and chose to stay. It was less a connection and more like this was the only "home" blacks knew. However, after close to two hundred years of working the soil, it is no surprise that blacks felt a sense of ownership to the/or belonging to the United States. Land ownership was not a panacea to negotiating the racial inequalities of the day but it offered freed blacks a means to root themselves and establish a home. bell hooks' discussion of home place highlights the inherently political act of black land ownership. hooks writes:

> Historically, African American people believed that the construction of a home place, however fragile and tenuous (the slave hut, the wooden shack), had a radical political dimension. Despite the brutal reality of racial apartheid, of domination, one's home place was the one site where one could freely confront the issue of humanization, where one could resist. Black women resisted by making homes where all black people could strive to be subjects, not objects, where we could be affirmed in our minds and hearts despite poverty, hardship and deprivation, where we could restore to ourselves the dignity denies us on the outside the public world (hooks 1990: 42).

hooks illuminates how blacks sought to establish meaningful connections to place in a world that largely aimed to oppress them. Her discussion of home place is important because it truly encapsulates the meaning of property to blacks. However, hooks' discussion of home place also highlights the important roles black women played in resisting anti-black subjugation. hooks outright locates black women in the agentic act of creating and maintaining home.

BLACK WOMEN AND THE POLITICIZATION OF THE HOME AND FARM

Excavations at the Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead recovered more than 26,000 artifacts. The majority of these artifacts were recovered from the house lot of the site and were representative of the Williams family's daily kitchen and household activities. As a domestic site, it was not surprising to find such a large number of artifacts from this particular location of the site nor that they were related to the Williams family's efforts to meet their daily sustenance needs. However, these artifacts were unique its ability to reevaluate the significance of black women's labor in facilitating black families' and communities' cohesiveness.

Discussions of black land ownership commonly overlook black women; they fail to consider them as landowners or to ask what property ownership meant for their freedom. This is a grave oversight considering whites early allegations that black women's retreat from the fields to "play the lady" seriously impacted their agricultural output. It also overlooks their contributions to the household economy to help them

maintain land holdings. Suzanne Spencer-Wood has critiqued archaeologists' adherence to elite Victorian gender ideologies in their understandings of past cultures' household activities. These ideologies interpret men "as public, cultural, rational, active, powerful, superior and naturally dominant over women" (Spencer-Wood 1999: 163). This can be seen with projects that examine home and farm sites and solely identify them by the assumed male head (Spencer-Wood 1999: 163). Some questions about public actions like buying land, trading livestock or building fences can erase women and children from the past. Yet, to use the Williams Farmstead as an example, the simple identification of numerous ceramic and glass fragments, metal cans and faunal remains as women's work belies an opportunity to enhance understandings of black women's labor beyond cooking, serving and sewing.

Loren Schweninger notes that prior to the Civil War, older and/or single black women accumulated land at greater rates than black men (Schweninger 1990: 85). However, following Emancipation there was a dramatic decline in land ownership because of the "infusion of freedmen and women into the ranks of real estate owners" (Schweninger 1990:149). While a small number of blacks inherited land or brought several acres from sympathetic whites, Frankel conversely states that the federal government "directly leased land that had been confiscated from southern planters to a small number of [black] males" (Frankel 1999: 53). Most of these men, however, "had held leadership positions during slavery, such as slave drivers and heads of household" (Frankel 1999: 53). This drastically impacted female land ownership because it ignored the frequent instances were black women were operating in this capacity and inherently

connected the acquisition of land with nuclear organized families that unequally divided male and female household labor and relationships. To be more specific, Frankel argues that the government ultimately saw "women, even those without men, as subordinate members of male-headed households" (Frankel 1999: 52).

Despite opportunities to receive land grants from the federal government or the occasional opportunities to purchase property individually, black women equally valued the social and economic collateral afforded to them via land ownership. For example, land ownership also granted black women a chance to accumulate personal and real estate property through marriage or inheritance. In addition, the acquisition of property, the physical act of constructing a home and the tasks and social relationships involved in maintaining a household offered black families the means to *root* themselves physically, socially and geographically. After Emancipation, many black women were concerned with the carving out of their own domestic spheres. Oral history interviews coupled with population census records demonstrate that many black women considered the daily work of "keeping house" as their primary profession even though they frequently worked outside of their homes as cooks, maids, clothing launderers, seamstresses and farm laborers. Frankel argues that black women did "not envision that freedom would mean performing the same type of domestic and agricultural work as they had as slaves. They expected to be working for their own families, preferably on land owned by their husbands" (Frankel 1999: 65). In a rich study of Dallas' Freedman's Town, James Davidson (2004: 97) notes that home ownership reflected household stability. The ownership of a home in Dallas guaranteed families physical longevity in the

neighborhood. And, this stability and longevity helped foster households that either "contained a complete (or remnant) nuclear family, consisting of at least one parent and children" or multiple generations of interrelated affinal and fictive kin connected together in a rich social network supported by churches, schools and lodges (Davidson 2004: 89).

The artifacts recovered from the Ransom Williams Farmstead are largely representative of the daily domestic tasks engaged in by the Williams family members. Although there is no universal definition of the household, its contested association with the domestic—as encompassing tasks related to food production and consumption as well as child-bearing and rearing responsibilities (Yanagisako 1979: 166)—has consistently structured how archaeologists locate residences and interpret the associated structures and functions comprising them. Richard Netting and Richard Wilk (1984) proposed five universal categories of household activity— production, distribution, transmission, reproduction and co-residence — and sixth unit of analysis, consumption, was eventually added to this list (Ashmore and Wilk 1988; Galindo 2004: 181). The artifact assemblage from the farmstead yielded a range of material items, which can be said to represent those six activities.

For example, Marie E. Blake and Terri Myers note that the purchase and subsequent management of a successful black farmstead was dependent on a range of factors such as accessibility to water and an efficient division of labor within the household (Blake and Myers 1999: 87-88). Although the Ransom Williams Farmstead is situated along the Bear Creek, the soil on the property is extremely rocky and archaeologists could not find a natural water source nor a well or cistern in the immediate

vicinity of the family's residence. The barrel bands found near the house and throughout the farmstead suggest that the collection and hauling of water was a chore shared by Ransom, Sarah and their children. While Ransom may have purchased and carried water from a nearby freedman's community in his horse drawn wagon, his sons could have been tasked with placing and repairing wooden barrels around the perimeter of the property for the collection and storage of rain water. Sarah and her daughters may have regularly filled stoneware crocks and cast-iron vessels with water to prepare meals. However, they may have also filled and hauled buckets of water for laundering the family's and nearby white neighbors' clothes. Black women frequently worked outside of their homes as laundresses and seamstresses, and the recovery of hundreds of buttons from the site could be evidence of this type of work. Sarah and Ransom may have used the additional funds that came in from clothes laundering to buy the children educational supplies like slate and pencils as well as tobacco for consumption.

Water hauling, however, was not the only physically strenuous job that black women did. Black women often performed the same backbreaking tasks that they did in slavery following Emancipation. In fact, Frankel argues that, "Freedwomen needed more time for their families in part because their private domestic responsibilities increased after the Civil War. Cooking and clothes-making often ceased to be communal activities" (Frankel 1999: 71). At home, women often made their children's clothing and bedding from flour sacks, and they further contributed to household subsistence by planting gardens and helping raise livestock (Franklin 2009: 9-10). Maria Franklin states "a strict division of labor along gender lines did not always hold, even if it was the ideal

model" (Franklin 2009: 10). Descendant community members recalled working besides their mothers and fathers in agricultural fields (Franklin 2009: 10). Plus, "males did not exclusively hunt or fish" (Franklin 2009: 10). One interviewee recalled that her mother was skilled with a rifle and hunted small game for their furs, which she then sold (Franklin 2009: 10). During the excavation, we recovered numerous bullet cartridges and two rifle butt plates. These items, along with the presence of rabbit bones in the storage feature, could similarly be evidence of Sarah Williams hunting small game for both food consumption and larger participation in the market economy.

CONCLUSION

Black women's labor was not limited to the physical extent of her home. Black women hired their labor out to farms just like their husbands. Franklin also recorded numerous references of black mothers selling extra produce from their gardens, producing cane syrup, selling milk, eggs and butter or raising turkeys (Franklin 2009: 11). In one interview, an interviewee summed up the valuable contributions of rural black women's labor when he stated, "That his parents were loath to release their daughters to marriage because, in doing so, much of their household labor pool would be lost" (Franklin 2009: 11).

The domestic labor of black female landowners was important to maintaining a self-sufficient household. Their labor was often hard, comprising tough physical labor in and outside of their own houses. However, their work was highly political because it engaged with notions of domesticity solely relegated for white women. While Victorian ideology strived to place white women firmly and invisibly in the household, slavery

made black women's engagement with domesticity and the household visible and often contentious. While stereotypical tropes like Mammy "became a national symbol of perfect domesticity", black women strived after Emancipation to control their own labor, mother their own children and to assert their identity as free women in alternative household spheres (White 1985: 165). As Silvia Junko Yanagisako notes that domesticity has always been analytically a poorly explicated word, the labor of black female landowners offers an opportunity to truly redefine the meaning of this word (Yanagisako 1979: 176).

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Chapter 6: Conclusion

This dissertation examines black land ownership and its relationship to race and class relations in the post-bellum south. Throughout this work, I have highlighted the deep meaning that land held for blacks. Scholars have noted that land was freed blacks' highest aspiration following their emancipation from slavery. Land was linked to blacks' desires for racial and economic autonomy. Once considered a form of chattel property, freed blacks saw their official recognition as citizens and the acquisition of land as central to their exercise of freedom. As landowners, they were free from enslavement, able to meet their basic needs and the necessities of their families and communities. While land ownership did not always yield economic wealth, it offered blacks a sense of pride, responsibility and stability that often meant more than material affluence.

While black landowners have been overlooked within the historiography of the post-bellum south, the recent emphasis on emancipation in archaeology necessitates a closer look at black landholders to examine the shifts and continuities in race and class ideologies. To be specific, the post-bellum period saw significant advancements in politics, education and black economic development. Blacks challenged stereotypes that portrayed them as lazy, shiftless, childlike and prone to criminality by establishing schools, churches, businesses and holding political office. Freedmen's communities were particularly great examples of race pride and cooperative economic development. Within these communities, blacks formed an independent yeomen class where they governed themselves, educated their children, and maintained cultural traditions. The attempt to live a life as a free man or women was an act of considerable agency and resistance that

differed significantly from what occurred during the antebellum period on small farms and plantations. Yet, the failure of Reconstruction, the subsequent disenfranchisement of blacks and the rise of segregation and tenancy led to the continuation of a virulent form of racism that necessitates a close examination of how the material world contributed to the imposing and resisting of these practices. An archaeological study of race and class through the lens of black land ownership helps illuminate processes of identity formation while simultaneously contributing to a more heterogeneous understanding of the black past.

This study contributes to this effort by examining the material culture from the Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead, a historic freedman's site in Manchaca, Travis County, Texas, in relation to other black and white tenants and landowners. While Reid has noted that the emphasis on tenancy can lead scholars to uncritically assume that black landowners were affluent (Reid 2012: 8), I steer away from specific measurements of wealth and status to highlight the existence of a shared class-consciousness that defined the actions of both black and white rural residents. This shared class-consciousness is important to understanding the homogenous material culture that can be found on black and white historic late 19th and early 20th century sites. Archaeology shows that black and whites were united in their aspirations for land and economic self-sufficiency. Their lives were defined by hard work, isolation, high mortality and fear of crop shortages and debt. Black and white rural residents were also conservative consumers; they shared a preference for plain, relatively inexpensive ceramics and purchased few leisure items.

They often lived in similar style housing as well as planted and ate the same types of foods.

However, this shared class-consciousness did not supersede race. Despite the similarities of the agrarian experience, the lives of black and white landowners continued to be socially distinct. The prevailing belief that blacks were inferior to whites placed them in a hierarchical relationship that maintained blacks as an exploitable source of labor and politically powerless. While enslavement maintained the unequal relations between blacks and whites, emancipation altered the conditions that sustained this resulting in a re-manipulation of space to keep blacks oppressed. While the post-bellum tenancy plantations demonstrate the clear renegotiation of space to maintain the dominant racial and economic hierarchy, the farmsteads of black landowners do not always reflect this. The Williams Farmstead was located in a predominantly white farming community along the Bear Creek in Austin, Travis County, Texas. Without the aid of a few archival documents, there were no material indicators that the site belonged to a black household. The site resembled a typical late 19th and early 20th century farmstead. Yet, the homogeneity of the recovered artifacts and documented architectural components did not preclude the existence of racial and economic disparities between blacks and whites.

Although black landowners were at the pinnacle of southern agrarian society, their racial identity left them vulnerable to wonton violence and systemic prejudice. Black landowners lived a precarious existence in society. Economically prosperous blacks were especially susceptible to whites' violent retribution. Black landowners faced particular challenges; they had to work extremely hard to obtain land and were subjected

to the will of whites that may or may not want to sell. They often acquired land that was poor quality and had limited tools and money to improve it. Black landowners also had to perform or display the right social sensibilities. Black landowners had to show that they were "good Negroes" who knew their "place". They had to show they were hard workers, not too affluent, and deferential to whites.

The Williams Farmstead showed this careful negotiation of a highly racialized and class-based society. The Williams family appeared to have hidden in plain sight; they were not recorded on the 1870, 1880, 1980 and 1900 United States Population Census Manuscripts but consistently paid their taxes from 1870 to 1910. Although the family resided on one of the least quality parcels of land in the Bear Creek community, it appears they enjoyed a level of affluence relative to black sharecroppers. Their children were literate, and the family consumed a diverse range of domestic and wild fauna. Leisure and personal items were found in minimal amounts, but excavations revealed evidence of efforts to acquire some household and agricultural upgrades and conveniences. Parts of an icebox, wood stove and carriage were unearthed at the farmstead.

My research has bearing to contemporary debates surrounding the wealth gaps between blacks and whites. It also offers some historical context to the current claims that economic privilege offers a means to circumvent racism. Perhaps this issue is best symbolized by the current debates over the role of race in killings of black youth such as Trayvon Martin. While walking in a gated community (read: secure and largely white), Martin's presence in a hoodie triggered the usual fears and sentiments of black male

criminality, which led to his death at the hands of George Zimmerman. Despite allegations of Martin's criminality through claims of school suspensions, pot/marijuana smoking, and use of foul language, Martin's death symbolized the protracted fears of black parents as his education, location in a gated community and parents' efforts to effectively co-parent (hence challenging the stereotypes of the dysfunctional black family) still could not save him. What is particularly relevant about this is each one of these—parentage, education and residential location are key components of what comprises middle-class status. I reference Martin's death because it highlights the existence, dilemma and specific particularities of the black middle class. The parallels to 21st century concerns about post-racialism are similar to the promises for racial equality and freedom for freed blacks following the abolition of slavery.

Recent studies by sociologists like Karen Lacy (2007) and Mary McCoy-Patillo (1999) highlighted the black middle class in urban areas like Chicago, Illinois and Washington, DC. What is particularly significant about these works is their attention and successful isolation and identification of this group. While most studies focus on the disproportionate number of blacks facing crippling impoverishment, studies such as these recognize the heterogeneity existing within black communities and highlight a need for scholars to refrain from just noting the existence of interlocking oppression and acknowledge not just the processes leading to it but the varying manifestations it too can take on. What Lacy and McCoy-Patillo's books did was counter the tendency (scholastically and popularly) to speak of black subjectivity and experience as a monolithic underclass. Moreover, it disentangled their specific needs, social formations

and separate strategies in maneuvering white supremacy. Scholastically, this is key as the usual race versus class debate ignores this internal variation within black community. In addition, it reveals the prickly debate within Critical Race Studies about exactly what to do with a small subset of blacks with some privileges against a backdrop of millions facing social, political and economic disenfranchisement. To be specific, discussions of black class relations have bordered on near pessimism, lampooning and ridicule of this group. While contemporary studies like Lawrence Otis Graham have exposed the upper echelons for their shallow consumerism, emulation of white notions of respectability and colorist, others like Lacy and McCoy-Patillo highlight the significance of residential segregation, education, location, code-switching in the negotiation of two overlapping worlds. Yet, scholars like Walter Rodney, Manning Marable and E. Franklin-Frazier have done challenged the power of this group as they declare their lack of any true wealth.

What my study of the Williams Farmstead seeks to do is enter the conversation and debate surrounding the black middle class from a historical perspective. While this study makes no argument against the issue of whether their truly exists a black middle class, it joins current sociologists in identifying this group as an unique, subset of individuals with specific strategies, peculiarities and histories negotiating racism. My research uses black land ownership as a lens to explore how class can yield a myriad of experiences under race.

Appendix

Ransom Williams Farmstead Artifact Categories
After South (1977:95-96) with changes from Stone (1974), Sprague (1980), and Diamond (1998).

1) Kitchen/Household
   a) Food Storage & Preparation
      i) Stoneware Containers
      ii) Cast Iron Vessels
      iii) Metal Cans
      iv) Container Glass (various bottles)
      v) Other
   b) Food Service & Consumption
      i) Whiteware Dishes
      ii) Porcelain Dishes
      iii) Tableware {Non-container Glass and others (ex. goblets, glasses, dishes)}
      iv) Cutlery
         (1) Knives
         (2) Forks
         (3) Spoons
         (4) Utensils (fragmentary)
      v) Other
   c) Furnishings
      i) Furniture (Castors, Hinges, Knobs, and Pulls)
      ii) Lamp Parts (all parts)
      iii) Stove Parts
      iv) Other
   d) Locks and Keys (except door hardware)
   e) Miscellaneous Hardware
   f) Unidentifiable Glass Fragments
2) Clothing/Adornment
   a) Fasteners
      i) Buttons
      ii) Cufflinks
      iii) Buckles
      iv) Hook and Eye Fasteners
      v) Grommets/Eyelets
      vi) Suspender Buckles
   b) Jewelry

i) Brooch
c) Accessories
d) Other
3) Architectural
a) Structural
i) Square Nails
ii) Wire Nails
iii) Screws
iv) Spikes
v) Bricks
vi) Wood Samples
vii) Mortar Samples
viii) Flat Glass
ix) Miscellaneous Hardware (ex. lightning rod, strap hinge, door plate)
b) Fencing
i) Wire
ii) Staples
4) Personal
a) Grooming
i) Combs
ii) Toiletries
iii) Cosmetics
b) Health/Medicine
i) Medicine Bottles and Stoppers
ii) Syringe
c) Accouterments
i) Coins
ii) Eyeglass/Monocle
iii) Pocket Knives
d) Tobacco
i) Snuff Bottles
ii) Smoking Pipes
iii) Tobacco Plug Tag
e) Alcohol
i) Wine Bottles
ii) Liquor Bottles
iii) Beer Bottles
5) Faunal
a) Bone
b) Shell
6) Botanical
a) Food
i) Peach Pits

b) Fuel
    i) Charcoal Samples
c) Other
    i) Seeds

7) Activities
    a) Horse Tack and Harness
        i) Hardware (all of the various nails, buckles, rings, etc.)
    b) Carriage and Wagon
        i) Hardware (all of the various wagon parts)
    c) Construction
        i) Hand Tools (ex. Draw Knife, Auger Bits, Hammer, Axe, Chisel)
    d) Toys (ex. Marbles, Tops, Doll Fragments, Cap Gun)
    e) Firearms/Hunting
        i) Munitions
        ii) Gun Parts
        iii) Gun Tools
    f) Fishing (ex. Hooks)
    g) Miscellaneous Hardware
        i) Construction Hardware
        ii) Other Hardware
    h) Farming
        i) Hand Implements (ex. Hoe, Pick/Mattock)
        ii) Machinery (ex. plow blade, clevis and pins)
    i) Sewing (ex. Needles, Pins, Safety Pins, Thimble)
    j) Music (ex. Jew's Harp, Harmonicas)
    k) Water Storage (ex. Barrel Bands)
    l) Writing (ex. Pencils and Slate, Ink Bottle)
    m) Collectibles (ex. Commemorative Spoon, Dart Point, Geofacts)
8) Lithics
9) Unknown
    a) Identifiable
10) Unknown
    a) Unidentifiable

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