

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:           LANDSCAPES OF TENSION: EXPLORING  
  NERVOUSNESS AND ANXIETY ON A  
  MARYLAND PLANTATION

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This dissertation examines a late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century plantation site, L’Hermitage, which is located in Frederick, Maryland, on what is now Monocacy National Battlefield. It considers how the interactions among and between the plantation owners, the Vincendière family, and their enslaved workers, in order to investigate how negotiations of power and supremacy can be read through spatial organization, material culture, and interpersonal relations. I refer to Denis Byrne’s (2003) use of the phrase “nervous landscape” to explore how a landscape and its occupants can be literally and figuratively nervous when absolute power fails and a heterogeneity and multiplicity of power and identities are introduced. That is, the disruption of homogeneity and hegemony breeds nervousness. Byrne uses this concept to explore racial tension; however, this project recognizes that anxiety can

emerge from uneasiness around other structural factors. This research relies on multiple sources, including historical documents, artifacts, and archaeological features in order to explore how race, gender, class, religion, and nationality interacted on the plantation landscape. This work applies particular attention to how the power dynamics around these hierarchies played out within the nervous frame, mitigating or contributing to a nervous landscape. The dissertation also uses this framework to explore nervousness in the literal sense; how anxiety was a fundamental element of the colonial experience, and more broadly how emotion is an important aspect of the human experience that should be considered in archaeological interpretations of the past.

This research is intended to contribute to the National Park Service's goal of enhancing its interpretation of the larger context of the Civil War. Monocacy National Battlefield (MNB) is primarily valued for the battle that took place in 1864, and this is reflected in much of its current interpretation. However, MNB is committed to expanding this interpretation to situate the Civil War battle in its historical, social, political, economic, and geographical context. Research on plantation life, including topics such as agriculture, slavery, and racism, will contribute toward this goal. Furthermore, the results of my study can be useful in framing the way Monocacy discusses power dynamics and identity in the context of L'Hermitage.

LANDSCAPES OF TENSION: EXPLORING NERVOUSNESS AND ANXIETY  
ON A MARYLAND PLANTATION

by

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the  
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
2018

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## Acknowledgements

This dissertation is the largest project I've ever tackled, and it would have been impossible without the incredible assistance and support of so many others. Though it is "my" dissertation, it always felt like a collaborative effort, and I am extremely grateful to everyone who played a part in helping me through this process. I would like to thank my committee members -- Paul Shackel, Barbara Little, Augusta Lynn Bolles, Don Linebaugh, and Stephen Brighton--who shared their resources, knowledge, and wisdom with me. A special thanks goes to my advisor, Paul Shackel, who has provided me with guidance and encouragement since I was a junior in college(!) and patiently worked with me through many starts and stops to ensure that my dissertation was as strong as possible.

I would like to express my appreciation for the past and current staff at Monocacy National Battlefield, including Joy Beasley, Kate Birmingham, Tom Gwaltney, Andrew Banasik, and Susan Trail— without them, my dissertation literally would not exist; the opportunities, resources and support they provided made this project possible. The staff at the Museum Resource Center, particularly Marian Creveling, Karen Orrence, and Bob Sonderman, provided support throughout the process of artifact analysis and processing.

I am grateful to the McNeil Center for Early American Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, which provided me with a dissertation fellowship.

I would also like to express my appreciation for the following people:

My fellow graduate students at the University of Maryland, particularly David Colon-Cabrera, Mike Roller, Jeremy Trombley, Courtney Singleton, Megan Springate, and Mary Furlong Minkoff, whose friendship, support, and feedback greatly improved my graduate experience and helped shape this dissertation;

Kevin Watkins, whose accountability check-ins, inspirational messages, and occasional threats played a huge part in the completion of this dissertation; I feel extremely fortunate to have a friend who is so incredibly supportive and invested in my success and well-being;

My favorite librarian, Caitlin Shanley, who assisted me with all my information needs, gave me many encouraging pep talks, and generally made my time at Paley Library so much more enjoyable;

Melinda Lewis, with whom I had many wonderful, morale-boosting noodle lunches and chats about academia throughout the writing process.

A very special thanks goes to my parents, Dan and Becky Bailey, and my sisters, Emily and Ray, who have been cheering me on since the very beginning and kept me going through it all.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

In summer 2010, a team of archaeologists scraped back soil to reveal a stone and mortar chimney foundation, a moment that was both exciting and sobering. The presence of the chimney hearth was evidence of a slave dwelling that had once existed on what is now Monocacy National Battlefield in Frederick, Maryland. The dwelling, one of six that would be identified, had been built long before the 1864 Civil War battle commemorated at this National Park site.

The story begins with the Vincendières, a family of refugees from Saint Domingue (present-day Haiti) who traveled nearly 600 miles to Frederick in 1793 in the wake of widespread slave uprisings in the French colonies. They brought twelve enslaved workers with them from the French colony, and went on to establish a plantation on the present-day battlefield land. L'Hermitage, as it was called, had an enormous enslaved workforce according to census records, but until 2003, the park had no material evidence of the slave quarters' existence. Archival research unearthed an account written by Polish traveler Julian Niemcewicz, who had passed by L'Hermitage in 1798 and observed that "On its banks one can see a row of wooden houses and one stone house with the upper storeys [sic] painted white" (1965:111). Archaeological excavations conducted over two field seasons in 2010 and 2011 revealed a row of chimney bases that verified Niemcewicz's description.

However, the excitement of this discovery was tempered by the sobering reality that existence of slave quarters was evidence of the racism, oppression, and violence that has persisted throughout American history. The excavation of the slave

village introduced a more complicated narrative into Monocacy National Battlefield's public interpretation, one that dealt with slavery, domination, and resistance. This tension echoes throughout the L'Hermitage project, as it is palpable on the landscape in the past and present. Fear, anxiety, and nervousness about one's precarious position motivated the inhabitants of L'Hermitage, both enslaved and free, to try to assert control over the environment and the movements within it.

The investigation of Monocacy National Battlefield's plantation history provides the opportunity to explore dynamic and ever-changing power relations in the past and present as they played out over the landscape. The history of L'Hermitage links multiple countries, France, Haiti, and the United States, people, and stories, to create a complex narrative of precarity and control in the past and present.

The purpose of my project was to examine additional histories of the park landscape and expand the somewhat limited scope of the park's current interpretive displays. Archaeological investigation of the slave quarters at L'Hermitage has and will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the experiences of the enslaved individuals who worked for the Vincendières. Furthermore, plantation sites like L'Hermitage are ideal locations for examining the intersection of racial identity, racism, and material culture in a complex social and economic system. My hope is that at some point in the near future, visitors to the park will come away with knowledge of not only battle strategies, victories, and losses, but also knowledge of for/over whom the Civil War was fought and the people who once occupied this land and the cultural context in which they lived.

A singular focus on Civil War history at national battlefields is problematic because,

as the Monocacy National Battlefield website points out, “The landscape has many other stories to tell...a rich and diverse history that spans over 10,000 years” (Monocacy National Battlefield [MNB] 2012). In the case of Monocacy National Battlefield, people have inhabited the present-day battlefield park since the Paleo-Indian period. This landscape hosted indigenous peoples 10,000 years ago (MNB 2012c), a plantation with a large enslaved workforce in the 18th and 19th centuries (MNB 2012d), and tenant farmers in the 19th and 20th centuries (Reed and Wallace 2004:108, Temkin 2000:26). Each of these periods is an important component of a comprehensive depiction of Monocacy National Battlefield’s history and requires a place in the interpretive narrative.

### Background and History



Figure 1. Map displaying the location of Monocacy National Battlefield. Courtesy of Tom Gwaltney.

Monocacy National Battlefield is located in Frederick, Maryland, about fifty

miles northwest of Washington, DC, and fifty miles west of Baltimore, Maryland (Figure 1). The battlefield comprises 1,647 acres of land, including farm, forest, and river areas. Components of the park include the Baker, Best, Lewis, Thomas, and Worthington Farms, and the Gambrill Mill and House, as well as five monuments on the battlefield that commemorate the Battle of Monocacy and recognize the soldiers who fought there on July 9, 1864 (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Map of the component properties in Monocacy National Battlefield. Courtesy of Tom Gwaltney.

Prior to the battle, Union troops had been defeated at Lynchburg, Virginia, which left the Shenandoah Valley and Washington, D.C. vulnerable to the Confederates (Reed and Wallace 2004:49). Union and Confederate forces fought for

the capital along the Monocacy River, covering ground on many of the surrounding farms. Although the Confederates won the Battle of Monocacy (the only Confederate victory on Northern soil), their advance on Washington, D.C. was delayed by Union troops long enough for Union reinforcements to come to the defense of the capital. Thus this event became known as “The Battle that Saved Washington, D.C.” (Reed and Wallace 2004:54). Although the site is obviously best known for the battle that took place in 1864, the occupation of park land stretches back to the Paleo-Indian period (12,000-8,000 B.C.). In recent years, eleven prehistoric sites dating to these various periods have been identified and recorded on Monocacy National Battlefield property.

My project focuses specifically on the period of occupation between 1793 and 1827. L’Hermitage was on land that now forms the Best Farm, so named for the family of tenant farmers that occupied the farmstead during the Civil War. L’Hermitage was a 748-acre plantation assembled by the Vincendière family in 1793. Before arriving in Frederick, the Vincendières had been living in Saint Domingue (present-day Haiti). The colony was one of France’s most lucrative endeavors, as it led the world in sugar and coffee exports, made possible by the enslavement of hundreds of thousands of African captives and their descendants (Johnson and Smith 1998:249). Due to the harsh conditions under which they were forced to work, the mortality rate among enslaved workers rose such that planters imported hundreds of thousands of slaves to maintain their labor pool. Consequently, by 1789, enslaved workers far outnumbered any other group in Saint Domingue, as the population included over 675,000 enslaved workers, 54,000 white planters, and 36,000 free

people of color (Blackburn 1997:440).

In Saint Domingue, the Vincendières had enjoyed great wealth and status gained through their participation in the plantation system. The family patriarch, Etienne, served as an attorney and manager for several large plantations, and he later purchased two coffee plantations for himself. His wife, Magnan, came from a wealthy family that owned indigo plantations. Their relative, Jean Payen de Boisneuf, who came to Maryland with the family, was the wealthy owner of three large sugar plantations and was an active representative of Saint Domingue in local and international politics. In 1791, a wave of slave insurrections caused many French planters to lose their property and flee the colony. The next year, the French government abolished slavery in its colonies, but many white planters, including the Vincendières, refused to release their enslaved workers, wishing to preserve their plantations and lifestyles. However, increasingly violent slave revolts eventually encouraged the Vincendière family to leave the country (Rivers-Cofield 2006:274). The French Revolution, which began in 1789, also prevented the Vincendières from returning to their native country. In order to escape the ongoing violence in Saint Domingue and France, the Vincendières, Jean Payen de Boisneuf, and twelve of their enslaved workers traveled to the United States, with all but Etienne Vincendière settling in Frederick, Maryland in 1793 (Beasley et al. 2001:24). It is not known why the Vincendières and Boisneuf chose to live in western Maryland, particularly since the landscape was so very different from that which they were used to in Saint Domingue. The climate and environment did not support the kind of large-scale cultivation and slave economy that the family had practiced, and most of the other

residents in the region were Germans from southeastern Pennsylvania and English settlers from southern Maryland who had settled there beginning in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century (Birmingham and Beasley 2014a:7).

Upon arriving in Frederick, the family established L'Hermitage on land that had been assembled by James Marshall, a local merchant. Soon after, the Vincendières opened their plantation as an asylum to other refugees from Saint Domingue and began constructing new buildings. In 1795, at the age of eighteen, Victoire Vincendière was established as the head of household, an unusual position for a young woman whose parents were both still living. She purchased 457 acres of surrounding land, and then bought an additional 291 acres, the land on which they were currently living, from Marshall in 1798. Evidence suggests that all financial transactions were actually arranged by distant relative Jean Payen de Boisneuf, though the motivation for these actions is unclear. According to the 1800 census, the L'Hermitage household included six men, eight women, and ninety enslaved individuals, at least twelve of whom had been brought from Saint Domingue by the Vincendières and Boisneuf. Theirs was one of the largest slaveholdings in Frederick County and even in Maryland, and it was ten times the number needed for the size of their property. Rivers-Cofield (2006:277) suggests that the Vincendières maintained an unnecessary quantity of enslaved laborers as a symbol of status, wealth, and their French-Caribbean roots, though they may have intended to participate in slave dealing or a secondary enterprise.

The Vincendières remained in Frederick for the rest of their lives. In 1816 and 1819, they began selling portions of L'Hermitage and some of their enslaved laborers

to slave dealers from Baltimore, Tennessee, and Louisiana, and by 1827 they had sold all of their property. After the Vincendières relinquished ownership of L'Hermitage, the property changed hands several times over the next century, but today it is known as the Best Farm, as the Battle of Monocacy took place when the Best family was a tenant on a portion of the land. In 1973, Monocacy National Battlefield was designated a National Historic Landmark and placed on the National Register of Historic Places, and in 1991, the battlefield was opened to the public.

The property where L'Hermitage once stood is referred to as the Best Farm in Monocacy National Battlefield's interpretive materials; the Best family never owned the land but they were the tenants at the time of the Civil War battle for which Monocacy National Battlefield was commemorated. The Bests did live there for several generations, though the owners since the time of the battle were the Trail family, who owned it from 1835 until they turned it over to the National Park Service (Reed and Wallace 2004:90).

There are several buildings on the farmstead, all of which are clustered about a quarter mile west of Route 355 and can be accessed by a lane leading in a westerly direction from the road (Figure 3). These buildings include the main house – a multi-part, L-shaped stone, brick, log and frame structure covered with stucco and wood siding; a one-story log kitchen; a log smokehouse; a two-story log and stone dwelling; a hipped roof stone barn; and a timber frame wagon shed and corncrib. All of the buildings face east except for the secondary dwelling, which faces west; all were constructed in the late 1700s and early 1800s, but have been modified since then with additions, renovations, and protective measures. A concrete block dairy barn, a

metal pole barn, frame sheds, chicken coops, and hog pens also existed on the Best Farm but were removed by the last tenants in the early 1990s.



Figure 3. Structures on the Best Farm looking southwest, including (left to right) the main house, the secondary dwelling, and the stone barn. Photo courtesy of the National Park Service.

While much of the property is open farmland, there are trees lining the riverbank and the western edge along Interstate 270. The cropland is rich and fertile, given that it is located in the bottomland of the Monocacy Valley. The Best Farm has been primarily agricultural land for the past two centuries, and farmers have grown a variety of grains, grasses, and corn as well as cattle, pigs, sheep, and horses there (USDA Census of Agriculture 1850, 1860, 1870) It is mostly flat with a gentle rise as one moves further east toward the road. Streams and an oak grove are found on the higher ground (Hotchkiss 1864:141). Limestone outcroppings are scattered around

the property, and were the source of crushed limestone that covers the entry road (Reed and Wallace 2004:19). A mix of crops, native plants, non-native plants, ornamental trees, shrubs, annuals, and perennials populates the Best Farm (Reed and Wallace 2004:14-17). These include deciduous trees, lilac shrubs, ailanthus trees, and fruit trees.

The most recent activity at Monocacy National Battlefield, from 2001 to the present, is the preservation and stabilization of existing structures. A multi-year identification and evaluation study was performed from 2001 to 2003 in order to examine the entire site history, from prehistoric times to the present, and reveal evidence of L'Hermitage in its original state (Beasley 2005). During these years, testing of the 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century occupations of the Best Farm recovered over 45,000 artifacts and uncovered features related to the enslaved population of L'Hermitage, including a domestic deposit and two ambiguous trench-like features. In addition, archaeologists discovered anomalies that were thought to represent the row of wooden houses described in a Polish visitor's 1798 account of the slave quarters (Beasley 2005:19.6).

Under the direction of Cultural Resource Manager Joy Beasley and Archeologist Kate Birmingham, a group of undergraduate and graduate students performed fieldwork in 2010 and 2011 on the Best Farm in the possible slave village area that was identified during the previous investigations. During the summer of 2010 we explored features uncovered during the survey, and exposed new features. Based on these features, we were able to determine the spatial layout of the slave

village and its conformity (or lack thereof) to typical arrangements in the state, the region, or perhaps even Haiti.

### *L'Hermitage in Context*

This study builds upon and contributes to the discourse and scholarship on plantation studies in general and plantation archaeology in particular. Plantations are defined by Singleton (1985:1) as “an agricultural enterprise in which a number of workers of a subordinate class work together to produce a crop for someone else to be sold in a market.” Plantation sites like L’Hermitage are ideal locations for examining the intersection of racial identity, racism, and material culture in a complex social and economic system. As Singleton (1999:15) points out, “Plantations offer archaeologists the opportunity to observe material manifestations of social relations within discrete components of a well-defined cultural landscape.” Furthermore, research performed on plantations can help remind people just how important slave labor was for creating the landscapes seen in the past and present, thereby highlighting the African-American presence in and contribution to plantation history (Gibb 1997). The sociocultural life of enslaved individuals was neglected in the past by archaeologists, and while this has changed in recent years, there is still much work to be done to understand the characteristics and significance of items in African American contexts (Handler and Lange 1978:2-5) as well as the practical matters of housing, diet, and lifestyle (Fairbanks 1981:1). Enslaved workers were prevented from leaving written records so most primary documents regarding slavery were written by white European-Americans with the goal of reinforcing the established system (Singleton 1985); therefore archaeology has quite a lot of contributions to

make to our understanding of the lifeways of this marginalized group as well as their owners. As Wilkie and Farnsworth (1999:286) point out regarding the strengths and contributions of archaeology:

The study of archaeological remains is, by its very nature, the study of day-to-day life. [Anthony] Giddens' duality of structure is a useful concept to apply to material cultural remains as well. In using material culture, individuals are engaged in both conscious and unconscious acts, yet both of these forms of action are inherently meaningful. Giddens argues that those acts carried out by the individual unconsciously may serve to relieve tensions that shape everyday interactions (1979:69). Through conscious action, individuals may manipulate these tensions. Material culture, therefore, can be seen both as a means of unconsciously alleviating tensions among individuals or within groups (as passive reflections of shared values) and as actively manipulated symbols in social interactions. In such a way, material culture can potentially be seen as a more passive reflection of cultural norms or as active means of discourse. The challenge for archaeologists, of course, is to attempt to understand the myriad potential meanings of a given artifact in a given context.

Since its inception in the 1930s, American plantation archaeology has expanded and become increasingly complex and diverse in terms of research questions, goals, and approaches. While early plantation archaeology was largely descriptive and addressed research questions that Singleton (1990:70) characterizes as “poorly conceived,” later work addressed topics such as class, race, ethnicity, power, economics, and relations of domination, and developed new concepts like status patterning and artifact patterning (Singleton 1990:70). Archaeologists generally took three approaches to plantation archaeology: a planter-focused approach, a slave-centered approach, and a dialectical approach (Orser 1990); plantation archaeology can generally be characterized as a progression from the former to the latter. Hudgins (1993:171-3) identified other changes to plantation archaeology in the 1970s and

early 1980s: a more interdisciplinary approach (incorporating anthropology, folklore, history, and architectural history), a new focus on earthfast structures, and an appreciation for the overall plantation landscape, rather than isolated buildings. Fairbanks (1981) characterizes these years as a time where plantation archaeology tended to focus on sites in the southeastern United States, such as Georgia and South Carolina, and pursue research questions about diet, housing, lifestyle, and the relationship between enslaved laborers, planters, and overseers. Archaeologists looked for manifestations of these relationships in the archaeological record, particularly in the form of the artifact patterns proposed by Stanley South (1977).

In the 1980s and 1990s, research interests expanded even more. Heath (1999:54) suggests that some of the salient topics of this period were “exploring the formation, retention, and maintenance of ethnic identity over time, for understanding how social relationships grounded in hierarchical systems of status, power, and gender were mediated within the confines of the antebellum slave system, and for exploring the manipulation of land, architecture, and other forms of material culture by both blacks and whites.” Shackel and Little (2015:97) note that later years saw the pursuit of an understanding of the “social, political, and economic implications of the plantation economy, its place in a profit-making system, the creation and integrity of an African American culture, and implications for an archaeology of racism today.” Clearly, plantation archaeology has come a long way since the early days of simple description and has spawned increasingly specialized areas of research. These include living conditions (MacDonald and Morgan 2012, Heinrich 2013, Singleton 1995, Pogue 2002, Young 1999, Reitz et al. 1985, Tuma 2006, Yentsch 1994, Reinhart

1984), spatial and landscape design analysis (Heath and Bennett 2000, Baugher and Spencer-Wood 2010, Battle-Baptiste 2007, Heath 2016, Gary and Proebsting 2016, Singleton 2015, Howlett Hayes 2013, Mrozowski, et al. 2008, Heath and Gary 2012, Edwards-Ingram 2006, Yentsch 2008, Epperson 1990, Epperson 1997, Epperson 1999, Agorsah 1999, Armstrong 1992, Delle 1998, Edwards 2006, Farnsworth 2001, Pulsipher and Goodwin 2001, Singleton 1995, Wheaton and Garrow 1985), personal items belonging to enslaved workers (Agbe-Davies 2015, Evans 2012, Fennell 2011, Hauser and DeCorse 2003, Cobb and DePratter 2012, Galke 2009, Agha and Isenbarger 2011, Davidson 2016, Ogundiran and Saunders 2014, Heath, 2016, Anna Agbe-Davies 2016, Hauser and Armstrong 1999, Howson 1990, Crane 1993, Singleton 1995, Reinhart 1984, Wilkie 1995), processes of cultural change (Joseph 1989, Otto 1975, Wheaton 1985, Wheaton and Garrow 1985, Ferguson 1999, Dawdy 2000, Loren 2000, Renaud 1996, Sanford 1996, Wilkie 2000), African and African American identity (Gijanto and Horlings 2012, Midlo Hall 2007, Kingelhofel 1987, Delpuech 2001, Yentsch 1999, Singleton 1995, Wilkie 2000, Pulsipher and Goodwin 2001, Loftfield 2001, Heath 1999, Cathcart 2009, Ferguson 1980, Hauser and Armstrong 1999, Deetz 1993, 1999, Singleton and Bograd 2000, Cochran 1999, Deetz 1999, Emerson 1999, Ferguson 1999, Wilkie and Farnsworth 1999, Howson 1990, Orser 1998, Posnansky 1999, DeCorse 1999, Mouer 1993, Sanford 1996, Kelly and Kelly 1980, Thomas 2002), status (Otto 1975, Lange and Handler 1985, Singleton 1995, Lewis 1985, Otto 1980, Farnsworth 1999, McEwan 1986, Moore 1985, Howson 1990, Orser 1988), domination and resistance (Baram 2012, Kerr-Ritchie 2013, Orser 1990, Orser and Funari 2001, Singleton 1995, Grivno 2007,

Howson 1990, Sayers 2012, Thomas 1998, Wilkie 1995), and race and racism (Galle and Young 2004, Paynter 2001, Epperson 1990, Babson 1990, Fitts 1996, Orser 2008, Brandon 2008, Leone et al. 2005, Epperson 1997, Wilkie 2000, Sanford 1996). My work is informed by these studies, as well as the theoretical frameworks that archaeologists have applied to the study of African diaspora archaeology, including pragmatism (Agbe-Davies 2017), critical race theory (Epperson 2004, Fennell 2016), postcolonial theory (González-Tennant 2014), black feminist thought (Franklin 2001, Battle-Baptiste 2011), and Marxism (Delle 2014).

#### *Creole and French Descendant Plantation Sites*

The rise of plantation archaeology in the Southeastern United States was followed by regional studies elsewhere. Archaeological investigations at plantation sites in northeastern states such as Massachusetts (Chan 2007), New York (Trigg and Landon 2010, Coplin and Matthews 2009), and Rhode Island (Frank and Ryzewski 2013) added more evidence that enslavement was indeed practiced outside of the Southeast United States and the Caribbean.

L'Hermitage is unique as it is the only French-Caribbean related plantation in Maryland, and moreover is one of only a few French plantation sites under study; aside from studies taking place in Louisiana, most plantation history and archaeology thus far has dealt with Anglo-American sites (Eccles 1972: ix, Kelly 2009:80, Scott 2001:688), particularly in areas of the Southeast United States such as Georgia and South Carolina (Fairbanks 1981:1). As plantations in Maryland as well as much of the Southeastern United States were largely influenced by English architecture (Forman 1934:5), French and Creole plantations stand out on the American landscape

and are valuable for comparative purposes. Post houses found in French settlements in St. Louis, Missouri could be linked to those in Haiti, where post houses were often built by indigenous peoples in the 1700s (Peterson 1965:31). After the Haitian Revolution, many white planters and enslaved and free Africans came to Louisiana, settling in New Orleans. The new residents had a clear influence on their adopted home; for example, the African population is credited with bringing voodoo to the sugar plantations where they came to work, and encouraging its spread in Louisiana (Wilkie 1999:100). Louisiana was the site of sugar and cotton plantations, with French planters generally operating the former and Anglo-American planters operating the latter (de Jong 2002:2). Remnants of French plantations, some more substantial than others, still exist; for example, Laura Plantation, Destrehan Plantation, and Parlange Plantation, all in Louisiana. However, most of what we know about these settlements and plantations comes from documentary rather than archaeological data.

Many of the excavation reports for these types of sites are descriptive, focusing on architecture (Edwards 2006, 1994, Gums 2006, Maygarden 2006, Waselkov 2002), diet (Scott 2006, Waselkov and Clute 2002), and material culture (Doepkens 1991) such as personal items (Smith 2002), or ceramics (Olin et al. 2002), with very little anthropological interpretation. Invasive and noninvasive testing of the slave quarters at Oakland Plantation in Natchitoches, Louisiana took place in 1997 and 2002 (Gijanto 2007, Miller et al. 2000), but research has not moved beyond the identification of features at this former French cotton plantation established in 1789. However, some archaeologists have made sociocultural topics, such as status

and identity, an explicit part of their work. For example, in her work at Rosedown Plantation in Louisiana, Anderson considers “how people [i.e. enslaved workers] living in these oppressive contexts negotiated power over their own lives according to local circumstances and contexts” (2004:vii).

Loren points out that “identities were fluid in colonial contexts and were negotiated in different times and places by the individual or by the person categorizing that individual” (2000:87); colonial inhabitants could manipulate their perceived identity by adopting a particular dress, diet, and architectural style (94). Because French colonies were the site of much more intermixing between European, African, and indigenous peoples, the “creole” identity is a more pronounced component of archaeological studies of these sites, compared to their British counterparts. For example, Dawdy (2000, 2008) traced social understandings of “Creole” throughout the 18th and 19th centuries in Louisiana, showing how it was fluid, dynamic, and malleable to serve the needs of those who claimed the identity for themselves or applied it to others. She proposes three types of creolization—transplantation, ethnic acculturation, and hybridization—and considers how each one might manifest in the archaeological record.

In general, studies of French colonial or French Creole plantation sites tend to explore French identity through distinctive architecture or diet. Interest in the creation of identity, particularly creole identity, has been gaining momentum in the past decade and will perhaps become increasingly popular, especially as it parallels a discipline-wide interest in identity creation and maintenance. Further exploration of French-derived plantation sites would be invaluable as there are unique features

belonging to them.

*New interest in enslavement*

As stated above, early plantation archaeology mainly focused on the material remains of elite white slaveowners. This neglect has been explained by Posnansky (1984:170) as racism; “The Africans were regarded as unimportant. They were considered as adjuncts of the European presence.” However, in the 1970s and beyond, archaeologists began to pay more attention to the archaeology of slavery, primarily living conditions and expressions of identity (Singleton 1995:123). Leone et al. (2005) suggest that any archaeology of African American history should investigate antiblack racism in the past and its implications in the present.

As an anthropological approach became more prevalent in plantation archaeology, identity became a major topic of concern. Leone et al. (2005:576) note that “the continually evolving topic of identity has moved away from a common monolithic ‘African’ toward diverse ethnic communities that comprise the diaspora.” Archaeologists, who sometimes based their interpretations on static typologies, did not always recognize the fluidity of identity. However, more recent studies reflect the dynamic nature of identity.

Archaeologists’ focus on enslavement led to a greater interest in race and racism in plantation contexts. The focus on ethnicity was part of a larger postmodernist movement in historical archaeology that promoted the study of identity. After ethnicity became a much-studied topic within plantation archaeology, race, and subsequently racism, became a subject of discussion as well. This work focused on the function of race and racism in plantation society, and the degree to

which these ideologies are manifested in the archaeological record. As Epperson (1990) points out, racist ideology tends to frame the way in which people interact with each other and the material elements of their universe, so racism should have both spatial and material effects that will appear in archaeological contexts. Leone et al. (2005:590) echo this thought, noting that studies of material culture can reveal, “how hegemonic and oppressed groups negotiate power and identity.” Archaeologists who have incorporated race into their studies have looked at how racist beliefs have affected spatial and material uses on plantations (Babson 1990, Fitts 1996). However, Orser (1998) cautions that race is difficult to determine from the archaeological record because it is “mutable and situationally-defined” (663). Orser (2008) and Brandon (2008:114) warn that race (and consequently racism) should not be viewed as monolithic entities, as they are experienced differently in different contexts. It follows that race and racism will not be expressed in the same manner across the board, and archaeologists must avoid generalizing and expecting uniform manifestations in the archaeological record. Instead, a consideration of the historical and local context of the site is of utmost importance. Wilkie (2000:8) claims that archaeologists are prone to conflating race and ethnicity or focusing on one to the exclusion of the other. Orser (1998) notes that archaeologists are more prone to study ethnicity, and specifically the problematic approach of searching for ethnic markers, but are loathe to examine race and racism:

Most historical archaeologists seemingly have been willing to accept the widely held, albeit nonanthropological, understanding that associates race with ethnicity. This facile understanding of race has made it possible for historical archaeologists to downplay or to sidestep racism as a means of creating and upholding the social inequalities that characterize American society. The failure of American historical archaeologists to address race and racism in any

substantive way has served to maintain the field's tacit political conservatism, a stance consistent with the traditional use of historical archaeology to examine sites associated with places and personages important in the dominant national ideology (662).

Another problem with archaeologists' approach to race (or lack thereof) is that "At present, the few historical archaeologists who are interested in questions of race confine themselves to African Americans. For historical archaeologists, it is as if race attaches only to men and women of color" (Orser 1998:664). The final issue is that even if archaeologists address race and racism, these discussions rarely make it out of academia to a wider audience (Orser 1998:665). Some have suggested that archaeologists start exploring the effects of racism on the people they study, while developing an archaeology of whiteness (Orser 1998:666, Leone et al. 2005:581). So far, few (Epperson 1997, Wilkie 2000) have tackled whiteness in plantation contexts. Babson (1990:23) suggests that archaeologists use racism as the context in which to consider European-African interactions. It is not enough to simply identify an ethnic group and search for ethnic markers in the archaeological record, but we must look at how humans interact and how these interactions produced things like racism, particularly on plantations where "racism was employed...to exploit the culture, knowledge, skills, and labor of enslaved Africans and their African-American descendants" (Babson 1990:27). Epperson (2004) advocates for the application of critical race theory to any study of the African Diaspora to construct an archaeology "that is simultaneously race-conscious and anti-essentialist" (Epperson 1999).

Perhaps archaeologists have shied away from the act of recognizing "racial construction in the past and inequality in the present" (Mrozowski et al. 2000:xxii) because it is too explicitly political, though Robert Kelly (1998) asserts that

“archaeology’s purpose today is to play a role in ending racism. Everything follows from this fact.” Sanford (1996:143) says that “dealing with slavery means dealing with people’s history of oppression and a dehumanizing institution”—an inherently political study. Studies on racial exclusion, racial formations, white supremacy, white privilege, and power dynamics in the past, based on that which is recovered from the material record and historic documents, has helped disrupt racism and disprove pervasive, inaccurate ideas, for example, that slavery wasn’t practiced in the north, or that enslaved populations were cultureless. Maria Franklin (1997:38-40) contends that “those who remain unwilling to reflect on the social and political implications of their work will only escalate further alienation of archaeologists from the public,” instead, archaeologists must consider how our work could legitimate racism and dominant interests. She says that “As archaeologists, we must question how racism conditions our discipline and, in so doing, how an unreflective archaeology is fed right back into a racist society without challenging it” (Franklin 1997:40).

My research on L’Hermitage answers Franklin’s call, in that I explore how racism manifests in the archaeological and archival record. Furthermore, I critically examine how the Vincendières’ status —bolstered by their wealth and whiteness — gave them the freedom to act almost with impunity, and contributed to their cruel and violent behavior toward their enslaved workers. I borrow my framework for examining race and racial formation from Bonilla-Silva’s work on racialization (1991) and from Omi and Winant (2002), who have contributed a seminal piece on race in the United States. They focus on two key elements: racialization and racial formation. They define racialization as “an extension of racial meaning to a

previously unclassified relationship, social practice, or group” (Omi and Winant 2002:18). Racial formation is “the process by which social, economic, and political forces determine the context and importance of racial categories and by which they are in turn shaped by racial meanings” (Omi and Winant 2002:16). Historically, racial categories came about to justify the oppression, enslavement, and extermination of others and take away their property and rights. Omi and Winant argue that race gains its meaning through social relations and the historical context in which they are embedded; for example, to be “black” has different meanings within different societies and throughout history. Race is also strictly classified and delineated. One is either white or non-white, with no intermediary races; ambiguity is uncomfortable. These classifications are a way of explaining variation in humans; different features have been linked to differences in intellect, physical ability, and temperaments, and justify particular treatment of the group. Therefore inequality is attributed to racial features rather than structural problems. Although social scientists have long advocated for a view of race as a social concept, it is still widely regarded as biological. Omi and Winant’s work provides a useful lens with which to examine race relations on the plantation setting of my research because, as they point out, race forms the central axis of social interaction, and “there is a racial dimension in every identity, institution, and social practice” (2002:19). Racialization does not operate in a vacuum, though, “but at the intersections with sexual politics, class interests, and cultural geography” (Chatterjee et al. 2010:5).

### *Analytical Framework*

For this project, I used the research described above as a foundation and a

springboard for considering how to interpret the data that have been recovered regarding L'Hermitage, and to contribute something useful to the body of scholarship on plantation history and archaeology. My framework relies heavily on the concept of nervous landscapes introduced by archaeologist Denis Byrne (2003). This perspective explores “how a dominant culture spatially controls a population’s presence in and movement through a landscape but also looks at the full range of methods a minority group may use to subvert that system of spatial control. That contestation makes the built environment tense, nervous.... A nervous landscape is always on some level a landscape where hegemonic ideologies and containment have failed due to the interactions between different spatial regimes, modes of community building, and imaginings” (Sies 2005:3). In other words, this is a space where power is not always effective and where resistance is possible. Byrne applied this concept to colonial Australia, where white settlers imposed a system of land divisions and uses on Aboriginal territory. The grids and fences trained Aboriginal bodies to remain within certain boundaries and outside of others, but they were not completely effective. By jumping fences, raiding orchards, and creating unmapped paths through mapped territories, Aboriginal people found gaps in the grid (Byrne 2003:177-180).

The concept of nervous landscapes has never been incorporated into analyses of plantation contexts, nor has the term been widely used elsewhere, beyond Byrne’s work and a dissertation that explored how the environment influences the nervous system, and vice-versa – how the “environment and experience co-produce each other” (Newman 2010). In both cases, a nervous landscape is one where local events, the built environment, and material culture will reflect tension and nervousness.

According to Byrne's (2003:170) usage, a nervous landscape is used to explore how "an indigenous minority's presence in and movement through a colonial landscape is spatially controlled or constrained by the colonizers. But it is also interested in the ways in which the minority group subverted that system of spatial control, transgressing its numerous finely drawn boundaries, poaching on its preserves, tweaking the nerves of a spatial system which was inherently tense with racial foreboding, paranoia, longing, and deprivation." In other words, the nervousness exists precisely due to the ambiguity resulting from shifting power dynamics on the landscape.

Byrne interpreted the nervousness of colonial Australia based on maps, historical records, and archaeology. The latter can be more elusive and difficult to interpret, but there are previous studies that could provide guidance. There are certainly many examples of studies that revealed nervous landscapes, where negotiations of power took place to varying degrees (e.g. Orser and Funari 2001, Singleton 1995, Grivno 2007, Howson 1990, Thomas 1998, Wilkie 1995). Orser (1990:115) conceives of the plantation as the slaveholder's "power domain" where manifestations of this power included "making important decisions regarding plantation operation, empowering agents to act on his or her behalf, and controlling the acquisition, use, maintenance of material objects on the plantation... [and] assignment of work to slaves." However, this power was not absolute; enslaved workers executed acts of resistance and rebellion. It is in these cases where enslaved laborers acted contrary to the organization, control, and wishes of slaveowners that they contributed to the nervousness of the landscape. According to Byrne, disruptions

and subversions of hegemonic power result in tension that is inscribed on both bodies and the landscape.

The efforts on the part of slaveowners to control the landscape and bodies of enslaved workers demonstrate their attempt to gain absolute power and failure to acquire it, while instances of resistance indicate spaces in which enslaved workers could exercise some agency among the constraints imposed by slaveowners— what Byrne would call “gaps in the grid” (2003:177). Although many of these items have been interpreted as signs of resistance, it is difficult to tell if their consumers regarded them as such, or if they were instead evidence of one taking advantage of opportunities to express some degree of personhood, humanity, and individuality. Byrne’s concept circumvents this debate by interpreting these kinds of items as evidence of where people took advantage of “gaps in the grid” –which can be, but are not necessarily, forms of resistance. The fact that these gaps exist is what makes a landscape tense.

I favor the nervous landscape framework because it takes a broad landscape approach, which provides a more comprehensive view of the environment in which activities took place in the past, rather than focusing on a specific building, feature, etc. In this sense, the Monocacy National Battlefield, and specifically the Best Farm/L’Hermitage, is a cultural landscape.

According to Faegri, “The cultural landscape can only be understood by its antithesis: untouched, unspoilt nature” (Faegri 1988:1). On first glance, this definition is appealing because it divides landscapes into two neat categories, each one clearly in opposition to the other. However, in reality, these dividing lines are arbitrary,

blurry or even non-existent. In fact, it seems that most, if not all, landscapes could be defined as cultural, because human activity and influence is so pervasive and has affected practically all landscapes. Even if there are areas that are “untouched,” by the very act of recognizing a space as “unspoiled” and drawing an artificial boundary around it, does it not become a cultural landscape? If the landscape is defined and given significance by humans, couldn’t we say that it has been “touched” in some way by humans? For this reason, I am drawn to broader and more inclusive definitions of cultural landscapes, those that recognize and allow for infinite variety. Furthermore, the definition should acknowledge that cultural landscapes are defined by human activity, which can be both material (action) and non-material (perception) in nature. I prefer a definition written by John B. Jackson, who said, “Landscape is never simply a natural space, a feature of the natural environment. [E]very landscape is the place where we establish our own human organization of space and time” (Jackson 1984:156). Although he speaks of landscape in a general sense, I think this is an apt description of cultural landscapes. Time and space are expansive enough concepts that, when applied to the cultural landscape of the Best Farm, can account for the many occupants, uses, boundaries, and places that have defined the landscape in the past and present.

Landscape analysis requires a more interpretive methodology rather than a strictly morphological one (Cosgrove and Jackson 1987:96); the landscape is “read” like a text (c.f. Geertz 1973). A landscape approach is well suited to application in archaeological contexts. Landscape archaeology, or the archaeology of “place” (Anschuetz et al., 2001:159), has its roots in excavations of the 1960s and

1970s (William Paca Garden, Carter's Grove, and Kingsmill) and expanded in the 1990s (Yamin and Metheny 1996:xxvii). Landscape archaeology is "an interpretive framework that specifically addresses the relationships between past human behaviors and the physical (or social) space in which they occurred. This usage grew out of processual approaches such as settlement archaeology and human ecology but has also expanded to include a variety of more symbolic models of human-land interactions" (Branton 2009:53). Yamin and Metheny note that landscape archaeology is concerned "with the expressive qualities of landscape aesthetics is at the heart of symbols and meaning studies in landscape archaeology; it consists of a careful search for the symbolic messages encoded in the appearance of a dirt path, a wooden fence, a brick wall topped with broken glass, straight streets, curving lanes, and tidal ditches. Variations in the small details of daily life often derive from the nuances of material symbolic expressions....These nuances only appear with careful fieldwork" (1996:xxvii).

A cultural landscape approach is a useful tool for those studying the "material reflections of power relations," and particularly "the manipulation of the built environment to reproduce and naturalize the existing (or desired) ideology of the powerful" (Branton 2009:55) (see Spencer-Wood's examination of "powered cultural landscapes" (2010), Shackel's "landscapes of power" (2003:5), and Leone's analysis of the William Paca Gardens (1984)). A cultural landscape approach can also be used to illuminate memorializing behaviors (ceremonies, commemorations, interpretation) and the production of heritage (e.g. Shackel 2000, 2003). As "durable, visual representations of the past" (Foote 1997:33), landscapes are important links between

the past and the present (Mitchell and Buggey 2001:45).

The application of Byrne's "nervous landscape" concept is central to my study of L'Hermitage, and makes several important contributions. First, a landscape approach encourages a consideration of the spatial organization of the L'Hermitage landscape and the surrounding area. This is a meaningful way of exploring the power dynamics on the plantation. I am interested in the way that the Vincendières attempted to exert control over their environment and their enslaved workers— analogous to white colonists imposing grids on the Aboriginal Australian landscape in Byrne's conception – and how enslaved workers found "gaps in the grid," or places to resist the dominant power, and how these tensions were inscribed in the material and historical record. Second, the phrase "nervous landscape" encourages me to consider how the landscape reflects nervousness or anxiety on the part of the Vincendières. Emotion is not often explored in archaeology, but it's important to consider it as it helps us understand the human experience better. Though the Vincendières' controlling and brutal treatment of their enslaved workers doubtless reflects and was motivated by racist colonialist norms, I argue that their behavior was also motivated by their nervousness and anxiety around their (real or perceived) precarious situation: ninety enslaved workers controlled by 10 slaveholders, and they had just witnessed what these lopsided ratios could produce—i.e., the uprisings in Saint Domingue. Finally, the nervous landscape concept encourages me to consider how the ideologies and narratives created and reinforced at L'Hermitage are still at play on the landscape at present.

### Research Questions

My broad goals can be distilled to more specific questions. How was L'Hermitage a nervous landscape? How is this nervousness reflected in the plantation layout, material culture, and interactions between the Vincendières, their enslaved workers, and the local townspeople? How did the Vincendières attempt to assuage their anxiety and assert their power, and what was beyond their control? Furthermore, how did their status as white, French, Haitian, immigrant, Catholic, and wealthy, affect their position on the plantation and in the town of Frederick? Finally, how might their nervousness be read in the material culture recovered from L'Hermitage? In exploring these questions, I intend to tease out the deep-seated power dynamics and negotiations at L'Hermitage in hopes of complicating the classic domination/resistance model. Furthermore, I will maintain a critical lens on the Vincendières to examine how their social locations informed their experiences and behavior, and the strategies they used to hold and maintain power. L'Hermitage is an excellent case study with which to delve into these topics, because as Orser (1990:5) points out:

Plantations present almost perfect arenas within which to study such vexing, but deeply significant, issues such as ethnicity, race, and class because of the spatial proximity of diverse ethnic and social groups, the constant demand by planters for plantation control through oppression and dominance, and the persistent image that surrounds southern plantations in the popular American imagination.

### Contributions of the Study

This project has several important implications. First, I demonstrate an approach that shifts the analytical focus of plantation studies by critically examining the supremacy of the plantation owners and the complexity of their social location. I

also introduce the concept of nervous landscapes as an analytical tool, in this case, for a plantation setting. Plantation archaeology tends to address power dynamics in terms of domination, resistance, and subordination, yet this dichotomous characterization obscures negotiations of status. Furthermore, it fails to capture the affective component of interactions between people. The nervous landscape concept offers another way to explore the heterogeneity of power, from subtle to overt, and the ways in which negotiations of power create environments of uneasiness and agitation, both literally and metaphorically. In addition, the concept can be applied to nervousness caused by any kind of tension, whether racial, religious, ethnic, gender, etc. Its broad applicability should prove useful in a range of contexts. Some have argued that the most important function of public archaeology is to confront traditional views of history and create a more inclusive interpretation of the past by incorporating the histories of those who are usually denied a presence (Shackel 2007, McIntosh et al. 2006). This also has a function in the present; Susan Kane pointed out that “archaeology can help negotiate present conflicts with past data” and address issues of ethnicity and nationalism (Kane 2003: 4).

Furthermore, an exploration of Monocacy National Battlefield’s plantation history will help expand the interpretation of the park and broaden its appeal and value to visitors. During the 2010 and 2011 archaeological field seasons, there was a notable increase in visitation from youth and African American individuals, and for the first time Monocacy National Battlefield received visitors who were coming for something other than the site’s Civil War history. Perhaps this is due in part to the novelty of being able to see archaeologists at work, but it seems that the project’s

subject and research goals were a source of appeal too. The information, analyses, and interpretations produced by this dissertation will contribute to our knowledge of Monocacy National Battlefield's history and be incorporated into future exhibits, tours, presentations, and educational materials that will explore topics such as agriculture, transportation, slavery, and racism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries—an exhibit that, based on previous experience, may attract a larger audience to Monocacy National Battlefield. Furthermore, other battlefield parks and plantation sites could benefit from Monocacy National Battlefield's example. The broad themes that arise when discussing L'Hermitage—power, inequality, resistance, migration, and adaptation to new environments—have the potential to resonate with people of all backgrounds. Immigration in particular has been a major topic of conversation receiving widespread media attention, but each of these themes has a universal quality that is relatable on some scale. This quality links the past and present, demonstrating the relevance of the L'Hermitage landscape to our contemporary world.

I will also shed light on areas of research that are lacking. It is clear that there are a few areas for improvement in plantation archaeology, some of which I can address with my work at L'Hermitage. First, Max Grivno (2007) observes that the history of slavery in western Maryland is severely underrepresented in scholarly literature. This is evidenced by the fact that most reports on Maryland archaeology are gray literature (e.g. Cox and Sharpe 2003, Heintzelman 1974, Hurry 2000, Hurry and Kavanaugh 1985, Luckenback and Schiszik 2006, Sperling 2007, Sperling 2008) that often does not reach historians. Grivno attributes the lack of research on western Maryland in

part to a lack of resources (2007:23), but also notes that scholars have had other priorities. Most studies of plantation life have focused on “areas where slavery dominated every economic, political, and social institution,” (ibid) which distracts them from the Mid-Atlantic, New England, and upper South regions. Furthermore, most studies of slavery in Maryland focus on the large tobacco plantations along the Chesapeake Bay, overlooking the diversified agricultural practices and small slaveholdings in western Maryland (Grivno 2007:24). These Chesapeake plantations were predominately English in origin, with organizational practices that differed from those of French settlers like the Vincendières. L’Hermitage is located in western Maryland, owned by French-Haitian immigrants, and engaged in small-scale, diversified agriculture, making it unique among other plantations sites in Maryland.

Additionally, I have identified several research questions that have been pursued superficially or not at all by plantation archaeologists. First, the domination/resistance trope has become common in plantation studies. How can we make this model more nuanced, and avoid falling back on easy stereotypes and superficial analyses? Second, while archaeologists frequently consider the social history of plantations based on race, ethnicity, and class, there are many other social locations (e.g. citizenship, nationality, religion, gender) that inform a person’s position and their lived experience. We must expand our scope of consideration for a richer understanding of human behavior and interactions. Finally, the discussions of oppression on plantations are increasingly common (e.g. Epperson 1990 and 1997; Orser 1998, 2004, 2007, 2008; Singleton 1990, 1995, 1997), but they often focus on the enslaved workers as subjugated objects, rather than critically examining the planters (some exceptions

include Delle 1998, Epperson 1990, Farnsworth 2000, Howson 1990, Potter 1991, Singleton 2001). What does the historical and archaeological record reveal about the ways that plantation owners obtained, maintained, and perpetuated their supremacy? My research will touch on each of these areas in order to address gaps in scholarship.

### Overview of Chapters

The first chapter provides an overview of the project, while the second and third chapters trace the history of two landscapes: the 18<sup>th</sup> century plantation landscape in Saint Domingue and the L'Hermitage landscape in Frederick, Maryland, depicting the Vincendières' existence in and movement between these landscapes. This provides important background and context for the experiences of the Vincendières and their enslaved workers, showing what their lifestyle was like in colonial Saint Domingue and how their environment impacted their behavior. Though we have limited information about the specific plantations belonging to the Vincendières and the details of their daily life in Saint Domingue, extensive research has been conducted on Haiti's history during the French colonial era, which provides valuable information and context. We then follow the family and their enslaved workers to Frederick, Maryland, and I describe what they would have encountered upon arrival to this region. I trace the history of this particular landscape, from its pre-L'Hermitage iteration to its occupation by the Vincendières and their enslaved workers, to its ownership and management by the National Park Service at present.

Chapter Four reviews the archaeology conducted at L'Hermitage and establishes the framework for analysis. In the next few chapters, I return to the concept of nervous landscapes, which I interpret in three different ways. Chapter Five explores

how L'Hermitage was an example of a nervous landscape according to Byrne's usage of the term. It looks at how the Vincendières imposed their colonial vision via the organization of the landscape and the spatial arrangement of the structures therein, as well as their control of the movement and behavior of their enslaved workers in other ways. This is followed by a consideration of how enslaved workers might have found "gaps in the grid," as Byrne put it— where there were moments of resistance and where they transgressed the boundaries established by the Vincendières.

The sixth chapter considers alternative interpretations of the term "nervous landscape," with a specific focus on the affective potential of this term. I consider how L'Hermitage was a nervous landscape in the sense that it reflected nervousness on the part of its inhabitants, who may have found themselves in a precarious situation. I consider the nature of nervousness and anxiety and the extent to which they can be read in the landscape and the archaeological and historical record. I consider why the inhabitants of L'Hermitage were in a fragile or precarious position and how it may have motivated their actions. Emotion and affect theory have been little incorporated into archaeological interpretations, so this chapter is also a meditation on the contributions that a consideration of emotion can make. I argue that archaeologists should be more open to thinking about emotion and affect because it provides a richer understanding of human behavior.

The seventh chapter considers how the former L'Hermitage landscape, now Monocacy National Battlefield, is a nervous landscape in the present. Again, I move away from Byrne's usage of the term to think about the tensions and literal nervousness that play out on the landscape, in this case when a new interpretation of

the landscape as the site of slavery threatens the park's main narrative about the battlefield, a change that threatens some visitors personally and also threatens national narratives that glorify war and military sacrifice as the most important stories to tell about a battlefield landscape, or narratives that are positive and make us feel proud or respectful of our history as opposed to those, like about slavery, that make us feel guilty, angry, or ashamed. I argue that this disruption is positive and healthy, and an important way of complicating overly simple narratives that hide the negative aspects of our history.

In the eighth chapter, I summarize how this project considers these different ways of interpreting the term “nervous landscape” and applying it to L’Hermitage and Monocacy National Battlefield. I consider what these interpretations contribute to archaeological scholarship and public history: namely, the under-studied topic of affect and emotion, and it helps connecting the past and present by presenting universals — fear, anxiety, nervousness— that most people can relate to and understand. Therefore, making this particular history — a history that most people probably won’t feel a connection to— relevant and interesting to people, an important goal for the National Park Service in their effort to serve the public and connect people to history.

## Chapter 2: Life in Saint Domingue

While this study primarily focuses on the L'Hermitage plantation in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, I begin the story further back and farther away, in Saint Domingue in the mid-to-late 1700s. This French colony was home to the Vincendière family for several decades their arrival in the United States in 1793. A discussion of the Vincendières' environment and circumstances in Saint Domingue will provide necessary background and context for much of what happens at L'Hermitage.

Inevitably, there are gaps in the scholarship and limits to our knowledge of Saint Dominguan history. It wasn't until the twentieth century that Haiti's topography was mapped, meaning that maps dating to the colonial era were imprecise or vague on certain regional details (Burnard and Garrigus 2016:14). Even where primary sources exist, their usefulness is limited due to their subjective nature. For example, Jeremy Popkin noted in his study of the Haitian Revolution (2007) that primary sources dating to the Haitian Revolution have limited usefulness since people of color authored few of the sources he recovered, and the sources produced by white elites perpetuate messages of "black barbarity" and contain distorted, contradictory, or ambiguous accounts. Those who were captured by rebels wrote of the brutality with which they were treated, but often failed to make (or articulate) the link between the violence of the revolution and the years of brutal plantation slavery that preceded it. Furthermore, while historical archaeological research in the Caribbean dates to the 1960s and earlier (Goodwin 1946; Mayes 1972), there was no archaeological research

geared toward the understanding of plantation slavery in Saint Domingue until Kenneth Kelly's project in 2016 (Kelly 2008, 2017). Based on a survey of historic maps produced in the 1780s, Kelly identified 25 plantation sites, but upon visiting them he discovered that most of the sites had been significantly disturbed by agricultural activity, urbanization, and erosion. Historic plantations identified in the early 1990s have, for the most part, since been destroyed or critically compromised (Kelly 2017). Due to the effects of environmental forces, population growth, and urban development, the types and quantity of data recoverable via archaeological and archival methods are severely limited. Consequently, at times I rely on research and data from other Caribbean colonies for comparative purposes. However, while there are some shared features among the islands, there are many characteristics that are specific to Saint Domingue, so the application of information from other colonies is limited. Therefore, I will primarily focus on the history, development, environment, and culture of Saint Domingue to the extent possible.

### *Colonization of Saint Domingue*

At the time that the Vincendières were living in Saint Domingue, the Caribbean was part of an expanding European colonial empire. Prior to the French occupation of Saint Domingue, Christopher Columbus claimed the island for Spain under the name Hispaniola in the 1490s. The Spanish primarily settled on the eastern portion of the island and established the colony of Santo Domingo (modern-day Dominican Republic) and the first Spanish settlement, Navidad. There, they engaged in gold mining, cattle raising, and lumber harvesting (Hermann 2005:3, Davies 2008:17). In the mid-1600s, the French governor of Tortuga, Bertrand d'Ogeron,

traveled to the western portion of the island where he encouraged the development of permanent French settlements (ibid.). By 1670, this French settlement had established its own general government (*Government des Iles sous le Vent* — Government of the Leeward Islands) independent of the colonial government of the nearby island of Martinique (Dessens 2007:6). The 1697 Treaty of Ryswick solidified the French colonization of the western third of the island, as Spain ceded this land to France. The French plantation colony was renamed Saint Domingue.

Saint Domingue measured 30,000 km<sup>2</sup> and was characterized by three mountain chains and fertile mountain valleys. According to Moreau de Saint-Méry's 1789 account, "The mountains of Saint-Domingue... serve to vary the climate, which depends upon their height, their nearness, and the way in which they are located in reference to the prevailing winds... In general, the French Part or Saint-Domingue is warmer and more exposed to droughts than the Spanish Part" (Moreau de Saint-Méry 1985:14-15). The lush valleys below were composed of a rich bottomland where, the Dominican missionary Jean-Baptiste Labat noted in 1701, its settlers "grow the most beautiful cacao trees in the world" and had the potential to produce a great deal of cacao, indigo, tobacco, coffee, and cotton in the near future (Garrigus 2006: 21). Colonists quickly developed the land to take advantage of its resources, to the extent that substantial changes were made to the integrity of the environment. Moreau de Saint-Méry noted in 1789 that "The droughts are becoming longer and more frequent. This arises from a greediness which counts the future for nothing...People have cut down the trees which covered the higher points and which summoned the life-giving rains and held onto the abundant dews" (Moreau de Saint-Méry 1985:15).

Saint Domingue's three distinct mountain chains divided the colony into three provinces, which were further divided into eleven geographic regions. The activities of the island depended on the particular landscape features of each province. Only 17 percent of Saint Domingue's land was flat and arable, therefore farming tended to be concentrated in the Artibonite Plain, the Northern Plain, and Cul-de-Sac (Garrigus 2006:23). The North province was especially important because it contained not only agriculturally rich land suitable for the cultivation of sugar, but it also contained the major trading ports of Cap Français, Port de Paix, and Môle Saint-Nicolas (Hermann 2005:3). Though the province composed less than a quarter of Saint Domingue, it contained two-fifths of the white population and approximately one-third of the slave population (Fiehrer 1989:422). While sugar plantations required flat land, coffee could grow on uneven terrain, therefore coffee plantations were concentrated on the more irregular land of the West province, the largest and second most important of the three provinces. Important cities such as Port-au-Prince, Saint Marc, Léogane, Gonaïves, and Croix-des-Bouquets were established here (ibid.). The South province also contained coffee plantations but was less productive than the other two provinces. Due to its isolation from the other provinces, the southern peninsula was the last to be developed and was home to a surviving buccaneering culture, though this later transitioned to tobacco, sugar, and coffee. In all cases, the plantations were supported initially by indentured servants and then by enslaved labor. Saint Domingue exported its agricultural products to France and the United States, and imported finished goods such as timber, furs, and rice from Louisiana, and hardware, housewares, luxury goods, and machine parts from France (Fiehler 1989:420). The

colony relied heavily on this maritime trade since its fortune depended upon the export of its crops, and because the island did not produce its own goods locally (Fiehrer 1989:423). This system was overseen and administered by a French-controlled government under the supervision of the Minister of Marine, a representative of France who appointed colonial officials in Saint Domingue (Herrmann 2005:4). Though colonial planters could become extremely wealthy, they had relatively little institutional power or local control. This system was based on the Exclusive economic model, which served to benefit France whereby “all manufactured goods consumed by the colonists in the French colonies were to be imported from France while all the raw goods, cultivated in the colonies, were sold exclusively to France” (Herrmann 2005:4). Such a system was extremely successful for France, as it ushered in a “Golden Age” where Saint Domingue reached a level of prosperity unparalleled by any other colony in the late 1700s.

The Vincendières inhabited the western section of Saint Domingue, in the Petite Rivière district of Saint Marc (Birmingham and Beasley 2014a:9). More specifically, they lived in Saint Hycronimo’s (Jerome’s) Parish in the Artibonite River valley (Figure 4), a region that primarily produced coffee, sugar, indigo, cotton, and rum (ibid.). The land was extremely fertile and productive, thanks to the construction of irrigation canals in the 1740s and 1750s (Rivers 2002:14). Moreau de Saint-Méry observed in 1798 that:

The establishments of the parish of la Petite-Rivière all in all add up to ten plantations producing white sugar, ten other making brown sugar, 410 indigo plantations, 126 cotton, 140 coffee, three rum distilleries, seven brick pottery works, over fifty lime kilns, and a very small number of stock or stud farms (1985:163).



Figure 4. Map of Saint Domingue, with arrow indicating the region where the Vincendière family lived. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, catalog no. 73695947.

Étienne Bellumeau de la Vincendière was a merchant and planter in this region, where he lived since arriving in Saint Domingue in 1747, at the age of twelve (Hait 2016:23). He owned a coffee plantation in Saint Marc and co-owned the firm of de la Vincendière and Berard, serving as a *procureur* (attorney) and managing several plantations for absentee owners who were living in France (Birmingham and Beasley 2014:10). Étienne was likely successful, thanks to the labor of his enslaved workers and the coffee boom that took place in Saint Domingue between 1750 and 1780 (ibid.). Perhaps thanks to this increase in profits and land value, Étienne was able to purchase two additional coffee plantations in the late 1760s or early 1770s, a move that effectively ended his duties as a *procureur*, as the management of his own properties was a time-consuming endeavor (ibid.).

Étienne married Marguerite Elizabeth Pauline de Magnan (referred to as Magnan), on February 12, 1769 in the Petite Riviere district of Saint Marc, Saint Domingue (Birmingham and Beasley 2014a:10), around the time that he purchased his coffee plantations. His wife's family, through her mother Marie-Francoise Sterlin De Magnan, had a successful indigo plantation on the Plaine de l'Artibonite and enjoyed wealth and influence in the colony (ibid.). Étienne and Magnan had ten children between 1769 and 1794: Étienne Paul Marie, Marie Françoise Pauline, Elizabeth Louise Marie Michel, Jean Victoire Marie Eugene, Victoire Pauline Marie Gabrielle, Jean Baptiste Marie Benjamin, Prosper Henry, Jean Pauline Émerentiène, Adelaide, and Hélène Victoire (ibid.).

Étienne's relative Jean Payen de Boisneuf owned three large sugar plantations on the island— located in the Montrouis, Les Verettes, and des Roseau districts— as well as a house in Saint-Marc, on the Rue de Bourbon (Rivers 2005:5.4, Birmingham and Beasley 2014:10). Boisneuf was born and raised in Saint Domingue, though his wealth also allowed him to purchase land in France. Thanks to his status, Boisneuf was able to wield influence and political power as a member of the military, the Estates General of France in 1789, and the Colonial Assembly of Saint Domingue; he was also “an active representative of Saint-Domingue within local and international politics” (Birmingham and Beasley 2014:10).

#### *Plantation Economy of Saint Domingue*

The key features of Saint Domingue — its wealth, productivity, and hierarchical society — were founded on and supported by a plantation economy that in turn relied on a system of slave labor. As John Garrigus (2006:32-3) notes:



Figure 5. 1764 engraving depicting a sugar plantation in Saint Domingue. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

By this time every aspect of life in Saint-Domingue involved slavery, on and off the plantation. Bound workers turned the wheels of the colony's economy so that masters with little more than a livestock pen, banana grove, or carpentry shop considered slaves vital to their livelihood. In plantation houses and in city residences slaves served as cooks, housekeepers, valets and grooms; they cut wood in thickly grown hollows, dug irrigation channels, and shouldered roof beams in urban construction projects.

While I have not found records that would provide detailed information about the Vincendières' wealth, slaveholdings, or landholdings, it is clear that as white European planters, they had opportunities to build large fortunes via their participation in France's most economically productive colony (Figure 5). Nathalie Dessens (2003:42) described the opportunities for colonists to become fabulously wealthy:

Everywhere, because of the relative absence of a social fabric in the very early days of colonization, it was easy even for obscure adventurers to reach the upper levels of society....The noblemen who arrived in the islands had many opportunities to become highly visible in a very short period and to launch dazzling political careers. This was also true, however, of people who came over with nothing, as self-made men flourished in these colonial societies

where it was possible to come as an indentured servant and end up as a reasonably wealthy planter.

In fact, the phrase *riche comme un creole* had caught on in France, a testament to the famous wealth of Saint Domingue (Geggus 1982:1). Saint Dominguan society was shaped by its unprecedented wealth and prosperity and rapid growth, which made it the richest Antillean colony after less than a century (Dessens 2007:8). In 1680, Barbados had been the most valuable Caribbean colony, to be replaced by Jamaica by 1750; within thirty years Saint Domingue had superseded all other tropical colonies to become the most valuable (Knight 2000:162). An account from the 1780s notes that, “The flourishing state of trade and the prosperity of its inhabitants were without parallel perhaps in the world; for here there were no poor, I may say, either white or black... There were no beggars in the streets and no poorhouses in the cities” (A Merchant, quoted in Babb 1954:11). This dramatic growth was fueled by slave labor and an intense plantation system that produced the goods that composed a large part of France’s overseas trade in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (Popkin 2003:114). Those in adjacent industries, such as the slave trade and manufacturing, also prospered by serving the needs of the colony. By 1791, Saint Domingue had over seven thousand plantations, including 793 sugar plantations, 3150 indigo plantations, 789 cotton plantations, and 3117 coffee plantations, which comprised at least two-thirds of France’s overseas trade (Gillikin 2014:5). These numbers are all the more impressive when one considers that one hundred years earlier, not a single sugar plantation had existed on the island, and over 100 of the plantations had been established in the short period between 1700-1704 (Fick 1990:22). By the mid-1700s, Saint Domingue had become “the most important sugar colony of the Caribbean” (ibid.). Most of the sugar

was grown in the fertile Plaine du Nord, described by Jamaican colonist Bryan Edwards as place that yielded “greater returns than perhaps any other spot... in the habitable globe” (Geggus 1999:31). Plantation owners exported approximately 163 million pounds of sugar to France in 1791 (Stein 2000:225). By the 1780s, exports from the relatively small island of Saint Domingue were equal to the total exports from the United States (Babb 1954:6-7) and “supplied half of Europe with its sugar, coffee, and cotton” (Babb 1954:7). Following the “coffee revolution” of the 1700s, Saint Domingue produced sixty percent of the coffee sold in the Western world in 1789 (Trouillot 1990:36). This trade activity made Saint Domingue enormously prosperous, and also threatened the economies of other nations. British planters observed as early as the 1730s that French sugar production had exploded such that the country was able to supply itself with sugar (which had previously been purchased from Britain and Portugal), and the French were infringing on British trade by selling rum and molasses to the Northern colonies in exchange for horses and lumber, and selling their sugar at lower prices, effectively shutting the British out of the sugar trade in foreign markets (n.a. 1731).

The growth of Saint Domingue’s plantation economy contributed to the development of an elaborate lifestyle and “sophisticated urban culture” among the planter class, particularly those who lived in the cities (Kelly 2009:82). The island was transformed into a carefully planned landscape of European-style buildings and well-tended plantations (Gillikan 2014:234). A traveler to Saint Domingue remarked in the 1790s that, “I was agreeably surprised upon disembarking to find myself in a large city, evenly built and very clean. The houses generally are of two stories,

constructed of stone and ornamented with balconies. Most have gardens or thick trellises shading them from the sun and furnishing a very good Muscat grape” (Popkin 2008:68). Due to the island’s isolation, social and cultural development started out slowly. Visitors to the colony during its early period of growth noted how eager colonists were to host guests, a sign of their “craving for unusual company” and “relatively impoverished social life” (Dessens 2003:51). However, as the population and prosperity of the colony grew, so too did its attempts at urban modernization (Dessens 2007:9). The colony’s major port city, Cap Français, was the most impressive and well developed, such that it could “support French theatre, learned societies, an active press, European entertainments, a wide range of public merriments, such as fetes, bals, masques, charivaris, and a stream of distinguished ‘tourists’” (Fiehrer 1989:420). Six theaters were constructed by 1789 to host actors and musicians in the latest Parisian plays, one of which could seat fifteen hundred spectators (Burnard 2016:51). A hospital was also constructed in Cap Français as early as 1692, followed by others in Port-au-Prince, Léogane, Fort-Dauphin, Petit Goave, Saint-Louis, and Les Cayes (Dessens 2007:10). Colonial printers also published newspapers, including *La Gazette de Saint-Domingue* beginning in 1764, and *La Gazette du Jour* in 1775, and two almanacs (Moreau de Saint-Méry 1985:10). As a sign of the growing cultural elite, by 1788, Cap Français featured five bookstores, a Freemason lodge, dancehalls, coffeehouses, and the Société Royale des Sciences et des Arts at Cap Français (Moreau de Saint-Méry 1985:10). Other cities on the island followed suit, and soon Saint Domingue had several urban centers featuring

lodges, booksellers, reading clubs, public parks and squares, and pleasure gardens (Burnard 2016:51).

### *Slave Trade*

The pronounced wealth in Saint Domingue was generated via the exploitation of slave labor to reach enormously productive outputs on the island's plantations. An active transatlantic slave trade supported this economy by bringing huge numbers of captive Africans to the French colonies; between 1784 and 1790, 40 percent of slave trade disembarked in Saint Domingue (Burnard 2016:253), and during the 1700s the colony received at least eighty percent of Africans from French vessels (Geggus 2001:125). During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, over 800,000 African slaves were imported into Saint Domingue (Dominguez and Dominguez 1981:9), and between 1780 and 1788 alone, Saint Domingue's enslaved population saw a 60 percent increase (Burnard 2016:250). English merchants provided most slaves to the French colonies until the Anglo-French War broke out in 1778; after it ended in 1783, French traders provided virtually all slaves to the French West Indies (Stein 2000:341). The transition to French participation in the slave trade coincided with a massive expansion of plantations on the islands, necessitating more labor and therefore more enslaved workers. Following the war, the average number of slave expeditions rose from 60 to 110 per year, and Saint Domingue's slave population grew from an estimated 260,000 in 1775 to 465,000 in 1789 (ibid.). Two-thirds of these slaves were African-born in 1789 (Fick 1990:25). This was due in part to the heightened activity around the slave trade, but was also a reflection of the high mortality rates among enslaved workers on the island. French colonial author Hilliard d'Auberteuil observed that of the 800,000

African slaves brought to Saint Domingue between 1680 and 1776, only 290,000 remained by the end of that period (Fick 1990:26). An estimated fifty percent of African slaves died within the first three to eight years in Saint Domingue, due to “the psychological shock of becoming a slave, to moral despondency and an inability to rapidly adapt and physically resist the rigors of chattel slavery, [and] to the grossly inhuman conditions aboard the slave ships and to resulting sicknesses, not the least of which was scurvy” (Fick 1990:26). Reproduction among enslaved workers was never high enough to maintain the labor pool, as the death rate in the late 1700s was around ten to twelve percent per year, while the birth rate was eight to nine percent (Dessens 2003:61). The high mortality rate for enslaved workers, combined with the rapid expansion of the plantation economy, resulted in a perennial labor shortage in Saint Domingue (Burnard 2016:60).

Moreau de Saint-Méry identified the African regions from which French merchants typically took individuals: Senegal, the Ivory Coast/Gold Coast (Ghana)/Slave Coast (Togo, Benin, western Nigeria), and the kingdoms of the Congo and Angola (Fick 1990:26). Geggus (2001) has performed important work in tracing the origins of many of the enslaved workers who were brought to Saint Domingue, which provides valuable guidance in my search to find the origins of the enslaved workers on the Vincendières plantation in Saint Domingue. Saint Domingue accounted for over three quarters of French expeditions and at least eighty percent of the slaves they sold there. The colony was an attractive location for slave ships to land due to the large size of the local market and the prospect of rapid sales and sizable local prices. This colony absorbed more slaves than any other, and also more

males, and fewer people from the least appreciated regions: Sierra Leone, Biafra, and the Windward Coast. Slaves from different parts of Africa were believed to have different strengths, characteristics, and temperaments; therefore planters favored particular regions of origin depending on their needs (Midlo Hall 1971:53). The places from which Saint Domingue imported Africans were based in part to the types of agriculture practiced. Sugar planters preferred male Africans from the Bight of Benin, who were thought to be more physically robust and skilled agriculturalists, and therefore more suited to the demanding work of sugar cultivation. Coffee planters, on the other hand, used many more West Central Africans, who were deemed too short, inexperienced, and prone to illness for sugar cultivation but suitable for coffee production. In his technical manual for coffee plantations, Pierre-Joseph Laborie instructed planters in how to select their enslaved laborers:

In the Choice of Guinea negroes, the planter ought to attend to the following circumstances: Youth, an open cheerful countenance, a clean and lively eye, fresh lips, found teeth, a strong neck, a broad and open chest, sinewy arms, dry and large hands, a flat belly, strong loins and haunches, round thighs, dry knees, muscular calves, lean ankles, high feet and lean; an easy and free movement of the limbs; and a middling stature, or rather small. The Congo, Arada, and Thiamba, are the best nations. Women, in general, do not admit of so much nicety of choice in this respect, because, all over the coast of Guinea, women are accustomed to work for the men. A gang ought to be, as much as possible, composed of the same nation. I preferred the Congos. They are docile, and work pretty well, provided they are well fed (1789:162).

Geggus (1989) has also explored the age and sex composition of the Atlantic slave trade and argues that these factors were significant in shaping black society in Africa and the Americas. He bases his study on two samples, one composed of 177,000 slaves transported between 1714 and 1792, and the other composed of 13,300 Africans who lived in Saint Domingue between 1721 and 1797. Using this

data, Geggus shows that how much variation there was among the various regions participating in exportation and importation and how supply and demand influenced the age and sex compositions of the Africans selected for enslavement. The French slave trade transported an unusually high proportion of children and males. Males were needed as sugar cultivation exploded, necessitating a large pool of skilled workers. Males also had the highest mortality rates on French ships and on plantations. Regionally speaking, more enslaved Africans came to Saint Domingue from Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Congo, and Senegal than other parts of Africa. Geggus argues that this composition has to do with ideas about the gendered division of labor; in addition, “slave traders paid considerable attention to ethnicity and based business decisions upon the perceived or imagined attributes of different groups” (1989:35). There are no known records of where the Vincendières’ enslaved workers originated, but Geggus’s research indicates that sugar plantations in the western portion of Saint Domingue, where the Vincendières were located, tended to import Africans from the Bight of Benin and the Congo in the years between 1773 and 1791 (1999:39).

The importation of enslaved Africans during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries led to a unique demographic profile in the colony. White residents held the majority of wealth, property, and power, but formed the smallest population in Saint Domingue, owing to the fact that as many as 30,000 captive Africans were brought to the island per year in the 1780s (Kelly 2009:82). Colonial records are reportedly unreliable and have varying population figures (in part because slaveowners underreported the number of slaves to avoid a head tax) (Babb 1954:9), but the 1789 census records a total population of 523,800, which included 30,831 whites, 24,848 free people of

color, and 434,429 slaves of African descent (Dessens 2007:8). In other words, 90 percent of Saint Domingue's residents were slaves at that time, a larger percentage than anywhere else in the West Indies or North America (ibid.). While the census did not record the sex of slaves at this time, in 1780 there were approximately 79 women for every 100 men (Davies 2008:18). Among the white population there was also a sex imbalance; by 1789 there was one woman for every six men in the colony (Forster 1990:2), while the sex ratio was balanced for free people of color.

The plantation system also created and reinforced a racial hierarchy on the island of Saint Domingue. According to Knottnerus and Durant (1999:14), plantations reveal race patterns of "white superordination and black subordination, interracial conflict, a hierarchical division of labor based on race and class, interracial paternalism, a color status hierarchy, racial social distance, racially segregated communities, and institutionalized racial norms.... In this sense, the slave plantation functioned as a race-making social system." Colonial society was divided into three subgroups: at the top of the hierarchy was the white population, which occupied a dominant social, economic, cultural, and political position; next came the free people of African descent, composed of an increasing number of offspring of white men and slave women but also of freed slaves of unmixed African ancestry; and at the bottom of the hierarchy was the population of enslaved workers of African descent (Dessens 2007:9, Fiehrer 1989:423). It was a hierarchy based on phenotypical distinctions (Geggus 1989:1297), a system of racial division and discrimination devised by colonists--not France, which was not particularly invested in racial politics or the race of their planters; the French government was primarily concerned with increasing its

wealth (Midlo Hall 1971:146-8). In the following sections, I will discuss each of these social groups in detail.

*African and African-Descended Enslaved Workers*

Enslaved workers in Saint Domingue were overworked, treated horribly, and lived in miserable, sub-par conditions. Planters were primarily concerned with productivity and profits, and viewed enslaved Africans as a necessary yet disposable aspect of the plantation machine, one that was not self-sustaining but could be continually replenished. “As long as the slave trade provided an ample supply of new Africans, planters accepted that a large proportion of their slaves would be afflicted by sickness, reproductive problems, and early death. Planters did little to make the material conditions of slavery any easier. On the contrary, they adopted more scientific methods of slave management during the eighteenth century that made plantations more efficient and slave work more difficult” (Burnard 2016:230).

Organized primarily as gang labor, with some performing specialized tasks, most enslaved workers’ tasks were extremely taxing and unrelenting. Much of their work was not gendered the way it was for white Europeans. While European women were considered too delicate to withstand much hardship, for enslaved African women on Caribbean estates, “the distinguishing features of life included exhausting manual labor, a lethal disease environment, savage physical punishment, inadequate food, sexual abuse, broken health, and infertility” (Dunn 1993:72). Moitt’s (1995) examination of the division of labor among enslaved workers on plantations in the French Caribbean reaffirms this assessment. He notes that gender was not often a consideration in the allocation of tasks; women did proportionately more hard labor

than men and were also responsible for the domestic work and childcare for their own families. Specialized or artisanal tasks were typically given to men, while the burden of hard (field) labor placed on women (Craton 1982:49). Female workers were divided into groups in which the strongest women did the most arduous tasks, lighter and more varied tasks were performed by nursing, pregnant, or new enslaved workers, and children performed the lightest tasks. It is no coincidence that there were more women in the field than men, and that field labor was considered to be at the bottom of the hierarchy. As Moitt (1995) points out, the organization of plantation labor was inherently sexist, putting women in structural slots that had no bearing on their abilities. For example, the act of processing sugar cane was extremely labor-intensive and dangerous, yet this incredibly taxing work was often assigned to women and was considered to be demeaning for men. Enslaved women were also disproportionately domestic workers; their working conditions were somewhat better in that they tended to receive better accommodations and larger rations, but also had to deal with more instability. They were more likely to be sold when plantations changed hands, and had to remain single indefinitely.

Beckles (1991) also noted that work reproduced the gender order, one that was unique and specific to the colonial Caribbean. In his study of Barbados, he noticed that newly-arrived enslaved Africans “underwent a re-genderization process, were inducted into a new gender order,” and were forced to conform to new definitions of femininity and masculinity (9). For example, in order to get the most labor possible out of enslaved women and justify her subjugation, slaveowners redefined black feminine identity. This newly constructed identity held that black

women were “non-feminine” due to their “alleged muscular capabilities, physical strength, aggressive carriage, and sturdiness” (Beckles 1991:10) and their ability to work long hours without tiring and be more productive than men. Enslaved women with infants were driven to work, then demonized for appearing un-nurturing, immoral, and unfeminine (Beckles 1991:11). However, when the slave trade dwindled and slaveowners required more laborers, they revised this image of black women to portray them as natural reproducers and nurturers (Beckles 1991:14). Enslaved women were further exploited by white men for their sexual value; assaults were excused by these men due to the innate “Jezebel” nature of black women (Beckles 1991:23).

Resistance was common among enslaved workers in Saint Domingue; who used a variety of methods including marronnage (running away and establishing communities of escaped slaves), suicide, abortion and infanticide, the practice of Voodoo (rather than Catholicism), and selling crops for personal income (Forster 1990, Fick 1990, Midlo Hall 1971, Rivers 2002, Gaspar and Hine 1996, Shepherd and Beckles 2000). The latter was especially common; to establish a bit of distance between themselves and their enslavers, enslaved laborers could, at times, own property, goods, or money (Scott 2004). For example, provision grounds, found in Martinique, among other places, provided enslaved workers with plots of land to use for cultivation as they pleased (Tomich 1993). This property “provided an extensive stage...of slaves’ participation in independent activities” and also had the effect of creating “intense competition between [slaves] and plantation owners and managers for labor services and land resources” (Marshall 1993:203). By growing their own

food, enslaved workers allowed planters to save money, but this activity also “gave slaves a distinct time and space dictated by the plantation yet detached from it” where they could raise their own crops and livestock (often to sell at urban markets), bury their dead, and worship their ancestors (Trouillot 1998:25). Battle-Baptiste (2004:1) argues that the use of the enslaved landscape, particularly the yard or “homespace,” shows how enslaved men and women “shaped as well as adapted to their environment to meet their cultural and spiritual needs.”

*Gens de Couleur (Free People of Color)*

The emergence of a racially-mixed population complicated the traditional racial scheme. Being neither white nor black, mulattoes occupied a third space that Munford (1991) describes as “midway between slavery and freedom, ... a paradox as a social category... Indeterminate in status, they never really enjoyed more than mitigated enslavement” (xvii). According to Michelakos (2009:21), “With the emerging hybridization of racial identity on the plantation a more enhanced taxonomy of racial identity created further social stratification: The lighter one’s skin color, the better the chances of obtaining occupations of greater reward and skill, and better still the opportunity of gaining manumission.” Garrigus (2006) found this to be true in Saint Domingue and elsewhere, where a class of free people (*gens de couleur*), descendants of freed slaves and white planters, rose in wealth and status in the 1770s and 1780s to compete with the *grand blancs*, or wealthy white planters, who responded with more strident white supremacist rhetoric and legislation to promote solidarity.

Saint Domingue’s free people of color occupied a unique place compared to their counterparts in other Caribbean slave societies: they were often wealthier than

*petits blancs*, they had the same rights as free whites with regard to employment, property ownership, and education, yet they could be punished with enslavement and were supposed to defer to former masters (Davies 2008:20). This status shifted in the 1770s, as white elites began to classify free people of color as racial others to protect the interests of their white peers; however, free people of color sometimes had the financial and political resources to contest and resist this imposition (Davies 2008:21). They also had strength in number; by 1789, the population of *gens de couleur* was almost equal that of whites (Fabella 2010:43). This differed from other areas such as Jamaica and Brazil, where freeborn families were treated “as full members of the master class, as whites, in essence” (Garrigus 2006:4). He argues that before the mid-eighteenth century, ideas about white purity existed but were unevenly applied; however, following the defeat of France in the Seven Years War, white planters in French colonies feared a division between the colony and the center of the French empire, so they used racial bonds to ensure their solidarity with France (Garrigus 2006).

Roughly one-third of the *gens de couleur* were entirely of African descent; two-thirds were of mixed African and European descent (Davies 2008:20). Over time, their social status became based on wealth and connections rather than African genealogy (Garrigus 2006:11). This population occupied a somewhat ambiguous position: generally poor and disenfranchised but some became merchants and property owners, and were wealthier than some white colonists (Burnard 2016:62, Davies 2008:20, Dominguez and Dominguez 1981:16). Wealth was usually derived from white fathers (Midlo Hall 1971:142).

Many *gens de couleur* owned slaves (Dessens 2007:9), but there were also several legal restrictions imposed on them: they could not bear arms or buy gunpowder without a permit; could not hold certain occupations such as bailiff, lawyer, apothecary, or mechanic; and could not have the names of white people or sit with white people at church (Dessens 2003:69-70). Consequently, *gens de couleur* attempted to gain more political power and representation in the French National Assembly, with the assistance of the *Société des Amis des Noirs*, founded in Paris in 1788 (Rivers 2002:29).

### *Les Blancs*

The white population of Saint Domingue was divided into two groups: *grand blancs* (wealthy property owners who lived in the country, the cities, or France)—the Vincendières belonged to this group— and *petit blancs* (plantation managers, lawyers, retail merchants, grocers, tradesmen) (Fick 1990:17).

Though white planters may have identified with white elites in Europe, Europeans in the metropole tended to regard their Caribbean counterparts as crude, savage, and alien—“the ill effects of the tropical climate, the monotonous rhythm of plantation life, and their close proximity to people of African descent appeared to have sapped them of their morality, sociability, and physical and intellectual vitality” (Fabella 2010:41).

Wealthy white residents of Saint Domingue took advantage of their power, privilege, and lack of surveillance to defy social norms. Dunn (1973) describes life in the colonies as living “beyond the line,” which meant, “a flouting of European treaty obligations. It meant a general flouting of European social conventions” (Dunn

1973:10) particularly for the rapidly rising powerful master class, a trend that coincided with the switch from tobacco and cotton cultivation to sugar production. Europeans tended to “behave in a far more unbuttoned fashion than at home. White men who scrambled for riches in the torrid zone exploited their Indian and black slaves more shamelessly than was possible with the unprivileged laboring class in Western Europe. And they robbed and massacred each other more freely than the rules of civility permitted in Euro combat” (Dunn 1973:12), thereby creating a society “radically different from the one they left at home” (46).

Saint Domingue’s native-born white population, known as creoles, were thought to be inherently different from French-born whites in ways that were undesirable: culturally unsophisticated, selfish, violent, and animalistic (Fabella 2010:41). In 1733, the Jesuit Jean-Baptiste Le Pers described Saint Domingue’s creoles as, “well-built and easy going, though somewhat flighty and inconstant. They are frank, energetic, proud, haughty, presumptuous, [and] intrepid; in religious matters they are criticized for having very little aptitude and much indulgence but we have seen that a good upbringing easily corrects most of their faults.” At the end of the century, Moreau de Saint-Méry described Saint Domingue’s island-born whites as having “a host of admirable qualities; frank, good natured, generous, perhaps ostentatiously, confident, brave, steadfast friends and good fathers, they are exempt from the crimes that degrade humanity” (quoted in Burnard 2016:10). Both writers identified hospitality as the principal virtue of Saint Domingue whites. They were viewed by the French as “lazy, cowardly, lascivious,” with a “disdain of labor” (Charles and Cheney 2013:140-1, Eccles 1972:159, Lewis 2000:564).

Alternatively, white creole women were portrayed as a modest, civilizing influence on white men. Although they were depicted as kind and gentle, white women were less likely than white men to manumit their slaves (perhaps to ensure that they had less competition for the resources and attention of those who held power—white men) and were “generally pro-slavery, socially illiberal, and economically exploitative of black women” (Beckles 1993:668). One common feature of both white women and women of color was the fact that they sometimes had outside commercial activities, such as selling goods and services locally.

#### *Racism and Racial Formation*

Vaughn (1995:173) asserts that the racial system emerged early on in the colonial Caribbean, saying that, “The idea of races—imprecisely defined and inconsistently explained—had arrived ... with the first English settlers,” while racism developed not much later. This attention to race and ethnicity, and their inclusion in the social hierarchy, had direct ties to the colonial economy. Chatterjee et al. (2010:1) link racism and capitalism, saying that “the plantation, a racialized space from the start, was at the heart of industrial capitalism as it developed in the following centuries.... men and women recruited to work in the plantations had to be simultaneously dehumanized and racialized in order to rationalize production.” Balibar and Wallerstein (1991:33) likewise point to developing capitalism as the source and persistence of racism, saying that,

A capitalist system that is expanding...needs all the labor-power it can find, since this labor is producing the goods through which more capital is produced, realized, and accumulated.... But if one wants to maximize the accumulation of capital, it is necessary simultaneously to minimize the costs of production...and minimize the costs of political disruption (i.e. the protests of the labor force). Racism is the magic formula that reconciles these objectives.

And all of this was “contingent on the assumption that European laborers were unavailable and unsuited for this regime” (Chatterjee et al. 2010:1). An American example is provided by archaeologist David Babson (1990:23), who notes that planters in South Carolina wanted to grow rice and discovered that West Africans were particularly skilled in this type of agriculture, so they created a racist ideology about the Africans in order to justify their enslavement and their subordinate position on the plantation. So it is inaccurate to depict Europeans as “naturally” prejudiced toward Africans due to the physical appearance; in fact, slavery as we know it did not exist in the early decades of the English colonies (see Allen 1997, Berlin 1998, Eltis 1993, Morgan 1975, Morgan 1998, Parent 2003, Walsh 2010). Munford (1991) asserts that the “African was transformed into a *thing* and depersonalized by stigmatizing the color of African skin” (ix). In Maryland, particularly in the Chesapeake region, skin color became an increasingly important marker in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, due to the fact that as “the servile labor of white indentured servants had been discarded, the exemption from manual labor which in France was the privilege of a *class*, in the colonies became a *racial* attribute, a function of white skin” (Munford 1991:x). The rising reliance on black labor power—a “matter of life or death” (Munford 1991:xi)—was related to the European economic depression, which drove Europeans to look for alternative sources of income, and led to the development of the colonial slave empire (Munford 1991:xi). Black individuals were “othered” by whites, who, ironically, kept them intimately linked with themselves. As John (1999:46) puts it, slaveholders “defined blacks as savages, then entrusted them with their children; as docile, then developed black codes; and as witless, then

purchased them based on skills."

In defining blackness, Europeans in the colonial Caribbean also defined not-black, or whiteness. Newman (2010) has examined the various ways that these color lines were drawn in British colonial Caribbean society; for example, eighteenth century laws passed in Jamaica that defined whiteness (those of pure European ancestry and those of at least four degrees removed from African ancestry) (Newman 2010:587) and prevented non-whites from acquiring property in excess of £1,200. The question of whiteness and ancestry was of great concern as white planters and elites frequently had affairs with black workers (unmarried/widowed men made up the largest part of the white population, and viewed black women as sexual objects—the absence of anti-miscegenation laws in Jamaica also facilitated these liaisons (Newman 2010:588)) and produced racially mixed offspring. Occasionally, the lightest-skinned and most well-to-do of these offspring were granted a white racial identity and its accompanying privileges (ibid.). Attempts to regulate whiteness speaks to the fear of British West Indian whites had of losing their place in the colony and “the importance of whiteness as a marker of British national identity in the context of a rapidly expanding overseas empire” (Newman 2010:589). Brutality was the norm:

That whites were free to act as they pleased toward blacks does not, however, explain why they were so brutal toward their slaves. White Jamaicans, as Charles Leslie noted, were notorious for their ill treatment of slaves. One of the causes of that ill treatment arose from the almost complete absence of constraint over how that power was exercised.... Late eighteenth-century commentators were similarly interested in the extraordinary circumstances that led white Jamaicans to treat their slaves so abominably. Some attributed white Jamaican brutality to the climate, arguing that the heat transformed the “natural Disposition” of Britons “from humanity into Barbarity.” Others blamed the “Barbarity” on the way white Jamaicans were raised. “Bred for the

most Part at the Breast of a Negro Slave; surrounded in their Infancy with a numerous retinue of these dark Attendants,” white Jamaicans were, John Fothergill asserted, ‘habituated by Precept and Example, to Sensuality, and Despotism’ (Burnard 2004:32).

Aimé Césaire argues that this unequal colonial relationship results in the corruption of the colonizer’s humanity. He portrays colonialism as a violent and exploitative structure that had a destructive impact upon the European colonizers, too: “colonization works to *decivilize* the colonizer, to *brutalize* him in the true sense of the word, to degrade him, to awaken him to buried instincts, to covetousness, violence, race hatred, and moral relativism” (2000 (1955): 35). Césaire identified this as “the boomerang effect” of colonialism:

... colonization, I repeat, dehumanizes even the most civilized man; ... colonial activity, colonial enterprise, colonial conquest, which is based on contempt for the native and justified by that contempt, inevitably tends to change him who undertakes it; ... the colonizer, who in order to ease his conscience gets into the habit of seeing the other man as an animal, accustoms himself to treating him like an animal, and tends objectively to transform *himself* into an animal. It is this result, this boomerang effect of colonization that I wanted to point out. (Césaire 2000 (1955): 41).

Racist policies were established to contain slaves and maintain the social order, and racism was “a mind control device designed to keep the slave passive enough to insure the survival of the system” (Midlo Hall 1971:136). Colonial intellectuals of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century described racial prejudice as an inherent, natural feature of the Caribbean plantation regime. With hundreds of thousands of Africans working for a few thousand Frenchmen, planters argued, “brutal discipline and an abiding scorn for all people of color were essential tools of the sugar trade” (Garrigus 2006:22). These policies also served to reinforce white supremacy in the plantation environment. According to Degler (1959:52), racial prejudice and discrimination

predated the formation of plantation slavery and was institutionalized as a means of social control of slaves and justification for slavery. By the very definition and treatment of slaves as inferior humans, the norm of white supremacy was created and perpetuated. Thus, the slave plantation was a unique type of social organization that acted as a sort of social crucible in which race relations were developed that created a system of racial inequality and that established a legacy for the twentieth century” (Durant 1999:12).

Saint Dominguan slavery and plantation systems were regulated by the Code Noir, which was signed into law by King Louis XIV in 1685 (Herrmann 2005:22). The laws were partially intended to protect slaves by establishing a basic level of care, including the amount of food they were required to receive, restricting the types and quantity of punishment allowed, to safeguard against the brutalization of slaves, and regulating the amount of labor extracted from slaves. However, this system was borne out of practicality rather than a true concern for the well-being of enslaved workers (Midlo Hall 1971:86-7, 112). The slave code and other racist policies were in place to maintain social order, so that nothing would threaten the amount of property, money, or power that the white colonists had. It was in the interest of colonial elites to create discriminatory policies because through the degradation and dispossession of non-whites, whites, elite and poor alike, could maintain their social status.

French colonists also exercised social control by restricting the rights of enslaved workers, requiring that slaves have the permission of their master before marrying or traveling, forbidding slaves from carrying weapons and selling items, and meting out strict punishments, including beatings when masters “believe that their

slaves so deserve” and disfigurement or death for slaves who attempt to run away (*Édit du Roi, Touchant la Police des Isles de l’Amérique Française* 1687:28–58). Revisions to the law in 1775 and 1784-1786 were made in an attempt to increase the number of enslaved workers on the island and decrease a reliance on the importation of slaves (e.g. more regulations on labor conditions, providing slaves with garden plots, clothing allowances, and supplies, giving slaves better care when ill, encouraging marriage), though these allowances received resistance from slaveowners, who wanted total autonomy in the running of their plantations (Midlo Hall 1971:92-112). Consequently, enslaved workers were often denied basic rights even when they were codified into law.

For the most part, planters viewed slaves as objects that were valuable only for the labor they provided: “Slaves were literally worked to death because they were the units of production and, as such, represented an investment that, once amortized, had already yielded its profits” (Fick 1990:27). It was believed that constant surveillance and the threat of punishment were required to secure the minimal performance of the slaves’ duties. Dr. Collins stresses this necessity in his *Practical Rules for the Management and Medical Treatment of Negro Slaves in the Sugar Colonies*, published in 1803:

To one point you ought particularly to attend, and never let it escape from your memory, that a negro is an instrument, which requires you to be incessantly acted upon to the performance of its duty. Whenever work is to be done, your white servants ought to see that it is done, and not to satisfy themselves with giving orders to the negroes, and trusting to their memories for the execution; for it is ten to one but that they forget it, and by that means incur your displeasure; and it is certainly, in all cases, more pleasant to prevent an offence than to punish the commission of it. The neglect of this rule is the occasion of many severities, which, with a little attention, might easily be avoided” (Tomich 2016:340).

White planters' power allowed them to manipulate narratives and “construct reality in a fashion that justified their every action” (John 1999:45). Gramsci's concept of hegemony provides an explanation of this power,

a particular form of dominance in which a ruling class legitimates its position and secures the acceptance if not outright support of those below them. For dominance to be stable, the ruling class must create and sustain widely accepted ways of thinking about the world that define their dominance as reasonable, fair, and in the best interest of society as a whole. As a concept, it draws attention to how dominance and subordination are defined as part of the normal structure of society and woven into the institutional frameworks of major aspects of social life, from the family to education to organized religion (Johnson 1995:128-129).

This “constructed reality” took the form of narratives about the superior qualities of those of European descent and the inferiority of those of African descent. For example, according to Moreau de Saint-Méry, “The Africans transplanted to Saint-Domingue remain in general indolent and idle, quarrelsome and talkative, and liars, and are addicted to stealing. Always given to the most absurd superstitions, there is nothing which does not frighten them more or less” (1985:42).

*Rebellions, Uprisings, and the Haitian Revolution<sup>1</sup>*

By 1789, the demographics and political climate in Saint Domingue created an atmosphere in which a major revolt could take place. The population consisted of over 300,000 free gens de couleur, 500,000 enslaved workers (mostly young men), and only 40,000 whites—and while the latter were united by racial solidarity, they were also divided along class lines; “the resulting tensions pitted sugar and coffee

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<sup>1</sup> Most of the information for this section comes from Fick 1990 & 2000, Burnard 2016, Rivers-Cofield 2006, Childs 1940, Kadish 2002, Geggus 1989, Dessens 2007, Popkin 2008, Ghachem 2012, Dubois 2004b, and Fiering and Geggus 2009.

planters against each other as well as against merchants and lawyers, and separated all of these from the turbulent *petits blancs*, or poor whites” (Geggus 1989:22-23).

The outbreak of the French Revolution occurred with the creation of the National Assembly in 1789. Several members of the Assembly belonged to the *Société des Amis des Noirs* (Society of the Friends of Blacks), which was founded in 1788, and proposed the abolition of slavery. Their proposals were not initially accepted, and some members of the National Assembly took up the cause of *gens de couleur*, arguing that they should receive the same rights as white colonists. Free people of color in Paris were successfully able to secure more civil and political rights, a move that inspired their counterparts in the colonies to send delegates to France to agitate for the same rights. Sensing a possible threat to their wealth and prospects, white planters sent their own representatives to argue on behalf of their interests. Vincendière relative Boisneuf was one of these colonial representatives; he belonged to a group of politicians who supported the French Revolution— believing that it would bring them new freedoms— but wanted to maintain the plantation economy and the practice of enslavement in Saint Domingue, even though to do so would be in contradiction to the Revolution’s promotion of “*Liberté, Égalité, et Fraternité*” (Rivers 2005:5.4). As the owner of three sugar plantations, Boisneuf stood to lose a great deal of wealth, status, and power with the end of slavery.

In May 1791, following an uprising of 350 free people of color in Saint Domingue, the National Assembly granted political rights to those who had been born of free parents. Enslaved workers took part in a revolt three months later, and the National Assembly responded by revoking the rights of the *gens de couleur*, who

retaliated by attacking white colonists. Enslaved workers participated in the revolt, which became increasingly violent and widespread, as plantations were destroyed and slave masters tortured and killed. Factors that made this revolt possible include the prevalence of absentee masters, depersonalization and estrangement of whites and blacks, economic distress and famine, enormous slaveholding units, imbalanced demographics where blacks heavily outnumbered whites and African-born slaves outnumbered Creole slaves, and a social structure that allowed for emergence of an autonomous black leadership (Genovese 1979:11). Furthermore, the “geographical, social, and political environment provided terrain and opportunity for the formation of colonies of runaway slaves strong enough to threaten the plantation” (Genovese 1979:12).

Colonial elites worked to subdue these rebellions. In November 1791, Boisneuf traveled to the Philadelphia with a fellow deputy of the assembly, the Baron de Beauvois, to appeal to George Washington for help in the form of food, building materials, and a large number of weapons, including "eight thousand fusils and bayonets, two thousand mousquators, three thousand pistols, [and] three thousand sabres" (Babb 1954:90). The men met with Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson, who brought their appeal to Congress, but the United States declined to make a significant contribution or get involved in the uprising (Rivers 2005:5.5).

In March 1792, the assembly reinstated the rights of free people of color and abolished slavery on February 4, 1794. At this point, Saint Domingue had experienced almost three years of rebellion, attacks, and destruction, and had lost its status as the jewel in the French empire’s crown. Former slave Toussaint L’Ouverture

emerged as the leader of the slave rebellion, though Napoleon Bonaparte had him captured and jailed in 1802 and reinstated the practice of enslavement in the French colonies and revoked the rights of *gens de couleur*. However, enslaved workers continued their insurgency and successfully established the free republic of Haiti in 1804.

## Chapter 3: Life in the United States: 1793 and Beyond

Motivated by slave rebellions and the Haitian Revolution, large numbers of colonists left Saint Domingue between 1793 and 1803. The first wave of displacements occurred after the slave revolt of 1791; colonists fled to other parts of Saint Domingue or elsewhere in the Americas, such as Cuba, Jamaica, and cities along the eastern seaboard of the United States (Dessens 2007:15). A second wave of migration occurred in 1793 after the burning of Cap Français in Saint Domingue; most went to the Atlantic Coast of the United States (Dessens 2007:15). Then a third wave of migration occurred after the withdrawal of British troops in 1789; most went to Jamaica or the eastern US (Dessens 2007:15). A total of about 20,000 refugees came to the US by 1791, most commonly to port cities such as Charleston, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New Orleans, and Norfolk (Egerton 2000:96, Morrow 2000:123). Refugees also went to Louisiana or returned to France (Dessens 2007:16). Most expected that their time away to be temporary, that they would return to Saint Domingue once the slave rebellions had been subdued.

It was during this third wave of upheaval and migration that the Vincendières, Jean Payen de Boisneuf, and twelve of their enslaved workers fled to the United States. The family likely sold or lost their property before leaving Saint Domingue, though the Vincendières did inherit the estate of one of Magnan's relatives, and Boisneuf willed his colonial property – consisting of three sugar plantations, a house in Saint-Marc, and additional land—to Victoire and her sisters, to repay them for their

support following their arrival in Maryland (Rivers-Cofield 2011:32). While Victoire and her siblings received indemnity payments from the French government for these estates, they only received ten percent of the full value, and they did not receive payments for the loss of Etienne's properties (Birmingham and Beasley 2014:15). The fact that Boisneuf left his properties to members of the Vincendière family reveals his expectation that they would eventually be able to return to Saint Domingue and resume their previous way of life and recoup their fortune. This was a common belief among French refugees from the colony, one that would never come to pass (Rivers-Cofield 2011:32).

The family members arrived in the United States separately in 1793 and settled in different parts of the country. Boisneuf, Magnan Vincendière, and her two youngest daughters were in France when the revolts broke out in Saint Domingue; it is likely that they were escaping the Reign of Terror when they came to Frederick, Maryland. The rest of the Vincendières came to the United States from Saint Domingue (Rivers 2002:50). With the slave rebellions beginning in 1791 and the burning of Cap Francois occurring in the summer of 1792, it seems likely that the family left the colony to escape the violence they were experiencing there. Records indicate that Etienne Vincendière departed from Saint Domingue in December 1792, arrived in Charleston, South Carolina on February 1, 1793, and remained there for the rest of his life with his brother Henri (Birmingham and Beasley 2014b:11). It is unknown why he settled in Charleston rather than joining several of his family members in Frederick. His daughter, Pauline Vincendière, her husband Louis Adrien Dugas de Vallon and their children settled in Georgia (ibid.).

It is not clear why the Vincendières chose to come to Maryland, though it “was an attractive location for refugees fleeing Saint-Domingue thanks to strong trade ties that connected Saint-Domingue and Maryland ports. Hundreds of refugees fleeing by sea stepped onto ships already destined for Baltimore” (Rivers-Cofield 2011:32). Baltimore received 53 ships with 1,000 white refugees and 500 free and enslaved people of African descent in the summer of 1793 (Rivers 2002:34-36). At one point French refugees constituted over 12% of Baltimore’s population (Babb 1954:382). Perhaps the family was also attracted by the “abundance of unoccupied land which was at once cheap and fertile, a legal system which offered a large measure of civil and religious liberties, and the guarantee that property rights would be protected and secure, (these) were strong magnets for those seeking better opportunity for themselves and their families” (Kessel 1981:iii). Maryland may also have been appealing to a French Catholic family, as Baltimore had a large Catholic population (Babb 1954:392).

### *Reception of Refugees*

Once Saint Dominguan refugees arrived in the United States, Americans immediately pitched in to make sure their needs were met in their new country. “Refugees usually arrived in a state of utter destitution, were granted a generally warm welcome, and benefited, as elsewhere, from the financial aids provided by the federal and local governments” (Dessens 2007:19). Americans formed relief committees to raise funds and provide food, clothing, and shelter, and started local and regional subscription campaigns to these ends, even as civil war and slave revolt in Saint Domingue continued. Congress also appropriated \$15,000 against the debt to

France, for the relief of the exiles in 1794 (Childs 1940:87). Maryland received the greatest amount of government aid as it had the largest number of refugees. (Babb 1954:86). With this assistance, Saint Domingans were able to adjust and build a new life in the United States. Refugees formed close-knit communities based on their shared background and experiences in Saint Domingue (Dessens 2007:46). They kept in touch with friends and relatives throughout the East Coast via correspondence (Dessens 2007:48), and tended to marry other refugees, or at least other Catholics.

Once public and private aid was depleted, refugees needed to support themselves. They returned to their old occupations or took on new occupations. These included hotelier, baker, silversmith, cabinetmaker, hairdresser, fencing master, musician, barber, actor, tailors, shoemakers, seamstresses, embroiderers, and boardinghouse keepers, goldsmiths, ironmongers, cabinetmakers, carpenters, upholsterers, physicians, lawyers, engineers, builders, surveyors, and public printers, teachers, journalists, businessmen, planters, overseers. Some rose to prominence in the fields of education, agriculture, and business. They also contributed to the founding of St. Mary's College in Baltimore as well as many other Catholic institutions in Maryland, and at least one University of Maryland faculty member was a refugee of the Saint Domingue revolt (Babb 1954:124, 126). Refugees also formed a prominent mercantile house, several medical practices, and a freemason's lodge in Baltimore (Babb 1954:123, 364)" (Rivers 2005:5.9). Young refugees of color were often apprenticed in the craft industry (Gillikin 2014:111, Dessens 2007:71-6, Childs 1940). Slaves remained with their masters, or were sold or hired out as sugar workers, domestics, cooks, wigmakers, or coachmen (Dessens 2007:78).

While (white) French refugees received a great deal of support and sympathy from those in the United States, they were also met with fear and trepidation. Americans pitied the refugees and their loss of property, wealth, and stability, but remained cautious and distrustful of their new neighbors, who were in many ways quite alien, and introduced potential dangers to the country. With western Maryland primarily composed of German and English Protestants, the French Catholic Vincendières would have been an unusual addition to Frederick society.

French refugees from Saint Domingue tended to practice Catholicism, which was another source of apprehension for Americans, who were more resistant to accepting the refugees in part for this reason (Gillikin 2014:200). The area north of Thurmont and around Emmitsburg was almost entirely settled by Catholics, who formed a Catholic parish in Emmitsburg in 1786, followed by the erection of St. Joseph's Church in 1793 and St. Joseph's College in 1809 (Tracey and Dern 1987:255). Even with this concentration of Catholic residents, the region remained dominated by Protestantism, thanks to its settlers of German and Scots-Irish descent, and Catholics were much discriminated against. This distrust of Catholics had a long history in Maryland, whose European settlers were largely Protestant. The Maryland Assembly addressed the "Catholic menace" in 1718 by removing the rights of Catholics until they pledged the supremacy of the British Crown and renounced the papacy, and in 1756, the Lower House of the Maryland Assembly enacted a provision for double taxation of Roman Catholics (Tracey and Dern 1987:247). Catholics were not permitted to build churches, though they could observe Mass in a private setting (251). In passing this legislation, the Assembly was following the orders of the

British Parliament, who charged the Assembly with keeping the “strictest watch” on Roman Catholics to prevent them from thinking themselves “more fortunate and easy if their religion was established here” (Proceedings of the Assembly, 1745-1747, Archives of Maryland, op.cit. 44:456).

The late 18<sup>th</sup> century was also time of great distrust of the French, particularly in the late 1780s and early 1790s. The French Revolution, which occurred between 1789 and 1799, was widely covered by American newspapers. Though Americans had undergone their own revolution fairly recently, they were horrified to learn of the violent behavior of the French revolutionaries. Some granted the French revolutionaries cautious support while condemning their brutal acts, but even this support was revoked once the Reign of Terror began in the early 1790s and imprisonment and massacres became significantly more common (Gillikin 2014:153-4). Subsequently, many Americans looked upon the French with distaste and suspicion. In addition, when French revolutionaries declared war on all European monarchies, they lost even more support among Americans, who were divided over the implications of this act and displayed their loyalties: “Wearing a black cockade in one’s hat signified adherence to order over “mob-ocracy” and affection for the British, on whom the French declared war in 1793. The red cockade marked one as a friend of liberty and equality, a foe of things British and aristocratic” (Brugger 1988:164).

Americans also kept an eye trained on the social and political developments occurring in the French West Indies. White Americans in particular began to shift away from pro-French sentiments due to the slave revolts in Saint Domingue and the

other French colonies, as they feared that this revolutionary spirit would spread to the United States and infect enslaved workers; speculating that

the small number of French nationals living in the South might follow the lead of their mother country and throw their efforts behind universal emancipation. The ‘lower order of Frenchmen’ who ‘fraternize with our Democratic Clubs (might) introduce the same horrid tragedies among our negroes, which has been so fatally exhibited in the French islands,’ observed one South Carolinian. ‘Our... French friends will do not good to our Blacks,’ agreed another (Egerton 2000:99).

It was partly this attitude that motivated the passage of the Alien and Enemies Act on July 6, 1798, which gave the President the power to deport aliens who had (or were suspected to have) ties to wartime enemies (McDonald 1909:144).

Americans particularly feared that enslaved individuals brought from Saint Domingue would spread rebellion and revolutionary ideas to enslaved workers in the United States and breed rebellion (Davies 2008:122-4, Nash 1998). After witnessing years of revolts and the Haitian Revolution, they were hesitant to welcome those who, in their mind, had engineered chaos and destruction in the French colony (Gillikin 2014:243). Southerners also feared that “an excessively large free black population might endanger the whole system of slavery”; consequently, several states, such as Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and Kentucky prohibited the entry of free blacks (Dessens 2003:66).

Americans also feared the spread of another kind of “contagion,” yellow fever. In 1793, the disease spread rapidly throughout Philadelphia where it was attributed to the refugees from Saint Domingue, who had reportedly carried it with them from the island. One account (Williams and McKinsey 1910:135) described a horrifying scene in Philadelphia, and the ripple effect on East Coast cities such as

Baltimore:

All the towns and communities which had intercourse with Philadelphia were filled with alarm. Nor were their fears ill founded, for in the last days of July a strange disease of a most dreadful and deadly character had begun to spread in Philadelphia. A fever would set in with pain in the head and loins. On the fourth day the whites of the eyes turned yellow, blood ran from the nose, the patient vomited profusely a black vomit, the body become of a yellowish-purple color and on the eighth day he would die. But it was more likely that the physicians would not let him live until the eighth day, for at the appearance of the very first symptom bloodletting was begun and kept up without intermission until the patient would die from exhaustion. Deaths took place all the time. The constant ringing of church bells and the funeral trains became so depressing to the sick that it had to be prohibited and bodies were buried silently at dead of night. All who could procure means to leave the city fled and it was to prevent infection from this army of refugees that precautions were taken and quarantines established in all the towns within two hundred miles of Philadelphia. Baltimore was greatly alarmed not only on account of infection from Philadelphia but because a shipload of refugees from San Domingo had landed at her wharves. So the Governor of the State issued a proclamation and all means which suggested themselves were tried to secure the public safety. No person who came from Philadelphia or who was suspected on coming from there was allowed to be received into any family or indeed to come into the town. In order to keep them out, a large number of citizens enlisted and formed themselves into a patrol to guard every road and avenue by which the town might be reached and all persons suspected of coming from the scene of the plague were ruthlessly driven off. Clothing and supplies which were sent from Eastern Pennsylvania for the troops gathered in Frederick were not permitted upon any account to be received.

Citizens of Frederick, being close to the Pennsylvania border and less than 200 miles from Philadelphia, would likely have been keenly aware of the nearby epidemic and possibly suspicious and fearful of how refugees like the Vincendières would affect their city.

#### Arrival in Maryland

Upon arriving in Frederick, the Vincendières were confronted with a very different environment from the tropical landscape they were used to in Saint Domingue. They settled in the Monocacy Valley in Maryland's Piedmont region,

bounded by the Potomac River to the south, Parr's Ridge to the east, the Blue Ridge Mountains to the west, and the Catoctin Mountains to the north (Kvach 2002:15). The Monocacy River cuts through the valley, stretching from Pennsylvania to the Potomac River. This location boasted a great deal of natural resources, thus, like Saint Domingue, the farmland in western Maryland was rich and fertile. Though the valley is relatively small, it was Maryland's most productive farming region, with over 95 percent of the land being arable and 76 percent of the valley containing the most desirable soil types— deep, well-drained, and nutrient-rich (Kessel 1981:32). In addition, local farmers had the advantage of a relatively moderate climate that resulted in a growing season that lasted nearly half the year (Kessel 1981:34). Polish traveler Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz observed in the late 1790s that the land in western Maryland “flows with milk and honey,” and the fields in the region, “groan under the weight of Indian corn, wheat, (and) rye,” the meadows were “covered with clover,” and the roads were choked with wagons hauling farmers' bounty to markets and mills in Baltimore (cited in Grivno 2011:23).

By the time the Vincendières and Jean Payen de Boisneuf arrived in 1793, Frederick County had a population of over 30,000 and the city had over 5,000 inhabitants (Randall 1998:91). The county had the largest general population and the largest white population of all the counties in Maryland (Beasley 2004:21). This was a significant departure from Saint Domingue's demographic profile, in which black slaves and free people of color far outnumbered the white population. Even at their lowest proportion, which occurred around 1810, white residents accounted for 62 percent of Maryland's population (Fields 1985:3). However, both Saint Domingue

and Maryland had a large population of free people of color; in fact, Maryland had the highest figure in the United States (about 84,000 out of a total population of 260,000) (Dessens 2003:37), and the population continued to grow by leaps and bounds; the free black population in Frederick County increased by 122 percent between 1790 and 1800, 71 percent between 1800 and 1810, and 127 percent between 1810 and 1820 (U.S. Census 1790-1820). Of Frederick’s white population, 40-50 percent were of German descent, while the remaining percentage was composed of English, Scotch, Irish, Welsh, and French settlers (Beasley 2003:21). Given that German farmers tended to not rely as heavily on slavery, usually owning fewer than twenty slaves, the enslaved population of Frederick County remained relatively small and grew more slowly than the white or free black populations (Reed and Wallace 2004:22) (see table for population numbers).

**Population of Frederick County, 1790-1830**

	<b>1790</b>	<b>1800</b>	<b>1810</b>	<b>1820</b>	<b>1830</b>
<b>White</b>	26,937	26,478	27,893	31,997	36,706
<b>Slave</b>	3,641	4,572	5,671	6,685	6,370
<b>Free Black</b>	213	473	783	1,777	2,716

*Source: U.S. Census 1790-1830*

*Industries of Frederick County*

The Monocacy Valley is “a particularly fertile farmland suited to the cultivation of both tobacco and wheat,” and drew its earliest settlers from tidewater Maryland counties where tobacco and enslaved labor prevailed (Kvach 2002:8). The development of Maryland in the 17<sup>th</sup> century was the result of the growth of tobacco as an agricultural product. However, by the early 1700s wheat had begun to overtake

tobacco as the state's cash crop (ibid.). Furthermore, "years of uneven economic and social growth caused by an over-reliance on tobacco slowed change and progress. Tobacco greatly benefited some planters, but caused hardship, poverty, and social unbalance for the vast majority of Marylanders. Many poor to middling farmers wanted to escape from tobacco's economic fluctuations and looked elsewhere to start a better life. Western Maryland offered cheap land, freedom from the direct control of tobacco planters, and a chance to begin a new life" (ibid.). Farmers from eastern Maryland settled along Maryland's northern border and in the western part of the state, particularly the Monocacy Valley. The valley also drew Germans from Pennsylvania who generally pursued grain cultivation and livestock husbandry (Jeske 1999:11). Farmers in western Maryland realized that tobacco wasn't as hardy or dependable as other crops, such as wheat and corn, so the latter became the primary crops grown in the region. Farmers also grew rye and oats (Grivno 2007:6). Western Maryland became characterized by flexible, diversified farming and relatively small family farms (usually 50-250 acres) (Reed and Wallace 2004:11, Grivno 2011:11, Kessel 1981:182). Western Maryland's wheat industry boomed thanks to a commercial link it had established with Baltimore City, from which crops were exported.

Important east-west routes between the two regions allowed wheat and later flour to flow freely from field to port. Before 1744, Baltimore consisted of a cluster of homes located next to the Chesapeake Bay. By 1752, Baltimore had expanded to twenty-five houses with a population of two hundred people, and by 1790, Baltimore ranked as the fourth largest city in the United States. Much of this growth can be

attributed to the commercial link between western wheat farmers and eastern merchants. Later, as millers established mills that expanded production, flour became a key export product. Merchants shipped the majority of Maryland's flour to the West Indies, with early trade figures showing up to 70 percent of Baltimore's wheat trade shipped directly to the West Indies (Kvach 2002:23).

By 1790, Frederick was the top producer of wheat in the country (Fiedel and Griffiths 2005:24). After 1793, Maryland became more active in international trade, as the French Revolution disrupted European farming and trade (Grivno 2011:24). As a result of the popularity of grain farming, grist and flourmills were established to convert wheat, rye, oats, and Indian corn into more easily transportable and marketable flour or meal. Milling thus became a prominent feature of the local economy: by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Frederick County boasted eighty grist and flourmills and 300-400 stills, two glass works, two iron furnaces, two forges and two paper mills (Reed and Wallace 2004:23). The growth of industry in Frederick led to an increase in the size of the population in Frederick Town, and the city became the commercial and governmental center for the surrounding area, boasting banks, law offices, and printing establishments (Reed and Wallace 2004:23).

### *Enslavement in Maryland*

Because agriculture in western Maryland tended to take the form of small farms with diversified crops, rather than the large mono-crop plantations of the tidewater Chesapeake, residents in places such as Frederick tended to rely less on slave labor. Still, slavery had a long history in the state. When the Vincendières arrived in Maryland, slavery had already existed for more than a century—Maryland

was the third colony to recognize slavery as a legal institution (LaRoche 2007:7).

The first documented Africans in Maryland were brought to St. Mary's City in 1642. Prior to 1700, enslaved Africans and people of African descent were rare in the Chesapeake, constituting less than 5% of the region's population (Berlin 1998:29). Only very wealthy planters could afford to purchase enslaved Africans to work their tobacco fields; small-scale planters often relied on English and Irish indentured servants, and it was not uncommon for these planters to work the land alongside their servants (Franklin and Schweninger 2004:22). However, England experienced rapid economic development in the second half of the 1600s, and by the 1680s, a much smaller number of indentured servants came to the colonies as they could take advantage of opportunities at home (Kolchin 1993:12). With the rising cost and declining supply of indentured servants, it was no longer economical for planters to rely on this type of labor (Morgan 1975:299, Franklin 2004:22). Instead, planters turned to enslaved Africans to provide labor. By this time it was less expensive to purchase Africans, and planters could own them and their labor for their lifetime, as opposed to a limited period of time, in the case of indentured servants (Franklin 2004:23).

In 1664, the Maryland Assembly solidified the practice of slavery when it ruled that "all negroes and other slaves to be hereafter imported into the Province shall serve *durante vita*. And all children born of any negro or other slave shall be slaves as their fathers were for the term of their lives." The Assembly passed another act in 1671 declaring that an enslaved person could not be freed through baptism.

Slavery became increasingly entrenched in Maryland, and by the 1700s most field laborers were Africans or people of African descent (Franklin 2004:23).

Slavery was used inconsistently throughout the state. Known as “the middle temperament” and “the middle ground,” Maryland “held a bifurcated position when it came to slavery. In effect, there were two Marylands—one founded upon and supported by slavery and the other based upon free labor” (LaRoche 2007:50-2). By 1790, half of all enslaved workers lived in the southern counties, Calvert, St. Mary’s, and Charles, where tobacco was the dominant agricultural product (ibid.). By contrast, enslaved laborers comprised less than 5% of the population in the northern counties, including Alleghany, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Harford, and Washington (ibid.). Though enslavement was relatively uncommon in Frederick County compared to the southernmost counties, the practice was more established there compared to other counties in the region, as Frederick County had two of the most active slave markets (ibid.). Still, census data for Frederick County indicates that it was most common for slaveholding households to own one to five enslaved individuals, and this number dropped significantly between 1810 and 1830 (U.S. Census 1790-1830). The number of slaveholding households increased over time, from 15.5 percent in 1790 to 27.4 percent in 1820, but the practice of enslavement never reached a majority (ibid.).

Farmers in western Maryland tended to use free laborers more than those in the southern part of the state. According to Max Grivno, “In the three decades following the American Revolution, artisans and farmers cobbled together workforces that included apprentices, indentured servants, slaves, tenants, and wage laborers. In

1810, an employer in Frederick captured the opportunism that characterized labor arrangements in early national Maryland when he advertised for a hostler, noting that either ‘a white man, a free black, or slave,’ would suffice” (2011:36). Because wheat farming does not require year-round labor, it was common for slaves to work as domestic servants, perform odd jobs, or spend time hired out to one of the mills or iron foundries between Frederick and Baltimore (Brugger 1996:239-40, Wehrle 2000:58).

Maryland legalized manumission by last will in testament in 1790, just as the slave population was increasing in some counties, including Frederick County. Between 1790 and 1820, the percentage of slaves in the overall population grew from 12 to 17 percent in Frederick (Grivno 2011:38). In that same time period, the percentage of slaveowning households in Frederick County rose from 16% to 27% (Grivno 2007:74). This expansion occurred largely because Chesapeake tobacco farmers, who had exhausted the soil in their region, moved to the fertile land of western Maryland to establish wheat farms (Grivno 2011:38).

#### *Establishment of L’Hermitage*

The majority of the land that comprises Monocacy National Battlefield was once owned by one man, James Marshall. As a young merchant from Scotland, Marshall immigrated to America to make his mark in the lucrative tobacco and commodities trade between Britain, the American colonies, and the West Indies (Reed and Wallace 2005:63. His entry into the western “barrens” of Maryland began in 1758 with the purchase of Wett Work, a large tract of land on the east side of the Monocacy River that was divided after Marshall’s death in 1803 into the Gambrell

Mill property, and the Thomas (Araby), Worthington (Clifton), and Baker Farms (ibid.). In 1765, Marshall purchased another large tract on the west side of the river, which he called Arcadia, that later formed the nucleus of the Hermitage or Best Farm (ibid.).

Beginning in 1784 James Marshall became an independent agent for neighboring landowner Daniel Dulany “to improve his Estate here (in Frederick) & other good services,” including the facilitation of land sales, contracts, and evictions among his duties (Earley et al. 2005:81) In 1794, he served as agent for Dulany in the sale of 457 acres of Locust Level, located immediately north of Marshall’s Arcadia between the Georgetown and Buckeystown roads (ibid.). On December 12, 1794, James Marshall, acting as agent for Daniel Dulany, contracted initially with Boisneuf but by December 16th, the contract was finalized and signed by Victoire Vincendière for 457 acres of Locust Level for £4,113 (Earley et al. 2005:83) (Figure 6). According to the contract, Boisneuf paid half of the purchase price (£2,579) as a deposit to Dulany in Baltimore on December 13th, on behalf of Victoire Vincendière and with her money. The deed for the land was conveyed on the 24th of March 1795, when Victoire Vincendière paid the remaining amount in full to Dulany (ibid.). A few years later on April 27, 1798, Victoire purchased an additional tract of adjoining land, 291 acres, part of the Resurvey on Locust Level, and part of Arcadia. This she bought from James Marshall for £2,910. Marshall had acquired part of this land from Dulany in 1791 (ibid.).



Several extant structures on the Best Farm are attributed to the Vincendières' occupation of the property, including the log and stone secondary dwelling, the main house, and the stone barn. Although many of the structures were likely constructed before their purchase of the property in 1798, the Vincendières probably established this location as the center of plantation operations around 1794 or 1795 (Birmingham and Beasley 2014b:20). A newspaper advertising the plantation for sale in 1820 provides a great deal of information about the farm complex:

The improvements are—a good two story Stone HOUSE with six rooms and a Cellar; a stone barn; stone stable, large enough for 15 horses; a good two story dwelling log house; a granary, corn, pigeon, meat log houses; ice house and others; a large well, which, altho' upon a hill, has never less than 20 ft of most excellent lime stone water, even in the driest seasons; a good and well situated garden, of four acres of fruit trees, of several kinds (*Baltimore Patriot & Mercantile Advertiser*, May 11, 1820, Vol. XV, Issue 113:1).

As would be expected, the advertisement defines the heart of the plantation complex as composed of the main house, the stone barn, stone stable, and the dwelling house. Additional dwellings and outbuildings were present, including animal and processing structures, a well, and gardens; additional facilities and structures not mentioned would have included privies, industrial areas, and quarters for the enslaved individuals (Birmingham and Beasley 2014b:20). During the Archeological Overview and Assessment and Identification and Evaluation Study of the Best Farm, the archaeological remains of several support structures were uncovered within the historic building cluster; in addition to the stable (described as a shed in the Best Farm Study) attached to the stone barn, a privy, cistern, and an icehouse were identified” (Birmingham and Beasley 2014b:20-1).

The Vincendières later purchased additional property in the local area. In 1792 both Victoire and Boisneuf were co-purchasers of land in Jefferson County, Kentucky

with Jacques Nicholas Gilbert Miniere, although the reasons for any venture they may have had there are unknown (Birmingham and Beasley 2014b:13). Victoire also purchased a 201.25-acre tract called Hawkins' Merry Peep-o-Day, located five miles outside of Harper's Ferry, West Virginia in the town of Berlin (known today as Brunswick) (ibid.). In 1811 she purchased a 37.75-acre tract called Gleanings; in 1816 she bought a house on Lot 284 in Frederick; in 1821 she purchased 28.5 acres of Resurvey on Tuscarora; in 1823 she bought 80 acres of a tract called Maryland; and in 1828 she purchased part of Lot 91 in Fredericktown (ibid.). Additionally, her 1849 will indicates that she owned land in Wheeling, [West] Virginia and Martinsville, Ohio (ibid.). Indeed, the family landholdings were vast, and in one case Victoire sold property in trust to provide for her family members (ibid.).

Like their neighbors, the Vincendières were practicing agriculture on the small scale typical of the region; the family operated a mill and orchard, and grew wheat and clover (Beasley et al. 2005:5.22; Frederick-Town Herald 1816:3, 1819:3). Archaeological excavations in 2011 revealed a lime kiln on the L'Hermitage property that likely belonged to the Vincendières; they may have been participating in the plaster and lime industry and/or using lime for their own purposes (Bailey 2014b).

#### *White Residents of L'Hermitage*

One unusual aspect of the establishment of L'Hermitage is that the land was the legal property of Victoire, the family's eldest unmarried daughter (Birmingham and Beasley 2014b:13). When the family arrived in Maryland in 1793, Victoire was sixteen years of age (ibid.). By at least 1800, Victoire was the legal head of household for a plantation that was home to 108 people, 90 of whom were enslaved (ibid.). This

substantial number of enslaved individuals made Victoire the second largest slaveholder in the county at that time, and among the largest within the state of Maryland (ibid.). The other eighteen members of the household likely consisted of the Vincendières' immediate family, Boisneuf, and a number of other French refugees (likely including an overseer). From 1801 to 1804, the household also included the family of Victoire's elder sister Pauline Dugas de Vallon (Foster 1886).

According to the 1810 U.S. Census, "V. Vincendière" headed a household in Frederick County, Maryland, with one free white male aged 16–26 years, one free white male aged over 45 years, one free white female aged under 10 years, one free white female aged 10–16 years, two free white females aged 16–26 years, one free white female aged 26–45 years, one free white female aged over 45 years, and ninety slaves (Hait 2016:1).

The U.S. Census indicates that in 1820 "Victor" Vincendière headed a household in Election District 2 of Frederick County, Maryland, with two free white males aged under 10 years, one free white male aged 16–26 years, three free white males aged 26–45 years, one free white female aged under 10 years, two free white females aged 16–26 years, two free white females aged 26–45 years, two "[f]oreigners not naturalized," twenty-five "persons engaged in Agriculture," one "perso[n] engaged in Manufactures," and a total of fifty-two slaves of various ages and genders, for a grand total of sixty-three persons (Hait 2016:1).

By this time, Victoire's mother and brothers had died, as had Boisneuf, and her other sisters married and left the household, although Emerentienne and her husband John R. Corbaley may have joined the family at L'Hermitage. Victoire never

married; Rivers suggests that “It was not uncommon, however, for single women to help run the household within their own family in much the same way as a wife would, and an account written by Victoire’s niece indicates that this is exactly what she did (Rivers 2005:5.15). Lowe describes Victoire as “a charming young girl who gave up an engagement of marriage with a young nobleman to remain with her mother and devote her life to the education of her brothers and sisters” (Lowe 1913:17). Victoire’s broken engagement makes sense at that time period, since the French Revolution broke out when she would most likely have married, plunging her family into the chaos that was the French refugee movement (ibid.). Furthermore, “to marry a nobleman would have likely cost her family a substantial dowry, and given the tenuous situation of the Vincendière’s plantation livelihood, the dowry may have disappeared” (ibid.).

### *Enslaved Population*

Twelve enslaved individuals were forced to immigrate to the United States with the Vincendières. Their presence in the country was highly regulated:

Slaveholders in the United States feared the repercussions and potential spread of the Saint-Domingue slave revolts, and were unhappy about harboring slaves and freed slaves who originated from that colony. In light of these fears, the Maryland legislature passed a law in 1792 (titled *An Act Respecting the Slaves of Certain French Subjects*) that required the registration of enslaved persons within three months of their residence (Rivers 2002:48; MSA, Laws of Maryland 1792). Under this law, French settlers were only allowed to bring a limited number of enslaved individuals based on their status within the family household (Birmingham and Beasley 2014b:23).

In addition, this law prohibited the sale of enslaved workers brought from the West Indies for at least three years following their arrival in the United States.

A 1793 slave registration document provides us with the names and ages of

the enslaved individuals who accompanied the Vincendères and Boisneuf: Magnan Vincendière registered Janvier (age 24), François Arajou (age 20), Jane Sans-Nom (age 16), Veronique (age 16), and Maurice (a mulatto, age 15); her son Étienne Vincendière registered Marianne (age ~40), Cecile (Marianne's daughter, age 18), and Souris (age 15); Victoire registered one servant, Saint-Louis (age 15); and Jean Payen de Boisneuf brought an additional three enslaved individuals: Pierre Louis (age 35), Lambert (age 5), and Fillelle (age 8) (Birmingham and Birmingham 2014b:23).

The 1800 Census indicates that the Vincendières assembled an enslaved population of ninety individuals, meaning that they acquired an additional seventy-seven enslaved individuals in seven years (Birmingham and Beasley 2014b:23). Although no record of this purchase has been found, it is likely that the Vincendières acquired them in one or two large transactions. The 1810 U.S. Census indicates that they maintained this population of 90 enslaved individuals (U.S. Census 1810). Genealogist Michael Hait has suggested that this unchanged number is particularly suspect in the historic documents, suggesting that “the enumerator (or his informant) simply estimated a large number of slaves as ‘ninety,’” and was more likely closer to fifty enslaved individuals based on later census records (Birmingham and Beasley 2014b:23). It is unusual that the number remained unchanged after ten years, considering that the population would have fluctuated due to natural increase or death (Birmingham and Beasley 2014b:24). Despite the uncertainty of the number of enslaved laborers at the Best Farm from 1800 to 1819, the enslaved workforce totaling over fifty individuals is still a substantial and curious number. In 1790, only one planter in Frederick County owned between fifty and ninety-nine slaves, and one

person owned 100 to 199 slaves (Reed and Wallace 2004:97; Rivers 2006:276). Any enslaved population greater than fifty persons would have been unusual in the county. Additionally, the number and size of structures identified during the archaeological excavations support the fact that the enslaved population was indeed sizeable (Birmingham and Beasley 2014b:23-4).

In any case, the Vincendières assembled a labor force that was significantly larger than what was needed for the size of their landholdings and the types of agriculture they practiced. Traditionally enslaved laborers farmed tobacco, rice, cotton, and sugar by working together in large groups (gang system) but the movement toward diversified agriculture (using land for grains, vegetables, and grazing) required fewer workers for shorter periods of time (Reitz et al. 1985). As slave use declined, it became more cost-efficient to hire free laborers on an as-needed basis, so enslaved workers were adapted to other activities, such as the nearby iron industry or sold down South (Grivno 2007: 25). Most residents in the area had small farms where they cultivated small crops of grains, orchards, and livestock, all of which required a minimal workforce. Flax, corn, potatoes, and hay were also cultivated (Reed and Wallace 2004:11, 14; Miller 1886:132; Scharf 1882:363). The Vincendières operated a mill and an orchard and grew wheat and clover, neither of which is as labor-intensive as traditional plantation products (Rivers-Cofield 2006), yet their plantation system more closely resembled that of the tidewater tobacco plantations in Virginia and Maryland, or the sugar plantations of Saint Domingue. “Cereal crops such as grain, wheat, and clover dominated the area and fewer laborers were necessary for growing these crops than the tobacco that dominated Southern

Maryland. Typical cereal plantations of 700-1000 acres had 12-25 slaves” (Rivers 2002:53). It seems that they were trying to replicate the large-scale plantation system they were accustomed to in Saint Domingue and maintained an unnecessarily large quantity of enslaved laborers as a symbol of status, wealth, and French-Caribbean colonial norms. Given their origins in Saint Domingue, it is likely that the Vincendière family and their associates placed a great deal of importance on owning a large number of slaves as an expression of wealth and power. Moitt noted that the number of slaves one owned was a status marker in the Caribbean:

When Moreau de Saint-Méry wrote that ‘in Saint-Domingue everything takes on an air of opulence’, he was referring to the multitude of slaves in the households of European slave-owners who apparently considered it a matter of dignity to have four times the required number of domestics. He may as well have been talking about any of the Caribbean colonies during slavery. The number of domestics varied according to types of establishments and households, but there was a general tendency for slave-owners to have more servants than they needed (Moitt 1995:1024-5).

Olwell (1998:44) argues that the same was true in South Carolina:

Obviously, because slaves were valuable property, slave ownership was regarded as an important measure and marker of economic status among whites. As one visitor to the low country remarked, “if a man has not as many slaves as they, he is esteemed by them their inferior.” But possession of slaves had a social and political meaning as well as an economic one. Ownership of a slave automatically made one into a master and, in a slave society, into a member of the ruling “class.”

Additionally, plantation laborers were a necessity for the economic success of Saint Domingue plantations, and it is possible that the family felt that this system was required for their financial success in Frederick County as well. They may not have realized that the large enslaved labor force might be a financial burden in Frederick County until after they had tried to support such a population for many years (Rivers

2005:5.22-3).

Furthermore, Victoire Vincendière may have leased some of her enslaved workers to local glass or iron manufacturers, such as Catoctin Iron Furnace (Reed 2002). This was an extremely common practice in Frederick County, where the types of agriculture practiced did not require a large labor force year-round. Some of their slaves may have worked as domestic servants, artisans, or hired help on neighboring farms or in local industries (Rivers 2005:5.22). The enslaved individuals may have been engaging in several occupations. The lime kiln described above indicates that enslaved workers may have been involved in that industry. The enslaved individuals would have had to quarry, transport, process, and distribute the raw materials, by-products, and lime involved in the process, requiring a great investment in labor. Saw, grist, and flourmills also operated in the region, and may have provided additional employment opportunities (Beasley et al. 2001:9). Slaves were also rented out in order to learn valuable skills and trades that they would utilize on their home plantations. One newspaper advertisement indicates that Pierre Louis, the enslaved man brought to Maryland by Boisneuf, was a perruquier, or wig maker / hairdresser who played the violin (*Baltimore Daily Intelligencer* 1794:3). A slave named Jerry had previous experience as a brick-maker, and had been hired out to brick-making plants within the state (*Maryland Gazette* 1795:3). Plantation owners could sell skilled slaves for higher prices, which provided an added inducement to rent slaves out to other facilities: (Birmingham and Beasley 2014b:24).

### *Sale of L'Hermitage*

In 1815, Victoire Vincendière began selling parts of L'Hermitage and selling

or manumitting the family's enslaved workers. By 1815, Victoire was advertising parcels of L'Hermitage for sale in the *Frederick Town Herald*, and the *Baltimore Patriot & Evening Advertiser* (Earley et al. 2005:98). By 1820, at least one of her brothers had died, and her remaining siblings were married, with only her sister Adelaide, Adelaide's son Enoch Lewis Lowe, and several family friends residing at L'Hermitage (Reed and Wallace 2004:97). On June 14, 1827, Victoire sold L'Hermitage to John Brien, an iron master and substantial landowner in Frederick and Washington counties. The plantation sold for \$24,025, more than ten times the amount of its 1798 assessment (Birmingham and Beasley 2014b:13). Victoire moved to a townhouse in Frederick on Second Street near St. John's Catholic Church, where she lived until her death (ibid.).

Victoire started selling L'Hermitage's enslaved individuals in 1822. By the time she succeeded in selling L'Hermitage in 1828, she had sold at least 25 individuals, including 17 slaves that she sold to a dealer from Louisiana (Rivers-Cofield 2011:39). One of the slaves sold south was Fillelle, who had been eight-years-old when Boisneuf imported her to Maryland from Saint Domingue. As the years passed following the sale of L'Hermitage, Victoire sold or manumitted all but a very few of her slaves, and her will manumitted the three slaves remaining in her possession when she died in 1852" (Rivers 2002: 57-58).

It is possible that Victoire sold her enslaved workers because of family debts. The settlements that the family had to pay with regard to their many lawsuits (described in detail in Chapter 5) were a draw on their resources and may have contributed to the downfall of the plantation. Unless the family rented laborers to

nearby farms or industries, owning so many enslaved individuals for a wheat and grain-producing plantation such as theirs may have been a failing venture anyway (Rivers 2005:39). In addition, the ads to sell land correspond closely with the deaths of the elder generation of the family. Boisneuf died in October 1816 and Marguerite Vincendière followed in 1819 (Russell 2001). Furthermore, perhaps the Vincendières were downsizing in response to the economic downturn in the first quarter of the 19th century: “Stagnating commodity markets, financial panics, crop failures, and increased competition from western farmers combined to create an economic malaise that lasted from the 1820s to the 1840s. Hard times forced landowners to scrutinize their operations and to reconsider the composition of their workforces” (Grivno 2011:18).

In addition to the economic concerns of the day, the Vincendières may have also been influenced by the growing number of slave uprisings that occurred. Slave rebellions in the United States increased by 150 percent in the 1790s, a trend that was blamed on the “dangerous ideas” spread by enslaved workers from Saint Domingue (Babb 1954:242). A resident of Norfolk, Virginia, observed that, “Our negro Slaves have become extremely insolent & troublesome” due to their “associat(ion) with French Negroes from St. Domingo (with whom the place is also overrun)” (Egerton 2000:96). The extent of the influence of the French colonies is uncertain, but it is clear that organized slave resistance was becoming more prevalent in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1800, Gabriel Prosser, a blacksmith, and his brother Martin, a slave preacher, planned a major rebellion in Virginia, for which they recruited at least a thousand slaves (Mullin 1972). In 1811, 500 slaves took part in the German Coast

Uprising in Louisiana (Baade). Five years later 300 fugitive slaves joined Native Americans to battle U.S. Army troops in Florida (Turner 1905). In 1822, freed slave Denmark Vesey planned an insurrection in Charleston, S.C. but was caught—along with 34 other slaves-- before carrying out the plot (Egerton and Paquette 2017). After seeing four major rebellions organized in just over two decades, it is possible that the Vincendières responded by reducing their enslaved workforce.

Grivno postulates that it was a combination of financial and security reasons that inspired plantation owners like the Vincendières to sell or manumit their enslaved workers:

Not only was slave property deemed unprofitable, it was becoming untenable. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Pennsylvania was transformed into free soil and a haven for runaway slaves through the workings of its gradual emancipation act and the implementation of anti-kidnapping statutes and a personal liberty law. Faced with an economy that was in the doldrums and fearful that their slaves would escape northward, slaveholders on the sectional border began to rid themselves of their human chattels. Frederick County's slave owners manumitted 630 people between 1790 and 1819 but did so out of motives that were far from altruistic. For most masters and mistresses, manumission was a desperate attempt to shore up their authority, not an expression of political or religious sentiments (Grivno 2011:46).

After the Vincendières sold L'Hermitage and most of their enslaved workers, the property underwent several transformations and periods of ownership. It was first owned by John Brien (FCLR JS 26:551-554) who sold it to John McElfresh (FCLR JS 49:146). McElfresh's four children divided the property upon his death, with the portion now known as the Best Farm falling to his daughter Ariana McElfresh Trail (FCER Liber WBT 168-228). The Trails continued to own the farmstead and lease it to farmers such as the Bests until the National Park Service acquired the land in 1993. Between 1827 and 1835, the construction of the B & O railroad on the west side of

the Monocacy River resulted in the creation of the Monocacy junction with a station house and outbuildings on the eastern edge of the Best Farm, a wooden bridge carrying the Georgetown Pike over the tracks, and a continuous earthen embankment along the railroad (Hotchkiss 1864: 141).

Frederick's position as a transportation center made it a highly strategic location, and both Union and Confederate forces were active in the area throughout the Civil War (Beasley 2005:2.6). Union and Confederate tensions came to a head in spring 1864 during the Valley Campaign, as Confederate Major General Jubal Early pushed north through the Shenandoah Valley in an attempt to attack the capital from the North and to divert Grant's pursuit of Lee in the South (ibid.). In order to allow Grant sufficient time to send reinforcements to Washington, D.C., and in defense of the strategic supply lines provided by the Georgetown Pike, the B & O Railroad, and the Monocacy River, Union General Lew Wallace engaged Early in the Battle of Monocacy on July 9, 1864 (ibid.). The most intense fighting during the Battle of Monocacy occurred on the Worthington and Thomas farms; however, Confederate artillery batteries and Union and Confederate skirmishers were engaged on the Best farm as well (ibid.).

After the Civil War, Frederick County quickly regained its agricultural productivity. However, while agricultural production thrived, industrial expansion did not recover as thoroughly. Increased mechanization led to a reduction in manual and agrarian labor within the county. After World War II, however, the county's close proximity to Baltimore and Washington, D.C. led to increased suburbanization and increasing development (Birmingham and Beasley 2014:8). Over the past fifteen

years, Frederick County has experienced significant population growth and development, and the historically rural agrarian character of the area has been increasingly threatened (ibid.). In order to counter this threat, many of the historic farmsteads that comprise the battlefield are operated under special use permits for agricultural use. These permits have several important functions; they provide opportunities for local farmers to have agricultural access to local land in perpetuity, allow generations of farmers to ensure the long-term viability of their family farms, and preserve Monocacy National Battlefield as a rural oasis in the midst of burgeoning urbanization (ibid.) (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Map of the L'Hermitage and Best Farm boundaries in relation to each other. Courtesy of the National Park Service.

Vincendières could actively attempt to stifle the individuality and autonomy of their enslaved workers. However, clearly they were not always entirely successful in this endeavor, a situation that may have introduced a sense of instability and nervousness on the L'Hermitage landscape.

## Chapter 6: Reading Nervousness in the Historical and Archaeological Record

There are many ways to interpret the dynamics that I described in Chapter Four. First, one can view the landscape and behavior as expressions of racial prejudice and the imposition of a colonial vision. My exploration of this site leads me to wonder what the Vincendières envisioned for themselves and how they carried out this vision through control of their environment and the people living in it. I argue that their activities could in part be interpreted as motivated by racist, colonialist norms. In other words, the Vincendières were doing what they thought was normal – what they had observed and become used to in Saint Domingue and the United States. The cruelty of slaveowners in both places has been extensively documented in both primary sources and historians' accounts. Saint Domingue had a reputation for being tolerant of particularly brutal treatment of enslaved workers. In her characterization of colonial Saint Domingue, Fick (1990:36) states:

One might well argue that the ruthlessly labor-intensive, capitalistic nature of Caribbean slavery necessitated the extraction of maximum labor from the slave in the shortest period of time and that, to do this, the utilization of fear and the creation of an atmosphere of terror were requisite. Yet at the same time, in colonial Saint Domingue there seemed to be an indeterminate line

between economic interest, on the one hand, and pure self-indulgent sadism, on the other. Where the one began and the other left off in these cases was hardly clear.

Haitian writer and politician Baron de Vastey devoted his essay *The Colonial System Unveiled* to cataloging the horrifying brutality of Saint Dominguan slavery that he observed. This unsettling account describes over 100 instances of enslaved workers in the colony being tortured and killed – burned alive, mutilated, flogged to death, sexually assaulted, held in iron masks and iron collars—and insists that this is the norm:

I can anticipate your response: you will reply to me, with your usual arguments and bad faith, that such acts of cruelty rarely happened; you will go on to tell me that since time immemorial there have been monsters who have defiled themselves with misdeeds of this sort, and that just because Barré Saint-Venant is one such monster, I should not conclude from this that all colonists are indiscriminately monsters. Yes, they all are, more or less; they all committed such horrors, participated in them and contributed to them. In any case, the number of colonists who acted in a decent and human fashion is so small that it is not worth making them an exception to the general rule (Bongie 2014:107-8).

In fact, the perpetuation of these norms was necessary to the maintenance of their plantation and lifestyle:

For the slaveholder, psycho-social survival required interpreting the plantation context in a fashion that led all whites and blacks to believe that white dominance was God-ordained white destiny. Indeed, slaveholders had to construct their own meaning, as they constructed the meaning of those they enslaved. Within that construct, white privilege, which was their birthright, was inextricably linked to the devaluation of the black bondsmen they owned (John 2000:44).

While I understand the Vincendières' behavior to be shaped by racist and classist systems and structures in their environment, I would like to propose another reading of their behavior—not an alternative, but a companion interpretation. Racist measures were carried out to protect the privileged status and economic and political

dominance of white Europeans, who feared that enslaved and free people of color, when in the majority, would realize their potential power and revolt. The system (racism) and the emotion (fear) went hand-in-hand in contributing to brutal treatment of enslaved workers.

While Byrne's concept of the nervous landscape helps us tease out the power dynamics as they played out on a plantation landscape, I find this concept also useful because it encourages us to consider the affective component of the landscape and those who inhabited it. In particular, I would like to reflect on the precarious position of L'Hermitage's occupants and how their nervousness or anxiety around this vulnerability may have contributed to their behavior.

Initially I was drawn to the concept of the "nervous landscape" because a landscape approach encouraged thinking more holistically about the site and considering the significance of spatial organization. But one can also regard a nervous landscape as embodied experience, nervousness and anxiety as emotions felt and expressed by the plantation's inhabitants and also a motivating factor in their actions and behaviors. After all, as Hurtado (1996:130) points out, "It takes psychological work to maintain privilege; it takes cognitive training not to empathize or feel for your victims"—and I want a better understanding of how and why that psychological work occurs.

Like Sara Ahmed, I prefer to ask, "what do emotions do?" rather than "what are emotions?" (2004:12) but it is still important to define the terms I am utilizing. From a psychological perspective, emotions are based in the brain, result in bodily agitation, and are shared by all human beings. In contrast, a constructivist view of

emotion argues that emotions are not universal: “Not only does the emotional content of a situation change according to cultural context, but the actual emotional experience is learned and social” (Tarlow 2012:172) (others who have argued that emotions should not be regarded as psychological states but as social and cultural practices include: Ahmed 2004; Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990; Rosaldo 1984).

I favor the second approach, which acknowledges that emotional encounters are shaped by direct interaction, memories, and imagination (Svasek 2010).

Following Lutz and Abu-Lughod (1990), emotion is “a form of social action that creates effects in the world, effects that are read in a culturally informed way by the audience for emotion talk.” Emotions are an expression of power relations; linking the individual with the social in dynamic ways (Bourke 2003:113). Emotions are intentional in the sense that they are “about” something: they involve a direction or orientation towards an object (Parkinson 1995:8). Perhaps the most relevant reading of emotion for my purposes is that they are “an expression of power relations.

Emotions link the individual with the social in dynamic ways. They are always about social enaction” (Bourke 2003:113). I am particularly interested in the ways in which emotions reflect power dynamics, as a foundational aspect of my interpretation of the nervous landscape concept includes a consideration of both power and emotion.

Since the advent of the “affective turn,” scholars in the social sciences have begun to incorporate analyses of emotion into their work. Harald Fischer-Tiné observes that, “Drawing on the observations of anthropologists that emotions are the result of socio-cultural practice and historical context rather than being hard-wired into our brains, new social theory has attempted to trace the relationships between

emotion, power and politics” (2016:3).

Perhaps the discipline to have dealt with emotion to the greatest degree is psychology. Such approaches are interested in the neurological and chemical bases of emotion, understood as a physical agitation. They see emotions as fundamental parts of biologically determined human experience and thus mostly shared cross-culturally. The psychological school of emotion studies does allow a role for culture, but this view often relates more to “how emotions are manifest, their consequences and value in the world” (Panksepp 2004:16). Psychologists have tried to determine whether all human beings distinguish emotions from non-emotions and classify the emotions into anger, happiness, fear, etc. (Russell 1991).

Historians have been studying the history of emotions since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Fischer-Tiné 2016:4). Like archaeologists, historians are concerned with understanding the emotions of those who “are not directly observable, whose culture we do not share, and whose emotional lives may have been very different from our own” (Tarlow 2012:179). Historians generally take the view that emotion is neither wholly biological and chemical nor entirely produced through discourse. The most influential historical theorists of emotion have followed Febvre (1941) in rejecting the direct application of psychology to the past and instead trying to chart the different emotions of history (Tarlow 2012:179).

This method has mostly involved studying the shared emotional codes and standards that define a time and place. Stearns calls this ‘emotionology’ (Stearns and Stearns 1985, Plamper 2010). Its emphasis, then, is not on how people felt or represented their feelings but on what people thought about such matters as crying in

public, getting angry, or showing anger physically. It assumes that what people think about feelings they will eventually actually feel (Rosenwein 2002:824).

Not surprisingly, this line of inquiry is also of concern to anthropologists. Studies of emotion were first taken up by cognitive anthropology in the 1950s—a shift in interest from behaviorism to cognition and a greater interest in the ideational and mental; identifying motivation also became an important ethnographic project (D’Andrade 1995:10-2). In the 1980s and 1990s, anthropologists became concerned with whether emotions and emotional categories are universal/pan-cultural or if they are culturally-specific (Lutz and White 1986, Russell 1991). Those working on the cultural construction of emotion tend to argue in favor of the latter (e.g. Wierzbicka 1986; Abu-Lughod and Lutz 1990; Rosaldo 1984). Other questions of interest to anthropologists include: How many primary emotions are there? Are emotions easily identifiable? If different cultures have different terms for emotion, does that mean they experience different emotions? Or is it just a matter of translation?

D’Andrade argued in favor of this line of questioning, saying, “It is to be hoped... that at some point anthropologists and other social scientists will come to see that a reasonable theory of power... needs *some* psychological theory. A theory of power has to have some explication of the kinds of events that “make” people do things, and this *always* involves postulating a psychological theory” (1995:242).

Until about twenty years ago, experiential aspects of the human past were mostly considered to be beyond the reach of archaeological investigation. While cultural anthropologists have long engaged with the subject of emotion, whether in ethnographies, in the development of psychological and cognitive anthropology, or

debates on whether emotion is essentially biological or cultural, but unlike cultural anthropologists, archaeologists usually cannot consult with the subjects of their research about their emotions. Emotion was regarded as unrecoverable from the archaeological record, as inherently subjective or speculative, and as potentially essentializing. Past feelings and sensations are believed to be inaccessible and unknowable, and asking questions about anything so intangible was not just difficult: it was foolhardy (Tarlow 1997, 2000). After all, what can a projectile point or ceramic sherd tell us about what people were thinking or feeling? Archaeologists, it was argued, should stick to things they can touch, measure and put in a museum. These concerns are legitimate given the types of evidence available to archaeologists. We must be critical about attributing emotional states, motivations, or concerns to people of the past, and imposing our modern-day or Western understandings of emotion on another era.

But in the late 1990s, a number of scholars recognized that experience, emotion and meaning might be worth looking for in the archaeological past, and some archaeological research, primarily mortuary studies, has begun to incorporate considerations of affect theory and explorations of emotion. Burials inspired archaeologists to think about empathy, fear, and guilt (Hill 2013, Spikins et al. 2010, Stutz and Tarlow 2015:8-9), as well as grief and bereavement (Farrell 2003, Metcalf and Huntington 1991, Cannon and Cook 2015). Archaeologists have also begun to explore the sensory experience of people in the past (see Hamilakis 2014, Sorensen 2015). To study emotion, affect, and the senses archaeologically requires “the imaginative interpretation of archaeological evidence, “a sense of historical

variability and change,” and attention to “the way that emotion works through material things and places” (Tarlow 2012:179).

There are a few compelling reasons to consider emotion in archaeology.

Archaeologist Sarah Tarlow, who has done extensive work in this area, elaborates on some of these reasons, saying:

The actions and motivation of human beings are shaped by their emotional experiences—their desires, fears, and values. . . . Emotional ideologies play key roles in the reproduction and transformation of relationships of power, and therefore to neglect consideration of the emotional is to impoverish our social archaeologies generally. The meaning of architecture, artifacts, or landscapes in the past is animated by the emotional understandings which inform their apprehension. A landscape may be a place of dread or of joy; an artifact maybe a token of love or a mnemonic of oppression. Emotion, in short, is everywhere. Emotion is part of what makes human experience meaningful. Emotionless archaeologies are limited, partial, and sometimes hardly human at all (Tarlow 2000:719-20).

I don't believe it is necessary or appropriate for all archaeologies to include a consideration of emotions, but I do think Tarlow makes a powerful point. Emotion is central to human experience and the way society works, and our understanding of volition and motivation requires the incorporation of emotion. For the purposes of my research I think this is worth exploring, and I particularly want to engage with the ways in which encounters with the material world are inherently affective.

### *Nervousness and Anxiety*

Inspired by Byrne's concept of the nervous landscape, the emotion I am most interested in exploring in this context is nervousness, as well as related emotions such as anxiety, fear, and paranoia. Unfortunately, the primary sources related to L'Hermitage rarely reveal the feelings of the Vincendières or their enslaved workers about their experiences in Saint Domingue and Frederick, Maryland (Rivers 2002:8).

However, an interpretation of archaeological and historical sources can shed light on the experiences of the Vincendières and their enslaved workers, and how these experiences shaped them psychologically and behaviorally.

The occupants of L'Hermitage had many reasons to be nervous *and* seek ways of minimizing nervousness. For example, the enslaved workers' lack of autonomy meant that every day had the potential for harm, mistreatment, sale and separation from family, and death. For the Vincendières, their experience with the slave uprisings in Saint Domingue demonstrated to them that the power and control of the white and wealthy were not absolute, thus they had reason to feel nervous and uneasy when they rebuilt a plantation with an enormous enslaved workforce that far outnumbered them. Furthermore, they were French Catholics who settled in a largely German Protestant region where large-scale plantation slavery was unusual. Perhaps the tension extended beyond L'Hermitage to encompass interactions between the Vincendières and local townspeople. In the following sections I consider how the Vincendières' experiences in Saint Domingue and Maryland may have instilled a sense of fear and nervousness in them, and subsequently affected their behavior by contributing to the controlling and brutal measures they took against their enslaved workers.

My focus on the Vincendières' anxiety is not meant to imply that they were more vulnerable than their enslaved workers, or that their emotions or experiences are more important or interesting. Undoubtedly the enslaved inhabitants of L'Hermitage were in a much more precarious position, vulnerable in terms of both their structural power and physical safety. As Trevor Burnard noted, slavery was characterized by

“disorganization, instability, and chaos,” where enslaved workers “lived in a world of radical uncertainty. They were always vulnerable to the depredations of whites and fellow slaves” (2004:179). In spite of whatever forms of rebellion, resistance, or resilience were displayed by enslaved workers, slaveowners basically always had the upper hand and the power to control their slaves, exerting enormous influence on their physical, emotional, and psychological well-being. My intention in focusing on the Vincendières’ relationship to vulnerability and nervousness is to respond to Toni Morrison’s charge to investigate “the mind, imagination, and behavior of masters” (1992:12). In doing so, I will achieve a better understanding of oppressive mechanisms and how they can be identified in the historical and archaeological record.

#### *Defining Nervousness and Anxiety*

Anxiety is characterized by a hypervigilant state that is rooted in ambiguity and perceived danger. Whereas fear is a reaction to a specific threat or danger, anxiety is unspecific, “vague,” “objectless,” which contribute to a sense of “uncertainty and helplessness” (May 1950:205). May proposes that “Anxiety is the apprehension cued off by a threat to some value that the individual holds essential to his existence as a personality. The threat may be to physical life (the threat of death), or to psychological existence (the loss of freedom, meaninglessness). Or the threat may be to some other value which one identifies with one’s existence: (patriotism, the love of another person, “success”, etc.)” (1950:205-6). In the case of the Vincendières, arguably they perceived their enslaved workers as a threat to their physical life, safety, status, and wealth, even as they provided those things.

According to Byrne (2013), nervousness is the result of “gaps in the grid,” and the realization that one’s power is not, in fact, absolute, nor can one count on the security or stability of the “grid.” The fragility of one’s position reflects the precarity of power, which, according to Judith Butler, “relies on a mechanism of reproduction that can and does go awry, undo the strategies of animating power, and produce new and even subversive effects” (2009:ii). Butler’s words the echo nervous landscape concept, the failure of power. To be in a vulnerable or precarious position demonstrates that one’s power is not absolute: “(hegemonic) elites cannot take their position for granted, but also that one elite rarely controls all resources, such as land, financial means, parliamentary control, knowledge and access to force,” (Salverda and Hay 2013:237); elite power must be seen as open to challenge (Scott 2008).

#### *Precarity in a Colonial Context*

A discussion of precarity, vulnerability, anxiety, fear, and nervousness is particularly applicable to a colonial plantation context. Charles Ball, a former slave, pointed out that, “There is, in fact, a mutual dependence between the master and his slave” (Taylor 1999:390). Dependency on another puts one in a vulnerable position; slaveowners were dependent on slaves for their livelihood and wealth. “This class of people across the Americas,” notes Murphy, “had gained and were continuing to gain substantial riches because of slavery. However this wealth necessitated the co-operation of slavery for it to continue. It was not only their lives that were at threat; their livelihoods and their status in society (both of which were highly prized at the time) were dependent on slave complicity” (Murphy 2011:2).

C.L.R. James points out that France was economically dependent upon its

overseas colonies, such as Saint Domingue (Go 2015:124). The colonies provided them with enormous profits, but because those profits were made “within a highly distorted social structure that included a mass of exploited, brutalized, and resentful African slaves,” it was ultimately a system founded on fear (Burnard 2004:138).

Burnard points out that

Whites were in an extremely precarious situation in mid-eighteenth-century Jamaica. On the one hand, they had established an awesomely productive economy in which they made enormous profits. On the other hand, they made those profits within a highly distorted social structure that included a mass of exploited, brutalized, and resentful African slaves. The result was a society in which fear was, as the historian Bryan Edwards argued, “the leading principle upon which the government is supported” (Burnard 2004:138).

According to Lacan (following Freud), anxiety is the result of when “the Other is too close, and the order of symbolization...is at risk of disappearing (Harari 2001:xxxii). Other neo-Freudians describe anxiety as “the feeling of being helpless in a hostile world” (Slater 2013:2) or “the feeling that one is living among enemies” (Moehle and Levitt 1991:177). These are apt description for colonial contexts, where planters were vastly outnumbered by their enslaved workers, and feared what they were capable of doing. In Saint Domingue, the white population grew 30 percent between 1681 and 1731, while the enslaved population grew 1,050 percent during this time (Garrigus 2006:32). The Vincendières were part of the racial minority not only in Saint Domingue but again in Frederick on their own plantation.

In fact, the colonial environment has frequently been characterized as one fraught with anxiety and paranoia (Wilson 2008, Cobb and Sapp 2014, Delle 2014), e.g. “the colony as a site “riven by contradictions and anxieties” (Moore-Gilbert 1997:118), where there was “the seemingly constant fear and concern of colonizers

with the threat of violence on the part of the colonized” (Green 2002:813). Fisher-

Tiné argues that:

the history of colonial empires has been shaped to a considerable extent by negative emotions such as anxiety, fear and embarrassment, as well as by the regular occurrence of panics. This is perhaps most obvious if we zoom in on the group of the ruling colonial elites. Contrary to their well-known literary and visual self-representations, Europeans who were part of the imperial enterprise were not always cool, calm and collected while ‘running the show’ of empire. Quite the reverse: one of the seemingly paradoxical effects of the asymmetries characteristic of the situation coloniale, which put a minuscule elite of culturally alien colonizers in a position to exercise power over an often numerically stronger ‘native’ population, was the fact that anxiety, fear and angst became part of their everyday experience (2016:1).

It was anxiety rather than fear, as there was often no specific cause that could be linked to the colonial response; “There was frequently no identifiable reason for colonial disquiet, other than an indeterminate foreboding; a sense that something was about to happen” (Peckham 2015:1). Slaveowners expected resistance from their enslaved workers, but could not predict when it would occur or what form it would take, lending a sense of danger and vulnerability to the plantation landscape (Peckham 2015:24). Furthermore, as Moreau de Saint-Méry noted, many enslaved workers knew how to use arms and had access to them, and could easily break into plantation buildings, which were usually left unlocked (1985:270).

Planters and colonists attempted to appear as though their power was safe and secure (Rutherford 2012), but “such acts of self-assertion only thinly concealed a subterranean—and no less constant—strain of doubt. Beneath the pomp and ceremony, anxiety was perennial to empire” (Jackson 2016:73). Elites give the appearance of being in control, but were actually often acting defensively or reactively.

This colonial insecurity manifested in material ways, such as the creation of fenced spaces to keep enslaved workers contained and separated from slaveholders (Peckham 2015:1). This reflects the fear on the part of planters, who were “obsessed with containing and controlling slaves... they lived in constant terror of their slaves” (Midlo Hall 1971:52). From the beginning of their journey as slaves, the relationship between slave and owner was filled with fear on both sides. The fear of slaves, taken from their native Africa and taken to the unknown world of the Americas where they were often met with cruelty, is well-documented. It is the fear felt by slave owners that is perhaps lesser chronicled. This fear began during the trans-Atlantic crossing when it became apparent that slaves posed a very real threat to their owners. There were roughly five hundred revolts on ships crossing the middle passage, showing that even when shackled and manacled that the complicity of slaves could never be guaranteed. This continued into life on plantations; the fact that whites were greatly outnumbered served only to exacerbate this fear. It became very obvious, very quickly that slave owners were in a position of vulnerability, particularly as they would often be relatively isolated on the plantation with the nearest support being miles away. Moreau de Saint-Méry argued that, “the reason for the concern of the planters was very simple, of course. They feared that the servile problem would get out of hand and that the white régime would be overthrown” (1985:270).

The Vincendières may have shared this fear, shaped by their previous experiences in Saint Domingue, and perhaps also their experiences in Maryland. I will propose some precarious positions and situations the Vincendières may have found themselves in, which may have given rise to anxiety.

As residents of Saint Domingue, the Vincendières lost their property, home, livelihood, wealth, and way of life in the Haitian Revolution. Saint Dominguans experienced near-constant slave revolts and rebellions in the 1790s, which contributed to an environment of instability and insecurity for planters. Slaves practiced guerrilla warfare, escaped in large numbers (*marronnage*), and participated in massacres and mass destruction of Saint Domingue's cities and plantations. "Colonists lived in fear of being suddenly ruined by the loss of all their slaves. Planters going to bed at night owning 100 or 200 slaves could not be sure of waking up the next morning with even one" (Hall 1971:65). Sometimes slave resistance was smaller, subtler, but still had definite repercussions for slaveowners. Other forms of resistance included "partial revolts, conspiracies, plots to kill the master, suicide, infanticide, voodoo, poisonings" (Fick 1990:75).

Poisonings in particular caused a great deal of panic in Saint Domingue. In the late 1700s, there were widespread reports of slaves poisoning their masters. It remains unclear how pervasive the practice actually was; perhaps the paranoia and panic were partially manufactured or fueled by rumors. But regardless of the veracity of these stories, they caused mass hysteria and witch hunts on Saint Dominguan plantations (Hall 1971:68-75, Burnard 2016:103-112, Gaspar and Hine 1996:248, Fick 1990:66-74, Moreau de Saint-Méry 1985:273). When poisonings did occur, they were usually motivated by the desire to be free:

slaves who administered poison often did so in a highly calculated manner. Of the poisons used, some were so dangerous and so violent that when given to dogs, they inflicted immediate death. Others had a much slower effect, causing the victim to languish five or six months before finally dying. Some slaves would consciously administer small doses of poison in their master's food or drink as an initial warning. If the master's cruelty persisted, the doses could be increased and finally induce death

(Fick 1990:71).

In addition to threats to their physical safety, planters experienced violence and the destruction of their surroundings. Etienne Vincendière reported fleeing Saint Domingue “to avoid murdered by the assassins armed by the Civil Commissioners Polverel and Sonthonax against all the planters of... St. Domingo" (South Carolina Will Book D 1800-1807). The diary of Mrs. Enoch Lowe recalls, “Aunt Victoire told me that her uncle was one of the victims of the Insurrection, having been shot by a native whilst seated at the dinner table” (Lowe 1913:17). Furthermore, while Magnan and several of the Vincendière children were in Paris at the time, they were no safer—this was during the Reign of Terror, and according to a relative, the revolutionary army was pursuing Magnan, who hid with her children on a farm. They escaped just before the revolutionaries arrived, and the army killed the farmer and razed the farm (Birmingham and Beasley 2014b:12).

The physical destruction of Saint Domingue during the slave uprisings also had an enormous effect on those who witnessed it. Written accounts describe an environment of “ruins,” “desolation,” and “horror” (Gillikin 2014:239). "On landing, we found the town a heap of ruins. A more terrible picture of desolation cannot be imagined. Passing through streets choked with rubbish, we reached with difficulty a house...The people live in tents, or make a kind of shelter, by laying a few boards across the half-consumed beams; for the buildings being here of hewn stone, with walls three feet thick, only the roofs and floors have been destroyed” (Sansay and Drexler 2007:61, quoted in Gillikin 2014:239).

Having arrived in Maryland, the Vincendières continued to be in a vulnerable

position. As was likely the case in Saint Domingue, the family was vastly outnumbered by enslaved workers on their plantation. Slavery funded their livelihood yet was also inherently dangerous, as their plantation was filled with “a people they both despised and feared” (Burnard 2004:19). Slaveowners knew that enslavement was an oppressive practice and feared what enslaved workers would do if given the opportunity for revenge: “Slaveholders, however, also expected that the dehumanizing institution of black enslavement would compel those held in chains to attempt acts of bloody revenge. Advocates for the enslavement of black Americans understood that subjugation of another person required two essential ingredients: a culture willing to sanction oppression and a government that commanded a monopoly on the legal distribution of violence and was capable of enforcing it” (Paulus 2017:4).

In addition, the Vincendières brought twelve enslaved workers from Saint Domingue – presumably those whom they trusted the most or considered to be the most loyal—but it is possible that the fact that they had brought slaves with them from the West Indies may have made other townspeople view them as potentially dangerous and making locally residents vulnerable to attack. Dominguan slaves were believed to be dangerous, as they might spread revolutionary ideas and incite rebellion among slaves of the American South. As refugees flooded the country, fear spread that slaveholders in the U.S. might suffer a similar uprising if they did not keep the slaves arriving from Saint Domingue under tight control. White Virginians referred to the enslaved refugees as “infected with the contagion of liberty,” and Louisiana prohibited importation of Saint Dominguan slaves altogether (Rivers-Cofield 2011:32). The U.S. government passed laws ending the country’s

participation in the international slave trade in 1807 due to this fear of black Saint Domingans inciting insurrections: “During debate about enforcing the ban, one Pennsylvania congressman asked the House of Representatives “to look at St. Domingo” as a reason to end the slave trade. The Haitian Revolution illustrated that slaves might “learn the rights of man” and become “proficient in the art of war” in order to obtain their freedom” (Paulus 2017:36), The transgression of these borders and boundaries, of there being a “pollution” of ideas or persons, or of “matter out of place,” was viewed as dangerous in 18<sup>th</sup>- and early 19<sup>th</sup>-century America (c.f. Douglas 1966).

These fears were not entirely unfounded; “in the decade of the 1790s, slave uprisings in the U.S. increased by 150%, and many Americans blamed the refugees (Babb 1954:242-243). In order to maintain control, various states with a high number of refugees passed laws to regulate them” (Rivers-Cofield 2011:32). In fact, slave revolts did occur in the United States that were likely inspired by the Haitian Revolution, but revolts actually had a much longer history that predated the Haitian Revolution: “There were at least 18 revolts in Maryland which began in the 1680s, and continued through 1688, 1705, 1738, 1739, 1805, 1814, 1817, and 1830, and occurred throughout the United States in 1831, 1835, 1840, 1845, 1855, and 1856; the only revolt recorded in 1857 occurred in Maryland” (LaRoche 2007:24). Furthermore, “In 1739, at least 200 insurgent conspirators led a systematic revolt in Prince George’s County... careful planning and organization with a considerable period of preparation marked this type of revolt. The aim of establishing the “Negro” state revealed careful planning and a calculation of the numbers of reliable and

trusted insurgents. Conspiracies were constantly rumored, uncovered, betrayed, and thwarted. In 1740, Maryland courts received depositions from several African Americans in Prince George's County "relating to a most wicked and dangerous Conspiracy having been formed by them to destroy his Majesty's Subjects within the Province, and to possess themselves of the whole Country." In 1753, the state again had to cope with "a conspiracy among Blacks to kill whites." As Vincent Harding notes, this fight was for Black possession of "the whole Country." Blacks closely followed the outbreak of the French and Indian War, hoping that the "French will give them their freedom." Frederick County, Maryland, reported insurrectionary movements among slaves after French soldiers and their Ohio Valley Indian allies routed General Edward Braddock in 1755. These stirrings for liberty, occurring 20 years before the American Revolution, suggest that Black people had deep seated desires for freedom derived independently of the political conflicts of the 1770s (LaRoche 2007:24-5).

Another consideration is that, to slaveowners, slaves were an unknown entity, and therefore unpredictable, which was a great source of nervousness – the anxiety of the wild and uncivilized. As Trevor Burnard points out, "The uncertainty of whites' position in the island was heightened by their profound lack of knowledge about Africans and African society" (Burnard 2004:142). Unity among slaves, shared customs and languages unknown to slavemasters, and the retainment of a culture that slaveowners could not access or engage created a great deal of fear of the unknown (Murphy 2011:2). "The degree of unity among slaves and the danger that that unity posed to whites who knew little and understood less of African customs and

language” (Burnard 2004:43); “the discovery of slaves retaining their own culture, a culture to which slave owners could not access nor engage, created a great deal of fear- namely of the unknown” (Murphy 2011:2).

According to Homi Bhabha, this fear of the unknown was the primary cause of colonial anxiety. Colonists stereotyped the Other (e.g. African slaves) in order to satisfy “the colonial desire to know the inscrutable natives in their peculiar or different specificity,” however this fixed and oversimplified perception of the Other is constantly disrupted by the colonized: “And every time the colonized announces its desire or breaks out of its objectified positions (that is, whenever it *speaks!*), such as in the times of armed anti-colonial resistance, the colonial imaginary breaks round this fault,” resulting in uncertainty, insecurity, and anxiety (Thakur 2012:250).

“Because it is not self-evident that colonial relationships should exist at all, something needs to supply an explanation for colonialism. One explanation has often been the supposed inferiority of the colonized people. Through racist jokes, cinematic images, and other forms of representation, the colonizer circulates stereotypes about the laziness or stupidity of the colonized population. These stereotypes seem to be a stable if false foundation upon which colonialism bases its power, and are something we should perhaps simply dismiss. However...their stability is not quite as assured as it seems, and that the strange anxieties underlying stereotypes can be productive for critics writing against colonialism” (Huddart 2005:35). The system of stereotypes and classification is established to give the illusion of order and control, but any such system must confront anomalies and inconsistencies— a destabilizing experience (Douglas 1966:36-9). For slaveowners, daily life on a plantation was full of these

contradictions: enslaved individuals were portrayed as “savage and inhuman,” yet at the same time they were valued for their skills and abilities; they were said to have a “debilitated mental capacity” yet planters also believed them to be capable of plotting rebellions (John 2004:45). Bhabha’s work suggests that “colonial discourse only *seems* to be successful in its domination of the colonized. Underneath its apparent success, this discourse is secretly marked by radical anxiety about its aims, its claims, and its achievements” (Huddart 2005:5). Thus the precarity of this relationship is revealed, making it uncertain whether slaveowners ultimately have total knowledge of and control over their enslaved workers:

On the one hand, colonial discourse recognizes colonized subjects (or any “Other”) as difference; something “patently foreign and distant” (Bhabha 1994: 73). On the other hand, it inserts the colonized into some familiar category (“black,” “uncivilized,” etc.). This is what enables the colonizer to believe that they know the colonized and thereby allows them to manage, regulate, or rule. Colonial discourse admits of something foreign but then rejects the difference by classifying it as something familiar. It tries to make the unknowable “entirely knowable and visible,” seeking to fulfill its fantasy of coherence (Bhabha 1994: 70) (Go 2016:53).

Undoubtedly, the Vincendières had the upper hand in terms of power and influence; this was not entirely a fantasy. However, their wealth and livelihood depended on the plantation economy and the practice of enslavement, so the control of their enslaved laborers was of utmost importance. Indeed, the loss of the enslaved workers themselves would have significantly affected the Vincendières’ financial security. As with most slaveholders, “Their own personal income and all the power and prestige that came from that were reliant on their successes in the plantation,” and the cooperation of slavery was necessary in order to maintain their livelihoods and their status in society (Murphy 2011:2). Murphy states:

The financial investment of slave owners should also be remembered; the cost of purchasing slaves was not cheap. Slaves then were not commodities; they were investments that needed to be protected in order to yield any kind of profit. Not only that, they were risky investments; success (and wealth) were by no means guaranteed (Murphy 2011:2).

Additionally, L'Hermitage was located close to the Pennsylvania border, and therefore close to a free state, which put the Vincendières at a greater risk of losing enslaved workers who attempted to gain freedom. A growing number of enslaved individuals escaped to Pennsylvania in the 1780s and 1790s, in spite of a stipulation in the state's law saying that runaway slaves from nearby states were not entitled to "any relief or shelter," and that slavemasters "shall have like right and aid to demand, claim and take away his slave...as he might have had in case this act had not been made" (Grivno 2011:45). In 1828, slaveholders in Frederick County complained that they had suffered "serious losses" from slaves escaping into Pennsylvania and cautioned that "the evil seems to be growing, and unless a speedy stop can be put to (it), much greater evils can be anticipated" (Grivno 2011:46). Within a few years, self-protection and refugee societies had been formed by free African Americans Maryland and Pennsylvania to receive escapees going from Frederick to Franklin County in Pennsylvania and protected them from slavecatchers (LaRoche 2007:128).

The Vincendières were already in a precarious financial position, so further losses of their income could be enormously detrimental in their attempt to regain security and status and maintain their class standing following the loss of their property in the Haitian Revolution. Boisneuf and the Vincendières were involved in several legal cases regarding unpaid debts. Their legal troubles were not confined to Maryland, but extended throughout the Atlantic world (Birmingham and Beasley

2014b:14). Many of these debts may have originated due to the collapse of the plantation system in Saint Domingue, and stayed with them throughout the course of their lives. These debts likely influenced the decision to place L'Hermitage and its assets under the name of Victoire, in order to protect the land from creditors who may have been seeking Boisneuf or Magnan for repayment of these debts (Birmingham and Beasley 2014b:15). The family and their associates had debts that followed them from Saint Domingue. Although plantations in the colony were some of the most lucrative in the world, plantation owners still borrowed money in order to get their operations off of the ground, or expand their productivity (ibid.). The reputation of the colony for producing landowners of great wealth, as well as the thriving economy towards the end of the eighteenth century, made the business of plantation management in the West Indies particularly competitive (ibid.). Plantation owners often borrowed large sums of money from French merchants in order to expand their businesses. These loans were usually paid off over time, and in the case of a default the plantation was confiscated (ibid.). The slave revolts rendered this system of loan default particularly difficult, however, as plantation owners no longer had the collateral of their plantations, instead having to pay in cash or goods. For individuals like Boisneuf and the Vincendières, these debts placed them in a difficult financial situation, as they had lost their lands and crops and needed to start over as refugees in another country, likely with new lines of credit (ibid.). These debts complicated the lives of refugees, especially those like Boisneuf, who sought to continue to enjoy the lifestyle to which they were accustomed (ibid.).

In all, these individuals were involved in an unusually high number of

lawsuits involving their failure to pay for goods or services, or repay loans. It seems likely that Boisneuf and the Vincendières believed that they should either be allowed to prolong their debts until they regained their properties in Saint Domingue, or have their debts forgiven entirely since their major assets were no longer under their control (Birmingham and Beasley 2014b:16). It is more likely that Boisneuf was merely prolonging his financial obligations until the end of the conflict in Saint Domingue (ibid.). Boisneuf, Etienne, and family friend Pierre Laberon still bequeathed their assets in Saint Domingue to relatives during the period after the revolt (ibid.). It appears that many refugees believed that the slave revolt in the colony would fail, and that their assets would be returned to them. However, this would not come to fruition for the Vincendières, to whom the French government only gave ten percent of the value of their property (Birmingham and Beasley 2014b: 16).

It is possible that the Vincendières also had reason to feel insecure and threatened due to their status as outsiders, being French Catholics in a primarily German and Anglo-American Protestant state. As discussed in Chapter Three, many Americans distrusted St. Domingans and treated them with suspicion. Victoire's niece wrote that her aunt's Protestant neighbors were "bitterly antagonistic" to Catholicism and "had taken so strong a hold on their prejudices as to control neighborly feelings" (Lowe 1913:17). *The Maryland Journal*, a daily newspaper published in Baltimore, featured a letter on August 23, 1793 stating that foreigners of non-Protestant persuasion "will be considered as Dissenters by our laws, and may of course expect a treatment corresponding with the inferiority of that subordinate

character” and “their churches...will have no more protection than if they were Mahometan mosques or Pagan temples...” (cited in Hartridge 1943:120).

Pro-French sentiments also soured following the slave rebellions in Saint Domingue, as Marylanders feared that the revolts would spread to the United States (Egerton 2000). The enslaved population in America was significant—900,000 out of a total population of 5,308,000 in 1801 (Johnson and Smith 1998:258)—so such an event would have dire consequences for the planter class.

Also, Rivers-Cofield (2006:277) points out the animosity between French and German residents:

During the last decade of the eighteenth century, grain prices fell in the United States, largely because the French and Haitian Revolutions had disrupted trade and decreased demand for flour. Since grain was their major crop, the German residents of Frederick County blamed the French for their economic problems (Niemcewicz, 1965, pp. 109 113). Given the ethnic and religious tension between the French and Germans in Maryland, plus Boisneuf’s propensity for unreliable financial dealings, it is no surprise that Boisneuf and the Vincendières seem to have had a difficult time getting along with local residents.

### *Reactions to Vulnerability*

I have described some of the situations in which the Vincendières might have felt or expressed fear, anxiety, and uneasiness. I interpret their extreme measures of control as a sign of their insecurity around the perceived precarious nature of the plantation dynamics and their fear of losing their status, wealth, power, and bodily integrity. Judith Butler argues that precocity, the condition that “Anything living can be expunged at will or by accident; and its persistence is in no sense guaranteed,” results in the creation of social and political institutions to “minimize conditions of precarity” (2009:ii). In the case of the Vincendières, their fears manifested in several

different attempts to exercise control, including their treatment of slaves and their manipulation of the landscape. Anxieties about changing circumstances are not exclusive to elites, though the privileged often have enhanced means (e.g. wealth) to alter their living conditions – and, as such, spatial patterns more generally (Salverda 2010:239). This reveals the political dimension of emotion: “Emotion-displays of fear are exercises of power: who becomes frightened and what is the outcome of their displays? Fear is about relations of power and resistance. The emotion appears as the link between the psychological feeling or experience and ‘being in the world’ or acting as social beings” (Bourke 2003:129).

Though the lengths to which they went to maintain control over their enslaved workers reveals the reality of their power, the Vincendières may have seen themselves as victims of an unfair attack, who lost everything without just cause. Written accounts from that time demonstrate that refugees from Saint Domingue were more likely to cast themselves as “passive victims” than “active participants in the great events they recount” (Meadows 2000:94-5). These postexile narratives shaped the belief among refugees and their descendants that the revolutions had “reversed their family’s fortunes, separated members of the family, and caused all their hardships” (ibid.). However, it is important to note that the Vincendières were in fact the architects of their own precarity; they chose to participate in a system of radical inequality and live in environments where they were dependent upon the labor and subordination of others in order to maintain their quality of life.

Equally important is that the perceived threats to the Vincendières’ safety and security were not always real or did not come to fruition but, as Hofstadter points out,

“the paranoid style has to do with the way in which ideas are believed and advocated rather than with the truth or falsity of their content” (1965:4); “It is in the responses to supposed subversion rather than in the threatening forces themselves that one finds the most interesting continuities” (Davis 1973:10). Regardless of whether paranoia is justified or not, it motivates thoughts, beliefs, and behavior, and the pursuit of security. Perhaps the artist Jenny Holzer described it best in one of her *Inflammatory Essays* (1979-1982): “The most exquisite pleasure is domination. Nothing can compare with the feeling. The mental sensations are even better than the physical ones. Knowing you have power has to be the biggest high, the greatest comfort. It is complete security, protection from hurt.”

In colonial contexts, elites reacted to their paranoia and (perceived) vulnerability by attempting to assert even more control over the environment and respond with increasingly strict, harsh measures toward enslaved workers. Those in positions of power tend to have the means to alter their environment, and do so as a defense or reaction to fear. In some ways, this power is an illusion: “Because of the view that elites, through their control over resources, have the most power at their disposal, it is often assumed that they are the ones exercising power proactively and expansively. But it needs to be stressed that elites, especially in the face of change, tend to defend their interests and privileges as a reaction to external challenges to their position. The elite may apply its power to resist pressure to maintain the status quo, at least in certain domains. Hence, colonial elites who have lost their hegemony--their initial dominance over virtually all (public) spheres of life--have to move from exercising power over others directly to more strategic uses of their remaining

resources to prevent them losing their power base and privileges” (Salverda 2010:117). These strategies often took the form of extremely violent reactions and brutalization for the most insignificant offenses.

Slaveowners turned to racist ideologies, slave codes, and harsh discipline to keep their enslaved workers subdued and provide themselves with “a desperate sense of security” (Fick 1990:67, Knight 1970). Harrison posits that, “Shock and fear tactics were necessary methods for enforcing labor and paralyzing the slave community to ensure the slavers’ footing and security in the New World. The more slaves lived in fear and uncertainty the stronger the slaver and overseer’s grip on their bodies, minds, and souls” (2009:67). Slaveowners’ brutal treatment of enslaved individuals was not only acceptable, but encouraged: “Terror, or naked power, was at the core of the institution of slavery.... Whites were encouraged to keep firm discipline and to punish slaves frequently and harshly. Indeed, whites frowned on overseers and planters who were deemed to be lenient toward their slaves” (Burnard 2004:149-150). For example, in Saint Domingue it was permissible for a slave who struck his/her master/mistress to be hanged (Code Noir, Article 33), for white colonists to kill any person of African descent who showed any sign of rebellion or refused to stop when encountered on a road (Loix, Ordonnance des Administrateurs, Article 21, March 27, 1721; Loix, Ordre Concernant des Nègres de la Dependence du Cap, November 12, 1691) – all because colonists were “concerned about threats to public order and continued existence of the colony posed by slaves,” and the basic objectives of slave laws were to “preserve order in the colony, maintain and develop its wealth and continue its dependency on the mother country” and ultimately

maintain social control (Midlo Hall 1971:81). Colonist Hilliard d'Auberteuil expressed the sentiments of white planters when he said that, "In Saint Domingue, interest and security require that we crush the black race under so much contempt that whoever descends from it should be covered with indelible scars until the sixth generation" (1779:273).

Slave owners also became more violent and controlling in the response to slave resistance: "when resistance occurred, slaveholders responded with vicious rapidity, as much to subdue their own fears as to smother revolution. Whether an act of perceived insolence was punished with a whipping, or whether an insurrection was quelled by hanging the leaders, the motive was always to keep the slaves in total subjection" (Orser 1991:40). Furthermore, planters "believed they could control any rebellion through harsh estate discipline. They were wary of what slaves were doing but were convinced they could effectively repress slave discontent. Few believed there was a limit to the amount of repression slaves would endure" (Burnard 2004:261). Slaveholders became more controlling over enslaved workers' living conditions in response to fears of uprisings. This was indicated materially; for example, by the end of the eighteenth century, the enslaved population at Rich Neck plantation in Virginia was eating a smaller variety of wild animals, and whites were eating less fish and meat that mirrored contemporary cuts. Maria Franklin (2000) hypothesizes that enslaved populations were starting to be controlled more closely at that time, so white slave-owners would have been attempting to rein in the use of firearms by the captives. Franklin asserts that this is a reflection of increased control due to white fear of, and reaction to, revolts and uprisings across the diaspora, such as

the 1791 Haitian Revolution.

The "exceptional cruelty" with which the Vincendières treated their slaves may have been borne of this paranoia. The family may have had a genuine fear of their labor force, and this fear may have compelled them to make an example of any perceived offense committed by a slave. Furthermore, revenge and pride may have played a role as the family attempted to perpetuate their way of life despite the revolution that had taken it from them (Rivers-Cofield 2006:283). Perhaps they were influenced by the colonial mentality where, "any brutality exercised by whites toward blacks could be excused by the fundamental necessity of keeping blacks subdued. Only in this way could white fears be assuaged. Such assumptions, of course, were a license for sadism and tyranny among all whites, not just those inclined to psychopathic behavior. Whites knew that they had the full support of the state and white public opinion for whatever they did toward slaves" (Burnard 2004:33). Consequently, slaveowners like the Vincendières could behave with impunity and assuage their fears in whatever way they deemed necessary.



## Chapter 7: Monocacy National Battlefield: A Nervous Landscape in the Present

The tensions and anxiety that played out on the Best Farm landscape were not simply relegated to the L'Hermitage period; the current landscape is also characterized by a kind of tension and therefore could be characterized as a nervous landscape even today, in terms of the tension between multiple and competing narratives at Best Farm (Bailey 2013). Long recognized as the site of an important Civil War battle, considerable energy has been invested in educating the public about Monocacy National Battlefield. The emphasis on the Best Farm's Civil War connections is clear from the Monocacy National Battlefield website and public literature, as well as its planning documents, all of which tie the site's significance to the 1864 battle and the subsequent memorializing and commemorative efforts (e.g. NPS 2009, Reed and Wallace 2004). However, in the past decade, archaeologists have pursued multiple research projects at Monocacy National Battlefield in order to expand interpretation of the site and provide broader context for the battle, with the most recent being the excavations undertaken to explore the slave village associated with L'Hermitage. Though the data have not yet been fully incorporated into Monocacy National Battlefield's interpretive materials, they form the basis of an alternative to the traditional battlefield narrative.

### *Commemoration and Memorialization*

The promotion of certain values and ideals necessitates the omission of others that do not support the dominant ideology. In this case, the institution of slavery

detracts from the promotion of a successful battle. Consequently, very little is remembered about African-American history through the interpretation of the Best Farm and a sanitized or distorted version of the past is created (Leon and Rosenzweig 1989:xix). Furthermore, this contributes to text that is selective, biased, and simplistic (Gatewood and Cameron 2004:207). As Lonnie Bunch points out, the desire to omit— “to forget disappointments, moments of evil, and great missteps—is both natural and instructive” (2007:2). It indicates which aspects of our history are considered shameful, unmentionable, or unimportant. Although slavery was one of the dominant forces in American life for almost 250 years, providing the basis of political and economic power, few institutions address this history and its legacy to the public (Bunch 2007:3). Bunch makes the observation that much of our struggle to find racial equality has been significantly influenced by slavery, therefore race relations can never be fully addressed until we recognize their roots in a comprehensive, accessible fashion (2007:4). Furthermore, Shackel points out that if we leave minority histories out of the national public memory, we create a “consensus history” that lacks the richness of a more complicated, multicultural history (2005:24). It is for this reason that Ira Berlin charged NPS with the task of making “a history in which all Americans can see themselves” (2000).

This tension is an inherent part of the commemoration and memorialization of sites, structures, and landscapes. Commemoration is a selective process that memorializes certain aspects of lived experiences, particularly those elements that a community finds value in retaining and will make the past agreeable (Lowenthal 1996:148). One key characteristic of memory and the past is that they are produced

and constructed. They undergo constant invention and reinvention; there is no single objective truth, or if it exists, it is never passed down without many alterations. As Lalone (2003:72) points out, “Historical representations vary depending on time period, political climate, intended audience, circumstances of presentation, and producer’s background and intent.” The past is often improved in some way; it is “always altered for motives that reflect present needs. We reshape our heritage to make it attractive in modern terms, we seek to make it part of ourselves, and ourselves part of it; we conform it to our self-images and aspirations” (Lowenthal 1985:348); the past is neither static nor absolute (Lowenthal 1975).

Knowledge of one’s past and one’s heritage can confirm and enhance one’s identity and self-esteem, sustain one’s roots, and validate claims to power, prestige, and property (Lowenthal 1985:53). Furthermore, a better understanding of the ways that memory and the past are constructed, maintained, forgotten, and disregarded will allow us to better understand the creation of the American landscape (Shackel 2003).

Historic landscapes are contested sites, where multiple groups and individuals vie for the final say in how and for what they are ultimately commemorated. In the case of battlefields, these antagonisms often take the form of the traditional, patriotic, or heroic portrayals of the past versus those who wish to redefine that past. The National Park Service is tasked with determining how to interpret historic battlefields in a neutral and objective fashion that will appeal to a broad audience with diverse interests. This is a challenging task, particularly because visitors bring their own memories and associations to battlefields.

Furthermore, commemorating painful or disturbing events and memories is

particularly challenging. The Best Farm exemplifies Avery Gordon's concept of a haunted landscape (1997). She explains that to be haunted is "to be tied to historical and social effects"; to reckon with this haunting is to "make contact with what is without doubt often painful, difficult, and unsettling" (Gordon 1997:23) The Best Farm is a haunted landscape because events, lives, and experiences have gone unexplored and unrecognized, yet their presence remains through the existence of material evidence, records, and oral history. Some of this history is painful, as it deals with the enslavement and cruel treatment of human beings, or it deals with the conflict, violence, pain, and death of the Civil War. Foote argues that tragedy and violence are always marked on the landscape — sometimes formally commemorated through the sanctification, designation, rectification, or obliteration of sites and landscapes— but even those sites not marked leave an imprint on the landscape, culture, and public memory (1997:7).

The ties between landscape and memory are strong, with the former "often regarded as the materialization" of the latter (Ashmore and Knapp 1999:13). Landscape, memory, and the past are inextricably bound together and implicated in the creation of national identity and socially constituted histories (ibid.). Due to their fixed and static physicality, monuments serve to reify memory and values that are in danger of contestation or obliteration. The establishment of a monument legitimizes the events, values, and ideologies for which it stands (Savage 1999:4).

As Bunch (2007:2) points out, "You can tell a great deal about a country or a people by what they deem important enough to remember; what they build monuments to celebrate; and what graces the walls of their museums." Similarly,

Neff (2005:2) notes that monuments teach us as much, if not more, about the people who erected them than about those who they are meant to honor. Therefore, what do these battlefields and military monuments convey? According to Neff (2005:2), these commemorative spaces and structures “seek explicitly to preserve ideals and values in order to communicate them undiminished to the future.” Those who build the memorials are attempting to preserve their understanding of the past and convey it unchanged to future generations. Likewise, Gatewood and Cameron (2004:207) argues that “the not-so-hidden agenda of most commemorative sites...is to serve as components of a patriotic landscape,” and to “exist not just to educate citizenry, but to instill and sustain nationalistic impulses among the viewers.” Similarly, Silberman (1999:5) notes that efforts at commemoration “[often serve] to bolster the political power of modern governments or national leaders, making their rule seem both justified and pre-ordained.”

### Battlefield Preservation

Civil War sites are popular tourist destinations today, spurred in part due to the release of books such as *The Killer Angels* and films such as *Gettysburg*, *Gods and Generals*, and *Lincoln* (Gatewood and Cameron 2004:193). However, an interest in commemorating and visiting battlefield sites has an even longer history, one that began shortly after the end of the Civil War.

The battlefield preservation movement was initially motivated by veterans groups such as the Sons of Confederate Veterans (Martin et al. 1997:172), whose call for the memorialization of battlefields in the 1880s and 1890s reflected the post-Civil War idea that the landscapes were sacred sites because soldiers had sacrificed their

lives upon them (Venables 2012:149). The creation of patriotic landscapes was motivated by “the rise of historic preservation, monument building on a grand scale, the institutionalized celebration of the national past, improved transportation, and greater affluence” among white Americans in particular (Zelinsky 1988:95).

Following World War I, there was a great deal of national pride around the United States’ status as a world power in military, economic, and social arenas (Smith 2008:xv). Patriotism became “an urgent issue” in the United States, and the government committed more resources to celebrating American victories, power, and success (Kulik 1989:16). Promoting nationalism and maintaining a certain American identity became of utmost importance; it is probably not a coincidence that in the 1920s there was increased support for establishing national battlefields and the passage of the most restrictive and racist immigration bill that the United States had seen (Kulik 1989:16).

Throughout the 20th century, the role of battlefields evolved from a place to honor military sacrifices to a place to “combine patriotism and pleasure, to enjoy a vacation that would also provide a reassuring sense of social order, a strong feeling of comradeship, and a renewed pride in past accomplishment” (Patterson 1989:136). By the 1950s, national battlefields were firmly established as sites of both education and recreation, becoming popular places for families to stop on a longer road trip. Toward the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, national programs were established to oversee battlefield preservation. The Civil War Trust, established in 1991, is a nonprofit organization devoted to battlefield preservation and public education; and in 1996, Congress established the American Battlefield Protection Program to provide grants and

technical assistance for battlefield research, survey and evaluation, planning, advocacy, interpretation (NPS 2007:19, 86). State and local programs, such as the Maryland Civil War Heritage Commission, were also established in the 1990s.

John Latschar, former superintendent of Gettysburg National Military Park, observed that, traditionally, programs “emphasized ‘safe’ reconciliationist topics. We discussed [the] battle and tactics, the decisions of generals, the moving of regiments and batteries, the engagement of opposing units, and tales of heroism and valor....” (Linenthal 2006: 127-8) Thus, as Gatewood and Cameron argue, a battle such as Gettysburg, “came to be recast not as a place of fratricidal struggle or conflict over the racist imperative of slavery, but as a battle over heartfelt principles by two determined sides” (Gatewood and Cameron 2004:208). Promoting patriotism, nationalism, and memorialization of American military history became more important than delving into the messier, more sensitive topics of American cultural history (Smith 2008: xvi) That is, we prefer to focus on the aspects that are pleasing and uncomplicated rather than those that challenge our beliefs about the past and encourage us to consider the legacy of the Civil War in the present (Blight 2000).

As Patterson (1989:136) points out, these national battlefields serve a particular purpose on the American landscape. They provide a place to “combine patriotism and pleasure, to enjoy a vacation that would also provide a reassuring sense of social order, a strong feeling of comradeship, and a renewed pride in past accomplishment” (Patterson 1989:136). Battlefields have come to be seen as holy places and “sacred patriotic space, where memories of the transformative power of war and the sacrificial heroism of the warrior are preserved” (Linenthal 1993:3). The

dead are regarded as brave, heroic martyrs who lost their lives on the “altar of the nation” (Neff 2005:2) in the course of a battle over “heartfelt principles” (Gatewood and Cameron 2004:207). Gatewood and Cameron characterize battlefields as “holy sites” celebrating the “holy crusade” of war, visited by “pilgrims” (2004:194). The language used in books, brochures, and websites sometimes reinforces the sanctity of battlefields; Gettysburg is repeatedly described as a “hallowed ground,” “national shrine,” and “place of pilgrimage” in promotional literature (ibid.). In contrast to these depictions of sacred battlefields, Bodnar (1992) regards these landscapes as purely utilitarian sites for professionals to promote national unity, middle-class values, and an official history. Those in positions of power embrace depictions of a timeless past; portrayals of the past as unchanging, abstract, and sacred are important in maintaining the status quo (Bodnar 1992). It is clear that regardless of the interpretation, battlefields serve an important ideological purpose for our public memory. Following Homi Bhabha (1990), I would argue that narrative practices are significant and worth investigating further because they play a key role in the formation of national consciousness.

As a reflection of these national values, battlefield parks tended to focus on battle events and the experiences of soldiers in combat. Promotion of these stories sometimes comes at the expense of a community’s local and regional heritage (Martin et al. 1997:157). This issue was addressed at a 1998 conference, *Holding the High Ground*, for which managers of NPS battlefield sites gathered to discuss “principles and strategies for managing and interpreting Civil War battlefield landscapes” (NPS 1998:2). NPS acknowledged that its traditional approach to the interpretation of

battlefield sites has stressed “the military tactics and strategy [the veterans] so loved. Like the returning veterans, we focus our interpretation on the experience of soldiers; we view the resource primarily through military eyes” (NPS 1998:2). The participants of *Holding the High Ground* note that the NPS portrays a skewed view of the past at battlefield sites, one that is biased racially and socio-economically and only tells the story of “the literate, the enfranchised, or the landed--those whose thoughts and actions are generally recorded in the historical record” (NPS 1998:2). Though this type of interpretation was “easiest and most convenient” (NPS 1998:9), it ignored significant aspects of American history. Although NPS called for change over a decade ago in the course of this conference, vestiges of the old ways of interpreting battlefields still remain.

#### *Memorialization at Monocacy National Battlefield*

It was within this historical context that Monocacy National Battlefield was established and developed. As with other battlefields in the country, the commemorative process began soon after the Civil War ended. Growing patriotism, nationalism, and a devotion to reconciliation and memorialization of the post-Civil War nation supported the movement to add more markers and monuments and preserve the battlefield (Linenthal 1993). In the 1870s and 1880s, commemorative groups arose and began organizing the creation of monuments honoring those who had fought in the Battle of Monocacy. New Jersey, Pennsylvania, United Daughters of the Confederacy, Vermont, and Maryland erected monuments at the site in 1907, 1908, 1914, 1915, and 1964, respectively. Glen Worthington, a local farm owner, was one of the first to call for the creation of a national battlefield. His campaign in the

1920s coincided with a government-sponsored systematic study of all battlefields, including Monocacy National Battlefield (Monocacy National Battlefield et al. 2009). Based on the findings of this study, Congressional legislation was introduced to commemorate the battle.

On June 1, 1934, Congress authorized the establishment of Monocacy National Military Park (Public Law 73-443 H.R. 7982) but did not appropriate any funds for land acquisition (Reed and Wallace 2004:58). It was not until the centennial of the Civil War approached that people became interested again in the battlefield and wanted to organize for more federal support. Part of the motivation for this movement was the rapid urbanization that occurred in Frederick, especially following the 1950-1952 construction of Interstate 270, which cut through the battlefield (Monocacy National Battlefield 2012a). Local community members realized that such development could have a negative impact on Monocacy National Military Park and subsequently organized a grassroots movement to authorize NPS to establish boundaries and begin land acquisition.

In 1973, Monocacy National Battlefield— which consisted of approximately 1,500 acres at the time— was placed on the National Register of Historic Places and designated a National Historic Landmark; three years later, funds were also appropriated for the purchase of land (Public Law 94-578 H.R. 3830). Between 1976 and 2001, NPS acquired six properties (The Thomas, Best, Worthington, Baker, and Lewis farms, and the Gambrill Mill property) with most of the funds coming from the federal government (particularly the Clinton administration), though the Civil War Preservation Trust contributed \$36,000 for the purchase of the Thomas farm. In 1991,

the 1,650-acre battlefield was opened to the public, though there was little interpretive material. Visitation has rapidly increased since then, perhaps due in part to the construction of a new Visitors Center in 2007 (NPS 2015).

Visitors to Monocacy National Battlefield are often surprised to learn that the landscape contains a history beyond the 1864 Civil War battle that inspired the creation of the park. They are even more surprised to learn that a plantation with a large enslaved population existed on the park's landscape in the late 18th and early 19th centuries; the perception is that slavery was not practiced so far north, less than an hour from the Pennsylvania border. The omission of a substantial discussion about slavery stems in part to the post-war reconciliation movement of the 1890s, when preservationists focused on militaristic honor and glory rather than the racial and social advancements made during the Civil War and Reconstruction (Boge and Boge 1993:21, Smith 2008: xvii). These preservationists portrayed battlefields as sites of military, rather than social or racial, conflict (Blight 200, Smith 2008: xvii). The cultural conflicts of the 19th century were a dividing force, so military parks functioned to "limit controversy over the war and forget what had separated the country in the 1860s" (Smith 2004:129) by avoiding the issue of race and slavery, preferring to focus on what everyone could agree on: the valor, courage, and heroism of the Civil War soldiers (Smith 2008: xv).

Monocacy National Battlefield's interpretive materials--including brochures, web content, exhibits, and waysides--stress the importance of the Civil War battle, and highlight battle monuments and sites of combat. Visitors are encouraged to take a self-guided driving tour around the grounds or solicit the expertise of interpretive

staff to learn more about the battle. On the anniversary of the battle, visitors are invited to watch demonstrations of weapons and soldier life. In addition, NPS employees deliver educational lectures to Civil War interest groups, avocational archaeologists, and other interested parties. The Visitors Center, located on a hill overlooking the battlefield, contains exhibits devoted to the Battle of Monocacy and, to a slightly lesser extent, the Civil War in general. The contents of the exhibit are largely devoted to the soldiers' experience. Artifacts in glass cases include weaponry, military pins, saddles, canteens, artillery, and uniforms (Figure 26). Around the perimeter of the room is a timeline detailing the political events leading up to the Civil War, and the first panels detail the spread of Civil War battles to the Shenandoah Valley. Most of the exhibit panels are devoted to taking the visitor through each event of the daylong battle and its after-effects.



Figure 26. Artifact case on the second floor of the Monocacy National Battlefield Visitors Center. Photo by Megan Bailey.

The Visitors Center is located on a hill overlooking the battlefield. The first floor houses a gift shop and at one point contained a small freestanding display case featuring information about and materials from the evaluation study and Phase II testing performed at Best Farm between 2001 and 2003. More specifically, it presents information about the identification of the so-called “slave village” that would have been associated with L’Hermitage. Included are diagrams of the excavation units, photographs of the Best Farm and the excavation, and artifacts recovered from the investigation. The text supporting these items is solely focused on the excavation and the archaeological process with little to no interpretation of the data recovered. The language is quite technical and straightforward, focusing on the facts of the excavation rather than social context. For example, one panel describes the site:

Fourteen units revealed a linear, trench-like feature that met in a corner. It remains unclear precisely what the feature is; possibly an enclosed area. 479 artifacts of a domestic and architectural nature were found in this area, dating from the late 18<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> c... The artifacts displayed here were discovered as part of the archaeological investigation.

A panel titled “Eyewitness leads archaeologists to the slave village” recounts the 1798 journal entry of Polish visitor Julian Niemcewicz, who noted of L’Hermitage, “One can see on the home farm instruments of torture, stocks, wooden horses, whips, etc. Two or three negroes crippled with torture have brought legal action...” This exhibit does not focus on the alleged abuse at all; rather, the response to this quote is:

Although this account exaggerated the amount of acreage and number of slaves, it contained enough verifiable information to help archaeologists narrow down the whereabouts of the slave village...their location relative to the river and “stone house” assisted the archaeologists in determining where

to begin their investigation.

NPS shies away from discussing one of the most salient features of this quote, favoring the aspects that contribute to the archaeological excavation. Though the quote provided an excellent opportunity to discuss plantation life, power relations, and oppression, none of these topics are broached. Thus the archaeology of the site is made to seem more important than the actual social events that occurred on site.

The second floor of the Visitors Center is entirely devoted to the Battle of Monocacy and, to a slightly lesser extent, the Civil War in general. There is no mention of the prehistoric occupation of the land, nor do the Vincendières or any other early European families appear on the display panels. Slavery is addressed in a very broad fashion on a few of the panels, but enslaved populations are rarely tied to a specific property on the battlefield. Furthermore, civilians in general are all but ignored, unless portions of the battle were fought on their property. Instead, the focus is clearly on military strategies, combat, and soldiers.

The first panel at the entrance, titled “Monocacy: A Battle for Time,” displays large photographs, primarily of white men (in fact, women rarely appear in the exhibit, the only notable example is Mary Quantrell, a Frederick resident who is recognized for having waved a U.S. flag in the presence of Confederate troops). The panel also contains several quotes that glorify the Battle of Monocacy. For example, Glenn Worthington is quoted as having said, “Here was a race between the two great contending forces, the state of which was the capital of the nation, its treasure and its prestige.”

The contents of the exhibit are largely devoted to the soldiers’ experience.

Artifacts in glass cases include weaponry, military pins, saddles, canteens, artillery, and uniforms. Around the perimeter of the room is a timeline detailing the political events leading up to the Civil War, and the first panels detail the spread of Civil War battles to the Shenandoah Valley.

Most of the exhibit panels are devoted to taking the visitor through each event of the day-long battle. Beginning with the Confederates' decision to target Washington, D.C., the exhibit text continues through each battle strategy, including Union organization and response, the desperation of the Confederates ("If victorious, we have everything to live for. If defeated, nothing will be left for us to live for."- General Robert E. Lee), morning action at the Worthington Farm, skirmishing at Jug Bridge, taking over Gambrill Mill, retreat over the railroad bridge, the final charge, climax at the Thomas Farm, Washington saved, withdrawal of Confederate troops, etc. If this list is a bit tedious, it is only to convey the exhaustive detail in which the Battle of Monocacy is recounted. Each battle tactic is analyzed for its potential consequences, and the Generals leading the Union and Confederate troops—Lew Wallace and Robert E. Lee, respectively—are assessed for their ability to perceive and respond to events.

In addition to describing the battle itself in great detail, the exhibit follows the after-effects of the event. Some are specific to the Battle of Monocacy, such as the number of casualties suffered by each side, while others focus on national events, such as the re-election of Lincoln and the establishment of the Freeman's Bureau.

While the strategic military actions of the battle are clearly the center of attention in this exhibit, other themes are overtly or subtly on display. In very large

letters, the words “Honor,” “Remembrance,” and “Dedication” headline three panels around the exhibit. These words succinctly capture the purpose of creating a national park: to honor those who fought in the Battle of Monocacy, to remember those who died in battle, and to dedicate monuments to the efforts of everyone involved in the battle.

The panel titled “Honor” celebrates the soldiers who participated in the battle for their bravery and devotion to their country and their cause. A photograph of a Medal of Honor awarded to Lt. George E. Davis in 1892 for bravery is on display; the caption notes that though Davis valued this prize, “his greatest reward remained the service he had rendered his country.” The glorification of national loyalty is echoed by a statement from the Maryland Senate Joint Resolution of January 1931, which noted that Monocacy National Battlefield park should serve as a “resting place and a shrine where thousands of travelers and tourists could rest and renew their patriotism by a contemplation of ‘the lofty deeds which there have been wrought; of the great hearts which spent themselves here.’” According to the exhibit, patriotism and national pride are valued qualities for which soldiers should be honored.

The “Remembrance” panel consists of an enormous photograph of a cemetery, and the text describes the movement of the Union and Confederate dead to their respective burying grounds. It seems that in this exhibit, the Battle of Monocacy, and even the Civil War, is not meant to be remembered as a conflict between “right” and “wrong,” or an event for which one side should take the blame. Instead, NPS takes a rather neutral position that enforces the idea that both sides were fighting to protect the causes most important to them, for better or for worse. Lt. General John B.

Gordon is quoted as having said:

...It will be a glorious day for our country when all the children within its borders shall learn that the four years of fratricidal war between the North and South was waged by neither with criminal or unworthy intent, but by both to protect what they conceived to be threatened rights and imperiled liberty; that the issues which divided the sections were born when the Republic was born, and were forever buried in an ocean of fraternal blood.

This quote, taken from Gordon's 1903 publication *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, is telling in that it makes reference to the fraternal nature of Union and Confederate forces; they are portrayed as two sides of the same coin, both fighting for opposing, but no less legitimate, causes. Thus the battle is portrayed as a matter of honor, and is therefore justifiable.

The "Dedication" panel, which depicts a large group of men surrounding a monument, notes that, "Monument dedications provided aging veterans an opportunity to honor and remember their fallen comrades." These monuments are also meant to be "an inspiration to future generations." Soldiers are considered to be worthy of such recognition due to their devotion to their country and especially their willingness to sacrifice themselves for their cause. Sgt. Newton Terrill of the 14<sup>th</sup> New Jersey Volunteers is quoted as having said, "Every drop of blood shed at Monocacy, every life lost, was sacrificed in a noble cause. Those fallen heroes...if they could only know that their lives saved our National Capital from destruction, would willingly exclaim: 'I die content, I gave my life to my country'..."

The prevalence of quotes with thematic elements similar to those of Terrill's give the impression that the heroic sacrifice on the part of the soldiers is both honorable and appropriate. The heroism of soldiers is celebrated often throughout the

exhibit, and even on the informational brochure, which places the following quote front and center on the first page: “From every point of view it was heroism” (attributed to Union Gen. Lew Wallace). In a panel titled “A Soldier’s Sacrifice,” a “heroic comrade” is celebrated for sacrificing his life so that others might be spared. One quote from an anonymous battle witness insists that, “The enlisted men of the Old 8<sup>th</sup> are every one a hero—God bless them!” I feel I must add a note of caution here that I do not wish to denigrate truly selfless acts of sacrifice on the part of the soldiers, nor do I want to attack individual actions in any way; rather, I question the way in which these actions are described and honored uncritically.

While the Battle of Monocacy is clearly the central focus of the Visitors Center, it lacks a sophisticated discussion of the slavery issue that gave rise to the war. In addition to the display case on the slave village that I have already described, there are a few panels on the second floor that are devoted to slavery, though the institution is largely discussed from a legal or political, rather than social, perspective. Most of the text relating to slavery is specific to the situation in Maryland: the state constitution, the number of enslaved and free African-Americans, and laws that limited the freedom of free and enslaved blacks. Although these panels note that African-Americans were severely restricted in their daily life, even after the passage of the Emancipation Proclamation, the discussion never goes into greater detail about issues of power and control and the way these tensions played out on the plantation landscape. Instead, the focus is more generally on the status of slavery in Maryland, which was a border state and as such subject to greater political maneuverings. One panel notes that antebellum attempts at neutrality were unsuccessful as tidewater

counties along the Chesapeake Bay had strong ties to the plantation system and slavery that were central to the economy, while western Maryland was characterized by small farms, mills, and other industries that required fewer enslaved workers. These kinds of facts are characteristic of the exhibit's discussion of slavery, which takes a very detached position and does not go into great detail about the nature of slavery or its role as a motivating force in the Civil War (although it is recognized as one of the causes).

Visitors do have the opportunity to learn about other histories when they visit individual farm sites at the battlefield. The Best Farm features four interpretive waysides adjacent to the parking lot, which include one titled "Caught in the Crossfire" that describes the battle fought at the Best Farm on July 9, 1864, and how the Best family reacted to it; another, titled "The Lost Orders," describes how a copy of Confederate military strategy was accidentally left behind on the Best Farm, and later discovered by Union soldiers; a third on the Maryland Civil War Trains' Antietam Campaign, a 90-mile tour that follows the footsteps of Confederate and Union troops beginning on the banks of the Potomac River in Dickerson, Maryland, and continuing northwest to Antietam National Battlefield; and finally one placard for L'Hermitage, which provides a brief overview of the known history of the Vincendières and their enslaved workers and references the 2003 excavation that identified the location of the slave village (Figure 27). There is no signage regarding the 2010-2012 excavations of the slave village, and the site itself gives no indication that any archaeological activity took place there, as all the excavation units were filled in after the completion of each field season, and Johnson grass covers the whole

area.



Figure 27. Wayside describing archaeological excavations on the Best Farm. Photo by Megan Bailey.

However, those curious to learn more about these aspects of Monocacy National Battlefield's history could consult the Monocacy National Battlefield website (<https://www.nps.gov/mono/>) as there are webpages featuring a history of the L'Hermitage plantation and the Best Farm, a profile of Victoire Vincendière, and information about slavery at L'Hermitage and other farms on Monocacy National Battlefield's property. In general, however, Civil War military history takes center stage.

*Present-Day Nervous Landscape*

In some ways, Monocacy National Battlefield is still a nervous landscape today. Monocacy National Battlefield's interpretive focus on the Civil War centers on white soldiers, battle formations, military uniforms, and, to a lesser extent, enslaved individuals and the historical context for the Civil War. This landscape also hosted indigenous peoples 10,000 years ago, a plantation with a large enslaved workforce in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and migrant workers in the 1950s, but these aspects of Monocacy National Battlefield's history are downplayed or altogether omitted. In doing so, the National Park Service (inadvertently) sends a message about which histories are important and valuable. However, this hegemonic interpretation is not absolute; attempts to incorporate these other stories, such as through the initiation of the L'Hermitage Slave Village project, have revealed means of resistance on a nervous landscape. Cast in the sense of tension and anxiety, the public study of the history of slavery and African Americans caused some visitors to become uneasy or agitated, as it was a disruption to the conventional interpretation of the battlefield and challenges the notion that slavery wasn't really the cause of the conflict. To incorporate and highlight the history of L'Hermitage would make progress toward inclusivity, heterogeneity, and multiplicity, taking a step toward the kind of insurgency that Sandercock promotes. Therefore, providing this larger historical context is important not only for educational reasons, but for political and ideological reasons as well.

While narratives of memorialization and commemoration have always been politicized, it seems especially timely to reconsider the narrative around Civil War history given the national discussion on Confederate monuments and memorials that

is currently ongoing. The movement to remove markers of the Confederacy found renewed momentum in response to the December 2016 shooting of nine people at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, S.C. by Dylann Roof, a white supremacist who posed for photos with a Confederate flag before committing the mass murder (Coates 2015). Following this event, South Carolina lowered the Confederate battle flag from the capitol grounds and Alabama Governor Robert Bentley ordered it removed in Montgomery. Other cities and states followed suit, tearing down or quietly removing Confederate statues, flags, and other memorials (Shapiro 2017). The Southern Poverty Law Center identified more than 1,500 Confederate-related sites in 31 states, a number that excludes the “approximately 2,570 Civil War battlefields, markers, plaques, cemeteries and similar symbols that, for the most part, merely reflect historical events” (Graham 2016). Though only a small fraction have been removed at this point, many more are now subject to a debate about the meaning of Confederate monuments, which is a subset of a larger debate about the historical interpretation of the Confederate States of America and the reasons for the Civil War. Stewards of these sites and members of the public are grappling with the significance of leaving the monuments in place vs. removing them vs. providing critical context for the site. The crux of the problem is “the act of honoring the values supposedly symbolized by the Confederacy (and commemorated by a sign such as a flag or a monument) that perpetuates conflict owing to differences in interpreting those values.... Were this not the case, it would be a relatively simple proposition to [satisfy] all parties” (Richardson quoted in Winsboro 2016:220). Those opposed to the commemoration of the Confederacy argue that to do so promotes

harmful, violent ideologies like white supremacy and antiblackness, while those who wish to protect the monuments view them as symbolizing heroic courage and loyalty as well as the “rise of the South out of the ashes of that war and the persistence through decades of poverty and isolation that have led finally to the region’s vindication today as the ‘New South’” (Leib and Webster 2015:14).

For National Park Service staff, this means assessing the appropriateness of Confederate monuments, flags, and buildings to their mission to “discover American history in all its diversity” and “to tell the complete story of America” (Winsboro 2016:222). More broadly, it demands recognition of the fact that landscapes are dynamic, with ever-changing meanings that are always subject to being challenged. It is with these debates over commemoration that it becomes clear how the interpretation of landscapes is tied to issues of power; “the construction and interpretation of landscapes are constitutive of, reflections of, and points of contention within societal power relations” (Leib and Webster 2015:10). John Winberry, who conducted an extensive survey of Confederate monuments in the South, observed that “Landscapes are subject to change in form and function; but they also change in symbol and meaning. Just as we describe the form of landscape, we must seek also to understand their meanings, both in the past and in the present” (1982:14). The ambiguity of landscapes means that they can always be re-evaluated and re-interpreted to serve the needs of a particular time, place, or group.

It is within the context of the national debates described above that Monocacy National Battlefield is challenged to create its public interpretation. Under its relatively liberal enabling legislation, Monocacy National Battlefield’s managers may

preserve and interpret anything at the park that existed at the time of the Civil War. This opens up a broad range of possibilities for expanding the interpretation of the battlefield's history. The L'Hermitage research and excavations provide the opportunity to challenge dominant and hegemonic narratives about American history; this counter-narrative is akin to Byrne's "gaps in the grid," or instances where resistance and contestation are possible on the landscape.

To discuss the history of L'Hermitage with the public is to create a counter-narrative that challenges dominant narratives that ignore, downplay, or romanticize slavery in favor of a whitewashed past (Cook 2016). The shift to counter-narrative is akin to a symbolic excavation; "the unearthing of difficult and long suppressed (and repressed) historical narratives... through memory work, the construction and representation of the past" (Alderman and Campbell 2008:388). Archaeology can do this work through actual excavations of historic sites; the results can disrupt the narrative that dominates a particular landscape, as did the discovery of the slave village on the Best Farm. Indeed, newspaper articles that covered the L'Hermitage Slave Village project often featured headlines that called attention to the project's disruptive nature or its ability to expose new information, e.g. "Discovery in Frederick Sheds New Light on 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Md. Slaves" (Hellerman 2010), "Digging Up a Grim Past" (Snyder 2003), "Brutal Slave History Unearthed at Frederick County's L'Hermitage" (Ruane 2010), "Monocacy Battlefield home to historical secrets" (Loos 2013).

In Byrne's analysis of the nervous landscape, these disruptions of hegemonic power are what cause tension to occur. In the case of Monocacy National Battlefield,

that tension came about in the course of the Best Farm Slave Village study, when members of the public reacted to the public interpretation of the L'Hermitage plantation history. Civil War buffs, families hoping for an educational experience, and others come to Best Farm for its connection to the Battle of Monocacy, and these visitors sometimes made their way out to the archaeological site to observe the excavation process. While many were interested in the excavation and history of the L'Hermitage slave village, some complained (to archaeologists) that there was no point in studying this early period of the Best Farm's history because it detracted from the Civil War history. Similar statements were made after the *Washington Post* published an article on the Best Farm project. Out of nearly two hundred online comments, many were by turns curious, supportive, and introspective, while others grumbled that we were wasting time and money on an irrelevant, unnecessary project, preferring that we "move on" and stop focusing on slavery so much.

The supportive comments displayed a fascination with archaeology and an appreciation for the archaeological process and the types of information it can provide about the past. Some examples of these comments:

*I am in awe with the article about L'Hermitage. I think it is most important for us to know the roots from which each family in the United States came...their struggles and their courageous faith and hope in a better world. —Comment in response to "Brutal slave history unearthed at Frederick County's L'Hermitage" from [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com).*

*All this stuff was found in the soil? Just recently? After repeated plowing, and moving, etc? And it took all this time? They can actually tell what type of lives they led by seeing a bone, food remains?? (after how many years) and foundations? And a couple glasses? Wow, dont [sic] know about everyone else. This is amazing, but creepy. —Comment in response to "This is truly extraordinary" from [www.fredericknewspost.com](http://www.fredericknewspost.com).*

Critical comments tended to question the significance of the project, finding it to be misguided, pointless, or irrelevant:

*Well cry me a river. Perhaps the Democrats can get the descendants some reparations [sic] from the discriminated black farmers' fund set up by DA.*

*How expert are these Park employees at archaeology? Do they have experience at it? Are they following proper procedures with the extraction and preservation of artifacts that they uncover? Instead of harping on the cruelty of our ancestors maybe the article would have been more useful if we learned more about the discoveries and ultimate finale to this dig? Will there be a museum? Are there living ancestors of the slaves? Help please.*

*Tell me again:*

*What was the White elected President Abraham Lincoln most known for. What is carved on his Washington DC Monument.???*

*I would love to see your evidence of oppression. It is obvious you know nothing of this country's early history thinking a single mother was brutal to her slaves and lived. Your [sic] foolish and responsible for your words.*

*Seriously, who cares??*

*So what's the point of this story ? The slaves are long dead and so are the people that engaged in that practice.*

—Comments in response to “Brutal slave history unearthed at Frederick County’s *L’Hermitage*” from [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)

Other national battlefields have also dealt with this kind of backlash when attempting to highlight other histories, particularly that of slavery. For example, when former Gettysburg National Military Park Superintendent John Latschar mentioned that slavery was one of the causes of the Civil War, the Secretary of the Interior received eleven hundred letters from constituents demanding his resignation, a sign that he struck “a raw nerve among many who seek to celebrate the bravery of their ancestors who fought for the Confederacy” (Horton 2001). I interpret this backlash as the result of a situation where absolute power (in the form of dominant narratives that

support privileged groups) fails, and a heterogeneity and multiplicity of power and identities are introduced. That is, the disruption of homogeneity and hegemony breeds nervousness in people; this anxiety is “a jolt out of comfort and complacency” (Slater 2013:1). The new narratives challenge one’s understanding of identity and heritage. Heritage is an inheritance that selectively memorializes certain aspects of lived experiences, particularly those elements that a community finds value in retaining and make the past congenial (Lowenthal 1996:148). We are linked to heritage through narrative structures and stories about the past. These stories are central to our well-being as individuals and as members of a group (Chambers 2006). As Lowenthal (1996:143) points out, “Ever refashioned for present needs, heritage ... [is] possessive, self-serving, and cavalier in [its] use of evidence.” The reason for this is that a prime function of heritage is to “sustain traditional perspectives in the face of each generation’s autonomy and unlikeness” (Lowenthal 1996:172).

Altering the past allows one to believe what *ought* to have happened *did* happen (Lowenthal 1985:326). One’s heritage also informs and shapes one’s identity. As Lowenthal points out, “the security of ‘I was’ is a necessary component of ‘I am’” (1985:41). In order to feel grounded in one’s identity in the present, one must know one’s origins. Knowledge of one’s past and one’s heritage can confirm and enhance one’s identity and self-esteem, sustain one’s roots, and validate claims to power, prestige, and property (Lowenthal 1985:53).

I argue that a challenge to one’s self-identity or self-understanding breeds nervousness, particularly around the introduction of narratives that cast one in a negative light. “For Americans, a people who see their history as a freedom story and

themselves as defenders of freedom, the integration of slavery into their national narrative is embarrassing and can be guilt-producing and disillusioning. It can also provoke defensiveness, anger and confrontation” (Ater 2012:142). White people may feel especially vulnerable, guilty, and/or ashamed, as well as “defensiveness, nervousness, and a variety of fears: fear of being called racist, fear of black anger or judgment, fear of loss of group pride, and even fear of reparations or revenge for a history of slavery and racial oppression” (Gallas and Perry 2014:26). “Black people can experience comparable feelings of vulnerability during discussions about slavery and race. In fact, learning about slavery can be traumatic for any black American and may generate acute feelings, such as shame or distress” (ibid).

Such individuals find it difficult to assimilate these sites with “heroic notions of the national past” (Foote 1997:35). This situation sets up a sharp clash between old and new narratives, which, because of the role played by historical narratives in identity, can cut to the core of a person’s sense of self. It is not hard to see why this process is likely to be difficult and accompanied by resistance; after all, “struggles over narratives are,” at heart, “struggles over identity (Gallas and Perry 2014:9). People and social groups tend to avoid telling stories that reflect poorly on those they identify with, and surely slavery falls into this category for white Americans, and, indeed, for all who identify as American, including those who are African American or otherwise nonwhite. Slavery in the Americas, however, is more than merely a story of exploitation by perpetrators of injustice; it is also a story of violence, cruelty, and trauma virtually unparalleled in human history” (Gallas and Perry 2014:9-10).

A visitor’s exposure to a new historical narrative is a messy process. After all,

“challenging people’s self-concepts and worldviews is threatening because they often feel anxious, fearful, confused, angry, guilty and resentful” (Goodman 2001:38-9). The process is also inherently lengthy and does not always produce immediate, visible results, because rather than assimilating new information, piece by piece, learners are gradually building up an alternative historical narrative, which continues to conflict with the original narrative until the latter can be modified or discarded (Gallas and Perry 2014:10). In response to this new narrative, visitors may ignore it or reject it, or try to argue against it or rationalize their existing narrative, and may “engage in expressions of resistance that appear to delay the incorporation of the conflicting information, such as complaining about the unpleasantness or relative unimportance of the new narrative, making jokes or sarcastic remarks, or acting out physically by attending to other matters or leaving altogether” (Gallas and Perry 2014:11). Clearly, this process can be challenging and difficult, but as I will discuss in Chapter Eight, the potential rewards are significant.



## Chapter 8: Discussion

This project relies on the concept of the nervous landscape to make a number of claims about power dynamics. As I have argued, L'Hermitage can be characterized as a nervous landscape in the past and present, and it has served as the site of literal and figurative nervousness. My analysis of this landscape makes three significant contributions to the archaeological discourse: first, it highlights the spatial and material nature of power dynamics; second, it demonstrates the benefits of considering emotion in archaeological and historical interpretations; and third, the L'Hermitage history provides the opportunity to create more comprehensive, inclusive, and relevant narratives about the past.

### *The Nature of Power*

The structures and archaeological features at the Best Farm demonstrate that negotiations of power have spatial and material manifestations. Power relations are a force that helped structure the ways in which the material record of plantation life was formed (Thomas 1998:532); archaeological features and artifacts are tangible incarnations of social relationships embodying the attitudes and behaviors of the past (Beaudry et al. 1996:150). Material culture has been manipulated to “condition and control social action” (Beaudry et al. 1996:153) and “create common sense through discipline” (McGuire and Paynter 1991:8). It is not always easy or straightforward to analyze the significance of an object, due to this manipulation by those who come into contact with it (Thomas 1998:532). However, the interpretive approach I have taken here – similar to that which is applied to “symbolic” aspects of culture, and developed by Geertz (1973)—addresses both the materiality and the ideological roles

of the data. As William Sturtevant (1964:107) noted, “material culture resembles language in some important aspects: some artifacts -- for example, clothing -- serve as arbitrary symbols for meanings.” This means that material culture can be conceptualized within the semiotic notion of signs: “semiology aims to take in any system of signs, whatever their substances and limits, images, gestures, musical sounds, objects, and the complex associations of all of these, which form the context of ritual, convention or public entertainment: these constitute, if not language, at least systems of signification” (Barthes 1964:9). Hence semiotics is characterized by the conscious treatment of all aspects of human life, verbal and nonverbal, written or otherwise, as texts amenable to critical analysis” (Beaudry et al. 1996:177).

L’Hermitage effectively illustrates the nature of power: power is heterogeneous, “multifaceted and not reducible to a single source or structure” (McGuire and Paynter 1991:8); power is expressed in multiple ways, e.g. the “power to” vs. “power over” (Miller and Tilley 1984:5-8). The different forms that power can take – material, ideological, legal, etc. -- reflects the fact that “rulers have understood that their domination rests on more than force alone. Accordingly, dominant groups have always employed public spectacles and cultural metaphors to disguise, symbolize, and enact their rule” (Olwell 1998:7).

Planters require these social controls “to ensure and facilitate the quintessential activity of the slave plantation: the production of cash-generating crops produced by the labor of African slaves” (Yates 1999:35). At the same time, these controls could be subverted or circumvented, demonstrating that in spite of slaveholders’ efforts, slaves “had a will of their own, that they were sentient,

articulate human beings, that they were members of society as well as capital assets....The slave could never become the thing he or she was supposed to be” (Morgan 1998: 261). It was this constant tension that created the nervous landscape of L’Hermitage.

### *Emotion and the Past*

I argue that connecting emotion with the past results in several contributions to scholarship by providing alternative perspectives. This approach contributes “psychosocial texture” to social analysis, which in turn helps “expand the scope of social investigation. It leads to a focus on embodiment, to attempts to understand how people are moved, and what attracts them, to an emphasis on repetitions, pains and pleasures, feelings and memories” (Wetherell 2012:2). In addition, historical interpretations that consider emotion provide a means of connecting affect and material culture, by interpreting texts and material culture as emotional responses. In doing so, one can also connect the landscape with emotionalism, which is something that has not been studied or understood enough (Plutino 2009:1).

In addition, I think this reading of the landscape assists in the ongoing drive within the discipline to connect people to the past and make archaeology more relevant and engaging. It is disturbing to me when plantations are described by archaeologists, museum professionals, and interpretive materials in a detached, sterile, or sanitized ways, as a list of facts and numbers-- (e.g., “here’s where the slave cabins were,” “here’s how many slaves there were”)—when they were sites of struggle, trauma, oppression, and resistance, joy, and sadness. The emotional element makes for a more compelling story, a narrative rather than a list of facts. It engages

people's empathy in addition to their intellect. It's a way to connect people to the places, events, individuals, and communities of the past.

Thinking about emotion also gave me an avenue by which to wrestle with a critical interrogation of white supremacy and privilege. I have been hesitant to describe the Vincendières' experiences in Saint Domingue as trauma, or traumatic. Though the violence and instability they witnessed surely affected them on some level, the word "trauma" is a loaded term and has serious connotations that I fear will imply that the Vincendières' experiences were somehow equally or more difficult than those of their enslaved workers and therefore they are justified in their ownership and mistreatment of slaves (i.e., their fear and anxiety justifies their abuse of enslaved workers). Trevor Burnard also tried to hold these multiple truths simultaneously in his study of the brutal Jamaican slaveowner Thomas Thistlewood:

Of course, to understand is in some ways to forgive. Forgiveness is especially easy when the person in need of forgiving produces the words that we rely on to construct a historical narrative. This account of Thistlewood's life and diaries is an empathetic one; it acknowledges the difficulties he was forced to labor under and the different context of an eighteenth-century world with values and experiences removed from our own. I hope, however, that empathy does not tend too much toward sympathy. Sympathy for the travails of a man living in the middle of a war zone (as Jamaica indubitably was in the eighteenth century) is constrained by the realization that the subject was definitely not on the side of the angels. Thistlewood was on the wrong side of history--he was a brutal slave owner, an occasional rapist and torturer, and a believer in the inherent inferiority of Africans (Burnard 2004:7).

Judith Butler (2005) has asked whether it is an act of violence to highlight white trauma, and this project has forced me to wrestle with the ways that we can talk about white trauma in an ethically responsible way, one that provides context and an explanation for their behavior, but not a justification or excuse. Because to talk about

the legacy of slavery is also to talk of ‘white trauma’ as everyone implicated in slavery was traumatized (Walker 2012:171). Toni Morrison argues that, “Slavery broke the world in half, it broke it in every way. It broke Europe. It made them into something else, it made them slave masters, it made them crazy. You can’t do that for hundreds of years and it not take a toll. They had to demonize not just the slaves but themselves” (Morrison quoted in Gilroy 1993:178). A critical analysis of oppressors’ experiences and motivations can help address silences in the historical record, silences that persist in the present and contribute to ongoing structural inequality. To discuss enslavement without addressing the enslaver or portraying them as “shadowy figures” is to deny “the importance of the perpetrator in slavery’s memory” (Walker 2012:169).

I think there is a tendency to look at the cruel and oppressive behavior of slaveholders and dismiss them as grand masterminds, as evil monsters, as the alien Other. I see how easily this narrative could be applied to the Vincendières – one could portray them as wealthy Catholic foreigners whose behavior was bizarre and out of control in comparison to the gentle German Protestant farmers around them. This is similar to the way that the present-day media categorizes those who commit horrific crimes as outsiders, foreigners, mentally ill, or misunderstood loners. I want to humanize plantation owners, *not* to garner sympathy for them, but to avoid these easy characterizations and distancing mechanisms. Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois (2003) argue that to characterize perpetrators as different or “other” as distinct from the “normal” human population obscures the pervasiveness of violence at the micro and macro levels. They state:

Torturing and killing are as cultural as nursing the sick and wounded or burying and mourning the dead. We reject the view that violence is fundamentally a question of hard-wiring, genes or hormones, while certainly accepting that these contribute to human behavior, accelerating, amplifying, or modifying human emotions. But *brute* force is a misnomer, and it is the very *human* face of violence that we are trying to unravel here. Sadly, most violence is not “senseless” at all (2003:3).

To understand the behavior of the Vincendières and other slaveholders not as “senseless” but as partially motivated by a sense of fear, insecurity, entitlement, and a desire to remain at the top of the socioeconomic hierarchy and protect their power, status, and resources, and to understand that plantation owners didn’t behave as they did just because it was their role but because there was an emotional component motivating their actions, is to have a deeper understanding of plantations, power dynamics, and humanity. An understanding of these dynamics can help disrupt them in the present – by opening up this conversation, we can link past events to oppressive practices, events, and policies in the present. As Paul Farmer (2004:309) points out, “Those who look only to powerful present-day actors to explain misery will fail to see how inequality is structured and legitimated over time. Which construction materials were used, and when, and why, and how?” Making connections between the past and the present demonstrates that the former isn’t “over” and the latter doesn’t exist in a vacuum.

Public interpretation at plantation sites often encourages visitors to admire the plantation as a beautiful estate or to identify with the owners by telling stories about their possessions and their lives, but visitors aren’t asked to identify with their oppressive practices. While you and I may not be in the same exact position as the Vincendières, the fear of danger, or of losing power, status, or resources can motivate

us to enact similarly harmful or oppressive behaviors in our desperation to maintain the status quo. While it's easier and more comforting to otherize and distance ourselves, this is a way to acknowledge that we all have the capacity for great cruelty (but also great kindness!). This is a way of linking the past to the present and drawing out important themes and lessons that are still relevant today.

Relatedly, this critical study of white privilege and supremacy is a postcolonial project. Postcolonial thought is primarily an anti-imperial discourse that critiques empire and its persistent legacies” (Go 2016:1). The signifier “post” in the term “postcolonial thought” refers to an intellectual stance that recognizes colonialism’s legacies, critiques them, and tries to reach beyond them (Go 2016:9). Colonialism depended upon racializing and dehumanizing colonized peoples or constructing them as unruly populations to be disciplined, worked upon, managed, ruled, or otherwise ‘civilized” (Go 2016:21), therefore postcolonialism “is a sustained *critique* of empire and, in particular, a critique of the ways of knowing, seeing, and being attendant with empire” (Go 2016:19). The postcolonial project is similar to Toni Morrison’s project of averting “the critical gaze from the racial object to the racial subject; from the described and imagined to the describers and imaginers; from the serving to the served” (Morrison 1992:90). Archaeologists have engaged with this theoretical framework in recent decades, and during the 1990s and 2000s in particular they “began to explore and unpack the archaeology of the ‘colonizer”” and “sought to be more than confirmation of the written accounts of the European experience” (Ferris et al. 2015:7). My critique of the Vincendières draws from this legacy of scholarship that deconstructs colonial identities (colonizer, colonized) to

explore the range and diversity of experiences of those living in colonies.

Furthermore, a project of both postcolonialism and my work is to connect dynamics, systems, and structures in the past and present, as the narratives from the past “are still playing out globally in the societies and descendant States that archaeologists, descendant colonized, and descendant colonizer are all members of, variably enculturated into, and required to negotiate their lived life through” (Ferris et al. 2015:19).

### *Insurgent Historiography*

Audre Lorde suggests that scholars in positions of privilege and power re-focus our scholarship to center on the voices, perspectives, and methods that are usually ignored, devalued, and make us uncomfortable—or what Foucault (1980:81) called “subjugated knowledges.” With regard to studies of the past, the result of this approach is an “insurgent historiography” that counters “official” history, which is usually uncritical, conservative, and fails to recognize structural inequality (Sandercock 1998). Sandercock suggests that insurgency demystifies that which is controlled by a privileged elite and makes the invisible visible (ibid.). This is especially relevant to Monocacy National Battlefield because its management by the National Park Service means that its interpretation must be government-sanctioned, which in turn results in an interpretation that fits comfortably with the official narrative of traditional American history. However, to critique and transform these interpretations can be ultimately liberating, as bell hooks points out: “Subversive historiography connects oppositional practices from the past and forms of resistance in the present, thus creating spaces of possibility where the future can be imagined

differently—imagined in such a way that we can witness ourselves dreaming, moving forward and beyond the limits of confines of fixed locations” (hooks 1994:151). Many archaeologists heed these words by exploring the horrific realities of slavery and racism on plantation landscapes. This is a history that, as Conquergood (2002:146) says, “dominant culture neglects, excludes, represses, or simply fails to recognize.” To do so is worthwhile and important, though as Sandercock (1998:53) cautions, “There is a difference between rewriting history by adding the forgotten or repressed contributions of (for example) women and retheorizing history by using gender or race as categories of analysis.” To create an insurgent or subversive narrative, one does not just “add [women/immigrants/African Americans/American Indians] and stir” (ibid.) Following this line of thought, I think the National Park Service would do well to approach its interpretation of the landscape from an analysis of the mechanisms of power and the ways in which this power can be contested. One way to do this is to reframe the topic of inquiry. In terms of a racial analysis, I am inspired by Laura Pulido, who notes that “a focus on white privilege enables us to develop a more structural, less conscious, and more deeply historicized understanding of racism.... Because whiteness is rarely problematized by whites, white privilege is scarcely acknowledged” (Pulido 2000:534). Instead of exploring how the effects of white privilege burden people of color, Pulido asks how white privilege prevents whites from being similarly burdened. This may seem like a subtle shift, but it is a significant one, since the latter question interrogates power rather than allowing it to go unquestioned as it does in the former case.

Another key piece of being critical is re-centering the discussion and using

this new perspective to look for gaps and silences in the narrative, questioning why certain events, ideas, people, sites, and memories have been excluded (Trouillot 1995, Foucault 1980). Sandercock points out that these processes of exclusion are intrinsically political, with those in positions of authority molding people's "understanding of the past, causing them to forget those events that do not accord with a righteous image, while keeping alive those memories that do" (1998:2). Those in positions of power are drawn to depictions of a timeless past; portrayals of the past as unchanging, abstract, and sacred are important in maintaining the status quo, but have no place in critical interpretations of history (Bodnar 1992). To be uncritical is dangerous, as it allows the unchecked perpetuation of traditional (and often harmful) ideologies. Those who have a stake in maintaining these ideologies will work to preserve their idealized version of the past, even if it does not tell the whole story. The purpose of these ideologies is to produce and reproduce current features of society, particularly exploitative relationships (Althusser 1975). Presentations of the past *are* ideology, and they serve to mask or misrepresent current political or economic realities in favor of reproducing a society characterized by inherent inequality. If these ideologies go unchallenged, they will continue to "[cram] every 'citizen with daily doses of nationalism, chauvinism, liberalism, moralism, etc.'" (Althusser 1971:154). Histories, symbols, and identities are pushed through a process of ideological centralization (Silberman 1999:10).

Though archaeology, like any other type of research, can be manipulated in order to promote the status quo and maintain silences, it can also expose and break silences, though one must strategically choose which silences to uncover and which

to leave untouched; both are political decisions in their own way. Archaeology provides tangible evidence of behaviors, events, and systems that were literally and figuratively buried. Furthermore, by virtue of excavating in public, where visitors can watch and ask questions, archaeologists can contribute something meaningful. In the course of the L'Hermitage project, we attracted visitors almost every day while we were excavating. This provided many opportunities to engage with visitors about the archaeological process, the goals of our research, and the reasons why we thought the slave village is worth pursuing. While our discussions touched on relatively benign topics such as architecture and agricultural practices, visitors were usually open to discussing more politicized subjects such as racism, immigration, and religion. Changing a dominant narrative does not only happen through static materials such as exhibits and brochures; it requires a certain degree of interaction as well. However, excavation alone, while powerful in some contexts, is usually not sufficient to transform narratives. Additional research, discussions, interpretation, and communication are required to make the archaeology a useable product.

It can be difficult or anxiety-inducing for everyone involved to challenge dominant narratives; Linenthal (2000) notes that making slavery central to a discussion of the Civil War endangers the comforting notions that people have devised for themselves. However, it is an important part of the decolonization process, due to its ability to “disturb and rupture, which can in turn provide an opportunity for an anticolonial reality founded on postcolonial ethics” (Slater 2013:1). This anxiety can have great power; Slater argues that: “I understand anxiety as productive, both in the sense that it reveals a continuing colonial order and is an

articulation of the potential for transformation (2013:1). A critical engagement with “white pain, raw emotions, and an inability to remain self-possessed” and other manifestations of postcolonial anxiety can expose the embodiment of colonialism and, surprisingly, models for anticolonial social relations,” demonstrating that within anxiety are radical possibilities (Slater 2013:1).

### *Creating a Counter-Narrative*

Understanding the need for broader context and more diverse narratives, Monocacy National Battlefield’s staff has been working to develop new stories about the park’s history. For example, research on slavery in Maryland was incorporated into the Visitors Center exhibit in order to provide context for the development of the Civil War. These panels focus on the legal and political ramifications of slavery and abolition movements, particularly in Maryland, which was a border state and as such subject to greater political maneuverings. A discussion of slavery also has a presence on the website, which has been enhanced in recent years (MNB 2012e).

Still, Monocacy National Battlefield’s staff recognizes the need to give more attention to slavery and the African American presence on the landscape, not only as it pertains to the battlefield but also to the region. These topics are especially salient given that Frederick served as a point of sale for the local slave trade (Grivno 2007:93), that Monocacy National Battlefield is a member of the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom (Monocacy National Battlefield et al. 2009:32), that enslaved individuals accounted for one-third of Maryland’s population in 1790 (Fields 1985:1), and that Maryland had the largest free black population in the United States in the mid-1800s (Reed and Wallace 2004:27).

These changes would have the benefit of including more stories in the broader context of Civil War history, and representing aspects of history that are often marginalized. Under its relatively liberal enabling legislation, Monocacy National Battlefield's managers may preserve and interpret anything at the park that existed at the time of the Civil War. This opens up a broad range of possibilities for expanding the interpretation of the battlefield's history.

Developments in the study and practice of tourism have contributed valuable resources that can be drawn upon for inspiration and guidance. African Americans have "called for greater recognition of their achievements and perspectives within representations of the South's past," demanding an end to marginalization in historic sites and museums and creating counter-narratives that correct inadequate or harmful depictions of their history and "publicly recognize the struggle and resiliency of African Americans" (Alderman and Modlin 2013:11). For example, the NAACP initiated an economic boycott of South Carolina for fifteen years to protest the state's display of the Confederate flag outside of the Statehouse in Columbia. Supported by other large organizations such as the National Collegiate Athletic Association and the United Auto Workers union, the boycott negatively affected tourism and economic growth in South Carolina, as businesses, conferences, and artists relocated to other states. In addition, much scholarship has been produced that critically analyzes the interpretation of slavery at historic sites such as plantations, museums, and historic houses (see Wolfe 2015, Brooms 2012, Carter et al. 2014, Jackson 2011, Flewellen 2017). These studies also contribute frameworks with which to create counter-narratives that "challenge the dominant narratives that romanticize slavery" or ignore

it altogether (Alderman and Modlin 2013:4). These counter-narratives are not only important for educational purposes, but also because they serve the important role making connections between the past and present that can eventually result in a more just society (Alderman and Modlin 2013:16, Araujo 2012:2). More specifically, these critical narratives can make

connections between the institution of slavery, the foundation of the USA, and slavery's impacts on present-day race relations more explicit to the public. As Inwood, Tyner, and Alderman (2014:n.p.) have recently argued, the complex situations surrounding the violent deaths of black men like Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri; Eric Garner on Staten Island, New York; and Freddie Gray in Baltimore, Maryland are certainly a product of the 'neoliberal and racialized conditions' in the USA today but are also part and parcel of a more than 400-year legacy of devaluing black lives and black bodies dating back to slavery (ibid.).

To create these conceptual links is an important part of breaking the pattern of structural inequality that persists in the United States and globally; to quote philosopher George Santayana (1905), "Progress, far from consisting in change, depends on retentiveness....Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

Museums, historic sites, and national parks are increasingly incorporating discussions on slavery in their interpretive materials and tours (c.f. Horton and Crew 1989, Horton 1999, Handler and Gable 1997). So how should the L'Hermitage story be interpreted to the public? Gallas and Perry argue that "Dismantling old narratives and replacing them with new, and historically more accurate, alternatives may be healthy and productive. But this process can generate resistance, resentment, or outright disbelief, and it requires careful thought and sensitive handling for a successful outcome" (Gallas and Perry 2014:xvi). Some considerations to keep in

mind are that “representing the past is not neutral, but inherently ideological and selective. It is a social practice that makes certain people, places, and perspectives appear legitimate while rendering others invisible and seemingly unimportant” (Alderman and Modlin 2013:7). Second, there is the difficulty of talking about a traumatic history without alienating or triggering anyone, though a certain amount of discomfort may be inevitable (Walker 2012, Horton 1999). Third, one must tackle complex goals, such as how to educate and engage diverse audiences with different levels of familiarity with the topic at hand (McKee 1998:134), how to recognize all aspects of the landscape’s history, regardless of whether they reflect well on the country, the privileged and powerful, the National Park Service, and how to create a more multivocal environment, characterized by power-sharing, negotiation, respect for multiple objectives, inclusivity—all of which require greater commitment of time and funding, resources that Monocacy National Battlefield has in short supply. Unfortunately, institutional constraints including staffing, funding, and ownership can result in under-resourced, unsophisticated, overly simplistic, distorted, or sanitized versions of the past (Butler 2001:168, Leon and Rosensweig 1989:xix).

These inadequate interpretations of the past provide a model for the kinds of practices to avoid when the history of plantations and slavery is involved. Lowen (1999:339) notes that plantation sites often erase enslaved African Americans in their interpretive materials, preferring to focus on elegant or unique objects. Site tours will not refer to enslaved workers by name, and will not give them credit for the profitability and smooth functioning of the plantation (Lowen 1999:339). Furthermore, rather than addressing racism, violence, and other horrors, tour guides

will “allow today’s visitors to conceptualize living, working, reproducing, and dying on the old plantation as an idyllic retreat from the modern world” (Lowen 1999:342). The marginalization or omission of enslavement and the role of African Americans in plantation history is a “symbolic annihilation” of a people, community, and history (Alderman and Modlin 2013, Butler 2001, Dann and Seaton 2001, Eichstedt and Small 2002, Gallas and Perry 2014). Furthermore, it is also problematic when historic sites acknowledge the practice or presence of slavery but mythologize or romanticize enslavement or downplay the ways in which enslaved individuals were fundamental to the construction and maintenance of the plantation landscape (Lowen 1999). Historic sites have also minimized the suffering of enslaved workers and the controlling and brutal treatment they received from slaveowners, and/or positioned enslaved individuals completely passive subjects without agency (Walker 2012:165), or as constantly sad, depressed, or angry (Alderman and Modlin 2013). Finally, plantations and museums will sometimes glamorize the slaveowners or practice affective inequality, displaying more sympathy or empathy for the slaveowners than for enslaved workers (Modlin et al. 2011).

While there are some deeply entrenched and harmful interpretive practices at historic sites, there are other sites that do “employ slavery counter-narratives to evoke empathy in visitors and create a more socially just cultural landscape”; Matthew Cook argues that the Natchez Museum of African-American History and Culture in Mississippi and the Frogmore Cotton Plantation and Whitney Plantation in Louisiana are three such examples (2016:3-4). In addition, a large body of scholarship is available on best practices and models for interpreting slavery, and many of these are

worthy of consideration at Monocacy National Battlefield. First, by talking to African Americans or African American visitors about what they would like to see, parks can design more relevant and engaging interpretive materials (c.f. *Assessing African American Attitudes Toward the Civil War*, Glass-Avery 2011). Of course, African Americans are not a monolith, therefore it is important to tell a diversity of slave stories to show a wide range of experiences, rather than lumping all enslaved workers together (Cook 2016). Ideally these stories will recognize enslaved individuals who demonstrated agency, personhood, and a critical consciousness (Walker 2012:154). As far as the presentation of information, it has been suggested that museums, national parks, and historic sites do not segregate information but that they show how the lives of the enslaved and enslavers were entwined (Small 2013:416); that they use material culture in their presentations, either by expanding their museum collections, making better use of existing collections, re-interpreting collections to address African American heritage, and to use comparable objects (Horton and Crew 1989:258). These sites are urged to create a narrative, as “storytelling is perhaps the best strategy for engaging visitors in a challenging learning process that comes across, at least initially, as reasonably entertaining” (Gallas and Perry 2014:13), identify shared or universal values and experiences, and, I would add, critically engage with concepts of power, privilege, and whiteness. When possible, it is encouraged that historic sites attempt to connect with descendants of the site’s occupants (Jackson 2011). This has already been initiated at Monocacy National Battlefield, when professional genealogist Michael Hait identified Cicely Schatzman as a descendant of one of L’Hermitage’s enslaved workers; she and her mother, Kym

Kennedy were invited to Frederick to tour the slave village site. It was a powerful experience; Kennedy told *Essence* magazine that “research performed by genealogists is important because it gives African Americans a foundation that we don’t have as a race, as the result of slavery. Many of us do not have any connection to our history like other races” (Stone 2011). Identifying and connecting with descendants can be challenging to navigate, but is ultimately rewarding as it is an important method of linking the past and present and delivering information and resources to the people who can make use of it.

Historiography is an inherently political act. In plantation contexts, the way in which enslaved individuals and slaveowners are portrayed affects and is affected by the way we perceive power, race, freedom, labor, and other major elements of the political, social, and economic spheres. Esther Wolfe (2015) calls plantation archaeology an “act of witnessing,” which gets at the way in which archaeologists are uniquely positioned to see that which is literally and figuratively hidden. Interpretations of plantation history that reify simplified, racist, and uncritical narratives and glorify slaveowners while marginalizing or ignoring enslaved Africans and African Americans are a form of structural or institutional racism. Witnessing is a means of recognizing, validating, and affirming the marginalized narrative and raising its profile.

### *Conclusion*

Monocacy National Battlefield is more than a piece of land; it is a landscape of memory, commemoration, and conflict. As the L’Hermitage project demonstrates, public memory is produced and constructed, constantly undergoing

constant invention and reinvention. There is no single objective truth about the past, or if it exists, it is never passed down without many alterations. As Lalone (2003:72) points out, “Historical representations vary depending on time period, political climate, intended audience, circumstances of presentation, and producer’s background and intent.” The past is often improved in some way; it is “always altered for motives that reflect present needs. We reshape our heritage to make it attractive in modern terms, we seek to make it part of ourselves, and ourselves part of it; we conform it to our self-images and aspirations” (Lowenthal 1985:348). Malleable, manipulable, and self-serving, the past can be used as something that perpetuates traditional perspectives. Due to their fixed physicality, monuments serve to reify memory and values that are in danger of contestation or obliteration. The establishment of a monument legitimizes the events, values, and ideologies for which it stands (Savage 1994). On the other hand, archaeological research can help disrupt these conventional, official narratives and create something that resonates with a larger audience on a personal level. For this reason, it is important for narratives to reflect the realities of the experiences of people who inhabited a landscape.

Linenthal (2006:125) points out that in an ever more diverse nation, the NPS needs to “link varied publics to their sites and stories”; through these negotiations, NPS can create a richer interpretation and presentation of the past and manage the landscape in a more democratic fashion. The L’Hermitage project is one means by which NPS is creating this type of interpretation. It provides an opportunity to discuss a variety of subjects, including power, oppression, agriculture, industry, plantations, slavery, immigration, nationality, race, and discrimination, among others. Through

the renegotiation and reconstruction of these narratives, NPS can create a richer interpretation and presentation of the past and manage the landscape in a more democratic fashion.



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