

MORE TO THE STORY:
HISTORICAL NARRATIVES AND THE AFRICAN AMERICAN PAST IN
MAURY COUNTY, TENNESSEE

By

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ABSTRACT

Local white residents have traditionally controlled historical production in Maury County, Tennessee. Using historical publications and the memorial landscape, these local historians have produced historical narratives that often privileges white experiences and views, while excluding those of African Americans. By excluding African Americans from these narratives, many local historians imply that African Americans have not played a vital role in the history and development of Maury County.

In 2012, a group of local residents, led by Jo Ann McClellan, formed the African American Heritage Society of Maury County, Tennessee (AAHSMC), with the goal of preserving the history of local African Americans. These preservation efforts inherently challenge the implication that African American history is not vital to a fuller understanding of the history of Maury County. The AAHSMC has been very successful in preserving this history, with the ultimate goal of creating a narrative of Maury County's history that fully recognizes the experiences of African Americans. The organization's ongoing efforts serve as a valuable case study for anyone who is interested in the preservation of African American history, and the creation of historical narratives that are inclusive of this history.

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INTRODUCTION

On a drizzly October day in 2013, representatives of the African American Heritage Society of Maury County, community members, and state and local officials gathered to dedicate the Wall of Honor that stands in front of the Maury County Courthouse.¹ Engraved on this monument are fifty-four names of service members from Maury County who died while on active military duty, from the War of 1812 through wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The men who were being honored on this day died in service to the Union army during the Civil War; many of them were African American men serving in the United States Colored Troops. Engraving these names was the culmination of the first phase of research to identify black men and women from Maury County who served in the Union army. This huge victory for the African American Heritage Society of Maury County resulted from years of research and advocacy. It also represented a victory for African Americans and historians in the United States.

1. The views presented in this Thesis are solely those of the author. It does not necessarily represent the views of the African American Heritage Society of Maury County, Tennessee.



Figure 1: The Wall of Honor. This memorial is sited prominently, in front of the Maury County Courthouse, the center of political power in Maury County. Highlighted here is the Civil War panel that features the names of Confederate Soldiers. Photo by Jaryn Abdallah.

Maury County, Tennessee, established in 1807, is located about an hour south of Nashville, Tennessee, and is easily accessed by I-65. In 2013, the United States Census Bureau estimated Maury County's population at 83,761 people. Of that number, about 85% of the population was white, and 12% black.² Political power is located in the county seat of Columbia. Other cities in Maury County include Spring Hill on the northern border with Williamson County, and Mt Pleasant to the southwest of Columbia. Numerous small towns and unincorporated communities are scattered throughout the county.

Maury County residents actively remember their history through historical organizations that erect monuments and markers and publish local historical literature. Historical memory, the way in which people understand the past, helps people to

2. US Census Bureau, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/47/47119.html>

contextualize their lives within their communities, within the United States, and within the world. In Maury County, the desire to construct an historical memory is often expressed through genealogical research. Many residents of Maury County undertake genealogical research and several proudly trace their ancestry back to early white settlers. The Maury County Genealogical Society promotes a First Families of Maury County project that recognizes descendants of people who settled Maury County by 1860. There are three designations for this program: one for people who settled in Maury County before 1820, one for people who settled before 1840, and one for people who settled before 1860.³ Residents who are able to prove their relationship to an early settler are able to have that ancestor recognized on a plaque at the Maury County Archive. In 2014 it was estimated that three African American families are represented in the First Families program.⁴ Because of the sensitive nature of some of the documents involved in the project, the records are not public, and it is difficult to confirm this number.

The creation of an historical identity is a vital part of the life and development of any region or group of people. This is particularly true in small, southern towns such as Columbia, Tennessee, and the surrounding Maury County, where history plays an important role in the life of the community. Long-term white residents, particularly those whose family lines trace back to the original white settlers of the area, have carefully produced a historical narrative that provides them a very specific socio-cultural identity.

3. Maury County Genealogical Society, "First Families of Maury County Project," *Ancestor's Voice Newsletter* 1, no. 1 (Fall 2002): 1.

4. Jo Ann McClellan and Michelle Cannon, who are involved with the project, gave this estimation.

As is common throughout the South, memory of the antebellum South and the Civil War feature heavily in residents' memory of Maury County's history. White historical narratives rarely acknowledge the experiences and contributions of other racial and ethnic groups within their communities. Because white people often enjoy a monopoly on the power and wealth in communities, it is their historical memory that becomes the dominant historical narrative. Marginalized groups throughout the United States have and continue to challenge these privileged narratives and publicly recognize their own histories.

In this thesis I will explore three main themes. First, I will explore the dominant historical narrative by identifying who produces it and documenting the methods that they have employed to create their narrative. For many years people who identify as white have controlled these centers of historical production in Maury County. I will then evaluate the white-centric dominant narrative in order to understand how African Americans are represented, and how their experiences are silenced. Finally, I will trace the efforts of the African American Heritage Society of Maury County to challenge this dominant narrative and to promote the inclusion of black experiences in Maury County's history.

The idea of history as a production is an important area of historical scholarship. Instead of accepting the existing historical narrative as the absolute factual record of what has happened in the past, historians argue that history is a narrative that humans actively produce, at both the individual and the collective levels. This view of history as a production necessitates that historians recognize the groups that have been influential in

the production process in order to understand how the narrative has privileged some stories and silenced others.

In his work *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, Michel-Rolph Trouillot examines the production and silencing of historical narratives. According to Trouillot, these silences enter the record at four distinct moments: fact creation (sources), fact assembly (archives), fact retrieval (production of narratives), and retrospective significance (history).⁵ He argues that people, as historical actors, create these silences.⁶ He notes that there is a difference between what happened, and what is said to have happened.⁷ What is said to have happened involves a series of choices that inherently silence some events and perspectives while privileging others. This is the production of history, and it happens every day in communities in ways that are often much more relevant to peoples' lives than the history that is produced within the academy.⁸

Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen explore how the past influences peoples' lives in *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life*.⁹ Their work highlights the important role that history, and particularly family history, plays in the

5. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 26.

6. Ibid., 48.

7. Ibid., 2.

8. Ibid., 20.

9. Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 13.

lives of Americans.¹⁰ In fact, many people that Rosenzweig and Thelen surveyed described a deeper connection with their family history than with national history. They summed up their research by stating, “Almost every America deeply engages the past, and the past that engages them most deeply is that of their family.”¹¹ This has important implications for a study of the development of Maury County’s historical narrative, as this local history is also family history for many of the leading producers. Challenges to the dominant narrative are also challenges to someone’s family narrative. Rosenzweig and Thelen also highlight the important role that women play in the transfer of historical knowledge from generation to generation.¹² Throughout Maury County’s history women have played an important role in creating and preserving the past, and many of these efforts focused first on their own family histories.

Understanding the development of an official collective historical narrative in a small Southern town, and recognizing the degree to which that narrative includes or excludes African American activities and experiences, necessitates a consideration of the influential nature of the Civil War and its subsequent Lost Cause mythology.¹³ The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Sons of Confederate Veterans are two organizations that influence the historical discourse of the South in general, and in Maury

10. Ibid., 9.

11. Ibid., 22.

12. Ibid., 28-30.

13. Reiko Hillyer, “Relics of Reconciliation: The Confederate Museum and Civil War Memory in the New South,” *The Public Historian* Vol. 33, No. 4 (Nov 2011), 37.

County, Tennessee, specifically. As is common throughout the South, the dominant memory of Maury County's history heavily privileges the antebellum and Confederate experiences of white residents and silences the experiences of black residents.

The contested memory of the Civil War and the prevalence of the antebellum South and the Confederacy in white narratives are issues that have been of much interest to historians. Michael Kammen examines the power of memory in the development of the national historical narrative in the United States in his book *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture*. Kammen explains that the national historical narrative is based in public memory, which is created to serve a specific purpose at a specific time.¹⁴ The development of the memory of the Civil War and its aftermath were pivotal to the development of United States history. Kammen suggests that national reconciliation after the Civil War was possible due to historical amnesia and selective memory, which excluded African Americans.¹⁵ White southerners began to plant the roots of memory, which glorified the antebellum period and forgot African Americans, soon after the Civil War. These efforts continued into the twentieth century as Confederate memorial associations, particularly the United Daughters of the Confederacy, became more vigilant about producing and presenting their history.¹⁶ Kammen focuses on the national collective memory over the local or regional, but his

14. Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 13.

15. *Ibid.*, 114.

16. *Ibid.*, 381.

work is important in understanding the role of memory in the production of a narrative at any level.

One of the most influential works in the field of Civil War memory is David Blight's *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*.¹⁷ Blight traces the development of Civil War memory beginning soon after the war's conclusion, identifies how reconciliation narratives became prominent, and explores how these narratives erased the legacy of slavery and emancipation from American memory, which marginalized African American experiences. A 2011 article by Reiko Hillyer in *The Public Historian* focuses on how the Confederate Museum reflects this process. "Relics of Reconciliation: The Confederate Museum and Civil War Memory in the New South," examines the creation of the Confederate Museum as an attempt to "document and defend the Confederate cause... [it] enshrined the history of the Confederacy to vindicate the Lost Cause and preserve the antebellum mores that the New South's business ethos appeared to displace."¹⁸ Hillyer argues that the proliferation of Lost Cause memorial activities in the late nineteenth centuries was as much about validating the subjugation of African Americans when the memorials were created as it was about validating Confederate history.¹⁹ The Confederate Memorial Literary Society, which established the Confederate Museum, was an influential example of a larger development throughout the

17. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

18. Hillyer, "Relics of Reconciliation," 36.

19. *Ibid.*, 51.

South of women's memorial organizations, which took up the cause of memorializing the Confederacy during the late nineteenth century.²⁰

Memorialization through monument was an important aspect of collective memory during the nineteenth century. Kirk Savage's *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Memorialization in Nineteenth-Century America* (1997) examines the representation of African Americans in public sculpture.²¹ This includes the representation (or, better said, the lack of representation) of slavery, emancipation, and African American contributions to the Civil War. He explains how the ways in which these sculptures acknowledge and silence African Americans illuminates the concerns that people had at the time. For example, the lack of representation of enslaved people reflected the challenge of depicting such individuals in sculpture form; pro-slavery advocates found it difficult to portray them without creating either extreme of humanizing the enslaved or dehumanizing the entire system. When emancipation was remembered in public sculpture, it was represented through the figure of Lincoln. The formerly enslaved people were passive recipients of the freedom granted to them, rather than actively involved in attaining it. This reinforced the racial hierarchy of white supremacy at a time when that hierarchy was threatened. Finally, the common soldier monument that proliferated throughout the South portrayed a generic white soldier. This soldier could be representative of the either the Union or the Confederacy, but he could not be black. Black soldiers were inextricably connected to the cause of emancipation and

20. Ibid., 44 and 54.

21. Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).

to the Union. White Americans were struggling to come to terms with the war's legacy, especially the reality of incorporating newly freed people into public life. The historical landscape that was created in the nineteenth century still informs our understanding of history. We need to know how and why it was created, and what silences exist.

In *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (2005), Fitzhugh Brundage traces the development of the memory and southern history.²² A major facet of his study is the use of public space to create and reinforce specific historical narratives.²³ Brundage reinforces the understanding that access to public space is dependent on access to power. It identifies who has power and who does not. Discussion of history cannot be separated from discussions of power, and discussions of power in the United States – whether that is social, economic, political, or even historical – cannot be separated from a discussion of race. Brundage traces the development of the memory of southern history in both white and black communities, explaining how this memory helped people develop group identities. His discussion of the centrality of twentieth-century black schools to the development of black historical memory is especially important, as it helps us understand how these groups, with little access to public space, were still able to cultivate collective memories and identities.

Perhaps the most influential memorial organization in the United States following the Civil War was the United Daughters of the Confederacy, whose efforts Amy Heyse examines in her article “Women’s Rhetorical Authority and Collective Memory: The

22. W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

23. *Ibid.*,6.

United Daughters of the Confederacy Remember the South.” Heyse discusses the crisis of memory among many ex-Confederates that precipitated Lost Cause commemorative activities. Heyse’s evaluation of the proliferation of Lost Cause memory is in agreement with that of Hillyer as Heyse explains that, “Public memories are rhetorically constructed recollections of a shared past that serve present and future needs of individuals and communities.”²⁴ Women, through organizations such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy, often led these collective memory efforts.²⁵ This article confirms the importance of a community’s collective memory in defining itself. In the South, the Civil War has dominated this community collective memory, especially as remembered by white residents.

Karen L. Cox furthers this argument over the centrality of women to the development of the Lost Cause in her book *Dixie’s Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (2003), in which she identifies women as the central agents of the Lost Cause.²⁶ Cox explores the UDC's efforts to care for Confederate veterans, memorialize and vindicate their service, recognize the contributions of women to the Confederate war effort, and perpetuate the Lost Cause narrative through education and inclusion of children in commemorative

24. Amy Heyse, “Women’s Rhetorical Authority and Collective Memory,” *Women & Language* 33, no. 2 (Fall 2010), 33.

25. *Ibid.*, 31.

26. Karen L. Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2003).

events. White women have been, and continue to be, crucial to the development of the dominant historical narrative of Maury County's history through organizations such as the UDC and the Daughters of the American Revolution. As recently as the summer of 2014, a group of white women in Maury County chartered a new Confederate memorial association, the Order of the Confederate Rose, Antoinette Polk Chapter.²⁷ These organizations sponsor contemporary Confederate Memorial Day commemorations and push for recognition of their Confederate ancestors.

Racial issues are a very important part of this discussion, as the experiences and contributions of many groups, including African Americans, have traditionally been neglected in favor of a narrative that overemphasizes the experiences of white community members. James Horton argues that understanding American history is impossible without understanding the institution of slavery. He acknowledges that the discussion can be very uncomfortable in the public realm, and calls on academic historians to engage the public more fully, particularly at historic sites.²⁸

African Americans have long worked to document and commemorate black history. Numerous articles attest to the struggle to remember and commemorate individuals, places, and events that are important to African American history. In *The Southern Past*, Fitzhugh Brundage traces the development of black public history. He identifies African American scholars such as Carter Woodson and Luther Johnson as

27. Rebecca Sowell, "Antoinette Polk Chapter #20, Columbia, Tennessee," *The Rosette* (July 2014): 6.

28. James Oliver Horton, "Presenting Slavery: The Perils of Telling America's Racial Story." *The Public Historian* 21, no. 4 (Autumn, 1999): 20.

pivotal to this development. Woodson, founder of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH) in 1915, is often called the “Father of Black History,” as he spearheaded various efforts to research, preserve, and promote the study of black history, both in the academy, and in black communities. One of his most important legacies was Negro History Week, which began in 1926, and eventually grew into Black History Month.²⁹ Through Negro History Week, Woodson and the ASNLH encouraged black schools to become central sites for the development of black historical memory.³⁰ Luther P. Jackson was also central to this effort, especially through his outreach to teachers, and his vision for black teachers to encourage a greater understanding of black history. Through that, teachers would also be able to encourage social and political activism.³¹ Given the emphasis on schools and teachers, women were also critical to this early black public history movement, as the majority of black teachers were women. It was these teachers who implemented the activities and curricula developed by organizations such as the ASNLH.³²

In his article “A Struggle for Public History: Black and White Claims to Natchez’s Past,” Jack E. Davis examines the racially segregated history of Natchez, Mississippi, and African American efforts to publically recognize the history and experiences of their community. Davis’s work is similar to this study, and highlights the

29. Brundage, *The Southern Past*, 157.

30. *Ibid.*, 181

31. *Ibid.*, 161

32. *Ibid.*, 173.

importance of both. He stated that, “Each initiative of blacks and others toward making public history in Natchez more racially inclusive represented another victory of the African American experience, and, one might add, a victory for history itself.”³³ To conclude his article, Davis observed that, “public history in Natchez remained segregated even as it was becoming more racially inclusive.”³⁴ While black residents were successful in their efforts to uncover and promote their history, those efforts were not recognized by the dominant white producers of Natchez’s history. Their history remained marginal to the white narrative. Will the narratives of Maury County’s history remain segregated as they have in Natchez? Will the African American Heritage Society of Maury County be able to push the historical narrative they are documenting beyond the boundaries of the black community, so that it is recognized alongside the stories of Maury County’s white residents?

33. Jack E. Davis, “A Struggle for Public History: Black and White Claims to Natchez’s Past.” *The Public Historian* 22, no. 1 (Winter, 2000): 63.

34. *Ibid.*, 63.

CHAPTER 1: HISTORICAL PRODUCTION IN MAURY COUNTY, TENNESSEE

Understanding the production of Maury County’s official historical narrative is a vital first step in understanding how African American experiences have been included and how they have been silenced. This official narrative is produced and promoted by the Maury County government, archives, and historical organizations such as the Maury County Historical Society, The United Daughters of the Confederacy, and the Daughters of the American Revolution. It is presented and reinforced to Maury County residents and visitors through text publications as well historical markers and commemorative events.¹ These stakeholders present a narrative that focuses almost exclusively on Maury County’s white residents.

CENTERS OF HISTORICAL PRODUCTION:

The mission of the Maury County Archive is “to collect, conserve and make available to the public the priceless collection of Maury County original documents.”² This mission statement acknowledges the archive’s role in preserving Maury County’s history through the preservation of official and personal documents, which is vital to the production of Maury County’s public historical narrative. As with all archives, the Maury County Archive’s collections are the result of a series of choices that privilege some stories while silencing others.³ The Maury County Archives privileges white-centric

1. See Appendix A for a list of local historical publications

2. Maury County Archive website: <http://www.maurycounty-tn.gov/index.aspx?page=48>

3. Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 52.

narratives while silencing the experiences of African Americans. As the repository for county records and genealogical information, the archive is the key historical institution for researchers seeking information about Maury County's history. The Maury County Archive contains a wealth of information about prominent white residents, as many white residents with local ancestral ties actively donate family histories and genealogical information. The research library contains many volumes documenting the history and genealogy of these local families.⁴

Among the archive's holdings are all of the extant government records, dating back to the founding of Maury County in 1807. These include court records and minutes, tax records, wills, deeds, probate records, and marriage and death records. Prior to emancipation, the majority of black people living in Maury County were considered property, and therefore are excluded from many of these particular early records.⁵ The archive also has microfilm copies of Confederate service records, but no equivalent information is available about people from Maury County who served in the Union army,

4. The research library contains hundreds of volumes of family histories, some in the form of published books, and others as binders of records put together by local residents. None of these volumes are histories of black families. A few of the published histories include: Meade Johnson, *America's Friersons Ancestry Book vol 1* (Birmingham, AL: AFAB, 1996); John Charles Payne, *The Big Payne Book: A History of the Payne Family of Virginia, Western North Carolina, Tennessee, and Missouri* (John Charles Payne, 2007); *History and Genealogy of the Harlan Family* (Baltimore: Gateway Press, 1987); Fred Hawkins and Dorothy Westmore Gilliam, *Hardison and Allied Families* (Columbia, TN: Fred Hawkins, 1992).

5. This is an example of African American history being silenced at the moment of source creation, as explained in Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 26.

many of whom were black.⁶ The archive keeps microfilm records of local newspapers, dating back through the early nineteenth century. Individuals and organizations have also donated copies of their family or organizational histories to the archive's research library.

Some information about African Americans is available at the archive, but the majority of the archives' holdings are papers such as government documents and family research that have been generated by whites, and therefore perpetuate their perspectives. The majority of the archive's collection consists of local government records such as court minutes and birth, death, marriage, and tax records. Some census and tax records identify the number of enslaved people owned by local whites. However, before the Civil War, most African Americans living in Maury County were enslaved, and therefore not able to participate in public life in ways that would leave official records. Staff at the archive has used these records to compile databases that will be helpful for those studying African Americans. In 2005, staff members began to abstract all of the names of people listed in deeds and wills. This means that any enslaved person who was bought or sold or willed to a white person, or who received anything upon their owner's death, is listed in this database of names. Also, Michelle Cannon, staff archivist, has abstracted the names of free people of color listed in the 1850 census. This is all information that will be useful to historians and genealogists.

Donated materials in the Maury County Archive include genealogical records and personal documents. Diaries and memoirs of white residents mention enslaved people. As property, enslaved people are also recorded in wills and deeds when ownership was

6. "Microfilm of Confederate Army Records on File at New Maury County Archive," *Historic Maury* 38, no. 4 (2002): 173-174.

transferred. While these sources acknowledge that African Americans were present throughout Maury County's history, they provide very little depth of information about their lives or experiences. None of the genealogical information available in the research library documents African Americans in Maury County. Further, only one collection of papers in the holdings of the archive documents African Americans. This is the Kimes Collection, the personal papers and photographs of the Kimes family, black educators and community leaders. It was organized and donated in 2009 by Jo Ann McClellan, the president of the African American Heritage Society of Maury County.

The Maury County Convention and Visitor's Bureau (CVB), another Maury County Government department, is responsible for marketing the county to tourists through festivals, special events, and group tours. The group tours are particularly important, as they are all based on marketing Maury County's history. Groups travel the county by bus, stopping at various historic sites, with a tour guide to give even more historical information during the drive. Even the web address for the CVB, www.antebellum.com, identifies the historical focus that the CVB emphasizes. The literature produced by the CVB proclaims Maury County the "Antebellum Homes Capitol of Tennessee." Clearly, the antebellum period figures heavily in the historical narrative that the CVB presents to tourists.

In their work *Representations of Slavery: Race and Ideology in Southern Plantation Museums* (2002), Jennifer L. Eichstedt and Stephen Small discuss the implications of the emphasis on antebellum history at historic house museums. As the antebellum period figures so prominently in the dominant narrative of Maury County's history, through house museums as well as local historical publications, their

observations help inform our understanding of this narrative. Eichstedt and Small found that most house museums that focus on antebellum history, “tell a story of American history that centers around whites, males, and elites, and that these sites erase or minimize the presence, labor, and lives of enslaved Africans and African Americans.”⁷

Furthermore, they found that,

“Visitors tend to receive information that humanizes white people and presents them as multifaceted human agents with aspirations, emotions, experiences, responsibilities, and obligations... In sharp contrast, enslaved African Americans are almost always depersonalized and dehumanized – we are rarely given their names or told of their hopes, aspirations, emotions, or experiences in any detail whatsoever, and we almost never hear anything about them as human agents struggling to secure their own destiny.”⁸

While Eichstedt and Small focused on plantation house museums, their observations can also be applied to a survey of the historical sites and resources that communicate the dominant narrative of Maury County’s history to both residents and visitors.

The group tours of Maury County that are developed and offered by the CVB heavily emphasize white experiences, while silencing black experiences. When these group tours arrive, a guide from the CVB greets them and accompanies them throughout the tour. This guide gives directions to the bus driver and provides historical information about Maury County during the drive. The "Tour Guidebook" that is used as a training resource for the guides details the experience that many tourists have while visiting

7. Eichstedt and Small, *Representations of Slavery: Race and Ideology in Southern Plantation Museums* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002), 4.

8. *Ibid.*, 7.

Maury County.⁹ This handbook offers historical information about the county as well as scripts for various tours. While there are a few passing comments that acknowledge the existence of African Americans in the historical information, the omission of black experiences in the suggested tour scripts is glaring.¹⁰ For example, enslaved people built the grand antebellum mansions and plantation homes that are the highlights of group tour itineraries. These white families, who are the focus of the tour, owned and profited from enslaved workers, but these workers are rarely mentioned on tours. The social history of African Americans is largely ignored. The tour of downtown Columbia fails to mention the black business district that developed just a block away from the town square (which is a focal point of the tour), or the Columbia Race Riot of 1946, a nationally significant event that occurred downtown.¹¹

9. Maury County Convention and Visitor's Bureau. *Discover the Antebellum Homes Capital of Tennessee, Maury County: Tour Guidebook*.

10. Enslaved people are mentioned infrequently in the information given to tour guides. In the talking points for Elm Springs, the guidebook states, "bricks were made by slaves on the place." The Polk family of Rattle and Snap is identified as "leaders in the new society of land, slaves, and business ventures," and the guide is informed that "slaves" called Rattle and Snap "the big house." At St. John's church, tour guides are encouraged to note that, "master and slave worshipped side by side," although the church does "feature a slave gallery." At Clifton Place, guides are encouraged to mention that "outbuildings, slave quarters and a barn" are still standing on the property, and that as a result of the Civil War, Gideon Pillow, the home's owner, lost 409 slaves, which are listed along with various animals and other farm supplies. The final mention of enslaved people is at Rippavilla, where the guide is encouraged to inform the tour that the "kitchen and servants quarters" were built before construction of the "big house" began.

11. These observations are based on a CVB tour guide training session that I attended, where I received all of the information necessary to guide bus tours around Maury County.

The CVB does offer a group travel tour that focuses on African American history. However, according to Becky Leifheit, CVB Assistant Director and Group Sales Coordinator, this African American history tour has never been requested or given.¹² The CVB also stocks an African American Heritage Brochure that documents sites of significance to African American history.¹³ This brochure was developed in 2005 by the Center for Historic Preservation (Murfreesboro, Tennessee) through a partnership with the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area and the Maury County CVB. While it is the best resource available for tourists interested in black experiences in Maury County's history, it needs to be updated and expanded. While offering this tour and brochure is a good step, the omission of black history in other brochures and tours segregates the historical narratives. It reinforces the ahistorical, but common, attitude that black history is separate from, and secondary to, the story of whites.

According to Ms. Leifheit, 780 people participated in the CVB's bus tours of Maury County in 2014, and another 757 people stopped in at the Visitor's Center to get information and brochures about Maury County. This does not include numbers of visitors at the many historic sites or festivals throughout Maury County. The CVB does not have any information about the racial demographics of visitors. However, from working at the President James K. Polk Home & Museum in downtown Columbia, I have been able to observe many of bus tours that the CVB conducts as well as individual visitors to the Polk Home. Those observations lead me to conclude that the vast majority

12. Becky Leifheit, email message to author, February 10, 2014.

13. Center for Historic Preservation, *Maury County African American Heritage Tour Guide* (2005).

of visitors to Maury County are white. This is not surprising, given the overwhelming emphasis on white experiences in the county's tourism literature.

Community commemorative events are essential to the development of the community's history.¹⁴ Every spring, out of town visitors and mules inundate the city of Columbia during its annual celebration of Mule Day, which acknowledges the vital role that the mule trade played in Columbia's economic development during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁵ While organizers do not explicitly bill these events as historical in nature, they do celebrate Columbia's history as a major hub of the mule trade. White men and women in antebellum clothing, some on wagons proudly emblazoned with the sign, "Homeland Security Since 1861," a reference to the area's Confederate experience, participate in the Mule Day Parade, one of the main events of the weekend-long celebration.¹⁶ This celebration is a source of contention within the community. There is disagreement over whether or not enslaved people were ever sold alongside mules at these large mule sales days. Many black people believe that this was the case. Local historians have disputed this, however.

A network of historic house museums is an important part of the official historical narrative of Maury County. The James K. Polk Ancestral Home, where I am currently employed as a museum educator, is located in downtown Columbia. It is the

14. Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 20.

15. "About Mule Day," http://muleday.org/?page_id=2.

16. See: Associated Press, "Blacks Have Separate Party During Festival," *Times Daily*, Sunday, April 17, 2002, 4B; and Serreta Boson-Amos, "Mule Day: A Lasting Community Tradition," *Columbia Daily Herald*, March 31, 2013 <http://columbiadailyherald.com/sections/lifestyles/mule-day/mule-day-lasting-community-tradition.html>, accessed October 1, 2014.

only one of the local house museums without a strong connection to Maury County's antebellum story. The one-time home of President James K. Polk, this site interprets his life (1795-1849) and presidency (1845-1849). While the museum certainly has ties to the larger picture of the Civil War, it does not interpret Maury County's experience. James K. Polk is known to have been a slaveholder, both in his own household and on a Mississippi cotton plantation. After the President's death from cholera shortly after leaving office in 1849, his wife, Sarah, took over the decision-making for their Mississippi cotton plantation. She owned the plantation until she sold it in 1860, and she continued to own domestic enslaved workers. The Polks' connections to slavery are addressed infrequently in the tours given of the site. The interpretation is largely left to the discretion of the individual docents, who rarely discuss this issue.¹⁷

The other three historic house museums each highlight Maury County's antebellum and Civil War experiences. Located in downtown Columbia, just a few blocks from the James K. Polk Home, the Athenaeum Rectory is the only surviving building of the Columbia Athenaeum School, a progressive nineteenth-century school for young white women. The Athenaeum interprets the story of Franklin Gillette Smith, founder of the Columbia Athenaeum School. The Civil War is a large part of the narrative at the

17. In her MA Thesis on the interpretation of slavery at Tennessee's Presidential Sites, Lauren Baud, former historical interpreter at the Polk Home, evaluated the Polk Home's interpretation of slavery. She charged that the Polk Home's interpretation of slavery was extremely lacking, and could be categorized as "symbolic annihilation" based on the definitions set by Eichstedt and Small in *Representations of Slavery*. Based on surveys, Baud identified the major obstacles being the attitudes of staff members as well as the lack of training and information about enslaved workers that they receive. As a current staff member at the Polk Home, I have observed that while the docent staff has changed due to turnover, the lack of training and information has not been rectified.

Athenaeum. This features the social life of white residents during the antebellum and Civil War years. The documentary *Southern Belle* follows a weeklong event called the Athenaeum Girls' School, which takes place at the Athenaeum every summer. This school emphasizes an interpretation of white antebellum life and manners that some historians have criticized.¹⁸ The interpretation at this site actively promotes the Lost Cause narrative of the Civil War. While it is highly likely that many of the young white women who attended school at the Athenaeum brought enslaved black women with them as attendants, the lives of the African American women are not interpreted.

Elm Springs, located southeast of downtown Columbia, serves double duty. It is a historic house museum that interprets the lives and Civil War experiences of the Todd and Looney families who lived in the home. Elm Springs is also the International Headquarters of the Sons of Confederate Veterans. Separating the two is difficult, as all of the promotional materials and online information for the house museum highlight the SCV connection.¹⁹ During the guided tour of the house, docents do not mention enslaved people directly, but did note that the back staircase was for "children and servants," and that the second floor of the kitchen was "cooks quarters." While docents ignore African American experiences, the offerings in the gift shop are even more disconcerting. A number of the books offered for sale are reprints of late 18th and early 19th-century books that document slavery from a perspective that extols the "virtues" of antebellum race

18. Kathy Conkwright and Mary Makley, "Southern Belle," DVD (Nashville, TN: MakeWright Films, 2010).

19 "Elm Springs: A National Historic Landmark," Brochure.

relations.²⁰ They also offer pamphlets with contemporary interpretations of the “War for Southern Independence,” such as David Livingston’s “Why the War was Not About Slavery.”²¹ Along with providing tours to visitors and hosting SCV meetings, Elm Springs also hosts community events, including an annual Sunset Symphony performance in the summer and a chili cook-off in the fall. Although some people do come dressed in antebellum clothing, these events are not explicitly historical or commemorative in nature.

Rippavilla Plantation, in Spring Hill makes some effort to include African American experiences. The interpretation of the mansion tells the story of the white Cheairs family for whom the home was built in the 1850s, and who lived there throughout the Civil War. The guided house tour privileges the white Cheairs family, with minimal acknowledgement of the lives of enslaved people. A central aspect of the interpretation at Rippavilla is the Battle of Spring Hill, which occurred on the grounds of the plantation. In 2010, the Civil War Preservation Trust bought 84 surrounding acres of battlefield land from General Motors for preservation and interpretation.²² Interpretive waysides are located around the battlefield and visitors may tour them on their own or as

20 Books for sale in the Elm Springs Gift Shop include reprints of *Thomas Nelson Page's The Negro: The Southerner's Problem* (1904) and Nehemiah Adams' *A Southside View of Slavery: Three Months at the South in 1854* (1860). The gift shop also features DVD's for children including Disney's *Song of the South* and Shirley Temple as *The Littlest Rebel*.

21. David Livingston, “Why the War Was Not About Slavery,” *SCV Sesquicentennial Series 1* (Columbia, TN: Sons of Confederate Veterans, 2011).

22. Civil War Preservation Trust, “Civil War Preservation Trust Successfully Protects 84-acre Parcel on Spring Hill Battlefield.” Accessed April 28, 2013
<http://www.civilwar.org/aboutus/news/news-releases/2010-news/spring-hill-closing.html>

part of a docent-guided tour. Visitors may also take advantage of a driving tour through the town of Spring Hill that interprets the battle.

Rippavilla's grounds include a slave cabin and slave cemetery on the property, and staff offer a "Plantation Life & Slavery" tour during Black History Month.²³ One interesting feature of the Rippavilla site is the Freedmen's Bureau school that was relocated from the Rutherford Creek area to Rippavilla's grounds, which is a notable preservation effort.²⁴ Many buildings, such as schools, that played important roles in the development of black communities have been erased from the landscape. Having this surviving example provides an important opportunity to understand life for African Americans following emancipation. Unfortunately, these outbuildings are peripheral and have very little connection with the actual interpretation of the site.²⁵ They are self-guided areas, with no interpretive waysides to give the visitor information. Rippavilla could utilize these features more effectively, to include the stories of African Americans more fully.

23. 'Plantation Life, Slavery Tours' to be Offered in Feb. at Rippavilla, Jan 19, 2013 <http://columbiadailyherald.com/sections/lifestyles/features/%E2%80%98plantation-life-slavery-tours%E2%80%99-be-offered-feb-rippavilla.html>

24. Jennie Jo Hardison, "President's Pen," *Historic Maury* Vol. 31, No. 1 (1995): 41.

25. In the fall of 2012, I assisted Jo Ann McClellan, President of the African American Heritage Society, in installing a temporary exhibit about Maury County Freedmen's schools in the Freedmen's School building at Rippavilla. This exhibit then moved to the Fairview Community Center in College Hill, a predominantly African American neighborhood on the east side of downtown Columbia. This exhibit will be reinstalled at the Freedmen's School in November 2014, so that it will be available to tour during the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Spring Hill, which occurred on the property.

The Maury County Historical Society (MCHS), originally founded in 1905, is a leader in producing the history of Maury County, Tennessee.²⁶ The Society operated until about 1915 and was then disbanded. Unfortunately, our ability to understand the goals of this early organization is limited due to the lack of minutes that were kept and the loss of the organization's collection after the society was disbanded.²⁷ However, it is worth noting that in his research into the Order of the Pale Faces, a Reconstruction-era white supremacist group that originated in Columbia, historian John Edward Harcourt discovered that at least two founding members of the MCHS had previously been members of the Pale Faces.²⁸ While we do not know a lot about this early organization, the fact that some of its members had been involved in a racist organization intended to intimidate and control African Americans certainly suggests that African Americans would not have been well-represented in the organization's efforts.

In 1964, a group of Maury County residents reincarnated the Maury County Historical Society, which continues to operate today. Currently, the MCHS focuses on publishing. The organization publishes a quarterly journal, *Historic Maury*, and continues to sell copies of previously published historical books. These books include compilations of articles written by former County Historian Jill Knight Garrett, and other publications that feature pictures and information about the many antebellum homes and historic

26. David Peter Robbins, *Century Review, 1805-1905, Maury County, Tennessee* (Columbia, TN: Board of Mayor and Aldermen of Columbia, 1905), 180.

27. Maury County Historical Society, "Maury County Historical Society's History": <http://www.historicmaury.com/societyhistory.html>

28. Edward John Harcourt, "Who Were the Pale Faces? New Perspectives on the Tennessee Ku Klux," *Civil War History* 51, no. 1 (March 2005), 66.

churches throughout the county. It also sponsors historical markers and recognizes local historic preservation efforts through an annual awards ceremony.

White women's memorial organizations have played an important role in the production of Maury County's dominant historical narrative. Both the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) have been active in sponsoring monuments, memorial events, historical lectures, and local historical publications. Membership in memorial organizations such as the DAR and the UDC is granted only to women who can prove that they are descendent of a veteran of the Revolutionary War or the Confederate army, respectively. The James K. Polk Memorial Association, which has operated the James K. Polk Ancestral Home in Columbia since 1929, was founded by women, and throughout its organizational history, the Board of Directors has been predominantly comprised of white women.

Women's organizations still play an important role in the white memory of Maury County's history. In 2014, a new organization, The Order of the Confederate Rose, was formed in Maury County to support the local Sons of Confederate Veterans' organization in their historical and memorial efforts. One of the ways that the OCR does this is by portraying Confederate mourners at commemorative events.²⁹ Clearly, Confederate memory continues to be an important feature of Maury County's history.

Jo Ann McClellan, President of the African American Heritage Society, has also served in various leadership roles within The Maury County Genealogical Society. While

29. Greg Jinkerson, "SCV Dedicates 25 Confederate Graves at Spring Hill Cemetery," Spring Hill Home Page, August 25, 2014. Accessed August 27, 2014 <http://springhillhomepage.com/scv-dedicates-25-confederate-graves-at-spring-hill-cemetery-cms-596>

the official records that genealogists use for their research privilege white residents, this organization has made efforts to encourage African American genealogical research through sponsoring lectures aimed at helping people find and use records of African Americans. Ms. McClellan has spearheaded many of these efforts, but white members have also been active in these endeavors.

METHODS OF HISTORICAL PRODUCTION:

These organizations and individuals who have been active in producing white-centric narratives of Maury County's history have been prolific producers of historical publications. This production began in earnest in the 1960s with the reorganization of the Maury County Historical Society. In 1966, the Society published a small book entitled *Historic Maury County, Tennessee in Pictures, Volume 1*, with the intent of presenting photographs that, "represent sites from different sections of Maury County."³⁰ This book documents the homes of many of Maury County's "first settlers," but makes no mention of African Americans, who were undoubtedly included in the group of first settlers, and whose labor was most likely exploited to build many of the homes and buildings of which the Society is so proud. The only local history work that consistently acknowledges enslaved workers is *Maury County Remembered*, a private collection of photographs and writings by Gilbert MacWilliams Orr that was compiled by Lois Harlan Orr and Gilbert MacWilliams Orr, Jr. in 1999.³¹

30. Maury County Historical Society, *Historic Maury County Tennessee in Pictures, Volume 1* (Columbia, TN: Maury County Historical Society, 1966).

31. Lois Harlan Orr and Gilbert MacWilliams Orr, Jr. *Maury County Remembered* (Franklin, TN: Hillsboro Press, 1999).

In 1969 the MCHS published the notes of Frank H. Smith, local historian and founding member of the MCHS in 1905. Mr. Smith's notes consist primarily of interviews conducted in the early 1900s with community members, many of whom were Confederate veterans, and none of whom was black. Aside from documenting instances of lynching, nothing is said of the experiences of black community members.³² Smith's compilation of these notes and the Society's subsequent publishing of them both highlight the white, Confederate story while silencing the black story. While these notes contain valuable historical information about Maury County, they only tell part of the story.

The Maury County Historical Society also publishes a quarterly journal, *Historic Maury*, which contains articles about local history and genealogy. The journal often features reprints of old newspaper articles and other primary sources such as deeds and government records. In its more than fifty years of publication, less than 30 articles prominently feature African Americans. The numbers of articles about African Americans peaks as other organizations promote this research and provide articles. In 2002, the Maury County Genealogical Society formed the African American Historical Council. That same year, *Historic Maury* published seven articles on African American history to coincide with that organization's creation and research.³³ This is the record for

32. Frank H. Smith, *History of Maury County* (Columbia, TN: Maury County Historical Society, 1969), 59-60.

33. John Edward Harcourt, "Freedom's Soldiers: What Do We Know About the Black Civil War Soldiers of Maury County?" *Historic Maury* 38, no. 2 (2002): 58-67; Joe Cornelius, "African American Education in Maury County, From Slavery to the Civil War," *Historic Maury* 38, no. 3 (2002): 103-111.

the most articles published about black history in any given year. The African American Historical Council did not last, but in 2012, the African American Heritage Society was formed, and *Historic Maury* featured articles about their activities.³⁴

Unfortunately, *Historic Maury*'s track record has been inconsistent. Although numerous articles about black history were published in 2002, alongside these articles, the publishers also printed a piece about "Aunt Ann" Satterwhite, a formerly enslaved black woman living in Santa Fe. The article is not current, but is a reprint of an undated clipping from a local newspaper. Aunt Ann is celebrated as the "most remarkable representative of the southern Negro type," so "happy in her work" as a washwoman, that she "never worries about the railroad strike, the coal strike." Aunt Ann "is to [Santa Fe] what a well regulated laundry is to Columbia."³⁵ Further, in 2005, *Historic Maury* published articles by local re-enactors, taking residents to task for not honoring their ancestors by joining re-enacting groups. In one article, the author claims that 100,000 African Americans fought in the Confederate army, 10,000 just from Tennessee.³⁶ This is the clarion call of the Lost Cause, urging white people to honor their Confederate heritage, and implying that many African Americans supported the Confederacy.

34. "Updating Maury's War Memorial Monument," *Historic Maury* 49, no. 4 (December 2013): 3-5; Jo Ann McClellan, "A Brief History of College Hill School," *Historic Maury* 50, no. 3 (September 2014): 7-11; Jaryn Abdallah, "College Hill State Historical Marker Dedicated," *Historic Maury* 50, no. 3 (September 2014): 11-12.

35. "Sold into Slavery Nearly a Century Ago," *Historic Maury*, 38, no. 3 (2002): 172.

36. Jim Lawrence, "War Between the States Reenacting in the Year 2005," *Historic Maury* 41, no. 3 (2005): 173-175; and Douglas McPherson, "Why Reenact Confederate History?" *Historic Maury* 41, no. 3 (December 2005): 176-177.

Jill Garrett, former Maury County Historian, published weekly newspaper columns about various aspects of Maury County's history, which were later compiled in two volumes of *Hither & Yon*.³⁷ Out of the numerous historical works that Ms. Garrett produced, these two volumes endure as lasting resources for historical information about Maury County. The Maury County Historical Society still sells these two volumes, and they are used as a reference source at historical sites such as the James K. Polk Ancestral Home.³⁸ Of the five hundred articles chosen for these two volumes, seven feature African American sites or experiences.

Along with keeping government records and family documents, the Maury County Archive also publishes compilations of newspaper articles written by the Director, and County Historian. These articles, which run in the local newspaper, *The Columbia Daily Herald*, document the creation of the Maury County Archive, local historical legends, stories from the archive's collection, and general historical information, mainly pertaining to Maury County. Many of these articles focus on Maury County during the Civil War. Less than twenty of over 360 articles in these compilations highlight African American individuals, schools and churches. However, these people are often presented as recipients of white actions rather than agents of historical change. Even when purchasing their own freedom from enslavement, African Americans are

37. Jill Garrett, *Hither & Yon: The Best of the Writings of Jill K. Garrett* (Maury County, TN: Homecoming '86 Committee, 1986); Jill Garrett, *Hither & Yon II* (Columbia, TN: James K. Polk Memorial Association, 1992).

38. In my time working as a historical interpreter at the James K. Polk Ancestral Home, I have used *Hither & Yon* as a reference on local history, as have many of my colleagues.

often portrayed as passive, being acted upon by white residents. For example, while men such as James Andrews, mayor of Columbia, are given credit for black public education, no recognition is given to black community members who were founding schools during Reconstruction and even before the Civil War.³⁹

The military service and wartime experiences of Maury County residents have been a major theme of many historical publications. In 1970, the local James Madison Sparkman chapter of the UDC published *Confederate Soldiers and Patriots of Maury County, Tennessee*, which was edited by Jill Knight Garrett.⁴⁰ Jill Garrett and Marise Lightfoot co-wrote *The Civil War in Maury County, Tennessee*, which details some of the county's Civil War experiences.⁴¹ This book lists Confederate veterans from Maury County and details of their service. It also includes the names of African Americans from Maury County who served in the Confederate army, but does not mention United States Colored Troops (USCT) or those Tennesseans who fought in the Union army. *Let the Drums Roll*, published by the Maury County Historical Society, identifies Revolutionary War veterans who settled in Maury County.⁴²

39. Bob Duncan, "James Andrews; Passive Resistance and Active Citizenship," *Maury County: Born Old In Sin*. 2010, 49-51..

40. Jill Knight Garrett, ed. *Confederate Soldiers and Patriots of Maury County, Tennessee* (Columbia, TN: James Madison Sparkman Chapter, UDC, 1970).

41. Jill Knight Garrett and Marise Lightfoot, *The Civil War in Maury County, Tennessee* (Columbia, TN: Garrett & Lightfoot, 1966).

42. Marise P. Lightfoot, *Let the Drums Roll: Veterans and Patriots of the Revolutionary War Who Settled in Maury County, Tennessee* (Columbia, TN: Maury County Historical Society, 1976).

These organizations have also sponsored efforts to publish primary sources such as marriage records, census records, court records, wills and deeds. Two different publications attempt to document cemeteries around Maury County. In 1964, two local historians collaborated to publish *They Passed This Way: Maury County, Tennessee, Cemetery Records*.⁴³ In 1989, Fred Hawkins published *Maury County, Tennessee, Cemeteries vol. 1*.⁴⁴ Neither of these publications included black cemeteries.

Cemeteries constitute an important record of black communities and can provide vital information for researchers and genealogists. In her work *Gone But Not Forgotten: African American Cemeteries and 1908-1930 Death Records of Maury County, Tennessee*, Jo Ann McClellan transcribed the available death records and headstones from 72 local cemeteries that were not included in previous efforts to document Maury County cemeteries.⁴⁵ Ms. McClellan highlights the importance of these cemetery records and states that, “In general, there are no official records of African Americans in Maury County before 1870 unless they were mentioned in a will or estate settlement. This makes the cemetery records very important for individuals researching their African American

43. Marise Parrish Lightfoot and Evelyn B. Shackelford, *They Passed This Way: Maury County, Tennessee, Cemetery Records* (1964); Marise Parrish Lightfoot and Evelyn B. Shackelford, *They Passed This Way, vol. 2: Maury County Death Records* (1970).

44. Fred Lee Hawkins, *Maury County, Tennessee Cemeteries, vol. 1* (Columbia, TN: 1989).

45. Jo Ann McClellan, *Gone But Not Forgotten: African American Cemeteries and 1908-1930 Death Records of Maury County, Tennessee* (Nashville, TN: Author’s Corner, 2009), ix.

ancestors.”⁴⁶ In her research she relied on old maps and interviews with community members to locate the cemeteries, many of which were near schools and churches, and often adjacent to, but separate from, white cemeteries. The death records indicate the existence of approximately sixty more cemeteries that she was unable to locate.⁴⁷ Beginning in 1913, the state began to issue death certificates that include vital information about the deceased, including name, sex, race, occupation place of birth, place of death, and even the place of burial. These death records are available through the Tennessee State Library and Archives in Nashville. Ms. McClellan’s book, which combines these death records with transcriptions of cemetery headstones, is an excellent resource for aggregate information on African Americans in Maury County.

The staff of the local newspaper, *The Daily Herald*, has twice compiled books of historic photographs from around Maury County. The foreword of the first of these books informs the reader that, “Members of our staff examined hundreds of photographs for consideration. From these a selection was made that represented our rich heritage.”⁴⁸ Each of these books is about 90 pages long, and feature 3 photographs per page. These compilations, published in 1999 and 2001, make little mention of black citizens or institutions. *Reflections 2000*, published by the Daily Herald in 1999, includes two photographs of Mount Lebanon Missionary Baptist Church, one photograph of a principal of one of the county’s black schools, and one of an Odd Fellows Building on

46. *Ibid.*, ix.

47. *Ibid.*, x.

48. The Daily Herald comp., *Reflections 2000: A Pictorial History of Maury County, Tennessee* (Marceline, MO: D-Books Publishing, 1999), 2.

East Eighth Street, the black commercial district.⁴⁹ The second compilation of photographs, published in 2001, identifies no black institutions.⁵⁰ These photo compilations, presented as a representation of Maury County's history, almost ignore entirely the wealth of African American educational, religious, business, or political institutions.

In 2013, local white historian, and member of the African American Heritage Society of Maury County, Michael Bennett published *The Duck River Chronicle*, the culmination of five years of research in local newspapers.⁵¹ Freely available online for anyone to access and read, the work includes four timelines set next to each other, beginning with white settlement in Maury County. Timelines of the histories of Maury County, the State of Tennessee, the United States and the world are compiled in an attempt to show what was going on locally, statewide, countrywide, and globally, at different times. This is an interesting resource that provides some help for those interested in black experiences and actions in Maury County, as it traces some interesting developments within black communities throughout Maury County. For example, Bennett identifies numerous recreational, religious, and educational fairs and meetings that brought many black visitors to Maury County. The activities that he notes suggest the vibrancy and activity of black communities that is not acknowledged in any other local historical source. Bennett gives only a brief synopsis of the information that he

49. The Daily Herald comp., *Reflections 2000*, 21, 42, & 85.

50. The Daily Herald comp., *A Pictorial History of Maury County, Tennessee and Its Events* (Marceline, MO: D-Books Publishing, 2001).

51. Michael Bennett, *Duck River Valley Chronicles: A Bicentennial History of Maury County* (2013) <http://www.duckriverchronicle.com/>.

gathered from local newspapers that are available on microfilm at the Maury County Archive. This information includes dates and names of people involved.

THE MEMORIAL LANDSCAPE:

Along with these local historical publications, Maury County's landscape is dotted with historical markers and monuments. The memorial landscape that Maury County's residents have created reveals important patterns in the community's collective memory.⁵² In my survey of historical markers and monuments, I found twenty-two different monuments, as well as twenty-seven historical markers. The term "historical marker" refers only to official markers that were placed through the oversight of the Tennessee Historical Commission.

This landscape demonstrates how historical narratives are reinforced throughout the life of the community, for both residents and visitors. Martha Norkunas's work, *The Politics of Public Memory: Tourism, History, and Ethnicity in Monterey, California*, discusses the relationship between power and the production of history as it relates to tourism. Using Monterey as a case study, she describes the exclusion of people of Mexican, Native American and Chinese descent from the representation of the past in Monterey, and explores how limiting their role in the past negatively impacts their access to power in the present. Tourism is an important part of Maury County's economy and the exclusion of people of color from the representation of the past may also impact their access to power in the present.⁵³

52. See Appendix A for a list of monuments and historical markers

53. Martha Norkunas, *The Politics of Public Memory: Tourism, History, and Ethnicity in Monterey, California* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 26.

In *Monuments and Memory: History and Representation in Lowell, Massachusetts*, Martha Norkunas examines the memorial landscape in order to understand what different communities and groups within Lowell deem to be worthy of public, permanent commemoration and how levels of representation—the National Park, the local ethnic organizations and individual people—differ in their conceptions of meaningful history.⁵⁴ She considers the roles that class, gender and ethnicity play in the memorial landscape. This study takes a similar approach and considers the impact of race, class, and gender on the memorial landscape in Maury County, Tennessee.

Based on its visible location in the center of the city, and its proximity to the center of political power – the Maury County Courthouse – The Major General William E. Potts Veteran’s Memorial Plaza and Wall of Honor is one of the most significant monuments in Columbia. The Wall of Honor lists the names of service men and women from Maury County who died while on active duty military service. It is an active site of community memory, as it serves as a site for memorial services throughout the year, particularly on days dedicated to honoring veterans.⁵⁵ The Wall of Honor on the memorial displays the names of all Maury County veterans who died while on active duty, from the War of 1812 to the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.⁵⁶ Until 2013, the

54. Martha Norkunas, *Monuments and Memory: History and Representation in Lowell, Massachusetts* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2002), 4.

55. WSMV, “Middle Tennessee Honors Veterans 11-11-2010,” Accessed April 29, 2013, <http://www.wsmv.com/story/14811557/middle-tennessee-honors-veterans-11-11-2010>.

56. Melissa Hodge, “Wall of Honor to be Unveiled July 4,” *Columbia Daily Herald*, July 3, 1998.

monument ignored the contributions of black and white soldiers who served and died in service to the Federal Army during the Civil War.

In October of 2012, Jo Ann McClellan, president of the African American Heritage Society of Maury County, petitioned the Maury County Commission to engrave the names of fifty-eight black and white Union Civil War casualties on this monument.⁵⁷ In the summer of 2013, employees of a local granite company engraved the names of these Federal soldiers on the monument. A re-dedication ceremony was held on October 19, 2013.⁵⁸ Research is ongoing to uncover the names of more Union soldiers so that these names can also be added to the monument. This monument and the efforts of the African American Heritage Society of Maury County will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 3.

Veterans and military or police service in general are prominent themes in the memorial landscape of Maury County. Aside from the Wall of Honor and memorial plaza in front of the Maury County courthouse, numerous historic markers and memorials honor the military service of specific individuals. A monument in front of the Elks Lodge honors those servicemen from Maury County who were killed in World War II. Police officers are also memorialized throughout the county. Monuments on the Public Square and at Woodland Park, a public city park close to downtown Columbia, remember officers who lost their lives in the line of duty. A memorial to Medal of Honor recipient

57. Maury County Commission, Minutes of Full Commission Meeting, October 15, 2012.

58. Kevin Walters, "Civil War Soldiers from Maury County Receive Due Honor in Granite," *The Tennessean*, October 18, 2013.

John Harlan Willis occupies a particularly prominent location, just before Highway 31 crosses the Duck River as one heads into downtown Columbia.

Monuments to the memory of the Confederacy are prominent throughout Maury County. In Columbia, the Confederate monument sits in Rose Hill Cemetery and was dedicated in 1882. While this is not situated in a well-traveled area like the Public Square, where many Confederate monuments are located in southern towns, it is an important site of community memory.⁵⁹ This monument stands guard over the graves of Maury County's Confederate veterans, in a specially designated Confederate Section of Rose Hill Cemetery.⁶⁰ Throughout the year, numerous memorial services are held at this site. In April, local United Daughters of the Confederacy and Sons of Confederate Veterans chapters hold a memorial service here.⁶¹ In the documentary *Southern Belle*, the Athenaeum Girls' School participants can be observed practicing antebellum mourning customs at this monument.⁶² Community organizations hold service days to clean and maintain this cemetery.⁶³ This is one of the more active sites of white collective memory in Columbia.

59. Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 77.

60. On the back side of this cemetery is Rose Mount cemetery, an African American cemetery. While many of the graves in Rose Mount cemetery are unmarked, there are numerous headstones that designate black veterans, including some from the Civil War. This cemetery receives very little interest from the White community.

61. "Confederate History Month," *Historic Maury* 44, No. 1 (2008): 24.

62. Kathy Conkwright and Mary Makley, "Southern Belle," DVD (Nashville, TN: MakeWright Films, 2010).

63. "Rose Hill Cemetery: Columbia, Tennessee," *Historic Maury* 41, No. 1 (March 2005): 86.

Other communities around Maury County also boast Confederate memorials. In downtown Mt. Pleasant, the Bigby Gray chapter of the UDC sponsored a monument to the memory of Confederate soldiers. In front of this monument, Tennessee Civil War Trails has placed an interpretive wayside about the formation of the Bigby Grays, which are featured in the Civil War memoir *Company Aytch*.⁶⁴ Written by Maury County resident Sam Watkins, *Company Aytch* chronicles his experiences as a soldier with the Bigby Grays, a Confederate company raised in Maury County that became Co. H in the First Tennessee Infantry. Watkins participated in many major Civil War battles including Shiloh, Murfreesboro, Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge, and Atlanta. A small park in the center of Santa Fe, one of the five towns in Maury County, includes a few memorials. These include a Tennessee Historical Commission marker for the Maury Light Artillery, and a marker with an historical sketch of the town that highlights Santa Fe's earliest white settlers and the Maury Light Artillery. Both the Bigby Grays (Mt. Pleasant) and the Maury Light Artillery (Santa Fe) were Confederate military units that were raised in Maury County during the Civil War. A group of local Civil War re-enactors portray the Maury Light Artillery at various Civil War re-enactments and commemorative events.

64. Sam R. Watkins, *Company Aytch or, A Side Show of the Big Show* (New York: Penguin Books, 1999).



Figure 2 (right): Mt. Pleasant Confederate Memorial, located on the Public Square. Figure 3 (left): Rose Hill Confederate Memorial, located in the Confederate section of Rose Hill Cemetery in Columbia, Tennessee. Photographs by Jaryn Abdallah.

African Americans are poorly documented on the landscape. Three monuments and one historic marker specifically recognize enslaved people. Two are located on the grounds of Zion Presbyterian Church, a white church founded in 1809, to recognize the contributions of enslaved labor to the development of the Zion community. One monument, erected in 1999, marks a small area in front of Zion Christian Academy where enslaved people are buried. It honors the “named and unnamed” whose labor was so vital to the community. It does not use the term “slave” or “enslaved,” but other sources such as the church's own history and the African American Heritage Tour Guide

acknowledge it as a monument to enslaved people.⁶⁵ The other monument on this site stands in front of the Zion Presbyterian Church Cemetery, attached to the church, to honor loyal slaves such as Daddy Ben, who displayed notable loyalty to his master during the Revolutionary War.⁶⁶ The Frierson Slave Cemetery is located just a few miles away, off of Hampshire Pike. This cemetery includes a large monument to the enslaved people buried there. This monument was erected by Frierson family descendants in 1937. Elizabeth Queener, a Frierson descendant, former board member of the African American Heritage Society of Maury County, and owner of the property on which the slave cemetery sits, estimated that while the cemetery only holds two grave markers, about thirty people are buried there. Finally, a marker in front of St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church in downtown Columbia gives a brief overview of the history of the church.⁶⁷

65. Zion Presbyterian Church, *Grace Will Lead Us Home: A Bicentennial History of Zion Church, 1807-2007*, 18-19.

66. I was unable to find any record of when this monument was erected. The earliest mention that I found was in a 1977 *Tennessean* article, but it did not discuss the history of the monument itself.

67. See Appendix A for text of St. Paul AME Church monument



Figure 4 (left): Zion Slave Memorial. Figure 5 (right): Daddy Ben Memorial. Both of these memorials are located as Zion Presbyterian Church in Columbia, Tennessee. Photographs by Jaryn Abdallah.



Figure 6: Frierson Slave Cemetery Memorial, Columbia, Tennessee. Photograph by Jaryn Abdallah

Currently, twenty-seven historical markers have been placed around Maury County under the auspices of the Tennessee Historical Commission's Historical Markers

Program. Two of these markers, at the sites of the College Hill High School and the Maury County Colored Hospital, will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 3. These markers were a direct result of the efforts of the African American Heritage Society of Maury County. Of the remaining twenty-five markers, two recognize the experiences or contributions of black residents. One of these markers is located near the site of Clarke Training School, a black school in Mt. Pleasant. The other is located at Mt. Lebanon Missionary Baptist Church in downtown Columbia, an African American church that was founded in 1843 by a group of free and enslaved African Americans. Twenty-two of these markers interpret the history of white residents in Maury County but remain silent about the contributions or experiences of African Americans. Of these markers, six focus on the early settlement of Maury County. Nine markers designate antebellum or Civil War sites.

The Tennessee Civil War Trails program has sponsored several waysides along Highway 31 that interpret events leading up to the Battle of Franklin in November 1864. One wayside, on the Public Square in Mt. Pleasant, describes Confederate General John Bell Hood's movements through the town leading up to the Battle of Franklin and the formation of the Bigby Gray's, a Confederate company raised in Mt. Pleasant. Moving toward Columbia, at the site of St. John's Episcopal Church, another wayside describes a skirmish that occurred on November 23, 1864. In Columbia, one wayside describes an engagement between Confederate and Federal forces on November 24, 1864 in which Federal forces escaped Confederate attempts to hold them at Columbia. Finally, two waysides are in Spring Hill, at the site of the battlefield around Rippavilla Plantation and describe the military maneuvers of the battle itself.

The historical landscape of Maury County continues to expand. Organizations such as the Maury County Historical Society, Sons of Confederate Veterans, United Daughters of the Confederacy, and Daughters of the American Revolution continue to sponsor historical markers, memorials, monuments, and waysides. In September 2014, a new Tennessee Civil War Trails wayside was installed on the grounds of Zion Presbyterian Church that interprets the life of Sam Watkins, Confederate veteran and author of the Civil War memoir *Company Aytch*, who is buried on the grounds of the church. In an interview about this new marker, Maury County CVB assistant director Becky Leifheit highlighted the importance of Maury County's Civil War stories and antebellum homes in drawing tourists to the county.⁶⁸ Through government agencies, heritage organizations, and historic sites, white community members continue to control the creation of a public narrative of Maury County's history. The narrative that these people have created privileges white experiences and silences black experiences.

68. Tim Hodge, "Civil War Trails Marker Honors Maury County Soldier," *Columbia Daily Herald*, Sept. 29, 2014, Accessed October 1, 2014 columbiadailyherald.com/news/local-news/civil-war-trails-marker-honors-maury-soldier.

CHAPTER 2: MAURY COUNTY'S HISTORY

White residents have enjoyed a privileged position as the creators of the public narrative of Maury County's history. African Americans are poorly represented in this narrative, while white residents are the central actors. What are the major themes of this narrative? How are black and white residents presented? Where have African American experiences been silenced? What opportunities are available, through primary sources or through existing historical scholarship, to help us better understand the experiences of African Americans?

LOCAL NARRATIVES:

Early white settlement and the founding of Maury County and its various communities are major themes of the dominant historical narrative. These white settlers moved, bought land, cleared land, built homes, farms, roads, and communities. During this period, the narrative presents the main historical agents as white. Soon after settling the area, they organized to petition the State of Tennessee to form a new county, and in 1807, Maury County was officially formed.¹

The antebellum period was an almost idyllic time in Maury County. Maury County flourished as it became a major hub of agricultural production in the mid-nineteenth century. The area produced corn, cotton, and tobacco. Wealthy white families

1. Jill Garrett, "The Beginnings of Maury County," 245-248 and "Early Settlers," 248-251 in *Hither & Yon*; Jill Garrett, "The First Roads in Maury Were Buffalo Trails," *Hither & Yon II*, 90-90; Flournoy Rivers, "The Beginnings of Maury County," *Historic Maury* 34, no. 1 (March 1998): 12-19; "Early Settlers of Maury County," *Historic Maury* 1, no. 4 (1965): 59.

continued to settle the area, constructing grand homes on countryside plantations and established cities and towns. Many of these homes remain, and form the core of the official historical narrative of this period. Names such as Polk, Pillow, Frierson, Booker, and Walker are prominent. These are just a few of the white families who controlled Maury County's wealth and political power. Schools for wealthy young white men and women, such as the Columbia Athenaeum, formed the early base of Maury County's educational system.²

Nathan Vaught, the Master Builder of Maury County, worked during this time, and is responsible for many of the county's well known architectural landmarks, including both homes and commercial buildings.³ Mr. Vaught's rags-to-riches story is one that is popular in the official narrative, and it is easy to highlight his contributions, as many of the architectural landmarks that he was responsible for designing and constructing still stand. The 2014 Maury County Christmas Tour of Homes featured homes and buildings associated with Nathan Vaught.⁴ This tour, a fundraiser to support

2. Jill Garrett, "The Athenaeum Once Famous School," *Hither & Yon*, 6; "Athenaeum Rectory," *Historic Maury* 46, no. 4 (2010): 10; Anna Looney, "Athenaeum Salutory, 1884," *Historic Maury* 29, no. 1 (1993): 9-10; Karen Finley Bailey, "The Columbia Athenaeum School for Young Ladies, 1852-1940," *Historic Maury* 41, no. 2 (2005): 126-132.

3. Jill Garrett, "Old State Bank Building Renovation is Announced," *Hither & Yon*, 130; F. H. Smith, "The Early Settlers and Settlements – Featuring the Master Builder of Maury County Nathan Vaught," *Historic Maury* 31, no. 1 (2005): 56-66; Marise P. Lightfoot, "A Sketch of Nathan Vaught: The Master Builder of Maury County," *Historic Maury* 1, no. 2 (1965): 21.

4. Greg Jinkerson, "Maury Christmas Historic Home Tour begins Dec. 5," Spring Hill Home Page, December 4, 2014, accessed January 2, 2015, <http://www.springhillhomepage.com/maury-christmas-historic-home-tour-begins-dec-5-cms-1699>.

the Maury County chapter of the Association for the Preservation of Tennessee Antiquities, which operates the Athenaeum Rectory, highlighted Vaught's legacy without asking who provided the labor to build these buildings.

Local white historians note two antebellum black institutions: both are churches. Mt. Lebanon Missionary Baptist Church and St. Paul AME Church were both formed in the 1840s in downtown Columbia.⁵ Both of these churches are still in operation. While these churches are important to the story of black experiences and contributions, the dominant narrative barely scratches the surface of their importance. Briefly highlighting just these two institutions does not explore the communities that they were a part of, or other black communities in Maury County.

Slavery in early Maury County and the antebellum period is infrequently acknowledged in this narrative. Given the notoriety that Maury County enjoyed as an agricultural center, it is likely that enslaved people provided much of the labor force.⁶ In *Maury County Remembered*, Gilbert Orr provides a detailed description of the contributions of enslaved workers to the construction of many of the large estates and plantation homes around the county. As he discusses the antebellum homes, he acknowledges that slave labor was used. However, Mr. Orr does not give us any

5. For information on Mt. Lebanon see Alice Algood, *Historic Maury County: Places and People*, 110-111. For information on St. Paul AME see Alice Algood, *Historic Maury County: Places and People*, 54-55.

6. MTSU Public History graduate students, under the direction of Dr. Martha Norkunas, have begun a project to identify enslaved people in Maury County. Kate Sproul identified 357 people enslaved by the four Polk brothers in the Ashwood area (cousins of President James K. Polk), and Joe Diate is identifying the enslaved people on two other local plantations.

information about how many enslaved laborers worked on any home, who they were, or what life was like for them.⁷

Local historians frequently single out four enslaved men. These are Daddy Ben, Dyer Johnson, Edmund Kelly, and Dick Porter. A memorial stands on the grounds of Zion Presbyterian Church to commemorate Daddy Ben's faithful service to his master. None of the records available at the Maury County Archive identify the date when this monument was erected. The earliest mention is in a 1977 article in *The Tennessean*.⁸ Daddy Ben's monument stands near a second monument that was dedicated by the church in 1999 to honor the work of enslaved men and women that contributed to the development of the Zion community. The second monument, situated outside of the church's cemetery does not use the word "slave," but in a published church history, it is clearly identified as a monument to enslaved people.⁹ It is also identified as a monument to enslaved people in the African American Heritage Brochure that was developed by the Center for Historic Preservation in 2005.¹⁰

Dyer Johnson and Edmund Kelly were instrumental in the founding of Mt. Lebanon Missionary Baptist Church in 1843. Both men were enslaved at the time, and

7. Lois Harlan Orr and Gilbert MacWilliams Orr comp, *Maury County Remembered* (Franklin, TN: Hillsboro Press, 1999).

8. Louise Davis, "'Daddy Ben' was 'Hanged' Three Times to Save His Master's Life," *The Tennessean*, November 1977, Zion Presbyterian Church file, Verticle Files, Maury County Archive.

9. Zion Presbyterian Church, *Grace Will Lead Us Home: A Bicentennial History of Zion Presbyterian Church, 1807-2007*.

10. Center for Historic Preservation, *Maury County African American Heritage Tour Guide*, 13-15.

later went on to purchase their freedom and the freedom of their families. The narrative that was constructed in local history texts about the two men highlights the generosity of their former owners in agreeing to the sale, putting the former owners at the center of the narrative. The attitude of James Walker, the owner of Edmund Kelly's wife and children, is described as "a blend of tenderness, caution, business, and the dread of the loss of old family."¹¹

Edmund Kelley documented his struggle to achieve his own freedom and that of his family in *A Family Redeemed From Bondage; Being Rev. Edmund Kelley (the Author), his wife, and Four Children* (1851).¹² In the 1840s, Kelley was ordained as a minister and served as pastor of the black First Baptist Church in Columbia, Tennessee. In 1846, his owner, Nancy White, sent him out of state due to financial troubles, and permitted him a pass that allowed his travel throughout the country.¹³ James Walker, a prominent Columbia businessman and brother-in-law to President James K. Polk, owned his wife and four children.¹⁴ As he traveled the country preaching, Kelley also raised money to free his family. In a letter dated February 24, 1850, Walker set the price for Kelley's family at \$2,800.¹⁵ While Walker does, in fact use kind, familial language in

11. Bob Duncan, "Walker's Loss and Kelley's Gain," *Maury County Archives Notebook*, 73.

12. Edmund Kelley, *A Family Redeemed from Bondage: Being Rev. Edmund Kelley, (the Author), His Wife, and Four Children* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

13. *Ibid.*, 7

14. *Ibid.*, 9.

15. *Ibid.*, 9.

reference to Kelley's wife and children, the fact remains that he owned them and controlled whether or not the family would reunite. He also charged Kelley a fee to purchase his family, rather than granting them their freedom. James Walker took a hard line throughout Edmond Kelley's continued efforts to secure his family's freedom, and even threatened to withdraw the offer completely.¹⁶ After a large fundraising campaign in various churches throughout the country, Kelley was able to raise over \$3,000 in order to purchase his family's freedom from James Walker.¹⁷ This also included Mr. Walker's travel and administrative costs. Edmond Kelley's efforts to overcome drastic hurdles (a hefty price and a short timeframe) in order to secure his family's freedom could be the center of the narrative, rather than James Walker's actions.

Dyer Johnson is another enslaved man who is mentioned regularly within the white-centric narrative of Maury County's history.¹⁸ Mr. Johnson purchased his freedom and that of his wife's in the 1840s. However, their former owner would not allow Mr. Johnson's wife to live with him until he had built a satisfactory house. While many local white historians emphasize the magnanimous action of Dyer Johnson's owner in consenting to the sale, Mr. Johnson's grandson, Lyman Johnson, recounted a different tale.

16. *Ibid.*, 11.

17. *Ibid.*, 15.

18. Jill Garrett, "Dyer Johnson's House," *Hither & Yon*, 29-30; Patricia Junkin, "The Dyer Johnson Family," *Historic Maury* 47, no. 1 (2011): 2-5; Bob Duncan, "The Long Shadows of Edmund Kelley and Dyer Johnson," *Maury County: Dimple of the Universe*, 102-104.

Lyman Johnson, known for his role in fighting for desegregation of schools in Kentucky, was interviewed numerous times throughout his life. In 1988, Wade Hall published a biography of Johnson. In *The Rest of the Dream: The Black Odyssey of Lyman Johnson*, Hall provides Johnson's recollection of his grandfather, Dyer Johnson's life. The first departure is the depiction of Mr. Johnson's owner, who would have sold Dyer Johnson to anyone for the sum of \$1,300. It just happened to be that Dyer Johnson was the one to make an offer on himself before anyone else did. The second major difference in Lyman Johnson's retelling is the attitude of Nancy White, the owner of Mr. Johnson's wife. While she insisted that Dyer Johnson had appropriate housing before she consented to sell him his wife, Betty, Nancy White refused to let Dyer Johnson see his wife, fearing that as a free black man, he would agitate her enslaved people.¹⁹ In a 2011 *Historic Maury* article, Patricia Junkin centers the narrative on Dyer Johnson and his wife, Elizabeth, emphasizing their efforts to achieve freedom and education for themselves and their family.²⁰

Dyer Johnson joined Edmund Kelly as a founder of Mt. Lebanon Missionary Baptist Church in Columbia. Mr. Johnson was almost lynched by the Ku Klux Klan during Reconstruction, after being mistaken for another man. Some white neighbors came to his aid, and explained to the would-be lynch mob that Johnson was an

19. Wade Hall, *The Rest of the Dream: The Black Odyssey of Lyman Johnson* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1988), 22-24.

20. Patricia Junkin, "The Dyer Johnson Family" *Historic Maury* 47, no. 1 (March 2011): 2-5.

upstanding community member. This is yet another example of the story and experiences of African Americans filtered through the lens of white actions.

Dick Porter was born enslaved and worked on the 1846 construction of the Maury County courthouse. In 1904, when the current courthouse was constructed, Mr. Porter, then an elderly free man, was given the honor of helping to lay the cornerstone.²¹ Local historians described him as a “beloved figure in Columbia and Maury County,” although it is unclear why he was so beloved.

The limited ways in which local historians acknowledge slavery, and the paternalistic tone of the discussion, is troubling. Each of these images of slavery in Maury County is benign, or even positive, emphasizing cordial, even familial relationships between the enslaved and the white ruling class. One local historian noted that, “regardless of what some may say about the institution of slavery, there was, in some cases, a significant amount of affection between the races.”²² The reality of slavery was rarely this cozy. Enslaved people had no recognized right to their own bodies or labor, and the abuse of enslaved people was much more prevalent throughout the South than “significant racial affection.” While it is, of course, possible that enslaved people in Maury County did not generally suffer egregious physical abuse, it is irresponsible not to acknowledge the fact that enslaved people were property.

21. Bob Duncan, “The Courthouse Time Capsule,” *Maury County: Dimple of the Universe*, 29-42; D.P. Robbins, *Century Review*, 21; Jill Garrett, “Historic Old Maury County Courthouse,” *Hither & Yon*, 29; “Tribute Paid to Mr. Dick Porter,” *Historic Maury* 37, no. 1 (January 2001): 29.

22. Bob Duncan, “Lee Warfield’s Legacy,” *Maury County Archives Notebook*, 37-39.

This idea of enslavers as “good owners” is prominent in the white-centric narrative of Maury County’s antebellum history. This is an ahistoric view of the institution of slavery. In their survey of antebellum house museums in Louisiana, Georgia, and Virginia, Jennifer Eichstedt and Stephen Small found that thirty-five percent of the museums that they visited employed this “good owner” narrative of slavery. However, they argue that:

“It is clear that on an intimate level it made a difference in an enslaved person’s life if the master-enslaver didn’t rape the girls or women or beat, maim, or kill those enslaved. However, the context of the institution of slavery always meant that enslaved persons could not ever count on remaining with specific master-enslavers, always facing the risk of being sold. And again, the notion of ‘good’ ownership must always be understood within the context of being owned.”²³

According to Eichstedt and Small, the language of familial affection is another method of silencing, as it implies that slavery was acceptable if the masters were kind, or there was affection.²⁴

The Civil War is a major turning point in Maury County’s history, and the local interpretation is heavily influenced by Lost Cause mythology.²⁵ This is the first real conflict in the narrative. This conflict is between the Union and local community. According to the local historians, the majority of white families in Maury County did not own enslaved people, and those who did generally cared for them fondly and allowed

23. Eichstedt and Small, *Representations of Slavery*, 161.

24. *Ibid.*, 13.

25. For more on the Lost Cause in Civil War memory, see David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), and Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

them a decent amount of freedom.²⁶ Local Union sentiment was extremely low. The county furnished many Confederate troops, but no Federal troops. As in much of Middle Tennessee, Federal and Confederate forces made their way through the county numerous times, often wreaking havoc.²⁷ Columbia was under Union control for much of the War.²⁸ The military commandeered many private homes and buildings, such as churches, for headquarters and hospitals. Skirmishes occurred throughout the county, with the most notable fighting happening in Spring Hill in November of 1864. The Battle of Spring Hill was small in scale, but it had important ramifications that would ultimately lead to the Confederate defeat at Nashville.²⁹

There are popular stories from the Civil War that are featured in the white-centric historical narrative. One of these stories is the “Forrest-Gould Affair,” in which General Nathan Bedford Forrest and Lieutenant Willis Gould got into an argument in front of a hotel in downtown Columbia. The argument ended with Lt. Gould dead, and Gen. Forrest wounded. This incident is featured in numerous local historical publications, and is one of the stories highlighted in the Maury County CVB’s tours of downtown Columbia.³⁰

26. Bob Duncan, “Overview History – Maury County,” *Maury County, Tennessee: History & Families*, 9.

27. Jill Garrett, “The Yankees Are Coming,” *Hither and Yon*, 161-162.

28. Bob Duncan, “Overview History – Maury County,” *Maury County Tennessee: History & Families*, 11.

29. Jill Garrett, “Breakfast Featured Ham, Coffee, and Ill Tempers,” *Hither & Yon II*, 273-274.

30. Bob Duncan, “The Forrest-Gould Affair – The Complete Story,” *Maury County: Dimple of the Universe*, 188-194; “The Forrest Gould Affair,” *Historic Maury* 32, no. 1 (1996), 3; Maury County Convention & Visitor’s Bureau, “Trolley Tour: Historic

Another popular Civil War story is that of Antoinette Polk, who courageously rode her horse from her home in Columbia to the home of her relatives a few miles away to warn them, and the Confederate soldiers with them, of the imminent Federal advances. It is said that Federal soldiers were in hot pursuit of Ms. Polk, and local legend holds that at one point they were close enough to pluck the feather from her hat.³¹ Her heroic actions that day saved many from capture and imprisonment.

The murder of Confederate General Earl Van Dorn in Spring Hill is another popular local tale.³² His lover's jealous husband murdered General Van Dorn at a home in Spring Hill, in northern Maury County. The home where the murder occurred is a focal point of many local historical publications and group tours that are organized by the Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Each of these stories highlights the actions, experiences, and emotions of white people, who are presented as interesting, multifaceted, and heroic historical agents, even when committing murder. Meanwhile, African American actions, experiences, and emotions are consistently ignored. White historians retell each of these popular local

Downtown Columbia," *Discover the Antebellum Homes Capital of Tennessee, Maury County Tour Guidebook*.

31. Bob Duncan, "Flying the Flags," *Maury County Archives Notebook*, 129-130; Bob Duncan, "The Yankee General's Flag," *Historic Maury* 38, no. 4 (December 2002): 140-142; Jill Garrett, "Buena Vista – A Lost Landmark," *Hither & Yon*; Maury County CVB, "Ride of Antoinette Polk," *Discover the Antebellum Homes Capital of Tennessee, Maury County Tour Guidebook*.

32. Jill Garrett, "Jealous Husband Kills Reb General in Maury," *Hither & Yon*, 238-243; Maury County CVB, "Spring Hill Affair Script," *Discover the Antebellum Homes Capital of Tennessee, Maury County Tour Guidebook*.

legends year after year. They are repeatedly printed in newspapers and books. They are featured on guided tours and in historical presentations.

The Civil War period is crucial to the history of African Americans, many of whom actively chose to leave the plantations of their masters to seek refuge and freedom in Union Army camps.³³ But these actions and choices receive no mention in the popular retellings of the Civil War in Maury County. Acknowledging the reality that enslaved people actively promoted their own freedom fundamentally disproves the popular narrative of contented slaves. It suggests that enslaved people were not contented with the labor system that exploited them. Michel-Rolph Trouillot acknowledges this in his work *Silencing the Past* (1995). He explains that the Haitian Revolution has received little mention in Western historiography, as it was an “unthinkable” event. It questions the system, and, therefore, does not fit neatly within the historical narrative.³⁴ He explained that the Haitian Revolution, “contradicted most of what the West has told both itself and others about itself.”³⁵ The mass defection of enslaved people from their plantations is very similar. Trouillot explained, “to acknowledge resistance as a mass phenomenon is to acknowledge the possibility that something is wrong with the system.”³⁶

The era of Reconstruction receives less attention in Maury County’s history. When it is mentioned, it is always in negative contexts, to remind readers of the suffering of local white residents. One local historian described Reconstruction as “evil,” and

33. Stephen V. Ash, *Middle Tennessee Society Transformed*, 111-122.

34. Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 96.

35. *Ibid.*, 107.

36. *Ibid.*, 84.

stated that all levels of government “were now held in the hands of radicals bent on revenge and personal reward. Local folks had a reason to be fearful.”³⁷ This narrative excludes community-building work of African Americans, newly freed from slavery and eager to exercise their rights as American citizens.

While the antebellum and Civil War periods generally dominate the efforts of local historians, there are important late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century events that they feature. The role of the mule trade in Columbia’s history continues to be a highlight of the historical narrative, as residents and visitors celebrate Mule Day at the beginning of April every year. In the mid-nineteenth century, Columbia was a hub of the mule trade, and on the first Monday of the month, buyers and sellers would meet in town to conduct business. The first Monday of April was typically the biggest mule sale day of the year.³⁸ Columbia continued to operate as a hub of the mule trade through World War I. Modern Mule Day is not a large sale, but a celebration of the importance that this sale had in Columbia’s historical and economic development.³⁹ There is no indication of African American involvement in the historical mule trade. African Americans are rarely featured in photographs of the modern Mule Day celebration.

37. Bob Duncan, “Secret Police and Hitching-Post Etiquette; City Laws in 1866,” *Born Old in Sin*, 138-139.

38. Jill Garrett, “From Unassuming Beginnings Mule Day Grew to World-Wide Renown,” *Hither & Yon II*, 259.

39. Bob Duncan, “The First Mule Day,” *Born Old in Sin*, 20-23

The discovery of phosphate in Mt. Pleasant was a huge boon to Maury County's economy in the late nineteenth century.⁴⁰ It brought numerous people to Mt. Pleasant, both investors and miners. The influence of phosphate mining continued to be a major factor in Maury County's economic development through the twentieth century. Paul Lubotina researched the desegregation process at Monsanto, one of the largest phosphate companies in the area. His work gives insight into the experiences of African American Monsanto employees, whose stories had previously been ignored in local literature.⁴¹

Public education in Maury County was an important development that is highlighted from the late nineteenth century through the twentieth century. However, education in Maury County was segregated until the 1960s. White schools received more public funds than black schools at the time, and these same white schools also receive higher levels of interest from local historians.⁴² While white children benefited from the support of the local school board, African Americans were responsible for ensuring that educational opportunities were available for their communities.⁴³ While white support,

40. D.P. Robbins, *Century Review*, 103; Jill Garrett, "Davis Heads Phosphate Centennial Committee," *Hither & Yon II*, 341-342; Jill Garrett, "Phosphate Industry Has Changed Maury County," *Hither & Yon II*, 343-344; .

41. Paul Lubotina, "Desegregation at Monsanto," Unpublished paper, Seminar in Public History, Middle Tennessee State University, October 2012. In possession of the author.

42. Bob Duncan, "James Andrews; Passive Resistance and Active Citizenship," *Born Old In Sin*, 49-51; Jill Garrett, "Andrews School is Now Only a Fond Memory," *Hither & Yon II*, 333-334.

43. Jo Ann McClellan, "Brief History of College Hill School, Bridge Street, Columbia, Tennessee," *Historic Maury* 50, no. 3 (September 2014): 7-11; Joe Cornelius,

both from local and broader sources such as the Freedmen's Bureau, northern missionary societies, and the Rosenwald Fund was often crucial, local African Americans lead these efforts.⁴⁴

Military service through the twentieth century, particularly World Wars I and II, command a great deal of attention from local historians. Two locally published volumes document the experiences of Maury Countians during World War II, but it is difficult to tell how many of the people who are included in these books are African American.

Maury County Remembers World War II, Part One lists people from Maury County who served in World War II, with an emphasis on those who died. Race is not specified.

Maury County Remembers World War II, Part Two is a compilation of interviews and memoirs from local people who either served in the war or remember the home front experience. The book's editors claim to include "stories from black soldiers," however only one person is identified as such.⁴⁵

TOWARD FILLING THE GAPS:

Local historians respond to inquiries about the absence of information about African Americans by asserting that such information does not exist. However, information about African American is available if one is willing to approach the research from a different perspective. The identification of black schools, cemeteries, and

"African American Education in Maury County," *Historic Maury* 38, no. 3 (June 2002): 103-111.

44. Ibid.

45. Virginia Alexander, ed. "Introduction," *Maury County Remembers WWII, Part Two* (Columbia, TN: Maury County Historical Society, 1991).

churches speaks to the existence of entire communities that have not been documented. Each of these communities and institutions was built and persevered within what was often a hostile environment. There are also numerous secondary works available that provide better information and context about the development of African American communities within Maury County. While there is still much research that needs to be done, we can begin to pull threads together in order to ensure that African Americans are better represented in the historical narrative. Each successful attempt to include African Americans Maury County's history provides a precedent and a framework on which new information can continue to be added.

The era of slavery is an important part of the black experience that is not well represented or addressed in the narrative that local white historians have produced. In *Constructing Townscapes: Space and Society in Antebellum Tennessee* (1999), Lisa Tolbert studied the development of county seats in the Nashville basin during the antebellum period.⁴⁶ Included in this study is the city of Columbia, the Maury County seat. Tolbert argues that life in these small towns was distinctly different from life in large cities, and life on rural plantations. Understanding the uniqueness of the development of these towns will help us understand the experiences of the people living in them, including various social classes of whites, as well as enslaved people.

Tolbert's research on the lives of enslaved people in small towns provides important insights into what people may have experienced in Columbia. Tolbert argues

46. Lisa Tolbert, *Constructing Townscapes: Space and Society in Antebellum Tennessee* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

that slavery was vital to the function of town life.⁴⁷ Enslaved people provided much of the labor force that constructed, and re-constructed, the townscape of Columbia and the surrounding county seats. They also provided much of the labor for community celebrations.⁴⁸ However, very little evidence of their lives and experiences remains, as small town slaves often lived in white spaces such as hallways of white homes or kitchen buildings.⁴⁹ They worked in these spaces as well as on city streets as messengers, or at town wells, fetching water for white families.⁵⁰ These important insights into the experiences of enslaved people in the small towns of Middle Tennessee provide a framework for understanding the history of enslaved people in Columbia. This, in turn, enhances our understanding of Columbia's history, by recognizing the pivotal role that enslaved people played in the city's development.

The narrative of the Civil War in Maury County focuses exclusively on the experiences of white residents, and largely ignores the actions of African Americans living in the county, most of whom were enslaved workers. Community members, especially women connected with local United Daughters of the Confederacy chapters, have undertaken major efforts to identify Maury County's Confederate veterans.⁵¹ In these efforts, they have even included the names of African American men who served in

47. Ibid., 120

48. Ibid., 72.

49. Ibid., 120

50. Ibid., 205-206.

51. Jill Garrett, *Confederate Soldiers and Patriots of Maury County, Tennessee* (Columbia, TN: James Madison Sparkman Chapter UDC, 1970); Jill Garrett and Marise Lightfoot, *The Civil War in Maury County, Tennessee* (Columbia, TN: 1966).

the Confederate Army.⁵² However, little has been said about the experiences of men from Maury County who served in the Union Army, which includes many formerly enslaved people who joined the United States Colored Troops (USCT). By October 2013, the African American Heritage Society of Maury County had identified over 400 African American and white citizens from Maury County who joined the Union Army, fifty-eight of whom died while on active duty.⁵³ Further research identified over 150 more USCT soldiers from Maury County, thirty-five of whom died while on active duty.⁵⁴ Clearly, Civil War military service was an important factor in the lives of African Americans in Maury County. While research has focused on those who died, further research into the lives of those who lived could provide important information about the experiences of African Americans in the late nineteenth century.

More research about the flight of enslaved people from plantations during the Civil War would enhance not only our understanding of black experiences, but also white experiences on the home front in Maury County. It would seem likely that a large number of African Americans leaving the county to serve in the military, many of whom were likely escaped slaves, would have had a profound impact on the county as a whole. As the narrative stands, only those “faithful” slaves who remained on their plantations and

52. Jill Garrett, *Confederate Soldiers and Patriots of Maury County, Tennessee*; Jill Garrett, “Black Soldiers & Patriots” *Hither & Yon*, 189-190.

53. African American Heritage Society of Maury County, Tennessee, *Honoring Maury County’s United States Colored Troops & Federal Soldiers Program Book*, (Columbia, TN: 2013), 7-10.

54. See Appendix B

continued to work for their former owners as paid laborers after the Civil War are afforded recognition.⁵⁵

Historians have addressed the movement behind, and the implications of, the “faithful slave” monument. Kirk Savage noted that the motivating factor behind this movement was the need by whites to legitimize the institution of slavery as beneficial to both slave and master. It had been a golden age of race relations. “Faithful slaves” exemplified the supposed intimate relationship between master and enslaved.⁵⁶ Joan Johnson discussed the implications of this “faithful slave” narrative in her research into the reactions of African American clubwomen to a national Black Mammy monument proposed by the United Daughters of the Confederacy. Johnson explained, “The Black Mammy...was a warm, maternal figure who represented the success of the paternalistic model of race relations and the supposed contentment, and more important, loyalty, of African Americans within that system.”⁵⁷ She further explained that, “African Americans recognized that portraying Mammy as a faithful servant did not honor her, but rather perpetuated the role of African Americans as inferiors or servants while disregarding the achievements of African American professionals.”⁵⁸

55. R.P. Robbins, Jr., “Story of a Single Slave,” *Historic Maury* 34, no. 2 (June 1998): 57-58.

56. Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers Kneeling Slaves*, 155-157.

57. Joan Johnson, “‘Ye Gave Them a Stone’: African American Women’s Clubs, the Frederick Douglass Home, and the Black Mammy Movement,” *Journal of Women’s History* 17, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 72.

58. *Ibid.*.

Stephen V. Ash includes Maury County in his book *Middle Tennessee Society Transformed, 1860-1870: War and Peace in the Upper South* (1988), an exploration of the experiences of Middle Tennesseans, black and white, during this tumultuous time. According to Ash, by 1860, slavery was deeply engrained in the social and economic fabric of Middle Tennessee. Therefore, the institution of slavery and its breakdown is inextricably linked to the history of the area.⁵⁹ Ash traces the efforts of many slaves throughout the region who actively broke the bonds of their enslavement during the chaos of the Civil War.⁶⁰ Nimrod Porter, a wealthy Maury County farmer, documented slaves' refusal to work, running away, and their theft of property.⁶¹ Court minutes document the efforts of Edmund, an enslaved man from Maury County, who declared himself to be free.⁶²

Also largely absent from the dominant narrative is the memory of racial violence in Maury County during Reconstruction. Both the Ku Klux Klan and the Order of the Pale Faces were groups organized by local white men to terrorize free black residents, Freedmen's Bureau representatives, and Radical Republicans. The Pale Faces have been described by one local historian as having "worked peacefully and through legitimate means" against carpetbag politicians, who also stated that following the end of

59. Stephen V. Ash, *Middle Tennessee Society Transformed, 1860-1870: War and Peace in the Upper South* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University, 1988), 25.

60. *Ibid.*, 115.

61. *Ibid.*, 116, 119.

62. *Ibid.*, 115

Reconstruction, the Pale Faces “just faded away.”⁶³ Historian Edward John Harcourt researched the activities of the Pale Faces in Columbia and throughout Maury County. His research directly contradicts the local narrative of the Pale Faces as a peaceful organization.⁶⁴ In *The Duck River Chronicles*, a survey of local newspapers, Michael Bennett identified numerous instances of violence perpetrated by white residents against African Americans.⁶⁵

Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (Freedmen’s Bureau) also document the violence that pervaded Maury County following the Civil War. In *Middle Tennessee Society Transformed, 1860-1870* (1988), Stephen V. Ash narrates the experiences of Middle Tennesseans during the Civil War and Reconstruction. Ash relied heavily on Freedmen’s Bureau records for this analysis. He observes that most hostility and violence against African Americans following the Civil War frequently came at the hands of lower-class whites, not the elite farmers. After all, these former slave owners were still dependent on black labor to maintain their plantations. Poor whites, however, resented the economic and educational progress that newly freed blacks worked toward in these early years of freedom.⁶⁶ This is confirmed by

63. Duncan, “James Andrews: Passive Resistance and Active Citizenship,” *Maury County: Born Old In Sin*, 49-51.

64. Edward John Harcourt, “Who Were the Pale Faces? New Perspectives on the Tennessee Ku Klux,” *Civil War History* 51, no. 1 (2005): 23-66.

65. Michael Bennett, *The Duck River Valley Chronicles*, 177, 191, 193, 219-221, 254.

66. Ash, *Middle Tennessee Society Transformed*, 197. Lower class and poor whites are another group that is not well represented in Maury County’s dominant historical narrative. This further demonstrates how the exclusive emphasis on wealthy whites gives a very limited understanding of the actual history of Maury County.

Edward Harcourt's research into the membership lists of the Order of the Pale Faces. Harcourt found that the majority of the named members of this organization were middle- and lower-class white men.⁶⁷

Emancipation and the ability of African Americans to participate in public life and establish free communities were certainly some of the most important legacies of the Civil War. This period of black community building is vital to the development of the South.⁶⁸ However, these issues are not evaluated in the narrative of Maury County's history. There is no discussion or understanding of how African Americans transitioned into freedom, aside from identifying a few "faithful slaves" who continued to work for their previous owners due to their close bond. Understanding the development of free black communities will be an important avenue of exploration for historians interested in Maury County.

As African Americans capitalized on the freedom and citizenship rights that they had achieved following the Civil War, they quickly began to develop social, political, economic, and educational systems. Records of the State Colored Convention of Tennessee from the mid-1860s identify James T. Rapier as a delegate from Maury County.⁶⁹ Clearly African Americans in Maury County were taking an interest in politics, both local and statewide. In *The Duck River Valley Chronicles*, Michael Bennett

67. Harcourt, "Who Were the Pale Faces? New Perspectives on the Tennessee Ku Klux," 45-46.

68. Ash, *Middle Tennessee Society Transformed*, 215.

69. Judy Bussell Leforge, "State Colored Conventions of Tennessee, 1856-1866," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, 237.

identified numerous African American meetings, expositions, fairs, and picnics that drew the attendance of African Americans from throughout Maury and the surrounding counties.

World War II is another focal point of the narrative in which local white historians have overwhelmingly neglected African American experiences. One important legacy of World War II was the catalyst effect it had on the African American struggle for Civil Rights.⁷⁰ Maury County played an important role in this process, but the dominant local narrative completely omits the 1946 Columbia Race Riot, which captured national attention.⁷¹ In 1946, an altercation between two World War II veterans (one white, one black) on the Public Square in Columbia escalated into an armed confrontation between black business owners and a white mob in the black business district on E. 8th Street. The State Highway Patrol was sent to control the situation, which only further escalated the hostilities. By the morning, State Highway Patrol officers had ransacked the E. 8th black business district and more than 100 African Americans were jailed, two of whom were killed while in police custody.⁷² Twenty-eight of these men were eventually tried in Lawrence County. Thurgood Marshall, who would later become the first African American Supreme Court Justice, worked as a part of the NAACP's Legal Defense Fund

70. Gail Williams O'Brien, *The Color of the Law: Race, Violence, and Justice in the Post-World War II South* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 1999), 97-108.

71. For more information about the Columbia Race Riot: Gail Williams O'Brien, *The Color of the Law*, and Robert Ikard, *No More Social Lynching* (Franklin, TN: Hillsboro Press, 1997).

72. O'brien, *The Color of the Law*, 28-29

team, defending the black men during the trial. No white participants were ever tried.⁷³ The Columbia “Race Riot” and subsequent trial of this group of black men commanded national attention. Even Eleanor Roosevelt became interested, and served as the head of the National Committee for Justice in Columbia, Tennessee (NCJC), an organization that worked with the NAACP to publicize the story of what had happened in Columbia, and to raise money for legal representation for those charged with crimes.⁷⁴

The Color of the Law is vital to the study of African American history in numerous ways. First, Gail Williams O’Brien examines race relations throughout Maury County’s history. O’Brien traces the history of racial violence in Maury County and explains that African Americans retained a collective memory of this violence.⁷⁵ The threat of another lynching, and the desire to protect their community, were major motivating factors in the actions of African Americans. O’Brien also discusses the development of the black business district and community along East 8th Street in downtown Columbia and the vital role that business leaders played in that community. Finally, O’Brien evaluates this incident within the larger context of post-World War II race relations. Similarly to the “Race Riot,” the entire Civil Rights Movement is omitted from the white centric narrative of Maury County’s history. This historical literature is available, thus countering the remark that there is no material available about African American life in Maury County.

73. Ibid., 39.

74. Ibid., 34-35.

75. Ibid., 110-111

Sources that are already a part of the dominantly accepted historiography of Maury County's history provide information about African Americans that is overlooked in the development of local narratives. In *Century Review, 1805-1905, Maury County, Tennessee*, David P. Robbins does infrequently mention African Americans through the beginning of the twentieth century. This book is described as "a condensation of the most important events of the past one hundred years, and descriptive sketches of the cities and villages."⁷⁶ While his emphasis is on the actions of white residents, Robbins does include important information about African Americans. He acknowledges that during the 1880s, many African Americans migrated away from Maury County, which accounted for the county's lack of population increase during that decade.⁷⁷ Robbins also recalled the efforts of Cap Jordan to establish an African American school during the Civil War. For these efforts, Jordan was arrested and received 25 lashes, although the lash giver claimed to have struck Mr. Jordan "lightly."⁷⁸ He also included the names of administrators and teachers at Columbia's first black public school.⁷⁹ Robbins documented black schools, churches, and fraternal organizations throughout the county, including smaller towns such as Mt. Pleasant, Culleoka, Spring Hill, and Williamsport.⁸⁰

76. D.P. Robbins, Title Page, *Century Review of Maury County, Tennessee* (Easley, SC: Southern Historical Press, 1980).

77. *Ibid.*, 13

78. *Ibid.*, 24.

79. *Ibid.*, 27.

80. *Ibid.*, (Columbia) 39-40, (Mt. Pleasant) 102, (Spring Hill) 129, (Culleoka) 111, and (Williamsport) 154.

It is clear that African Americans are poorly represented in the narrative of Maury County's history. Even when they are included in the narrative, they are often understood as passive recipients of white action, rather than actors themselves. Understanding the ways in which African Americans are represented, or not represented, in the dominant narrative of Maury County's history has some important implications for our understanding of the development of this narrative, and of historical narratives in general. What little information about African Americans that exists in Maury County is presented as tangential to the efforts and experiences of white residents. The experiences of white and black in Maury County are rarely presented as interconnected. Thanks to the work of academic historians, local historians, and community members, information is available that will allow scholars and the popular press to begin to develop a narrative that is more inclusive of the experiences of African Americans, even as research continues to uncover new information.

CHAPTER 3: THE AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE SOCIETY OF MAURY COUNTY, TENNESSEE

In his work on the development of collective memory, Paul Shackel explains that collective historical narratives develop as groups decide what and how to remember. Through this process, the experiences of subordinate groups are often silenced. Shackel identifies ways in which subordinate groups respond to these erasures. He explains, “those who are excluded may try to subvert the meaning of the past, or they may strive for more representation in the form of a more pluralistic past. Sometimes they may not even call attention to their absence in the collective memory.”¹ Maury County’s history has been written from a white-centric perspective that has erased or marginalized African Americans.

African Americans in Maury County have, and continue to, engage in efforts to achieve a more pluralistic representation of the past and to integrate the experiences of black people into the dominant narrative. Many of these efforts have been private efforts of churches and individuals and have attracted little notice from white residents. However, records do exist. For example, in 1998, members of the Canaan AME Church in Mt. Pleasant petitioned the Maury County Historical Society for money to support the renovation of the Canaan Rosenwald School. The Maury County Historical Society approved \$5,000 for the project.² Unfortunately, these records do not give any names of

1. Paul Shackel, *Myth, Memory, and the Making of the American Landscape* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 3.

2. Maury County Historical Society, Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, February 1998, courtesy of Colleen Farrell

the church members who spearheaded the project or insight into their reasons or goals for doing the renovations.

In 2002, Barbara Garrett, a local white historian, organized the African American Historical Council as a branch of the Maury County Genealogical Society. This group sponsored a lecture and articles in *Historic Maury*, the quarterly journal of the Maury County Historical Society. Utilizing United States Colored Troops records for genealogical purposes was a major emphasis of this organization. While the organization did not last long, disbanding in the same year, it had an impact on the study of African American history in Maury County. This seems to have been a catalyst to efforts to understand African American history, as it was at this point that articles about black history began appearing in *Historic Maury*, the quarterly journal of the Maury County Historical Society. After the African American Historical Council disbanded, articles about African American history were infrequent. Many years there were no articles about African American history at all.

While spurred this temporary flurry of interest in black history, the African American Historical Council also planted the seeds of wider efforts to research, preserve, and promote black history. Jo Ann McClellan, a former member of the African American Historical Council, spent the next ten years continuing to research Maury County's African American history and seeking out partnerships with individuals and groups who were also interested in local African American history. One of McClellan's largest projects was documenting African American cemeteries throughout Maury County. This research culminated with the publication of her book *Gone but Not Forgotten: African American Cemeteries and 1908-1930 Death Records of Maury County, Tennessee* in

2010. An avid genealogist, she recognized the importance of cemetery and death records in researching black ancestors.³ After searching the extant local publications about Maury County cemeteries, she realized that previous cemetery research had focused exclusively on the white cemeteries.⁴ McClellan and a small group of white and black volunteers spent five years combing through records and visiting all the black cemeteries that they could find in order to transcribe the text on the head stones. Through her research, she located seventy-two previously unrecorded cemeteries and death records for 60 more cemeteries.⁵

Cemetery stones are sometimes the only records that remain of African American neighborhoods in Maury County. They had gone undocumented in earlier historical publications, including surveys of Maury County cemeteries. These neighborhoods were also undocumented in early efforts to document the county's various rural communities. In *Hither & Yon*, Jill Garrett drove through the countryside, documenting white communities and explaining the various buildings and institutions associated with particular events. McClellan noticed that black communities were left out of these travels. She noted,

“These women drove around the entire Maury County. But if you read that book, my particular community [is not mentioned]. They came up Snow Creek– the black community was down here.They said, ‘If you turn right, you get to Chestnut Ridge, and that’s where they used to have a lot of chestnut trees. Then

3. Jo Ann McClellan Interview with author, February 2014

4. Jo Ann McClellan, *Gone But Not Forgotten: African American Cemeteries and 190-130 Death Records of Maury County, Tennessee*, (Nashville, TN: Author’s Corner, 2009), ix.

5. *Ibid.*, x.

you turn left and it takes you back into town.' When you turn right, that was the black community. They didn't take that path."⁶

Elizabeth Queener is a white woman who grew up in Maury County. Her ancestors, the Friersons, date back to the earliest white settlers in the area. Though Queener now lives in Nashville, she has maintained an interest in Maury County's history. She explained to me that she grew up privileged. A black Mammy cared her for, and her family employed other black help in their home and fields.⁷ Her close relationship with her Mammy caused her to question how society functioned, particularly the system of segregation that regulated it. Throughout her life, she was involved in civil rights and was an environmental and conservation activist. She was also interested in black history. Queener began to research black Civil War soldiers from Maury County and look for like-minded individuals to join her. She came across Jo Ann McClellan's cemetery book, and contacted her.

According to Jo Ann McClellan, Elizabeth Queener first suggested the idea of researching the names of Union soldiers with the eventual goal of some sort of monument recognizing their experiences. This research partnership between Jo Ann McClellan and Elizabeth Queener formed the basis for the African American Heritage Society of Maury County.⁸ After the African American Historical Council disbanded in 2002, McClellan was advised by a friend that the county was just not ready yet to truly begin the process

6. Jo Ann McCellan Interview with author, February 2014

7. Elizabeth Queener, email message to author, October 20, 2014.

8. Jo Ann McClellan, Interview with author, February 2014

of understanding black history. With a new colleague and a focus on local United States Colored Troops veterans, McClellan and Queener believed that the timing was finally right.⁹ The first informational meeting for the African American Heritage Society of Maury County was held in January of 2012.

The founding Board of Directors consisted of four black woman, one black man, and two white women. Each of these board members either grew up in Maury County or had family connections to the county. After a few changes due to resignations of founding board members, the class of officers approved at the Annual Membership Meeting was comprised of three black women, one black man, and three white women. All but one board member grew up in Maury County.¹⁰

I became aware of the AAHSMC due to my interest in Maury County's African American history. While asking about how I could learn more about local black history, I was told numerous times that I should contact Jo Ann McClellan and learn more about this new organization that she was forming.¹¹ I attended the first meeting in January

9. Jo Ann McClellan, Interview with author, February 2014

10. Founding Board Members: Jo Ann McClellan (President), Patricia Bowman (Vice-President), Dorothy Oliver (Treasurer), Marcia Armstrong (Secretary), Paul Moss (Director), Patricia Junkin (Director), Elizabeth Queener (Director). Current Board Members as of March 2015: Jo Ann McClellan (President), Walter Mitchell (Vice-President), Dorothy Oliver (Treasurer), Jaryn Abdallah (Secretary), Patricia Junkin (Director), Barbara Booker (Director). Elizabeth Queener resigned from the board in March 2015, and her position as Director is vacant as of this writing.

11. Both Michelle Cannon, archivist at the Maury County Archive, and Tom Price, Curator at the President James K. Polk Home & Museum pointed me toward the African American Heritage Society after I asked them for help finding information about African American history.

2012, and joined the organization as a charter member that day. In August 2013, I was asked to fill a vacancy on the Board of Directors as the Secretary. In my time on the Board of Directors, I have been involved with research and planning various events, such as the dedications for historical marker unveilings. I am currently the only board member with no personal or family connections to Maury County's history, although I am a current resident of Maury County.

WORK:

During these early years of operation, Jo Ann McClellan explained that the African American Heritage Society was engaged in an "information-gathering" phase.¹² While the ultimate goal is to achieve a historical narrative that is inclusive of African American experiences, the first step is to learn and document as much as possible. This research is then used to publish articles and apply for historic markers through the Tennessee Historical Commission.

One of the AAHSMC's most important efforts has been to engrave the names of USCT soldiers on the Wall of Honor Monument on the Public Square in downtown Columbia. This monument, erected in 1998, claimed to list the names of all soldiers from Maury County who died while on active military duty.¹³ It consists of two large stone panels, separated by a truncated column. The names of soldiers killed while on active duty are separated by conflict and listed on the panels. Originally, the monument was supposed to include the names of soldiers from the War of 1812 through the Persian Gulf

12. Jo Ann McClellan, Interview with author, February 2014

13. Melissa Hodge, "Wall of Honor to be Unveiled July 4," *Columbia Daily Herald*, July 3, 1998, 1& 2

War. In 2011, four more names were added to the monument, including two men who died during the Battle of the Alamo, one man who died during World War II, and one man who died in Afghanistan.¹⁴ Maury County historian Bob Duncan explained the importance of the monument, stating, “Anybody who gives their life for their country deserves our respect and our remembrance. The best way we can do that is to carve their names deeply into stone so future generations can know that we honored their service.”¹⁵

The monument has four panels; one panel is dedicated to the names of “Civil War” soldiers who died while an active duty. That title, however, was misleading, as the panel consists solely of Confederate soldiers. While the title on the panel is “Civil War,” many Maury Countians believe it to be a Confederate monument. This leads one to assume that the only men from Maury County to fight and die in the Civil War did so on behalf of the Confederacy. Due to the efforts of the African American Heritage Society, the back panel of this slab now lists the names of United States Colored Troops who died while on active duty. The names of four white Union soldiers were added to the panel that lists the Confederate soldiers’ names. They were not distinguished as Union soldiers. As the Civil War soldiers are now essentially separated by race, the monument continues to imply that white Maury County natives only served in the Confederacy, and black Maury County natives only served in the Federal army.¹⁶

14. Skyler Swisher, “County Adds to War Memorial,” July 3, 2011, Columbia Daily Herald, 1A & 3A

15. Ibid.

16. See Appendix B for a list of USCT soldiers who died while on active duty during the Civil War.

The individuals who researched soldiers from Maury County who died during active military service did not include the stories of black and white Federal soldiers in their work. After more than ten years, and despite other additions to the monument, these Union veterans continued to be overlooked.¹⁷ They were not named in any local historical publication, despite the efforts made to identify Confederate veterans.¹⁸ It was not until Jo Ann McClellan and Elizabeth Queener did the research and petitioned the Maury County Commission that an effort was made to include these Federal soldiers in the dominant narrative.

The process of getting the names of USCT soldiers engraved on the Wall of Honor was no small feat. The first step in this lengthy process was gathering the research. Again, while numerous efforts had been made to document the names of Confederate soldiers, no comparable effort had been made for Federal soldiers, either white or black. In order to find the names of these soldiers, McClellan and Queener combed through Federal army records available on the research site Fold3. From service records and pension records, they identified fifty-eight soldiers who died during the war while on active duty. Many died of disease due to deplorable camp conditions.¹⁹

18. Jill Garrett, *Confederate Soldiers and Patriots of Maury County, Tennessee* (Columbia, TN: James Madison Sparkman Chapter UDC, 1970).

19. Jo Ann McClellan and Elizabeth Queener, *American Civil War, United States Union Soldiers Maury County, Tennessee* (Columbia, TN: African American Heritage Society of Maury County, 2012).

Once the research was complete, McClellan presented it to the Maury County Commission, seeking approval of the additional names, and allocation of funds for the project. Numerous attempts to contact the chair of the Administrative Committee proved unsuccessful. The chair of this committee, who would need to approve the project before it could be presented to the whole Commission, did not return McClellan's calls..

McClellan then contacted one of the Commissioners from her district, who supported the project, and ensured that it was brought before the Administrative Committee. The Administrative Committee asked Bob Duncan, Director of the Maury County Archive, to verify the accuracy of McClellan's research. That verification, along with McClellan's explanation of the project, the support of community leaders such as James Patterson, director of Maury County Veteran's Services Department, as well as Maury County Commissioner Scott Cipicky, helped to secure the project's approval. From the Administrative Committee, the proposal was then passed to the Budget Committee, where \$6,000 was allocated for the project. On October 15, 2012, the Maury County Commission approved an allocation of \$6,000 to engrave the names of fifty-four USCT and four white Federal soldiers onto the Wall of Honor.²⁰

This approval from the County Commission was only the first hurdle that McClellan cleared. Once the project was approved and sent to the purchasing agent to be completed, a number of delays occurred. After several inquiries, McClellan was informed that the project would not be completed until the AAHS had paid for a portion of the cost.

20. Maury County Commission, Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Commission, October 15, 2013.

The African American Heritage Society contributed \$2,700, which was raised through an “Adopt A Soldier” fundraiser.

The engravings were finally completed in the summer of 2013, and the addition was dedicated on October 19, 2013. The dedication ceremony was attended by a large crowd, and featured addresses by State and local officials, including Patrick McIntyre, Director of the Tennessee Historical Commission; State Representative Sheila Butt; John Seigenthaler, founder of the First Amendment Center at Vanderbilt University and former Assistant Attorney General in the Kennedy administration; and Bob Duncan, Maury County Historian and Director of the Maury County Archive.²¹ Re-enactors from the 13th UCST, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, also participated in the dedication ceremony. Bobby Lovett of Tennessee State University was the keynote speaker for the luncheon that followed the ceremony.²²

This recognition of white Federal soldiers and USCT members on an existing monument is significant. Confederate soldiers are featured prominently on Maury County’s Wall of Honor, and Jo Ann McClellan noted that many people believed this to

21. Tim Hodge, “58 Maury Civil War Soldiers Added to Monument,” *The Columbia Daily Herald*, October 19, 2013 <http://columbiadailyherald.com/sections/news/local-news/58-maury-civil-war-soldiers-added-monument.html> and “Updating Maury’s War Memorial” *Historic Maury* 49, no. 4 (December 2013): 3-5.

22. Dr. Bobby Lovett is the author of *A Touch of Greatness: A History of Tennessee State University* (2013), *America’s Historically Black Colleges: A Narrative History, 1837-2009* (2011), *How it Came to Be* (2006), *The Civil Rights Movement in Tennessee: A Narrative History* (2005), *The African American History of Nashville, Tennessee, 1780-1930* (1999), and *A Black Man’s Dream: The First One Hundred Years* (1993).

be a Confederate monument.²³ The memory of the Civil War, and ownership of Civil War monuments, continue to be hotly contested issues throughout the United States, Civil War monuments have come to be sites of conflict.²⁴ While other monuments to the USCT exist in Tennessee, this is the first time that they have been honored on an existing monument that also honors Confederate soldiers.²⁵ Other efforts to commemorate USCT and white Federal soldiers continue to be met with resistance throughout the United States. In 2013, the Sons of Union Veterans asked to place a monument to Union soldiers at the Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park in Florida. The park already hosts three monuments to Confederate soldiers who won the Battle of Olustee, one of which is an obelisk that was dedicated by the United Daughters of the Confederacy in 1912.²⁶ This request was met with outrage from Confederate organizations, who argued that the

23. Jo Ann McClellan, Interview with author, October 2014

24. For more information on recent contests over Civil War monuments, see Robbie Brown, “Memphis Drops Confederate Names from Parks, Sowing New Battles,” *New York Times*, March 28, 2013, accessed February 10, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/29/us/memphis-drops-confederate-names-from-parks-sowing-new-battles.html?module=Search&mabReward=relbias%3Ar%2C%7B%221%22%3A%22RI%3A5%22%7D&_r=0; and Robbie Brown, “Bust of Civil War General Stirs Anger in Alabama,” *New York Times*, August 24, 2012, accessed February 10, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/25/us/fight-rages-in-selma-ala-over-a-civil-war-monument.html?module=Search&mabReward=relbias%3Ar%2C%7B%221%22%3A%22RI%3A5%22%7D&_r=2.

25. A statue dedicated to the USCT was erected in Nashville, Tennessee’s Nashville City Cemetery in 2006.

26. Lizette Alvarez, “Blue and Gray Still in Conflict at a Battle Site,” *The New York Times*, January 16, 2014, accessed January 5, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/17/us/blue-and-gray-still-in-conflict-at-a-battle-site.html?_r=0.

addition of a Union monument would amount to “revisionist history” that would fundamentally change the meaning of the site.²⁷

The effort to include white Federal soldiers and United States Colored Troops on the Wall of Honor continues. In 2014, the African American Heritage Society was awarded a grant from The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee to partially fund a second phase of additions to the Wall of Honor Monument. Thirty-five more names of USCT veterans are slated to be added, pending approval from the County Commission.

Following this first successful effort to include USCT and white Federal soldiers on the Wall of Honor, the AAHSMC continued to push to mark the landscape of Maury County with historical markers recognizing the experiences of African Americans. Grant money from the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee helped to fund the erection of two Tennessee Historical Commission Historical Markers at the site of the College Hill School, and at the site of the Maury County Colored Hospital. This designation by the Tennessee Historical Commission signifies the importance of these sites within local and state history.

The College Hill School was the first African American public school in Maury County. It opened in the 1880s as the Colored Public School. This was around the same time as the opening of Andrews School, the first public school for white students. Through the 1940s, the school educated elementary and high school students. In 1949, Carver-Smith High School opened to educate black high school students, and the College

27. Ibid.

Hill School restructured as an elementary school.²⁸ After school desegregation, College Hill Elementary School closed and the building was used as an alternative school for students with disciplinary issues. The original building was torn down, and the alternative school was rebuilt on the site. In 2006, the current school was named after H.O. Porter, a long-time College Hill educator and principal.²⁹

The dedication for the College Hill marker was held on July 26, 2014, in conjunction with a weekend-long reunion of alumni from College Hill and Carver-Smith High Schools. The reunion committee also helped fund the marker. A large group of alumni as well as local and state officials attended the ceremony. I attended this dedication in my capacity as a Board Member of the African American Heritage Society, and observed that the crowd was enthusiastic as speakers remembered the pivotal role that the school played in their lives and in the community.

28. "Historical Marker Dedication Ceremony Slated Saturday for College Hill School," July 22, 2014, <http://columbiadailyherald.com/lifestyles/features/historical-marker-dedication-ceremony-slated-saturday-college-hill-school>

29. Jo Ann McClellan, "Brief History of College Hill School," *Historic Maury* 50, no. 3, (October 2014): 7-11; And Jessica French, "Desegregation in Maury County Public Schools," Unpublished paper, Seminar in Public History, Middle Tennessee State University, October 2012. In possession of the author.

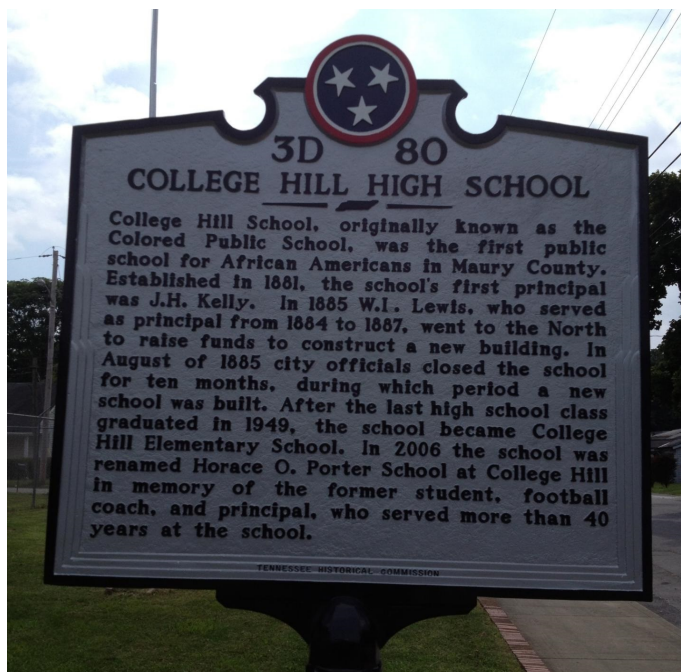


Figure 7: College Hill Historical Marker. Photo courtesy of Jo Ann McClellan.

In March 2015 the African American Heritage Society dedicated another historical marker at the site of the Maury County Colored Hospital.³⁰ On a crisp, sunny, spring morning, about seventy people gathered on E. 7th Street to dedicate this marker. State and local officials in attendance included Columbia City Mayor Dean Dickey, Maury County Mayor Charles Norman, Tennessee Historical Commission representative Tiny Jones, and Tennessee State Representative David Shepard. The hospital building is no longer standing; a home not sits on that property. The marker was placed in the front yard of that property, along the street. Jo Ann McClellan officiated the ceremony. Family members who own the property unveiled the marker, and AAHSMC Vice President Walter Mitchell read the text. Following the ceremony, about fifty people gathered at

30. Ashley Layhew Poe, "Study of the Maury County Colored Hospital," Unpublished paper, Seminar in Public History, Middle Tennessee State University, April 2013. In possession of the author.

Christy's Restaurant for a luncheon, which featured Dr. Learotha Williams of Tennessee State University as keynote speaker.



Figure 8: Maury County Colored Hospital Historical Marker, Columbia, Tennessee. Photograph by Jaryn Abdallah.

The African American Heritage Society also applied for a Tennessee Historical Marker at the site of Morton's Funeral Home. Morton's Funeral Home, on E. 8th Street, located in the heart of the black commercial district in downtown Columbia. It was a multigenerational family business. The Morton family were leaders in this black community. Both the Morton family and the business played pivotal roles in the "Columbia Race Riot," as detailed in Gail Williams O'Brien's *The Color of the Law*.³¹ In

31. Veronica Sales, "Morton Family Funeral Home," Unpublished paper, Seminar in Public History, Middle Tennessee State University, May 2014. In possession of the author.

February 2015 the Tennessee Historical Commission approved this application, and the African American Heritage Society will dedicate this marker later that year.

Another successful effort has been the implementation of a quarterly lecture series that addresses various aspects of the black experience. Themes have included The Civil War, Reconstruction, education, and religion. Speakers have included professors from nearby universities as well as local historians. It is no coincidence that these themes mirror the major projects that the African American Heritage Society has undertaken. Jo Ann McClellan, who is largely responsible for the direction of research and projects, explained that she focuses on things that African Americans have worked for when choosing projects.³² One example of that is education. Similarly to African Americans throughout the South, black communities in Maury County worked to support their educational institutions. African American education was highlighted as the theme of the 2014-2015 lecture series, the temporary exhibit hosted at Rippavilla Plantation, and the 2015 AAHS fundraising calendar.

RELATIONSHIPS:

Relationships both within and outside of Maury County have been an important part of the success of the African American Heritage Society. While the AAHS is a community based organization and does not have the resources to hire a professional staff member to conduct research and direct projects, the Society has developed a relationship with Dr. Norkunas, a professor in the Public History Department at Middle Tennessee State University. I was a student in Dr. Norkunas's Oral History Seminar and suggested

32. Jo Ann McClellan, Interview with the author, February 2014.

she get in touch with Ms. McClellan, which she did. They began to work together and have been collaborating since 2012. Students in Dr. Norkunas's Public History Seminar work with the Board to conduct research projects in African American history in Maury County. As of this writing, Public History graduate students in Dr. Norkunas's seminar have done detailed research on twenty-two African American topics in Maury County, completing research papers and related public history projects. Students in Dr. Norkunas's Oral History Theory & Methodology classes are also seek to co-create oral histories with black narrators in Maury County.

Other MTSU professors have developed projects with the AAHSMC. Dr. Carroll Van West's students have worked with the Society to identify important black history sites throughout Maury County, in order to update the African American Heritage Driving Tour brochure, which was created by the Center for Historic Preservation in 2005. This update is set to include more sites than the original fifteen. This relationship between public historians and a community based historical organization has given the AAHSMC access to new research that serves as the basis of public programs, brochures, historic markers, and other public history initiatives.

While the current information-gathering phase is critical, the ultimate goal of the AAHSMC is to make this information available to the public, and ensure that the narrative of Maury County's history includes African Americans. In order to accomplish this, relationships with other local producers of Maury County's history are essential. The African American Heritage Society has made inroads with other local historical organizations that are beginning to lead to an increased awareness of black history. Jo Ann McClellan explained that before the Society began operations, black history was

rarely acknowledged outside of February's Black History Month.³³ Now local newspapers and historical publications cover AAHSMC events throughout the year. Local and state officials attend AAHSMC events to dedicate historical markers and the Federal soldier name dedication on the Wall of Honor. One local historic house museum, Rippavilla Plantation, has requested several times to host a temporary exhibit that McClellan created about Freedmen's Bureau schools around Maury County. McClellan reported that the exhibit has received favorable responses from Rippavilla's staff and visitors.

FINAL REFLECTIONS:

The histories that have been produced by most local white historians do not include the experiences of African Americans fully. These exclusions imply that African Americans have not had an important impact on the history of the area. This is not an issue that is unique to Maury County. Many communities in the United States struggle to fully incorporate African American voices and experiences into their local histories. As the African American Heritage Society of Maury County researches, preserves, and publicizes African American history, the ultimate goal of this work is to create a narrative of Maury County's history that is more inclusive of white and black experiences.

The process of achieving an integrated narrative of Maury County's history that is accepted by other community organizations is complex. The African American Heritage Society of Maury County has started this process by working to research and preserve the history of African Americans in Maury County. Ultimately, an integrated narrative would

33. Jo Ann McClellan, Interview with the author, February 2014.

require historic house museums to understand and acknowledge the experiences of enslaved people, servants, and farm hands that made those large accumulations of wealth possible. It would require tours of downtown Columbia that discussed the experiences of the black people, enslaved and free, who lived and worked alongside whites throughout Maury County's history. Further, if the Maury County Convention & Visitor's Bureau is to continue identifying itself based on the county's antebellum experience, it must acknowledge the vital role that enslaved people played in that experience. Tours of the grand antebellum mansions must move past the singular focus on white families who lived in them to acknowledge the enslaved communities that lived and worked on these plantations. Narratives of the Civil War must include the experiences of the enslaved, beyond just the few who remained "loyal" to their enslavers. If the dominant narrative of Maury County's history is to truly become more inclusive, other local historical organizations must continue to join in the work of researching and documenting black history that has been overlooked for far too long.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: HISTORICAL MARKERS & MONUMENTS

Note: The term “Historical Marker” refers to a marker that has been sponsored by a local organization and approved by the Tennessee Historical Commission. These markers are uniform in appearance, and therefore easily identified as official. “Monuments” are privately sponsored and erected.

Historical Markers

Number	Title	Location	Summary of Information
3D 12	Forrest and Wilson	US 431, 2.5 Mi North of Rally Hill	Marks the area where Gen. Forrest outmaneuvered Federal Cavalry of Major Gen. James H. Wilson.
3D 39	James Knox Polk	Corner of W. 7th and High Streets, downtown Columbia	The home of President James K. Polk's parents. President Polk lived here while he practiced law, before he married Sarah Polk.
3D 20	Greenwood	Downtown Columbia, on sidewalk by cemetery	Marks the first city cemetery in Columbia. Many of the county's early European settlers are buried here, including Samuel and Jane Knox Polk, parents of James K. Polk
3D 45	Davis Ford	Hwy 50, 1/2 mi from Fountain Creek	Marks an area along the Duck River where the Confederate forces crossed.
3D 44	William Banks Caperton	Hwy 31, near Duplex Road	Local war hero. This marker shows the spot where his birth place was located.
3D 46	Ewell Farm	Hwy 31, junction with Depot Road	Home of Lt. Gen. Richard S. Ewell, CSA. He imported the first Jersey cattle to Tennessee and developed the "Hal" strain of pacers.
3D 50	Branham & Hughes Military Academy	Spring Hill, on the grounds of the Tennessee Children's Home	Late 19th/Early 20th century military academy. It closed in 1932. Became the Tennessee Orphan's Home in 1934.
3D 47	Billy Direct	Hwy 31, 2 mi south of Spring Hill, near Rippavilla	Foal site of horse Billy Direct, who set a mile pacing record of 1:55 in 1938. Burial site of other champion horses Napoleon Direct and Haynes' Peacock.
3D 14	Hood's Command Post	Hwy 31, 3 mi south of Spring Hill	Near the site where Hood spent the night prior to the Battle of Franklin. Hood failed to secure Nashville Hwy, allowing Federal troops to escape to Franklin
3D 21	Polk's Boyhood Home	Hwy 31, 2 mi north of Rutherford Creek	Location where President Polk's family first settled when they moved to Tennessee from North Carolina
3D 74	Rattle and Snap Plantation	Hwy 234, across from the plantation	Polk family home, part of the Ashwood Historic District. Home was built in the 1840s, Greek Revival architectural style.
3D 19	Forrest and Capron	Hwy 243, between Columbia and Mt. Pleasant	Civil War skirmish between Confederate cavalry under Forrest and Union Cavalry under Capron.
3D 68	Columbia Military Academy	Roadside in front of Columbia Academy	Site of a 20th-century military school that trained future "general officers, battle heroes, governors, educators, and corporate heads."

3D 71	Jonathan Webster	Hampshire Pike, Mt. Pleasant	Home of American Revolutionary War veteran, construction began in 1810. He is known as the person who introduced mules to Maury County. He is buried here in the family cemetery.
3D 13	Hood and Schofield	Hwy 243, Columbia	November 24, 1864. Military engagement leading up to the Battle of Franklin and later the Battle of Nashville. Intended to cut Schofield off.
3D 70	Maury Light Artillery	Old Hwy 7, Santa Fe	The unit consisted of 170 men. After sinking the USS Mississippi on March 14, 1863, the unit was disbanded in defeat on July 8, 1863. 47 members were killed, many were wounded.
3D 72	Rippavilla Plantation	Hwy 31, Spring Hill	Home of the Cheairs family. Nathaniel Cheairs was active in the Confederate Army. Confederate camp site and General Hood's command prior to the Battle of Franklin.
3D 37	St. John's	Hwy 243 toward Mt. Pleasant	Polk family church, consecrated 1842 by Bishop James Harvey Otey. Memorial services held on Whitsunday.
3D 38	Zion	Intersection of Hwy 412 and Zion Road	1 mile from Zion Presbyterian Church which was founded by settlers from South Carolina in 1807. "Many descendants of the founders are in the present congregation."
3D 76	Clarke Training	Bluegrass Ave, Mt. Pleasant	Rosenwald school that operated from 1922-1969. Founded by black community members. The school was closed in 1969, after the school system was desegregated. The building no longer stands.
3D 67	Mt. Lebanon Missionary Baptist Church	E. Eighth Street, Downtown Columbia	Church established in 1843 by free black residents of Columbia. It served as a school during Reconstruction.
3D 22	Sam Davis	Nashville Hwy, south of Columbia	the body of Confederate scout Sam Davis stayed here overnight on its trip back to Smyrna, TN, after his execution by Federal forces in Pulaski, Nov. 27, 1863.
3D 62	Birthplace of J. Percy Priest	Carter's Creek Pike and Theta Road	U.S. Congressman J. Percy Priest was born in this area on April 1, 1941.
3D 5	Joseph Brown	Hwy 31, south of Columbia	Home of Joseph Brown and the site of the first county court. Brown was one of the area's early leading citizens.
3D 7	First Settler	Hwy 31, South of McCains	Near the grave site of Maury County's first known white settler, John Mack, who supposedly settled in the area in 1781.
3D 80	College Hill School	1101 Bridge Street, Columbia	At the site of the first public school for African Americans in Maury County. The school opened in 1881. The last high school class graduated in 1949, at which point the school was reorganized into a black elementary school. It is now the H.O. Porter Alternative School at College Hill.
3D 82	Maury County Colored Hospital	506 E. 7th Street, Columbia	At the site of the Maury County Colored Hospital, which provided medical care for local African Americans from 1923-1954. The hospital was founded and operated by African Americans for thirty years.

Monuments

Name/Purpose	Location	Inscription
John Harlan Willis Memorial and Bridge	Hwy 31, entering downtown Columbia	Congressional Medal of Honor awarded to John Harlan Willis, Pharmacists Mate First Class, U.S. Navy by the President for conspicuous gallantry and courage above and beyond the call of duty while under fire on Iwo Jima, having died in action February 28,1945.
Veteran's Memorial	Public Square, in front of courthouse	Hail, ye heroes! Heaven-born band! Who fought and died in freedom's cause - Honoring all who served and in everlasting memory of those from Maury County who made the supreme sacrifice in World War I, World War II, Korean War, Vietnam, Grenada, Lebanon, Panama Canal, Persian Gulf.
Confederate Monument	Rose Hill Cemetery, Confederate section	Dedicated May 7, 1882. Made by Muldoon Monument Co. for Confederate Memorial Assn. Plaque placed May 7, 1999 by Capt. James Madison Sparkman Chapter, U.D.C.
Preservation Park	Downtown, Corner of W 7th & High St.	Given by the Maury County Historical Society, 1995
Pop Geers Memorial Park	W. 7th Street	Erected to the memory of Edward Franklin Geers by his fellow horsemen and friends throughout the world - A tribute from those who loved the greatness of his soul from the start of the race through the final home-stretch of life - His life was an inspiration for coming generations, "Temptation knocked unheeded at his door."
Kid's Kingdom	Playground at Maury Co. Park	With the support of Saturn Corporation and their worldwide network of Saturn retailers, the people of Maury County dedicate "Kid's Kingdom" to the children of our community. We cherish them today for they are our future.
Tony's Trail	Maury Co. Park	This trail is dedicated in memory of Tony Scott. Tony served as director of Maury County Parks & Recreation until he lost his battle with ALS on December 16 2004. He took great pride in the parks and enjoyed the beauty and tranquility of the outdoor opportunities he worked so hard to maintain. He loved nature and watching wildlife in the park. Ever mindful of others, as ALS progressively limited his mobility he gained a unique perspective on the challenges faced by those with special needs every day. His personal experience lead to the concept of this trail so all could enjoy that which he so loved. He wanted all who visit to know the same peace and fulfillment he felt here. Through his hands they will be able to do so.

Jared's Dream	Maury Co. Park	Dedicated in loving memory of William Jared Buckner, Sept. 30, 1990 - Mar. 1, 2002, son of Billy and Pam Buckner, brother of Bianca Buckner.
Zion Church Slave Monument - Cemetery	Grounds of Zion Presbyterian Church, Zion Rd, Columbia	This tablet is erected in memory, honor, esteem, and appreciation of those who lie here - men, women, and children - named and unnamed whose toil and tears enriched the soul of the Zion settlement and without whose efforts this community could not have survived and prospered. Session. Zion Presbyterian Church.
Zion Church Slave Monument - Daddy Ben	Grounds of Zion Presbyterian Church, Zion Rd, Columbia	This tablet is erected in memory and appreciation of the loyalty and service of the slaves owned by the early settlers of Zion community buried here. Among them is Daddy Ben, a son royal of Africa owned by Col. Scott. His loyalty to his master won for him the award of a gold eagle from a British officer. He was hung three times, still he refused to tell where he had hidden his master.
Confederate Monument	Mt. Pleasant Square	Erected in memory of our Confederate soldiers by the Bigby Gray Chapter U.D.C. The love, gratitude, and memory of the people of the South shall gild their fame in one eternal sunshine - History has enshrined them immortal - Crest to crest they bore our banner. Side by side they fell asleep. Hand to hand we rear this token. Heart to heart we kneel and weep.
Law Enforcement Memorial	Public Square, beside courthouse	In memory of those who have made the supreme sacrifice. It is not how these officers died that made them heroes, it is how they lived.
World War II Monument	In front of Elk's Club Lodge, WKRM Lane	In memory of T. Sgt. Thomas H. Armstrong, Jr., Pvt. Elijah H. Ayers, Jr., who died in service of their country in World War 2.
Fallen Officers Memorial	Woodland Park	This Shelter is dedicated to Peace Officers associated with Maury County who gave their lives in the LINE OF DUTY.
Whitwell Memorial	Woodland Park	In honor of Officer Larry Whitwell. Born February 13th, 1947. End of Watch April 5th, 1981.
Cameron Memorial	Woodland Park	My boy Jack Jack. Matthew 19:14. I AM with those that have suffered. I comfort those that are suffering. Pray for those that will suffer.
First County Seat	Intersection of Mooresville Pike and Morrow Lane	Maury County was created by act of the General Assembly of Tennessee Nov. 16, 1807, organized Dec. 21, 1807 in the log home of Joseph Brown about 400 yards west of this point. The county seat was moved to Columbia Dec 21, 1808.

Frierson Slave Cemetery	Hampshire Pike	Given by Willis Frierson to his slaves. Oldest marker is Milly Embry, 1861. Jim Frierson who was stolen from his family as a child is buried here with his wife Vinnie and many descendents including Napoleon Frierson for whom the famous pacer Napoleon Direct is named. In 1936 Hinton Frierson son of Willis Frierson deeded this property to the cemetery trustees.
Frierson Slave Memorial	Hampshire Pike	This monument erected to the memory of W.R. Frierson slaves and their descendants. Erected by H.S. Frierson, son of W.R. Frierson, 1937.
Nathan Vaught	Downtown Columbia	Master Builder of Maury County, August 13, 1799-April 9, 1880. An orphan apprenticed by the court to James Purcell "to learn the trade of cabinet marker," Vaught learned his trade during Columbia's early growth period. The high quality and lasting beauty of his buildings earned him the "Master Builder" title. Among his highly regarded works are Rattle & Snap Clifton Place, Elm Springs, St. John's Church, and Maury County's courthouse square. Twice married, first to Lucretia Jackson Journey, then to Sarah H. Dale, his was an example of a life well lived. He was a founder of Rose Hill Cemetery, a devout Mason, and a devout Methodist. From humble beginnings he left a legacy of unquestioned integrity and works of uncompromising quality.
William Leech Memorial	Old Hwy 7, Santa Fe	Bill Leech often said "A person's good deeds in life will bear witness for him." By this memorial the friends and family of William M. Leech, Jr. intend to bear witness for a friend, father and husband who we all miss more than we can say.
St. Paul AME Church	Church Street, Columbia	Saint Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church was originally a group of black people who held weekly meetings in the basement of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Early in 1840 they formed their own organization and erected their first church on the corner of second and Garden Streets on the bank of the Duck River. In 1867 these members organized into what is now Saint Paul A.M.E. Church under the direction of Rev. Gilbert Algee. In 1870 the first A.M.E. church in the county was built on the present lot and in 1888 became the first county school for blacks. In 2000 the church was completely remodeled under the leadership of Rev. Troy Merrit, Jr.

APPENDIX B: MAURY COUNTY USCTS

A list of United States Colored Troops from Maury County, Tennessee who died while on active duty during the Civil War.

Name, Company. Date of Enlistment, Age at Enlist, Occupation at Enlist, Death

61st Regiment

1. William Mays, Co. B, July 1, 1863, 23 years old, Farmer, Unspecified
2. Daniel Neil, Co. K, August 24, 1863, 30 years old, Field Hand, December 2, 1864
3. Madison Neil, Co. K, August 24, 1863, 45 years old, Field hand, August 21, 1864
4. John Parker, Co. K, July 16, 1863, 37 years old, Field Hand, September 3, 1863
5. Alphonso Polk, Co. E, August 24, 1863, 39 years old, Farmer, June 7, 1865
- 6.

111th Regiment

7. George Ackan, Co. E, February 16, 1864, 19 years old, Farmer, March 1864
8. George Benjamin, Co. E, February 10, 1846, 23 years old, Laborer, Jan. 25, 1866
9. George Blackwood, Co. E, February 10, 1864, 22 years old, Farmer, March 1843
10. James Cates, Co. E, February 10, 1864, 18 years old, Laborer, March 1865
11. Abraham Couser, Co. I, February 1, 1864, 18 years old, Farmer, Dec. 3, 1864
12. Lewis Cowdon, C. G, January 20, 1864, 44 years old, Unknown, Aug 14, 1864
13. Samuel Ercery, Co. E, February 10, 1864, 20 years old, Laborer, January 10, 1866
14. John Fleming, Co. E, February 10, 1864, 20 years old, Laborer, January 17, 1866
15. Elbert Grimes, Co. E, March 1, 1864, 24 years old, Farmer, April 5, 1865
16. Robert Henley, Co. I, February 1, 1864, 26 years old, Farmer, December 23, 1865
17. Jesse Higdon, Co. C, February 27, 1864, 17 years old, Farmer, October 2, 1865
18. Jacob Marks, Co. I, February 1, 1864, 45 years old, Farmer, July 4, 1864
19. Phillip Lawrence, Co. E, April 17, 1864, 22 years old, Laborer, December 1, 1864
20. Aleck Mack, Co. E, February 10, 1864, 25 years old, Laborer, December 15, 1865
21. Alfred Moore, Co. C, January 26, 1864, 42 years old, Farmer, March 23, 1864
22. Richard Watkins, C. E, February 10, 1864, 22 years old, Laborer, March 21, 1866
23. Willeby Worthman, Co. E, Unspecified, 50 years old, Laborer, October 25, 1864

110th Regiment

24. Henry Bellafount, Co. G, Dec. 23, 1863, 18 years old, Farmer, May 11, 1864
25. Samuel Bellafount, Co. G, Dec. 23, 1863, 34 years old, Farmer, Feb. 13, 1864
26. James Coffee, Co. D, Dec. 8, 1863, 43 years old, Farmer, November 22, 1865
27. Nelson Davis, Co. E, Dec. 7, 1863, 32 years old, Laborer, May 4, 1864
28. Abraham Fitzpatrick, Co. G, Dec. 23, 1863, 44 years old, Farmer, Oct. 17, 1864
29. Arthur Foster, Co. G, Dec. 23, 1863, 38 years old, Mechanic, May 14, 1864
30. Rufus McCord, Co. B, Nov. 20, 1863, 18 years old, Farmer, April 1, 1864
31. Thomas Mitchell, Co. G, Dec. 23, 1863, 21 years old, Farmer, Jan. 10, 1864
32. Allen Perry, Co. B, Nov. 20, 1863, 26 years old, Farmer, April 18, 1864
33. John Trousdale, Co. G, Dec. 23, 1863, 44 years old, Farmer, May 1864
34. Peter Wells, Co. G, Dec. 23, 1863, 26 years old, Farmer, March 12, 1864

11th Regiment (New)

35. Alfred Allen, Co. F, February 22, 1864, 34 years old, Unknown, Apr. 4, 1864

5th Regiment

36. John Simpson, Co. F, August 16, 1863, 29 years old, Farmer, Sept. 29, 1864

12th Regiment

37. Curan Andrews, Co. I, Aug. 12, 1863, 32 years old, Farmer, Oct. 12, 1865

All information from US Colored Troops Service Records, Fold3.com