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Jodi Skipper

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**“IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD”:**

**CITY PLANNING, ARCHAEOLOGY, AND CULTURAL HERITAGE POLITICS**

**AT**

**ST. PAUL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, DALLAS, TEXAS**

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AT  
ST. PAUL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, DALLAS, TEXAS**

by

**Jodi Skipper, B.A; M.A.**

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this document to my grandmothers, Lena and Lillian, and to my Aunt Mel, who did not live to see me complete this work, but guided me through it.

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“IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD”:  
CITY PLANNING, ARCHAEOLOGY, AND CULTURAL HERITAGE POLITICS AT  
ST. PAUL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, DALLAS, TEXAS

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2010

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What happens to a historically African American church when its local African American community no longer exists? Can attempts to emphasize its historic heritage help it to survive? In this dissertation, I consider the racial politics of urban gentrification and the ways in which one historic Black church community utilizes cultural heritage politics as a survival strategy and resistance to city planning in the city of Dallas, Texas.

This case study is part of a much broader phenomenon dating to the post-WWII era whereby U.S. local, state, and federal government officials “redeveloped” urban neighborhoods as part of urban renewal plans. Some of these government actions resulted in drastic changes to neighborhood landscapes, displacing entire “minority” communities. Affected by similar circumstances, the St. Paul Church community chose to remain in its original neighborhood and restore its historic building, rather than bend to the will of Dallas city planners.

In particular, I examine two church heritage projects; a public archaeology project in which a shotgun house site was excavated on the church property and a public history project which resulted in an interpretive history exhibition on the church. I examine how this church community became involved in these two projects and whether these approaches are practical to the historic preservation of this church community.

Basic contributions of this work include: 1) filling gaps in public archaeology research by examining a public archaeology project, beyond the excavation, and critiquing its viability in jeopardized urban contexts, 2) analyzing strategies of political mobilization around heritage politics; 3) determining which Black communities are more likely to engage in and benefit from this type of political mobilization; and 4) problematizing what constitutes giving the power to a community to negotiate its past in the present.



This dissertation project finds that although African-American and other minority groups are often politically and economically disadvantaged when challenging eminent domain abuse, these communities are not powerless. The St. Paul community's utilization of heritage politics as a means to avert eminent domain abuse is one case in point.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

What happens to a historically African American institution when its local African American community no longer exists? How does it survive? Local, state, and federal government officials in the U.S. have redeveloped neighborhoods as part of urban renewal plans and efforts to remedy “urban blight.” Some of these government actions have resulted in drastic changes to neighborhood landscapes, by removing entire “minority” communities and their historic structures, replacing them with office towers, condominiums, banks, new freeways, water front development, and a burgeoning White middle class. Within this context, I examine the implications of urbanization and gentrification on the St. Paul United Methodist Church (UMC) community in the Arts District of Dallas through the themes of representation, power, and place, and by emphasizing the continuing significance of St. Paul’s role as part of Dallas’s landscape. I further analyze how church site archaeology helped set in motion a community-engaged project to make the church more visible in its rapidly changing community and how the church historically utilized cultural heritage politics to resist and accommodate its wider community transformations.

With this dissertation research, I address the viabilities of historically African American cultural institutions in currently gentrified contexts. Very few studies have been undertaken that focus on Black American urban institutions that have chosen to remain in commercially developed neighborhoods after their primary residential

neighborhoods did not survive and none have diachronically considered the centrality of an institution's employment of its historical significance as a means of continued existence in that place. I have several objectives. My first is to demonstrate that a multidisciplinary analysis is crucial to the interpretations of community politics, the reproduction of historical narratives, and heritage preservation. The second related objective is to challenge the application of present frameworks in public archaeology as they relate to the viable historic preservation of sites in active, gentrified communities. Finally, I hope to make a significant intervention in the field of urban archaeology as applied anthropology by demonstrating how Black communities play necessary roles in their cultural representations and aim to increase our understanding of the effects of urban redevelopment on Black institutions attempting to survive in relation to the physical, social, and institutional properties of local urban settings. In addressing the above goals, my research focuses on the site of St. Paul and the role of memory and its production as central to the three major objectives as they relate to St. Paul as a historic site, Dallas landmark, and repository of material culture, historic architecture, and ultimately home to an interpretive exhibition.

The specific topics that I will attend to include the following: 1) examine how urban redevelopment segregated St. Paul from its original community, greatly contributing to the church's effort to recreate a community in order to survive; 2) examine how St. Paul's historical narrative competes with reinterpreted and/or invented histories which constitute the "new" North Dallas; 3) utilize theories in structural racism

to critique North Dallas's privatized public space; and 4) evaluate the practicality of an interpretive exhibition as a principal player in St. Paul's historic preservation.

Accounts of the effects of urban neighborhood transformations on African Americans have been inclusive in multidisciplinary approaches to urban studies as they relate to racial displacement, post-gentrification (Bullard 1992; Freeman 2006; Lang 1982; Marciniak 1986; Saunders and Shackleford 1998; Thomas and Ritzdorf 1996). Similarly religious studies have observed the relationships between African American church congregations and their gentrified neighborhoods (McRoberts 2003).

This dissertation addresses the historical and present conditions attributed to the cultural and institutional developments of the St. Paul Church. It more specifically examines how the church community transforms from a religious institution formed through a racial identity to one producing a cultural identity as a reflection of its gentrified neighborhood. It is my assertion that although St. Paul has somewhat shifting identities, it has remained a functioning Black church institution. Through these certainties, St. Paul's more ambiguous position in the Dallas Arts District has given the community ample opportunities to reflect on its place and on its historical significance's ability to maneuver the community within the Arts District space. This dissertation historically traces the St. Paul Church community, but is ultimately about the meaning of its place in the present, and how the church politically maneuvers its cultural heritage as a means of survival.

## **Church Background**

The St. Paul Church community began as a mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1873. It was part of a Freedman's Town, settled just outside the city of Dallas, where newly freed Black settlers hoped to avoid city vagrancy laws. St. Paul has remained in the same location for 136 years, but its neighborhood has changed significantly. By the 1980s, most residents had left this traditionally Black neighborhood, leaving St. Paul a Black church still serving the needs of a majority-Black congregation, while its community was gone. Rather than bend to the will of Dallas city planners by selling their much-venerated church, the St. Paul community chose to remain in the original neighborhood and restore its building. It is now the only active reminder of a historically Black neighborhood profoundly transformed by nearly 140 years of city planning, zoning, and annexation. The church building is one of the few remaining structures built by the North Dallas Freedman's Community. In response to these changes, members of the St. Paul community attempted to secure a place in their original neighborhood by obtaining Dallas historic landmark status in 1982. Members of the church community also participated in the memorialization of the Freedman's Cemetery (Davidson 1998, 1999, 2000; Prior and Schulte 2000a, 2000b), an early burial ground for residents of Dallas's freedmans' communities, showing concern for the historic preservation of their church community, as well as an affiliation with a larger Black Dallas community. Nearly 20 years later, the church community agreed to participate in a public archaeology project, another indication that they were aware of the significance that historic preservation has to their cultural survival in their neighborhood.

## **Archaeology at St. Paul**

During the summer of 2002, Jamie Brandon, Maria Franklin, and James Davidson from UT-Austin, initiated a historical and archaeological study of late-19th-century urban life in the North Dallas Freedman's Town. This community was founded in 1872, when the Houston & Texas Central (H&TC) Railroad came to Dallas, bringing many job opportunities for residents, some of whom were unemployed Blacks. Freedman's Town, which was located close to the railroads, increased in population and experienced an economic boost, which included the hiring of Black railroad construction workers. The railroads were lined with small, shotgun-style houses, built for railroad workers and their families. From the 1870s to the 1940s, this community flourished as a business and cultural center for many North Texas Blacks, who favored its institutions, which included churches, schools, insurance companies, health and recreational centers, and many privately owned businesses.

In the 1940s, the railroad corridor became the six-lane North Central Expressway, as Dallas city leaders and transportation planners attempted to make downtown more accessible to Whites in affluent neighborhoods to the North. In constructing the expressway, the city destroyed the homes of some 1500 people and paved over the Freedman's Cemetery, a resting place for many former slaves and their descendants. The Black community, which had once relied so heavily on the railroad economy, was victimized by the new expressway. Woodall Rodgers Freeway, which the city built between the 1960s and the 1980s, further impacted the community by increased partitioning and destroying more homes. The destruction of homes led to the instability of

the North Dallas neighborhood. Yet the highways were not a problem solely because they caused houses to be razed. The presence of the highways and the traffic, constant noise and maintenance that they brought, impeded the ability of residents to move from one space to another. Many community institutions, like St. Paul, suffered as residents who once patronized local businesses and places of worship were compelled to stay on their sides of the expressways.

When Brandon and Davidson began their research, they believed that archaeological excavations had the ability to recover some of what had been lost in the former Freedman's community. Davidson was very familiar with the historical background of Dallas's African American community, as a result of his participation in the Freedman's Cemetery excavations, and knew the potential of urban archaeology to recapture information lost through decades of forgetting. In addition, Davidson felt that an urban archaeology or the archaeological investigation of historic urban landscapes "...can expose modern race constructions through their relationships to both the consumption of material goods and landscape production" (2004a:79). While he believed that archaeological excavations could help to restore what had been lost in the former Freedman's community, he was well aware that the shifting North Dallas community was changing significantly and soon there would not be many opportunities to excavate. Soon, he, Brandon, and UT professor Maria Franklin, began to ask landowners in the Arts District about the potential for archaeological excavations on their properties. St. Paul was the only property owner to grant permission for the crew to excavate a parcel of their land.

That summer, the UT-Austin Department of Anthropology offered a field school on the church's property conducting a study of what was once the location of a shotgun house belonging to Thomas and Nora Cole. The field school excavation was conducted along with historical research on the adjacent St. Paul Church community. The research goals of the project were to examine late-nineteenth-century urban life in downtown Dallas and study the historical, cultural, and social development of African American communities within Dallas from 1870 into the early twentieth century (Maria Franklin, personal communication). The shotgun house stood a few feet behind the church, on the no longer extant Juliette Street. By the 1890s, Juliette Street was lined with 16 homes, two businesses, and two churches, including St. Paul. Mr. Cole, one of St. Paul's early trustees, and his family lived on this property from 1887-1910. He and Nora were born into slavery in Texas during the Civil War. Their children were born while they occupied the Juliette Street home and all members of the family attended St. Paul. Aside from the Coles, the excavated plot of land was a homesite for working class Black families, until the lot was purchased by the church in 1962. By that time, most of the neighborhood elements had been destroyed by the Central Expressway and Woodall Rodgers Freeway construction.

From its inception, this archaeology project was meant to be a public one that informed, involved, and educated the public about the work; and a politically activist one that would use the past to influence the present and future. The archaeologists established a rapport with the community by working with governing members of the congregation in order to arrive at a set of research goals that the church approved. They solicited input



from them, making the field school a cooperative effort between the people who would work on the site and the people who used the site. At the church community's suggestion, field schoolers taught some of their excavation techniques to children in the church's youth summer camp. Archaeologists also worked with church members, who provided invaluable information on previous members of the congregation and the church's history and role within the community. Some descendants of the Cole family are St. Paul members and were very excited about the summer excavations. Archaeologists shared documented information on the Coles and Cole descendants shared genealogical information. Archaeologists provided information to descendants who did not even realize that the Coles lived adjacent to the church property; they were only familiar with the Coles' second residence a few blocks up Juliette Street.

The small site, measuring 23 ft. by 87 ft., appeared to have been a single shotgun house, an economical home likely with three rooms and no hall to connect them. Nineteen excavation units were opened. Archaeologists excavated the house portion of the lot for the first half of the session. Excavators then focused on the backyard area, where four 2-by-2 meter units were dug. The excavation exposed intact features in the form of postholes, brick piers for former outbuildings, and two trash pits. The team recovered items including soft-drink bottle fragments from the early-20<sup>th</sup> century, remains of writing utensils (e.g., pencil erasers, slate pencils), jewelry, toys (e.g., doll parts, marbles) and ceramic wares. Archaeologists also recovered a large variety of tableware including a tea- leaf pattern cup fragment, thought to date from the 1880s to 1900.

Through these excavations, the church community not only learned more about their history, but publicly represented their congregation by making it more visible to local Dallasites. Many residents of the Dallas/ Ft. Worth metroplex were not aware that St. Paul's was a remnant of the Freedman's Town community. Local news coverage helped to re-expose St. Paul's history and its significance, at a time when the church was raising money to renovate its historic building. The positive exposure definitely did not hurt.

James Davidson later returned the artifacts to the church, along with a small descriptive traveling exhibition, in which they are presently held. The UT archaeologists left the St. Paul community with significant material remains and an innovative way of looking at its cultural heritage. Potential opportunities for further excavation in the former Freedman's Town were possible, yet doubtful, because most vacant property in the area had been sold, or was in the process of being sold. A "a survey of the area found less than 20 vacant house lots, robbed of their former homes but still left untouched by development, though virtually all of these [had] signs announcing planned developments in the immediate future" (Davidson 2004a:84). The 2002 field school remains the only extensive excavation of the North Dallas Freedman's Town.

### **The Post-Excavation Project**

The archaeologists were well aware that the church community was interested in recovering more information about their history. They also requested that the archaeologists create a traveling exhibition of the artifacts that the church could use for

various events. As the only active reminder of the North Dallas Freedman's Town and as owners of one of the few remaining structures built by the freedman's community, the St. Paul Church community wanted to be more visible in the Arts District, now an imposing district of multi-use buildings, high-end loft housing, museums, performing arts centers, and theaters. Many church members hoped that this apparent invisibility would soon become a thing of the past.

The St. Paul community graciously accepted the offer of a UT field excavation, but wanted and requested more, leaving the archaeologists with the challenge of responding to the community's additional and legitimate needs, once the excavation was over. Archaeologists often do not have the time or resources to extend community engagement projects and community requests to lengthen projects are seldom made. I came into the project in response to the community's additional needs.

As an archaeologist, I often wondered what happened to community stakeholders after my work was done. Did cultural resource management (CRM) firms, who designed public archaeology projects, continue to inform communities about the post-excavation work (e.g., cataloging and report writing), and were local community opinions considered on a more long-term basis? Most crew members, including myself, were temporary workers and left projects shortly after the excavations, while site managers and crew chiefs were left to write reports. I knew of projects that continued to engage communities, but most of these were university-run field schools like the St. Paul excavations, and not part of the majority of CRM excavations, conducted "...in the context of construction projects" for which the "aim is either to avoid significant cultural-resource loss, or to

mitigate the development impact by excavating, documenting, and studying the archaeological or historic evidence at the site” (Downum and Price 1999:8). I wanted to better understand what happened to stakeholders and the sites they were invested in on a more long-term basis and whether additional historic preservation projects could help to sustain the significance of the archaeology work and help communities to better understand the potential value in maintaining historic preservation. It was also my hope that the public archaeology project at St. Paul could shift into an applied archaeology project, based not only on the recognition that the “study of past societies has an important impact on living ones” (Downum and Price 1999: 1) but with more specific foci on resource claims, cultural identity construction, public education program development, cultural tourism and influencing public policy (Downum and Price 1999).

As an archaeologist of African American descent, specializing in African Diaspora archaeology, I also knew that my work with St. Paul had the potential to increase minority participation in archaeological studies, namely the participation of Black Americans. The St. Paul Church community is a historically underrepresented one that I could reach out to through archaeological interpretations, not solely through, more familiar, historical documentary reconstructions. As a Black researcher, in a field with few Black archaeologists, I knew that simply trying to tell Black communities that archaeological research could benefit their heritage needs would not be enough. It had to be proven. It was my hope that my direct approach, working with and through the community, on a long-term project, could help them to realize the significance and value of archaeological research on their own.

Historical archaeology in the U.S. is not familiar to the general American public, and even less recognizable to those groups considered “minority” or underrepresented populations. There is much more familiarity with Native American prehistoric archaeology, still heavily investigated in the U.S., supplemented by “the popularity of museums, National Geographic magazine, a growing proliferation of TV documentaries on archaeology, and the image of Indiana Jones, [which] all go to construct a public perception of archaeologists as digging in far-away lands, searching for clues of long-lost societies” (Franklin 1997a:799). The St. Paul community was different. The UT-Austin field school was their second participation in an archaeological excavation, the Freedman’s Cemetery Memorial Project the first, and they were well aware of the exposure that historic preservation work could get them. In this sense, my initial goal would not be to help the church members understand how archaeology could work, but to help them realize that my personal project goals were not the primary goals, but aligned with their goals, as a whole.

My interests in the reclamation and re-understanding of Black histories in the U.S., and more specifically Texas, were allied with the interests of many St. Paul members attempting to do similar things, although on a more microscopic scale. Some church members expressed a desire to help reclaim and better place St. Paul’s history within the context of Black Dallas history and the history of the Arts District neighborhood. I, as an archaeologist of African descent, wanted to help them with this recovery and knew that the material retrieved during the 2002 excavation could be helpful. Additionally, I wanted

to help introduce this community, a historically African American one, to archaeology's additional potential.

Few scholars, outside of historical archaeologists Maria Franklin (1997a) and Anna Agbe-Davies (2002) have addressed issues specifically as they relate to African American communities, African American archaeology research, and researchers of African descent. More recently, there has been an increased interest in African American archaeology, as the field remains dominated by those of non-African descent, with increased attempts to include African American communities in various aspects of the research.

I wanted my work to not only benefit the church's more immediate goals in some way, but to amplify the interests of African descendant U.S. populations in African American archaeological research, not solely as participants, but ultimately as proactive researchers. I saw this as one way to increase African American interests in the field and excite their interests in becoming researchers, as I was. Although an evaluation of whether or not this project could influence others to want to do similar things would be a more diagnostic study, and outside of my project scope, I felt that my work with St. Paul could at the least be a great case study for how archaeological research could benefit Black communities on a more long term basis.

Why St. Paul? Archaeological excavations had recently taken place on the church property and members of the church community were accessible and eager to participate in a post-excavation project. A case study at St. Paul could serve as a model for other excavations in the former Freedman's Town, if practical, or otherwise provide additional

information on a community unlikely to offer additional sites for excavation. The St. Paul Church also provided the setting for a diachronic examination of urban African American life in Texas, from the Reconstruction Era to the present, ranging in issues from early racist government practices to awareness of the present AIDS crisis in the African American community, a relatively extensive span for a project in African American urban studies.

Shortly after the excavation, I began to work with the church community on a project that would offer a more comprehensive history of the church and exhibit this information, along with the archaeological materials. In this project, artifacts would not only be tools used to inform researchers about a particular public, but channels of memory through which we could learn about this group from its own perspective. My goals were to illustrate how public archaeology projects could serve as catalysts for more long-term studies in post-slavery sites, analyze the territorial history of St. Paul, determine how church members experience the landscape from differing perspectives, and discover whether community-based public history could help a community to broaden its understanding of its past through archaeology and historic preservation. My interdisciplinary proposal seemed sufficient, at the time. However, my further exposure to the church's history and community introduced me to a complex world of cultural politics and heritage preservation, as well as how the church faces the challenges of looking to the past to map its future. Outside of traditional site and artifact conservation, this project was and is about one community making a claim for legitimacy in a space in which it no longer seemed to fit, making the public aware of its importance, constructing

its identity based on its cultural and historical significance, attracting Black heritage tourists, and ultimately contesting historically racist policies that helped to place it in the North Dallas Freedman's Town, and ultimately in the Dallas Arts District.

### **Theoretical Approaches**

Numerous controversies involving Native American communities forced anthropologists and other social scientists to develop relationships with contemporary communities (Deloria 1992). Over the last two decades, anthropologists, historians, sociologists, museologists and other social scientists have been paying significantly more attention to methods designed to examine and foster the politics of community representation and involvement in social science studies (Ames 1986; Bond and Gilliam 1994; Clifford 1988; Hall 1997; Kan and Strong 2006; Karp and Lavine 1991; Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 1998; Linenthal 1995; Meskell 1998). Other groups denied historical inclusions in the public realm are beginning to develop interests in the representation and presentation of their communities (Handler and Gable 1997; Perry and Blakey 1997; Yoneyama 1999).

Some researchers in fields like public history have recently embraced working with descendant communities to provide alternative narratives based on oral histories in their projects. One example is cognitive mapping used to examine the former locations of non-extant structures through the recollections and memories of underrepresented communities (Hayden 1995). In this process, oral histories describe how associated communities remembered particular locations. Some researchers examined how



communities are engaged in and affected by historical “silences,” how cultural memory is determined by these processes, and simultaneously produces collective community identities (Caruth 1995; Fabre and O’Meally 1994; Flores 2002; Sturken 1997; Trouillot 1995). In the same vein, some recent research in the field of urban development studies has focused on the themes of empowerment and urban heritage in underrepresented communities (Essoka 2003; Keys 1991; Serda 2003; Yilmaz-Saygin 2002). These authors have examined city planning and development through discussions of urban sprawl, urban redevelopment, urban revitalization, and urban renewal as they relate to redeveloped communities composed of multiple institutions affected within the same location. They focus on redeveloped neighborhoods as a whole. Either the community as a whole is relocated to another location, or the members generally choose to remain in their locations, accepting the transformations. These types of research help to begin to answer questions about what heritage means to stakeholders in communities, which have changed significantly, who do not feel they have the power to affect these changes.

In their collection of essays entitled, *Places in Mind: Public Archaeology as Applied Anthropology* (2004), Paul Shackel and Erve Chambers state that “heritage often means integrity, authenticity and stability, and it is a way for communities to make a claim to a past and assert themselves in the present political and social landscape” (2004: 3). In this dissertation, I examine this intersection of heritage preservation and political mobilization as cultural heritage politics. My notion of cultural heritage politics is analyzed through discourses on “the political mobilization of Black churches” set forth by political scientists like Eric McDaniel (2008) as they intersect with cultural heritage

and historic preservation, and the use of “politics of the past” (Gathercole and Lowenthal 1994). Since there is a gap in scholarly research on the political mobilization of Black churches through historic preservation projects, I rely upon political science theory as a way to help better understand the more conventional ways in which institutions, like St. Paul, mobilize around political issues. I explore “politics of the past” specifically through notions of an innately politicized archaeology and question whether it is a viable public archaeology strategy to interpret resources with and through community stakeholders, especially in gentrified communities with contentious political histories, in ways that will enable the stakeholders to ultimately manage their historic preservation.

In particular, I examine a community-engaged exhibit project, designed to present St. Paul’s history to the Dallas public in an accessible and socially relevant way; one which the church community utilized as a way to draw attention to a building renovation and restoration plan. In this case study, I examine whether the archaeological excavations, and subsequent exhibition, were enough to convince the church community of the significance of these methodologies or whether these approaches needed to be auxiliary means by which the church community politically mobilized to retain a significant place in the Dallas Arts District. In other words, I wanted to find out if the church found these methods crucial to their politics, or merely supplemental to them. If I could answer this, then I could better understand how viable public archaeology projects actually are to community historic preservation, and how stakeholders actually perceive the work that is being done.

This work attempts to fill gaps in public archaeology research by examining a project, beyond the excavation, and critiquing its viability in a jeopardized urban context. More specifically is the issue of Dallas's historical metanarrative and its exclusivity. Historic site interpretations in the city of Dallas are dominated by narratives with White males as master symbols. One example is the Confederate Memorial in Dallas, which silences the histories of enslaved Africans and victims of Reconstruction-Era violence. There are few sites throughout Dallas representing the contributions of the earliest African American community and none of these are located in the pioneer neighborhood. This effort is a response to selective histories in Dallas (e.g. Confederate Memorial, Robert E. Lee Memorial,) and other cities in Texas, centered on White elite male master narratives, by privileging the contributions of newly freed African American populations in Texas, with an interdisciplinary approach of urban public history, public archaeology, and exhibit representation.

In this dissertation, I also analyze strategies for political mobilization around cultural heritage, by diachronically examining how one African American institution advocates for its historic heritage over a 30-year period. It is my hope that this study will help archaeologists and other historic preservationists to determine which historically Black communities are more likely to engage in and benefit from this type of political mobilization and complicate what constitutes giving the power to a community to negotiate its past in the present. More specifically, is simply engaging a community in archaeological research sufficient to make them conscience partners in public archaeological research? Or should this research go beyond engagement to facilitating

more long-term historic preservation projects for communities and thinking about ways to prevent the destruction of historic sites (standing and non-extant) through education, and ultimately working with communities to define feasible options for site management?

My theoretical approach in this project also draws upon the contextual emphases of certain practitioners in public history (Hayden 1995, Frisch 1990), public archaeology (Babson and McDavid 1997, Ebbitt et al. 2007, Jameson 1997, Mullins 1998), cultural representations in museum studies (Karp and Lavine 1990, Karp et al. 1992, Kratz 2002) and cultural resource management (King 2008, McAndrews 2007). Those who practice applied archaeology often intersect their archaeology work with the above-mentioned areas, often with much overlap. Downum and Price (1999:1) offer a typology of eight inclusive areas: resource claims, cultural identity and representation, technology, public education, cultural resource management (CRM), cultural tourism, environment, and ecosystem projects. The St. Paul project, from the archaeology to the exhibition, covers seven of these, making it a great case through which to explore applied archaeology projects, which the Committee on Curriculum for the Society of American Archaeology (SAA) defines as:

the application of archaeological research and its results to address contemporary human problems, including (but not limited to) issues that involve cultural resource management, heritage tourism and development, long-term modeling of human/environment dynamics, and public education aimed at awareness and stewardship of archaeological remains. (2)

The St. Paul project began as an urban archaeology one, the archaeology of a part of a city or an urban landscape; in this case with a public component. As previously stated, UT-Austin archaeologists believed that excavations could help to recover what had been lost in the former freedman's community. Davidson (2004a:105) wrote that "controlled excavations within the rest of Juliette Street—before construction is allowed—of features such as house foundations, yard activity areas, privies, and well/cisterns would allow us to assign recovered material to known households, and to delineate between different levels of socioeconomics or class within the African American families that once live there." Archaeologists were able to recover information on the Cole family, through documents and artifacts, but the more extensive excavations of the rest of Juliette Street were prevented by construction and the fact that St. Paul was the only local institution to agree to excavations. In this case, gentrification did not warrant excavations; it made them impossible.

Public archaeologists who work within urban contexts examine landscapes, often as gentrified historic sites, such as the one in Dallas. They deal with the "city as artifact" (Schlereth 2004) and as a space for collective public memory, which Dolores Hayden examines as "the power of place" or "the power of ordinary urban landscapes to nurture citizen's public memory, to encompass shared time in the form of shared territory..." (9). Urban archaeologists carefully study the documentary record, including maps that show how project areas have changed over time, deeds, census records, city directories, and oral accounts describing conditions of earlier manifestations of the city. As cities move forward, pushing "the stories of residents and neighborhoods into obscurity" urban

archaeologists “help us to remember the people who influenced the city’s character” (*National Park Service, Urban Archeology Program website, 2008*).

Urban archaeology is often about recovery and record keeping. It generally takes place prior to city construction in a particular area, revealing landscapes that have been sealed for considerable amounts of time, yet restricting efforts to prevent further damage to sites. Gentrification projects are disproportionately burdens on underrepresented communities for whom this power defined by Hayden “remains untapped” (Hayden 1995:9). Public memory recovery can fill in historical gaps and supplement archival material yet will likely not result in the maintenance of historic sites set to be demolished by construction projects.

Like other urban archaeology projects, excavation on the St. Paul site was about examining the changing landscape of a neighborhood, the North Dallas Freedman’s Community, through city archival records, and through the memories of recent church members. It was also about recovering the documentary record for a church community which had lost much of its early records to a fire in 1973. Unlike many other urban archaeology projects, it was not a project in rescue or salvage archaeology, in the sense that the church property was not immediately threatened by urban development, but it was one of few remnants of a former neighborhood in an almost completely developed one. The St. Paul Church community was not at risk of site desecration, but wanted to share its story in a space within which it was almost invisible. Urban archaeology presented the framework for this process, while the public archaeology position taken by the principal archaeologists made this project one that engaged the “excavated”

community as an integral part of the project execution. The application of urban archaeology research with community engagement ultimately helped the St. Paul Church to address issues involving cultural resource management and heritage tourism and development. It was also about public education, one crucial element of the proposed archaeology project.

My work is about applied anthropology (and by extension applied archaeology) and how archaeologists can work to help solve human problems, through principles, theories, and methods that cultural anthropologists have been employing for over half a century. For archaeologists, much of this work will be interdisciplinary and determined by what develops “on the ground,” not what is hoped for or planned for in an office building.

In my work, issues in museum studies intersected with public history and archaeology to include how particular groups are culturally represented in museums, through artifacts, and the politics surrounding these representations. Through these connections, I was able to construct an interpretive framework for engaging communities who are not yet familiar with what archaeology has to offer them from a problem-solving standpoint. Through applied practices such as the ones explored in this dissertation, this is changing, and it is my hope that this dissertation will help to accelerate our commitment to communities and the preservation of their cultural resources.

## **Chapter Synopsis**

This dissertation presents my observations on the long-term effects on one institution that has chosen to remain in a redeveloped neighborhood after its former neighbors were removed to other parts of the city. This work focuses on the push/pull actions of the St. Paul community, on the one hand fighting against the silencing of its cultural and historic heritage in its new, majority-White neighborhood, while simultaneously adapting to the structures of a cultural arts district. In this dissertation, I examine how one Black church community utilizes its cultural heritage to politically mobilize in the Dallas Arts District. The means by which I will achieve this view is through the examination of the St. Paul community's engagement in a history preservation project, developed through archaeological excavations, and the subsequent production of an interpretive history exhibition. I examine the diverse coping strategies that the church employs to maintain its place in the Dallas Arts District as well as to make its community more visible, by negotiating its cultural and historic significance. These issues are investigated in the seven subsequent chapters.

To understand the significance of the exhibition to the St. Paul Church community, it is first necessary to establish the socio-historical context for the church. Not simply who founded the church and when, but the reasons that it was founded and under what circumstances; how the church responded to changing conditions in the local Dallas social and political landscapes, as well as in its local environments (Freedman's Town and the Dallas Arts District). For the purposes of this chapter, I will not include all of St. Paul's pastors in the description, only those most noted in church oral history and



those with whom I worked with during my tenure at St. Paul. In the second chapter, I provide an overview of St. Paul's history. This is intended to familiarize readers with how the church is racially and politically placed in Dallas's urban landscape, as well as provide a historical background for some of the details covered in Chapter Six on the interpretive exhibition. The historical narrative approaches the history of St. Paul through its affiliations with the United Methodist Church and the North Dallas Freedman's Town, two bodies which have greatly shaped the life of the church. The historical narrative chapter is chronologically arranged from St. Paul's development as a mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church, North, from 1865 to the present. In the following chapter, I focus on city planning and racial politics in Dallas as part of a much broader phenomenon in the U.S. While there have been some studies on the effects of urban development on underrepresented communities in the United States, they have not focused on the long-term effects on institutions that have chosen to remain in redeveloped neighborhoods once their surroundings have been removed to other parts of a city (Denton and Massey 1993). This chapter proposes to help readers explore how St. Paul transitioned from the North Dallas Freedman's Community to the Dallas Arts District and the strategies employed by the church community to survive these developments. What were the forces that served to create Freedman's Town and which led to its desecration and decline? I will further examine the issues and processes associated with "silencing" the St. Paul Church community through the manipulation of its structural landscape, to give readers a sense of how neighborhood gentrification not only removes buildings and people, but affects how publics remember these former landscapes, often through intentional acts of

forgetting. Chapter Four places the urban archaeology project at the church within the larger context of African Diaspora archaeology and chronicles how theoretical approaches to public archaeology in the African Diaspora relate to work with the St. Paul community, and how these methods can be engaged with a more preventive public archaeology, designed to make African American stakeholders self-sufficient after archaeological excavations. Chapter Five is an account of my community-engaged fieldwork and the methodologies applied to assist this church with its goal of becoming one of the most visible institutions in the Arts District. This chapter examines the development of the history exhibition, through my initial meetings with the church community, and the approaches taken to formulate frameworks for the exhibition. This chapter's goal is to give those readers interested in community-engaged work a more realistic sense of how situations can potentially unfold on the ground, leaving room for inconsistency and a need for flexibility. The sixth chapter covers the various parts and sections of the exhibition. I chose to cover this section, in detail, so that the issues in cultural representation faced during the exhibit development can be more transparent to those unfamiliar with exhibit development, as well as complicate what it means to construct an archive. Chapter seven presents an evaluation of the exhibit project as a tool for historic preservation and how this relates to archaeology as applied anthropology. It also examines how the St. Paul Church community cooperated with local media to bring attention to the project. The dissertation concludes with my evaluation of St. Paul as a cultural landscape at risk and what work such as that presented in this dissertation may mean for other institutions in similar situations. It will also include a discussion of the

church's present status in the Dallas Arts District and its renovation and restoration project.

### **Closing Remarks**

It is hoped that, in this work, the proper framing devices have been chosen to examine the St. Paul church community as a Black church fighting to secure its place in a gentrified neighborhood. At the least, I will have delineated the means by which the St. Paul congregation in Dallas demonstrated agency by formulating and implementing political strategies for resistance to its removal and emphasize the pivotal and enduring historical role St. Paul plays as a visible cultural and spiritual landmark within Dallas's urban landscape. Race has its consequences in the lives of Black Dallasites and is a large part of how they formed identities from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present. For St. Paul, its relationship to the United Methodist Church community and its congregation's subsequent recognition as a historic site entity contribute to these identity formations. These are not the only windows into the realities of this church congregation, but I think that they are key ones. I also expect that this work will rise to the challenge of looking at the plights of historic site communities in post-gentrified neighborhoods and helping to establish a framework for looking at these at-risk site communities as potential cultural resource managers and for assisting African American communities with using heritage conservation as a vital strategy in urban redevelopment.

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ST. PAUL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

#### Introduction

St. Paul is a Black church, but not of a historically Black denomination. It is a majority-Black congregation of the United Methodist Church (UMC, formerly Methodist Episcopal Church). Churches are often considered Black churches if they are associated with African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) or Christian Methodist Episcopal (C.M.E.) (formerly Colored Methodist Episcopal) denominations or other churches founded to serve Black congregants. This point may seem moot within the context of a public engagement project with a Black community, but it is significant in the larger scope of this dissertation. In order to be sensitive to a community's needs it is important for researchers to understand how the community came to be as it is, not just the history of the site's key events and major players. Within the context of a Black church, and many other communities, it is important to understand what conditions gave birth to a particular community, and allow it to survive, and what the perceptions of community members seem to be. Institutions, like St. Paul, operate within hierarchies, which allow them to make certain moves, but with conditions. These hierarchies have also helped to determine the spaces in which they operate. As a Black, United Methodist congregation, St. Paul does not only negotiate itself as an urban Black space, but as a religious (United Methodist) space, both which have historically contributed to its identity formation and continue to do so.

I introduce this chapter with the preceding paragraph in order to draw the reader's attention to why I think that it is significant to provide a socio-historical contexts for the community with whom I work. St. Paul has not achieved staying power solely through luck. Its constructed identities, both given and assumed, have contributed to its present condition and to its significance. It would be difficult for me to persuade myself or attempt to convince a reader that a site should be historically preserved without a context that would help to explain why. It is not only the goal of this chapter to present a socio-historical context for St. Paul, but to explore the church community through its racial and cultural identity formation, as a Black church, in a historically-White denomination, in an urban south-southwestern space. St. Paul benefited from the contributions of White benefactors, but has always been challenged by the restrictions and gazes of White society. Throughout this chapter, I make deductions about how St. Paul's earlier congregations resolve these relationships through strategies utilized by other Black churches and cultural institutions, especially in cases where oral and written documentation is insufficient or nonexistent.

The role of racial oppression is evident throughout St. Paul's genealogy, through the history of Methodism during slavery, the founding of Black Methodist Episcopal churches, and on. This history relates to the past and current racialized urban landscape of Dallas. Racism is still evident, but its form with regard to the church's history has changed over time, heavily dependent on the choices of Methodist leaders and influential White Dallasites, and how St. Paul members respond as agents. These relationships will be introduced in this chapter, and further addressed in proceeding chapter discussions.

Early on in this dissertation project, some St. Paul members requested that I research the church's history, as a supplement to artifact descriptions presented by the UT field school, and primarily as a way to fill in missing gaps in the church's documented history. The church historian, Ms. Moore, wrote a comprehensive history based on information that she inherited, yet many questions about the architectural history and early church history remained. I chose to research the church's history as part of an applied anthropological process that centered the church's questions over mine. As a result, I spent relatively more time trying to fill information gaps than answer questions in which I was interested. Not all of the church's questions were answered but I think that the history was made more complete.

The description that follows is by no means an exhaustive history, but a truncated, chronological account. A more detailed version was prepared for the church, but I choose to not present such particulars here. My aim with this chapter is to shed some light on the events and environments that helped St. Paul to become and remain a standing part of Dallas's urban landscape, as well as assist readers with understanding the church's importance and why the church community believes that it should remain in the Dallas Arts District.

### **Methodism and the Black Church**

Teachings of the Methodist faith originated in 1729, at Oxford University with a group of students who met to pray, study Christianity, and to help the less fortunate. Other students referred to them as "Methodists," due to the methodical manner in which

they celebrated their faith. The most well-known member of this group was John Wesley, most often credited as the church's founder. This movement within the Church of England bore several small societies and new denominations, including one representing newly-independent Methodists within the American church.

This Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC) resulted from the teachings and missionary works of preachers on horseback, known as circuit riders who were local ministers and class leaders responsible for the church's development across what is now the U.S. New congregants were attracted to the church's doctrine of spiritual individualism, and enslaved Africans, more specifically, to shouting and Holy Spirit possession reminiscent of spirit possession in West Africa (Pinn and Pinn 2002). Methodists and Baptists teachings also reflected West African rituals revolving around the significance of water, relevant in the sacrament of baptism, and appealed to enslaved Africans with the belief that "anyone who was saved and felt a calling to preach could do so" and that "the rich and free had no greater access to heaven than the poor and enslaved" (Pinn and Pinn 2002:8). In many ways, these denominations seemed to help enslaved African communities to deal with their states of oppression, by believing that there would be something greater in the end.

Compared to most Anglican clergyman, Methodist preachers initially opposed slavery. Early leaders of the church cautioned that slavery was divinely and humanely unjustified, but slaveholders broke away from these teachings. In 1785, their disobedience was rewarded when "...the rules that prohibited slave owners from holding ministerial office in the Methodist Episcopal Church were suspended" (Keels and Keels

2003:29). In their 1832 *Doctrine and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, members declared that the Methodist Church was “as much as ever convinced of the great sin of slavery” (Bourne 1834:11). This was undoubtedly a welcome declaration to enslaved persons attempting to understand how and why their enslavement on earth could be justifiable to a liberating God. If they became spiritually “born again,” then they would have equal access to the Kingdom of Heaven, even though they were considered unequal on earth. Yet Rev. George Bourne, a staunch abolitionist and Presbyterian minister, quoted this doctrine in one of his anti-slavery works, *Man-stealing and Slavery denounced by the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches* (1834), as he criticized whether the Christian community was in fact dedicated to the anti-slavery movement as they declared. Rev. Bourne was one of the founders of the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833. Within his many works, Bourne declared slavery a sin and questioned whether Christians who owned slaves could be Christians. Although the nearly 72,000 colored members of the M.E.C. may have viewed the church as relatively liberal, they would have probably been well aware of the fact that the internal debates over the issue of enslavement compromised how liberal the church was and if the rules would truly be enforced. Still, they continued to join. According to the minutes of the 1831 annual conference, 71,589 of the 513,124 members of the church were colored, not including Native Americans. By 1861, over 200,000 persons of African descent had joined the Methodist Church (Pinn and Pinn 2000: 28). They were part of the church community, but not comparable to White members. Camp meetings were open to enslaved persons, yet the tents at the camp meetings were segregated. According to Pinn and Pinn (2000) it



is not clear whether this segregation was forced by attending Whites, voluntarily chosen by Black members who may have wanted seclusion and privacy from White congregants, or a combination of both. The authors do mention that private services would have also been attended by Whites wanting to subvert the enslaved communities' discussions about the slave system and their warranted freedoms.

Black congregants also experienced segregation within the church walls. Segregationist practices in the North led to the ultimate creation of the A.M.E. Church, whose early members were not impressed with the embedded racism at the St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church, their church home. "The rapid growth in the numbers of African worshipers at St. George's propelled discussion of issues charged with implicit racism, such as where should Africans sit and how should they participate in services" (Pinn and Pinn 2000: 32). In 1787, members of African descent withdrew from St. George's after being asked to sit separately from the White members. By 1816, they had completely broken ties with the M.E.C., forming the A.M.E. Church with the help of the Free African Society, a mutual aid association. This was the first African American denomination in the U.S., and subsequently a splinter group would later found the African Methodist Episcopal-Zion (AMEZ) Church.

Prior to the Civil War, the M.E.C. experienced another critical division, also resulting from racist practices in the church. This time, Southern Whites were to blame. Just over sixty years after the M.E.C. was formed in the United States, the M.E.C. South was formed after Southern members split with the mainline church over the issue of slavery (Elliott 1855). This division was preceded by a sequence of events beginning in

the 1830s when “a small number of Methodists were prompted by antislavery concerns to withdraw from the Methodist Episcopal church because they felt it condoned slaveholding” (Padgett 1992: 64).

The Civil War years proved more divisive as both church factions struggled to contend with ambiguous and newly-freed Black populations. The M.E.C. South continued to have Black members until after the Civil War, when White congregants encouraged Blacks, who remained members of their division, to form a separate body, which became the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church (C.M.E.), so that they would not be absorbed by M.E.C. missionaries from the North. “This fear was justified because more than half of the Africans involved in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, left during the Civil War and Reconstruction period” (Pinn and Pinn 2000: 54). Black congregants did not generally leave the M.E.C. South out of spite, but through a cooperative effort by southern White churches to maintain a Black presence, without having Black members in the same church building. In addition, according to Clyde McQueen (2000), “some Blacks desired close relationships with whites,” (13) possibly to re-acquire church property that the federal government had seized during the War through “...a military order that authorized its agents to take possession of all church property of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, under the assumption that the outcome of the Civil War would end the southern denomination’s separate existence” (Gravely 1982: 168). Most of this property later became that of the more than 200,000 C.M.E. church members who separated from the M.E.C. South (Gravely 1982).

Still, some of the Black M.E.C. South members instead chose to affiliate themselves with financially sound White churches, which now owned some of the federal property confiscated from Confederate landowners during the Civil War. Some of those members joined the M.E.C. North which “appealed to the freedmen as a color-blind denomination” (McQueen 2000: 13). The St. Paul Methodist Episcopal Church (now St. Paul UMC) in Dallas was one of them.

### **St. Paul’s Early Years (1865-1890)**

The 1864 Conference of the M.E.C. North chose to establish General Conferences and Mission Conferences as part of the answer to their “Negro problem,” even with opposition from some southern White men. “Following the Confederate surrender in 1865, missionaries from all the Protestant denominations crowded into the South to assist in the organization of African American churches” (McQueen 2000: 11).

St. Paul’s religious history begins with the formation of the Mississippi Mission Conference, one of the M.E.C. conferences established to accommodate newly freed Blacks, by keeping them separate from mainline churches. In December of 1865, four White ministers and 12 Black preachers met as part of this Christmas Conference organized by the MEC, North at the Wesley Church in New Orleans, Louisiana (Figure 2-1). The Mississippi Mission Conference set an amazing goal for itself, by seeking to establish and administer churches for Black Methodists in the midst of southerners who did not promote Black development and Black-run churches, like the A.M.E. They believed that Blacks were very capable of and should be running their own institutions.



the perceived promises of urban centers. White Americans still maintained *de facto* control and these urban centers were not immune to violence and the attempts of former slave owners to restrict the movements of freed Blacks. James Davidson (2004:76) states that “[during the Reconstruction era] many freedmen and women in the Dallas area were effectively barred entry into the town of Dallas due to the passage of harsh vagrancy laws just months after emancipation, targeting freedmen with the threat of de facto slavery (imprisonment and hard labor) for up to half a year for each offense” (Davidson 1999).

Neither these laws, “nor the extensive violence that was carried out against Blacks and Unionists in Dallas County”, were effective enough to prevent Black settlements within and outside the city of Dallas (Prior and Schulte 2000a: 64). The impending arrival of the railroads attracted new Black residents, along with many other immigrants, to the Dallas area (Prior and Schulte 2000b: 69). From 1868 to 1870, the town’s population had increased by over 800 persons and “2109 Blacks and 11, 197 Whites were living in Dallas County” (Enstam 1998:35; Prior and Schulte 2000b: 69). Blacks who moved into North Texas formed communities outside of the town of Dallas, to avoid being arrested as vagrants (Davidson 2004:76). Freedman’s Town, later called North Dallas, was one of the earliest communities.

The communities developed several institutions, including commercial businesses, schools, and churches. At the Texas Conference of 1873 (M.E.C. North), church leaders decided to organize and supply Dallas with a mission (Minutes of The Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church for the year 1873), which later became St. Paul. Melvin Banks (1973) who wrote a history of New Hope Baptist Church,

one of Dallas's first Black congregations, says that "early Dallas was not famous for its law abiding or religious environment. It was known as a cold and reckless frontier community with its share of gambling, violence, and crime. There were some 45 saloons and 8 wholesale liquor houses in the town. The failure of early religious adventures gave the town a hard name" (13). He adds that:

The state of affairs disturbed the old Black settlers who had been associated with the common religious services held by groups of all the citizens around the Masonic Hall and who had shared the efforts of the white churches to engage in special services for the Black Community...Congested living, no schools, no churches with no organized recreation, the Black population was adrift. These Christians shuddered for the future of their people who were becoming mad, discouraged, frustrated, and were drifting into attitudes of not caring. It was the determination of Black Christians in Dallas to bring order out of chaos. The year 1873 is immortal in Dallas Black history. The Black community needed stability and respectability, and none could create it better than they who were 'the salt of the earth.' This year saw the rise of the Black Church in Dallas. (13)

Unsurprisingly, that year also saw the birth of St. Paul.

Although Banks is likely correct about Dallas's early reputation, he fails to mention the racism and oppression which affected the development of viable cultural institutions for old and new Black Dallasites, who were constrained to certain areas of the

town with minimal municipal services and accommodations, as well as early failure of the Freedman's Bureau in Texas. The multiracial Masonic services were likely those endorsed by slave-owners dealing with a relatively small Black population. The Dallas of 1873 was a Reconstruction-Era, more industrialized town with Black residents in charge of making decisions about their livelihood, without much support. Still, the year 1873 was immortal in Dallas Black history, in more ways than listed by Banks (to be further discussed in Chapter 3). It was problematic, but gave way to innovation at a time when many resources were not available to Blacks in Dallas. As a result, churches were often designed to do what governments did not do.

St. Paul was organized as Dallas's first Black M.E.C. earning it the title, "Mother Church." In 1874, Richard Lane deeded the land upon which this mission church was built to William Bush, L.H. Carhart, Anthony Banning Norton, W.P. Boliver, and Ed Finn, trustees of the M.E.C., and the Philadelphia Board of Missions for the sum of \$150. "Half of Lot No. 5 in Block No. 305 in Peaks addition...Fronting 46 feet on Juliette Street running back at (?) width with a side front on Good Street 174 feet to an alley 20 feet wide being the half of West corner Lot No. 5 in said Block..." was deeded to the M.E. Church to be "used kept maintained & disposed of as a place of Divine Worship & for school purposes, subject to the discipline usage & ministerial appointments of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America" (Dallas County Clerk Records Building [DCCRB] 1874:9.782 [book. page]). According to Smith (1985) E. Finn was one of four Black preachers in Dallas in 1873 (22), but it is unclear whether this is the Ed Finn listed as a trustee of St. Paul.

On April 6<sup>th</sup> of 1875 Bush, Carhart, Finn, A.J. Burris, and Norton, all of St. Paul M. E. C., transferred the same property “as a trust for the better securing of the Board of Church extension of the M.E. Church of (Philadelphia)...The Philadelphia Board of Church Extension aided St. Paul’s trustees by lending them \$250 to erect a home of worship” ([DCCRB] 1875: AA: 651-653). That same year, Chas. L. Madison was assigned to the Dallas Mission at the West Texas Conference held in Columbus, Texas. The 1876 Conference was held in Austin, Texas (Minutes of the Annual Conference of The Methodist Episcopal Church for the Years 1875 & 1876). There, the Dallas mission was organized as St. Paul (or St. Paul’s) Methodist Episcopal Church (M.E.C.) under the leadership of J.G. Webster and Dr. William Bush, Austin District Presiding Elder.

It seems that the men behind St. Paul’s development were not only devout Methodists, but concerned citizens who played a number of roles. St. Paul Trustee and Ohio native, Anthony Banning Norton, first arrived in Texas sometime in 1855 or 1856. Norton, a Radical Republican and editor of the *Norton Intelligencer*, was a distinct figure in Dallas in the years following the Civil War. “He wore a white beard that reached nearly to his waist and hair that flowed several inches over his coat collar” after vowing never to shave or cut his hair until Henry Clay should be elected president. (McElhaney 1986). In 1857 and 1859, Norton was elected to the Texas legislature from Henderson and Kaufman counties as a Know-Nothing. Members of the American or “Know-Nothing” Party fragmented over the issue of slavery and most went to the Republican Party after the Dred Scott decision. After Norton supported Sam Houston for governor in



1859, Houston appointed him adjutant general in April of 1860. In 1860 he also became the editor of the Austin *Southern Intelligencer*, a Unionist newspaper.

Prior to the Civil War, Norton strongly opposed both slavery and secession, but “remained in Texas until he was forced to leave” (Sanders 2008). He returned to Texas in 1865 where he was elected to the Constitutional Convention of 1866, and served as chairman of the Committee on the Condition of the State. Norton became postmaster of Dallas in 1875 and United States marshal for northern Texas in 1879. He unsuccessfully ran for Congress in 1866 and 1871 and for governor in 1878 and 1884. He spent the remainder of his life in Dallas, as publisher of Norton’s *Union Intelligencer*, which he published until his death in 1892 (Sanders 2008)

Norton’s assistance with St. Paul’s purchase of land for development was critical when, prior to emancipation, many enslaved persons held church services outdoors under brush arbors as private spaces for congregating outside of the White community’s gazes (Levine 1992; Prior and Schulte 2000:88). St. Paul’s initial “home was in a brush arbor on a parcel of land” (Moore 2003: 1). This parcel of land was probably that deeded by Richard Lane to St. Paul’s trustees. It is unclear whether a congregation had been formed prior to emancipation or was the product of freedmen and women immigrating to Dallas, and desiring places to worship. It is also plausible that prayer meetings were held in the homes of St. Paul members prior to the donation of Lane’s land.

It was through the contributions of sympathizers, like Lane and Norton, and the loan from the Philadelphia Board of Church Extension, that St. Paul received its first building, likely in 1874 or 1875. According to oral history, St. Paul’s first church

building was a white frame house at the intersection of what was then Juliette and Good [later Burford] Streets. This white frame house would have probably been moved from a different location to St. Paul's present property, sometime between 1874, when Richard Lane deeded to property to St. Paul's trustees, and 1876 or 1877, when the building was apparently a victim of arson. Although details about the fire are unknown and it is unclear how much damage was done, a frame building was around in 1887, as witnessed by a Dallas Morning News observer, during his visit to the church (*Dallas Morning News* 1887). According to the observer, the church had a seating capacity of around 250 with 80 members, and was erected in 1874, suggested that the burned building was not totally damaged, but restored by 1887.

It is also believed that the first church basement also served as a school, established by Reverend George Warren Richardson, a Methodist minister from Minnesota, and his son George O. Richardson. This was one of the very few schools open for Blacks in Dallas (Dallas Public Library 1945; Moore 1994:1). In 1876, Richardson offered the school to the West Texas Conference, then sought to establish a Normal College to train Black youth. With little support in Dallas, the Conference accepted and relocated the Andrews Normal School to the basement of Wesley Church in Austin. The school moved around, changing several forms, until it became Samuel Huston College in 1898.

Although the school at St. Paul was short lived, this and other schools “played a vital role in advancing education among the free [Black] population by raising funds to pay teachers...” (McQueen 2003:3). Some operated before state-sponsored Freedman's

Bureau schools and others stepped in when Reconstruction-era public schools failed to retain teachers and students due to financial reasons (McQueen 2003:3). “Black schools and the newly emerging black churches also helped strengthen family structure. School teachers included morality lessons in their day, night, and Sabbath classes and left African Americans with definite impressions of how free people ‘should’ behave. Likewise, both black and white preachers stressed sobriety, monogamy, and responsibility, while condemning vices that might disrupt families” (Smallwood 2007: 74).

Newly-freed Blacks, as well as some Radical Republicans, recognized the significance of Black education as many of these churches developed schools to train all ages in "everything from scripture lessons to higher education" (McQueen 2000: 3). On the other hand, along with these developments came overt racist hostility from local Whites who had no or little respect for the new Black citizens. Union Army veteran, Capt. William H. Horton, was Dallas’s first Freedmen’s Bureau agent. He reported violent acts committed against Blacks, including beatings, shootings, and murder, primarily for not obeying the authority of local Whites (Prior and Schulte 2000a: 64-65). Church burnings were also prevalent, as these institutions represented a form of Black “progress.” Although freepersons were unable to seek justice in these cases, they were overall not deterred by White violence and continued to create new lives for themselves.

St. Paul’s beginnings were complicated and historically rooted within the contexts of race in U.S. society. Educating Black Dallasites was not an easy task. Difficulties in establishing a home base form the Black normal school in Dallas serve as one example.

Still, through the efforts of philanthropists, clergyman, community activists, and the local Dallas Freedman's community a distinctly Black American church congregation was formed, one that was not only able to promote Christianity, but supply its members with a safe social space that would allow them to deal with society outside of the church walls. By 1885, St. Paul did have a successful Sunday school, with a superintendent, six teachers, and 65 students. It likely served many of its congregants in ways that public education did not, and gave them some of the tools necessary to face challenges in their local community. Yet how this early Black congregation and its work were conceptualized by its pioneer members is difficult to pinpoint, but deductions can be made. Below, I attempt to this by exploring St. Paul's duality as a church and as a post-Emancipation Black cultural institution through C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya's notion of a Black Sacred Cosmos.

### **The Early Church and a Black Sacred Cosmos**

There is a dearth of information on doctrines associated with St. Paul's earliest congregations. It is probable that St. Paul operated under a premise similar to that of the C.M.E. Church, which had a "positive relationship with the Methodist Episcopal church [South]" (Pinn and Pinn 2000:58). St. Paul not only seemed to have a positive relationship with the main church but, unlike C.M.E. churches, it was a congregation in the main church. It was probably not in the best interest of the congregation to involve itself in Reconstruction-era politics, emigration, or Back-to-Africa movements like the politically-charged A.M.E. and A.M.E. Zion denominations, who literally separated from

the M.E.C. St. Paul's community was dependent on its White brothers and sisters and that likely came with many restrictions on its political movements. The historically-Black churches were likely better able to overtly express doctrines in a "Black Sacred Cosmos," which C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya (1990) define as an African American religious worldview. Still, St. Paul M.E.C. was a Black church and likely could not escape responding to social problems of the day.

Like congregations in the C.M.E. Church, St. Paul's early leaders probably thought that "cooperation with whites was the key to racial harmony..." (Pinn and Pinn 2000:58). Unlike C.M.E. congregations, St. Paul's leaders may have been better able to evade the paternalistic environment of the M.E.C. South so significant to the C.M.E. churches' survival. St. Paul grew from the support of the M.E.C. North and obstinate Republicans like Norton, who may have given church leaders some flexibility in the capacity to believe that they deserved the right to worship as Christians, even if under a unique condition of blackness. I argue that their roles as Black congregants in a majority-White, and largely Republican, denomination may have provided more flexibility in how they expressed their Black Sacred Cosmos than M.E.C. South-affiliated congregations.

Still, it is very difficult to generalize how St. Paul's early leaders may have understood their "Black Sacred Cosmos," especially considering the potential for multivocality within the congregation, and possibly within leadership. For example, even with restrictions in the C.M.E. Church, some leaders like Bishop Lucius Henry Holsey became proponents of "African American separatism" (Pinn and Pinn 2000: 58). Other C.M.E. leaders shied away from making public separatist stances altogether. This

example of diversity within one denomination shows that members of St. Paul could have also been diverse in whether and how they chose to express their “double consciousness” as Blacks in America. Still, the environment of a racist Reconstruction-era and then Jim Crow South would have heavily limited, at least their public displays of worship.

During the Reconstruction Era, southern Blacks began to congregate for worship services similar to those many of them had experienced under plantation rule. Similarly, in Dallas, small groups met under brush arbors or in someone’s home to worship. Shortly after, larger congregations developed from the smaller groups. By 1878, at least seven churches in the North Dallas Freedman’s Town had developed (Morrison and Co. 1878-1879). Churches like Bethel A.M.E, Evening Chapel C.M.E., Free Mission Baptist, Free Will Baptist, New Hope Baptist, St. Paul M.E., and St. John Baptist served the needs of Black members who continued to observe Christian services practiced during slavery (Prior and Schulte 2000b: 89). It is likely that many of these members were former enslaved persons, but it is not clear whether Baptist and Methodist congregants were affected by their former owners’ beliefs and the religious enthusiasm of the Second Great Awakening, whose relative racial inclusiveness is often deemed responsible for the rapid development of Afro-Christianity, or were evangelized once they settled near Dallas.

St. Paul’s earliest pioneers may have practiced religious doctrines similar to those of black churches with other religious affiliations, like the New Hope Baptist Church in Dallas, which sought “to minister not only to the spiritual needs of people but also to the personal and social needs as well” (Banks 1973: 15).

Disappointed by the turn of Reconstruction they needed renewed faith in mankind, deliverance from the bondages of fear, frustration, shame, sin, guilt, aimlessness, and hopelessness...New Hope [also] attacked the problem of the monogamous family life and stabilized home and marriage life, and parental responsibility. Home ownership and improvement were encouraged. Manners and etiquette were common subjects of discussion among the people. The *talented tenth* found opportunities to engage in speech activities like debates and recitations...Traveling Negro musicians and speakers as well as Whites stopped by the church. Politicians spoke to the people during these hectic days of the struggle of Negroes to protect their gains of Reconstruction. (Banks 1973:15; brackets and italics added)

Banks goes on to discuss how several New Hope members were excluded from the church for *immoral* behavior, like dancing, drinking heavily, suing fellow members, attending shows, swearing, domestic troubles, refusing to tithe, and participating in sports. It is unclear whether the members of St. Paul would have followed similar *moral* guidelines or whether New Hope maintained a stricter code of discipline. New Hope's code of ethics may have also been attributable to the church leaders' attempt to help its members assimilate into Dallas's broader White society by not drawing unwanted attention, or as a protective measure during Jim Crow to avoid violence and jailing for anti-social behavior. The ability of Dallas's churches to develop under oppressive

circumstances proved a need to develop a deeper sense of community for blacks and to ensure the community's stability.

Apparently, the first 25 years of St. Paul's growth and success can be attributed to a diverse group of aforementioned pioneer benefactors and ministers who had the vision to learn and educate, and "refused to be broken in spirit" under dejecting social systems (Moore 2003:1). The congregation developed and went on to build their flock, and served many freedmen and women in the Dallas area both spiritually and culturally.

### **Building a New Sanctuary (1891 - 1947)**

By 1899, the St. Paul community had a 2-story brick building, with a shingle roof at 260 Juliette Street, indicating an increase in congregation size and space needs. This building could have faced Juliette Street, unlike the present structure which faces Routh Street, Burford Street at the time (personal communication, Tara Dudley). According to the 1899 Dallas Sanborn Insurance map (See Figure 2-2), this building has a 2-story tower centered on its northwest façade, and was 18 feet high from the ground to the roof line. It had no basement.

Ms. Moore's history mentions how pioneer male members dug the foundation for a brick church, coming from their daytime jobs and working until dark, while the women provided food and did small chores. Although Ms. Moore's history does not make this clear, I think that this church may have been the one that the brick foundation was dug for, not for the present church building, as often repeated in church oral history. For the purposes of this dissertation, I refer to this building as St. Paul's First Brick Church.



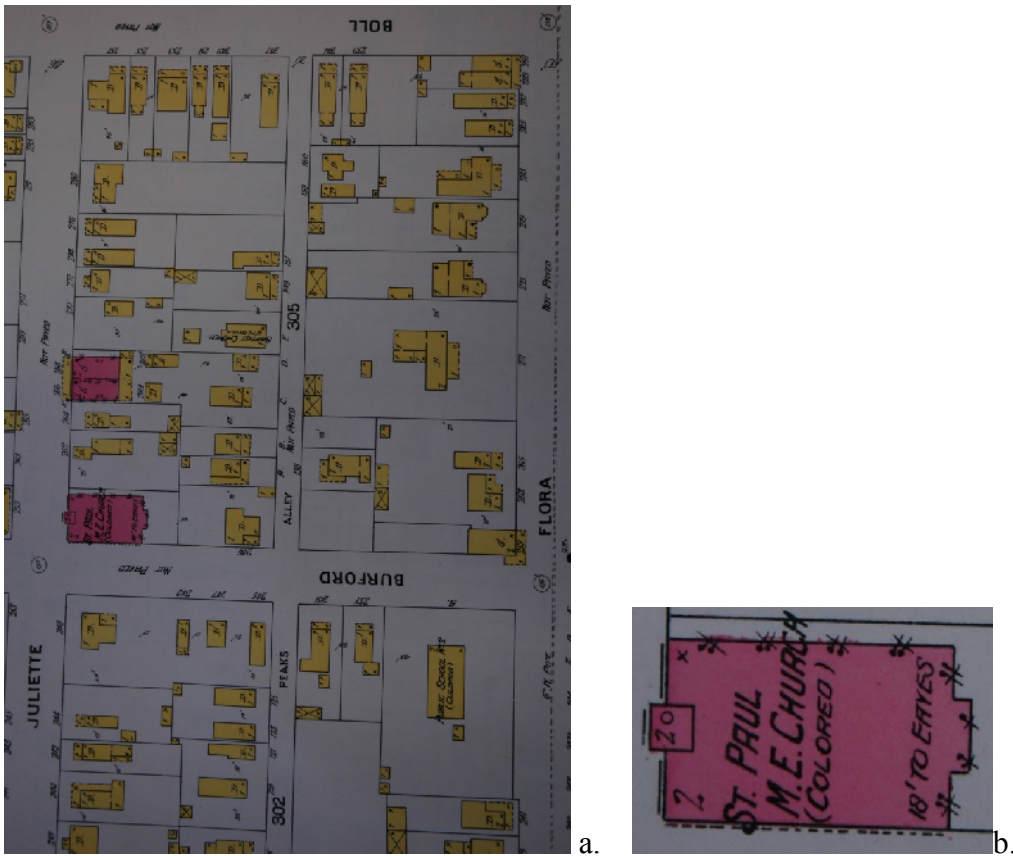


FIGURE 2-2. 1899 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map: (a) Shows the St. Paul Methodist Episcopal Church (Colored) at the intersection of Burford [now Routh] Juliette Streets [no longer exists]; (b) Close-up of St. Paul.

By 1905, the St. Paul community added a third story to the tower on its northwest façade (1905 Dallas Sanborn Maps). This building maintained the same address as the 1899 building. It had a wood shingle roof, with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> brick floors and a 3<sup>rd</sup> floor frame, and remained 18 feet from the ground to the roof line. It also had electric lighting. St. Paul church member, Ms. Mollye Banks, donated a copy of a photo which could be the church from the 1905 Sanborn in the background (See Figure 2-3). Ms. Banks identified the photo as a school picture taken in either 1914 or 1915. This could be a day school or a Sunday school, like the one mentioned by the *Dallas Morning News* observer

30 years earlier. According to architectural historian Tara Dudley, the church in the image is a brick church, but is likely not the present structure. The windows do not match. James Davidson's description identifies the photo as facing west, which means that this photo was likely taken from Burford Street. Ms. Banks identified the young man to the left of the teacher as Earnest Benjamin Scott. I do not have a name for the teacher or for any of the other students.



FIGURE 2-3. School Picture, taken outside basement of church facing west. This is possibly a Sunday school or day school. To the left of the teacher is Earnest Benjamin Scott (Mollye Banks' uncle). Taken in 1914 or 1915.

A 1921 Sanborn map shows plans for the construction of a new brick church. According to oral history, William Sidney Pittman, American's premier African

American architect of the time, is credited with designing St. Paul UMC in 1912, but I have been unable to support this claim. Pittman was Dallas's first Black architect and a son-in-law to Booker T. Washington. In 1911, Pittman moved to Dallas with his wife of five years, Portia, after living and working in Washington D.C. He was the architect for several buildings throughout Texas, including the Knights of Pythias building in Dallas's Deep Ellum district and St. James A.M.E. Church, now an office building, in Dallas; as well as other buildings throughout the country.

In order to investigate the oral history claim, I brought in some outside help. One well known architectural historian said to me, "This is indeed a quandary--one that I am at a complete loss as to how to solve definitively. Some issues are best left in an indefinite manner, or perhaps you can be definite that there were [sic] a succession of architects--which is something. Such is history" (E. G. Daves Rossell, 2008, elec. comm.). I understood what he meant, but knew how important actually naming Pittman as an architect could be to the church. Pittman was a colorful character and also the first Black architect in Texas. If I could not determine that he was the architect on my own, then I would get a more expert opinion.

I contacted the UT-Austin architectural department and asked if any students would be interested in helping me to do a comparative site analysis between St. Paul and William Sidney Pittman's other churches in Texas. It was also my hope that the student could help me to flesh out some of the issues in the NRHP application, namely concerned with architectural descriptions. I had an architectural description from St. Paul's 1982 city landmark application, but did not think that this would suffice for the NRHP.

I got a reply from Tara Dudley, an architectural history student. I had met Tara previously, during my association with the UT Black Graduate Student Association, and was glad to hear that she was interested. We met monthly, between Tara's archival research and my visits to three of Pittman's Texas churches: Allen Chapel A.M.E. in Forth Worth, Joshua Chapel A.M.E. in Waxahachie, and St. James A.M.E. Church in Dallas. I was unable to visit Wesley Chapel A.M.E. in Houston, prior to the exhibition, so I contacted their administrator, Carlfred Giles, who was kind enough to send images of the church. Tara was to use these images in her analysis. Although she was unable to deny or confirm whether Pittman was the architect for St. Paul, some of the results of her larger investigation are mentioned in this dissertation and will be included in a historical manuscript written for the church community. .

There is an application for a building permit that names N.H. (or M.H.?) Black as the architect in 1913, with the Hardeman Belcher Company as contractors. Although there is a building permit for St. Paul in 1913, and Sidney Pittman allegedly designs the church at around the same time, it does not seem that the church was actually built until a few years later, after 1921. This matches Ms. Moore's indication that the First Brick church was condemned in 1917 or 1918. A long standing member, Mrs. Kate Turley, who owned the property on which the church's annex is now located, deeded the land to the church in December of 1918, for a sum of \$500, with a vendor's lien in effect, in case the trustees fell behind in payments. Trustees of the church included Nelson Jones, C.S. Lightner, H. S. Thompson, Richard Bills, John Craigs, Henry Polk, H.W. Scott, T.H.

Barry, and Walter Reed McMillan (Dallas County Clerk Records Building [DCCRB] 1913:760:303 [volume. page]).

Walter Reed McMillan, Quitman native and pioneer Dallas physician, came to Dallas in 1910, one year after receiving a medical degree from Meharry Medical School. McMillan “built the McMillan Sanatorium in 1925 (or 1923) on Hall Street and State Street” (25). The two-block, two-story building included a druggist, tailor/cleaners, barber shop, and café. Dr. McMillan served as a St. Paul trustee for many years and worshipped at the church until his death in 1958. Trustees like McMillan worked to make St. Paul debt free and on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 1920, the vendor’s lien was released after all payments had been made ([DCCRB] 1913:760:303 [volume. page]).

By 1921, the planned brick church had an address at 2600 Juliette Street (Figure 2-4). It was one story with a basement. Plans for this new church included a tower at the west corner and an additional story. Some part of the church would be wood-frame. It would have 12 inch thick walls, heating from stoves, lighting from electricity, and it would be 20 feet from the ground to the roof line. The shape of the chapel in the Sanborn map is not the same as that of the finished building.

The building’s construction was completed under the leadership of Dr. G.A. Deslandes, a Jamaica native and former professor of Wiley College in Marshall. Deslandes, a tireless leader and scholar, is credited with getting St. Paul “out of the basement” in 1922 or 1923 (*Dallas Morning News* Digital Historical Archive, 1950:1 & 11; Doss 1950:1). “The basement was called Noah’s Ark because it had stood so long” (*Dallas Morning News* Digital Historical Archive, 1950:1 & 11; Doss 1950:1).

According to Doss (*Dallas Morning News* Digital Historical Archive, 1950:1 & 11; Doss 1950:1), the church's basement "stood for years as mute testimony to the inability of members to raise enough money to complete the building" (*Dallas Morning News* Digital Historical Archive, 1950:1 & 11). Dr. Deslandes had a reputation for salvaging churches as an avid fundraiser, utilizing his White friends for assistance. Thirty days after Deslandes' arrival at St. Paul, "white friends and businessmen had donated \$7,500. The church itself raised \$2,500. The national church loaned \$5,000 and the Negro Knights of Pythias loaned \$15,000" (*Dallas Morning News* Digital Historical Archive, 1950:11). The resulting \$80,000 (also cited \$90,000) building seated 928 and served as a testimony to St. Paul's congregation, as well as the greater Dallas community, to get the church built. One *DMN* article cites \$80,000 (Doss 1950), another cites \$90,000 (1925). The latter article was more contemporary to the actual completion of the church building. Also according to this article, "all but \$21,000 of the cost of the building" had been paid. City documents show that Charles H. Leinbach designed the church extension for St. Paul in 1924 and that all work had been completed by 1927, the same year that the building was completed. Charles H. Leinbach, a Dallas architect, designed the church building extension in 1924, with M.A. White as contractor. Leinbach partnered with his brother, Jesse L. Leinbach in the Leinbach Bros. Architectural firm. All work had been completed by March of 1927. Deslandes left St. Paul that same year. The new building seated 928 and served as a testimony to St. Paul's congregation, as well as the greater Dallas community. It would later host several events significant to the Dallas Black community.

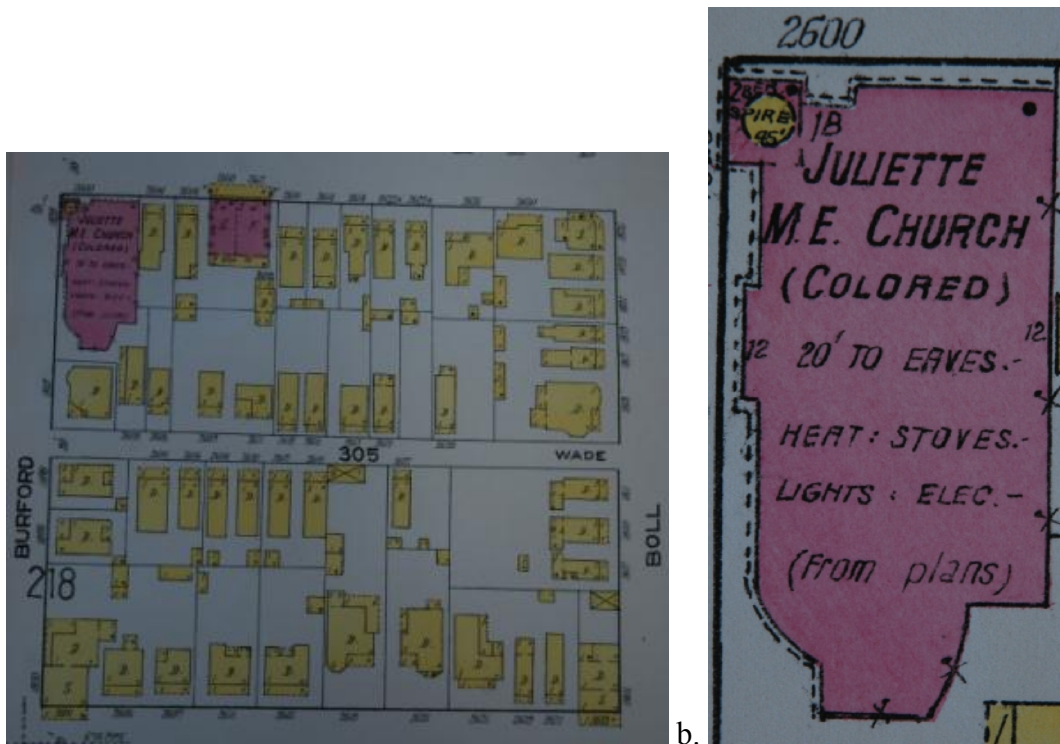


FIGURE 2-4. Plans for The Second Brick Church (1921): (a) Shows the Juliette Methodist Episcopal Church (Colored) [St. Paul] at the corner of Juliette and Burford; (b) Close-up of Juliette Methodist Episcopal Church [St. Paul].

In 1938, Mayor George Sprague swore in physician and businessman, Edgar Ewell Ward, as one of the first “mayors” of Black Dallas for 1938 (Maxwell 2010). During the ceremony held at St. Paul, Ward promised “to uphold the charter of the city and the negro chamber of commerce and to advance the welfare of the city...” (*Dallas Morning News* Digital Historical Archive, 1938). According to Lawe (2008), “during the 1930s, [Dallas] African Americans symbolically elected a ‘bronze mayor’ to represent their interests. Dr. Edgar E. Ward and A.A. Braswell held this position in the late 1930s. Because no public hotels were available to African Americans, many special guests stayed in the homes of the ‘bronze mayors’” (Lawe 2008:31). Here St. Paul served as a space for a symbolic event in the Dallas Black community, the swearing in of a principal

community representative. St. Paul also hosted other events like a singing contest among Black choirs, including St. Paul, Griggs Chapel, Mt. Zion, St. James, Golden Gate, Trinity, and the Church of the Living God (*Dallas Morning News Digital Historical Archive*, 1934).

St. Paul had placed itself as one of the leading Black church communities in Dallas, yet its place in the M.E.C. became even more ambiguous. St. Paul early members and members of other Black M.E.C. congregations "...stayed in the Methodist Episcopal Church of the North, hoping and struggling for a redeemed church; but their fate in the successor Methodist Church was to be segregated for three decades (1939-1968) into a nationwide "Central Jurisdiction." (Keels and Keels 2003: vi). This separation began in 1939 Northern and Southern Methodist Congregations along with the Methodist Protestant Church reunited to form the Methodist Church. The Methodist Protestant Church was "started in 1830 with a more egalitarian, democratic structure than the Methodist Episcopal Church" (Murray 2004: viii). Out of this reunification, six jurisdictional conferences were formed. A Jurisdictional Conference is "a collection of annual conferences that quadrennially meets to elect bishops and other representatives to church boards and agencies" (Murray 2004: xvi). Five of the established jurisdictional conferences were regional and one was based on race. This Central Jurisdiction seemed to represent the Methodist Church's continuing struggle with its "Negro problem." The two White branches that were divided over the issue of slavery had reunited, yet the issue of race remained pertinent nearly one-hundred years later. "When White Methodists in



the North and South reunited in 1939 after decades of discussion about how to deal with Black Methodists, their decision was to segregate them” (Keel and Keel 2003:90).

The role of race remained a significant issue for Blacks within the Methodist Church. For much of its history, the Methodist Church had by fact and in law treated blacks as inferiors. The Black population's role in the Methodist Church remained ambiguous as it had in so many other majority White congregations. In a similar vein to Dubois's notion of "double consciousness," these church members were Methodists, as well as Afro-Methodists. They maintained a religious “Black sacred cosmos” based on historical circumstances and necessity. According to these Lincoln and Mamiya (1990) "even in predominately white denominations with a million or more black members like the United Methodist Church (UMC) and the Roman Catholic Church, the surges and eruptions of the black sacred cosmos were constant and influential" (7). The establishment of the Central Jurisdiction was a clear indication of how essential recognition of racial difference and uniqueness would be to congregations like St. Paul. The segregation isolated them from their White counterparts but, on the other hand “one benefit of such a structure, it was argued, is that it would guarantee the election of black bishops. Thus, from 1939 to 1967, the Central Jurisdiction elected black episcopal leaders” (White 2008). The segregation allowed them to advance in particular ways that integration with White Methodists did not; it allowed them to have voting power at higher levels of the church. This sense of the significance of voting power was made evident in the congregation in other ways. This now substantially middle-class Black population included members of the Black medical and business community and their

political connections extended to the church. Dr. Lee Gresham (L.G.) Pinkston was one of these members.

Pinkston, a Mississippi native, and his wife Viola Maria arrived in Dallas in 1921. His first official position was as a physician in Walter Reed McMillan's Sanatorium, until he opened his own clinic in 1927. McMillan was also a St. Paul member. Pinkston opened the Pinkston Clinic Hospital at 3305 Thomas Avenue, in 1927 "to treat the black population of Dallas and provide a modern equipped medical institution for black doctors to practice and oversee their patients" (Phillips 1976).

Pinkston served patients from "as far north as Denison, south to Corsicana, west to Weatherford and east to Marshall. Patients also came to the clinic from other states including: California, Kansas, Illinois, Oklahoma, Michigan, New Jersey, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Tennessee" (Phillips 1976). "He was accepted in 1954 as a member of St. Paul Hospital, the first of five black doctors to receive the honor at that time, and remained in that position until his death in 1961" (Maxwell 2010). The clinic closed in 1961 after being the only black-owned and operated hospital in Dallas for 30 years.

Pinkston served on the Board of Trustees and the Board of Stewards at St. Paul. He was also a businessman, publisher, and community activist. He was president of the Negro Chamber of Commerce, president and publisher of the *Star Post Newspaper*, and president of Western Mutual Life Insurance Company. In 1936, he helped found the Democratic Progressive Voters League, "one of the oldest Black organizations in the state of Texas... organized to encourage blacks to pay their poll taxes and to vote for candidates who would address the needs of Dallas blacks," (Dulaney 2008) which held

some of its meetings at St. Paul. While serving as president and member of the executive committee, “[Pinkston] encouraged black Americans to unify their vote” (Dulaney 2008). “In 1954 he received the Dallas Citizen Council Award for his work in medical advancement, interracial achievement, and civic affairs” (Dulaney 2008).

As part of one of the most influential Black churches in Dallas, members of the St. Paul community were connected to the greater Black community in various other ways, including the Black film community. In 1941, actor, writer, and director, Spencer Williams Jr. shot scenes of his film, *The Blood of Jesus*, at St. Paul Church. Williams, famous for his role as Andy in the situation comedy *Amos 'n' Andy*, wrote, directed, and acted in a series of ten films in and around Dallas after he met Al Sack, Dallas-based film distributor and owner of Sack Amusement Enterprises, who offered to financially support the production of a series of feature films for Black audiences. His most famous film, *The Blood of Jesus*, features St. Paul’s church building, as well as performances by the St. Paul choir.

The film is about a Baptist woman (played by Cathryn Caviness of San Antonio), accidentally shot to death by her atheist husband (played by Williams). Her spirit is removed from her body and then goes on a journey, in which she must choose between Zion (heaven) and hell (an urban environment filled with juke joints and a tempestuous devil); and between Satan and God. She chooses Zion and is returned to her husband, who is sitting at her deathbed. Her survival is a Christian miracle. Movies like these not only served as entertainment for the Black community, but provided moral messages to Black Christian audiences, many of whom lived in Dallas. In 1991, *Blood of Jesus* was

selected for entry into the National Registry of Films and in 2007 was listed by *Time Magazine* as one of the 25 most important films on race.

St. Paul members were likely attracted to Williams' religious films and "the possibility and promise of individual transformation through Christian belief in the working of God's grace, the reality of the divine presence in the lives of individuals, and the assurance of just punishment for those who fail to commit to a life ordered by faith" (Weisenfeld 2007:95). Williams' film possibly provided escapes for many audience members affected by plaguing social problems. Still, it is unclear what attracted Williams to St. Paul. He seemed to be great at immersing himself in the communities with whom he worked (Jacqueline Stewart, personal communication) and could have personally known a St. Paul member who suggested the church as a location or could have been attracted to grandeur of the church at that time.

The 1941 Dallas Sanborn Insurance map shows that the planned church of 1921 had pretty much become a reality (Figure 2-5). The church remained at 2600 Juliette Street. It is a building of brick construction, mostly 2 stories, with a basement and auditorium. The entire building has composition roofing. The western and southern towers are 3 stories. There is also a sectioning of the choir from the vestibule (likely the seating area) and a choir room indicated. The walls are 12 inch thick and there are windows at the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor on the northeast elevation. St. Paul continues to have electric lighting with heating from gas and steam. The church is now 28 feet high from the ground to the roofline at its northwest elevation. The shape of the chapel is more streamlined than the 1921 Sanborn (Figure 2-5), meaning that changes from the design

plans were probably made. The 1941 church likely looked a lot like the present church on the exterior; the interior showcased its Allen Electronic pipe organ, visible in the film.

One St. Paul member told me that Williams had a crush on his grandmother, who is shown in the film, lightly suggesting that Williams could have had a female connection or female connections in the church or in Dallas.

Williams' film was probably an oasis in the desert for the St. Paul community with growing uneasiness surrounding problems of the First World War, racism, and lack of job and educational opportunities. Still, their pastor, Reverend W. Talbot Handy, Sr. was able to inspire the congregation to launch church and community programs and activities that would lead to the liquidation of the church mortgage. Their building was not truly theirs. A Mortgage Burning Ceremony was held on St. Paul's "Emancipation Day" in 1944.

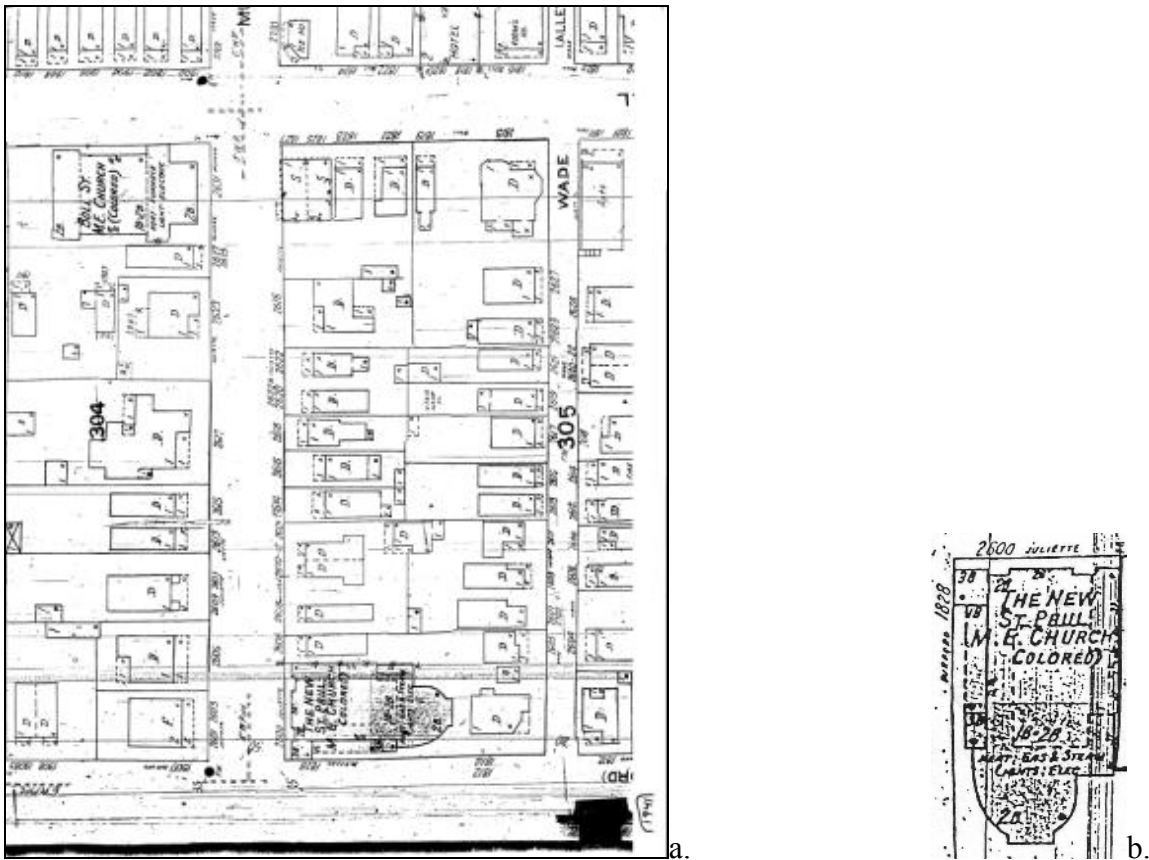


FIGURE 2-5. The Second Brick Church (1941): (a) The New St. Paul Methodist Episcopal Church (Colored) at the corner of Munger and Burford; (b) Close-up of The New St. Paul Methodist Episcopal Church (Colored).

Dedicated pastors like Talbot and determined members like L.G. Pinkston, were responsible for St. Paul’s structural development, as well as its prominent reputation among Dallas’s mid-twentieth century Black community. It not only served as a space for larger community events, but reflected a diverse group of Dallas Blacks working together to maintain a viable church institution. According to Moore (2003), “through prayer, determination, and commitment, the St. Paul Church family not only persevered, but prospered, both individually and collectively, epitomizing for many, the definition of

hope” This persistence continued and St. Paul flourished under the direction of Dr. I.B. Loud.

### **The I.B. Loud Years (1948 - 1980)**

In 1948, Dr. Ira Benjamin Loud, a native of Somerville, Texas, was assigned to St. Paul Church and served as its pastor for thirty-two years. He was a respected and persistent voice and active city leader in the 1950s and 1960s when public integration came to Dallas and the city seemed to escape much of the racial turmoil that boiled through the South, resulting from a combination of what seems to be accommodationist relationships between Black leaders and White city politicians and city leaders goals to not have Dallas exposed as a city which exploits many of its citizens, but as a city built by hard workers (White and male) who just happened to have a flare for business. In addition, women like Dallas Civil Rights activist, Juanita Craft, “helped keep Dallas peaceful during the turmoil that enveloped the Civil Rights Movement during the late 1960s” by “encouraging hope, education, and peaceful demonstrations...” (Decker 2008:161).

Like many Black Dallas leaders, Dr. Loud did not seem to be publicly vocal about race issues in Dallas, but he did promote integrationist policies for Black students in the ministry. “When the Perkins School of Theology opened its doors to blacks, his interest in seeing quality and theological education for minorities resulted in five students from that class going on to become outstanding ministers, and over 60 others entering the gospel ministry” (St. Paul UMC Designation Report, City of Dallas).

In 1952, five brave men (John W. Elliott, James A. Hawkins, James V. Lyles, Negail Rudolph Riley, and A. Cecil Williams) accepted the invitation to join the ranks of the entering class at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, “in the first voluntary desegregation of a major educational institution in the South”(Moore 2003:2). According to Cuninggim (1956:110), “at commencement in the spring of 1955 they received the first degrees that SMU had ever awarded to Negroes.” Lyles, Riley, and Williams did their fieldwork (now known as internship) at St. Paul. Williams became the pastor of Glide Memorial UMC in San Francisco, CA in 1963, when the church was a struggling mature, middle class. Williams opened the church to all classes, genders, and races, attracting a wide variety of members and hugely building the church congregation. Williams retired as pastor in 2000 and went on to become Glide's CEO and Minister of National and International Ministries. Glide Memorial has a present congregation of 10,000 and is the largest social service provider in the city. It was featured in 2006 Will Smith film, *The Pursuit of Happyness*. Williams and a host of subsequent Black seminarians bear testimony to the role of Dr. Loud and the St. Paul Church family in preparing and supporting Perkins’ Black seminarians.

Under Dr. Loud’s leadership, the St. Paul congregation also played a role in organizing other Methodist Churches in the metroplex: Carver Heights, Highland Hills UMC, Grand Prairie Trinity (now disbanded as an active congregation), Warren UMC, Crest-Moore-King Memorial UMC, and Hamilton Park UMC According to Wilson (1998) Loud played a significant role in the development of Hamilton Park by persuading Dr. Marshall T. Steel, pastor of the prominent Highland Park UMC, “to make the



Hamilton Park church a mission project as the Highland Park church had done ‘in other places throughout the city’. The Highland Park board of missions purchased the church property...for about 6,000. It granted the Hamilton Park congregation \$10,000 toward its first building and loaned it an additional \$10,000 for construction, with the Highland Park church paying the interest on the loan” (15). Reverend Loud became Hamilton Park’s first pastor, while serving a pastor of St. Paul. Zan Holmes, a young theology student during his internship at St. Paul, served as associate pastor prior to beginning his ten-year ministry at Hamilton Park.

Dr. Loud arranged for the purchase of the present Warren UMC, “organized Highland Hills United Methodist Church, and built Methodist West Park Apartments – 172 two and three bedroom apartments for low to moderate income families” (*Dallas Post Tribune*, 1973d). “To attempt to give recognition to the many contributions of Dr. Loud during his lengthy tenure as pastor is impossible. He left a legacy for his successors that will stand the test of time.” Cecil Williams called him called him ‘a man of all seasons’” (Moore 2003:2).

During Dr. Loud’s administration, St. Paul also saw changes in its relationship to the Methodist church. On April 23, 1968, the Methodist Church merged with the Evangelical United Brethren (EUB) and the Central Jurisdiction, forming The United Methodist Church, the second largest Protestant denomination in the U.S. The E.U.B. was a "similar church whose roots were among early German-speaking Americans, some of whom were contemporaries of the first American Methodists” (Murray 2004: xiv). This United Methodist Church also absorbed the Methodist Church’s Central

Jurisdiction, its segregated Black constituency. St. Paul, now a United Methodist Church, participated in this act of merger at the constituting General Conference in Dallas. St. Paul member Rhonda Elizabeth Renfro, then 8 year old daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Roy Renfro represented The Methodist Church, “along with a child from the EUB church,” (Kelly 1968) in the historic ceremony.

St. Paul was symbolic of reunification in the life of The Methodist Church, by providing a representative to this historic event. St. Paul also continued to build its own congregation by undergoing restorations in 1972. Unfortunately, it would also face harm that would serve as a reminder of how vulnerable a church community could be.

The St. Paul church community has remained active throughout its long history, even between 1973 and 1974, after a fire destroyed the church’s third floor business office. On November 11, 1973, the church building was damaged by fire, which “destroyed the church’s business office and damaged most furnishings in the sanctuary,” after the church had just undergone a \$75,000 renovation in the auditorium. Dr. Loud stated that historic church records stored in the business office were a total loss, including the original organization minutes of the church, files on the origin of Huston-Tillotson College, and member baptismal certificates. Arson was suspected and fire officials tentatively estimated the damage at not less than \$80,000” (*Dallas Post Tribune*, 1973b:1-2). According to the attending firemen, “...if they had been a few minutes later the entire building would have been destroyed” (*Dallas Post Tribune*, 1973b:1-2). A suspect carrying the Bible from the church’s pulpit was arrested, but no charges were

filed. Loud responded by “writing an article to be sent to each of his 1466 members entitle, -- ‘From Ashes to Beauty.’” (*Dallas Post Tribune*, 1973b:1-2).

The next year, repairs were completed and the church’s Allen Electronic Cathedral organ was restored. The first worship service in the newly decorated sanctuary was held Easter Sunday, 1974. Dr. Ira B. Loud died on December 19, 1984. The church’s I.B. Loud Fellowship Hall is him namesake.

### **St. Paul in the Arts District (1980 – 2007)**

Following Reverend Loud’s death, the St. Paul community seemed to focus on building its community initiatives, yet its local community was diminishing quickly. Although St. Paul seemed to continue “to blend smoothly into its future” (Moore 2003:3) big changes had been occurring in its surrounding neighborhood for a very long time and even bigger plans were in the works (discussed further in Chapter Three). “The section of Dallas in which the church is located was in an enormous revolution. The Arts District plans were on the drawing board, and the face-lifting of the community was well under way with office towers, condominiums, banks, and new freeways. Being in close proximity to Downtown Dallas made St. Paul’s vulnerability to change inescapable” (Moore 2003:4). St. Paul’s original neighborhood had all but disappeared and been destroyed by eminent domain, highway construction, and urban decay. St. Paul’s members were no longer connected to the church through its neighborhood, but through its culture and history.

The St. Paul Church stood as the lone reminder of the North Dallas Freedman's community within the midst of the Arts District's massive commercial development. Like many other historically Black institutions, St. Paul considered moving to another part of the Dallas metroplex. Unlike the other institutions, they chose to remain. They wanted to restore their building and solidified the decision by getting the city to recognize the church as a landmark. In addition, the church established their first library on the second floor of the building, another indication that the congregation had no intention of going anywhere. The Frederick M. Lange Foundation sponsored, in part, the establishment of this library, named for E.C. Ransom, a dedicated church member who was the first African American Conference Lay Leader in the North Texas Conference, and was elected delegate to the 1981 World Methodist Conference in Honolulu, Hawaii. The E.C. Ransom Memorial Library was dedicated on September 27, 1981. In March of 1982, the St. Paul United Methodist Church was designated a Dallas Historic Landmark. The formal plan for the Dallas Arts District was presented in August 1982. On October 17, 1982, the church celebrated the event as it unveiled the historic marker.

Under Pastor Ronald Henderson's leadership, the church community extended its arm to its developing community, delivering hot meals, clothing, and providing other social services to hundreds of people, and participated in events personifying a constructive, and necessary, relationship to its new neighbors. In 1985, the church played a major role in the planning and developing of the GOSPEL FESTIVAL, an annual event co-sponsored by the Arts District Friends, "a non-profit organization whose purpose is to provide and advocate broad-based public involvement in support of the Arts in the Dallas

Arts District” (*Arts District Friends* website). The premier performance attracted some 900 patrons. The church hosted this event for four years” (Moore 2003:3).

As in the past, the church community was also embedded in events occurring in its Mother Church. The North Texas Caucus of the United Methodist Church hosted the Black Methodist for Church Renewal National Convention (BMCR) in 1986.

Organizations such as BMCR were developed to assist Black congregations in dealing with economic and social justice issues as well as to help “expose latent and overt forms of racism in all local, regional, and agencies and institutions of The United Methodist Church” and “to act as an agitating conscience on all boards and agencies of The United Methodist Church in order to keep them sensitive to the needs and expressions of a “genuinely” inclusive and relevant Church” (*Black Methodists for Church Renewal* website). During this time, Bishop Leontyne Current Kelly, the first African American female Bishop in the United Methodist Church, preached at the opening Holy Communion Service at St. Paul, confirming the church’s commitment to supporting its leaders of African descent.

During this period, the church also set goals designed to intentionally recognize its significant role as a Black church in the Dallas Arts District, while recognizing a need for the church to incorporate cultural arts as an integral part of its mission. St. Paul became a church with a vision called “Renaissance 2000” incorporated in 1997 as a 501(c) (3) non-profit corporation. Renaissance 2000, Inc., was organized to restore and preserve the African American presence and influence in the Downtown Dallas community in partnership with the public and private sectors to enhance the arts, promote

economic development and respond to the social needs of the diverse and multi-ethnic community. The goals of Renaissance 2000 were to form and promote community based groups; enhance the appeal of the arts with development of creative and artistic resources for the African American tradition, uniting the poor and the affluent into dialogue and enrichment programs and developing economic empowering initiatives that would help preserve the African American history and revitalize economic growth. St. Paul was creating a new vision as a community, and arts institution, and so was the United Methodist Church.

At the 2000 UMC General Conference, a special event dedicated to “Acts of Repentance” for racist sins committed within the Methodist Church was sponsored by the United Methodist General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns (GCCUIC) and the Council of Bishops. The national caucus of Black United Methodists, some who were hesitant about the authenticity of the service of reconciliation, criticized the UMC for institutional racism (Burton 2001). In the first Act of Repentance, the UMC apologized to the historically Black congregations: the AME Church, the AMEZ Church, and the CME churches formed out of racist practices by the MEC during the 19th century, and were forgiven by the leadership of these historically Black denominations. “Wearing symbolic sackcloth patches and ashes, delegates sought to recapture the spirit of Methodism lost when some African Americans in the 18th and 19th centuries felt compelled to leave the church’s predecessor bodies and form their own congregations. Later, a constitutional Amendment, pledging work toward elimination of racism in

church organizations and policies, was proposed” (Lear 2000:2). Still, some observed that

in the Service of Reconciliation at the 2000 General Conference of The United Methodist Church, only elected delegates were seated on the main floor of the hall, while guests and observers were seated in an old-fashioned balcony encircling the hall. While a few key officials of the AME, AMEZ, and CME denominations were on stage, by default all the other guests of those denominations were seated in the balcony. This brought back memories of the days when Black Methodist members were relegated to separate entrances and to the balconies, while Whites sat downstairs and used main entrances, Black United Methodist elected delegates on the floor were forced to decide what course of action to take when they witnessed their Black sisters and brothers in the balcony—as well as when they realized that, among all the African American constituencies, *they* would not be mentioned. Their centuries of work to counter racism from *within* mainstream Methodism would not be recognized as part of the history leading up to reunion. United Methodism was treated as though it were a wholly White denomination in need of repentance. Ironically, some White delegates hugged Black delegates who kept their heads bowed in prayer while Whites confessed their sins. Few Whites realized that the sins were continuing at that very moment.” (Craig 2003: vii).

Those Blacks who remained in the mainline church were not included in the apology as the church "failed to engage black people who stayed in the "mother church" (Burton 2001). As a pastor of the Ben Hill United Methodist Church in Atlanta stated, "We need to clean our own house before we start reaching out to other folks" (Burton 2001). Four years later, at the 2004 General Conference, the second Act of Repentance included a service of appreciation for Black Congregationalists who remained a part of the mainline church. The 2008 General Conference extended these acts of repentance by calling on White United Methodists "to acknowledge their unearned privilege and seek to move beyond it" (General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, 2010).

Dr. Henry L. Masters carried St. Paul through the early period of Reconciliation and served until 2001 when Dr. Sheron C. Patterson became pastor. Dr. Patterson "was a trailblazer and champion of women's advancement" and the first African American woman to be ordained in the North Texas region of the United Methodist Church. Her spiritual leadership, relentless faith, and good works were noteworthy. Under her leadership, a million-dollar 'Restore Our Legacy' Capital Campaign was initiated at St. Paul" (Moore 2003:2). The UMC had some problems recognizing the significance of its Black congregations, but congregations like St. Paul capitalized on the strengths of their communities. St. Paul was increasingly becoming more enclosed by the Dallas Arts District, a district of novel and well-maintained buildings. The capital campaign was designed to help St. Paul's structure, the center of its community, fit in.



In the summer of 2002, James Davidson and Jamie Brandon, then doctoral students at UT Austin, began a historical and archaeological study of life in the late 19th century Freedman's Town. Davidson, Brandon, and UT professor Maria Franklin began the project by asking landowners in the Arts District if they could do archaeological excavations on the landowners' properties. St. Paul granted permission. It was in the midst of a capital campaign and any attention that could be drawn to the history significance of the building would be helpful. That same summer the UT archaeologists approached the community, the community allowed the field excavations to begin. When asked about St. Paul's preservation efforts in the Arts District, during the archaeological excavation at the church site in, Dr. Patterson said, "The city should not let all this beautiful history go to waste. This could be our arts church" (Dallas Diary 2002).

Following Dr. Patterson, local civil right activist, Reverend Leonard Charles Stovall, was assigned to St. Paul United Methodist Church in 2005. Shortly after his arrival, Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast. Under his leadership, St. Paul became headquarters for "Project Harambee," an ecumenical coalition for long-term community building with the survivors of Hurricane Katrina, which helped to serve hundreds of displaced families. The North Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church and the Hope Coalition also designated St. Paul as a Relief Resource Center. The St. Paul United Methodist Women's group was reorganized under his tenure.

St. Paul is the only historically Black institution in the Arts District which serves in the same capacity as its original development. The church community is now facing demands that stem from its determination to stay in place, while having to adjust to very

different surroundings and attitudes. The current Senior Pastor, Reverend Elzie Odom, Jr. was assigned to St. Paul in June 2006. He soon realized the church's need for more visibility in the Arts District and, as a result, has been integral in the church's recent renovation and restoration project, a development that has significantly changed St. Paul's circumstances. Dallas's affluent Highland Park United Methodist Church donated the bulk of financial resources needed to assist St. Paul with a renovation and restoration project. After these improvements, St. Paul will become the final historic building in the Arts District to restore its façade and interior.

**CHAPTER III**

**SEGREGATED LANDSCAPES, CULTURAL HERITAGE POLITICS, AND  
SILENCES: ST. PAUL AND DALLAS CITY PLANNING**

Things that disappear from sight are bound to disappear from the heart.

(Hamai Shinzō [1967] as cited in Yoneyama 1999:76)

Nearly five years prior to the brutal Mississippi murder of 14-year old Chicagoan Emmett Till and Rosa Parks' arrest in Montgomery, Alabama, one dozen homes owned by middle-class Blacks in Dallas were bombed. Till allegedly whistled at a White woman, Parks refused to give up her seat at the front of a segregated bus, and several Black Dallas families moved to majority-White neighborhoods for better housing opportunities. According to author Jim Schutze (1986) the Dallas Police Department arrested two half-brothers for the 1950-51 bombings, in order to appease the Black community so that Black citizens would not retaliate against White ones. The Citizens Council, the city's self-designated White ruling business elite, established a majority-White special grand jury which ultimately acquitted the men, citing lack of evidence, while comforting concerned factions of the Black community with an assurance that the bombings had stopped. The Black community had not received judicial justice, yet Black leaders seemed to accommodate the White business community, by accepting their guarantee, in order to maintain a relative semblance of peace.

This is a not just an American story, but a uniquely Dallas story. It is a story about a city plagued with racist ideologies, from its inception, while determined to silence those

who did not fit into its great White male master narratives. It is a story about an “obsessively image-conscious city,” encouraging what Dallas historian Michael Phillips refers to as “amnesia by design” (2006:3). History, at least the critical ones, reveals faults and weaknesses. Dallas’s master narrative has none. It wants to be “a city without a history” (Phillips 2006:3).

Most Americans are at least somewhat familiar with the city of Dallas, possibly with the famous television series of the same name; the Dallas Cowboys, “America’s team;” or as the city where President Kennedy was assassinated (Fairbanks 1998). When asked, however, to talk about Dallas’s significance in the Civil Rights Movement or its association with enslavement in America, many Americans would be stumped. The city of Dallas is, like other places in Texas, at the crossroads of the American South and the American West, often giving it the privilege to claim one region over the other, when convenient, while simultaneously denying unpleasant histories attached to both regions.

Too small in the 1860s and 1870s to merit extensive consideration in histories of the Civil War and Reconstruction, too Southern to be placed in the context of the great labor battles of the late nineteenth century, and too Western to be incorporated into monographs on the Southern desegregation struggle in the mid-twentieth century, Dallas stands as a postmodern Potemkin village—a façade behind which nothing stands (Phillips 2006:1).

Of course, Dallas has a history. Although a relatively young city, a lot of social and technological advancements were made in a short period of time; its population rapidly increased from its founding and continues to do so; and yes, in many ways it is the ideal American city. These are the stories that history tells and they do not include the intentional moves made by Dallas leaders to encourage these stories while suppressing others (Trouillot 1995). Dallas city leaders not only created histories, but also constructed and reconstructed the city in ways that would make the histories seem true. Dallas elites used strategic city planning as the vehicle through which many of these decisions were made to accomplish many of their goals.

In some ways, Dallas city planning reflects several other U.S. city planning policies, but unlike many, by the early-20th century, its business leadership fostered a unique brand of city management, affecting the city of Dallas as a whole, and ethnic groups in particular. It is under this civic leadership that the St. Paul church grew, while struggling to manage its place as a Black institution in a city run by a White business elite. St. Paul, like most other Black institutions in Dallas, had been subjected to being placed by others as well as locating itself within a racially stratified Dallas and continues to attempt to identify its place within its more recent urban space. St. Paul's story about one church's response to religious and secular persecution, and its subsequent survival, can be well understood within the context of Dallas city planning. In a more general sense, what is it about the city of Dallas that gave birth to freedman's communities with institutions like St. Paul? Further, how is it that Dallas allowed them to survive as parts of a cohesive Black community, and then watched them dismantle and partially reassemble

in other spaces? It is this chapter's goal to examine the development of the St. Paul church community as it relates to the larger history of city planning in Dallas. This chapter explores the neighborhood in which St. Paul developed, the events leading to the neighborhood's change, and how the church maintained a community within a changing landscape.

I explore the aforementioned issues by 1) establishing the racialized historical context within which St. Paul and other North Dallas Freedman's Community members contended with city planning, eminent domain, and gentrification, including the lack of suitable housing, segregation, racial violence, and the dismantling of black enclaves; 2) defining cultural heritage politics and providing an overview of how St. Paul, over the last 30 years, has employed it as a means of resistance to racism and gentrification, and as a strategy in redefining its identity and mission within the newer arts district; and 3) examining how historical production works hand in hand with site production in rendering silences of Black Dallas history and how Black Dallasites work to contest it.

The broader goals of this dissertation seek to address how historically Black cultural institutions endure in gentrified neighborhoods. For the St. Paul Church community, these developments began nearly 40 years ago, yet the structural foundations of Dallas city planning and urban development, which helped to make this gentrification possible, have been ongoing, since St. Paul's inception. The church community was necessarily born on the periphery of its mother city, as a primary means of survival outside of an impenetrable of White space. This chapter traces the historical processes

which initially brought St. Paul to the North Dallas Freedman's Town through the present day.

Also as part of the broader dissertation goals, this chapter specifically supplements comparative and regional gentrification studies to take a closer look at how a community, consisting of many former residents of a neighborhood, remain stakeholders in that neighborhood through a religious and cultural identity. Here, I consider what I believe is a necessary use of multidisciplinary approaches to this analysis, namely anthropology, political science theory, and historic preservation. This chapter is designed to examine gentrification as it relates to St. Paul, a site of history and archaeology, in ways that give readers the necessary contexts to determine the feasibility of public archaeology in this and similar contexts.

### **The City without a History**

The town of Dallas was founded in 1841 by John Neely Bryan, a Tennessee native who persuaded several families who had settled at Bird's Fort, "presently the site of the Tarrant County community of Birdville," (Cutrer 2008) to join him. Dallas's early Black population provided labor for farmers, such as those from Bird's Fort, who brought them to the area as enslaved property (Prior and Schulte 2000a: 57). By 1860, the population of Dallas was 678, with 97 Blacks (McElhaney and Hazel 2010), thanks to the influx of slave-owning families from Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and several other slaveholding states.

The year of 1860 was an interesting one for Dallas County. The Civil War was brewing and the county was in a slaveholding state. Yet, like many other Southern states, there were warring factions within. Several presumed abolitionists and anti-secessionists in the city were being persecuted for their beliefs. Subsequently, on July 8th, 1860, a fire originated at a county drugstore and spread to other nearby buildings, destroying most of the local businesses. Some townspeople blamed Northern abolitionists. Others thought that the fire was an accident. Several blamed a slave insurrection. There was very little circumstantial evidence for either of these, yet “a combination of economic, political, ethnic, and regional tensions, heightened by sensationalist journalism and fear over outside events like the John Brown raid...” (Phillips 2006:35) led to mass hysteria. As a result, two Iowa preachers were flogged and run out of town and three enslaved persons, Patrick Jennings, Sam Smith, and Cato were hanged. The next year Dallas voters chose to secede from the United States (McElhaney and Hazel 2010).

According to Phillips “the fire and subsequent violence against suspected abolitionists and anti-secessionists suggests how insecure Dallas elites had become about their grip on power as the Civil War began...” and “worried that the 1860 fire represented a dangerous revolutionary precedent, Dallas leaders tried to dampen its memory” (2006:34). Dallas city leaders memorialized the Confederate cause, with citywide commemorations, while silencing the civil wars within Dallas County and the secessionists, abolitionists, and enslaved persons who fought and gave their lives to oppose them. “Remembering that past could only raise disturbing questions about Dallas’s founders” and “to maintain its legitimacy, Dallas’ ruling bloc could not



acknowledge past political division” (Phillips 2006:34). The Confederate monument (dedicated in 1897) commemorated the deeds of Confederate soldiers, but it silenced the racist and segregationist circumstances that led to Dallasites’ participation in the Civil War. Per Phillips (2006:35):

the city landscape, littered with statues honoring the Confederate dead, suggested that Dallas had been the southwestern heart of Dixie. A fog surrounds a past marked by clashes between rich and poor and between secessionists and unionists so that in the twentieth century it seemed as if Dallas had been a nest of Johnny Rebs who unquestioningly followed their leaders to the battlefield. After the Civil War, few recalled the dissenters, black or white, who challenged the Dallas establishment, making sustained resistance in the future more difficult to imagine. Dallas elites failed to suffocate opposition through violence before the Civil War, but by the Postbellum period, they had learned an important lesson. The long difficult project of manufacturing consent had begun.

Although most Dallasites would be affected by this manufacturing of consent, in one way or another, Dallas Blacks who flocked to the city to benefit from its advancements would quickly find that they would become integral, and often unwilling, players in city leaders’ efforts to construct a city with no history; that is, no history of violence and oppression.

“Dallasites are taught that Dallas was a city with no reason for being—no port, navigable river, natural beauty that would draw immigrants there” and that “the city was

created solely as an act of will by the business leadership who turned a scrubby wilderness into a financial and cultural capital of the Southwest” (Davis 2006). This mythology excludes the thousands of Blacks, and others, who had settled near accessible railroads and waterways in Dallas County by 1875. For some, “the fertility of the soil and the nearness of Dallas to already-established Anglo settlements in East Texas made the area an ideal spot for a settlement” (Davis 2006). For Blacks, Dallas was a land of hope, yet a complicated one. Dallas County freedman’s communities, like the one in North Dallas, were ostracized from the city limits, yet flourished, nonetheless. They made places for themselves in a racialized space where none seemed to exist. It is within one of these places that the St. Paul United Methodist Church community began.

### **Segregated Landscapes**

Following the U.S. Civil War, many formerly enslaved Blacks left outlying plantation communities and relocated to large cities. They were looking for family members and prospects outside of sharecropping work encouraged by their former masters. Urban centers offered: 1) more employment opportunities, 2) some protection from unrestricted rural violence, 3) and spaces for segregated family members to reunite and gather (Prior and Schulte 2000a: 61). Further, they were often “closer to the freedman's bureaus established during Reconstruction” (Belkin 1990). Unfortunately, many freed persons were misled by the perceived promises of urban centers. White Americans still maintained *de facto* control and these urban centers were not immune to

violence and the attempts of former slave owners to restrict the movements of freed Blacks. According to James Davidson, during the Reconstruction era:

many freedmen and -women in the Dallas area were effectively barred entry into the town of Dallas itself owing to the passage of harsh vagrancy laws just months after emancipation, targeting freedmen with the threat of de facto slavery (imprisonment and hard labor) for up to half a year for each offense (Davidson 1999:22-23; Davidson 2000:23-24). To avoid arrest for lack of a job or a home, most blacks moving into North Texas area did not settle in Dallas proper, but instead formed their own communities adjacent to, but clearly outside of, the town (2004a:76).

The town of Dallas was initially ruled by an elite class largely made up of Anglo, Protestant slaveholders, landowners with large amounts of property, and merchants. In 1871, Dallas was incorporated as a city, and its recent economic developments soon reflected the new power of the merchant class which “expanded when a rail line reached the city in the early 1870s” (Phillips 2006:12). Along with these developments came overt racist hostility from local Whites who had little or no respect for the new Black citizens, and who had essentially expunged the Freedmen’s Bureau from Texas by 1869 (Crouch 1992; Prior and Schulte 2000b).

Dallas’s first Freedman’s Bureau agent, Captain William H. Horton, became enraged by hostile responses from many local Whites attempting to reassert their

supremacy by endorsing violence against freedmen and women. They later charged Horton with alleged corruption (Phillips 2006: 41). He was eventually removed from office. As a result, by the beginning of 1869, Reconstruction practically ended in Dallas, eight years prior to the end generally accepted by most historians, when President Rutherford B. Hayes withdrew federal troops from Southern states.

Racial conflicts continued and segregationist practices led to the development of a number of freedmen's communities in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Dallas, including Lower and Upper White Rock, Fields Community, Elm Thicket, The Prairie, Frog Town, 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Joppa, and the North Dallas Freedman's Town. Historians document "more than 30 black communities in early Dallas," who settled near waterways like the Trinity River and railways like the H&TC (Appleton 2002).

By 1870, the population of Dallas was about 3,000 and businessmen had begun to make economic expansion a priority. The key to this development was a feasible mode of transportation to carry regional products, like cotton and leather, from the region to manufacturing plants in the North and the East. The local Trinity River did not prove a navigable waterway, so business leaders focused on "securing rail service and succeeded in attracting the Houston and Texas Central in 1872 and the Texas and Pacific [T&P] in 1873, making Dallas one of the first rail crossroads in Texas" (McElhaney and Hazel 2010). The H&TC Railroad came to Dallas in 1872, bringing job opportunities for residents, including many unemployed Blacks. "Freedman's Town, located close to the railroads, experienced a population surge and an economic boost...African-American men frequently were hired for railroad construction work" (Prior and Kemper 2005:180).

Oral history asserts that Dallas Blacks were attracted to the slave cemetery (later known variously as Freedman's Cemetery, Colored Cemetery, and Negro Cemetery), now located nearly 2 miles northeast of downtown Dallas, although it is unknown whether the site was used for slave burials prior to 1869 (Davidson 1998; Prior and Schulte 2000a: 61). When Dallas was founded, its White residents, as well as enslaved Africans and their descendants, were buried in a true communal graveyard, known as the Old Dallas Burial Ground (Davidson 1998). The practice of burying Black and White residents in the early stages of a community's development was not an uncommon practice in many places like Dallas. Yet the Reconstruction Era, and its increasing urban populations, fostered more stringent forms of segregation. Less than 30 years after Dallas's founding, Freedman's Cemetery was established to take over as a burial ground for African Americans, while the graves of Whites were moved to the City Cemetery (Davidson 1998:1), creating segregated landscapes, not only in life but in death. Around the same time, many Blacks were moving just outside of the Dallas area to avoid "harsh vagrancy laws" that were established to limit their movements and keep them under control. The North Dallas freedman's community was born out of this urban social control; either Black citizens remained in Dallas and faced arrest and hard labor or created new spaces for themselves as a consequence of segregation.

Dolores Hayden revisits Lefebvre (1991) by concluding that "...one of the consistent ways to limit the economic and political rights of groups has been to constrain social reproduction by limiting access to space" (1995:22). Dallas exemplified this practice. . Black communities were produced in particular spaces on the peripheries of

White communities, and the city's infrastructure shortly began to mark their terrain and affect their quality of life with the construction of the new railways. With the new railways, also came greater populations. By 1880 the population of Dallas had more than tripled, to 10,385 (McElhaney and Hazel 1010).

The newly freed community was attracted to the H & TC and the T&P railroads that stimulated economic growth and development in Dallas, simultaneously expanding the power of Dallas's merchant class (Phillips 2006) and significantly affecting the development of Black communities like the North Dallas Freedman's Town, situated about one mile north of the intersecting tracks. "With the depot close by, Freedman's Town residents benefited from increased wage-earning opportunities as railcars transported men and women to outlying farms to perform day labor, and the railroads themselves generated jobs" (Prior and Schulte 2000b: 72).

By the late 1800s the city's politics were dominated by unstable coalitions of small business owners, bankers, industrial leaders, and newspaper publishers. These ruling blocs vied with growing trade unions, populists, and socialists for control of city hall. Leaders in the banking and insurance industries closely interacted with city officials and soon "launched the State Fair of Texas, organized a board of trade, and founded a merchants exchange to promote the city's favorable business climate" (McElhaney and Hazel 2010). Dallas continued to grow in wealth and population, with 38,067 residents by 1890, but soon suffered from the failure of three banks in the Panic of 1893, which was ironically caused by financial and logistical indiscretion in the railroad industry. When

the national economy began to recover three years later, so did Dallas's economy which soon attracted even more residents.

By 1905, Dallas's population was nearly 43,000 and city leaders hoped to increase the population even further. Three years later, a destructive flood caused the city to think more about its planning initiatives, most of which derived from the National City Beautiful Movement, a reform movement intended to promote civic order and a better quality of life through the beautification of cities (e.g., parks and city centers). Dallas upper-class merchants, bankers, and businessmen solicited the help of George F. Kessler, one of the nation's leading planners, to lead this initiative. The Kessler Plan (1912) solved flooding problems with the design for the Trinity River levee system, constructed decades later. In addition, "it sought to consolidate a rail system that was choking downtown and advocated straightening and standardizing the city's often chaotic streets. The plan also recommended a system of parks, boulevards and playgrounds" (Flick 2008). One of Kessler's recommendations would eventually become the Central Expressway, a link between the northern and southern parts of the city, although the southern part was never built.

Although Kessler's plans were deemed successful in several other cities:

...in Dallas, unfortunately, growth overwhelmed the comprehensive idea of the City Beautiful Movement. Physical sprawl and the automobile soon rendered the Kessler Plan obsolete...All too often [city leaders] glorified the growth that planning was supposed to accommodate. In the years after World War I - the

heyday of the “city practical” or “city scientific” - the richly varied City Beautiful ideal was discarded in favor of little more than traffic control, utilities regulation, and recreation management (Wilson 1983:260).

Dallas’s population continued to grow and so did city leaders’ desires to “manage” it.

Into the early 1900s, Black and White immigrants were attracted to the North Dallas area for a variety of reasons. The city-improved living conditions in the area, the additions of new tracts of land, newspaper advertisements promoting the area, and the rail transportation system appealed to many of them. Black immigrants were also attracted to the areas of North Dallas already settled by other Blacks, like the North Dallas Freedman’s Town. Some Blacks lived among White residents in North Dallas, yet were restricted by racist social norms, prevalent in the South, limiting their social interaction outside of their roles as laborers for affluent Whites in surrounding communities. On the other hand, Freedman’s Town residents and residents of the greater North Dallas area associated on several social levels and developed cultural institutions to meet their needs. Dallas Blacks were often restricted from admission to White institutions and, as a result, established their own schools, fraternal organizations, businesses, benevolent societies and churches.

Their movements were further restricted by the resurgence of the “murderous and ruthless” (Phillips 2006:89) Ku Klux Klan in the post-World War I era. The Dallas chapter soon became the largest in Texas, even claiming a Dallas dentist, Hiram Wesley Evans, as the district leader and later imperial wizard, who “...led a group of Klansmen



who forcibly removed Alex Johnson, a black bellhop, from the Adolphus Hotel and wrote ‘K.K.K.’ on his forehead with acid” (Maxwell 2010). The Klan lacked some support in the city not due to its anti-Black stances, but its anti-religious rhetoric, which offended Dallas Catholics and Jews, many who were part of Dallas’s business elite, the city’s controlling factor. According to Phillips (2006:96) there was some Jewish collaboration with the Klan, mostly second generation, who supported Klan members as sizeable consumers, whether they disliked Jews or not. The new Klan recruited members from Dallas’s upper class, which included banker Robert Lee Thornton (namesake for the E R.L. Thornton [I 30] and S R.L. Thornton [I 35E] Freeways).

Thornton helped to organize the Dallas Citizens Council, a clique of real estate magnates, downtown department stores owners, bankers, manufacturers, insurance company executives, and owners of utilities and media outlets, that for three decades determined who held political office in the city (Phillips 2006:12-13). In *The Accommodation: the Politics of Race in an American City* (1986), Jim Schutze revealed how the racist practices by the Dallas Citizens Council heavily influenced Dallas city politics and the rights of people of color, especially Black Dallasites, throughout the Civil Rights Era. The Citizens Council eventually followed up on Kessler’s plan to resolve problems with the Trinity River floodplain, and the dam construction justified through the project led to the clearance of land inhabited by low-income Blacks through eminent domain.

According to Schutze (1986), Dallas elites wanted to suppress overt racial tensions, so they evaded bad press and attempted to contain overtly racist activities in the

city. To them, Dallas was to be seen by others as a pristine city without the conflicts more prevalent in other Southern cities and with a business leadership capable of keeping things in order. Their effort to conceal the angers of Black Dallasites responding to unfair housing practices, and the resulting violence, is one example.

Through eminent domain, for the first time in American history, the government was able to legally take private property away from some citizens by force and sell it to other private citizens. In 1950, the Dallas Chamber of Commerce unveiled a plan which included the removal of “black residents to a concentration of public housing, and...resell [of] the neatly dried out, plumbed and de-Africanized land to private parties for development” (Schutze 1986: 63). Moreover, the federal House Appropriations Committee subsidized the city government operations. The basic premise for this “slum clearance” or “Negro removal” “was that the removal and subsequent concentration of blacks in government-run urban camps, or “projects,” “...was in and of itself a positive social good of such obvious benefit that it merited bending the concept of private property a little...” (Schutze 1986: 63). The planners were able to remove poor Black folks with seeming ease, although the movement had resulted in massive overcrowding. Yet planners also found the removal of those Blacks who could afford to rent or buy elsewhere somewhat problematic.

Low-income Blacks were more easily disregarded by the council; the ejection of middle-class Blacks was more complicated. During the mid-twentieth century, middle-class Black Dallasites continued to move into White neighborhoods as Whites steadily moved out. The Interracial Committee of the Dallas Chamber of Commerce, made up of

25 white men and “five invited black guests” called “the black housing shortage the single most important cause of the city’s racial unrest” and called “on city government and the business community to do something about it immediately” (Schutze 1986: 11). Unfortunately, the city government was largely responsible for the housing shortage and an oft willing participant in the removal of Black communities from their homes into useless, crowded developments.

As previously mentioned, in 1950, homes owned by middle-class Blacks who immigrated to South Dallas were bombed and the city “was in serious danger of racial warfare” (Schutze 1986: 5). This occurred after several Black families moved to majority-White neighborhoods in South Dallas when “there simply were no new homes available for most black buyers in black neighborhoods” or the available ones were located in inhumane slums “slated for some kind of legal hocus pocus by which the white people would render black-held property deeds into dust” (Schutze 1986: 12). Two half-brothers were arrested for the bombings as the result of White-expected retribution from Blacks. The bombings stopped, but racial dissension remained.

These were not the first racially incited bombings in Dallas. The bombings began when many Blacks moved into Dallas for post- World War II economic opportunities. For the past decade, the city of Dallas had experienced a severe shortage of housing for its Black residents, because there were a scarce number of spaces in which Blacks could safely live. After bombings in the 1940s, “the city had gone in under some color of the law, now very obscure, and had bought away the homes of black people who had made the mistake of buying property in white neighborhoods...In 1944, the city announced

proudly that it had turned a tidy profit on several of the properties it had taken from blacks and resold to whites” (Schutze 1986: 9).

Also as a result of the bombings, all-Black subdivisions like Hamilton Park were founded. The neighborhood was also established partially as a response to a 1953 bond election that led to the “decision to demolish housing in black neighborhoods for the expansion of the municipal airport, Love Field” (Wilson 2010). The city of Dallas revealed that the land on which a Black neighborhood of single-family homes, near Love Field, stood would “be taken under right of eminent domain...” (Schutze 1986: 12). This is stated below:

In his 1986 account of the Dallas bombings, Schutze describes how the city of Dallas misused the right of eminent domain to seize land from a Black single-family residential neighborhood and profited by re-selling the land to Whites. The city’s announcement that the property would be used for airport expansion caused the market values to plummet. The Black homeowners, as expected, had difficulties selling their properties at what were considered reasonable rates, because potential buyers knew that the property was going to be condemned. In this case, the city of Dallas announced that property was being taken for public use, which U.S. eminent domain law allows as long as compensation to the property owners is just (The Constitution of the United States, Amendment 5). The city of Dallas seemingly announced that the property was to be condemned so that there was not much of a chance that the property would be purchased by anyone other than the city of Dallas. When the Black property owners could not sell at feasible values, the properties were bought by the city, who later resold them to White

buyers for private use. It seems that the city fooled Black property owners into thinking that eminent domain would take place so that the owners would feel forced to sell. It created a loophole in the federal eminent domain mandate.

Prior to the bombings and Love Field removal, Dallas city leaders and Black residents made attempts to negotiate the housing shortage for Black Dallasites. Hamilton Park was one solution resulting from a proposal made by theater magnate and philanthropist, Karl S. J. Hoblitzelle, after he told the trustees of his foundation about “the desperate need of the negroes of Dallas for housing” (Wilson 2010). Hoblitzelle’s foundation lent the Dallas Citizen’s Interracial Association, established by the Dallas Chamber of Commerce and the Dallas Citizens Council, money to purchase 233 acres for Hamilton Park. This proposal followed a suggestion to establish a Black subdivision on a “riverbottom” site, which was refused by Black citizens, while the most appealing projects were curtailed by neighboring White landowners. According to Schutze, “one of the worst of the legacies of slavery and Reconstruction had always been a light regard for black property rights, and the city of Dallas tended to show utter contempt for black ownership whenever and wherever there was pressure to remove a black population from the path of white settlement” (1986: 11). These city planners had much help from the federal government.

Prior to the development of the Roseland Homes public housing project, the North Dallas Freedman’s Town had become very overcrowded, deteriorated, unsanitary, and lacked many public services. The neighborhood was landlocked by other neighborhoods that were either too costly for Black residents to live in or dominated by

White communities who strongly objected to Black neighbors. Some middle-class Blacks moved to outlying neighborhoods as Whites “flew” to neighborhoods in other parts of the city. White Dallasites had other places to go, but most Blacks were financially and socially constrained to the North Dallas neighborhood which became increasingly overpopulated. Community and government leaders attempted to resolve the overpopulation problems within the racist and segregationist politics which characterized the neighborhood as an uninhabitable slum. In many ways, through overcrowding and a lack of city services and maintenance, it had become just that.

Blacks were unwanted in non-Black neighborhoods and their options were very limited. Some Blacks who tried to buy homes in neighborhoods previously inhabited by Whites faced mob violence and bombings. The Roseland Homes housing project became one answer to the city leaders’ problems since a large number of poorer Blacks could occupy this limited space, with “better” conditions, at the expense of those Blacks whose property would become the location for the new housing project. Roseland was one of the earliest federal housing projects in the country and the first in Dallas. In order to build Roseland, the city condemned private land for public use, paying below-market rates to many of the 100 Black property owners, leaving them at a disadvantage when trying to find new homes. Moves such as these were made possible by the 1937 U.S. Housing Act which provided federal funds to states for public housing construction, during which states employed eminent domain in order to demolish or modernize existing homes, as required by the federal act. These segregationist policies did not set aside a new space for the residents, but razed the homes of many families against their wills, and at unfair

prices. Roseland Homes would be a new residential structure but in the same restricted Black space. For the displaced homeowners, Roseland Homes was a quick and immoral fix to the housing problems. It became a sanctuary for poorer residents who simply needed a decent place to stay and who were not privileged enough to challenge racism. A lack of suitable housing was a major problem in the North Dallas neighborhood, stemming from the lack of safe spaces for Blacks to live within the city of Dallas. There was even more instability in those Black spaces, as homes were seized by eminent domain further compounding the problem of available and suitable housing. The homes of 100 Black families were destroyed in the process and the proceeding construction of the North Central Expressway and the Woodall Rodgers Freeway, would further the destruction of the North Dallas Freedman's Town community.

The destruction of homes was harmful to the stability of the North Dallas neighborhood as it also led to the decline in businesses and social and cultural institutions. The highways strongly impeded the ability of residents to move from one space to another and many institutions suffered as a result. Residents who patronized local businesses and places of worship, partially due to their accessibility, were compelled to stay on their sides of the highway. Mobile transportation was now needed to travel to many parts of the neighborhood and cultural institutions suffered as a result.

The neighborhoods also suffered from the displacement of many residents who voluntarily left the overcrowded neighborhoods to search for housing elsewhere or were evicted due to eminent domain, or the renters' choice to sell. The North Dallas landscape changed severely "with serious consequences for the social and economic dynamics

essential to the community's solidarity for nearly 80 years” (Prior and Kemper 2005:191). The highway construction was indicative of a thriving Dallas economy, which led to the development of the Dallas Arts District, just north of the downtown central business district and adjacent to the Woodall Rodgers Freeway (See Figure 3-1). Similarly, other historically Black communities like Little Egypt, Frogtown, and the Prairie gave way to development in northeast Dallas, the West End business district, and the I-30/I-45 interchange, respectively.





Figure 3-1. One Arts Plaza Walking Map - Includes The Dallas Arts District and Downtown. Woodall Rodgers Freeway runs between the Arts District and Uptown. Original Image Cropped by Author. (1ARTSPLAZA.COM)

### *In the Neighborhood*

Throughout the developments in the North Dallas Freedman's Town, St. Paul went from a congregation of the neighborhood to one in the neighborhood (McRoberts 2003: 124). Here, I draw from sociologist Omar McRoberts' analysis of the racial and economic shift that hit the Four Corners area of Boston during the 1960s, describing how urban renewal presented challenges and opportunities for religious organizations and other institutions in the area, sending "older churches into identity crises" (McRoberts 2003:51). According to McRoberts (2003:50), "the racial turnover put considerable pressure on preexisting churches. As the face of the neighborhood changed, these old institutions faced firsthand the four options outlined in the classic religious ecology studies: move, adapt, become a 'niche' or metropolitan church, or fade away altogether." These institutions were no longer supported by their local neighborhoods which were largely responsible for their growth and development. They were now located in new neighborhoods made up of different communities, with differing goals and intentions.

St. Paul's community chose to stay in their changing neighborhood. The community could have taken on the identity of a "niche" church, which Ammerman and Farnsley define as one "relatively disconnected from the immediate neighborhood in which it is located" (1999:157) yet the St. Paul Church community did not plan to re-identify itself within the context of a larger community outside of the former freedman's town or the new arts district. This would mean developing a congregation outside of the neighborhood, based on a demographic that could be drafted from all parts of the city (e.g. a LGBT or a particular immigrant population). This would not be very feasible for a

church community which grew from an established neighborhood and was part of a denomination which had several churches throughout the metroplex serving similar congregations. According to the four alternatives, this left one option: adaptation, in which the church community intentionally chose to be more connected to the neighborhood.

The church community was in the midst of identity crises. “Ultimately it is the purpose and quality of connections within and among churches, and between churches and secular organizations that matters for the development of neighborhood institutional infrastructure. The latter requires that churches identify with neighborhoods in mission if not in membership and establish peaceable interinstitutional relationships that reconcile their divergent attachments to the neighborhood” (McRoberts 2004: 135). St. Paul's new neighborhood was the Dallas Arts District and all that came with it.

According to former resident and freedman's history advocate, Dr. Robert Prince, the once modest, yet thriving, [North Dallas] community was “...bought up and leveled in the speculative real estate bubble of the 1970's” (Prince 1993:31-32). By the 1980s, the North Dallas freedman's community no longer existed. As reported by St. Paul's church historian, around this time “sadly, the once proud, close-knit neighborhood had all but disappeared. Eminent domain, highway construction, and urban decay destroyed the church neighborhood, and many families moved to other areas of the [Dallas] metroplex” (Moore 2003:4). Urban anthropologist Robert V. Kemper adds that, “black residents were forced out of the area and the land remained vacant until the housing and apartment markets began to recover in the late 1990s” (2005:1).

Some members of the St. Paul UMC community, the oldest Black Methodist congregation in Dallas, say that they, their friends, and families, were affected by similar circumstances. These circumstances proceeded a long and vibrant church history as one of the premier institutions in the Dallas freedman's community and initiated the church's present place in what is now the largest art district in the U.S, as well as what is now referred to as the historic State Thomas neighborhood (formerly North Dallas). The church's story provides an interesting and complex space for discussing how this church community, located in a highly gentrified neighborhood, survived without its neighboring community and strategically employed its historic significance to do so.

### **Cultural Heritage Politics**

Even prior to the arrival of the UT Austin archaeologists, the St. Paul Church community had a history of engaging the historic preservation of Black Dallas. In the early 1980s, the church worked to get a city historical marker, and later in that decade many church members were involved in efforts to preserve the historic Freedman's Cemetery. In 2002, historic archaeology began at the church site, only after church leaders saw the potential benefits of this work to the church's greater goals of improving its visibility in the Arts District. In Chapter I, I discussed the events surrounding the development of the 2002 UT-Austin field investigation. Below, I present these two examples to set the historical context for the church's cultural heritage politics in the public realm.

### *St. Paul as a Dallas City Landmark*

In March of 1982, the St. Paul UMC received historic landmark designation from the City of Dallas, showing the church's dedication to stay put and proving their awareness that "it is almost impossible to really halt demolitions [in the City of Dallas] unless a property is designated as a city landmark or part of a designated district" (Jones 2006). Offers for the church property had been made and refused by the church community. Their landmark status can be viewed as an additional protective measure, as they occupied a space becoming increasingly more economically valuable. I argue that the church community's devotion to the preservation of their building indicated their willingness to utilize a politics of Black heritage designed to commemorate displaced members (structural and human) of their community and later to assist the church community with becoming more visible in the Dallas Arts District, changing at a pace more rapid than they could have possibly imagined. So did church member dedication to a "proper" memorialization of the Freedman's Cemetery

### *Freedman's Cemetery Preservation*

Many of the St. Paul Church members became familiar with the power of promoting a historic heritage in the late 1980s when they became integral in the recovery of the Freedman's Cemetery, the primary burial ground for practically every African American between the years 1869 and 1907 (Davidson 2005).

When constructing the southern end of the North Central Expressway, the city paved over one acre of the Freedman's Cemetery. At this point, most of the laws

protecting archaeological sites were not in place, and those sites inhabited by underrepresented populations (e.g. African Americans, Native Americans, impoverished European immigrants) were continuously at risk. When interviewed, Dr. Prince stated that the primary development of the railroad in the 1870's covered up "many of the graves"; highway construction in the 1940s simply covered up more (Belkin 1990). Prince added that his family was offered \$10 for each family member they could prove "to have been moved or destroyed during the construction" (Belkin 1990).

In the late 1980s, preparations began for the widening of a ten-mile stretch of the expressway, including the part that ran alongside the Freedman's Cemetery. The remnants of the Freedman's Cemetery would not be publicly recognized until "... a preliminary walking survey of threatened cultural resources performed by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) identified the remaining intact portion of Freedman's Cemetery" (Davidson 1999:1). Jerry Henderson, the archaeologist overseeing the highway survey, noticed that part of the area being investigated was the site of a former cemetery, as evidenced by a sign at the site (which at the time was a park) stating that information (Belkin 1990). Freedman's Cemetery was founded on April 29, 1869, and remained open and received interments up to July 26, 1907. For nearly all of its history, the Freedman's Cemetery served as the primary public burial ground for African Americans residing in Dallas and became the final resting place for over 7,000 of Dallas's African-American residents. Ms. Henderson alerted the state authorities about her sighting. She knew that "Texas law simply required that the graves be moved, but

that before that was done she wanted to excavate the entire area” (Belkin 1990). The Texas Department of Transportation brought in archaeologists to do the work.

During the highway construction planning, Black Dallas leaders warned that widening the expressway would infringe on the cemetery. Black leaders rallied to prevent more damage after the TxDOT highway excavation crew unearthed remains revealing that the freeway was constructed over hundreds of graves in the 1940s. A majority of the archaeologists were White and some members of the Black community felt disregarded in initial efforts to investigate the cemetery. There were many other issues surrounding these excavations, including the necessity of the expansion in the purported area, how archaeologists previously handled the removal of “grave goods,” and why the greater Black Dallas community had not been involved in many decisions surrounding the excavation. Ensuing debates resulted in an eleven-year battle to save the cemetery.

Between November 1991 and August 1994, excavations at the Freedman's Cemetery site covered nearly an acre. Archaeological investigations resulted in the exhumation, documentation, and analysis of 1,150 burials (Condon et. al 1998; Davidson 2005). The remains were removed and about 1500 bodies were relocated on land that had become a park and playground in 1965. Various responses from the Black community eventually resulted in the construction of a memorial for those interred in the cemetery and the realization that any efforts to ensure the survival of Black historic institutions and sites in Dallas would have to be done by members of the Black community.

### *Freedman's Cemetery Memorial*

The effort to preserve the cemetery began in 1989 when Black Dallas Remembered, a nonprofit established in 1983 to preserve and promote Black Dallas history, and other Black leaders rallied to prevent more damage. Through the efforts of the historical society and others, the Freedman's Cemetery has gone from a space for venerating the deceased to a place of healing. "The 7-foot tall bronze African figures of a male warrior and female storyteller overlook busy Central Expressway, a freeway whose expansion incited the Black community to save the burial place of thousands of former slaves. On the other side of the 20-foot granite arch leading visitors into Freedman's Cemetery are high-relief images of a Black man and woman in chains, their faces covered - a symbolic reminder that slaves lost their personal identities" (*Amarillo Globe News* 1999).

In addition to the bronze sculptures, the memorial includes a polished granite slab containing the poem "Here," written by the collaborating poet for the project, Nia Akimbo. Detroit artist David Newton, a graduate student at New York Academy of Art, created the sculptures. When his design was selected from 73 entries in a national competition, Newton said it's rare that a black sculptor gets to undertake a work that reflects his own heritage and history. From his Dallas studio Newton noted: "...African-Americans very seldom get to control their own images and tell their own story, especially in public monuments" (*Amarillo Globe News* 1999).

Black Dallas Remembered, Inc. assisted the community in the collection and publishing of family and community histories, as well as in advocating the cause of some



historic buildings and other key sites in the city, such as Freedman's Cemetery. Many members of the St. Paul Church participated in the Black heritage politics surrounding the Freedman's Cemetery Memorial. Although members of the Black community were no longer residents of the former freedman's community of North Dallas, many of them participated in the fight to reclaim a site which represented the plight of their ancestors. Most of the members of the St. Paul Church community no longer reside in North Dallas, but have chosen to remain members of the church. The church is one of the few reminders of a too often forgotten pioneer community. They shared roles as part of a church community, and their connections to the greater Dallas Black community strengthened. They had once saved their space in North Dallas history by receiving historic landmark status in the 1980s and then helped to memorialize their ancestors buried in the Freedman's Cemetery. This community's work did not end there.

### *Archaeology*

In reaction to changes to its cultural environment, the St. Paul community had to be strategic in how it chose to identify with this new community, which was not going anywhere. In fact, it was growing quickly. By 2002, when the UT archaeologists arrived in the Dallas Arts District, St. Paul was one of the few remaining historic site properties from the traditional North Dallas Freedman's Town and there was considerable urban and commercial development, along with mounting property values. The church community was making some difficult decisions about how to remain viable and how to preserve its building and heritage, just as it made a commitment to do so 20 years earlier.

Unsurprisingly, the church continued to make its cultural heritage a priority. They took a major step in allowing the archaeologists to excavate on the church property.

In return, the archaeologists took a major and necessary step by working with the St. Paul community prior to doing any excavation work. They began by presenting the field school ideas to governing members of the congregation and then solicited input from them. The archaeologists made the field school a cooperative effort between the people who worked on the site and the people who used the site. After the archaeologists made first contact, the St. Paul community continued working with them because they demonstrated patience and responsiveness.

The archaeologists' interactions made congregants who were initially wary of archaeologists more trusting and willing to work with the outsiders. Before archaeologists came to the church community, the congregation had been exposed to the Freedman's Cemetery archaeological work that many of them perceived as discourteous. Certain prominent and respected members of the Dallas Black community made statements indicating that they opposed the St. Paul excavations. It is likely that they opposed more excavations because they felt archaeologists mishandled excavations of the Freedman's Cemetery, and that the UT archaeologists would be no different. At that time, St. Paul's congregation chose to overlook some of these issues and decided to give the archaeologists the opportunity to excavate. At that moment, they intentionally chose to politically mobilize for their historic preservation.

### *The Political Environment*

Political scientist Eric McDaniel discusses “the political mobilization of Black churches” and how this mobilization occurs “when four conditions are met: the pastor is interested in involving his or her church in politics; the members are receptive to the idea of having a politically active church; the church itself is not restricted from having a presence in political matters; and the current political climate both necessitates and allows political action” (2008:5). McDaniel further argues that all of these factors must be negotiated, and that the failure to negotiate influences and compromises the levels at which a church can remain politically active. McDaniel defines a political church as one that “holds political awareness and activity as salient pieces of its identity” (2008:11).

I argue that St. Paul is a political church, which deploys heritage politics, the application of racial, ethnic, cultural and/or national identification in the present and for the present, as a vehicle for maintaining its traditional place in downtown Dallas. In this dissertation, I make use of the term heritage politics, as it relates to the intersection of cultural heritage and historic preservation, and the use of “politics of the past” (Gathercole and Lowenthal 2003). St. Paul gives significance to its cultural heritage, which allows the church to mobilize and activate it in particular ways. Its more recent pastors and members have been involved in this deployment of heritage politics and St. Paul’s current environment necessitates this activity. Although the church has financial and other resource constraints, the very nature of its heritage politics gives the community access to financial support that more radical political activities might jeopardize. For example, in the spring of 2007, St. Paul and its sister church, Highland

Park, initiated a major project to restore and renovate St. Paul's historic facility after Highland Park offered to cover 3.5 million of the 5.1 million dollars needed for renovation expenses.

St. Paul is also political, in the sense that it has established a mission outside of the "main objective," of churches which McDaniel states is the facilitation of salvation or saving souls (2008:11). St. Paul states its mission to "be a diverse Christian Community that utilizes the Arts in proactively building the Kingdom of God by seeking and making disciples for Jesus Christ through nurturing and care, outreach and evangelism, and witness and worship ... ALL to the Glory of God." Although St. Paul's mission may be understood or interpreted as that of saving souls, it is a "hybrid organization" which identifies with something other than its innately religious goals. It not only wants to seek and make disciples, but also does this as a diverse, arts church. According to McDaniel, "members of a church will recognize facilitating salvation as the core attribute of the organization but may also see a connection to adopt a political identity" (2008:11). St. Paul began to politically identify as an Arts Church as a response to its changing environment. According to McDaniel, a church's environment is the most important factor in the negotiation process that causes a church to become a politicized one. As previously stated, due to changes in St. Paul's neighborhood, it went from a congregation *of* the neighborhood to one *in* the neighborhood (McRoberts 2003:124; emphases added).

When I first visited St. Paul in 2002, one of the church's goals was to make St. Paul's history more visible to visitors to the Arts District who take the Arts District Stroll, a private guided tour of the history and architecture of the district, and potentially make

the church community a more diverse one, by targeting the Arts District's mostly non-Black residents and visitors. The St. Paul Church community took an adaptive stance to help ensure its survival by revamping their mission statement and creating a strategic plan designed to increase the church's membership and make the church more visible in the Arts District. The goals of the strategic plan included advertising church events to the larger Dallas community and tapping into government (financial) resources.

This goal brought on many significant changes and issues for the Church, along with pertinent questions like: 1) would the church feasibly survive as a Black institution, 2) would the church community adapt to its new environment, and 3) would a more inclusive congregation change the very nature of what it means to be a Black church? More importantly, could the church afford to adapt to its new neighborhood and attract this new membership?

Some members of the church community leaned towards adaptation, while other members, many of them elders, seemed to want to maintain more traditional practices. The church's pastor was one of the promoters of the "adapt to change" concept. She hoped to refine and embrace an "Arts Church" concept, which would redefine St. Paul as *the* church of the Dallas Arts District. Some members, who approached adaptation with a "change or die" perspective, agreed with the pastor. Others were cautious that the church would lose its traditional identity. It was critical for church members to approach those new challenges, hoping to gain new members without isolating its present membership. This was no simple task.

One of the church's initial moves was to create an Arts Coordinator, who would connect St. Paul to the Arts District. The Arts Coordinator, at that time, was a member of the Arts District Friends, whose mission is "to champion the Dallas Arts District, by enlivening and promoting the District as a place for people." Their mission statement further reads:" The Arts District Friends also aim to raise awareness and appreciation for the Arts District and the institutions that enrich it, through a variety of programming and marketing initiatives" (taken from *The Arts District Friends Website*). The Arts Coordinator hoped to develop a fruitful relationship with the Arts District through arts programming as an integral part of the church's indoctrination. Although the St. Paul Church community was the oldest living reminder of North Dallas's early history, it had not yet been a significant focus in the Arts District community.

Members of the St. Paul community once protected their church by attaining historic landmark status in the 1980s and helped to reclaim the Freedman's Cemetery in the 1990s. Many of them were familiar with the power of having a historical legacy and maintaining a historic identity. The St. Paul Church community served as "Mother Church" to five other communities. Visitors of these church communities visited St. Paul hoping to attain more knowledge of its history. Very little of this information was evident.

The St. Paul Church community's experiences during its bid for historic landmark status and member participation in the Freedman's Cemetery Memorial project helped to prepare them in their efforts to utilize Black heritage politics as a method of survival, but that was and is not enough to help ensure the community's continued existence in its

present location. Many historic Black churches, some of the strongest components of the traditional African American community, are often in need of assistance “to stabilize and restore them for future generations” (*Preservation Dallas*, 2006). Some of these buildings have been restored, due to their historical significance, but have also been adapted for alternate forms of use like cultural facilities, community centers, and commercial and residential spaces (*National Trust for Historic Preservation*, 2006). St. Paul is historically significant, but wants to remain an active church community. The church community realizes that this significance alone may not necessarily shield it from the demise comparable to that of many of its neighbors. Leaks had to be repaired, structural deterioration had to be assessed, and a larger congregation had to be built. These things cost money that St. Paul did not have, until leaders at Highland Park offered to supplement the costs for its repairs.

Highland Park’s help gave St. Paul much needed assistance and made it much easier for them to feasibly envision their goal of becoming more visible in the Arts District. This has not traditionally been the case with historic site properties in the former North Dallas Freedman’s Town neighborhood, but there have been more recent efforts to preserve two other sites, the original Booker T. Washington Arts Magnet High School and the Moorland Family YMCA building. Although both were historically Black institutions, they do not serve in the same capacity for which they were founded. I discuss these two institutions to give readers a deeper understanding of how cultural heritage politics works with other historically Black institutions in the Arts District, as a comparative means of looking at the historic preservation work with St. Paul. One

institution is historically Black, but no longer serves a majority-Black community and the other consists of a historically Black building appropriated to serve the needs of a Black cultural arts institution. These institutions have differing ways of historically preserving some form of blackness in Dallas. In comparison, St. Paul is the only one of the three institutions whose primary community has been in total control of its historic preservation.

### *Booker T. and the Moorland YMCA Building*

The Booker T. Washington Arts Magnet High School, facing St. Paul across Routh Street, was initially founded as the first high school for Black students in 1892. It was named the Dallas Colored High School in 1911, and then renamed Booker T. Washington High School in 1922. After several enlargements, the school was revamped as the Booker T. Washington Technical High School in 1952. The school underwent another change 24 years later, when it was repurposed as the Arts Magnet at Booker T. Washington High School, with an arts-focused curriculum. The once Black institution now serves a diverse group of high school students, who focus on various arts curricula. A new building was constructed and opened in 2008. The original historic building will serve as a future exhibit space for artifacts tied to the school, a major move in a city where older building forms are not generally valued.

Another historically Black building in the Freedmanstown neighborhood is the Moorland Family YMCA. The Moorland Family YMCA was organized in 1926 as a recreational facility for Black families. The original building was constructed in 1930.



Some of the principal campaigners for its construction were St. Paul members, including Dr. L.G. Pinkston. The building remained in the neighborhood, eventually becoming “a beacon for the North Dallas [Black] community” (Quimby McCoy 2008:4). “In a city that offered few places outside of church for African Americans to congregate, the building became the location where professionals could meet, clubs and organizations could come together, and young men could play and engage in extracurricular activities. The building served as the gymnasium for black schools that lacked athletic facilities, and schools even held their proms there” (Quimby McCoy 2008:4). After nearly 70 years of support from the Dallas Black Community, “the choice to relocate the building to Oak Cliff [in South Dallas] was based on studies undertaken in 1967 that showed that the African American population had shifted away from the North Dallas area and into Oak Cliff ...” (Quimby McCoy 2008:7). More recently, the YMCA building was scheduled to become the home of the Dallas Black Dance Theatre (DBDT), “the oldest, continuously operating professional dance company in Dallas” (*DBDT website*). The historic building underwent renovations and was preserved for future generations. Although not serving its original purpose, it was repurposed to again be a significant institution in the Black Dallas community.

The fortunes of the three historic buildings, St. Paul, Booker T. Washington, and the Moorland YMCA, shows some progress in the preservation of the few remaining historically Black sites in Dallas. These efforts are too little too late given the historic buildings that were not saved, and these endeavors are often spearheaded by private companies or individuals who have varied reasons for preserving these buildings.

Unfortunately, these efforts are the tail ends of a long line of intentional moves made by city leaders to silence the memory of the North Dallas Freedman's Town. It is those silences that members of the St. Paul community, as well as others, are trying to give voices to.

## **Silences**

Michel Rolph Trouillot defines silence as “an active and transitive process: one ‘silences’ a fact or an individual” in the same act of remembering another fact. Thus, “one engages in the practice of silencing” (Trouillot 1995: 48). Trouillot's work also examines how silences enter the process of historical production at the moment of site production. He explains (Trouillot 1995:29-30):

...the bigger the material mass, the more easily it entraps us: mass graves and pyramids bring history closer while they make us feel small. A castle, a fort, a battlefield, a church all these things bigger than we that we infuse with the reality of past lives, seem to speak of an immensity of which we know little except that we are part of it. Too solid to be unmarked, too conspicuous to be candid, they embody the ambiguities of history. They give us the power to touch it, but not that to hold it firmly in our hands – hence the mystery of their battered walls. We suspect that their concreteness hides secrets so deep that no revelation may fully dissipate their silences. We imagine the lives under the mortar but how do we recognize the end of a bottomless silence?

Many Black Dallasites believed that they were a part of the Freedman's Cemetery, whether directly related to those buried there or not. Through the cemetery, they were connected to a greater Black Dallas history, within an even larger city history, which traditionally failed to incorporate the struggles of its Black citizens. Through the Freedman's Cemetery Memorial, they could help to reclaim some of this loss, with some understanding that the truth might never be fully understood. Although Dallas city leaders contributed to Black Dallasites efforts to memorialize the Freedman's Cemetery, many years of damage had already been done, and several silencing processes had taken place.

During the Texas Centennial Exposition in 1936, celebrating 100 years of Texas independence, President Franklin D. Roosevelt unveiled the statue of Robert E. Lee straddling his horse at the corner of Hall Street and Turtle Creek Boulevard in North Dallas. In addition:

...a statue representing the Confederacy stood in the front of the center portico of the Centennial Building at Fair Park, while murals in the Great Hall of State depicted numerous Confederate officers. Visitors were left with the impression of Dallas as an unambiguously Southern city but a sophisticated one that had achieved progress through elite white leadership supported by broad consensus (Phillips 2006:114).

This commemoration was reminiscent of the late-19<sup>th</sup> century memorialization of Confederate veterans and leaders, which silenced the many who opposed the Confederate cause. Although the segregated exposition included a Hall of Negro Life exhibition, after much negotiation with Black community leaders, their goal of “recapturing history from racist mythology” (Phillips 2006:112) as a catalyst for political growth was not truly realized. Black Dallasites were repeatedly disenfranchised (in fact and by law), limiting their political power, and their statuses as true Dallas citizens continued to be ambiguous. Still, they wrestled and compromised with the city establishment. Ironically, Black leaders’ attempts to vindicate Black Dallas history would be hindered by changes in the make-up of city neighbors. Many of the spaces which Blacks historically occupied would soon be no longer visible.

In the 1970s, the history of the North Dallas community was essentially made to disappear. Two major freeways now ran through the neighborhood, many of its residents were gone, and the city of Dallas began to actively silence the fact that a Black community had or did exist in North Dallas. In the early part of the decade, city planners documented the area as the majority-White Oak Lawn community, disregarding the neighborhood’s cultural heritage before the 1970s (Prior and Kemper 2005:197). City planners then developed a new neighborhood, Cityplace Neighborhood, on the northeast border of North Dallas:

Subsequently, the designation of the State-Thomas neighborhood as an Historic District redefined the western edge of North Dallas. Soon after, The City of

Dallas created Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Districts for Cityplace and for the State-Thomas area, and later approved an Uptown Public Improvement District (PID), in order to make available millions of dollars in incentives for a new wave of land developers in the North Dallas area. As the final part of the process, on the east side of Central Expressway, the Roseland Homes housing project was torn down by the Dallas Housing Authority and replaced by a smaller number of units deemed to be more compatible with the upscale residential and commercial environment being developed in the area (Prior and Kemper 2005:197).

In the mid 1970s the City of Dallas and the Dallas Museum of Art began to envision a formal, public arts district to address blight in the area of Downtown Dallas adjacent to St. Paul. Next, the developers created and put into effect a plan to gentrify the district. This gentrification contributed to significant rises in the development of upscale commercial and residential properties in Freedman's Town. Those who developed the Dallas Arts District recognized the growth in downtown Dallas, extending to St. Paul's church location, and placed the arts district in the midst of this growth. This plan would place the St. Paul church building on the very edge of the planned district, which was "to reflect a multinational atmosphere, and contain mixed uses—arts facilities, office, retail and residential spaces, and cultural events..." (Sasaki Plan 1982). The church bordered the Arts District on the north end, while the Dallas Central Business District bounded the south end. St. Paul's church building remained, but much of the remnants of the North Dallas community were gone, even in name.

James Davidson reflected on the silencing of Black history by chronicling how the name of the neighborhood has changed.

Originally known as Freedman's Town, by the early twentieth century this area was more commonly known to its inhabitants as North Dallas (or 'Short North Dallas'), and later still the "Hall and State" or "State-Thomas" Neighborhood (Prior and Schulte 2000:69-79). Stripped of its historical precedence, the current name given to this same area is "Uptown" or the "Citiplace [also Cityplace] Neighborhood." When even the name of this historically African American enclave is erased, what then will remain? (2000a:82)

In name, St. Paul is simply *in* the Dallas Arts District, but no longer historically contextualized within what was once known as Freedman's Town.

Within a 30-year period, gentrification contributed to significant rises in the development of upscale commercial and residential properties and the erasure of the former North Dallas community. The Dallas Arts District community began with two institutions and now includes the Dallas Museum of Art; the Nasher Sculpture Center; the Annette Strauss Artist Square and the Trammell & Margaret Crow Collection of Asian Art; and the Trammell Crow Center. It also includes the Dallas Black Dance Theatre; the Dallas Theater Center/Arts District Theater and Ad-Libs Improvisational Comedy Theater; the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center and the Dallas Symphony Orchestra; the Belo Mansion/Dallas Bar Association; Booker T. Washington High School for the

Performing and Visual Arts; One Arts Plaza/7-Eleven Corporate Headquarters; Fountain Place; Fellowship Church, the Cathedral Shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe, and the St. Paul United Methodist Church.

Preservation planners for the city of Dallas have made recent attempts to restore historic buildings in the Arts District, yet there had been little attention to the significance of Black heritage sites downtown or in any other parts of the city. In fact, there have been overt attempts to suppress some of these histories.

In the 1980s, when Jim Schutze contracted to write his book exploring race relations in Dallas, which became *The Accommodation*, he wanted to examine how Civil Rights Era Dallas managed to avoid some of the more hostile events characteristic of other urban areas with significant Black populations, contemporary segregation, and the lack of effective Black leadership. His ultimate conclusion was that Dallas Blacks “made a political deal with the devil” (Phillips 2006:7), appeasing to White Dallas Citizens Council leaders, in an effort to avoid their wrath. They did not overtly protest White racist realities. Some argue that Schutze’s portrayal of Dallas Blacks eclipses the continuing history of a Dallas Civil Rights Movement, which helped to motivate legislation on a statewide level, like in the case of *Sweatt v. Painter*. On the other hand, Schutze does recognize that the community was constrained by the hegemonic forces to which it was subjected, which is a very significant issue in providing some historical context for the struggles of Blacks in Dallas. Yet, not everyone seemed to think so.

In the mid 1980s, Schutze’s publishing company cancelled publication of the book. There were rumors that the book could be hurtful to Dallas’s ideal image and that

influential Dallasites strongly suggested that the book be pulled from the publisher's roll (West 1986). The president of Taylor Publishing, Randolph Marston, responded that the book was pulled because there were so few orders for the book, not because of pressure from city leaders. In contrast, Schutze's editor at Taylor, Robert Frese, said "its critical view of the desegregation era in Dallas and fears of adverse local reaction were as much to blame for killing the project" (Applebome 1986), especially with then current tensions between Dallas Black and White politicians. Frese added, "Jim is saying things about Dallas that aren't all nicey-nicey, and it's so image-conscious here, you can't say anything negative" (Applebome 1986). Some Black Dallas city leaders agreed.

Roughly five years later, Dallas city leaders would once again face scrutiny about the city's memorialization of its Black citizens and its failure to vindicate particular histories. The city of Dallas had designated a portion of land between majority White-owned downtown and majority Black-settled South Dallas as the Dealey Annex, after its former owners. The annex was named after the family of George B. Dealey, former influential publisher of the *Dallas Morning News*. Dr. William Farmer, then a professor at SMU, and his students started a citizens' group to urge the city park board to rename the patch of land "Martyrs Park" to memorialize President Kennedy and Samuel Smith, Patrick Jennings, and "Cato," all murdered in Dallas. This tribute was a reluctant one, since all of these murders remained controversial: the Kennedy assassination for its high-profile nature and status as a supposedly unsolved mystery, and the murder of the three Black men who were probably wrongly accused of setting fire to the City of Dallas in 1860. Both of these cases complicate the legend of an unflawed Dallas.



When interviewed by a staff writer for the *Dallas Morning News*, Sondra Brent, chairwoman of the Fire of 1860 Committee, commented that, “Dallas still has the same mentality of racial tension that we had back then” and “that dedicating Martyrs Park would help Dallas cleanse itself of racial problems that have haunted the city to this day” (Jackson 1991). When interviewed by the same staffer, Joe M. Dealey Sr., a Dealey family descendant, gave his opinion on the name change by stating, “It's not ours. It hasn't been for a number of years. It's no big deal” (Jackson 1991). “Vivian Johnson, one of two African-Americans on the Park Board, said she would support the request to rename the park. She said Dallas has tended to view its history inaccurately, especially when it comes to minorities. ‘I feel very strongly about what they're doing.’” (Jackson 1991).

The park board agreed to the name change, yet no visible sign of this change was evident eight years after the decision had been made. According to Michael Phillips, Dr. Farmer “found it predictable that the leadership of the city could not squarely face the city’s past.” Farmer explained to him, “Dallas is unlike Chicago—it doesn’t know about its fire...It’s like a family going through a trauma but suppressing the memory” (Phillips 2006: 35).

## **Conclusion**

The Freedman’s Cemetery Memorial, Martyr’s Park, and Schutze’s book have all served as contested sites of memory in the Dallas community and about the city of Dallas. Through these sites, some memories have been suppressed while others were

prefaced. Even with these restrictions, members of the Dallas Black community have found ways to negotiate alternative ways of memorialization, which "...gives a sense of importance of [their] past" (Sturken 1997:1-2). These efforts continue.

In July of 2008 I called Donald Payton, one of the most well-known Black Dallas historians, who I met through my contacts at St. Paul. He previously invited me to his annual family reunion in Miller Park in Dallas, to be held the second week in July. Payton had mentioned the reunion to me on previous occasions, so I decided to go that summer. I called him for details. Mr. Payton was excited that I planned to attend. He said that there would be over 1000 people there and that it would be a good time.

Mr. Payton is a descendant of John and Lucina (Lucy) Miller, who were slaves of William Brown Miller, one of the most successful cotton planters and livestock-raisers in Dallas. He owned 7500 acres of land in what is now the Oak Cliff community in South Dallas. Shortly after Emancipation, some of Miller's former slaves purchased 600 acres from the Millers. The Miller Family Park, which hosts the annual reunion, was part of that purchase. According to Mr. Payton, John Miller purchased the land upon which the park now stands. Part of the land is now owned by the city of Dallas, which turned the property into a park.

Since 1975, the Miller Family Reunion has a tradition of celebrating its heritage with food, music, arts and crafts, a host of vendors, and sporting events. In 2008, it was no different. The event, which began as a reunion planned and hosted by several family members with organized events, is now one run solely by Mr. Payton, the family historian, but it seems to be no less interesting. Over 1000 Dallasites come out to the

park, bringing much food and family, while taking advantage of the deejay and the inflatable bounce houses that Mr. Payton provides. Mr. Payton does the work solely because he loves his family and appreciates his heritage.

Surprisingly, many visitors to the reunion do not recognize the history behind the event, as the structure of the reunion has changed over the years and does not provide a space for a formal program with background information. According to Mr. Payton, that was once a major focus. Now, guests visit the site without knowing why the site was chosen as a gathering space and, just as important, why the event is held the second weekend of each July. Per Mr. Payton, the initial reunion committee decided to celebrate their heritage in July as a way to honor Patrick Jennings, Sam Smith, and Cato, the three slaves hanged after they were wrongfully accused of being perpetrators in the Dallas fire on Sunday, July 8<sup>th</sup>, 1860, which fell on the second weekend in July. Although the event behind the celebration was tragic one, it was uplifting to hear the reason behind the timing of the celebration. I wish that more of the guests knew.

I chose this story as an example of how Black Dallasites willfully choose to re-expose events silenced by those who have historically controlled what is remembered, including: 1) in the way that Miller Family and other community members have urged the City of Dallas to commemorate the family property, and 2) how Miller descendants chose to remember three Black men hanged by Dallas citizens, for a crime with no proof against them. After hearing this story, I was even more convinced that other stories of marginalized Dallas populations can be told. They can break through the silences through

their own efforts, with some help, and by believing that Dallas is a city with a history, a sometimes ugly one that will likely only be vindicated through its victims.

Their histories can also be made more visible through historic interpretive projects using development in the fields of public history, public culture, and public archaeology. The Freedman's Cemetery Memorial project is one example. Another example, the original Booker T. Washington High School building, was left standing and is to be home to a permanent exhibition on the school. It will serve as a reminder of the community for and by which it was built. Although the Moorland YMCA Building is presently housing the Dallas Black Dance theater company, it is still standing. And last, but not least, there is the continual presence of St. Paul, the one evident reminder of the North Dallas freedman's community. Through archaeology and a public exhibit project, its history was revived in the public realm.

To Hayden (1997:46), "place memory encapsulates the human ability to connect with both the built and natural environments that are entwined in the cultural landscape. It is the key to the power of historic places to help citizens define their public pasts: places trigger memories for insiders, who have shared a common past, and at the same time places often can represent shared pasts to outsiders who might be interested in knowing about them in the present." The St. Paul Church building has the ability to do all of these things. In addition, so do the artifacts recovered from the UT-Austin field school in 2002.

The archaeologists embarked on the project knowing the potential power that the church, as an artifact, and any related artifacts could hold. They could stimulate

memories. This project was one among a long history of archaeological projects designed to help recover the histories of Black American communities, and more recently with some help from members of the public themselves.

The genealogy of what is considered public archaeology of the African Diaspora is a lengthy and complicated one that should be understood by anyone attempting to assess its viability. For this reason, the next chapter will explore this genealogy as it relates to the project at St. Paul and to the church's potential to make the most of this work. It will further examine the feasibility of public archaeological studies to work with communities, like St. Paul, on a more preventive and long-term basis. The St. Paul Church community continues to see the value in promoting its heritage, yet making sure that it has the proper tools to do so is more easily said than done.

## CHAPTER IV

### ENGAGING COMMUNITIES THROUGH PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY

The previous chapter explored how Dallas's city planning history is a unique one, in several respects, but in many ways it is a common one. It is a familiar story about urban development in neighborhoods made up mostly of historically marginalized groups and their subsequent decimation due to city planning, neighborhood blight, eminent domain, and descendant generations' desires to take advantage of burgeoning opportunities in other parts of cities, especially after the federal enactment of civil rights housing legislation.

In the North Dallas Freedman's Town, archaeological excavations by the UT-Austin field school helped to recover some of the displaced histories, through a cooperative effort with the St. Paul Church. In another example, excavations at the Freedman's Cemetery site were more contentious after archaeologists seemed to exclude community members from the excavations of Black bodies. The remains were finally memorialized in a way which suited most parties involved, but it was after several years of planning and negotiations, involving archaeologists, the state department of transportation, and local community organizations. These events surrounding the Freedman's Cemetery occurred prior to, but are lesser known, than the recovery of burials at the more famous, sometimes infamous, African Burial Ground site excavation in New York, which increased the level of public archaeology surrounding African Diaspora sites.

Although similar interactions between archaeologists and indigenous communities had taken place in the U.S., generating legislation designed to give more historic preservation rights to indigenous Americans, these movements had not yet generally taken place between archaeologists and African American communities.

Earlier in my archaeological career, debates on the two burial grounds caused me to think more about how archaeologists interact with communities and how they could be more proactive about working with communities prior to the decimation of sites. When I began practicing archaeology, I worked in Cultural Resource Management (CRM), through which archaeologists assist federal and state agencies in the identification and evaluation of archaeological and historic sites to protect them from disturbance and destruction and with the investigation and recording of those that cannot be save. This work is done through compliance with state and federal laws. Although the Section 106 review process requires that researchers consult local communities about the sites in question, it does not require that these communities be cooperatively engaged in the work.

I was aware of some community-engaged CRM and academic projects, and understood the theory behind them, but had not been a part of the practice. My eventual participation in two very different community-engaged projects gave me the tools necessary to assess what is often considered public archaeology in more dynamic ways. I could no longer simply critique the moves that other archaeologists seemed to make, but became more personally aware of their limitations and the boundaries within which they work. As an archaeologist, it was difficult for me to choose a dissertation project mainly

focused on work after others had done the excavation. I wanted to know what the potential for archaeology as a catalyst for further historic preservation was, especially on behalf of underrepresented communities. I had no idea, however, if these discoveries could directly relate to community-engaged archaeology and whether they would affect my understanding of the value of public work in terms of archaeology as a form of historic preservation and cultural heritage management. For many, the debate continues. For me, things now seem clearer, at least in terms of how I think that my work with St. Paul can contribute to larger debates about defining public or community-engaged archaeologies, what community empowerment means, and the feasibility of working with African Diaspora communities in proactive ways.

In this chapter, I will explore several cases, including my work in Houston, Texas, designed to help archaeologists who want to engage publics be more realistic about their intentions and the boundaries within which they work. The chapter will provide a general background of public archaeology associated with African Diaspora sites in order to familiarize the reader with the field's genealogy. I will more specifically focus on those projects generally considered the precursors to the intersection of African Diaspora and public archaeologies, and the general theoretical arguments and applied approaches that make up the responses to these endeavors. I will then focus on my involvement with the Fourth Ward Freedman's Town excavation project in Houston, a story similar to that of the North Dallas Freedman's Town cemetery, but with more intricate details about how public archaeology does and does not work, from the perspective of one who has been on various sides of the excavation debates. This chapter will conclude with a general



overview of how the work at St. Paul fits within the larger framework of community-engaged archaeology.

My dissertation work is about cultural heritage politics and about how the St. Paul community engages in such processes. Within that framework, this dissertation is also about the limitations of St. Paul and my limitations as an archaeologist. I chose archaeology as one tool in St. Paul's greater historic preservation efforts, which begins with the church's goal of making itself more visible. As a public archaeologist I want community engagement to be an embedded part of the process, yet soon realized that St. Paul's ability to become more visible in its gentrified community is contingent upon its ability to continue to make itself visible, through its historic preservation. Public archaeology work historically has this limitation, and as a result, I also did. This chapter is about establishing a basis for going beyond those limitations, in order to better equip historic communities like St. Paul to remain viable in changing environments.

### **Introduction to African Diaspora Archaeology**

An interdisciplinary approach to the study of the lives of African Diaspora communities has increasingly become integral to the field of historical archaeology. This archaeological research records some undocumented lifeways of African diasporic populations, namely in the Americas, and how they relate to "the European colonial experience..." (Singleton 1999:1). A more holistic African Diaspora archaeology which, in name, would be more inclusive of African diasporic populations outside of the western hemisphere has not yet been realized (Singleton 1995; Orser 1998), although several

Africanist archaeologists and others are making moves to reverse these trends and make African Diaspora archaeology more inclusive of pre-trans-Atlantic slave trade populations (DeCorse 1999). One reason that the Western hemisphere exhibits more studies in African Diaspora archaeology is that cultural, educational, and political movements (e.g. Civil Rights, Black Power, and African American studies) have caused researchers of various backgrounds to examine the roles of blackness in the creation of archaeology sites. These examinations did not come naturally.

Early African American archaeological research projects were based largely on the analyses of material evidence at ante-bellum plantations, with attempts at denoting class and status, while the day to day life experiences of Black communities were often neglected (e.g. Otto 1977). After Charles Fairbanks pioneered a project which brought about the research agenda of looking for Africanisms, or cultural survivals (Fairbanks 1974; Fairbanks and Mullins-Moore 1980), later studies attempted to interpret African Diaspora sites using multifarious perspectives, including acculturation, creolization, and resistance studies (Bower 1991; Deetz 1996; Ferguson 1992; Geismar 1982; Handler and Lange 1978). These studies involved material culture analyses coupled with the use of oral, historical, and ethnographic resources as supplementary interpretive tools. Most of these methods were utilized to analyze the life ways of enslaved Africans without much identification of the “gray” areas, post slavery sites inhabited by newly freed persons which could not be so easily identified as African American occupied sites, due to artifact similarities to White tenant farming sites and other sites inhabited by poor Whites

(Singleton 1985), or other African influenced sites outside of the period of enslavement. As research interests developed and became more complex, so did the areas of study.

By the late 1990's, Charles Orser (1998) referred to four wide-ranging topics that African Diaspora archaeologists generally considered: 1) the material identification of African identity, which explores the famous Herskovits-Frazier debate on whether African Diaspora populations maintained African cultural traits outside of African boundaries, and whether these traits can be identified in artifacts; 2) the archaeology of freedom at maroon sites (e.g. Palmares in Brazil and Fort Mosé in Florida), or New World enslavement resistance sites, which may reveal cultural survivals of African political and economic systems and syncretisms of New and Old World traditions; 3) how race and racism, as opposed to ethnicity, influence archaeological interpretations and socio-historical contexts; and more recently, 4) the relevance of archaeological research to non-archaeologists, persons who may not directly participate in archaeological interpretations, but may be affected by what the interpretations mean, as descendant communities and other interested parties. This latter subject matter, that of community or public archaeology, is the one that most influences this dissertation work.

### **Public Archaeology in the U.S.**

Public archaeology in the African Diaspora has its historical roots in the contentious development of community archaeology between archaeologists and indigenous American groups. During the 1970s and 1980s, many U.S. Native groups began to realize that community-based representations of history were integral to how

they would be represented in the greater scheme of American society and how much political influence they could potentially have in federal negotiations. Litigious relationships between some Native groups and archaeological researchers often led to heated debates. The controversial nature of excavation projects and disputes about ownership of the recovered materials resulted in government legislation, such as the 1990 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), which states that if human remains are found on federal lands and their cultural affiliation to a Native tribe can be established, the affiliated tribe can claim them. “The law instituted a systematic approach to working with Indian tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations to return culturally affiliated human remains, funerary objects, and sacred objects of cultural patrimony. In the legislative process that created NAGPRA, the Congressional Budget office estimated that there were approximately 100,000-200,000 Native Americans whose remains could be repatriated using this act” (Kraus 2010:24). The Society for American Archaeology (SAA) finally compromised in support of Native groups’ attempts to get the legislation passed, yet there were still some hard feelings stemming from historically strained relationships (Deloria 1992).

Many on diverse sides of the debates do agree that NAGPRA and other forms of federal legislation have been most affective in their abilities to spark conversations between Native groups and researchers (Harry 2010) that would not have had these discussions prior to the enactment of these laws. According to Tallbul and Deaver (1997) changes in national laws gave “Native Americans a stronger voice in how archaeology is conducted; thus, it [was] now critical that we integrate non-Western values and concepts

of historic preservation into the [historic preservation] process” (14). It was not simply enough to talk to indigenous U.S. groups, but it was necessary to change how archaeologists innately think about Native American historical contexts and the interpretations of their material remains.

Prior to NAGPRA, and even later, many named the failure of archaeologists to recognize the validity of Native group opinions and their capacities to make informed decisions about their material culture, as the primary reason for these contentious relationships . In other words, if tribal leaders did not agree with the scopes of work presented by the archaeologists, then they did not have a wherewithal to understand the need for the work.

For example, in 2001, I attended a meeting between the Florida Archaeological Council and representatives from the Seminole Nations in Florida and Oklahoma. The meeting was later split up into sections on various topics involving archaeology of Native groups in Florida. One representative for The Seminole Nation, a White woman, talked about the problems with historically representing Native American groups according to contemporary regional affiliations, many based on material culture representations when not much else can be deduced about a particular group. It is not easy to explain to a Native person why his/her ancestor is being identified as a ceramic or why an archaeologist or museum curator’s ability to “define and explain American Indians” and their identities (Deloria 1992:595) was the preferential one. On a broader scale, many archaeologists felt that if Native Americans could not prove a direct link to a certain culture group, then it was the responsibility of the archaeologists to make determinations

about artifact ownership. These arguments became even more complicated over sites involving prehistoric populations, in which no documented links could be made.

Tensions flared in 1996 after the Kennewick Man discovery, during which five modern Native groups claimed a link to the skeletal remains of a prehistoric man found on the bank of the Columbia River in Kennewick, Washington. Archaeologists who wanted to study the remains in more detail contested these claims and a court battle ensued. The U.S. Court of Appeals did not support the tribal claims, and sided with “science,” or the archaeological community.

My trip to the FAC meeting took place just five years after the Kennewick man controversy. After the representative from the Seminole Nation gave what I thought was a pretty good critique of the relationships between archaeologists and Native Americans, a CRM archaeologist asked, “What do [the Native groups] want us to do?” The representative responded, “They don’t want you to dig at all.” The archaeologist said, “We have to dig, so what do they want us to do now.” It seemed that this dialectical dilemma could have gone on for a number of weeks, but the representative tactically ended the conversation at this point. Many of the archaeologists attempted to have a long overdue conversation with the Native groups, but were not prepared to listen. The community-based representation had been forced on many of these archaeologists, through NAGPRA, who seemingly wanted to satisfy their interests without really considering how these representations would affect the historical depictions of these groups. Relationships between Native American groups and the archaeological community remain uneasy, but attempts at partnerships are being made. The Navajo

Nation has its own archaeology department and is now in control of its resources, while applied archaeologists like John Rossen are working as active partners with some Iroquois Nations in New York, who are just beginning the process, to help them establish some independence in their heritage management (Rossen 2010). Similar work is being done by the federally recognized Mohegan Tribe of Connecticut which is in its 16th year of conducting research, along with a UCONN Archaeological Field School. The Mohegan Tribe Cultural and Community Programs Department supervises the work.

The attempts of Native groups and some archaeology and museum friends to help reclaim material remains are not only commendable in how these efforts affect national law, but also in their influences on how indigenous populations perceive their archaeological resources. Yet, there is much work to be done.

In March of 2010 the American Anthropological Association (AAA) commemorated the 20th anniversary of NAGPRA with several published commentaries in *Anthropology News*. Several authors addressed issues including the fates of remains of tribes not federally-recognized or “culturally unidentifiable”, and consequently outside of NAGPRA’s scope (Bruchac 2010; Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2010; Kraus 2010); the pliability of DNA testing in determining cultural affiliation (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2010; Jones 2010); “the determination of rights when there are multiple claims” (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2010:4); “whether associated funerary objects are also to be returned” (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2010:4); and the ambiguity of modern, federal constructions of Native American identity and association as opposed to vernacular or historical constructions (Bruchac 2010:5).

When researchers at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science (DMNS) revisited previous designations of unaffiliated remains, they discovered that they “may in fact be affiliated with federally-recognized tribes” (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2010:4) indicating potential oversights in other tribal affiliations and the need for anthropological researchers to revise methods for determining which remains constitute affiliated ones. Colwell-Chanthaphonh (2010) suggests that “the culturally unaffiliated designation should thus not be considered permanent and fixed, but provisional and open to revision” (4). The author admits that this effort can be costly; a concern for many institutions with limited financial resources, but presents these efforts as integral to doing proactive work in NAGPRA mandated collaborations.

Colwell-Chanthaphonh, the curator of anthropology and NAGPRA officer at the DMNS, also responds to general complaints by archaeologists and museum managers that federally-recognized tribes usually object to the repatriation of their ancestral remains by stating that none of the 121 Native American tribes with whom they worked refused repatriation and reburial. Their major argument was that their rights be acknowledged in NAGPRA processes. Similar critiques were made about Native groups’ refusal to allow “destructive analysis” (Cast, Gonzales, and Perttula 2010:8) of their ancestors’ material remains, but collaborative efforts between archaeologists and the Caddo [Nation] Repatriation Committee show otherwise.

A recent amendment to the 1990 NAGPRA regulation 43 CFR 10(11) gives Native American groups “the right to claim specimens without a cultural link if they had been found close to tribes' historic lands,” (Dalton 2010) after years of being dependent



upon and restricted by museum decision-making bodies, federally recognized forms of identity, and a strict NAGPRA review committee in charge of determining whether or not their ancestors can be repatriated. Museums must now consult with tribes in historical territories from which material remains have been extracted, giving more leniency to tribal groups attempting to repatriate formerly “unidentifiable” remains, but it is not inclusive of funerary objects, a point of contention for many indigenous groups. Responses to the amendment, from museums managers, anthropologists, and other scientists, range from the expedited repatriation of such remains to claims that the new ruling contributes to a decrease in scientific genetic value and “that geographical connections between remains and current tribes may be meaningless” (Dalton 2010).

Although NAGPRA has sparked conversation, the recent amendment proves that collaborations between Native American groups and archaeologists are yet to be on solid ground. Tribal group multivocality as well as the diverse opinions of archaeologists, museum curators, and other researchers continue to stimulate much debate, yet many archaeologists are more aware that tribal opinions not only matter, but are integral to the enactment of federal laws. Collaborations with Native American publics can and should not be avoided.

### *African Diaspora Archaeology and Community Engagement*

The analyses of African Diaspora archaeological sites and the development of this field have been influenced by developments in Native American community archaeology, as well as the contributions of sociologists and other social scientists that have made

significant strides in the research of otherness, with explorations of authority and representation and insider-outsider research (Warren and Twine 2000). Although sociologists and cultural anthropologists faced the tasks of working with African American descendant communities, historical archaeologists had largely avoided these relationships prior to the controversial recoveries of sites like the African Burial Ground and The Dallas Freedman's Cemetery, in which engagements with descendant communities and other local publics were enforced (Blakey 1998; Coughlin 1996). Even with developments in African-American archaeology and the increased attention paid to Native communities due to NAGPRA regulations, efforts to involve Black Americans in the archaeological research of their communities were "relatively weak" (Franklin 1997b). These projects occurred at the height of research debates surrounding the impending 1990 NAGPRA and showed that African American descendant communities expressed some of the same concerns as descendant Native American communities. They also introduced the politics of government and community involvement into the archaeology of the African Diaspora in the United States.

The African Burial Ground Project in New York City gained national attention when, in 1991, the US General Services Administration (GSA) began to dig foundations for the construction of a 34-story federal building in Manhattan (Coughlin 1996, Blakey 1998). This former burial ground for New York's enslaved Africans began to attract local and national attention, when the project was halted by the detection of skeletons at the site and local African descendants began to question the GSA's intentions. They were concerned about where the bones were going and who would handle them and saw a

definite need for African American scientists to be involved with the project from start to finish, and joined together to have the site properly memorialized (*Then I'll Be Free to Travel Home*, 2001). Along with holding the GSA responsible, many African Americans also blamed the majority-White archaeology team from City University's Lehman College for much of the problems. Although the archaeologists were doing the work that the GSA hired them to do, they were caught between the GSA, who often utilized them as scapegoats, and the African American community who saw them as partners with the GSA.

The African Burial Ground site began to attract local and national attention. Some people questioned the GSA's intentions and many members of the descendant community, those activists promoting the sacred and historic nature of the burial ground site, and the extended general public made their beliefs known to them. African-Americans in New York City, Africans, and Afro-Caribbeans were "the majority of people honoring and fighting for the site," although some Native American groups did become involved in ceremonies (Frohne 2000).

Even with often strenuous relationships, various parties involved in the development of the African Burial Ground National Monument were able to make several moves through collaboration and much compromising. In October of 2003, the remains of 419 individuals were reinterred in New York, after a procession to their final resting place, from which they had been removed. Although project supervisors criticized the GSA for limited project funding, researchers were able to conduct significance DNA research on the recovered individuals, conduct comparative analyses with data sets from

central African, and set the standard for comparative DNA studies between African and African American populations. In 2005, ground was broken for the African Burial Ground memorial site, located just north of New York's City Hall. A couple of years later a \$3 million memorial, funded by the GSA in partnership with the National Parks Service, became a National Monument. The monument, which includes an interpretive center, officially opened in the fall of 2007. The site not only raised awareness about the historical significance of African Diaspora colonial era sites in the U.S. but among a few others, exposed the complicated dynamics surrounding the politics of government and community involvement in archaeologies of the African Diaspora.

As a result, in the early 1990s, some historic archaeologists began to stress the need for members of the field to question how racism influences research and examine how individual and personal reflexivity could help to challenge this racism, by asking researchers to think about social responsibility and ensure that their research did not serve racist interests (Franklin 1997b, Potter 1991). The examinations of racial subjectivities are the basic tenets for reflexive and critical archaeologies and an un-reflexive archaeology is more likely to happen when members of descendant groups are excluded from all aspects of archaeology, including the conception of research questions, excavation, data analysis, and interpretation. Researchers were not always attentive to their places in relationship to the groups being studied. They began to question their assumed objectivities and involve some interested publics. What soon became more important to public archaeologists was how historic relationships affected present relationships between descendants of these researched groups and how archaeological

studies may alter or contribute to the wealth of accessible historical information (Babson and McDavid 1997; Baker 1997; Deagan and Landers 1999; Franklin 1997b; LaRoche and Blakey 1997; Leone et al. 1995; Paynter 1990).

Some African Diaspora sites were excavated with the recovery of, and participation from, African descendant populations, in mind. Archaeology in Annapolis was a cooperative project between the University of Maryland and the Historic Annapolis Foundation developed in 1982. Early research was designed to explore sites related to elite histories and institutions, but researchers soon discovered “that these sites could not be understood in isolation from a city of enslaved Africans” (Shackel, Mullins, and Warner 1998: xvi) and other underserved and underrepresented groups. One of their early objectives was to “make archaeology accessible” (Shackel, Mullins, and Warner 1998: xvi) by instituting a public outreach program which continues today.

In the late 1980s, archaeologists in Annapolis, Maryland “met with African-American scholars at the Maryland Commission on African-American History and Culture to discuss the potential for an archaeological project focused of African-American life in the city” (Mullins 1999: 8). First, African American researchers wanted to know “if there actually ‘was’ an archaeological record of African-Americans in the city” (Leone et al. 1995: 112) and second if material relations to African culture could be shown. They then requested that archaeological studies focus on African-American life outside of slavery, the “proud” moments in Black history, arguing “that historians fixate on servitude, ignore antebellum free Black and post-Emancipation communities, and focus on the instrumental oppression of African-Americans” (Mullins 1999:8-9). This

appeal possibly reflected Franklin's observation that "scholars [were] discovering that there are black Americans who still feel that slavery is a shameful topic and still too sensitive to be discussed or displayed openly" (1997b: 42).

The work in Annapolis was one of the first to address this multivocality of African Diaspora publics in community engagement projects. Through research at the Maynard-Burgess House, the Courthouse Site, and Gott's Court (18AP63), "Archaeology in Annapolis has examined how African America has confronted dominant ideologies through material tactics ranging from conscious concession to subversiveness to complete rejection of racist boundaries" (Mullins 1998:19). Along with the collection of oral histories, archaeological interpretations were compared to those of the local descendant community, in order to get a broader sense of the use and meanings of the excavated remains (Leone and Matthews 1996).

Others projects, similar to Fairbanks' early work, were designed to recover the material remains of non-African descendant populations, yet, with much effort from researchers, came to include African Diaspora archaeology components. Some of this research would come to make significant contributions to how subsequent public archaeology work would be carried out. For example, research at the Fort Mosé site was an initial attempt to recover 'European' remnants of the fort. Through efforts by those like archaeologist Kathleen Deagan, historian Jane Landers, Florida Representative Bill Clark, and members of the local Black community, much of that mentality changed, but not without a number of problems.

Following his work at Kingsley, Charles Fairbanks was asked to excavate a military fort in present-day St. Augustine, Florida. This site was Fort Mosé, often referred to as the first established free Black colony in the U.S. Although Fairbanks and his students were aware of the Black history affiliated with the site, the site's owner refused to support any African Diaspora research at the site. He wanted only to represent the site's Anglo history.

Fort Mosé was once a place of refuge for enslaved Africans, who the Spanish government allowed to live at the fort if they helped to protect the northeast coast of Florida from English invaders. In return, they were given a restricted state of freedom. They were only free within the fort.

Even with dissent from the site's owner, one of Fairbanks' students, Kathleen Deagan, refused to neglect the Black history at the site. She, along with historian Jane Landers researched the Black presence at the site and began to solicit community support for the project. Their efforts were successful. Representative Bill Clark of Florida, an African American, gave his support and received support, for a historical and archaeological study, from others in the Florida legislature. "The first six months of the project were devoted to historical research by Jane Landers and were followed by two field and lab seasons under the direction of Deagan and the supervision of John Marron of the University of Florida" (Deagan and Landers 1999:262).

As the recovered information became more public, it became more evident "...that the ideas that free African Americans made important contributions to the defense and culture of St. Augustine [was] an unfamiliar and difficult concept for many

residents, for whom slavery remain[ed] the dominant (if not exclusive) paradigm for black history” (Deagan and Landers 1999: 263). Some members of the local White community opposed the project’s development, stating that Deagan and Landers had falsified information, wrongfully glorifying the contributions of African Americans. Local publics even accused the researchers of intentionally placing out of context artifacts at the site, fabricating their research as part of a revisionist history project (Deagan and Landers 1999:263). Deagan and Landers stated, “St. Augustine has had a troubled history of race relations over the past century, and negative reaction to the presence of a very important site in African-American history continues to the present” (1999: 263). Still, a result of cooperation between the University of Florida and members of the Black community, Fort Mosé’s story has been shared through historical and archaeological evidence.

Researchers responded to these accusations by making their research more inclusive and accessible to the local community, especially African descendants. They found that “if anthropologists are to contribute effectively to the study and resolution of contemporary US problems, they need to consider the complex scope and nature of US society,... and to engage with several publics beyond their study subjects and academic audiences...” (Deagan and Landers 1999: 262; Forman 1994: 6). As a result, non-academic publics became project participants. Deagan even created a traveling exhibition on the site’s history,

Fortunately, The Fort Mosé project ultimately resulted in a wealth of information about a free Black settlement, and even produced a wonderful exhibition, from a mostly



African American perspective. I visited the associated living history exhibition held on February 24, 2001 and was impressed with the way the various supporting elements were integrated into the overall colonization of St. Augustine. Visitors, many non-Floridians, asked many questions and were very interested in the Fort Mosé settlement. Through public engagement, Fort Mosé researchers were able to reach beyond public criticism and educate the public, through interaction, and went even further by making their work appeal to broader audiences through a public exhibition.

Projects like the one at Fort Mosé initiated much needed discourse between archaeologists, local publics, and Black descendant communities. How these descendant communities were defined varied from researcher to researcher and project to project. Some descendant communities are defined as the actual biological descendants of the group being studied. In other cases, the descendant community represents the regional community relative to the one being researched, like the community engaged by the Fort Mosé researchers. Other studies represent a national or even international community concerned about the implementation and research on the project, like the African Burial Ground project.

In 1995, when archaeologist Amy Young began her work in Mississippi, she was partially responding to Theresa Singleton's challenge to "archaeologists to begin investigations of black life in Mississippi" (Young 2004: 66). Her work extended to the use of ethnographic data and oral histories from descendant communities, as a way to gather as much evidence to reconstruct their ancestors' daily lives as possible. In the 2004 article, "African American Archaeology in Mississippi," Young discusses how she

soon recognizes that her descendant communities would not only consist of African American scholars, legislators, and local organizations, but that she would have to engage specific individuals from the specific, and diverse, physiographic zones (or regions) throughout the state. She specifically chose 3 regions: the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta region (Mound Bayou), the Natchez District (the Saragossa and Mount Locust cotton plantations), and the Pine Hills regions (the McCallum Farm Site-22FO1018), so that she could make cultural comparisons between the regions. She intentionally targeted sites with standing historic structures, like slave cabins, and adjacent communities, so that she could document cultural continuities, from periods of enslavement to freed communities, in the particular regions.

Young noted that, at the time, “many people living in the [Saragossa Plantation] descendant community [were] unwilling to get involved in research focused on slavery times” (Young 2004:71), reflecting on periods of enslavement as oppressive histories, not recognizing the potential “value” of slave cabin material remains, and associating archaeology with exoticism. Still, Young was able to gain pertinent information about the historical and more recent significance of hunting for food resources to the descendant community.

In 1997, Young’s goal was to locate the remains of slave houses at the ante-bellum McCallum farm site. “Much of the original farm remains in the hands of descendants of Malcolm McCallum” (Young 2004:74), the farm site’s founder. Although there are no remaining extant 19<sup>th</sup> century building, members of the founding family’s descendant community provided historical and genealogical data, as well as information

about the potential location of former buildings. Archaeological excavations revealed what could be the remains of John McCallum's, Malcolm McCallum's son, homesite, along with artifacts that "may represent the remains of slave houses" (Young 2004:74).

Also in the Pine Hills region, Young excavated the early community of Old Augusta (22PE1605). Young's goal was to "determine whether intact deposits exist at the site [as no original structures remained] with the ultimate goal of reconstructing community development and social relations" (Young 2010:75). The archaeological team did locate a number of intact deposits, including "the courthouse and a house in a residential area referred to as 'the Quarters' where black servants lived after freedom" (Young 2010:75). In addition, Young and archaeologist Robert Reams of the Desoto National Forest tested segments of Camp Dantzler a 1920 black logging camp in the Pine Hills. Young cited that "one of the challenges that remain in working in the Piney Woods is identifying a greater number of African American groups to act as partners in [the] investigations" (2004:76).

In 1998, when Young excavated portions of Mound Bayou, "the first all-black incorporated town in the state" (Young 2004:72) of Mississippi, the community was in decline due to a history of "political and economic pressures from surrounding towns controlled largely by a few wealthy white planters" and a subsequent "general lack of businesses in the town" (Young 2004:72). The community was originally founded by two Black men, Isaiah T. Montgomery and Benjamin Green, as a post-Reconstruction Era safe haven for Delta region Blacks. Unlike the Saragossa plantation descendant community, this community saw Young's work as a potential way to revitalize and

reclaim its history to younger community members, abandoning the area for better opportunities. This community-based project was different from the Saragossa work in its collaborative effort between Young's team, the Mississippi Humanities Council, and the Mississippi African American Historic Preservation Council (MAAHPC), with the common goal of a traveling exhibition displaying artifacts to be excavated by Young's team. Members of this descendant community chose the site and the research questions, in order to best represent the goals of a statewide project, not a local community project with an ethnoarchaeological approach reflective of Young's Saragossa project.

According to Young and Crowe "Mound Bayouans [did] not want Isaiah Montgomery's dream to fade, the project was entitled, 'Digging for the Dream: Archaeology at Mound Bayou.' To [the researchers'] knowledge, this [was] the first archaeological project designed and implemented by a black community" (1998:6). Young and Crowe (1998) go into detail about the steps taken in implementing this archaeology project: 1) Milburn J. Crowe, then President of the Mississippi African American Historic Preservation Council, invited Amy Young, an African American archaeology researcher to Mound Bayou, after he became interested in doing a local archaeology project; 2) Young educated the local community about African American archaeology via a slide presentation; 3) archaeologists learned the history of Mound Bayou from the perspectives, and diverse opinions, of the descendant community; 4) Young attempts to find an excavation location which could serve as a compromise to those diverse goals and opinions and, along with members of the local community, chooses a commercial building site (including the Bank of Mound Bayou and City Hall); 5) young Mound

Bayouans were included as site excavators, at the request of the local community; 6) and lastly, all interpretations were improved by the local community.

During her research on The Levi Jordan Plantation Site in Brazoria, Texas, Carol McDavid defined her “publics” as “the descendants of [plantation owner] Levi Jordan, the descendants of the African-Americans who lived on the site, other European Americans, African-American members of the surrounding region, community leaders, local educators, people interested in history and archaeology, academics who study history and archaeology, and others” (1997: 115). In 1986, archaeological research began at the Levi Jordan site under the direction of University of Houston Associate Professor Kenneth L. Brown.

In 1848, the Levi Jordan plantation was built by planter Levi Jordan and some of his enslaved persons. The Black population of the plantation inhabited the site area until the late 1890s when the site was abruptly abandoned. Excavations at the enslaved quarters’ site resulted in the recovery of approximately 600,000 artifacts ranging from silverware, ceramics, sewing materials and toys to religious items. Many of these findings were from slave cabin areas where items were left untouched for decades. Research at the site offered a rare educational opportunity to present the development of economic, social, and cultural relationships from the period of enslavement through emancipation and reconstruction.

McDavid’s research on this plantation involved working with descendant communities representing the planter families and the enslaved/tenant communities. This was no easy feat. Her research goal was to seek varying narratives within and between

the Black and White communities and she did. There were some objections from members of both communities, but once she established a positive relationship between herself and the two descendant communities, and between the two descendant communities, she was able to gain “authority” in their minds. She was not out to solely satisfy her own interests, but to tell a fairer story.

Research at the site led to various understandings of the complex relationships between researchers and publics, including how “...descendants [began] to realize that their lives can be changed by the ways that other people tell their family histories, and they [were], increasingly, demanding a voice in presenting the archaeologies and histories of their ancestors” (McDavid 1997: 115). The archaeology project was rare in its efforts to include input from representatives from multiple communities. Associated parties included the Levi Jordan Plantation Historical Society (LJPHS), a Levi Jordan Advisory Group (including academic and state representatives), the Levi Jordan Plantation Stakeholders Group, the Texas Parks and Wildlife personnel, and the Brazoria County Historic Community. Carol McDavid took the idea of public communication even further through the development of an interactive website, an outreach and collaborative tool, designed to not only make the project historical and archaeological information available, but to allow broader audiences to offer feedback on the site and the project.

As a result of some projects like the ones at Ft. Mosé and Levi Jordan, by 2000, critical archaeologies were being “revisited” (Wilkie and Bartoy 2000) and collaborations between public archaeologists and community partners were a primary focus.

Archaeologists like McDavid vocalized a critical archaeology of the African Diaspora which supposes that archaeologists impact the communities with whom they work, through cultural representations and through decisions made about community cultural resource management. Advances had been made, but there was still much work needed, especially in privately and federally funded CRM projects. Many of the embedded archaeologists were involved in more long-term academic projects, which allowed them more temporal flexibility in developing public archaeology projects. This was great for the few, but most archaeology was, and still is, being conducted under the federal and state historic CRM standards, which did not include public participation as part of the research designs, or did not normally support the use of more interdisciplinary techniques like oral history, integral to the study of African Diaspora populations. LaRoche and Blakey took note of this following their experiences with the African Burial Ground CRM project; “CRM archaeologists have, however, been accountable to governmental and other clients who frequently are not principally interested in anthropological research...” (1997: 92). “Generally CRM archaeologists need have little academic preparation or interest in African-American research” (LaRoche and Blakey 1997: 92). Many CRM agency archaeologists were accustomed to writing research designs within their firm or agency families and implementing this design within a small frame of time, usually under financial constraints. Within federal, state, or private CRM institutions, “projects are often launched in response to immediate needs, rather than as part of an overall objective or plan” (McDonnell 2002). Many of these projects did not include participation from descendant communities, who were often unaware that they occur.

Government policies did not solicit this support (unless human remains are involved), namely due to issues regarding time and money, or even lack of interest. Still the ABG model influenced how both CRM and academic researchers did applied and theoretical work, as recognition of the importance of different and more informed community engagements increased (LaRoche and Blakey 1997). According to Jameson (1997), a CRM archaeologist, “how [archaeologists] involve the public in the rich fabric of the American experience [was] one of [the] great challenges as [they] enter[ed] the twenty-first century” (1997:9). It still is.

In 2005, I entered an environment in the Fourth Ward of Houston, Texas, which challenged many of my assumptions about how and why community-engaged research did and did not work. I was familiar with the theory and history of public archaeology, but soon recognized that the learned theory could not truly be understood without personally experiencing a community-engaged project, in which the local community has been historically damaged. By the time archaeologists actually engage some descendant communities, it is too late, in the sense that genuine efforts at community engagement are thwarted by inoperable, historical tensions.

### **The Late Archaeologist**

Archaeologists often arrive too late. We come in after homes have been lost, human bones have been bulldozed, and entire landscapes have been silenced. It was no different when I arrived in Houston’s historic Fourth Ward neighborhood after I was asked to co-manage an archaeology project in anticipation of the construction of a public



school in this neighborhood associated with a former Freedmanstown. It was the post-ABG era and relationships between government entities, historic preservationists, and local communities often remained tense. I was accustomed to the relatively smooth relationships between archaeologists and the St. Paul community, but knew that situations such as these were not always so collaborative. It was not that way when I arrived in Houston's Fourth Ward.

#### *Fourth Ward Freedman's Town*

The history of the Fourth Ward Freedmanstown began in 1838 when the ward was established under a system similar to that of New York City's Ward System. After a complicated history of White land development, the ward diversified shortly after the end of the U.S. Civil War, when the Black population of Houston helped to settle the area after many of them left rural areas looking for different opportunities in cities, similar to those freed persons in Dallas. Some Black Houstonians soon became property owners and established viable neighborhoods, and the largest number of them chose to settle in the Fourth Ward. They were attracted to the undeveloped land in the outlying regions of the ward, in which there were no other developed communities to compete with. This land, mostly owned by Whites, was too far away from the city's urban center for most Whites to actually want to occupy it, so they sold some of the land to newly freed Blacks, who benefited from White Houstonians desperation to recoup funds in a tattered Confederate city. Many of the impoverished Blacks were sold this land through a Bond for Title or Contract for Sale instrument that was basically a rental or owner-financed

mortgage. The instrument was normally not filed in the courthouse until the final payments were made to the seller, sometimes one to seven years later. These contracts unfairly took advantage of the buyer because, if the purchaser missed a payment, the seller would evict the family and re-sell the house and land. Although the land was often purchased through these credit traps, was flood prone, at a distance from the city center, adjacent to two cemeteries and near land set aside for a city hospital, it was one of few areas in which Blacks and native Europeans could actually purchase property, and not simply rent from other property owners at inflated prices. The land discouraged White settlement, which also made it more affordable than in other parts of the city.

By 1870, Freedmanstown, within the Fourth Ward, consisted of a relatively high concentration of Blacks, with a 94% population, compared to the 43% population of the rest of the Fourth Ward. This increase seemed to reflect Blacks residents' desires to settle near other Blacks, in efforts to better avoid undesirable encounters with Whites. Freedmanstown largely remained a neighborhood of Black property owners until 1880 when many continued to live in the area, but did not own their property.

By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century each of Houston's wards had acquired its own character, largely based on ethnic and social class. The majority-Black Fourth Ward Freedman's Town was no different. In 1907, Houston city managers decided to move its "red light" district to Freedmanstown, which was falsely designated a blighted neighborhood, even with protests from its residents. Shortly after, property values in the area increased, as well as land consolidation, in efforts to build brothels. These developments initiated the physical destruction of Freedman's Town and many residents

moved to “safer” areas of the city. The city later created a major thoroughfare through the neighborhood, displacing many families, and in the 1940s constructed a public housing complex on a site in Freedmanstown, designed to accommodate White war veterans. This move was made possible by the 1937 U.S. Housing Act which provided federal funds to states for public housing construction, during which states employed eminent domain in order to demolish or modernize existing homes, as required by the federal act. In 1938, Houston developers chose to demolish homes on the proposed site for “San Felipe Courts,” a 1000-unit public housing development for low income White residents, which forced many families from their homes. Despite protests to city hall and the federal government, declaring that this project would dislocate hundreds of people from one of the city’s most important black neighborhoods, the government went ahead with the project (McDavid, Bruner, and Marcom, 2008). Although eight Black families took their fight to the Supreme Court, they still lost their land (McGhee 2009).

Nearly 60 years later, underground utility piping was being installed at the Allen Parkway village and human bone fragments were discovered. Local residents did not soon forget the events from 60 years ago and were outraged when they discovered that the Houston Housing Authority may not have removed and reinterred 928 bodies as they had claimed in 1940 when they built the public housing. The size of the cemetery to which the bodies were said to have been removed was seemingly too small to inter all of the bodies and the discovery of human bones indicated that, at the least, not all of the bones had been removed. Also, at the time of the bone discovery, the Allen Parkway Village was a blot on the city’s current landscape, and now had mostly Black residents

who moved to Allen Parkway Village following the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which allowed racial segregation in the housing units. White residents fled to other parts of the city.

When the bones were discovered in 1998, the housing unit was in close proximity to downtown, which had greatly expanded over the past 60 years. The building was now on prime real estate. About 70% of the housing had been torn down through the federal HOPE VI program, designed to “eradicate severely distressed housing” (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development). Residents were upset because they were not included in any decision making processes. According to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, “the head of any federal agency having direct or indirect jurisdiction over a proposed federal or federally assisted undertaking in any state...prior to the issuance of any license...must take into account the effect of the undertaking on any district, site, building, structure, or object that is included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register,” (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service) which likely included any remnants of the cemetery and Allen Parkway Village itself. Many residents were literally removed from their homes as city developers ignored their responsibility to recover and preserve bones, or at least consult with the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, about what to do with the internments likely belonging to early residents of Houston’s Fourth Ward Freedmanstown. Black residents in the neighborhood felt that they were being neglected all over again. Construction continued, even though one member of the community had some luck in forestalling the project

several times. He tried using historic preservation concerns as a trump card in his efforts, but was unable to stop the project.

This is the political landscape that I entered nearly 7 years later. I was asked to co-manage an excavation project, contracted by the Houston Independent School District (or HISD), which now owned several acres of the former Freedman's Town. A fellow archaeologist, a friend with whom I worked in the past, was bidding on the project and new that it was a politically charged one. The property now owned by the HISD was once owned by Black and European immigrant descendant populations who recently had their properties taken away. The HISD had purchased and condemned homes and businesses on adjacent streets since 1966. Residents were angry and watching every move that the HISD made.

I was solicited to co-manage the project because I was a Black archaeologist, specializing in African Diaspora archaeology. This would not only help the environmental firm, for which my friend worked to get the bid, but was somehow meant to pacify the local community which had tired of White politics...or at least my friend thought. I had dealt with large groups of Black folks, on several political scales, for much of my life, and knew that my blackness was no guarantee of a congenial friendship between me and members of the Fourth Ward community, but it did secure the bid for my friend's company. I was not trying to create a miracle. The project seemed interesting, so I took a chance.

My friend asked that I attend a public meeting during which she would present her company's proposed research plan and methodology to the project's advisory

committee, and to the general public. Attending were members of the local community, members of the Texas State legislature who had been involved in the planning of this project for the past several years, and of course, the news media. My friend gave a well thought out Power Point presentation, while I tried to get a grasp of the various constituencies involved. Of course, that was not likely going to happen in 1 hour. The meeting was not as politically charged as I had expected, but I soon realized that it had followed years of meetings, debates, and downright ugliness. By the time I became a part of the project, former UT student, Dr. Fred McGhee, had been hired as a community liaison between the school district and outspoken members of the former Freedmanstown community. Fred's research proposal was a culturally sensitive one, which requested local community collaboration at the onset of the excavation project, citing the ABG project as what not to do. Fred is Black, an archaeologist, president of his own archaeological firm, and a community activist, and had much time to soothe some of the disputes between various groups, after he and state Senator Rodney Ellis convinced the HISD that a cooperative effort between the community and the HISD was necessary. The HISD had already developed and accepted a proposal which did not include community engagement. Fred had taken intricate steps to write a more sensitive project proposal and wanted to have a Black archaeologist as project manager to show the community that this was a diverse effort. That was me. He also wanted to make sure that the HISD followed federal and state legislation, such as the Texas Antiquities Code. That was up to the environmental firm, Hicks & Co., for which I worked.

There were potential burials of Union prisoners of war at the site to be excavated, according to local oral history, and those who had recently lost their homes were hoping for any potential way to halt the HISD's development of the site. The location of burials *could* do that. Community members were well aware that government institutions in Houston, and Texas in general, did not seem to have much respect for Historic Preservation laws (Barile 2004) and requested that this project have much transparency. In 1984 Allen Parkway Village was placed on the National Register and look what happened to it. Also in 1984, a part of Fourth Ward was placed on the National Register and named "Freedman's Town," although not part of the original. Many parts of it were demolished. The fact that the HISD brought Fred on as a liaison helped with the effort to better engage the community. Fred's job was to assist the HISD with determining the historic significance of the site, prior to construction of the HISD schools, as warranted by Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act. To Fred, this meant hiring folks who could do the work in ways that would make both the local community and the HISD more comfortable. It was also his responsibility to make the excavation project accessible to the local community and let them know what decisions were being made and why. I was glad to have Fred in this role, because, frankly, I did not feel at ease doing it. I was a newbie and had no friends in the local community or in the HISD. Fred did.

Residents of the former Freedmanstown did not get the opportunity to gather archaeological data from the Allen Parkway Village site 7 years prior, so our work presented a great opportunity to gather information on Black urbanization in Texas. In September of 2005, we began archaeological testing of a 16-acre tract in the former

Freedmenstown, in anticipation of the construction of two schools by the HISD. We excavated for several weeks, awaiting the recovery of burials, but none were revealed. I watched a backhoe operator for hours at a time just in case anything came up.

As I watched the backhoe operator, members of the community watched me. One member of the local community advisory board stood outside of the property fence with a video camera and filmed much of the excavation. She said nothing. I assumed that her role as a project advisory member would lead her to cross the property line and visit the site, as they were allowed to do, but she never did. On the first occasion, I went up to her, introduced myself, and made small talk. After all, she *was* a member of the community and I was a community-engaged researcher. She was cordial, but didn't say much. She never put the camera down. Although I did not think that I could say something damaging to myself or the archaeological crew, I was experienced in how words could be misconstrued. I did not say much more and was content enough to talk to her camera.

On another occasion one advisory board member came to visit the site at a time when Fred was unavailable. I was asked to give him a tour. I allowed him get me into a debate about the potential probability vs. possibility of burials being located at the site, especially near his former property. At that point, I did not think that it was very probable, but almost anything was possible. I thought that I handled the situation quite well, but soon found out that he falsely reported our crew for failing to enforce OSHA (or Occupational Safety and Health Administration) standards, regarding the maximum depth that archaeological pits can be excavated. This went nowhere, because it was not true, but reinforced my understanding that I was on the other side: the side of the funding



institutions, not the side of this community. This was a reality check for someone who prided herself on being a community activist, when it came to historic preservation projects. I still like to think that, but am often reminded that archaeologists, even ones who support local publics, often remain in liminal and ambiguous positions, no matter what their intentions are. This doesn't negate the significance of the work, but helps me to realize that communities have to be engaged before the damage is done, so that they are better reassured of our intentions. The damage has to be prevented, so that the work has more meaning, and so that I can no longer think that I arrived too late, as I did in Houston.

### **Preventive Public Archaeology**

My work in Houston and Dallas helped me to better frame how I thought the work in Dallas could contribute to African Diaspora public archaeology. This framework became two-fold: it became about making communities independent and preventing historical and cultural resource abuses. African Diaspora community archaeologies have to go further.

My work with St. Paul taught me that public archaeology's ongoing themes about community empowerment were very limited in how much historic preservation control is actually that of the community. Public archaeology today can range from simply making local communities aware of the work to partnering with communities in archaeological research designs and implementation. The "power to the people" call made by Franklin (1997b) has not adequately made the transition to more concrete means of empowerment.

Franklin duly noted that “most of [archaeologists] have not given black society much reason to feel that archaeology should be important to them” (1997b: 43). She also stated that “history belongs to everyone ideally, perhaps, but in actuality it belongs to those who have access to its material remnants, to those who control its penning, and to those who possess the power to authorize and disseminate it” (1997b: 41). When most archaeological studies are CRM projects, how do African Diaspora communities ever get the power to “authorize and disseminate”? How do they get this power even with more accessible academic projects, controlled by public or private universities? I think that the problem with power, in terms of African Diaspora public archaeology, is too much community reliance on archaeologists (academic and CRM), including me.

I was proud of my work with St. Paul, and knew that its control of its archaeological resources was significant, but was constantly worried about what would happen to its historic preservation efforts once I was gone. Secondly, I began to think about how to prevent contentious situations like the one in Houston from occurring. The education of underrepresented communities, about their historic preservation, was key, yet not sustainable. Communities would have to be made self-sustaining ones, as the Navajo Nation, after many years of negotiating its indigenous cultural resource management. Once African Diaspora communities become more aware of the intricacies of historic preservation management, especially according to state and federal mandates, their power can be imposed, not simply negotiated through archaeologists; especially in gentrified communities like the Fourth Ward Freedmanstown where national standards for historic preservation were undermined by the state, early on.

I knew that the UT-Austin archaeologists proposed their project as a public one, and it was public in the sense that that church community was an integral part of the project planning and the excavation. They also remained in charge of the recovered artifacts, which does not often occur in African Diaspora archaeology projects. I was excited about all of this, but soon realized that the community's ability to remain an integral participant in its historic preservation had to continue beyond the excavation, and the proposal of the UT-Austin project managers. Their work was done and the community needed more. I began to reflect on what happens to the engaged communities once the excavation is completed and how much value the excavation could truly have for them in the long run. For me, my work became not only about engaging the community, but helping to ensure that the community was able to continue the work on its own. It would be selfish and immature for me to think that I would always be there to help, or would want to be. In order to do this, I would have to find ways to help the community see the significance of the archaeology and other historic preservation work to their overall goals as an active church. I soon found that this would be no easy feat. Ultimately, I discovered that the archaeology work was not as important as educating communities, in nontraditional and more interdisciplinary ways, about the long-term benefits of this work and hoping that this would matter to them. I could not operate my part of the St. Paul project based on the assumption that this work would be good for them, just because I offered to do it. I also began to hope that my work would be about shifting community members to historic preservationists, which sometimes happens naturally, in a more intentional way. Archaeologists can not do all of the work necessary

to benefit communities in the most efficient ways. Communities would have to make historic preservation a priority, and ultimately work to prevent the damage to and destruction of their properties, prior to hearing about proposals from historic preservation entities who may not have the community's best interest in mind. They would have to work to put preventive measures in place. (See Chapter VII for the detailed framework)

### **African Diaspora Public Archaeology Today**

Many communities have seen the benefits of African Diaspora archaeology research, especially in those contexts through which various publics were able to politically mobilize through archaeological research, like those affiliated with the African Burial Ground in New York and the Freedman's Cemetery Memorial site in Dallas. Similarly, the Freed Man's Neighborhood Association of Houston's Fourth Ward won a fight against city hall which ultimately decided to not destroy historic brick streets important to the local community, a significant feat in a community whose history has been decimated by several institutions. The city had proposed to install new sewer and water lines in the area and tear up the brick street laid by and for members of the Fourth Ward freed slave community. With much help from archaeologists, the neighborhood association argued for the preservation of the historic brick streets based on archaeological evidence which cited their cultural and historic significance (McDavid, Bruner, and Marcom 2008).

Even with advancements such as these, there are still more recent questions about the feasibility and logic of community-engaged archaeology, in general, and African

Diaspora archaeology, more specifically. Shannon Dawdy's experience as a pre- and post-Katrina archaeologist in New Orleans led her to ask if "community archaeology can be *no* archaeology" in contexts where public needs are much greater than those of historic preservation, especially in locations affected by natural disasters. For example, how does one ethically defend community-engaged research to a public which does not have adequate housing? My immediate response is that there have always been public needs greater than archaeological research, yet momentous destruction to a community could mean that community-engaged research might not be the best solution at all times.

Dawdy made the effort to historically represent the Lower Ninth Ward neighborhood in ways that would encourage the city to prioritize its preservation, with little success. I think that the best solution to historic preservation in misrepresented communities, in catastrophic environments or not, is to equip these communities with the tools necessary to better realize their own significance (see Chapter VII), so that site significance becomes an entrenched notion in their community repertoire, not simply a knee-jerk reaction to potential or real site decimation. This could mean less archaeology initiated by academic and CRM researchers, but more archaeology requested by local communities; to me, a potentially good thing.

## **Conclusion**

It was not practical for me to give a comprehensive history of African Diaspora public archaeology, yet I attempted to give the reader an introduction to the field, and how it developed, in a relatable way. My main goal with this chapter was to establish a

framework for my work with St. Paul and how it fits within developments in African Diaspora archaeology. My project went beyond the excavation to better analyze the feasibility of “empowering” communities in proactive and sustainable ways, the only way that I imagine public archaeology; one in which members of the community are not simply engaged, but the engagers.

My work with St. Paul is unique in the sense that I was able to follow the church from the excavation, through political mobilization, and to primary stages of proactive historic preservation over an eight year period. The lessons learned were not expected, yet were able to help me better understand what it could look like for archaeological research to “give power to communities,” if at all possible. The following chapters trace this work, and ultimately propose a framework for addressing long term community historic preservation needs.

## CHAPTER V

### BEYOND THE DIG: ENGAGING THE ST. PAUL CHURCH COMMUNITY

Through the 2002 field school excavations, the St. Paul Church community not only learned more about its history, but publicly represented its congregation. Many residents of the Dallas/ Ft. Worth metroplex were not aware of St. Paul's remainder in the Arts District and that the church building is one of the few remaining structures built by the North Dallas Freedman's Community. Although the St. Paul community is the oldest living reminder of the neighborhood's early history, it had not yet been a significant focus in the Arts District community. Many church members hoped that this apparent invisibility would soon become a thing of the past and expressed a desire to promote St. Paul's historic legacy. Local news coverage during the excavation helped to re-expose St. Paul's history, and its significance, at a time when the church was raising money to renovate its historic building. The UT archaeologists left the St. Paul community with significant material remains and innovative ways of promoting its cultural heritage, including a website about the Juliette Street project.

While researching the Cole House Site, archaeologists observed that the church community was interested in recovering more information about their church history, exhibiting the documentary and archaeological material at the church, and achieving National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) status. Potential opportunities for further excavation in the former Freedman's Town were possible, yet doubtful, because most vacant property in the area had been sold or was in the process of being sold. When Dr.

Maria Franklin first introduced me to the project, I was aware of the paucity of research on Black Freedman's communities, Black migration to larger cities, and Black Texas urbanism, and the failure of many social scientists to complicate these communities and their present places on the American landscape. I was also aware of the need for researchers to consider "a site's particular historic context" especially in underrepresented racial and class populations like the one at St. Paul. Archaeologist Kerri Barile discusses these issues in her critique of how a researcher's use of "single-level analytical methods" and the disregard of regional contexts can disproportionately affect what sites get nominated to the National Register (2004:94). The UT archaeologists had begun to establish a historic context for the house site, but further research into the St. Paul community could only contribute to the dearth of information. Even without the potential for more excavations, I was inspired to work with the church on a post-excavation project that would result in an exhibition on the church and could help to further evaluate public archaeology as an applied, community-based anthropology. Here I use the term applied as does the Society for Applied Anthropology, "the integration of anthropological perspectives and methods in solving human problems throughout the world" (Bennett, Wiedman, and Whiteford 1999). The public archaeology project would expand to a public history project, encompassing archaeology as a part of the historical record; oral histories; and an interpretive history exhibition designed to present St. Paul's history to the Dallas public in an accessible and socially relevant way.

My research intent was to explore the territorial history of the church and understand how the church community experiences the site and landscape in order to



define its collective past. I chose to create a historical narrative and utilize oral history interviews in preparation for a long term exhibition, the ultimate deliverable and concrete application of cultural heritage as a way for St. Paul to become more visible in the Dallas Arts District. This chapter discusses my process of accessing and collecting information as a researcher, beginning with my initial meetings with members of St. Paul.

### **The First Meeting**

When I first became involved in the study of the St. Paul Church and the Freedman's Town community, I began by meeting with church leaders. In the fall of 2002, Dr. Franklin and I met with St. Paul's Board of Trustees to discuss the potential for engaging in a post-excavation project. This meeting included Senior Pastor Sheron C. Patterson and other church leaders. I presented my suggestions for an exhibit project and asked them what they were interested in doing regarding history, archaeology, and landmark preservation. We all agreed that more archival and archaeological research would assist them with their goal of receiving National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) status for the church. Further research would also help to create narrative texts for a history exhibition on the church. The exhibition would in turn help the church to become a better repository for its artifacts and documents, by stressing the logistics for and significance of a maintenance and preservation plan. James Davidson was working on a project report and still had some of the artifacts in his possession. The remainder was being held in plastic bins at the church.

The trustee members of the church agreed with my proposal and to further investigations of the church's history through a public interpretive project, which would result in a heritage exhibition chronicling the history of St. Paul.

### **Homecoming**

On August 23 of 2003, the St. Paul community held its Church Family Homecoming Celebration, commemorating 130 years. I attended a church picnic on that Saturday, which offered fried catfish, watermelon, and ice cream; met some of the congregation members; and returned to the church on Sunday for service.

The 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Homecoming Sunday's motto was, *130 Years: Still Family, Still Faithful*. The service included a spoken word and dance piece titled "Blood beyond the Root," which showcased two young church members performing to a background recording of Nina Simone's rendition of "Strange Fruit." The guest speaker was Mr. William Blair, founder and senior publisher of *The Elite News*, a Dallas based black church newspaper, whose life history includes such achievements as the youngest Black First Sergeant in the U.S. Army during World War II and pitcher in the Negro Baseball League from 1946-1951. Although a church member informed me that this was "not a usual Sunday," one thing remained clear: this church community understood and valued its Black heritage.

Following the service, church members and guests could peruse the church historian's, Ms. Jimmie Mae Moore, extensive scrapbook chronicling St. Paul's history. This book was complemented by exhibited items (mainly photos) representing the St.

Paul Museum. The church had museum curators and mobile designers, in charge of displaying those items. An adjoining room of the church exhibited artifacts from the 2002 UT archaeological excavations, along with a video of some phases of the project. Davidson had returned those displayed items to the church, as a descriptive traveling exhibition, where they were and are presently being held.

I met some of the church members and generally talked to them about who I was, where I was from, and what my research interests were. I realized the significance of a formal, and sometimes personal, introduction about one's self, and genealogical background, in southern Black communities and felt that this was probably a better way to establish some rapport with church members, rather than asking them to help a practical stranger. Fortunately, the members were familiar with historians, archaeologists, and other social scientists, and did not seem too skeptical of my intentions. I think that the public fish fry was a great space for me to introduce myself. I could meet members without any pretentious notions about what their standings were in the church or community and speak with them on informal levels.

Leah Parker, the church's business administrator, called me shortly after the homecoming celebration to discuss potential project plans. According to the field school archaeologists, Leah had been very active in the archaeology excavations and was familiar with most church operations. Leah is the church's business administrator, driver, and always manages the Body & Soul mission program for the homeless. I told her that I was in the exploratory stages, so any ideas from her and the rest of the church would be taken into consideration. I let her know that I was interested in interviewing church

members and briefly explained that I would need their permission, due to University mandated ethical research practices. I also told her that I was in the process of developing a proposal for the project, so that we could apply for grant funding. I ended the conversation by telling her that I would send her a note with a compiled list of ideas and questions, based on my research up to date.

In addition, I asked how she felt that this historical research project could help the church community and what she thought church members would like to see. I told her that I was generally interested in Black history in Texas and why it was seemingly being ignored by academic and other historical communities, and felt that my research with St. Paul could contribute greatly. I added that I was also interested in how newly freed Blacks created a sense of community in Dallas, which continued through institutions like St. Paul, and would like to conduct oral history interviews with church members, interested in telling their stories and how they relate to the St. Paul community. I also wanted to know how the church members felt about the archaeology work done in the summer of 2002 and how information gained in this research might contribute to historic interpretation projects (e.g. exhibits, a heritage museum, etc.) at the church. I also introduced her to the idea of “cognitive mapping,” which would involve asking members to talk about how they saw the neighboring community’s landscape, prior to the substantial urban development.

Leah previously mentioned, and highly favored, the production of a living history exhibition and/or heritage museum, in our previous conversations. I told her that this could entail a process of collecting photos, stories, and artifacts, and asked how she felt

about displaying these at the church. She seemed to think that this was feasible. I felt that a heritage room might provide a space where church members could reflect on their relationships with the church, and visitors could recognize St. Paul's symbolic role as a "Mother Church," the ancestor to other community churches. Leah realized the importance of having visitors from those churches organized through St. Paul (e.g. Hamilton Park, Highland Hills, Grand Prairie Trinity, Warren, and Crest-Moore-King Memorial) who could also make connections to St. Paul. The room could include photographs, historical documents, and a timeline highlighting important events integral to St. Paul's development. It could also include a social history of St. Paul's building, from its frame house construction to its present structure. Dolores Hayden states:

Writing the social history of buildings can begin with material culture theory and method, identifying "mind in matter," but beyond evaluating an urban building as an artifact it is necessary to probe the complexity of habitation and finance, turning not only to building plans but to all public records of ownership, taxation, and regulation that may exist. The final results of research for an urban building type can be a complex social history linked to many ordinary buildings. In the city, this social history includes the builder, and also the owner or developer, the zoning and building code writers, the building inspector, and probably a complex series of tenants. (1995:33)

St. Paul's building would have dual roles, as a space for exhibition and as a "living witness" to history as Lisa Yoneyama describes in her work, *Hiroshima Traces*. Yoneyama examines historic spaces and their relationships to descendant communities who were post-nuclear victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Yoneyama describes her conversation with a female socialist city assemblywoman when she interviewed her "regarding the citizens' proposal to restore [an] abandoned [atom bombed] building as a literary museum" (1999:68). Although the woman was not directly affected, she was concerned about the site's interpretation. The woman explained:

it would be nice if we could have some place where both citizens and visitors could find literature that was written with specific emotions, or under a particular historical condition... [To turn this atom-bombed building into] a small theater would also be an interesting idea – a small space where the audiences can have an intimate and heartfelt (*shimijimi [to] shita*) experience, where people can talk about peace in an intimate and heartfelt way... I want to make [the building] into a space where people can cherish their personal encounters with each other... It went through the bombing, survived, and has persistently lived through the postwar years. It is living its history. (1999:68)

The woman "hoped that when converted to a museum of literature related to the bomb, the space would affect visitors in ways unlike ordinary museums. Most museums are secondary spaces to which artifacts from the past have been transported through time

and space; this museum would itself be a ‘living witness.’ It would tell people its own history, ‘how the space was used, what people saw and felt in it, and what kind of condition it was in at the time of the bombing.’ The literary works that would be displayed and read here are unquestionably artifacts, but they would also be objects forever linked to the spatiotemporal context in which they were produced” (1999:68).

Like Yoneyama’s presented example, a St. Paul Heritage Museum would provide a primary space for visitors. Congregation members and visitors could learn about the church’s history, as well as, explore other historical themes in which they are interested. The museum would also provide a secondary space for artifacts recovered during the 2002 field schools. The St. Paul UMC could be a “living witness,” as well as an archival repository and exhibit space.

### **Preparations**

I began preparations for the heritage space by telling Leah that I looked forward to speaking with the church historian, Ms. Moore, because her longevity in and wealth of knowledge about the church could be invaluable. I wanted to work with her on a more extensive historical background of the church’s development, ultimately creating a historical archive/database on the information presently available and recovered through my research. I later found out that Ms. Moore had already written a historical background of the church in 1994. I would use this as the framework for additional research. I also further inquired about William Blair’s *African-American Religious Hall of Fame Museum*, which would include information on St. Paul’s. I later visited this museum in

South Dallas. It showcases a piano donated by the St. Paul congregation and artifacts from other churches in the Dallas area.

In January of 2004, I was invited to introduce the project to an extended audience of church leaders at a Leadership Retreat, a meeting in which lay and clergy persons gather to better and develop their skills as church leaders. This was to be a prime opportunity for me to meet some of the key leaders in the church, on a more intimate level, yet my awkward sense of the North Texas highway system caused me to be late. I followed Interstate 35 to Fort Worth, instead of following it to Dallas. I arrived once all of the speeches had been made and the lunch was completed. As soon as I walked in, I was directed to a podium in front of the audience. I let them know that I planned to complete some of the work started by the archaeologists two years prior, with their blessing, of course. Some seemed excited about the project; others just seemed ready to go home.

One member introduced himself after my talk and gave me a spur-of-the-moment letter saying that the work that I was doing “is extremely important.” He continued that “Most people have no idea what former slaves accomplished and the debt that all Americans (especially in the South) owe them for their accomplishments. Eventually there should be a monument and brief history about the former slaves that founded St. Paul, either directly in the church or in the Arts District.” (Personal communication, Carlton Odom) I was also able to meet Ms. Moore, the church historian, and express my desire to speak with her in more detail. She seemed willing to work with me, while seemingly mindful of my intentions.



At this meeting, Leah also suggested that I form a committee for the project. I later contacted her to find out if she had any suggestions on how to do that and quickly learned that churches are very busy institutions and meetings are scheduled months in advance. Since I was more familiar with Leah than anyone else in the church, I contacted her with suggestions for a meeting and with potential dates. She would then run these suggestions by the Pastor, who would review her schedule. Once Leah got back to me with a date confirmation, she attempted to contact other parties and find out what worked for them. The time that this process took depended on how busy Leah was (and she is one of the busiest people in the church), what the Pastor's schedule looked like, the priority of the meeting, and the schedules of those being invited. I aimed for June; so that I could simultaneously take advantage of some of the Juneteeth activities taking place in Dallas at around the same time. Juneteenth observes the ending of Black slavery in the US, stemming from Galveston, TX, where the news was received by Blacks in 1865, almost three years after Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation had been announced. I did not celebrate Juneteenth as a child in Louisiana, did not find out what it was until I was nearly an adult, and wanted to experience what all of the fuss was about.

I visited the St. Paul Church again in June of 2004, prior to any of the Juneteenth celebrations, but convenient for the church. My goal was to start talking with Leah, and other members of the church, about their visions for the history project. I had previously contacted Leah to suggest that I speak with her; Dr. Patterson; longtime members Ms. Ava Cox and her son Reggie, also descendants of the Cole family; and Ms. Moore. I was able to speak with Dr. Patterson, Leah, and Reggie. These church leaders and I came up

with the goal of creating a heritage room for the church. This room was to house photographs, historical documents, and a newly created timeline highlighting important events integral to St. Paul's development, as I previously discussed with Leah. The exhibition was to also emphasize the architectural and social history of St. Paul's building, its most visible artifact, indeed, the "face" of all cultural heritage projects associated with the church. The project would also entail research into building plans, ownership records, and St. Paul's link to other buildings in the Arts District area.

I came up with a list of things that I could do in Dallas, on my own (e.g. meeting with local Black history scholars in the area; visiting history archives and Black historic sites, researching black history exhibits in Dallas, and familiarizing myself with the public history of Dallas) and with the church (e.g. talking to elder members including Ms. Moore); all with the goal of writing a church history on which to base the exhibit narrative.

I began by contacting one of the field school project archaeologists, James Davidson, to find out what he had already archived and asked for copies. Much of James's work centered on the general history of the North Dallas Freedman's Town and the Cole domestic household, the scope of the archaeology project, so I would have to do a good deal of researching the church's 20<sup>th</sup> century history and its building history. Fortunately, he had all documents that he could find associated with use of the land presently owned by the church, beginning shortly after the city of Dallas was founded. These included church land deeds, mortgage information, and mechanics liens. These documents would become more valuable to me later on.

I surveyed and toured the city of Dallas's public archives to retrieve documentary research for this proposed project. I researched information on St. Paul at the Dallas Historical Society archives and the Dallas History Archives at the Dallas Public Library. I visited The African American Museum, which showcased *Facing the Rising Sun*, a comprehensive exhibition on the historical and archaeological research surrounding the Freedman's Cemetery excavations. I thought that this exhibition, which even included a reconstructed burial, was well done. I then visited the Freedman's Cemetery Memorial, which was less visual, but complementary to the exhibition. Outside of the 3 symbolic sculptures designed by Dallas artist David Newton, and a city marker, it was strictly a place for reflection. Some of the graves remain, but none are visible.

I next visited the Dallas Heritage Village at Old City Park, a collection of historic buildings (removed to the park from various locations) and furnishings dating from 1840-1910. The park includes living history interpreters, who demonstrate historic ways of life through the histories of former Dallas citizens. I did find it interesting to be able to speak with a "Jewish Victorian housewife," who could time warp into a present-day museum docent able to answer tireless questions about her experiences in turn-of-the-twentieth century Dallas. "Mrs. Leah Blum" cooked kosher meals as I was welcomed as a guest into her home.

Old City Park also included a shotgun house, which had no docent at the time, but was relevant to my exhibit work with St. Paul. I was familiar with shotgun houses, one of the most well known Black vernacular types in New Orleans, but had not seen one in Dallas. I was well aware that they existed at one time; the Cole House archaeological

excavation, historic photos, and community histories verified this. It was nice to see one in the context of Black Dallas, although the 1906 house was out of place. Even without a docent, the house gave a glimpse into the lives of its former residents when it once stood “...at 2807 Guillot Street near the center of what was the North Dallas Freedman’s Town (the modern day State Thomas neighborhood). In the 1980s this simple home (one of dozens that once existed in North Dallas) was moved out of the path of construction of Woodall Rodgers Freeway and placed on the grounds of Old City Park...” (Davidson 2004a).

I later visited the Dillard University Archives & Special Collections at the Will W. Alexander Library in New Orleans. Not for the purpose of further investigating shotgun houses, but to further explore the founding history of St. Paul as a Black congregation in the Methodist Episcopal Church, North. Although I did not find a direct link to St. Paul, I did get a better sense of the historical environment that gave birth to post-emancipation churches in Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. Dillard’s archive is the gatekeeper to much of this information.

Outside of these visits, I contacted the North Texas Conference Archives at The Southern Methodist University (SMU) Center for Methodist Studies at Bridwell Library, Dallas; Central Texas Conference Archives, Fort Worth, Texas; the Millsaps College Archives, Jackson, Mississippi; and the Centenary Archives in Shreveport, Louisiana for additional information.

When I returned to Dallas, I took photos of the areas of the church that Leah and Reggie suggested as possible exhibit areas (e.g. the basement area and the third floor

library where the field school artifacts were stored) and made a list of the artifacts from the excavation and began to conceptualize ideas for an exhibition. Church members also expressed interests in getting National Register status, so I began researching the possibility of helping them to put together a proposal for nomination.

Although people from the church had ideas, I prepared to have a list of my own to contribute and discuss, in order to get and keep the ball rolling. I could not plan my entire dissertation agenda around the St. Paul Board meetings, due to the restraints that it could place on my research time. I also did not think that the board expected me to meet with all of them every time that I was in town, but I did want to keep them abreast of what I was doing. After all, that was my initial idea of a public history project and I did not want to disappoint the public. As a result, I continued to contact Leah for permission to visit and do research with or at the church, and make a list of people that I needed to keep updated on my progress, and stay in touch with them. Fortunately, that method seemed to work well on a project that would persist through three pastors and several board members.

### **Rapport and Representations**

Dr. Maria Franklin suggested that one of the best ways to meet members was to go to church, as they had done during the archaeology field school; have Leah introduce me; ask members for their numbers; and then get in touch with them for an interview. I found this to be more easily said than done. My timidity and lack of persistence were probably the main reasons for this relative difficulty.

I attended services, when I went to Dallas to do research, and found those visits more productive in allowing me to understand the Methodist worship service than establishing rapport with members. I was raised as a Roman Catholic, in a majority Black congregation. Although I had never attended a Methodist worship service, I found the services to be alike in many ways, and thoroughly enjoyed the choirs; at that point, one of my favorite reasons for attending any religious worship service. I had not been to a Catholic church regularly in a few years, but did not forget what a highly organized order of worship was like. That helped.

The fact that I attended could have earned me some social points with church members, but I really do not think that my attendance did much in the way of helping with my research project. I am probably not the best judge of that. Leah suggested that I attend, without much pressure, and for this I was very grateful. She had always been supportive of the project and I think felt that my attendance would help. Churches are not only religious, but very social and political institutions, and I am sure that she knew that my social presence would at least give members a better perception of me than my absence.

During this time, I was not only concerned with my place and reputation in the church community, but about how an exhibition for the church could serve as a “representative” history for the greater Dallas community, how the church congregation’s multivocality may influence the exhibition’s outcome, how previous attempts at representation at Black historic sites in Dallas may have been embraced and refuted, and how my standpoint could influence my overall relationship with the community.

I did not want to consume myself with assumptions about how things were done at St. Paul, or in Dallas for that matter, so I decided to interview some of the church members through oral history recordings to get a better idea of their personal relationships to Dallas history and to the church, as well as to start developing the “cognitive” spatial maps that I wanted to be such integral parts of the project. The oral histories could also supplement some of the anecdotal histories that church members shared with archaeologists, painting broader pictures of St. Paul’s history as well as giving better contexts to the recovered artifacts.

### **Defying Boundaries**

Scholar of architecture, urbanism, and American Studies, Dolores Hayden used “cognitive mapping” to examine the former locations of non-extant structures through the recollections and memories of Los Angeles residents tied to a Black homestead. To create her cognitive maps, Hayden collected oral histories from her informants in an effort to “...identify historic urban places that have special significance to certain populations fighting spatial segregation of different kinds” (1995:39).

Cognitive mapping is an important tool, even where primary sources (e.g., Sanborn Insurance Maps) are available. The location of an item on a contemporary map does not mean that the place ever existed or may prove that the place existed to those who do not remember. These are instances in which places appear on maps, but are not uncovered in archaeological excavations. Some of these places apparently were never built.

When I visited the church during the anniversary celebration, a number of people had described how they remembered the local community, as children, and how it had changed. Those changes may not be recorded on maps. I was very interested in how these stories and memories could be recorded for present and future generations, which may not be so familiar with their pasts.

Supplementary information derived from locals and other sources (i.e., newspapers and tax records) can be invaluable. Oral history “accounts like these begin to make it possible to map spatial segregation for the larger African American community: not only streets and neighborhoods, but schools, hotels, stores, fire stations, swimming pools, and cemeteries would be some of the places to examine” (Hayden 1995:24). The residents of the Freedman’s community can then be explored, not only in their attempts to defy White boundaries, but to evade White boundaries.

Blacks in North Dallas apparently created their own urban communities within a segregated Dallas landscape. During the field school, the students collected data that allowed them to create a territorial history of the area of the St. Paul community. They used methods such as cognitive mapping to gather invaluable information about institutions that were integral to the community. Some St. Paul members were local residents prior to urban renewal. They remembered the locations of structures that are no longer standing. During the field school, the archaeologists reconstructed the outlines of Juliette Street and made notes about the people who lived and worked there. They did this by using Dallas city directories, Sanborn Insurance maps, United States Census data, archival sources, community memory, and artifacts.



My initial intent was to strictly audio record the interviewees, but I was able to video record with much assistance from Lynn Selby, a friend and documentary film maker, and Anyika McMillan, then St. Paul's Arts Coordinator. I first met Anyika at the church strategic planning workshop in 2004. She was leader of the church's Arts Committee and invited me to become a member. I attended my first Arts Committee meeting in October of 2004. Anyika helped to organize the oral history interviews in the spring of 2005.

I interviewed a total of thirteen members, five of them elders. Lynn video recorded each of these interviews as well as a choir practice session and the church's bi-weekly Body and Soul homeless ministry, in which nearly 300 of Dallas's homeless citizens are fed meals and given spiritual messages of encouragement. An announcement was made to the Body & Soul participants, prior to the videotaping. They were asked to keep their heads away from the cameras if they did not want to be on camera. Very few did. Most of them seemed to appreciate the attention.

In preparation for the St. Paul United Methodist Church oral history project, I sent letters to 16 potential participants stating that the members of the Arts Committee would like to document the experiences of church members and others who have contributed to the life of the church community in recent decades. I stated the proposed date and let the invitees know that we would be conducting audio and videotaped oral history interviews, on a voluntary basis, that may be used in exhibitions, publications, and other events/productions relating to the St. Paul history project. The major goal of the oral histories was stated to preserve stories and experiences for years to come. Volunteers

were also asked to bring photos, artifacts, and any other items reflecting their relationship to St. Paul. The tapes, and any other shared items, were to become a permanent part of the church's history archive.

Anyika and I discussed interviewing more than 1 person at a time and allowing members to interview each other, in order to make the most of their familiarity with each other and to allow ongoing discussions about familiar events. Some letters asked members to participate by acting as an interviewer, others as interviewees. Anyika made determinations about who she thought would serve best in these roles. She also spoke with several persons by phone and at church, and said that they were very excited about the interviews. They were given the options of participating on February 12<sup>th</sup> or February 26<sup>th</sup>, to allow some flexibility.

That morning, the interviews were held in the St. Paul Parlor room, which is a small and cozy space, sometimes utilized for prayer. I was one Victorian couch and a few chairs available for seating. By the time, the interviews were held; there was some debate about who would do the interviewing. Interviewees arrived at various times, through out the day, so our initial intent to have one on one interviews, between particular people, did not work. Several individuals were also participating in other church activities and were not available when we were ready to interview them. Eventually, we decided that Anyika would conduct all of the interviews, using the question guide that I wrote, while appealing to what she knew about the person's being interviewed. I facilitated the interviews as Lynn videotaped them. I will briefly profile the interviewees with some

general thoughts on them. More intricate details of their cognitive maps of St. Paul and the city of Dallas are dispersed throughout the dissertation.

Anyika interviewed her grandmother, historian, and Civil Rights activist, Eva Partee McMillan (83 at the time of the interview), who came to the church sometime in 1945, as a guest of her husband. Her husband was the son of Dr. Walter Reed McMillan (further discussed in the *Historical Background*). Ms. McMillan's very precise memory gave some insight to the social standing that St. Paul had, how it connected to other institutions like the Progressive Voters League, (previously discussed in the *Historical Background*), what led to the destruction of St. Paul's Freedman's Community, and why the church community chose to stay. She also shared the history of her paternal family, about which she has recently written a book. Ms. McMillan could even remember, verbatim, the first speech that each of her children gave at the church.

Anyika interviewed Ava Cox and Reggie Smith, the Cole descendants simultaneously. Like Ms. McMillan, Ms. Cox gave much information about the church's social standing in the community, especially through Dr. Loud, the pastor to whom she was the closest. She also provided information on the congregant's style of dress, and memorable church events. Her son, Reggie, gave exclusive information about what it was like to be Black teenager in Civil Rights Era, racist Dallas, and how his relationship to St. Paul became therapy for him.

The next interview was that of Preston Weaver, and his mother Jewell, and Ms. Delores Love, who had contributed many photographs to the UT field school project. Pastor Weaver gave the first insight into what it was like to be a child in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century

St. Paul and participate in church programs specially designed for children. His memories called to mind more memories from his mother and Ms. Love, who worked well together as interviewees. Ms. Weaver transferred to St. Paul from St. Luke United Methodist Church. She had fond memories of Dr. Loud and of her son's participation in the church's "Tom Thumb" weddings, church fundraisers in which young boys served as bridesmaids in formal gowns. In other cases, families raised money to have their child served as bride of groom and a miniature wedding was held as a benefit. Ms. Weaver was also a choir member and stressed the importance of the choir in the life of the church.

Ms. Love came to St. Paul as a teenager at the age of 14. She remembered participating in many church activities, nearly all that she was able to participate in, and also had fond memories of Dr. Loud. Ms. Love was married at the church in a large, evening ceremony. She shared her wedding photos, and others, after her interview.

Our second sets of interviews (afternoon) included mother, Muriel Johnson Redd, and her teenaged children Searcy and Marla Redd. They were held in the Welcome Room, just outside of the Parlor Room. It was not as cozy and we could hear much of the music coming from the Males Chorus practice. Our first interviewee was Muriel, a student of the creative arts and was very active in the Arts Ministry. She is now Arts Ministry coordinator. Muriel was very excited about how St. Paul, as an arts institution, could contribute to the Dallas Arts District. Searcy Redd IV and his sister Marla talked about what it was like to be a child in present-day St. Paul. They were both active in church programs and talked about this. Anyika also interviewed Mrs. Carla Mitchell, and

her mother Mary Smith. Both were choir members, who came from a musical family. Ms. Smith's husband was a pianist. Carla and Mary sang a church song in harmony for us.

After the church interviews, Leah and Anyika suggested that we interview 93 years old, Newell James. Lynn and I drove to his home in South Dallas. Mr. James came to St. Paul as a young man, after serving in World War II. He was not very talkative, while the cameras were rolling, but his love for St. Paul was expressed in the way that he smiled when he talked about being in the choir. He had retired from the choir several years prior to our interview, but longed for the spirituals, which he referred to as anthems. He was okay with the more modern music, but would like to hear some old anthems every now and again. Mr. James showed us several awards honoring his service in the choir. He lives independently, near family, and continued to drive to St. Paul when his health was good. He kindly thanked Lynn and me for taking time out of our busy schedules to spend with him that day. We did not share this with him, but his perseverance and appreciation for life gave us the drive we needed to keep on truckin' that day.

During our first set of interviews, I interviewed Anyika about her role as Arts Ministry Coordinator and what she felt about St. Paul's role in the Arts District whose motto is: *A place for reflection...Where art lives...Where history lives*. One of Anyika's goals was to connect St. Paul to the Dallas Arts District, the largest Arts District in the country. She hoped to develop a fruitful relationship with The Arts District, through arts programming, as an integral part of the Church's indoctrination. Anyika was a member of The Arts District Friends, whose mission was and still is "to champion the Dallas Arts

District, by enlivening and promoting the District as a place for people." Another goal is "to raise awareness and appreciation for The Arts District and the institutions that enrich it, through a variety of programming and marketing initiatives" (taken from *The Arts District Friends* Website). Anyika felt that St. Paul could only become an integral part of this community by embracing the change that now surrounded it, not fighting it, as Dr. Patterson once said. She saw the lack of finances and space as the two biggest obstacles for the church, but was very optimistic.

### **To Accept and Embrace**

After hearing church member perspectives about St. Paul's place in the Arts District and about increasing in visibility, I began to construct one audience for the public history project and exhibition. My initial proposal to the St. Paul Trustees began to fit into this mode of acceptance, as it aimed to make St. Paul's history more visible to Arts District visitors who took The Arts District Stroll, a private guided tour of the history and architecture of The Arts District.

Based on my archival research, my more detailed proposal was to now to be chronologically based on the historical narrative of information on St. Paul's conception in New Orleans, its relationship to Huston–Tillotson University, its founding of five other Black churches in Dallas, and its more recent role as a church in The Arts District. When possible, oral history interviews would also be utilized in order to describe the presented material culture. One of my major goals was to establish provisions for making the history exhibition more relevant to the needs of the community as community

interests and contexts change. The exhibition media (e.g. photos, labels, artifacts) would be easily removable and storable. The Arts Committee would also supplement the initial exhibit media with arts programming through literary, musical, and theatrical performances representing the St. Paul community through living history exhibitions. I would also encourage feedback on the displays by soliciting comments through response surveys from the church community and other visitors to the Arts District.

In the meantime, I attended a few Arts Committee events, like the Resurrection Arts Festival held in the spring of 2005. This festival, which centered on Easter activities, included concerts, an African Village with arts and crafts activities for children, and a screening of a 1941 film, “The Blood of Jesus.” In 1941, St. Paul was featured in this film written and directed by Spencer Williams Jr. of the TV show *Amos & Andy*. The film features St. Paul’s church building, as well as performances by the St. Paul choir.

The film is about a Baptist woman (played by Cathryn Caviness), accidentally shot to death by her atheist husband (played by Williams). Her spirit is removed from her body and then goes on a journey, in which she must choose between Zion (heaven) and hell (an urban environment filled with juke joints and a tempestuous devil); and between Satan and God. She chooses Zion and is returned to her husband, who is sitting at her deathbed. Her survival is a Christian miracle! Movies like these not only served as entertainment for the Black community, but provided moral messages to Black Christian audiences, many who lived in Dallas. I was unaware of this film, which inspired me to think more about how to feature St. Paul, not simply within the bounds of Dallas, but through its connection to the greater US.

## **Meetings**

Later in the year, I moved to Dallas for a scholar-in-residency project at The Women's Museum. Although I did not dedicate as much time to the St. Paul project as I had initially planned for that year, my more permanent placement in Dallas gave me opportunities to visit the church on a regular basis, discuss different ideas with Leah and others, and attend more of their events. As a result, I got to meet more of the church members. St. Paul now had a new Pastor, L. Charles Stovall. I introduced myself to him, my ideas about the public history project, and asked for his blessing. He was supportive, so I continued my work. In the meantime, I continued to work with the Arts Ministry to find ways of matching their goals to the goals of the exhibit project.

One example, was a project that Anyika proposed for the Camp SucSeed summer youth camp. Anyika was helping to manage this camp, which helped to excavate the Cole House site in 2002. I spoke with her in March and she told me that their 2006 summer camp theme was going to be Black Dallas and Genealogy. I saw this as the perfect opportunity to work with the children in a public history project, while contributing to the exhibit project. The camp consisted of 30 participants between the ages of 7-12. Some of the members were children from the St. Paul community and others were from the local Roseland community homes, a public housing development. I told Anyika that I planned to collaborate with the Dallas African American Genealogy group on a photography class with the summer campers. My goal was to have the students explore Black Dallas history through photography and present the images as an exhibition at the church. They would also document their personal genealogies (scrap booking, family trees, etc.) through a



genealogy course and record the Dallas Freedman's Town genealogy through their photography.

I soon realized that Camp SucSeed had been cancelled for the summer and that Anyika would be leaving St. Paul, and that the future of the Arts Ministry was uncertain. I put the children's project on the backburner and began to think about revamping my goals for the exhibit project. I could no longer rely so heavily on the Arts Committee and began to refocus on the development of the project advisory committee that Leah suggested over two years ago. This was one of the most significant plans to come out of my weekly discussions with Leah, as we began thinking about potential members for this advisory committee.

Leah and I came up with the names of potential committee members, including Leah; Pastor Odom; Mamie McKnight, executive director of Black Dallas Remembered (a Dallas African American heritage preservation group) and a former Dallas Landmark Commissioner and Texas Historical Commission member; church member Reggie Smith; avocational Black Dallas historian Donald Payton; Bill Bryant, Professor of Supervised Ministry at Southern Methodist University; Dr. Roslyn Walker, The Margaret McDermott Curator of African Art at The Dallas Museum of Art; Dallas City Council Member Angela Hunt; church historian Ms. Moore; Lareatha Clay, St. Paul Member and Texas Historical Commissioner, and me.

After the end of my scholar-in-residency term, I contacted Leah to find out if we could schedule some time to hold a project committee meeting in September. Once we had some dates set aside, then I would contact church members, like Ms. Moore and

Reggie. I also suggested having monthly meetings until the end of the year. Through these meetings, we would determine how we would like to involve particular members of the project advisory (community) board. Leah notified me that St. Paul now had a new Senior Pastor, Reverend Elzie Odom, Jr., and that I should introduce myself and consult with him about the direction of the project.

My plan for the upcoming months was to continue doing archival research, search for photos, and other primary sources. My first move was to inquire about the St. Paul Arts Ministry, which Anyika had once directed, to find out if it was still active. Leah told me that the church was in the process of reformulating some of its ministries, and their new duties, following the new pastoral assignment. The Arts Ministry was one of these. Although Anyika and the Arts Ministry had been my primary collaborators, I chose to proceed with the two project committees (local and community) as the major collaborators on the exhibit project. In the meantime, I met with Leah weekly to determine goals and results for the next few months, October–May.

I met Pastor Odom shortly after his arrival at St. Paul. Pastor Odom was a confident man who was well connected in the Dallas Methodist community. Leah and I met with him to discuss the public history project that we had been developing for the past three years. Pastor Odom had only been at the church for only a month, but was excited about the work that we had done and the future project potential. He was very interested in the exhibit project and eager to move ahead. He also agreed to working with a project advisory committee, as Leah and I proposed. For the first time, one of the church pastors asked that I welcome him to the church, instead of the reverse.

I was reinvigorated about the project and called Leah the next week to present an alternative to working with the potential committee members that we discussed. I asked that she consider having an in-church committee (maybe 10 people or so), consisting solely of members who expressed an interest in participating in the history project. I thought that this would give us an opportunity to determine how the church members felt about the project, what they would like to contribute, what the internal resources were, and brainstorm, prior to presenting information to the proposed committee, which consisted of several folks outside of the church community. I suggested that the community members serve as an advisory board for resources and consultation, but not be major parts of the initial creation process. In this way, the project could truly belong to the church community. Leah ran this suggestion by Pastor Odom and we agreed to have the two committees.

I now had some details on how the project could be administrated and created a tentative timeline to develop the 4-sectioned exhibition from December 2006 - February 2008. The four sections had been determined by the chronology established in Ms. Moore's written history (see appendix). The project would conclude with the submission of a National Register application. The timeline was:

December 2006 – January 2007

Consult Community Advisory Board

Section One: *The Early Years* (1865 -1890) Exhibit Development

*Output:* First Section of history exhibition

February – March 2007

Development of Preservation and Maintenance Plan for Section One

*Output:* Preservation and Maintenance Plan, Historical Manuscript

April – May 2007

Section Two: *Building a New Sanctuary* (1891 - 1947) Exhibit Development

*Output:* Second Section of history exhibition

June - July 2007

Development of Preservation and Maintenance Plan for Section Two

*Output:* Preservation and Maintenance Plan

August - September 2007

Section Three: *The I.B. Loud Years* (1948 - 1982) Exhibit Development

*Output:* Third Section of history exhibition

October 2007 – November 2007

Development of Preservation and Maintenance Plan for Section Three

*Output:* Preservation and Maintenance Plan

December - January 2007

Section Four: *St. Paul in the Arts District* (1983 - 2007) Exhibit Development

*Output:* Fourth Section of history exhibition

Full Exhibit Presentation and Formal Opening

February 2008

National Register and Texas Historic Site Designation Application Process

Begins

*Output:* Final Preservation Plan

Church Member and Visitor Response Surveys

Feedback

Submit National Register and State Landmark Applications

I had several small and large scale goals to discuss with the committees, including the potential for creating a documentary film using some of the oral histories; making content contributions to the *Project Past* website for the Juliette Street Project (2002 archaeology excavations), which had been developed by James Davidson and Jamie Brandon; and producing a historical narrative upon which the exhibit project would be based. I also planned to discuss the development of a preservation and maintenance plan; transcription of the oral history interviews; and indexing and archiving the archival

materials. The final points of discussion were to be how the actual exhibition would be presented and the creation of a photo archive and a classification database which would make the retrieval of archival materials less difficult.

Based on discussions with Leah, I contacted Pastor Odom, Reggie Smith, Ms. Moore, and Lareatha Clay to let them know that I was planning a committee meeting for the St. Paul History project, and that I would like for them to participate as church committee members. The role of the church committee was to include planning any public interpretations that might take place, exhibit building, planning public talks, fundraising, and similar activities. Pastor Odom had previously agreed to participate and said that he would attend. Reggie said that he and his mother, Ava Cox, would be there. They were invited to participate, due to their strong participation in the Juliette Street Project and their links to the Cole family, the family whose shotgun house site was excavated in 2002. At the time, Lareatha Clay was a Texas Historical Commissioner and one of the first Black members (her mother was the first) of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas. She was chosen, because of her familiarity with Texas Black history and historical societies.

We had a meeting in December of 2006. Although Ms. Moore agreed to assist in any way that she could, she was unable to attend the meeting. I planned the meeting to begin with Pastor Odom's comments on the long range goals for the church and how they related to the exhibit project. I also planned to discuss the issues of interpreting St. Paul to the public, my role as researcher, and the role of the church and community boards. I gave them a general introduction about what had been done already (e.g. oral history

interviews, *Project Past* website, James Davidson's traveling exhibition) and presented three missions for the public history project.

1. The **primary mission** - to preserve and interpret the archaeologies and histories of the people who built and continue to build the St. Paul United Methodist Church.
2. The **secondary mission** - to preserve and interpret the history of the Dallas Freedmanstown and the surrounding region, in order to complement the primary mission and to offer a more thorough understanding of contributions of the people of that neighborhood and of its relationship to the history of Texas and the United States.
3. The **tertiary mission** - to utilize the public interpretation of historical and archaeological research to promote understanding and appreciation of the significant history of St. Paul United Methodist Church.

Although most of the church committee members were on board with the direction of the exhibit project, one member did show a reasonable concern about how church members could potentially respond to the content of the timeline that I presented and how St. Paul's development related to the history of racism in Dallas. The member had some concern that a focus on Dallas's racist history could interfere with a celebration of St. Paul's history, and some church members could have issues with that.

I was quickly reminded of the scholarship in cultural representations at Black historic sites, which focuses on how some Black sites choose to suppress discussions on slavery and other institutions of oppression and highlight the accomplishments of Black Americans in spite of modes of oppression. According to Eichstedt and Small:

while Black-centric sites discuss slavery and the experiences of the enslaved, they do not restrict themselves to a focus on slavery; instead they also focus on other periods in African American history, in particular the civil rights movement.

Their goal is not to celebrate a genteel South nor [sic] to glorify the white elites who dominated that region. Instead, they seek to acknowledge, celebrate, and honor the struggles of African Americans and their perseverance, dignity, and resilience in the face of exploitation, hostility, and oppression. At these sites we do not hear about faithful, loyal, happy, or shiftless slaves, but of individual struggle and suffering, collective resistance of identity, and human dignity in the face of oppression. At these sites, African Americans are humanized and individualized- we hear of their struggles as human agents in a nation that promised quality but delivered so little. And these sites themselves persevere despite lacking resources and personnel, despite lacking the glamour and elegance of huge mansions, and despite their marginalization, even segregation, in the over-all tourist infrastructure. (2002:266)

In order to follow this method of representation, I would have to focus on the accomplishments and survival of St. Paul, in spite of racism and oppression in Dallas.

Other committee members responded that those histories could not be separated and that the facts, no matter how “real,” should be laid out. I shared the committee member’s initial concern, but felt that Dallas’s racist history could be utilized to foreground how St. Paul continues to survive, without highlighting stories of institutional victimization. Ultimately, my goal was to share St. Paul’s story, as an integral part of Dallas history, and I was well aware of how stories of racism and injustice, represented in museum exhibitions could affect potential visitors and the community being represented.

My more personal long term goals at that time were to 1) develop traveling exhibitions, slide shows, and brochures to show to visitors and to take to schools and community groups; 2) to sponsor community-wide activities to communicate and celebrate the history of St. Paul and Freedmanstown; 3) to provide a comfortable, park-like setting for people to enjoy the site and the history programs offered; 4) to design one or more outdoor archaeology learning areas for hands-on exercises, demonstrations, etc.; 5) to have demonstrations of "real-life" activities that people might have done in the past; 5) to hire a local resident to serve as Executive Director of the heritage museum; 6) to develop signage for the church grounds; 7) to have an active membership program to provide an ongoing source of funds, ideas, visitors, volunteers, etc.; 8) and to build a multi-purpose educational center on the church grounds for educational seminars, presentations, and artifact storage. Now that I reflect, those were some very ambitious goals.

Shortly after the church committee meeting, Leah, Pastor Odom, and I held a working lunch meeting with the community advisory committee. This committee consisted of Dr. Harry Robinson, director of the Dallas African American Museum; Mr. Phillip Collins, then curator at the Dallas African American Museum; Dr. Roslyn Walker, The Margaret McDermott Curator of African Art at the Dallas Museum of Art; Dr. Bill Bryant, Professor of Supervised Ministry at Southern Methodist University; and Mr. Donald Payton, local community historian. I began the meeting by introducing myself, giving an overview of the St. Paul history project (archaeology, archival research, photo collection, oral histories, and the church and community advisory committees), and



talking about the project goals and the main goal of the community advisory committee: to assist with the planning of public interpretations and museum building. I then asked each guest to give an introduction, so that they could become more familiar with each other.

Next, I discussed the exhibit narrative themes, based on Mr. Moore's historical narrative. These are *The Early Years* (1865 -1890), *Building a New Sanctuary* (1891 - 1947), *The I.B. Loud Years* (1948 - 1982), and *St. Paul in the Arts District* (1983 - 2007). The intended deliverables for the project included an exhibition and archive, historical narrative manuscript, project brochure, project website, and edited oral history interviews on DVD. I also included 6 project goals: 1) to utilize the Exhibition as a Vehicle to Connect with The Arts District Community; 2) to achieve National Register of Historic Places Landmark Status; 3) Achieve Texas State Historic Site Designation; 4) Increase St. Paul's Visibility in the Arts District; 5) help to Increase African American Community Awareness About St. Paul and its Connection to The Arts District; and 6) connect to Local Schools through the Implementation of Educational and Public Programs. I then asked for their feedback.

Most of the feedback from this meeting centered on whether the church could stand to simultaneously operate as an active religious institution and as a museum institution. For example, what would be the museum's hours of operation and who would give the tours and when? Some committee members also expressed concerns about accommodating large groups and making the exhibit spaces accessible to them. Pastor Odom stressed that the church would always be a "church first." He would not allow the

museum elements to dominate or disrupt St. Paul's primary role as a church. Two committee members expressed concerns about having displays and artifacts so near to the kitchen and how the intense heat from the kitchen could jeopardize some elements of the exhibition. I had not considered this issue previously, and was very glad that it was mentioned.

Overall, much of the concerns about the museum stemmed from logistical issues that could conflict St. Paul's role as a church to its role as a museum. My immediate thought was to refer to Mother Bethel, one of the most successful church/museum sites representing some aspect of Black history in the U.S. Mother Bethel A.M.E. church grew out of segregationist practices toward Black Methodists in the U.S. North. These practices led to the ultimate creation of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (A.M.E.) developed as a result of the Free African Society, a mutual aid association. Although members, like former slaves Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, were impressed with the relative openness of the Methodist Church, they were not impressed with the embedded racism at the St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church, their church home. "The rapid growth in the numbers of African worshipers at St. George's propelled discussion of issues charged with implicit racism, such as where should Africans sit and how should they participate in services?" (Pinn and Pinn 2000: 32). In 1787, members of African descent withdrew from St. George's after being asked to sit separately from the White members. Although their new church home, Mother Bethel, was dedicated in 1794, Black members of the Methodist Church did not become African Methodists until 1816, after

completely breaking away from the Methodist Episcopal Church. They then formed the A.M.E. Church, the first African American denomination in the U.S.

Although I had not been to visit Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church in Philadelphia, I knew that it had served this dual role for some time. There are Sunday Worship hours, with one hour after church designated for museum visits. All other museum visits are by appointment during designated days/hours for their three-room Richard Allen Museum, on the lower level of the church.

Surprisingly, much of the meeting discussion was about whether William Sidney Pittman, Black educator Booker T. Washington's son-in-law, designed St. Paul. According to oral history, Pittman, who was America's premier African American architect of the time, is credited with designing St. Paul in 1912. He was Dallas's first trained Black architect. In 1912, Pittman moved to Dallas with his wife of five years, Portia, after living and working in Washington D.C. He was the architect for several buildings throughout Texas, including the Knights of Pythias building and St. James A. M. E. Church.

Although Pittman was responsible for designing elements of over forty buildings, including the Negro Building at the 1907 World Fair's Jamestown Exposition in Virginia, his architectural career was rather short. Pittman was often criticized as being stubborn and difficult to work with. He was Texas's first practicing Black architect and often felt rejected by Dallas's Black community, when they patronized White architects, in lieu of him. By 1926, he had completed alterations to the Wesley Chapel A. M. E. Church in

Houston, his final project as an architect. Two years later his wife left him after tiring of his recalcitrant attitude.

In his later years, Pittman made a living as a carpenter. In 1931 he started a scandalous paper for Dallas's African American community called the *Brotherhood Eyes*. By 1932, J.R. Plummer, pastor of the Greater Shiloh Baptist Church, charged him with criminal libel, as a result of things printed in the paper. Pittman was found guilty of the charge. In it, he spoke of the questionable behaviors of Black community leaders.

In 1936, Pittman was charged with sending obscene material through the mail, across state lines. After pleading not guilty, he was convicted to five years in Leavenworth prison. On his release, he returned to Dallas where he worked as a carpenter until his death in 1958.

That issue about whether he actually designed St. Paul, was not resolved in this meeting. The meeting concluded and I told the committee members that I would be in touch.

## **The Building**

I next began to research what it would take to get National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) status for the church. I met with a member of the Texas Historical Commission and was given the okay to begin the nomination process.

I realized that the social history of St. Paul's building would be an integral part of this nomination process. I began to delve further into the history of the church's building, not only to help solidify its NRHP status, but to determine, if possible, if William Sidney

Pittman really designed the church building. Several church and community members expressed interest in this mystery and I knew that identifying Pittman as the architect would help to give the church the legitimacy as a “Pittman church” that it wanted.

I looked into building permit applications and contacted local and national architectural historians. I again contacted the Dallas Historical Society, with no luck finding information on Pittman. I also contacted the Dallas Central Appraisal District, with no luck there. What I did find was an application for a building permit, at the Oak Cliff Municipal Building, which states an N.H. or M.H. Black (the name was difficult to make out) as the architect in 1913. The Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division at the Dallas Public Library (DPL) log book lists a building permit for 1911 shortly before Pittman would have first come to Dallas. That document seems to be missing.

James Davidson had previously found a document (1924) releasing the St. Paul Church from debt to architect C.H. Leinbach, who entered into a building contract with them for the construction of a three-story brick building, which is the church's present building. All work had been completed by March of 1927.

Nancy Sparrow at UT's architectural archives found a listing for Charles Henry Leinbach and J.L. Leinbach under the section on charter members that paid dues for the period June-November 1939 listed under the Northeast Texas District, Dallas Section (page 94) in the book *Since 1886: A History of the Texas Society of Architects* by Hank Todd Smith published in 1983.

It seems that N.H./M.H. Black could have been the architect for the initial brick church and Leinbach may have designed the addition or extension to the building, but I

was still unsure if or when Pitmann would have come in. I began to look into other archives and historical institutions that could be helpful and landed a temporary job, in the process.

### **Job Opportunities**

In June of 2007, I began working at the Texas African American Photography Archive (TAAPA), which “consists of over 50,000 [mostly donated] photographic negatives and prints and more than 20 oral histories collected from African American photographers” to provide “... a broad overview of African American photography in the urban and rural areas of Texas...” (Documentary Arts, 2009). TAAPA was founded by Dallas documentarian, historian, playwright, exhibitor, folklorist, and author, Alan Govenar, through his non-profit Documentary Arts organization “to broaden public knowledge and appreciation of the arts of different cultures in all media” (Documentary Arts, 2009). Govenar was Project Director for the *Facing the Rising Sun: Freedman's Cemetery* exhibition that I previously saw on display at the Dallas African American Museum. I had tried to contact him in 2004, with no luck.

I finally met Dr. Govenar shortly following a talk that he gave before the Dallas Arts District Alliance. Leah Parker was a member and invited me, so that we could get a chance to meet Dr. Govenar. We were both interested in talking to him about our project. After the meeting, we briefly spoke with him and told him about our intended St. Paul exhibit project, exchanged information, and promised to follow-up. I later called Dr. Govenar and he told me that he would compile a file of all St. Paul associated

photographs that he could find in his archive. Leah and I scheduled a meeting with him to view this file and met at the TAAPA building shortly after.

Dr. Govenar had several photos of persons affiliated with St. Paul in some way, or with one of its descendant churches. Leah recognized some of the faces. I recognized none, but asked for a disc copy of images, just in case they could be identified later. Govenar also had original copies of *The Dallas Post Tribune*, a Black run weekly Dallas newspaper. The paper was founded in 1947 and continues today. I told Dr. Govenar that I would return to review the papers, hoping that they might contribute to my research on St. Paul.

It took approximately 2 weeks for me to review 21 years of weekly events in Black Dallas, that the TAAPA had available. I found articles highlighting the good deeds and accomplishments of some St. Paul members, with whom I was familiar; St. Paul Church celebrations; and coverage of the church fire in 1973. There was general reporting on Dallas school and church events; history tidbits; beauticians, clothing and movies ads; local murder cases; and other standard news coverage, written from the perspectives of Dallas's Black community to other members of Dallas's Black community. Any historian knows that this work is often tedious, so I broke the monotony by reminiscing about the Jheri curls and wave nouveau hair styles popular in the 1980s. I also jotted down the names of soul food restaurants and barbeque joints advertised in the weekly ads, so that I could research whether or not they were still serving. A lot of information in the papers was invaluable, not solely because of the information that I received on St. Paul Church and community events, but for the comprehensive

perspective on Black Dallas society from the 1970s to the 1990s. Prior to reading *The Post Tribune*, I was mostly interested in St. Paul's early, and lesser known, 19<sup>th</sup> century history. These readings gave me a further appreciation for St. Paul's endurance during the radical changes to its neighborhood and the introduction of the plans for the Dallas Arts District in the early 1980s.

During my research at the TAAPA, Alan Govenar asked if I would be interested in helping to further organize the TAAPA archive. I had initially planned to return to UT-Austin in the fall of 2007, but decided to remain to work at the TAAPA. I could get further glimpses into Black Dallas history by working with someone with much more experience, and hopefully come across more photographs related to St. Paul. In the meantime, I periodically met with Leah and Pastor Odom. On one occasion, Leah told me that the church secretary had a new career opportunity and had left St. Paul. They had not yet located a new secretary.

I visited the church, shortly after I stopped working at the TAAPA. Pastor Odom asked if I would consider working as the church secretary. I told him that I planned to focus much of my attention on the exhibition and just did not have the time. I was already 10 months behind my proposed timeline. I did want to dedicate more time to the preparation of the exhibition, but was also skeptical about going from the role of research to church secretary. I was also afraid that the good reputation I had with members of the church could be jeopardized by this position. Church secretaries are all-knowing and heavily involved with personal matters. I did not want to disappoint Pastor Odom, but also did not want to take the risk. Pastor Odom was disappointed, but understood. After a



few weeks of deep thinking, I decided to work as the church secretary, on a temporary and partime basis.

For eight months, I updated church and meeting calendars; served as webmaster; wrote grant proposals and letters of intent; created Sunday bulletins; ordered church supplies; and scheduled pastor and committee meetings. I am not sure if all of these things were on my initial job descriptions, but I seemed to handle them well. The most difficult task for me was making coffee. I became a lot more aware of the intricacies and logistics of what it takes to run a church, and gained a lot more respect for the institution and its members. It was never my intent to do a congregational study or ethnography, so I had not paid that much attention to what it took to run the church on a daily basis. I was also able to get to know members on a more personal basis and earn a level of respect that I do not think I would have gained solely as a researcher. To them, I was help when they were in need.

Lastly, in the spring of 2007, St. Paul and its sister church, Highland Park, initiated a major project to restore and renovate St. Paul's historic facility, after Highland Park offered to cover 3.5 million of the 5.1 million in renovation expenses. During my term as secretary, Pastor Odom let me know that the renovation would take place sometime the next year, and that the entire church was going to be evacuated for a period of at least one year. That was great news for the church, but not so great news for my plan to install an exhibition at the church sometime in 2008. When I left the church in October, plans for the restoration project were on the drawing boards. I now had to

reconsider whether the exhibit project was still feasible and, if so, how I would pull the project off in the process of an extensive renovation.

## CHAPTER VI

### **MAKING HERITAGE VISIBLE: AN ACCOUNT OF THE EXHIBITION *FROM FREEDMAN'S TOWN TO THE ARTS DISTRICT: CELEBRATING THE LEGACY OF ST. PAUL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH***

After six years of archival research and six months of formal planning the interpretive exhibition, *From Freedman's Town to the Arts District: Celebrating the Legacy of St. Paul United Methodist Church* opened at The Continental Lofts Gallery in Dallas on February 1, 2009. Over 100 guests attended the exhibit opening, which included a short program, with brief speeches by Pastor Odom and me, and a short ceremony honoring Ms. Moore. The attendees mostly included those St. Paul members who had attended church services that morning, but also included friends of the church, local community historians, historic preservationists, my friends and family, St. Paul renovation project architects, local media, and the District Superintendent of the UMC North Texas Conference. The opening was flanked by a program for local members of the Texas Historical Commission and a formal event sponsored by local fundraisers for St. Paul's renovation and restoration program.

The main purpose of this exhibit project was to help make the St. Paul Church story more visible to its local community by partially redefining the church's identity to the local Dallas public and strengthening its relationship to and place in the Arts District. The exhibition was not only an integral part of a wider public history project, but provided a space for the church to present a public case for its cultural preservation. My

goals were to address, in a practical way, 1) the need for archaeologists to make the past accessible to various publics and 2) to show in practice how researchers can strategize with descendant communities to apply archaeological and historical resources in their cultural heritage initiatives.

Through these events, over 200 visitors engaged Dallas history through such subjects as Black Methodism, Freedman's schools, Black consumerism, historic architecture, and Black representations in film. The exhibition, along with the church pastor's strategic effort to involve local media in its publicity, increased St. Paul's visibility in the community. St. Paul was not only featured in several evening news pieces and television community programs, but made front page of the *Dallas Morning News* as its Black History Month headliner (See Chapter 7).

St. Paul's location in an arts district, and the church community's desire to reflect this neighborhood, made an exhibition a practical and appropriate instrument through which to publicize the church's history and renovation project. The Dallas Arts District is filled with museums and exhibit spaces, very familiar to local residents, church members, and other visitors to the area. The exhibition's more specific location in Dallas's Deep Ellum community, the city's most well known arts and entertainment district, was fitting for equivalent reasons. The exhibition was also a dominant hegemonic standard, carrying an implicit "air of legitimacy" (Gaspar de Alba 1998:168). It was a mainstream form of representation, recognized by most visitors. Although its content was designed to re-represent common sense notions of St. Paul's history, it was not an act of resistance. This vehicle of representation was meant to be accessible to several audiences, many on which

the church relied for acceptance and financial support, as opposed to other potential strategies for visibility.

Considering this framework, this chapter addresses my curatorship process through 1) the development of the history exhibition and the exhibit opening event, 2) the interpretive approaches used in the development of the exhibition, and 3) my efforts to work with the St. Paul community and others in creating the exhibition as an example of public archaeology. I also provide an overview of the exhibit installation and implementation. Although it is not exhaustive, the specific exhibit items that I discuss best represent the exhibition's interpretive goals.

## **Conception**

### *Exhibit Planning*

I worked as St. Paul's secretary for eight months and soon returned to Austin. I met with friend and colleague, Lidia Marte, shortly after my return. She had recently completed her doctoral work on food, memory and "home" among Dominican immigrants in New York City, which included a public food exhibition on "cooking and remembering" in that particular community (Marte 2008).

When I first met with Lidia regarding the exhibition, she suggested that I focus on a "big idea," or unifying plan that would hold the various parts of the exhibit together, based on Beverly Serrell's method laid out in the text *Exhibit Labels* (1996). She also suggested that I schedule the exhibit opening for December, and I was very intimidated by that suggestion. I did not conceive how I could plan and install an exhibition in two

months. I had some experience theoretically thinking through exhibit representations in Dr. Pauline Strong's "Representation" class, yet I had the help of several other students and the scale of the project was not as sizeable as that of the St. Paul project. Lidia prepared her exhibition in a relatively short period of time. She knew that this was not ideal, yet possible, and would drive me to set a deadline that I must follow. She was right. Although I did not schedule the exhibition for December, I decided that February might be a bit more feasible for me and also potentially give the exhibition more visibility than it would receive in any other month. I was not sure who my exhibit audience was at this point, but felt that those persons looking to celebrate Black History Month events might be attracted to the idea of a Black history exhibition. Lidia and I agreed to meet biweekly, or as needed, for the next few months. The exhibition was tentatively scheduled for February of 2009, about 4 months after our first meeting.

I knew that St. Paul was undergoing its renovation and restoration project, and was soon planning to move from their church building to a different location. I could not feasibly wait until the congregation returned to the church in 2010, so I had to come up with an alternate location for the exhibition. I called my friend, Carlton Odom, with whom I had kept in touch over the years. He gave me the letter praising my work (previously mentioned), when I first attended a St. Paul Leadership Retreat in 2004. In it he said,

What you are doing is extremely important. Most people have no idea what former slaves accomplished and the debt that all Americans (especially in the

South) owe them for their accomplishments. Eventually there should be a monument and brief history about the former slaves that founded St. Paul. Either directly in the church or in the Arts District. Most people don't realize dynamic educational institutions such as Huston-Tillotson grew out of the basement of St. Paul. Keep up the great work – **If there is any way I can help or promote this work email me** (emphasis added in bold).

Odom added, "It would be nice to get a National Historic recognition or designation for the contributions of former slaves and St. Paul to the community. President Bush has strong ties to the Methodist Church," insinuating that the President's connection to the Methodist Church might draw some attention to this effort.

Carlton and I kept in touch over the years. We had many Starbucks conversations about one of his passions, art. Carlton wanted to market creative arts events in Dallas and provide a space for artists to display their works. He acquired a space at the Continental Lofts Apartment Homes (also a multi-use building). Monthly, I received emails about arts events that Carlton sponsored. I attended some of these events at the Gallery and other venues throughout the city. They were very well attended, had good food, nice music, and interesting people. Carlton's marketing and public relations firm, Creative South, promoted products and services for a range of clients, while maintaining a 6000 sq. ft. gallery space.

Most of Carlton's gallery events featured visual arts, and I was not sure how an interpretive history exhibition would fit into the gallery space or into the firm's goals.

Carlton was no longer a member of St. Paul, but had remained interested in the church's progress and development. I decided to give him a call in September. Carlton and I met over oatmeal and migas at Café Brazil in Deep Ellum, Dallas's entertainment district and home to the Continental Lofts Gallery. He seemed very excited about the exhibit project and offered his marketing help in any way. Although the space was a rental space, Carlton gifted the space to the St. Paul exhibition for the month of February. I now had a location and a potentially huge weight lifted. I could begin formal planning.

I had previously called Pastor Odom to let him know that I was aiming for a February exhibit opening. I told him that I was working on a location and that I would get back with him. I gave him a call once I had confirmation from Carlton and asked that he choose a date, preferably around the first day of the month, for the exhibit opening. We also discussed which church members could serve on a planning committee for the opening. I let Pastor Odom know that I had the design end of the exhibition taken care of. Any other elements of the exhibit opening would be taken care of by this committee. That included press, marketing, invites, food, etc. I let him know that the church could have as small or large of an opening as it desired. The space was there and could accommodate them. Pastor Odom quickly gave names for committee members. I was reminded of how well church communities are designed, in the sense that there was a member volunteer waiting in the wings for any project. I asked that we include Roslyn Walker, the DMA curator who was a member of the exhibit community advisory board put together 2 years earlier. She was now a member of St. Paul. I also asked that we include Lareatha Clay and Reggie Smith, who were on the church advisory board. To that group, we included



Muriel Johnson-Redd, the church Arts Ministry Coordinator; Macy Macys, co-historian for the church; Brenda Powers, head of the church marketing committee; and David Cole, one of the church trustees. Although Brenda, Muriel, and David Cole were not on the initial exhibit planning committees, I had worked with them during my post as secretary at St. Paul, and they were all familiar with my dissertation work with the church.

Although this committee would not be part of the exhibit planning process, it was my intent to get them familiarized with the exhibition which would allow them to continue to develop the exhibition for installation at the church after renovation. I also thought that it would be nice for St. Paul to have a formal exhibit opening, with a reception. I had been to several exhibit openings while in Dallas, and found them to be great ways to attract larger audiences. It could also be a great way to assemble and show appreciation to many of the people who had helped me along the way. Regrettably, I did not feel that I could help to plan this event. I was already overwhelmed with production work on the actual exhibition. I was aware that the exhibit opening would be a reflection on the church community, as well as on me, but decided to find a way to give suggestions to the committee without seeming to dominate the planning process. Pastor Odom ended our phone conversation by saying that he would check the church calendar and get back with me.

***The Big Idea.*** I began to think about Serrell's "big idea" and about three provisional titles that would express what was behind the big idea. The titles would describe what the exhibition was about. Lidia stressed that the "big idea" remains a "behind the scenes" theme, from which I could work and organize the exhibition. I

considered several larger frameworks around which the dissertation was centered and tried to come up with the exhibition “big idea” from there. These included historic preservation, cultural significance, landscape visibility, public archaeology/anthropology, gentrification, and reclamation. The best conceptual key that I could come up with at the time was “surviving survival,” to describe the St. Paul community’s process of maintaining its place in the Dallas Arts District, while continuously adapting to the changes in its environment, changes that often worked against the survival and the needs of a community church. St. Paul had survived in the Arts District neighborhood, and many other Black institutions had not (some after making conscious decisions to move under inauspicious circumstances). But had it really survived after sustaining such loss and what did this whole idea of survival mean? Did it simply mean remaining in place? I was not sure at this point and was definitely not sure that this would remain the underlying framework.

I began reading Serrell’s book from which Lidia’s advice regarding the “big idea” was drawn and soon realized that the big idea was a statement, that “...provides an unambiguous focus for the exhibit team throughout the exhibit development process by clearly stating in one noncompound sentence the scope and purpose of an exhibition...to delineate what will—and will not—be included in the exhibit” (Serrell 1996:2). Although the aim of Serrell’s concept was to offer some cohesiveness to exhibit teams, her suggestions were also very helpful in keeping me on some sort of track. I was the exhibit team, with much consultation from Lidia, but really needed a way to organize the exhibition, while allowing it some flexibility. I thought about these issues for a few days,

and decided that my big idea was that *St. Paul United Methodist Church is a standing part of Dallas's urban landscape and a site of black culture, public history, and urban archaeology*. This idea was a compound one, but it seemed to work at the time, and there was no one else to object. I wanted to cover all of these issues in a comprehensive way. I also came up with a project goal, which was to produce a more educated North Texas public by emphasizing the roles stated in the big idea, which now seemed to be a tangible one.

I recycled the three titles that I presented to the exhibit planning committees nearly 2 years before. These included: 1) *Celebrating the Soul of the Arts District: A History of the St. Paul United Methodist Church*; 2) *The Soul of the Arts District: Celebrating St. Paul United Methodist Church*; and 3) *From Freedman's Town to the Arts District: Celebrating the Legacy of St. Paul United Methodist Church*. *The Soul of the Arts District* was Pastor Odom's description of St. Paul, and I understood it. He felt that St. Paul was the only institution in the Arts District capable of providing Black cultural expressions in uniquely American art forms, like blues, gospel, and jazz. This "soul" intersected with St. Paul's place as the oldest surviving institution in the Arts District, the essence of the district itself.

I worked on treatment plans for the exhibition, as Lidia suggested. First, I created introductory panels that described each of the three parts of the exhibition that I wanted to present. These three general parts were the historical (chronological history of St. Paul), the archaeological (display of the results of the 2002 archaeological field work), and St. Paul in the Arts District (St. Paul's present role in the community). There were

also sub panels to describe each section in the chronological history. I continued to base the chronology on Ms. Moore's history. I also chose images that I felt correlated to each of these sections, as well as to the big idea. Lidia and I reviewed these treatments several times. She made suggestions about maintaining consistent font sizes and including maps that could better lay out where the church building was and when, as well as its place within the larger Dallas landscape. We also discussed who I wanted my audiences to be. Similar to the big idea, this could help me to frame the exhibition based on who I thought would attend the exhibition. I could not target all potential visitors, but did have a general idea about who the guests would be. As a result, I focused on three potential audiences: the St. Paul Church community, the broader UMC community, and local Dallas historians. I also wanted to attract those persons interested in attending Black History month activities, but felt that their interests were probably too diverse to target as one audience.

Lidia and I also talked about how to make some of the labels for the images more interpretive and informative. After all, this was to be an interpretive history exhibition, consisting of "displays that tell stories, contrast points of view, present challenging issues, or strive to change people's attitudes" (Serrell 1996:9). Serrell (1996:9) stated that, "The purpose of interpretive labels is to contribute to the overall visitor experience in a positive, enlightening, provocative, and meaningful, way. Interpretive labels address visitors' unspoken concerns: What's in it for me? Why should I care? How will knowing this improve my life? If labels only identify objects, animals, or artwork, then they are not interpretive." For example, in one of my initial treatment plans, I chose to use an

image of Kate Turley in the subsection, “Building Sanctuaries.” My first label read, “Kate Turley, a long standing member of St. Paul, owned the property on which the annex to the second brick church was built. She deeded the land to the church in December of 1918, for a sum of \$500.” After reading this description, Lidia asked me what I wanted the audience to really know about Kate Turley. That label was not an interpretive one, in the sense that it only identified Kate Turley and what she did. I added the statement, “Many women were great contributors to the development of churches in Freedman’s Town” to show how Turley fit into the greater scheme of Dallas and St. Paul history. Hopefully, it would inspire the visitor to think about how women contributed to the founding of Freedman’s communities, not only as mothers and domestics, but as financiers.

Ultimately, Serrell defines interpretation as “offering provocation” as opposed to just “presenting information” (1996:233). It would be my goal as the interpreter to apply different modalities in an attempt to give as wide a range of visitors’ opportunities to not only receive the information, but engage it. As an interpretive exhibitor, I chose to be responsible for how the impact(s) that my forms of communication might have on the visitors. I could not predict it, but I could help to influence how the public perceived the St. Paul Church community in its attempt to re-define its identity. To a huge extent, I had to gauge the personalities of the potential visitors and formulate ways of communication that could relate to their experiences. I was fortunate in the sense that I was intimate or familiar with many of the people who would likely attend the exhibition.

Early on, I realized that the interpretive services or “activities, presentations, publications, audio-visual, media, signs, and exhibits that convey key heritage resource messages to audiences” (National Association for Interpretation 2006) would be integral to the success of how interpretive the exhibition would be. It was important that I prioritize the involvement of St. Paul’s members in these key services. As previously mentioned, I did not feel that I could adequately make these a personal priority. Still, I realized that interpretive exhibition’s goal to help reaffirm St. Paul’s identity and historical significance and its place in the context of the Dallas Arts District could not be realized if there was not successful exhibit publication, media promotion, alternative activities, and other resources that would let potential visitors know that there was an exhibition taking place and, through the exhibition, inspire them to support the church’s historic preservation efforts.

With this in mind, I began to contact those potential committee members that Pastor Odom and I had discussed. All agreed to serve on the committees. One committee member said that she would prefer “...a big hurrah with lots of people and press, as opposed to a smaller event.” Pastor Odom felt the same way. This exhibition could front St. Paul’s move out of its church building and increase awareness of, and possible funding for, its renovation project. Pastor Odom and I attempted to schedule a meeting with the exhibit planning committee for a Thursday or Saturday in early December. I made calls to each member. After failing to get some consensus on the meeting date, I called Pastor Odom who decided to have the meeting after church service on Sunday, when most of the members were likely to be there.

### *Reception Planning*

The St. Paul exhibit reception planning committee met on December 7, 2008. I came up with a list of items that I thought we could discuss (Publicity and Communication, Food and Drink, Opening Program, and Entertainment) and explained to the rest of the committee that these were just suggestions. Pastor Odom opened the meeting by giving his general understanding of what the exhibit project was about and then put the remainder of the meeting in my hands. I told the members that I was in the process of creating the exhibition for the church, to be held at the Continental Lofts Gallery in Deep Ellum, a historic building which formally functioned as the Continental Gin Company. Members of the planning committee were unfamiliar with the gallery. I also brought a copy of the treatment plan for Part I, the history section of the exhibition, and passed it around so that the members could get an idea of some of the images and texts I planned to display. At the same time, I mentioned the items that I thought would be pertinent to discuss and then asked for feedback. In return, they asked me what I wanted them to do. Most of them seemed most interested in what I wanted to see happen. I was somewhat flattered by the level of respect they seemed to have for what they saw as *my* project. Pastor Odom had introduced it that way. I knew that it was important for me to frequently remind them that the reception was *theirs* to plan, without seeming to pass *my* responsibility on to them. I reminded them that the type of reception depended on what they wanted and any other events held during that month at the gallery would work the same way. I think that the members soon became more comfortable with making suggestions about the reception and the exhibition.

Reggie suggested that we make use of the opening reception as an opportunity to honor church historian, Ms. Moore, with a formal presentation and a plaque naming her service to the church. Everyone agreed and Ms. Mays volunteered to take on this effort. The discussion extended to potential programming for the remainder of the month, which I did not anticipate. I did not expect much talk about how the gallery space could be converted throughout the month, but was glad to hear that the church wanted to make the most of the exhibit space. Pastor Odom also suggested that we contact local television stations to announce and cover the event.

Brenda Powers agreed to lead the publicity campaign for the exhibition. Carlton had previously offered his help, and I suggested that Brenda contact Lareatha Clay, who had several contacts in the Texas historical community. I let the committee know that I could show them the gallery, so that they could get a better idea of the space with which we were working. We planned to meet at the gallery two days later. I contacted Carlton, who agreed to meet us there.

In the next few weeks, the committee was to generate a calendar, listing exhibit viewings, and a list of invitees. Invitations would go out by the first week of January and we would have another meeting in two weeks. Shortly after the meeting, I drafted a press release for Brenda to view, edit, and disseminate, upon her request.

I later drafted an agenda for the next planning committee meeting, although I was still trying to convince myself that I was not a primary participant in the planning process. I felt that the last meeting would have been more productive, at least time wise, if we had a more formal agenda. On the other hand, I wanted to encourage dialogue about



the exhibit opening, the church's primary interpretive service, and did not want to potentially restrict conversations about the planning with an agenda. As a result, I framed the agenda in a way that would involve updates from key committee persons. The agenda proposed a publicity update from Brenda Powers and reminded the committee that the press release needed to go out in two weeks. We would also need to compile a list of invitees for the opening and for any private showings. The exhibit invitations were to go out by the first of the next year (2009), with follow-up phone calls to key persons. The agenda also listed an update from Muriel, who agreed to take on the food responsibility.

Lastly, I wrote up a program agenda including the ribbon cutting, welcome address from Pastor Odom, address from a government representative, exhibit introduction from me (Ms. Mays strongly suggested that I do this), and presentation to Ms. Moore, namely who would make the presentation and how would she be presented. These were all items mentioned at the first meeting, so I basically gave a recap as the agenda.

In January, I received a few inquiries from committee members asking how to handle certain publicity issues. I could not answer most of these, and wanted to continue to retain some distance from the planning, so I referred them to whom I considered committee leaders. That seemed to work okay. At least I did not hear otherwise.

### *The Gallery*

Pastor Odom was anxious to meet Carlton, with whom he shared the same last name. He had previously teased that he and Carlton were possibly related. He seemed

even further amused once he realized that Carlton was White (after visiting his *Creative South* website) and emphasized their potential kinship even further. I was glad that Carlton was able to reunite with some of his former church mates and wanted to make sure that the church knew that he was responsible for loaning the exhibit space. All of the committee members showed up at the gallery and seemed impressed with the space (Figure 6-1). I do not think that the committee expected to have so much space to work with, 6000 sq.ft. with two restrooms and a kitchen. There was some talk about how the space could present information about the restoration project, amid conversations about how the opening events would be funded. I highly encouraged the former, as it was very pertinent to how exhibit visitors could relate to St. Paul's historic preservation cause. It was integral that guests see, firsthand, that the church was making significant strides in its physical restoration and reconstruction; it just needed more support. I tried to avoid the latter conversations, because I did not feel that it was appropriate for me to get involved in any logistics regarding money, especially after I learned how touchy of a subject financial expenditures could be in any organization. I did not want to potentially be caught in the middle of a financial debate.



FIGURE 6-1. Continental Lofts Gallery Interior 2 levels with connecting stairs. (Courtesy of <http://www.myspace.com/creativesouth>.)

The gallery floor includes several apartment units, to accommodate residents and office spaces. Figure 6-2 is a floor plan from the Creative South website, with a cropped image of the space generally adapted for exhibitions and arts programming. Lidia made a plan map of the gallery floor, listing the measurements that we took. I constructed my design based on this map and the images that she took when we first visited the gallery (Figure 6-3).

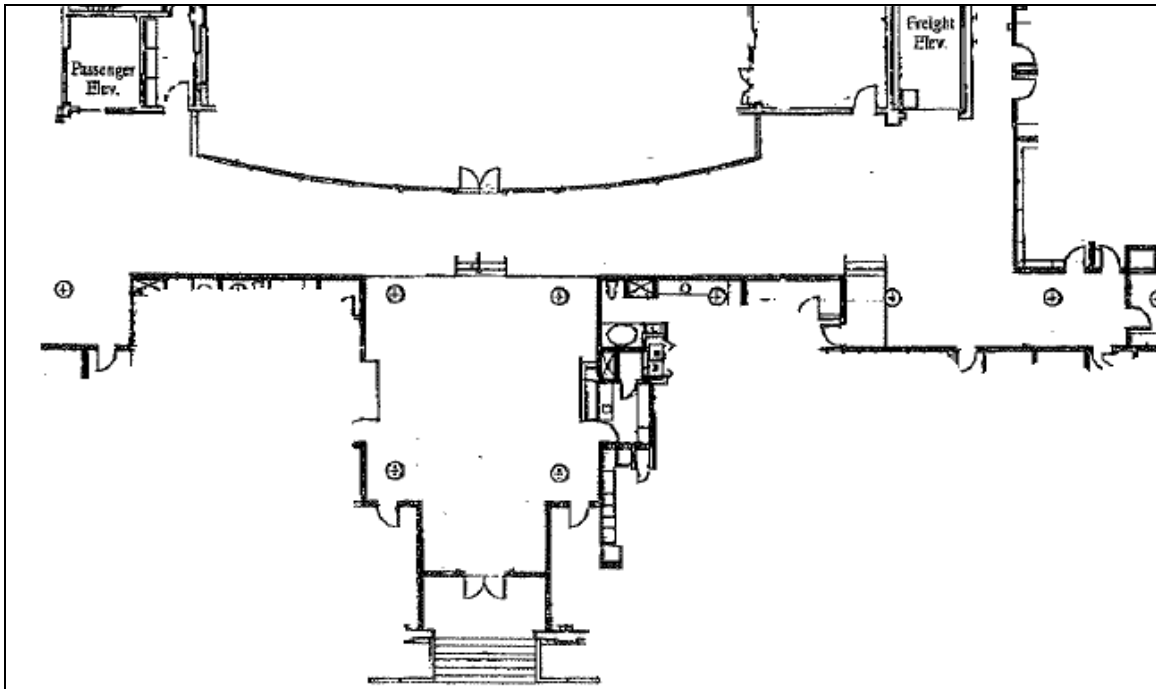


FIGURE 6-2. Gallery Floor Plan from *Creative South* website showing Available Exhibit Space. (Edited by Author.)

## Implementation

The exhibition included 3 introductory panels, 16 interpretive posters, a film display, and artifacts recovered during the UT-Austin archaeological field school. It began with the early development of the church, chronicling the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, moved on to cover its relationship to the North Dallas Freedman's Town, and ended with its present place in the Arts District. The exhibition was organized into three main parts: 1) *A History of St. Paul United Methodist Church*, 2) *Archaeology on Juliette Street*, and 3) *St. Paul in the Arts District*. Each part had several sections and commenced with an introductory panel, giving a general description of the contents of each part. I made the introductory panels consistent in layering so that they were easily recognized by visitors

in part of the exhibition. The entrance to the formal exhibit space was fronted by an introductory panel and a welcome panel dedicated to the ancestors buried at the Freedman's Cemetery. I decided to use two concrete pillars in the gallery space to serve as entrances to the exhibit space. I displayed images of the two statues of the warrior and the prophetess guarding the Dallas Freedman's Cemetery Memorial. The two images would serve as guards to the exhibition and the two pillars seemed to be the perfect spaces for their display. I chose these representatives from the Memorial site as a way to historically connect St. Paul to members of the Freedman's Community, many for whom the memorial was a final resting place. It was my intent to make sure that exhibit visitors experienced St. Paul as part of a greater community, one which no longer existed. In order to relay this message, it was significant to me that visitors be introduced to this idea early on, as this theme would continue throughout. In response to the greater goals of the dissertation, the inclusion of the Freedman's Cemetery Memorial project was designed to reiterate the church community's efforts in the cemetery's preservation.

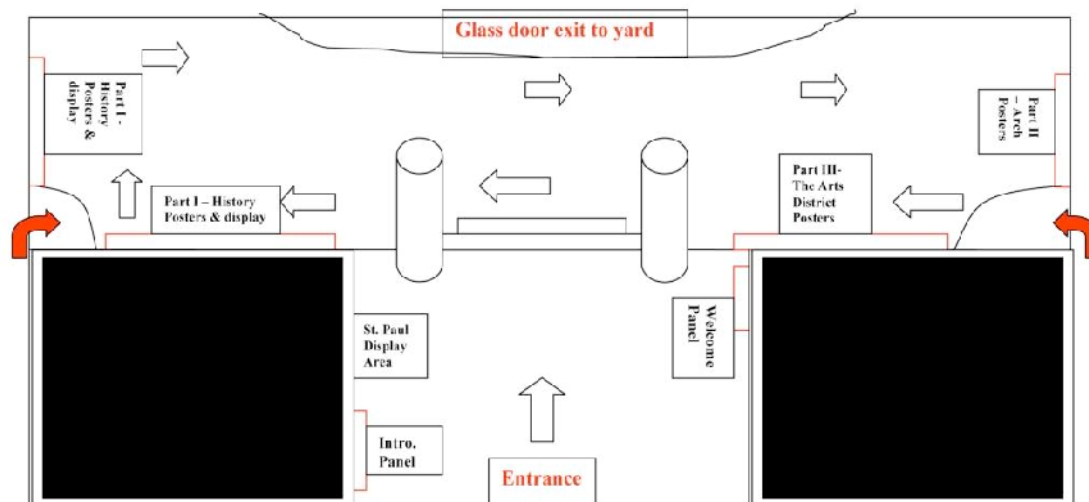


FIGURE 6-3. *Floor Plan of St. Paul Exhibition*. Original Sketch of Gallery Floor plan by Lidia Marte and Exhibit Elements added by Jodi Skipper. Image shows exhibit wall spaces in red border with descriptions in text boxes. The red curved arrows indicate the “Blood of Jesus” film display at left and the “Shotgun House” display right.

At the main entrance to the gallery (the upper level), I included a feedback table and sign-in section, near the exhibit introductory panel. The next station of the exhibition included St. Paul’s restoration and renovation display installed by Pastor Odom (Figure 6-4). This display consisted of poster depictions of a renovated St. Paul, a tri-fold cardboard poster of renovation and restoration architectural renderings (including renovation floor plans), and informative take-home material on the renovation project, an essential mode of interpretation designed to give visitors additional opportunities to explore St. Paul’s heritage, after their visits to the exhibition concluded. The lower level of the gallery space displayed the three main parts of the exhibition with their various sections. These will be discussed below in detail.



FIGURE 6-4. St. Paul Display. (Photo by author, 2009).

### *Part I: History*

The *History* part of the exhibition included four sections: 1) “Early Methodism and Enslaved Africans,” 2) “St. Paul’s Beginings (1865-1874),” 3) “Building Sanctuaries (1875-1947),” and 4) “The I.B. Loud Years (1948-1981).” The sections were generally based on the church historian’s written account of St. Pauls history (Moore 1994, 2003), although I did make minor changes to her original chronology.

#### *History* Section I: “Early Methodism and Enslaved Africans” Poster

By mid October, I had a pretty good idea of what photos and images I wanted to use. I decided to begin this part of the exhibition with an introduction to Methodism and what attracted enslaved Africans to the religion, to not only show visitors that the St. Paul Church had its roots in the intersection of slavery and christianity, but the complicated nature of this relationship. I also felt that is was important that the audience be aware that

St. Paul did not sporadically become a Methodist church, in a majority-Black community. The church's history was part of a greater process which began long before the 1873 birth date, with which most St. Paul friends were familiar. As the interpreter, I strove to change people's ideas about how St. Paul was conceived. I wanted to re-identify its history as a more in-depth and broad one.

To begin this experience, I included an image of a drawing of a slave ship from Ammi Bradford Hyde's *The Story of Methodism* (1889) (Figures 6-5 & 6-6). I first saw this image in an online study guide on John Wesley, connected to the UMC General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) Website (Daugherty 1996; Yrigoyen 1996). I acquired a copy of Hyde's book so that I could better assess the context of this drawing. The drawing in the text was not only of the slave ship but the seemingly excited Africans awaiting its arrival. The study guide image was a cropped one. Since the images are entitled "slave ship," one might also assume that they Africans are throwing up their arms in distress. They were not included in the initial cropped image on the GBGM website and gave a completely different context to the primary image that I located and scanned. I did not think that the audience would be as affected by the sole image of a slaveship, without some visual connection to people, especially people of the African Diaspora, so I chose to display the full text image.



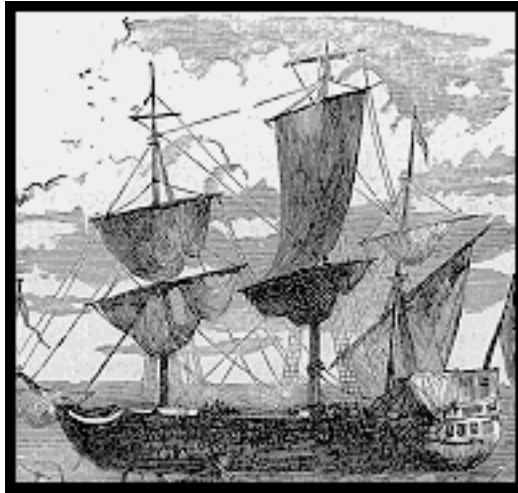


FIGURE 6-5. *A Slave Ship* in A.B. Hydes' *Story of Methodism* (1887). Cropped image (From *John Wesley: Holiness of Heart and Life*. <http://gbgm-umc.org/umw/wesley/thoughtsuponslavery.stm>)

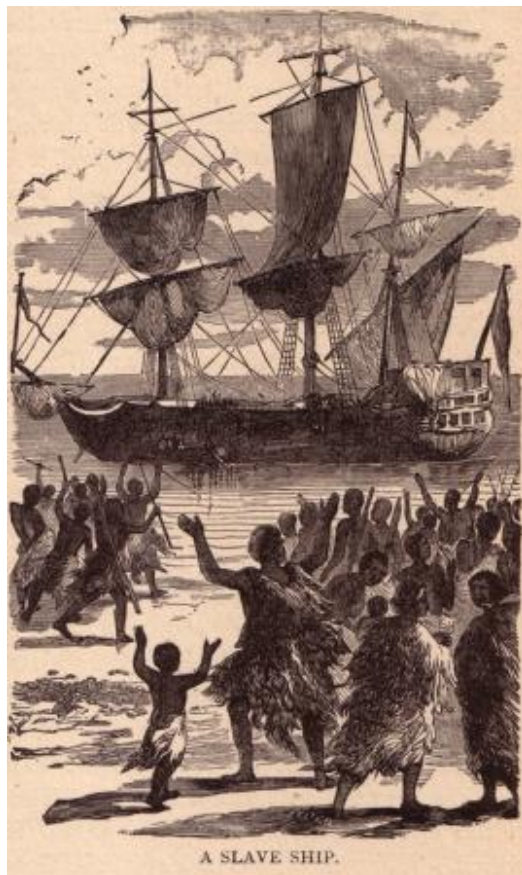


FIGURE 6-6. *A Slave Ship*. Author's scan from A.B. Hyde's *Story of Methodism* (1887).

I also included an image of a letter written from Wesley to William Wilberforce, a British leader in the abolitionist movement, in which he wrote:

Reading this morning a tract wrote by a poor African, I was particularly struck by that circumstance that a man who has a black skin, being wronged or outraged by a white man, can have no redress; it being a "law" in our colonies that the *oath* of a black against a white goes for nothing. What villainy is this? (Wesley 1783)

Wesley shows his support for Wilberforce's campaign against the British slave trade and encourages him to continue his fight until even American slavery "the vilest that ever saw the sun" had ended. On the exhibit poster, I put the above paragraph in bold, in order to direct the viewer's attention to it and to increase their chances of reading at least one of the three paragraphs in the letter. It was my goal to have the visitors understand that some earlier members of the Methodist church did not simply accept the enslavement of Africans as "normal" even though their way of thinking did not persist in the Americas. This story related to St. Paul's continuous struggle to define itself within the context of a White church in an elite, White male-run city. In this sense, the exhibition reflected larger issues framed by this dissertation.

To add to the visitor experience, I included an alternate interpretive modality, which Serrell defines as "the forms, or modes of presenting information or experiences" (1996:66), in this section of the exhibition. It was a touchable display of A.B. Hyde's book. The book was displayed with the pages open to *The Slaveship* drawing, which

coincided with a hanging vinyl banner of the same drawing. Many exhibit visitors flipped through the pages. The presentation of the book was meant to allow visitors additional opportunities to engage the complicated history of Methodism. I intentionally bookmarked chapters which associated Methodism with enslaved Africans and Black Americans. I noticed some guests shifting through the texts, but did not determine what their foci were.

### *History Section II: “St. Paul’s Beginnings” Poster*

The next section, “St. Paul’s Beginings (1865-1874),” covered the period from the establishment of the Texas mission districts to St. Paul’s founding as a mission church. This section was designed to interpret St. Paul’s history through various players who helped to found the church community and how their various political positions might have influenced these efforts. This poster section was also designed to help the exhibit audience place St. Paul within the larger contexts of Dallas and U.S. histories. It was my attempt to show that although St. Paul might seem isolated within the Dallas Arts District, it has not been historically cut off from its surrounding political and social environments.

I began creating this poster with an image of a drawing of members of the Mississippi Mission Conference (See Figure 2-1), that was introduced to me when I visited the Dillard University Archives in New Orleans. The image includes Colored and White members of the Conference, with the White members seated and the Colored

members standing behind them. Each member's name is included at the bottom of the drawing. I included a descriptive label with the image, but in order to make it more interpretive should have pointed out the differences in how the men were seated, to highlight the typical standard of racist practices in the image. Although the conference was meant to be a "christian" one that would uplift a struggling group of people, the racial hierarchy was still intact. I made some exhibit guests aware of the intricacies of the photo, but do not feel that most visitors noticed this on their own. I will suggest this change to the planning committee for the permanent exhibit.

I also included an image of Anthony Banning Norton, with a three-paragraph label. Norton's inclusion in the exhibition was a way to connect St. Paul to greater Texas and national histories. His image says that St. Paul was not only a church in a Freedman's community in Dallas, but that it had a connection to Civil War Republican values in the U.S., as well as to the political climate in the state of Texas, resulting from his role as postmaster as well as state legislator and judge. Norton was a well-known, and oftentimes disliked, character in Dallas history, as he remained a staunch Republican in a heavily Confederate climate. His Republican stance likely influenced his commitment to supporting St. Paul, as one way to help enforce the development of newly freed communities in the South. His addition to the exhibition also serves as a personal account of how White Methodist leaders of the Northern faction of the church contributed to the development of Black church communities in the South.

### *History* Section III: “Building Sanctuaries (1875 - 1947)” Poster

This section was the most difficult for me to conceptualize, because I had not yet constructed a comprehensive history of St. Paul’s building. I had a general sense of when and how the buildings were built, yet there were many loose ends. Fortunately, I had secured the help of architectural history student, Tara Dudley, at around the same time I was trying to figure out some of these issues. There were still many loose ends in her analysis, but her interpretations of the Sanborn maps were invaluable.

As stated before, St. Paul’s church building is its most visible artifact and the one most accessible to the public. It is also St. Paul’s best argument for its historic preservation. I knew that many church members, and other visitors to the exhibition, would be interested in this history. It is often the most talked about feature of the church. I wanted to include as much of the information about St. Paul’s building history that I had recovered as possible, yet wanted to give the visitors a framework for how the various buildings were conceptualized and constructed. I used Sanborn images as tools to cue exhibit-goers through these transitions. To me, St. Paul’s building history begins after Richard Lane deeded the property to the church’s trustees. As a result, I ended the first section of the *History* part with the date that the property was deeded and began the second section from this date. Instead of relying solely on the church’s written documents, I integrated oral histories, Sanborn maps, and my interpretations, along with Dudley’s, to compile this more comprehensive history of St. Paul’s buildings. To the right of the poster, I added a quote from Mr. Reggie Smith, who is a building contractor,

as he referred to St. Paul's early construction. He commented, "This is African American engineering...100%...one brick at a time" (Figure 6-7). This was my first use of multiple voices in the exhibition. It was an alternative way for exhibit visitors to receive the information from an actual St. Paul member. Although this was a section on St. Paul's history, Reggie's voice was integrated to show the real importance of the past to present members of the church. Quotes such as these were displayed throughout the exhibit space.

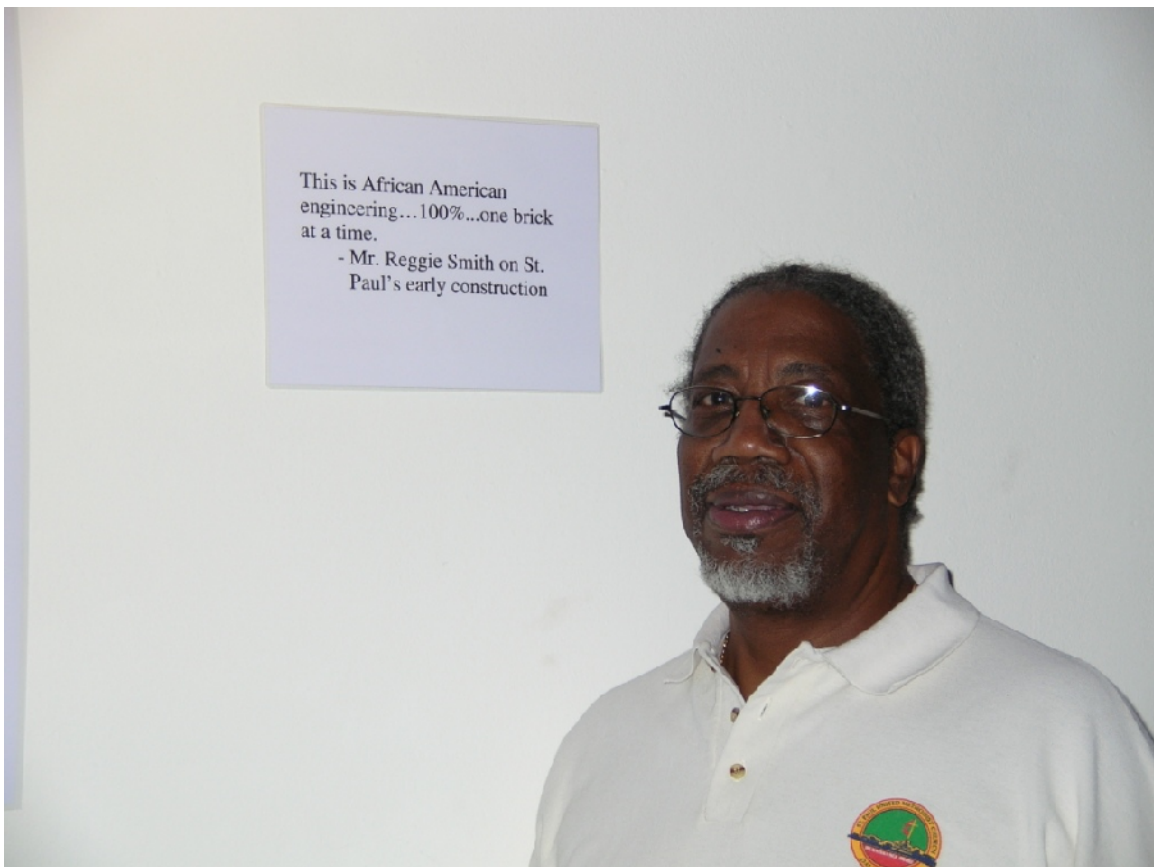


FIGURE 6-7. Reggie Smith standing next to one of his quotes. (Photo by author, 2009.)

*Making Decisions.* Although I could not prove that William Sidney Pittman designed St. Paul's Second Brick Church, I decided to include an extensive piece about

him in the exhibition. Pittman is one of the lesser known characters in Dallas history and also one of the least eulogized, even with the distinction of being Dallas's first Black architect. I did not want to repeat the process of forgetting him, as was often done in the past. It was also Dudley's conclusion that he could have very well designed St. Paul, based on its similar design to some of his other churches in Texas. As a result, I chose to include a summary of Pittman's life and work in the exhibition. I also included images of his other Texas churches (Figures 6-8, 6-9, 6-10, & 6-11). These churches are all historically documented and proven to be Pittman churches.

Although these churches are not direct components of St. Paul's history, around which the exhibition's "big idea" was formed, St. Paul is a site of black culture (which was part of the big idea) and is not to be solely defined within the confines of its church community. It was part of a community of churches, designed at around the same time, possibly by a Black man who did not have many other options. St. Paul is a part of Black culture in its connection to other Black sites. As a result, I chose to highlight these other sites in the exhibition.



FIGURE 6-8. Wesley Chapel A.M.E., Houston, 1926. Dallas, (Photo by Carlfred Giles, 2008.)



FIGURE 6-9. St. James A.M.E. Chapel, 1917. (Photo by Author, 2008.)



FIGURE 6-10. Allen Chapel A.M.E. in Fort Worth, (1912-14) (Photo by author, 2008.)



FIGURE 6-11. Joshua Chapel A.M.E., Waxahachie, 1917 (Photo by author, 2008.)

I made another connection to the larger Black DFW community by displaying an article from the *Dallas Morning News*. I found this article about the installation ceremony for the “negro mayor of Dallas,” Dr. Edgar E. Ewell. He was sworn in at St. Paul in 1938 (*Dallas Morning News* February 4, 1938).

I also chose to include an image of St. Paul members taken in the 1930s. Three of the people in the photo are unidentified and the 2 others are Mollye Banks’s grandparents (Figure 6-12). I do not have names for them. I included the image, which distinctly shows period dress and hair styles, and highlights folks who could be pioneer members of the church, or their immediate descendants. For the St. Paul members and other descendants of the North Dallas Freedman’s community, this image was a visual connection to some of their earliest Dallas ancestors. To other exhibit visitors, this image was intended to give them a more real sense of what this community physically looked like. It was important for me to make the audience connection to members of the community a more tangible one. It was not enough for them to be solely represented through texts on paper.





FIGURE 6-12. 1930's group photo. From left to right: unidentified, unidentified, unidentified, Mollye Banks' grandparents. The three unidentified persons were also members of the St. Paul congregation. Courtesy of Mollye Banks.

I did not have much information about the members in the photo, but I did have a lot of information about certain families, like the McMillans, who helped to develop St. Paul at its most critical times and would have attended St. Paul at the same time as Banks's grandparents. For the same reason stated above, I included a photo of the McMillan family on the exhibit poster, with a very brief description of Dr. Walter Reed McMillan's service to the church.

I decided to include an image of Kate Turley, copied from a copy that Ms. Moore has in her care, to represent the significance of women to the church and to the development of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Black community. I also incorporated an image of Dr. E. Holmer Browne, pioneer dentist and St. Paul member, who took care of Black patients not admitted to White facilities in Dallas, in order to illustrate the spatial restrictions members of the St. Paul community would have encountered, yet negotiated

through members of Dallas's Black professional class, many of whom were St. Paul members.

It was my initial intent to include a copy of the original poster advertising *The Blood of Jesus* film (See Chapter II) but, shortly after, I began to think about showing the film as an alternative technique to assist the audience with making an affective connection with St. Paul's history. I created a separate section for the film, which included copies of original film stills from church member Reggie Smith, a copy of the original film poster, and the film played on a 19-inch television screen. My interpretive goal here was to encourage participation from those who could be overwhelmed by reading all of the display material (or who, like children, could not) or who would like an alternative experience to this. After the exhibit opening, I did have several requests from exhibit-goers about where they could get copies of the film, insinuating that the display was interesting enough to warrant more interaction outside of the exhibit space.

#### *History* Section IV: "The I.B. Loud Years (1948 - 1981)" Poster

The "I.B. Loud Years" poster and book display completed the *History* part of the exhibition. Dr. Loud is the most revered and remembered St. Paul pastor in the church's recent history. Although I did not choose to focus on St. Paul's individual pastors, Dr. Loud became an exception. His administration saw St. Paul through a period of great social development in the life of the church, through his connections to the White Dallas political community, the greater Methodist Church, and to other Black church communities in Dallas. He was also one of the major reasons that St. Paul continued to

develop as a prominent social force in the Black Dallas community, with a semblance of respect from Whites. Through these developments, St. Paul gained a reputation for stability: one which would not be easily broken, and one that would be very relevant to its later historic preservation.

Through various personal sources I also learned that, through Dr. Loud, St. Paul gained a reputation for being an accommodationist church community. His cooperative relationships with the White Dallasites did not allow him much space to publically engage in overt resistance to racism in the city. I did not assume that St. Paul members would question the church's actions or genuine intentions to combat racial violence in Dallas, but did think that other visitors to the exhibition might. Although I spoke with a *Dallas Morning News* reporter shortly before the exhibition, his inquiry into St. Paul's participation in the local civil rights activities confirmed my perception. As a result, I also placed Dr. Loud's tenure at St. Paul within the context of his commitment to integrating Methodist universities. This section consequently included a book display of *Perkins Led the Way: the Story of Desegregation at Southern Methodist University* (Cunningim 1994) to elaborate on this commitment (Figure 6-13). I chose to include a book display not only as an optional display modality, but as another way to connect St. Paul to larger histories of desegregation in the U.S.



FIGURE 6-13. “The I.B. Loud Years” with book display. (Photo by Geneva Phillips, 2009.)

In addition, I included an image of Dr. Loud with famous jazz musician Louis B. Armstrong (Figure 6-14), displaying his even more extensive connections to larger U.S. Black society. In the photo, Dr. Loud embraces Mr. Armstrong as they share a laugh. I also included several other images representing scenes of community life in and around the church from Mr. Delores Love’s photo collection; again, another opportunity for visitors to “see” St. Paul members in the context of the North Dallas Freedman’s community.



FIGURE 6-14. Pastor I.B. Loud (Left) & Musician Louis Armstrong (Right). From the Dallas Public Library Texas/Dallas History Archives. (Photo by Marion Butts, 1959.)

While doing research in the *Dallas Morning News* online archive, I located a letter “to the Dallas News” in which one Dallas citizen praises Dr. Loud for being “an outright, forthright, and down right man...” (1956). Ms. Betty Stagg, possibly a White woman, served on a grand jury with Dr. Loud. I inferred that Ms. Stagg is White, because she writes that she is glad to know that “his [Dr. Loud’s] people have a newspaper where his words can be read as a continuing inspiration.” She adds, “We found him to be a loyal defender of the principles that built America, grateful for the opportunities that have been his, logical to a superb degree, with the decisions that were the jury’s daily obligations, fair yet firm and blessed with a marvelous humor when humor was a relief to the

negatives facing us each day.” I chose to include a copy of this news piece to indicate the influence that Dr. Loud had in the Dallas community, outside of St. Paul (Figure 6-15).

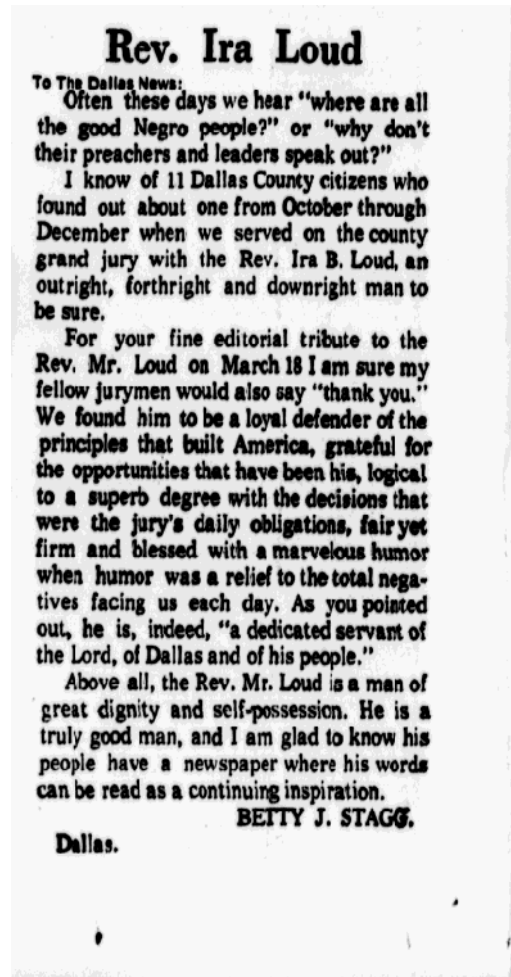


FIGURE 6-15. *Dallas Morning News* "Letters from Readers" 1965.

I also included several labels of quotes from the 2005 oral history interviews that I thought would fit well within this section. As previously mentioned, these were displayed to stress the significance of the past to present members of the church.

## *Part II: Archaeology*

From the early stages of the exhibit conception, I felt that it was important to make the archaeological excavation a stand-alone part of this exhibition. The archaeology at St. Paul could not be literally separated from the church's history, yet the artifacts on display could serve as mnemonic devices for the exhibit audience, in ways that the written documents could not. The UT-Austin archaeologists discovered the significance of church member connections to the past as the artifacts were recovered from the ground. For example, church members began to recall skating in the church basement, after a roller skate was recovered . In an interpretive sense, the artifacts were tactile connections to the past. Exhibit-goers could engage with artifacts that members of the Cole family likely touched.

What became the St. Paul history preservation project began with the archaeology on Juliette Street and it was one of the only ways, outside of the photographs and oral histories, to “show” remnants of Juliette Street, a once thriving neighborhood community. As an African American, and an archaeologist, I was also aware of the distance that some Black communities have from archaeology, as a whole, and felt that this would be a great opportunity to make archaeology more familiar to the exhibit audience. As part of the larger goals of this dissertation, this part of the exhibition would highlight the significance of reciprocal cooperation between archaeology teams and site communities, as a testament to the invaluable information that could result from these relationships.

Unlike the history part of the exhibition, this section was not meant to be followed chronologically; it would be thematically placed within the context of the archaeology and vanquished community on Juliette Street. The field school team had already done some extensive archival research on Juliette Street, by collecting census data, which included household demographics; deed records; and Sanborn maps, including housing profiles. James Davidson (2004) wrote a book chapter on these findings and he and Jamie Brandon started a website as part of *Project Past*, “a free web platform for a loose network of anthropologists, archaeologists and historians interested in the past and historical memory”(Brandon 2003, 2005). I also had access to the traveling exhibition that James Davidson put together.

#### “A Community on Juliette Street” Poster

I chose several images that I thought would integrate well into a poster on the Juliette Street community. Although Juliette Street was gone, I wanted to begin this display by showing a vital and active community. One image was that of Thomas and Nora Cole, donated by Mollye Banks during the 2002 field school (Figure 6-16). This image was of the Coles in the front yard of their first Juliette Street home, the excavated homesite at 2606 Juliette, taken sometime in the early 1900s.





FIGURE 6-16. Thomas and Nora Cole, front yard of 2606 Juliette. Early 1900s. (Courtesy of Ms. Mollye Banks.)

I also included several images of activity on Juliette Street. One in particular was of the Booker T. Washington High School Band with St. Paul and Juliette Street in the background (Figure 6-17). This amazing photo seemed to capture the essence of the neighborhood community life, highlighting the high school band, with cars, homes, and a church in the background. This photo is significant because it shows the audience the St. Paul Church within the context of the North Dallas Freedman's Community. This section was one of the only opportunities that those exhibit visitors who were not familiar with the community, first-hand, to see the church in one of its historic settings.



FIGURE 6-17. Booker T. Washington High School Band with St. Paul and Juliette Street in Background (right). From *The Texas African American Photography Archive* (TAAPA).

#### “Archaeology on Juliette Street” Poster

The Booker T. Washington High School photo not only displayed well in the “Community on Juliette Street” section poster, but in the “Archaeology on Juliette Street” section poster. I decided early on in the conception phase of this exhibition that I would not focus on the destruction of St. Paul’s neighborhood, but celebrate the survival of the church within the neighborhood. No section of the exhibition had yet addressed this issue of survival, one of the key underlying frameworks for the larger dissertation. The high school band photo showed a once thriving community, within the context of the church. I

remembered that I had a photo from the field school facing the church from a similar direction. I looked at the black and white image from the mid-twentieth century and compared it to the 2002 photo from the field school archive. The differences were striking. The earlier photo was of a neighborhood while the 2002 photo was that of a grass field. Still, the 2002 photo was not a current one. I needed a current image of the present view, so I displayed an image of the parking lot adjacent to the church as it was in the present. I now had the comparisons that I needed to show how St. Paul's community shifted from a vital community neighborhood to a thriving business district (Figures 6-18 a,b,&c). The one thing remaining static in the images is St. Paul. Its resiliency is portrayed through these photographs.



FIGURE 6-18. Three photos showing the west north/northwest side of the church over time: (a) St. Paul Neighborhood, mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, cropped from Figure 6-17. (Photographer unidentified) (b) St. Paul Neighborhood in 2002 (UT Austin Field School), and (c) St. Paul Neighborhood in 2009 (Photo by Ibukun Saucer.)

Lidia helped me to realize that it was pertinent to map St. Paul’s location near Juliette Street, in order to physically locate the church within its spatial contexts. Juliette Street was no longer and I did not think that the three comparative images adequately showed where Juliette Street was in relation to St. Paul. I wanted to give exhibit visitors several ways of historically locating St. Paul in order to stress the significance of its stability in a changing neighborhood.

I found a map while reviewing the Juliette Street website on “project past” (Figure 6-19). This map, designed by Jamie Brandon, was that of a 1905 Sanborn map, including the locations and names of present and past streets. I thought that this map would be a great space to show where St. Paul is currently located, where it would have

been located when the Cole's initially occupied the house, and where the archaeological excavations took place in relationship to the church and the former Juliette Street.

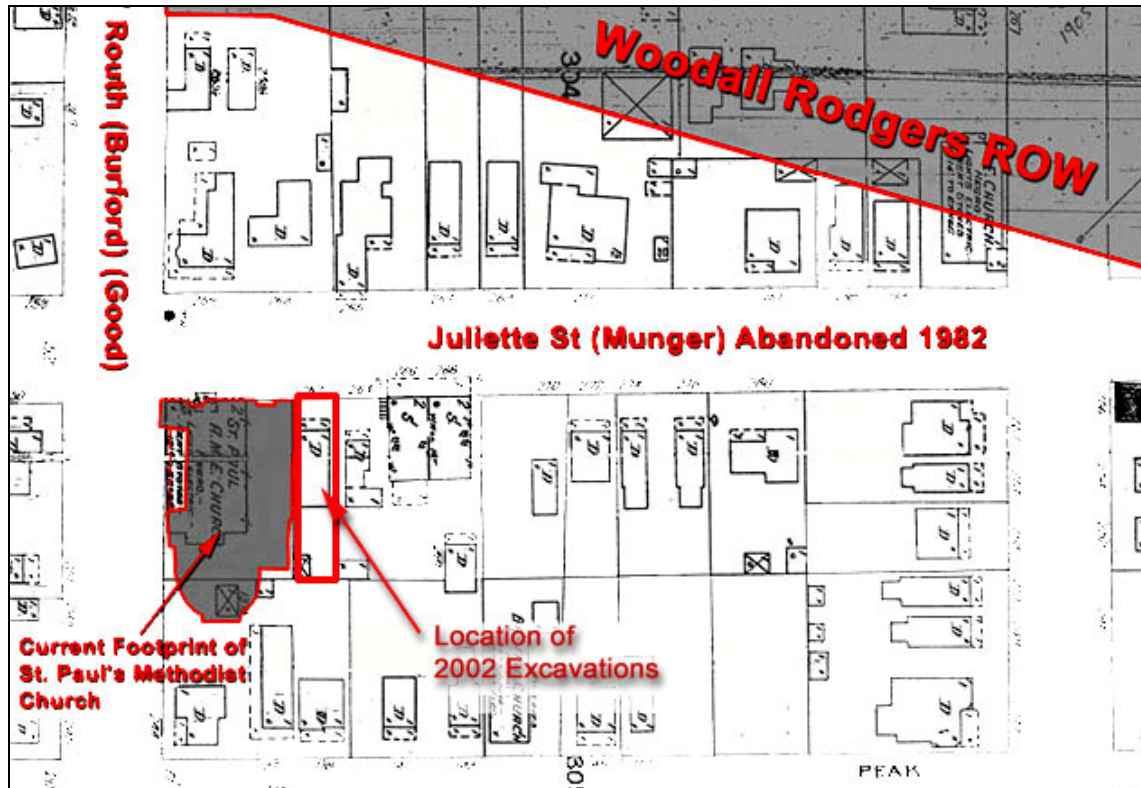


FIGURE 6-19. 1905 Sanborn Fire Insurance map with street names (past and present), the right-of-way (ROW) for the Woodall Rodgers Freeway, the current footprint of St. Paul Methodist Church and the 2002 project area (the Cole House) overlain. From the Project Past Website <http://www.projectpast.org/dallas/map.htm>.)

Adjacent to the labels for the hanging banner was the display of the Overton High Brown poster on a brick wall in the gallery. In order to present multiple voices, the framed poster (Figure 6-20) was flanked by a label with background information on the Overton Company and the excavated “High Brown” cosmetic and a quote from the oral history interview of Ms. Cox, during which she stated, “We didn’t have a line of make-up. We just put a little bit on because it was a nude color and it made you look gray. When Overton came up with that line of make-up...Oh, just beautiful! So you could be

pretty; you had your true bronze colors” (February 12, 2005). This display was intended to show a direct connection between members of St. Paul and the archaeological evidence, and more directly demonstrate how the archaeological artifacts served as channels of memory in this particular project.



FIGURE 6-20. Overton “High Brown” framed vintage poster copy with poster label (left) and quote from Ms. Cox (right). (Photo by Geneva Phillips, 2009.)

The cosmetic compact and several other artifacts were displayed in a case which included corresponding labels and photos already put together by James Davidson.

### The Shotgun House

Less than 10 days before the opening, I was still concerned about how to represent the shotgun house. The shotgun house is an important African American

vernacular and cultural aesthetic. I did not have any images of the Coles' original home, and I felt that a display of something similar could help to reconstruct what was presently missing from the Arts District landscape. This exhibit project was largely about making St. Paul more visible and I felt that the inclusion of the structure, once adjacent to the church, could only assist in this effort. I soon remembered the Guillot shotgun house that I visited at the Dallas Heritage Village and wondered if there were any images available. This shotgun house seemed to be the closest possible match to the one from the excavated site that I could find. It was in Dallas, occupied by a Black working class family, and would have been built around the same time.

I was able to access images from a representative at the historic village and printed one large poster image of the Guillot shotgun house, with six smaller images on one poster. I labeled the house with the Dallas Heritage Village curator's description, but also added some information about the colored glass bottles in the tree as part of the display in front of the house at Old City Park. I thought that the bottles could have been easily overlooked by the exhibit audience, so I included a label for them in order to make them more noticeable. Although not directly tied to the Cole family, they were integral parts of an African American aesthetic that I wanted to reference. As a result I added the text:

The Guillot Street shotgun house at Old City Park is fronted by a bottle tree.

Slaves from the Congo in Africa brought the idea of the traditional bottle trees -- live trees with colored bottles or glass shards hanging from the branches or put on

the tips of trees -- to the southern United States. Bottle trees protected the homes from evil spirits by capturing spirits inside the bottles. Spirits were attracted to the bottles and captured, where they could be “stopped” and do no harm. If the spirits were good, they were captured and used for protection. They also hung from the branches of trees in and around Black cemeteries. The different bottle colors held different meanings. The color "white" was associated with the dead or spirits. Red represented danger or warning. Blue symbolized the sky and water.

The primary poster in this section was printed large enough to give the exhibit audience the experience of actually being in front of a real shotgun house. My interpretive goal was to do just that. This poster was intentionally placed at the head of a small staircase, which gave one the sense that they were approaching the front door of the home.

### Part III: “ St. Paul in the Arts District (1981-2007)” poster

The third part of the exhibition was designed to focus on St. Paul’s more recent presence in the Dallas Arts District and to illustrate how the church remained active, even as the Arts District was being created. This section was designed to feature St. Paul’s stability, as church members chose not to move anywhere and to remain an active church community.

One example was the church’s dedication of the E.C. Ransom Memorial Library on September 27, 1981. E.C. Ransom, dedicated member, was the first African American Conference Lay Leader in the North Texas Conference, and was elected delegate to the



1981 World Methodist Conference in Honolulu, Hawaii. I chose to display one head shot of Ransom and one photograph of Ransom holding an award in 1976. I wanted to exhibit the images and story of Ransom as one way to show that St. Paul was an active church community, even in the Arts District neighborhood. The fact that the church was dedicating a library in 1981 seems to show a determination to stay in its building.

Although I labeled the images by stating that St. Paul's first church library was named in his honor, and that Ransom was a dedicated church member, I failed to mention that the library was dedicated in 1981 or how significant this event was to St. Paul's persistence in the Arts District; to me, a fault in the interpretation. As a result, I am not sure if these images were clear to the audience in any way. Fortunately, I did display an image from the church's celebration as it unveiled its historic marker on October 17, of 1982. This was the church's most aggressive means of stating its intention to remain in the Arts District.

I also chose to display images and maps of St. Paul in a completed Arts Plaza and in a completed Arts District. Each of these images gave more contexts to St. Paul's place in the greater Dallas Arts District. I also displayed two interior and two exterior shots of the church. I assumed that most visitors to the exhibition had been to St. Paul, but I knew that some had not. I wanted to, at the least, give them different perspectives of the church building and better introduce them to the structure that I wanted them to see as significant and be inspired to help preserve. I also came across a more full-scale photo of the church, taken by photographer Joe Mabel. It was a clear image, with scale references: (1) two vehicles adjacent to the church and (2) the One Arts Plaza in the background (Figure 6-

21). I realized that many visitors came to the exhibition because they were attracted to the church as a structural rarity in Dallas, not as a historically significant site. As an interpreter, I wanted to communicate with those people, yet give them enough additional information about the church to at least peak their interest in its history.



FIGURE 6-21. Photo of the St. Paul United Methodist Church taken by Joe Mabel, with quotes from Oral History Interviews. (Photo by Geneva Phillips, 2009.)

In addition to Joe Mabel’s photograph, I included the “Freedman’s Town Memories” and “St. Paul Memories” posters on that wall. The former poster was a collage of black and white images of St. Paul Church events, neighborhood scenes, and Freedman’s Town community life. The latter poster was a collage of more recent photos, mainly during my time at St. Paul. I included images of recent church events, including a St. Paul family reunion; my visit with St. Paul members to the protest in Jena, Louisiana; scenes from my ArtsVision summer camp presentation, and from the St. Paul renovation

and restoration project press event. It was also my personal way of honoring some of the church members with whom I had worked. The two posters helped to complete St. Paul's transition from Freedman's Town to the Dallas Arts District.

During one of her visits, Lidia restressed the significance of incorporating the voices of St. Paul members. I took more liberty to do this in this part of the exhibition, because it covered St. Paul's present place. It was easier to give voice through members with whom I was actually able to communicate. That task was a lot more difficult in the history part of the exhibition. As a result, this wall space was scattered with several quotes from St. Paul members sharing what St. Paul means to them. These quotes were extracted from the oral history interviews that took place in 2005. They were some of the most noticed and commented on modalities of the exhibition.

Ms. Ava Cox said, "My most vivid memory of the church is the chimes that we had. Especially on Sundays, when the organist started playing, you could hear it all over the North Dallas neighborhood." Ms. Cox also concentrated on the pride and prestige of the local people. "Everyone dressed in hats & suits & gloves...there were times when Reverend Loud had on a tuxedo and tails." She added, "Almost every street [in the State-Thomas neighborhood] had a beauty shop." Mrs. Jewell Weaver remembered St. Paul by saying, "Dr. Loud used to say that you couldn't go to heaven until you heard St. Paul's choir sing".

Ms. Mary Smith remembered first coming to St. Paul and said, "Somehow I found my way over here and loved what I saw." Mr. Newell James shared, "After I moved from North Dallas on Hall Street to South Dallas, I just decided to continue to go to St.

Paul. That's my first love...for church. St. Paul is important. I think about it all of the time."

I asked some of the interviewees how the St. Paul of the mid-20th century recruited its members. Ms. Cox responded, "I don't remember a big recruitment [effort]...It was just that we were *the* church...and people came. It's different now, because we don't have a neighborhood" (italics added). She further commented on Freedman's Town: "Most Black communities are fairly close to downtown...You could only come so close, because if you came too close you could be called a squatter and arrested...that's why Freedman's Town was here." She was remembering St. Paul within the context of its former community. I also asked some of the interviewees what they think keeps St. Paul going, even with all of the changes in its neighborhood. Carla Mitchell responded, "I think it was the hand of God leading us from one age to another." Through these quotes, I directly approach St. Paul's often ambiguous and problematic placement in the Arts District.

Reggie Smith shared memories about his personal experiences as a child at the church. He recalled sitting next to his grandmother in church. "She might let you nod off one time in the pews. And then the second time, she would grab hold of one of your ear lobes...and wouldn't let go." As a young man, St. Paul began to have a more powerful meaning for him. "Bad things would happen to you, but you would come to St. Paul and you would take the energy from the church and go back out in the world."

Muriel Johnson Redd also reflected on her childhood at St. Paul: "On Easter Sunday, I remember the smell of Easter Lilies around the church and the smell of

Poinsettias at Christmas.” Ms. Delores Love summed up her childhood at St. Paul by saying, “This was our social life...our second home.” All of the mentioned quotes were displayed in the last part of the exhibition, so that the audience could remember that this story is about much more than photographs and artifacts. It is about the people who helped to create them.

### **Postscript: The Exhibit Opening Events**

The exhibition was completely installed, but I was still unsure about how the audience would receive it. I had no front end evaluations to determine what types of questions visitors might ask so, as an interpreter, I had to infer things about who I thought my audience would be. I was very anxious about the upcoming event. Although I appreciated the fact that Pastor Odom highlighted the exhibition during the morning’s church service, the attention only made me more apprehensive about how the visitors would react to the exhibition; I now felt that they had high expectations. I also realized that the exhibit opening could be our greatest opportunity to serve the goals of an interpretative exhibition, by conveying the significance of St. Paul as a heritage resource in several accessible ways. Pastor Odom could verbally plead his case and I had to trust that the work I intended to do would be done. There would also be some media attention, making the exhibition more visible to an extended audience.

I left St. Paul’s church service prior to the end, so that I could get to the gallery space to make sure that everything was going as planned. When I first arrived, I saw my first cousins once removed unloading food and dishes from their vehicle. My parents

stayed with them the night before and I knew that my mom and her first cousins had planned to make red beans and rice, a Louisiana tradition that would serve the purpose of feeding hungry guests, especially those leaving a two hour church service. To my surprise, my family also came with barbequed meatballs, pecan candy (pralines to some), and sweet potato, custard, and crawfish pies. These dishes were served in addition to some hors d'œuvres sponsored by the church, although not the ones originally proposed during the reception planning. I was concerned that the amount of food may not cover the projected number of guests, so the additional foods from my family were meant to supplement the menu. My cousins, Shirley and Geneva, had already begun working with Muriel, who eloquently displayed the food. Her children, Searcy and Marla, also served as hostesses to incoming guests, a nice touch to the event (Figure 6-22). My first goal was to set up the film display and then double check the panels and posters to make sure they were still secure on the walls. They all seemed to be. I gave my parents a condensed tour of the exhibit space and they seemed pleased. My dad commented on the “old time” photos that brought back some visual memories for him, while my mom seemed to focus mostly on the amount of work that I did. I was glad that I was able to tell them about the process, before the guests actually arrived.



FIGURE 6-22. Marla (left) and Searcy Redd IV (right) serving guests. (Photo by Geneva Phillips, 2009.)

Guests began to arrive soon after shortly after St. Paul's service ended, as I expected. I spent some time introducing church members and friends to my mother and father and talking to guests, mainly giving laudatory comments about my work, some prior to seeing the exhibition. I spent some time perusing the exhibit space so that I could observe audience reactions, but did not spend as much time doing this as I would have liked to. In some ways, I wanted to give visitors a chance to examine the exhibition without the pressure of the exhibitor standing behind them. At the same time, I wanted to know what people thought and mostly left these questions up to the feedback forms and voluntary verbal feedback. A videographer from Channel 8 (Fox News) was there and asked me several questions about the project for a piece to be aired that evening. Dwayne Watkins, exhibit reception committee member, did the interview.

I also spent time having my photo taken, catching up with family and friends, talking to guests who were interested in the work, and also trying to make sure that guests partook in my mama's red beans. Once the word spread, I did not have to say much. A few people made comments that the appearance of the red beans was my way of showing Texans how it should be done. I did not disagree. I was enjoying myself, but became tense as I began to think about what I would say during my short speech, who I would thank, and what would be most memorable to the audience.

About an hour after the opening began, Pastor Odom asked that everyone gather around him for a brief ceremony. He began by thanking everyone for coming and then introducing me. I had decided to focus mostly on the significance of St. Paul, in my speech, and that is what I did. I talked about how much the church deserved the attention that it was getting and about the historical significance of the church, not only as a Black institution, but as a Dallas institution. I soon forgot to give thanks to Carlton Odom, who was responsible for the gallery space, and interrupted Pastor Odom's speech, which followed, to ask that he do that. He thanked Carlton and several other parties, including me, prior to his presentation to Ms. Moore. Pastor Odom then awarded Ms. Moore for her "continued service as church historian." She was given a glass plaque (Figure 6-23). Her dedication was followed by a prayer from Pastor Odom.





FIGURE 6-23. Pastor Odom awards plaque to Ms. Moore. (Photo by Geneva Phillips, 2009.)

After the program, I was also able to meet several people, with whom I had spoken about the project but never met. I contacted James Nader, architectural historian, to find out if he could help with the William Sidney Pittman mystery. He made suggestions after some inquiry about my work. I invited him to the opening and he came, with much enthusiasm. I also met Amy Turner, Head of the G. William Jones Film and Video Collection at Hamon Arts Library, Southern Methodist University. I inquired about any information on *The Blood of Jesus*, which she was in the process of archiving. She did not have much information at the time, but came to the exhibition after I made my work known to her. She was excited to find another connection to the film.

I took some time to watch the audience peruse the exhibition in myriad ways. Some began at the beginning; others seemed to follow a different path. Some looked at the photos; others read. Some seemed to read very carefully, as they pointed out typos in their feedback forms. Some guests helped their children through the exhibition by discussing some of the themes with them. Others briefly viewed the film, but did not seem to spend much time there. A chair or two might have been helpful.

Most of the guests were gone by 3:00 PM, two hours after the exhibition opened and two hours before the Superbowl began. A few guests trickled in later, but not many. I stayed around to make sure that someone was there until 5:00 PM, the formal end time. I also felt obligated to see this day to a close.

### *Proceeding Events*

The days that followed included the fundraiser sponsored by the Friends of St. Paul and other restoration and renovation committee members (Figure 6-24). The exhibition was not the center point of the gallery, but the background to which the church could center its restoration initiatives. Pastor Odom placed architectural renderings by Good, Fulton, and Farrell, one of the largest architecture firms in North Texas and also St. Paul's renovation project architects, at the center of the gallery floor, so that they could not be missed by visitors. Passed hors d'oeuvres were handed to guests, including Sr. Minister Rev. Mark Craig (Highland Park UMC); Rev. Larry George, District Superintendent of the North Texas Conference (UMC); and Mr. Barry Henry, who oversees the real estate group in charge of "the Crow family's urban real estate assets"

(*Crow Holdings Website* 2009); as they discussed the contents of the exhibition and future renovation plans for the church. Henry, a member of the St. Paul Restoration and Renovation Projected Committee, spearheaded the fundraising event. A few members of St. Paul attended this event. Some saw the exhibition for the first time and seemed very happy with it.



FIGURE 6-24. (Left to right). Duncan T. Fulton III, managing partner of Good, Fulton, and Farrell; Pastor Elzie Odom Jr., Senior Pastor, St. Paul United Methodist Church; Sr. Minister Rev. Mark Craig, Highland Park United Methodist Church; Rev. Larry George, District Superintendent of the North Texas Conference (UMC); Mr. Barry Henry, Crow Holdings; and author (center) at St. Paul fundraiser. (Photo by Alan Henderson, 2009.)

Two days after the fundraising event, on February 28<sup>th</sup>, some friends and I removed all exhibit wall contents and some of the hanging banners. The rest of the

banners were later removed by Reggie Smith and Carlton Odom, when an adequate ladder was available. I could now return to Austin and think more critically about the interpretations in and around the exhibition and what they potentially meant for the church. The next chapter discusses this evaluation.

## CHAPTER VII

### AN EVALUATION OF *FROM FREEDMAN'S TOWN TO THE DALLAS ARTS DISTRICT: CELEBRATING THE LEGACY OF ST. PAUL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AS AN EXHIBITION AND AS A CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT TOOL*

As an academic of the African Diaspora, and as an exhibitor of underrepresented communities, it is always my hope that my work will expand audiences, giving access to publics unfamiliar with the archaeological interpretations, through the art of exhibition, and the potential benefits of this work. Peter C. Marzio's work as director of the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston focuses on the need to present minority art in general art museums, with a goal of enlarging audiences, "to increase funding, to work together to rise above the status quo, and to make innovation a popular cause...while bigotry is, to a certain extent, ingrained in our society, the real obstacle to overcome is the lack of exposure and, therefore, the lack of experience of the general public..." (1991:126). Although Marzio speaks of art museums, this message should not be lost to archaeologists, curators, and other cultural heritage preservationists reaching out to U.S. minority communities. To Marzio's statement, I add that the historical ostracization of underrepresented groups as administrators and active participants in hegemonic frames, such as exhibitions, is another key obstacle. There is often much distrust between the representers and those being represented, when the represented are selectively asked to participate in such projects. In addition, I believe that (re)presenting an underrepresented

group through an exhibition could be futile if the group with whom one works does not participate in ways that will allow the group to critically make use of the representation and continue to enlarge audiences on its own.

Auspiciously, my work alone did not enlarge St. Paul's audience; the church's own publicity efforts, namely through that of Pastor Odom, to bring attention to the exhibit project and to strategically utilize the space as a case for its historic preservation served as a major catalyst for increasing its visibility. Yet, I do believe that the exhibition was a necessary, and accessible, channel through which the St. Paul Church community expanded its historic preservation audience. I wanted St. Paul's history to be prevalent on its own, and soon realized that one exhibition would likely not do the trick, but could at least serve as a much needed catalyst.

### **Evaluations of Visibility**

Once completed, the exhibition seemed to fit within the big idea that I conceived, yet I was not clear about whether I had truly helped the church community with its goal of becoming more visible in the Arts District community and drawing more attention to its restoration and renovation project. Only the post-exhibit responses, verbal and written, would tell.

I was able to analyze the exhibition, as well as evaluate the successes and failures of the big idea, through written and oral feedback. The unexpected amount of media coverage offered another venue for analysis. The fact that I was unable to complete the in-house church exhibition prior to the completion of this dissertation means that I would

have to wait to figure out what the long term effects on the church will be. Still, the more immediate responses from the exhibit guests, and the local Dallas community, give a preview. There is much community interest in what happens to St. Paul, what it represents within the span of Dallas history, and what causes it to stay in the Arts District. Based on the exhibit attendance, media coverage, and verbal and written feedback, it seems that as long as St. Paul wants to show, people will look.

### *The Exhibit Opening*

Three weeks prior to the opening, I sent out an *Evite* online invitation to all parties I thought would be interested in visiting the exhibition. Lidia and a few of my other friends reviewed and critiqued a test-run of the *Evite*, so that I could determine if it was comprehensive enough for a mass audience. I also made a few phone calls to friends and associates that I knew did not use or check email often. I contacted one of the oral history interviewees, who was no longer a member of St. Paul. I kept in touch with her periodically and she asked that I keep her updated on my work. During our phone conversation, she reminded me that she was no longer a member of the church. I told her that I realized this, but that she had so greatly contributed to the work, it would be nice to have her see the end result. She did not drive and said that she would come if she could get a ride.

I also submitted the exhibit information to the *Dallas Morning News* "Guidelive," online entertainment guide. The listing included the exhibit start and end dates, hours

open for visitation (Wednesdays 5PM-8PM & Sundays 1:30PM-5:30PM), the location, contact numbers, and a brief description of the event.

One week before the opening, I received a call from David Flick, Senior Reporter with *The Dallas Morning News*, the city's prominent newspaper. He said that Pastor Odom told him that it would be okay for him to give me a call with some questions that he had about the exhibition. I was not so much bothered by the call as Mr. Flick's assertion that I was not busy when he called. He immediately began to make inquiries after I answered the phone, without asking if I was engaged. I was driving, in the rain, to ProGraphix to pick up the vinyl banner copies of the Cole photograph and the image of *The Slave Ship* from A.B. Hyde's book. I was not usually opposed to driving while talking, but did not usually do this in the rain, or in unfamiliar circumstances in which I would really have to think critically about what I was saying. When I reflect on that day, I think that the interruption I felt was possibly magnified by the fact that I had one day to tie up loose ends before going to Dallas. What would the banners look like? If they did not work, then I would have to remain in Austin at least one more day, to have them redone, and not have much installation time in Dallas. I did not have the time to tackle anything else.

Mr. Flick's persistence was likely just the nature of the reporter and he seemed a lot more pleasant the next day, during our scheduled phone meeting. During our rainy day conversation, the first time that he called, Mr. Flick said that he would email me with some detail about the paper's interests. When he emailed me later that day, he said that he was working "on a Black History Month story on the historic role of St. Paul United



Methodist Church, and its current challenges as it finds itself in the center of the city's new Arts District.” (Personal communication, January 26, 2009) According to Mr. Flick, Pastor Odom told him that I had written, or was writing a history of the church. He was wondering if he could get a copy of that history, or a synopsis, along with some historic photos. He would give me a call the next day to interview me about my subject. I expected that the paper would be interested in doing a Black History Month story on the church, but I did not anticipate their concern about the church's place in the Dallas Arts District, as stated by Mr. Flick.

Mr. Flick's second phone call, the next day, consisted of some general questions about St. Paul's history. I told him that I would send a truncated history to him the next day and that he should find most of what he needed there, and direct any further questions to me. The *Dallas Morning News* staff had already interviewed some of the St. Paul members, previously unknown to me. Instead of why and when St. Paul was founded, Mr. Flick seemed more interested in how St. Paul responded to Dallas's various racial climates, for example was St. Paul accepted by the White community when it was first built and did St. Paul participate in the Dallas Civil Rights protests downtown, etc. I told Mr. Flick that I was unaware of any overt protests by the church. Most references to St. Paul's participation in the Civil Rights Movement, on a larger scale, refer to the church as relatively passive. The most well-known civil rights activity, directly affiliated with the church, was its involvement in the desegregation of Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology, under the pastorship of Dr. Ira B. Loud. I made Mr. Flick aware of that. St. Paul also served as a meeting space for organizations, such as

the Democratic Progressive Voter's League, "one of the oldest Black organizations in the state of Texas... organized to encourage blacks to pay their poll taxes and to vote for candidates who would address the needs of Dallas blacks" (Dulaney 2008). Key St. Paul members, like L.G. Pinkston helped to found the organization, but it is unclear how much influence the church had in founding the organization, as a whole.

He replied that some of the interviewed church members reflected on their participation in the integration of Downtown Dallas businesses. I told him that I did not deny that, but whether the church participated in the sit-ins, as a whole, was a different issue. I also told him that we could not be sure how St. Paul was directly affected by Reconstruction era racism, but would have to put it in the contexts of racism in Dallas. It existed, like in most other places in the U.S., but I did not have any records of racist incidents specifically relating to St. Paul. I began to feel like a cat in a room full of rocking chairs. Mr. Flick was just doing his job, but my past experiences with reporters on archaeological and other historic sites were not so positive. I was not aware that Mr. Flick knew that I was Black, so he would not necessarily appeal to my emotions as a Black person, as reporters on slave cabin sites in the past, but he would do what he could to make the story interesting to his audience. He wanted to know what made St. Paul different from other Black churches in Dallas. He asked that question more than once. In my opinion, not much made the church different, other than the fact that it chose to stay in a community that may not be very supportive of the fact that it is historically and culturally Black, when it had the ability to move to what might have been a safer

community space. I stressed this to Mr. Flick, but was not sure if that mattered much to him.

On the morning of the exhibition, I attended worship services at St. Paul. Dallas's local Channel 8 Fox News was there, unknown to me at the time. Pastor Odom seemed in unusually good spirits that day. He is normally very optimistic, seemingly almost to a fault, but this day was different. He greeted congregants with big hugs and affectionate kisses, outside of the normal friendly hugs and firm handshakes. I knew that he was happy about the exhibit opening, but could it mean enough to bring about such a change in his attitude. Pastor Odom soon recognized my presence. He asked that I stand and I was given a round of applause. He formally recognized me in the past, when I was leaving St. Paul, as secretary, to return to Austin. At that time, he talked about how much I meant to the church and helped them through some demanding times. Although I was very appreciative, I felt more grateful about his recognition of my role as curator. I had completed something that I promised to the church years earlier and I was actually proud of it. I was probably a pretty good secretary, considering my lack of secretarial training, but I was also paid to do a job description. The exhibition was my baby, and now my teen daughter was about to be introduced at her cotillion.

I soon realized that Pastor Odom's curious excitement stemmed from the fact that St. Paul had made the front page of *The Dallas Morning News*, not just the *Metro* section as initially promised by the paper staff. As Pastor Odom waved the morning paper, he reminded the congregation that "the whole North Texas is excited about St. Paul. There gonna be people coming to this historical exhibit who we don't know, but need to know."

He also addressed the crowd as certain visitors to the exhibition, using phrases like “when you go to this exhibit” and “when you see this exhibit,” not “if you go to this exhibit,” and also not typical of Pastor Odom’s mode of preaching. He, like many other church pastors, are careful not to seem as if they are making decisions on the church members’ behalfs, in an effort to not ostracize certain members, as Eric McDaniel’s discussed in *Politics in the Pews* (2008). Pastor Odom’s decisiveness, on the church’s behalf, made his recognition of the exhibition even more endearing.

“Embracing Change” captured my attention once I actually saw a copy of the newspaper; “Members at historic St. Paul UMC see opportunity in new arts center.” Following a caption of two longtime St. Paul members embracing each other, David Flick introduced St. Paul’s founding by freed slaves, the later dispersal of its members to the Dallas suburbs (without mentioning why), and then introduced the more recent transformations in its neighborhood. Members embraced their new neighbor, the 350 million dollar Dallas Center for the Performing Arts, saying “We have always adapted. We feel like we are at the start of a period of great growth...there is a reason that we are where we are” and “I think it gives us a great opportunity of using the arts as a way to serve God.” Flick then goes on to give the church’s history, just as I sent to him in the description. The article was a fitting combination of the church’s history and its present challenges, with the history seeming to serve as more of a background. Flick briefly mentioned the exhibition in the article and later highlighted its whats, whens, and wheres. He also included an image of one artifact, the Overton compact, and the photo of Anthony Banning Norton, two out of the five images that I sent to him. The other images

sent included the 1950s photo of Ms. Delores Love and friends after church, Mollye Banks's large family photo, and the early twentieth-century photo of the St. Paul school children. In the end, Mr. Flick and *The Dallas Morning News* gave St. Paul a full page of coverage!

In other versions of Mr. Flick's article, the St. Paul Church community was not only "embracing change" and "seeking opportunity," but also "reaping benefits." The titles seemed a bit strange to me in their tendencies to make St. Paul the mover in a space in which it was already static. The Dallas Center for the Performing Arts, "a \$350 million complex of theaters, performing spaces and an opera hall" was the one moving into the Arts District, yet St. Paul seemed to be the major beneficiary in this relationship (Flick 2009). Flick goes on to describe the arts center as a "blessing," although St. Paul members mention adapting to their new neighbor and saying that the change *could* be a blessing. It is not my attempt to undermine the significance of the arts center, but to note how the article titles can give the reader a sense of definite optimism on behalf of the St. Paul members, who are no strangers to changes in their neighborhood. While acknowledging the potential benefits that their new neighbor could bring, some members express caution like Macy Mays, co-historian and member for nearly 70 years, who "welcomes the new arts center, but with misgivings. 'I think it's a good thing," she said. 'There are some days when I get worried that we're getting crowded out.'" One of St. Paul's White members, Mary Fehler, hopes that others who visit St. Paul, as she did, will fall in love with the church, yet is skeptical about "how easily racial barriers will be broken down. 'I think a lot of people are afraid to attend because of their – no offense –

snobbery,' she said. 'It isn't white; or they may drive past and see that the bricks in the church building don't match.'”

Flick includes a quote from Jill Magnuson, a spokeswoman for the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts, who says that “the Arts District is richer for the presence of several nearby churches, including St. Paul,” yet the article title does not reflect this or explain how; to me, an indication that St. Paul’s long-term status in the Arts District does not give it precedence; it is still an oddity in a changing space. Although St. Paul made the front page of the news, it did so mainly in relation to its \$350 million neighbor, not due to its \$3 million renovation or to the exhibition. The fact that the exhibition opened on February 1<sup>st</sup>, the onset of Black History Month, coinciding with St. Paul’s renovation the next month, helped a lot. Pastor Odom’s insistence that the reception planning committee focus heavily on publicity and his resolve to make Dwayne Watkins, Special Projects Editor for *Fox 4 News*, a member of that committee, seemed to pay off. Watkins served as the liaison between St. Paul and the news stations, helping to get much publicity for the church. As a result, *The Dallas Morning News* coverage was supplemented by pieces on at least two different evening news programs in Dallas, as well as in Houston, and two exclusives on Fox 4’s *Lone Star Adventures* and *Insights* programs. *Insights* was a minority-targeted topic show that featured “interviews with news makers and cover[ed] topics that affect[ed] the [Dallas] community” and was “one of the longest-running public affairs programs airing in North Texas.” (brackets added) *Insights* ended its run in Dallas, nearly five months after its St. Paul exhibit project interviews, with a final viewership of 13,286 (Bark 2009).

### *Insights*

Pastor Odom gave me a call, before I came to Dallas for the exhibit set-up, to let me know that he would be interviewed on *Insights*. He said that it would be great if I was available to be interviewed as well. I agreed to be interviewed, but told him that I might not make it to Dallas in time for us to be interviewed together. When I finally arrived in Dallas, Pastor Odom had already been interviewed by Fox News general assignment reporter and *Insights* host, Shaun Rabb.

Mr. Rabb opened his interview by giving much credit to the significance of St. Paul's history, namely its longevity. He then began to ask Pastor Odom to speak about the "unique" thing taking place looking at the history of St. Paul. Pastor Odom responded that there were several things going on, like the opening of the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts in the Arts District, "just a half a block away from St. Paul." He then went on to mention how the exhibit project is in conjunction with UT-Austin, and how blessed they are to have the assistance of Ph.D. candidate, Jodi Skipper. He haphazardly spoke about how I participated in the archaeology that had taken place some four or five years ago and helped to uncover "some artifacts from the old freed slaves who used to live in Freedman's Town around St. Paul." In his defense, he was not the church's pastor during the 2002 excavation. Yet, Pastor Odom was not the only St. Paul member, some there in 2002, who associated me with the archaeology project, even though I was not there. I could be mistaken for Jennifer Lawton, the only Black female field school student on the project, or just associated with the project because I am an archaeologist from UT, working on St. Paul. It is difficult to tell at times. Still, Pastor

Odom got the message across that an exhibition on St. Paul would be taking place at the Continental Lofts Gallery in Deep Ellum and that I “adopted St. Paul as my Ph.D. project and part of my work is this exhibit.” Mr. Rabb responds by saying that “While we hear so much in the 21st century about mega-churches, St. Paul was the first church where many of the freed slaves were able to worship the god, as they saw, brought them their freedom.” Although St. Paul is often cited as the first Black church in Dallas, sometimes the first Black Methodist church in Dallas, this has not been proven. Pastor Odom seemed to agree with Mr. Rabb’s assertion. Pastor Odom then goes on to make a straightforward link (with a few off dates) between the Mississippi Mission Conference and the founding of St. Paul, although eight years apart, when the link that I made was an indirect one. It is likely that only I noticed these discrepancies and, for the purposes of the television program, his version seemed to flow well. Mr. Rabb then went on to ask Pastor Odom about St. Paul’s ministry, the social work that it does. Pastor Odom talked about St. Paul’s most well-known work through its homeless ministry. He followed up by stressing that with “the advent of the Arts District and all of the wonderful things and world class performance troupes and venues that are located in the Arts District, we feel like God has left St. Paul in its current location so that we can kinda be a connection between those disadvantaged and marginalized in our community and connect them with all of the wonderful things and the opportunities that are in the Arts District.” Mr. Rabb responds by calling St. Paul “a bridge of hope...in that part of North Dallas.” Mr. Rabb and Pastor Odom sum up the interview by discussing what visitors can see at the exhibition, during which Pastor Odom describes the organization of the exhibit display, through its



individual parts, its chronology, and some of the things highlighted in the individual parts. He then gives the exhibit visiting days and hours and reiterated the name of the gallery. In 5 minutes, Pastor Odom gave a brief history of St. Paul, its place in the Arts District, its purpose in the Arts District, and the general contents of the exhibition; from my perspective, a remarkable feat! Pastor Odom's interview aired on Sunday, February 1<sup>st</sup> at 8:30 AM and 1:30 AM Monday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>. I was also interviewed by Mr. Rabb, but my interview did not air.

### *Lone Star Adventures*

Richard Ray, the weekend news anchor for Fox 4, hosts *Lone Star Adventures*, a travel show that introduces viewers to historical, cultural, and outdoor adventures in Texas. Ray opens his piece on St. Paul with the February 1<sup>st</sup> church service and the opening hymn, Chris Tomlin's "How Great is Our God;" interspersed with images of the exterior of the church building and interior stained glass windows; segments of Pastor Odom's opening remarks on the significance of the history exhibition to be held later that afternoon; and images of the attentive church population. The piece then cuts to images of the exhibition with Ray giving a brief introduction to St. Paul and the images and artifacts featured at the exhibition. After Ray gives a brief synopsis of St. Paul's founding as a part of Dallas's Freedman's Town, while walking in front of the church building, the piece turns to a shot of Pastor Odom elaborating on St. Paul's founding by freed slaves, while standing in front of the archaeology display at the gallery. Shortly after, Ray goes on to mention how "throughout the years, St. Paul continued to be a place where notable

things continued to happen,” like the filming of Spencer Williams’s *The Blood of Jesus*, “a historically significant race film, the first of its genre, added to the National Film Registry in 1991.” I previously let Dwayne Watkins borrow a copy of the film, of which segments were shown as Ray mentioned that the film is featured at the exhibition. I did not give Mr. Watkins the details mentioned on the film, showing that some additional research was likely done by the segment producers. Ray then goes on the mention that I was working on a history of the church, something that I did not recall clarifying, but was likely mentioned to them by Pastor Odom, and that I helped to organize the exhibition.

I was interviewed by Dwayne Watkins during the exhibit opening. He asked several questions, while I was filmed by one of his *Fox* colleagues. They chose to air one of my responses during this *Lone Star* segment, a close-up of me stating, “it’s very important to understand the contexts under which the church has survived, and that’s a very changing neighborhood. When other Black churches decided to move, for very understandable reasons, St. Paul decided to stay.” Regrettably, when spoken, the quote sounded as if St. Paul decided to stay, for very understandable reasons, instead of the other Black churches deciding to move, for very understandable reasons, the point that I meant to stress. Unfortunately, I do not remember what question was posed. The segment ends with a shot of St. Paul’s choir singing, another exterior image of the church, a quote from a St. Paul member, stating, “a lot of people feel like we could leave and do better, leave and get a bigger church, but it’s not in the bigness,” and a closing quote of Pastor Odom saying, “This is your church, 135 years, ain’t that good news,” followed by a resounding “Amen.”

In 2008, *The Dallas Morning News* had a daily circulation of over 368,000 with a Sunday circulation of around a half-million subscribers, and is one of the 20 largest paid circulations in the United States. It was also ranked number 13 in the Top 100 daily US newspapers (*2008 Top Newspapers, Blogs, & Consumer Magazines*, p. 1). That Sunday, St. Paul was the center attraction to over half a million people...and that only included the *Dallas Morning News*! That Sunday evening, Fox News also aired reports on the exhibition at the 5:00 PM, 5:30 PM, and 10:00 PM news spots. St. Paul's story was visible through these multiple news resources. This was not the first time that St. Paul made front page news, but seemingly the first time that it received so much attention in one day.

#### *Other Representations*

St. Paul seemed to make its first appearance in the *Dallas Morning News* when an unnamed author gave brief sketches of "Dallas Colored Churches" (January 2, 1887), just 2 years after the paper was founded. Over the years, St. Paul has been featured in the *Dallas Morning News* to mark several of its church anniversaries; announce choir competitions; and formal ceremonies (e.g. a 1938 Black "mayor" installation and watch night celebrations). Church interests have also appeared in the *Dallas Times Herald* (now defunct and once the *DMN's* main competitor). The *Dallas Times Herald* featured articles on church apartment development projects spearheaded by Dr. Loud (August 2 & 5 1964) and several church anniversary announcements (June 28, 1971; September 7, 1995; August 4, 1998). More significantly, St. Paul's congregation has often relied on

local Black newspapers, like *The Dallas Examiner*, to promote its events, targeting primarily Black audiences, when larger White newspapers may have been more discriminatory about content and what got represented. Church events have also been featured in the *Dallas Post Tribune*, another historically Black newspaper. *The Dallas Post Tribune* covered church revivals, women's day celebrations, church anniversaries, community events held at the church (e.g. Black Dallas Remembered meetings) and other events. *The Post Tribune* also gave much coverage to St. Paul's 1973 fire (November 17 & 24).

More recently, in November of 2007, the church made *The Dallas Morning News*, although not front page, when it announced its restoration plans (Hodges 2007). Thirteen days later, St. Paul and Highland Park held a ceremony, with news coverage, at One Arts Plaza to formally announce their cooperative effort to restore St. Paul. The ceremony was attended by Pastor Odom and several other St. Paul members; Dallas City Councilwoman, Angela Hunt; Bill Lively, president and chief executive officer of the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts; Paul Rasmussen, associate pastor at Highland Park UMC; Mark Craig, Senior Minister, Highland Park UMC; and Rev. Matt Gaston, First UMC, Denton, Texas; and included performances by combined St. Paul-Highland Park choirs. Councilwoman Hunt later declared June 8<sup>th</sup> of 2008 "St. Paul United Methodist Church Day."

During the exhibit run, David Flick's article was reproduced in various forms. The Fox 4 News website printed the press release that I sent to Brenda Powers, verbatim, with the title "Historically Black Church Celebrates History" (Smith 2009). Truncated

versions of the press release were announced on local Dallas news and entertainment sources like pegasusnews.com.

Through these sources, St. Paul's story was not only more visible, but for about one month it was the talk of several communities: The North Texas UMC Conference; several local history communities, and the St. Paul Church community. The church hosted several events, outside of the exhibit opening night, including a renovation project fundraiser. Members were also invited to speak before the Dallas City Council. The exhibition alone did not solely serve the church's desire to become more visible; needs of the church; the church's ability to present its own case was the major component. In the end, the exhibit gave the church the space to do so.

## Exhibit Audience Reception & Feedback: Aims and Results



Figure 7-1. Church Ladies at Feedback Table. Photo by Geneva Phillips.

### *Written Feedback*

Nearly 200 visitors signed the guest book at the exhibition. I placed the book near the entrance door, along with a feedback table, including visitor feedback forms, and *Post-it Notes* for those who wanted to share additional information (Figure 7-1). I received a total of 25 feedback forms, including those Pastor Odom requested from church members after the exhibition had ended. I did not receive nearly as many feedback forms as I would (25 forms out of 200 guests) have liked and think that I should

have stressed the significance of these, at the exhibit opening, or placed signs near the different exhibit sections reminding the visitors to complete a feedback form.

My initial thought was to include a more formal feedback section of the exhibition, between Walls III and IV. I concluded that this placement could be intrusive to the flow of the exhibition, but now realize that it might have been more apparent to the audience than the feedback table. I placed the feedback table near the entrance doors, so that visitors could notice the forms when they entered and be reminded to fill out the forms when they exited. It seems that the forms were overlooked or that some visitors were reluctant to write their opinions, even though it was not mandatory that they write their names. I explicitly stated that their names and contact information were optional, and should only be left if they wished to be interviewed or to donate documents and images to the St. Paul exhibit project. Most respondents remained anonymous, while several indicated their names.

In Lidia Marte's experience as curator and exhibitor of *Migrant Seasonings* (2008), she found that the "peculiarities of her main target audience," "oral-centered communication groups," may have influenced whether they answered the exhibit feedback forms in their own handwriting. Many visitors did not use the forms that she created. In my discussions with Lidia, she suggested that this could have been the case with my exhibit audience as well. Although they were not largely Afro-Caribbean and other Latin Americans, as her audience, they were mostly part of "an oral-centered expressive culture" (371-372) of US African-Americans and may not have felt comfortable with this feedback method. Maybe visitors just did not understand the

significance. Upon reflection, how would they? I did not stress how important it was for me to understand how the visitors felt about the exhibition, not only for the sake of my dissertation analysis, but also to help with the later re-installation of the exhibition at the church.

Reggie Smith served as exhibit docent on Wednesday evenings and I asked that he remember to give the forms to visitors. He did, but that only resulted in a few forms. Later, I asked Pastor Odom if he could get more responses to the exhibition. He said that he would ask participants at the church Leadership Retreat to fill out forms. I realized that these members would probably not have the exhibit contents fresh in their minds, but some information was better than none at all. On the other hand, maybe these members had more time to reflect on the exhibition. If I had to do the exhibition over, I would have requested that the visitors answer feedback forms, when I introduced the exhibition at the opening, and would have probably given unobtrusive reminders in each section of the exhibition.

Overall, the exhibition was well received by a broad audience. Responses to the exhibition were generally positive (as expressed during the opening, on feedback forms, note cards, and in follow-up emails). (See Appendix for feedback form responses) The exhibition was fundamentally addressed to St. Paul members, local Dallas historians, and the United Methodist Church community. The feedback form was based on four questions and one comment response: 1) When did you visit the exhibition; 2) In your opinion, what is this exhibition about; 3) Which display area(s) did you enjoy most? Which least; 4) Which image or label had the strongest effect on your appreciation of the



topic; and 5) Please share how you feel about St. Paul's present place in The Dallas Arts District. Most visitors, hence respondents, came to the exhibition on its opening day. The feedback forms produced a range of responses. For example, replies to question #2 included 1) the visual and written documentation on St. Paul; the history of St. Paul, the history of Methodism; the future of St. Paul; the history of Dallas "through the eyes of St. Paul"; the history of Blacks in Dallas; the history of Freedmanstown; the history of the Black Methodist Church in Dallas; and the history of the Black church. According to Serrell (1996), "after the exhibition is completed, evaluation can tell you whether or not the visitor's experience successfully reflects or incorporates the big idea." I am content that most of the respondents seemed to understand that this was a history exhibition about St. Paul and that the big idea seemed to come across in several of those replies.

One respondent brought up "the fact that we are still standing in the same location," indicating his recognition of St. Paul as *a standing part of Dallas's urban landscape* as stated in the big idea. Likewise, St. Paul was mentioned as "a vibrant part of this [possibly the Dallas or Arts District] community" and "a treasured landmark, spiritual church [that] continues to grow, reinvent & be active in today's urban Dallas." (Brackets added by author) Others referred to St. Paul's "great times in the past that will go into the future" and "the significant role that St. Paul UMC played in the development of Dallas." Another replied that they were most strongly affected by the section of the exhibition "... that mentioned that the Freedmen's Town was on the 'outside' of town. Now the same area is a focal point of the cultural life of Dallas & St. Paul is still there & playing a vital role." These responses indicate St. Paul's significant place and strong

footing in the community. They also indicate vitality and the expectation of a future. Although several respondents mentioned St. Paul as an active survivor, in some sense, only one respondent mentioned “the image of what the old neighborhood used to look like compared to what it looks like now” (See Chapter 5, Figures 40 a, b, & c). That was my favorite part of the exhibition and the one that I thought would be most effective.

Respondents also referred to St. Paul as *a site of black culture* with reactions to the exhibition being about “...blacks in Dallas from the late 1800s until now,” “the importance of how far we have come as black Americans” and “the struggles of the black race in Dallas.” There were also repeated mentions of Freedman’s Town, one reference to the history of Black Methodism in Dallas, and one thought that the exhibition was about African American family history. One respondent summed the exhibition up as “...the rich history of a historically African American church.” Outside of these responses, one respondent to the comments section of the pegasusnews.com exhibit announcement replied, “This is a unique event for the African American Community to realize and they should attend such, to know...Dallas does care and so on that note...good follow up...A/T. Urban Historian and Archaeologist” (February 4, 2009). I later received a message from Mr. Alexander Troup (A/T) saying that he and a friend were working “on a project concerning the African American community in Dallas and surrounding areas of freed slaves...” He added, “The overall exhibition was very good and has the merits of giving Dallas more direction on the multicultural path it needs to recognize” (Alexander Troup 2009, elec. comm.). He asked if I could send him a source on the exhibition so that he could spread the work about the exhibition.

The lack of responses to St. Paul as a site of *public history* did not surprise me, because I feel that I failed to project this component of the big idea as much as I should have. I was glad that at least one person felt that the exhibition was about “preserving the history of those that have come before this church,” but should have focused more on the significance of heritage preservation in Texas and working with communities in cultural heritage projects. I should have found some way of engaging the audience as potential public historians. Although I concluded the exhibition with a panel stating, “It is our hope that this exhibition helped you to learn more about St. Paul and to better appreciate the importance of sites such as this one in the city of Dallas,” I did not give the audience the tools to do so. Fortunately, Pastor Odom organized an exhibition on St. Paul’s restoration and renovation project, at the exhibit entrance, which introduced the visitors to some of these ideas. The feedback table also included brochures from the Old City Park Heritage Village, hopefully connecting St. Paul’s exhibition to the greater Dallas historic preservation realm.

The *archaeology* section, Part II, was mostly mentioned in relation to the shotgun house. This part of the exhibition seemed to be very popular. Leah told me that she was very excited to see the shotgun house, as she had seen in the Freedman’s Town neighborhood, as a child. One respondent wrote that “the size of the bed in the house makes you appreciate the struggles that our ancestors went through for us to enjoy the luxuries that we have today.” A few of the feedback forms listed the artifacts as some of the more favorite parts of the exhibition. Jim Anderson, Senior Planner for the Dallas Landmark Commission wrote that the archaeology section was one of his favorites.

### *Verbal Feedback*

I also received some verbal feedback on the exhibition. Reggie, Ms. Moore, and many other St. Paul members expressed their sincere appreciation for the exhibition. Reggie, a longtime member, felt a sense of pride and vindication about the church's historical significance and his family's many contributions. He always knew how special St. Paul is; now everyone else could see it. He was overwhelmed by his reoccurring voice in the exhibition, through several displayed quotes, and by the attention paid to his great-great aunt and uncle, the Coles.

While Reggie assisted me with the exhibit installation, he identified one couple in an image of the "Freedman's Town Memories" poster. Mollye Banks gave this image of Annie Marie Scott and Ben Franklin Scott, also relatives of Reggie's, to the 2002 field school. Ms. Banks identified the image as "Benjamin Franklin Scott at 2205 Snyder (street changed to Deluth) facing south. Taken in 1945 or 1946." Reggie confirmed that the other person in the photo was Annie Marie (Figure 7-2). He wanted to make sure that I made note of this.

When I first brought the completed posters to St. Paul, Pastor Odom and Leah perused the posters. Leah was shocked to find an image of her family in Quitman. "Where did you get this?" she asked. I told her that it was part of the photo archive given to the St. Paul field school. No persons in the photo had been identified. She said, "This is not Freedman's Town; this is a photo of my family in Quitman [Texas]!" Her mother, Bertha, a longtime member of St. Paul, is the woman at the top left in the photo (Figure 3). I was somewhat relieved by the fact that members of Leah's family, including her

mother, had moved to Freedman's Town, making them inclusive, but was concerned that this image was not a "Freedman's Town" memory as the collage it was part of suggested. For me, this was a question of "authenticity." Had I known, I could have placed this photo within the context of the many families who moved to Dallas, and St. Paul, from smaller communities like Quitman. It was too late to change it.



Figure 7-2. Benjamin Franklin (left) and Annie Marie Scott (right) at 2205 Snyder (street changed to Deluth) facing south. Taken in 1945 or 1946.



Figure 7-3. Image of Leah Parker's family in Quitman, Texas. Date Unknown. Her mother, Ms. Bertha Parker is the woman at the top left.

At the exhibition, Ms. Moore thanked me for what I had done for their church. She did not elaborate on the specific work, but she seemed to be referring to the reconstruction and exposition of their history. This note of thanks was a distinctive one. Ms. Moore is the keeper of St. Paul's history and a longtime member. More than most, she recognizes its worth.

During the exhibit opening events, I also met several members of the historic preservation community who were doing work relevant to St. Paul's history. One librarian was doing more extensive research on *The Blood of Jesus* film and one historian from Kaufmann County was doing some research on St. Paul's early trustee, Anthony Banning Norton's, role as a judge. We agreed to exchange resources. I was later asked to speak before the North Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church's Commission

on History and Archives, made up of local church historians. Dr. William J. Bryan, then chair, had visited the exhibition. At the talk, Dr. Bryan praised my work for its innovative ways of recording church histories and encouraged commission members to begin thinking outside of the box. In these ways, the exhibition not only gave St. Paul some exposure, but exposed archaeology and oral histories as supplementary tools to traditional written church histories in Texas.

A few months after the exhibit opening, I met Carlton for dinner so that we could catch up on each other's lives. During our conversation, Carlton mentioned, that "Although my work is about the past, he feels that it did a lot for St. Paul in the present." St. Paul received some much needed attention to its historical significance at a time when it was trying to convince Dallas communities to support its restoration and renovation, generally and financially. His sentiments summed up what I tried to do. I then realized that at least one visitor got that point.

### **Outcomes and Implications**

In "Exhibiting Cultures: the Poetics and Politics of Museum Display," Ivan Karp says that the participants in the conference on which this edition is based, "tended to think of exhibitions as conforming to one of two models: either a vehicle for the display of objects or a space for telling a story" (1991:12). In my opinion, the St. Paul exhibition fit both models, as well as a third: it became a space through which St. Paul could present a case for its historic preservation. Events surrounding the exhibition (media and fundraising) greatly contributed to the public presentation of the church's cultural

heritage. Karp further introduces Michael Baxandall's chapter in the edition by stating that what each actor in the exhibit process "derives from the exhibition, in the end, is surely not entirely what he or she intended" (15). According to Baxandall, the artifact makers, the exhibitor's arrangement and display of the objects, and the museum-goer's assumptions are all actors in a "complex and dynamic relationship" contributing to the making and experience of the exhibition.

I intended to present St. Paul's story to a greater public, and make the church more visible in the process. I did not foresee the intersection of the exhibit opening with the onset of St. Paul's restoration and renovation project and the effect that the visible reconstruction of St. Paul's history could have on the reconstruction of the church building. Although the exhibition became a background space to the restoration project, it was a welcome interaction. It is my belief that the connection of the two events contributed to the media attention, which gave the exhibition a larger audience, and to the ability of the church to introduce its restoration plans to a larger audience. Unsurprisingly, it also placed St. Paul within a larger space of local/race politics.

Several online sources highlighted St. Paul's historic preservation efforts. *The Dallas Morning News*' online version featured David Flick's article with a different title, *Historic black church in Dallas seeks to reap benefits of upcoming arts center* (Flick 2009). Other sites featured assorted versions of Flick's article; with varying titles like *Historic black church in Dallas is hoping for lift from arts center* (QuickDFW.com) and *Historic black church has overcome many changes* (elpasotimes.com).



Some of the exhibit feedback, mostly as responses to one online version of David Flick's article, also gave glimpses into the contentious relationships between church and race, and church and state, often reflected in U.S. politics. It is not clear whether the commenter's actually attended the exhibition, and this does not seem to be there concern. The exhibition was not indicated in there discussions, one which seemed to be more about the "significance" of Black and White churches, and not about the opening of the exhibition at all. One discussion is listed below in order of comments:

Don't dare to forget or fail to mention that St. Paul's leadership and congregation has been at the forefront in local civil rights struggles, and had programs to help homeless citizens long before the recent push to make donating to homelessness an elitist event. (BIG BOOGER, quickdfw.com, February 5, 2009)

I have long seen this church continue to maintain in the Downtown Dallas Area. I was unaware until recent years that it was a predominately black church. Although I hate it when some says [sic] it is a "black" church. What does the color have to do with the love of the Lord? I have gone to churches for years that had a great mix of all races. I find more love in a church that welcomes everyone, regardless of the color of their skin, like the Bible says, than in churches that have a [sic] all white congregation. I can't wait to visit this wonderful old church. I love what they stand for and I love what they are doing for the community. For the record, I am white, my husband is mixed and all my precious grandchildren are mixed. I know we would be welcomed with open arms and not judges at this church. (mamaof4, quickdfw.com, February 5, 2009)

MAMAF4-----IT IS NOT THE COLOR THAT MATTERS. IT IS THE SEPERATION [SIC] OF CHURCH AND STATE. IF LIBERALS (ARTSY) WANT CHRISTIANITY OUT OF SCHOOLS, GOVERNMENT AND ELSEWHERE, THEN YOU SHOULD NOT DONATE TAX MONEY TO THIS CHURCH. IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH RACE, AND---AND TAX MONEY DOES GO THE ARTS (LOOK AT THE BAILOUT MONEY---PART GOES TO THE ARTS) (R U WITHMEE, quickdfw.com, February 5, 2009)

Just out of curiosity, what would people call it if a church was described as "a WHITE church"??? I think I know, I just wonder is [sic] DMN [Dallas Morning News] will let that question stand. (Brackets added by author) (TexasFred, quickdfw.com, February 5, 2009)

One commenter on the *Houston Chronicle's* website wrote, "How unique to use art to dam [sic] America and spew racial hate, like all black churches do. I'm sure Pastor Wright will be invited to head the dedication" (patrioticsam, chron.com, February 7, 2008). It is my guess that the commenter is referring to Pastor Jeremiah Wright, former pastor of the majority-Black Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago. Then presidential candidate, Barack Obama, was scrutinized for his connection to Wright as his former pastor. Wright was criticized, by some, as preaching racially divisive sermons. These sermons were excerpted from among Wright's numerous speeches and became politically controversial when Obama was criticized for his association with Wright and his seeming reluctance to condemn Wright's words.

I did not feel the need to respond to any of these comments, but did find these kinds of comments interesting. I was hoping to find responses to the exhibition, or comments on St. Paul's position in the Arts District, but instead got a reminder that the article forgot to mention the significance of St. Paul's civil rights and social service work in Dallas; realized that at least one person noticed St. Paul, but did not realize that it was a Black church; and that St. Paul should not get tax money, because it promoted the arts in a religious space. For a while, I was stumped about "what would people call it if a church was described as 'a WHITE church'?" My only guess is that the cowboy-hat clad white male in the photo meant racist. I certainly did not believe that the exhibition spewed racial hate, and did not feel that the opinions of a likely non-visitor who did not substantiate his case mattered. But, it did.

I reflect on Lisa Knauer and Daniel Walkowitz's critique of Charlotte J. MacDonald's chapter in *Contested Histories in Public Space* (2009). [MacDonald] "suggests that the significance of the museum (Te-Papa, New Zealand's New National Museum) is not limited to the content of its exhibits, but included creating a space where people of varying views can create their own narratives" (12). The web announcement of the St. Paul exhibition, alone, seemed to do something similar. It created a virtual space for people to express their views, outside of the contents of the exhibition. Marc Howard Ross prefaces *Culture and Belonging in Divided Societies* (2009) by stating that "cultural expressions and enactments regularly produce nasty, and sometimes prolonged, disputes, whether the catalyst is music, graffiti, sculptures, flag display, parades, pilgrimages, visits to sacred sites, secular and religious rituals, clothing and how it is (or is not) worn, museum exhibits, or films." The latter online comments quickly reminded me that St. Paul defining itself as black church, alone, made it political. What I saw as the political nature of my work was only an extension of something that already existed. The exhibition was the catalyst that generated particular responses.

### *If I Had To Do It All Over Again*

Neither the online responses nor the verbal and written exhibit feedback gave me the suggestions that I hoped would help me to reexamine the exhibition in ways that could help the church to install its permanent exhibition. It is understandable that the St. Paul community could have felt uneasy about critiquing a gift. Still, I had to reflect on what could be done differently, and how, based on critiques from Lidia Marte; my

professor, Maria Franklin; and a reliance on interdisciplinary resources relevant to public history exhibitions (e.g. Frisch 1990, Handler and Gable 1997, Hayden 1995, Karp and Levine 1991, Linenthal 1995, Marte 2008, Serrell 1996). Even though I felt that the exhibition reached its greater purpose, given more time, I would have done several things differently. These things are listed below.

### 1. Community Involvement

It was my initial intent to have the church and communities committees be more involved in the actual design of the exhibition. The church community played integral roles in the content and in the installation and management of the exhibition, but did not make decisions about exhibit content. I think that the relationships I established with the church community, as secretary, allowed me a particular amount of academic license and trust from the church community. I also personally funded the exhibition, which may have warranted less input than a church-funded project. Still, I can not help but wonder what the exhibit content would have looked like if the church and community committees made content decisions, as an exhibit team. They were aware of the exhibit chronology and what the sections would entail, but did not make decisions about photographs, labels, and displays. If they had, I would have probably had more information about some of the “unknowns” in the photographs.

When I began to plan the actual exhibit installation, I had already spent 6 years doing research, with no attempts at a concrete exhibit design. I knew that I had to complete the exhibition before I could write about it in this dissertation, so I was limited

to only a few months of completion, five months to be exact. I was concerned about community input, but saw this exhibition as only a test-run for the permanent exhibition to be installed at the church in 2010, after the renovation is completed. Now that I reflect, I think that it was more fruitful to create an exhibition for review, giving the church members some familiarity with the process. They are now aware of what the permanent exhibition can look like and what potential it has to make St. Paul more visible on the Arts District map. St. Paul members are generally well exposed to museums and their exhibitions, but not to the exhibit process. I am also aware that "...conflicts between people concerned with content and those responsible for execution are notorious in the museum world."(Karp 1991:24). These conflicts generally provoke more time consuming products, yet the debates are often necessary to produce more inclusive projects. For this reason, I plan to allot more time to the development of the permanent exhibition, with St. Paul members being the primary curators, and suggest that they solicit more help from museum professionals, and local history enthusiasts, and attempt to secure funding for the exhibition on a more long term basis. I also plan to make suggestions on exhibit improvements, such as the addition of a children's section.

## 2. Children's Section

One of the things that I regret is not having a children's section as part of the exhibition. I do not feel that I spent enough time making the exhibit language more accessible, to a younger audience, so I am not sure how the children who visited the exhibition responded to it. Most of them seemed content running around the exhibit space, because they did not

have much else to do. I spent much time planning the ArtsVision summer camp projects and could have used similar materials to create a space for children. I feel that children should feel free to be children in these spaces and had some concerns that the pristine gallery space would not allow such freedoms. For example, I did not want molding clay from the marble making exercises all over the floors. Still, I could have asked someone to monitor this area and even attempt to assess how the children responded to their section. I could have also designated a children's day, in which I could have managed a program similar to the ArtsVision program, while presenting a child-friendly history of St. Paul. There were not many children in attendance, less than 20, but I should have attempted to make their experiences more enjoyable. It is my hope that the permanent installation will have a tangible children's component.

### 3. Recording

I was able to find a videographer and photographer, from the church, a few days before the exhibit opening. I hoped to have a photographer cousin of mine to do this job, but he had a prior engagement. I received images from various sources, as well as video-taped the completed gallery space, but I should have been more vigilant about taking before and after shots of the exhibit space, for comparative purposes, and in order to have more complete records of the exhibit process. I took no photos of the exhibit installation, which I regret heavily, and took no personal photos during the exhibit run. That is a risk that I do not plan to take again. I relied solely on the photographic perceptions of others, who, to no fault of their own, had no idea what I was looking for. I also had to wait until those

persons compiled the images and sent them to me. I am still trying to track down the video from the opening.

#### 4. Maps

Although Lidia suggested that I include location maps of the church, I did not do enough of this. I used Sanborn maps, which were no help to someone unfamiliar with the church's location (e.g. my parents). Hypothetically, guests should have been able to view the exhibition and then drive down to see the structure they just learned so much about, with a printed copy of a map and driving directions. I did not make that possible.

The day before the exhibit opening, Pastor Odom asked if I could create a simple floor plan map to give visitors a sense of how the exhibition moved and what route they should take. I was under a serious time constraint, and was unable to get it done.

Fortunately, Pastor Odom was able to get this done. I think that this was very helpful, but I should have let guests know that these were available, not just assume that they would see them on the feedback table. "A larger, simple floor plan," as Serrell suggests would have probably been more effective (1996). She adds that "quick, clear orientation is a very important feature for visitors." I considered using footprint stickers as guides, but this would have probably been intrusive to the simple gallery floor plan.

#### 5. Images and Artifacts

Although I was content with the label typography, I should have made images with embedded writing, larger. The census record page was not very legible and I could have

pointed out the Cole family names, even with something as simple as a sticker dot. Maria Franklin also suggested that I consider limiting some of the texts, which seemed to be too lengthy. I tried to limit the texts as much as I thought possible, but now have a better idea of what texts may not be as necessary to the overall flow of the exhibition.

I also forgot to give credit to James Davidson, who designed the artifact display texts and labels. I should have placed this credit on the display case. I gave the archaeologists credit for the excavation work, but did not give James the specific credit that he deserved.

## 6. Test Run

The one thing that I regret the most is not doing a pre-opening evaluation of the exhibit. It was my intent to have the exhibit planning committee critique the exhibition, at least one week prior to the opening, and make any necessary adjustments during the final week. If they had, the exhibition would probably have less typographical error. One church member pointed out a few typos while he helped me to display the posters the week prior to the exhibition. I kindly thanked him for his attention to detail, but let him know that I did not plan on making any changes at that point. Unfortunately, I did not complete the exhibit installation in time to do that properly and was also overwhelmed by the printing costs. Any poster changes would have to be reprinted. I could not afford the time or the printing costs.



*My Future Exhibit Hopes and Plans – as Participant*

Although I plan to participate in the church's permanent exhibit development, it will be in the role of a consultant. My consultations will include assisting the St. Paul Planning Committee with clarifying the exhibit big idea, establishing formal objectives, spatial analyses, subject development for particular demographics, staffing, and creating a more interactive exhibition. I will also prepare and lead workshops and propose an administrative plan based on the workshop outcomes.

I plan to share some of my reflections on the 2009 exhibition with the church's exhibit planning committee and highlight what could be done differently. The church community has the option of creating several new exhibit components, including the children's section. Logistical alterations will also have to be made to the posters and their content, in order to facilitate the transition of the exhibition from the Continental Gallery space to the renovated St. Paul Church for installation. I had a lot more gallery space to work with than what is available at the church. Storage materials will also have to be purchased for associated documents and artifacts.

It is my hope that my work with the church will ultimately result in the development of St. Paul as an archival institution, with a long term history exhibition, both integral to St. Paul's cultural heritage preservation. The projected long term nature of this exhibit project means that the church community will have to facilitate its funding, promotion, and partnerships on its own. Unlike most archaeology project communities, St. Paul is also responsible for the preservation and storage of its own artifacts. They belong to the church, which owns the property on which they were found. All of these

things require vast amounts of thought and planning, that this church community, or any other institution, many not want to embark on without knowing what the potential benefits are. In this case, I feel that it was necessary for the church community to “see” the potential benefits of a history prior to making necessary time and economic investments. I do not feel that my word, alone, would have convinced the church community, even one as historically aware as St. Paul, that an exhibit project could benefit it in myriad ways. I was privileged enough to have this project supported as a dissertation project and was able to make the investments on my own.

#### *Potential and Possibilities*

Public history enthusiasts attempting to convince certain groups of the values of proposed projects should realize that the benefits of the work may have to be proven prior to embarking on any large scale projects. Communities are generally not at their beck and call, waiting for someone to present the “perfect” historic preservation project to them. They may have to be convinced and there may be not a “magic bullet” in this procedure. It is a process of experience and trial and error.

The ability of public archaeology to serve as a catalyst for cultural resource management projects is the essential theme of my work. While public archaeology of the African Diaspora is a more recent area of archaeological study, it is one that I believe holds immense potential to intersect applied archaeological research with the political movements of African American cultural institutions, particularly as it applies to cultural heritage management and historic preservation projects within the context of urban

gentrification. It also has the potential to not only engage African American audiences, but embed them in all processes of archaeological research, so that they are not only provisionally “empowered” by archaeological researchers, but truly recognize the significance of being proactive about the management of their cultural resources.

Through this exhibition, St. Paul Church members were not only exposed to archaeology and the art of exhibition, but to their *potential* to give the church political power in a cultural heritage sense. I highlight the word potential in an effort to complicate the meaning of giving political power to, or what some deem empowering, any cultural group. It is my contention that empowerment can only be achieved through independence. The exhibition was only one point in the church’s cultural heritage continuum. The key to St. Paul’s cultural heritage survival can only be achieved through the church communities willingness to institute and continue projects on its own, with some cooperative efforts, but not a through a sole dependence on my work or the work of any other researcher.

It was my hope that the exhibition would better situate the church in Texas historic preservation discourse, give them more recognition in the Dallas Arts District community, and make them better equipped to manage their own historic preservation. I was made aware that my exhibition was integral in getting the church community featured in the Texas Historical Commission’s 2010 update of the *African Americans in Texas: Historical and Cultural Legacies* brochure, giving St. Paul a potentially broader audience. Through such progress, I think that these processes of giving St. Paul increased visibility have begun, but it will be some time before the more long-term effects can be

determined. It is up to the St. Paul Church community to continue the work and not let the visibility dissipate or the church's histories become forgotten. Their participation in the exhibit reception planning gave some indication that they are very capable of doing so.

I did not foresee how much impact the church's own participation in the publication of its image could have and how significant this would be to my goals. I could not do this alone as a researcher, with one exhibition. Pastor Odom "...concentrated on the exhibition itself as an event and what it meant..." as Corrine Kratz did in *The Ones That Are Wanted: Communication and the Politics of Representation in a Photographic Exhibition*. Kratz describes how people who visit an exhibition "...see an exhibition through interests and experiences not anticipated by the exhibition developers," as some of the Okiek in her case study focused on the potential political effects that the exhibition might have on their displayed community, not necessarily the content or acts of display. Here, I refer to Pastor Odom's perception in a similar way. Pastor Odom became twice as excited about my work after he saw what it could do for the church community, not just for the academic community. As a result, he is more active in the preparation of a permanent exhibition.

Nearly seven months after the exhibition ended, I visited the church and met with Pastor Odom. I made him aware of some new information that I uncovered regarding St. Paul's business history. He realized that this information conflicted with the oral histories passed down through the church, and subsequently repeated in many Dallas history circles. I now believed that St. Paul's building construction began in 1918, nearly 17

years after the church was built and that the brick-by-brick theory, which states that early St. Paul members literally began to build the present brick church by hand was likely false. The brick-by-brick theory better correlates to the building of St. Paul's first brick church building, but the story is often told to stress the significance of how a community with limited resources could build such a splendid structure. Although the St. Paul Church community's resources were very limited, they were likely not limited enough to require that congregants literally build the second brick church; this was likely the work of hired building contractors. Pastor Odom seemed to prefer the oral history. I told him that that was fine by me, but that my job as a historical research is to present what I think is more accurate and that is what I plan to do. He understood. More significantly, he understood the power of a good story, so I tried to convince him that the church has a great story no matter if the construction began in 1901 or 1918. It is still rendered a historic building with a unique cultural heritage.

During the same conversation, I suggested that St. Paul employ an architectural historian to reconstruct the church's building history, based on present architectural discoveries made through the renovation project. For the first time, the present church community is able to see how the church was built from its basic foundation. I stressed to him that opportunities like these only come around once in a lifetime. Pastor Odom suggested that I find someone from UT-Austin to do the work. I told him that this would not likely happen, in a short period of time, and that the person would need to be funded. I made no further suggestions. I was disappointed that Pastor Odom did not see the significance of an architectural history, as I did, but did not feel comfortable pressuring

him to do the work. In many ways, I felt that it was now my job to back off and hope that he and other members of the church community understand the importance of taking advantage of a rare opportunity. If I began to make too many suggestions, or offer too much help, then I could easily begin to spearhead another project on behalf of the church community, without them being embedded in the process. I did not want to take the risk.

Surprisingly, I received a call from Pastor Odom about one week later saying that the church restoration and renovation planning committee had decided to allot a significant amount of money for a comprehensive architectural history. It would be completed by one of the renovation project archaeologists. I was enthused, not only because I felt that the church was making a major move in its historic preservation, but that church leaders seemed to realize the magnitude of establishing a more thorough history, and that it often comes at a price, requiring substantial time or money. For the first time, I felt that the St. Paul Church community knew what the tools are, how to use these tools to their advantage, and “claim the right to represent themselves” (Lavine 1991:56).

Through archaeology, exhibition, and a greater public history project, the church community became embedded parts of the research processes, which were shared with the larger Dallas community. Communities are not generally attracted to what they do not know is possible. Public exposure, participation, and integration are integral to gaining minority interests in public history and archaeology and enlarging audiences in these fields. St. Paul had an idea of what was possible, but is not aware of more contemporary political moves that it can make to further ensure in place in Texas history politics.

*Greater Implications – Archaeology as Applied Anthropology*

History often becomes “...one of the terrains upon which...groups have launched struggles for cultural, political, and land rights...,” sometimes in attempts to move these groups “from the margins into the center of a national narrative” (Knauer and Walkowitz 2009:12). Public history projects, such as the St. Paul exhibition can be mechanisms for these struggles. Although stories like St. Paul’s are often omitted in the greater U.S. narrative, due to their tendencies to complicate them, those embarking on interpretive projects can utilize their projects to move ostracized groups closer to the center. St. Paul must first move closer to the center of the Dallas narrative, one crammed with White male master narratives, in which Blacks, Hispanics, and women are often left out. Planners for the city of Dallas have made recent attempts to restore historic buildings in the Arts District. Yet they have not historically paid much attention to the significance of Black heritage sites downtown or in any other parts of the city.

On a larger scale, research has shown some disparities in the assignment of significance to Texas historic sites, leading to a statewide neglect to African American historic sites (Barile 2004). Although the Texas Historical Commission and other cultural resource management institutions are more aware of these disparities, there is still much research to be done on rural and urban Black Texan sites. I think that it is the responsibility of those who claim to protect and preserve neglected communities (e.g. historians, historic preservationists, ethnographers, archaeologists and other anthropologists) to make them, not only integral parts of historic preservation processes, but leaders in these processes, to help seal some of these gaps and to restrict the number

of underepresented communities who simply become parts of citywide, statewide, or national “celebratory narratives” (Walkowitz and Knauer: 29) attempting to justify the misdeeds of dominating groups. It is no longer feasible for historic minority communities to become interested in historic preservation work as a response to salvage cultural resource management, the public sector’s neglect to make them aware, or as someone’s research project. In the end, the state remains in control of their representations and their cultural heritage efforts can easily become systemically grounded. Underepresented groups have to see the significance and the potential power in this work and take offensive stances.

Just as noteworthy, evidence gathered from my work challenges commonly held notions about eminent domain and its affect on African American communities in the U.S. They are not always helpless, and those able to recognize and utilize the political power of their historic significance may have considerable keys to survival. My major research interest is in how public archaeologists can help such communities to do this, before they become sites for salvage archaeology. I have worked as a professional archaeologist for ten years and do not want to have to excavate another site that could have been saved, by some efforts to educate the threatened community about the importance of historic preservation. For public archaeologists, this means developing ways to institute a more preventive public archaeology. Preventive Public Archaeology, in order to be studied within this proposed context, will be identified as an archaeology that facilitates and assists with programming designed to educate historic site publics about managing their archaeological resources, outside of the customary realms of rescue



and salvage archaeology. It is a proactive approach to cultural heritage management, a “politic of the past” influenced by public political mobilization. UT-Austin archaeologists asked St. Paul Church members if they were interested in having excavations done at their church. They agreed, and cooperatively worked with archaeologists to engage in a public archaeology project. Church members were interested in doing a post-excavation history project, of some sort, but were not proactive about engaging someone to do this. I do not think that this lack of engagement was intentional, but brought on by the church’s lack of knowledge about available applied anthropological resources. I was later brought into the project by Maria Franklin, but often wonder how the church community would have re-exposed its archaeological resources after the archaeologists left the premises. Public archaeology has to go further; it has to endorse self-sufficiency for associated communities.

This proactive support can begin by:

- 1) **Identifying which underrepresented communities are more likely to engage in and benefit from this type of political mobilization.** Even though St. Paul was a standing structure, which are often overlooked by archaeologists, UT-Austin archaeologists understood the possibilities of excavating around the building. This effort not only contributed to insufficient data on Texas Freedman’s community material culture, but helped to make the associated church community’s history more whole. For preventive public archaeologists, this may mean prefacing above-ground artifacts in archaeological examinations.
- 2) **Analyzing strategies for political mobilization around heritage politics.** The UT archaeology field school gave St. Paul some media exposure, but this exposure was by no means durable. Some folks might vaguely remember an archaeological excavation, some years later, but would soon forget without the more current visibility of the artifacts. My post-excavation exhibit project helped to re-engage the Dallas public in the archaeological excavations. This was great for me, as an archaeologist, but not that grand of a gesture for the church community. They had to see the potential implications of promoting their heritage to gaining some visibility to St. Paul’s restoration and renovation project, and

hopefully, more funding for the church. And I had to be okay with that. A preventive public archaeologist would have to preference the community's need over theirs as a researcher.

**3) Examining public archaeology projects, beyond the excavation, and critiquing their viability in jeopardized urban contexts.** What does it mean to excavate the property of a community which no longer exists? Does it mean that we are too late? For most archaeologists, it simply means that we have to salvage what is left and make this information available to the public. For public archaeologists, it means engaging the public in helping to make this information available. For preventive public archaeologists, it means determining the significance of historic sites, along with local communities and historic preservationists, before remaining material culture has to be saved, especially in threatened urban contexts.

**4) Problematizing what constitutes giving the power to a community to negotiate its past in the present.** The notion of empowerment within historic archaeological contexts has varied meanings. To a preventive public archaeologist, it means theoretically defining empowerment (economic, political, and social), helping the archaeological public community become proactive enough to define their own empowerment and ultimately become independent. In my work, I chose to define empowerment through political mobilization, using the frameworks of Black political scientists. Those not working specifically with church communities can seek relevant literatures. For example a preventive public archaeologist working with a secondary educational institution may want to examine how the political strategies utilized by majority Black school institutions.

The scope of what could be studied to further an effective understanding of public archaeology's significance as an applied anthropology would go far beyond the level of asking associated research communities to participate in archaeological studies, but to encourage them to advocate for archaeological research, when warranted, and to further explore what archaeological research can do for them, in the long run; what I consider a truer examination of cultural heritage community engagement with archaeologists as public servants. For urban public archaeologists, this means considering the roles of race and ethnicity in U.S. urban development policies; exploring ways to educate and inform

private developers about the significance of cultural heritage identification and management on their properties; discovering the implications of educating secondary education students about the cultural heritage management in their communities; and examining how archaeologists can not only inform systemic CRM policies, but help to generate interests from a wider range of dynamic publics.

I was fortunate enough to work with a community which has a history of utilizing its historic heritage as a way to move within secular and religious Dallas social spaces. St. Paul manipulated the “politics of inclusion and exclusion” (Ross 2009:2) in Dallas’s symbolic historic landscape, by utilizing archaeology and exhibition as methods of visible inclusion. These hegemonic frames may be more accessible than St. Paul’s status as a Black Methodist church institution, a position that may ostracize non-Christians, non-United Methodists, and non-Blacks. Through these methods, the church’s renovation and restoration project became more visible. Although the exhibition was placed outside of the Arts District, I think that the exhibition helped St. Paul’s history become more visible to Arts District administrators and patrons who attended the exhibition. It is yet unclear whether the permanent exhibition will help St. Paul to move closer to the center of a Dallas city narrative, or gain more visibility in the Dallas Arts District, but I think that it is a nudge in the right direction.

The overall research at St. Paul exemplifies the significance of excavating resources connected to urban standing structures, like St. Paul’s building. Archaeological excavations can also assist with the paucity of research on Black Freedman’s communities and the failure of many social scientists to complicate them and their

present places on the American landscape. Unfortunately, in many cases this work becomes salvage archaeology, or venues of unpleasant controversy and contest, when they don't have to be. While several applied archaeologists are attempting to involve descendant communities in research and planning processes, questions about how archaeology can assist particular communities with historic preservation goals are still rare. The St. Paul public history project ultimately did this, but neither the initial archaeologists nor I began by asking the community what we could do to help them, from a cultural management perspective.

There is still much potential for historic archaeology to strategize with descendant communities in their cultural heritage initiatives. Through archaeology and exhibition, the St. Paul project centered on St. Paul's cultural heritage preservation, which archaeologist Paul Shackel describes as "necessary for sustaining local identity and a sense of place" especially with threatening transformations in the local economy. I think that it is a great public archaeology strategy to interpret resources where we are at this moment, through people met with the tasks of having to manage their own sites, especially in historic landscapes that are being devastated so quickly.

## **CHAPTER VIII**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

When Shackel and Chambers (2004) stated that “heritage often means...stability,” they seemed to sum up St. Paul’s more recent story. For this church, heritage has often meant stability, in terms of its concrete location. Unfortunately, this stability of place has not meant immovability for a congregation susceptible to the environmental forces which surround it. Still, this church community seems to have found a way to make the most of what it has; that is a dedicated core of members and, in many ways, what can be viewed as a prime location.

This dissertation project greatly influenced how I work with communities who have historic preservation concerns. It also influences how I consult others about their work. I no longer say to other archaeologists that they should consult with descendant communities, because it can make their work more valuable and affect the community’s significance. I now advise that they think of their projects as more long term ventures designed to make local communities more self sufficient about how they manage their cultural resources, as discussed in Chapters Four and Seven.

Members of the St. Paul Church community realized this early on. They asked the UT-Austin archaeologists to assemble a traveling exhibition based on the recovered artifacts. James Davison did this. They also asked the archaeology team about the feasibility of a more extensive project. I later came in to do this work. They saw the archaeology project as a productive and helpful one, but knew that more work had to be done in order for them to tell the histories that they wanted to tell.

## **Stories to be Told**

It was my intent to create a permanent exhibition for the church. I produced a temporary exhibition, because the church's renovation and restoration project did not make a church installation practical at all. The church renovation is ongoing and is projected to be complete in July of 2010. For over one year, the church community has been relocated to another church location, awaiting the completion of their restoration project. The nearly 100 years old structure will now have the addition of an elevator and modification of the entryway to assist with more feasible building accessibility; new office spaces and multi-purpose suites (e.g. bridal suite); new carpet and paint; mechanical, engineering, and plumbing equipment all up to code; and updated HVAC equipment. The renovation plan also includes emergency lighting, and fire and life safety alarms to meet current codes; the reconstruction of mechanical rooms, ductwork and plumbing foundations; and ADA compliant restrooms. Several safety improvements are also part of the renovation plans, including an automated fire detection and sprinkler system, along with the replacement of existing electrical wiring. Obviously, this is an extensive and highly involved project. Much of it is focused on church spatial needs, member accessibility, and church safety. Still, through all of these changes, the significance of the church building and history has not been lost.

Pastor Odom consulted me several times, during the renovation project planning stages. It helped that I was his secretary, at the time, and only a few steps away. From the beginning, he wanted to make sure that spaces were designated for the more permanent exhibit project, and this became an integral part of the architectural design plan. Within

the past year, I have taken periodic trips to the church to discuss plans for a permanent exhibition, as well as to keep in touch with Pastor Odom and the church's progress. In most cases, he seemed overworked, yet beamed with pride and joy. He was not only excited about the renovation process, but about the revelations that the project has made about the efforts that it took to create the present church frame.

Pastor Odom has also made several moves to reveal the original brick structures in places where the restoration project required that they be covered up. He wants the restoration to be about the past, as well as the present. He reiterates the story about how former slaves magnificently built this building brick by brick, in the late-nineteenth century. I continuously respond that they likely did not build this building brick by brick, as they had much documented help and resources, and it was likely around 1918 or so. He said, "Jodi that is the story that I am going to tell." I said, "That's fine, Pastor Odom, and I will tell the one that is documented." He seemed to agree. Although, I think that both are beneficial, I did not have to say so. He seems to already know that more interesting histories get attention from visiting publics, and that is one of the church's needs.

Pastor Odom is in the process of getting an exhibit planning committee together. Although I hoped to be more involved in the development of this project, I told Pastor Odom that I can only serve in the capacity of consultant; hopefully, a lifetime one. I just do not have the time. I suggested that he find someone to spearhead this project. He fortunately has a highly experienced museum curator as a church member. I met with him and Dr. Walker recently to discuss early plans for the exhibition. I initially proposed that

the church reinvent the temporary exhibition and install the different parts and sections, separately. Pastor Odom agreed with that, but decided to begin the exhibition with images of the renovation and restoration project. I see his decision about exhibit representation as a key step in the church's ability to define its past. I also think that this introduction will allow the church community to make the most use of the value of its present state, later connecting this to its historical foundations. I highly anticipate this effort.

### **Making More Connections**

One of the greatest lessons that I learned from my work with St. Paul is that Dolores Hayden's "power of place" was not just about the power of a place to affect those who have a direct connection to it. It is about the power of places to make connections for those who are looking to fill gaps in their personal histories, as well as those who no longer have extant places to connect to. It is not that Hayden was not clear about these links. This was just not a tangible thing for me, until my work with St. Paul.

When I was about ten years old or so, my mom and I were watching Douglas Sirk's *Imitation of Life* (1959), one of her favorite films. She began to mention another film that she saw when she was about five years old. She said that she remembered seeing a stairway to heaven and a woman who had to choose between heaven and hell. Hell was a juke joint. She could not recall what heaven was and could not remember the name of the film. For years I kept this vision, along with the belief that hell was a juke joint.



I remembered my mom's story only after watching *The Blood of Jesus* for a third time. I called her, while watching the film, and asked that she listen to the opening song, "Good News." She said, "That's it. That's the movie." *The Blood of Jesus* was her favorite film, as a child. My mom and I later watched the film together, as she recalled interesting stories about the local colored theater in the neighborhood, its five cents entrance fee, and the types of movies shown there. My mom had a connection to St. Paul. I soon realized that many people did.

My work at the church would not only mean something to the members of St. Paul, but to many people with shared histories. I now truly felt the potential significance of my work, as well as the work of archaeologists and other historic preservations who attempt to recover histories, especially for those whose histories have been concealed or neglected.

My mom's connections inspired me to think more about my work with St. Paul in terms of its relationship to other institutions, who may have similar concerns. What is the value of place reclamation through historic preservation, for those whose loss seems hopeless? Is there value in producing new memories?

### **Memory Making**

The St. Paul exhibit project was ultimately a theoretical intervention in memory. As mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation, one of my specific topics of focus in how St. Paul's historical narrative competes with reinterpreted and/or invented histories which constitute the "new" North Dallas. It is my fundamental hope that my intercession

in St. Paul's greater narrative, through the use of exhibition, will not only help to trigger memories, but produce new ones, as supplements to and replacements for those master Dallas narratives designed to silence nearly 145 years of Black Dallas history, while producing greater narratives of White male ingenuity and productivity. If it is through remembering that we silence (Flores 2002; Trouillot 1995), representing the contributions and sacrifices of those who produced and continue to build the St. Paul Church community, through exhibition, can help to create new memories about the church and its neighborhood, while silencing narratives which have neglected these contributions for several decades.

The St. Paul Church building serves as a repository for the collection and curation of its members' cultural memories, on the one hand, while the permanent exhibition has the ability to operate as a memory-making device for those visitors to the church, unfamiliar with St. Paul's extensive history. While displaying St. Paul's material and culture, in a controlled context, the permanent exhibition can provide historical information and insight for understanding the St. Paul Church building as an artifact and its community as a representation of Black Dallas urban life, in a community through which this culture was made to no longer exist.

### **Implications for the Future**

Over 55 years after the initiation of the U.S. governments' legislated Black removal, some politicians, political activists, and public policy lawyers have expressed concerns about the potential misuse of eminent domain to redevelop devastated areas,

like those in New Orleans, which housed largely poor and majority Black neighborhoods. Concerned citizens are aware that some local, state, and federal government officials verbalize “urban renewal plans” as ways to eliminate crime and make areas less economically stagnant. Yet the term that government officials use to describe the result of the above-listed problems, “urban blight,” is innately problematic, because it is normally defined by those whose economic and political interests benefit from redevelopment, not by those within the “blighted” community itself. There are circumstances which often lead to the deterioration of once vibrant communities; circumstances often rooted in race and class-based city planning practices. The fates of those people affected by this development are often understated, and sometimes completely overlooked. Referencing a post-Katrina New Orleans, Representative Maxine Waters (Los Angeles D-CA) warned, “We have to watch the redevelopment in New Orleans for a lot of reasons, and one of them is to make sure that the shadow government of the rich and the powerful does not end up abusing eminent domain to take property that belongs to poor people in order to get them out of the city” (quoted in Lochhead 2005). That threat remains a real one. Many other U.S. communities have contended with and continue to contend with potential government abuses of eminent domain (Greenhut 2004), but underrepresented communities are generally more at-risk when they are not as politically and financially equipped to battle government and business factions. One example is the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans, which was home to many low to moderate income Black people.

The concerns of Waters and others are reactions to the recent U.S. Supreme Court *Kelo v. City of New London* (2005) decision, which ruled that it was constitutional for

local governments to seize private property for private development if the project serves a “public” use, may threaten an even greater population of Americans with a potentially greater risk of property loss and community displacement. According to Kimberly Thomas Rapp (2005), Director of Law and Public Policy for the Equal Justice Society, “to some, *Kelo* allows an overbroad interpretation of “public use” and sustained unfettered use of eminent domain to dismantle communities, particularly low income and minority communities. To others, *Kelo* declined to exempt non-blighted, white middle class communities from the exercise of eminent domain and buttressed legitimate uses of eminent domain for sorely needed economic development in depressed areas, including low income and minority communities.” A public use has traditionally included projects along the lines of a public school or highway. *Kelo* seems to make it easier for private companies, like Costco and Wal-mart, to prove that their corporations may also serve the public good, under the guise of economic opportunity. So what might this mean for institutions like St. Paul? It could mean that the legal basis under which the church remains in the Dallas Arts District is further jeopardized, but all hope is not lost.

Slowly emerging efforts to make U.S. property owners more aware that their ownership rights are legally subsidiary to that of the State’s, and that there are methods to lessen the effects, are encouraging. Thirty five states now have limited eminent domain abuse, yet much eminent domain reform is still needed. The displacement of historically marginalized and other populations continues as violence sanctioned by the state, codified and justified by the legal system. Many underrepresented groups do not have the financial backing to battle government institutions, but they do have the ability to

respond to state and federal legislation as well as emphasize their cultural significances as the members of St. Paul have done. Archaeology is just one potential tool, and although it may not have solved all of St. Paul's problems, it did move the church one step closer to arguing for its own historic preservation.

In order for these engagements to even be mildly successful, community members must be educated about the significance of historic sites and engage in cooperative efforts to do something about their loss(es), before we lose more historic sites, with the potential to tell us more about who we are, why we are and where we are going. My research will continue to investigate how engaging archaeologists and early community responses to illicit legislative practices become practical tools in the often impractical realm of city planning, as well as analyze the long-term effects of urban renewal on St. Paul, an institution that has chosen to remain in its neighborhood.

I think that for many years, the local public has underestimated St. Paul's political power in Dallas. It is sometimes perceived as an accommodationist institution, which has not made the best choices about its location. It is not a mega-church, with thousands of members, and its frame is not modern. Either it should not have remained in the Dallas Arts District, or should have been more proactive about buying its adjacent property when it had the chance. Maybe it should or should not have. I think that this is a moot point, in the sense that there is a very complicated story about how and why St. Paul has remained in place, and the political mobilization that it took for the church to do so. It does not continue to survive, as a result of pure luck. The church has fortunately seen the

political power in its history. I hope that this manuscript has, at the least, brought some of these issues to light.

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## VITA

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