

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis:

PILOT TOWN AT NAVY COVE:
UNPLANNED UTOPIA

William Jonathan Glass, Master of Professional
Studies, 2021

Thesis Directed By:

Kathryn Lafrenz Samuels, Associate Professor &
Director of Cultural and Heritage Resource
Management Graduate Program, Department of
Anthropology

Pilot Town is a former commune-style settlement in Alabama that began around the 1830s. This community, described by many as utopian, consisted of generations of outer bar boat pilots and their families. For nearly a century this community occupied a small peninsula and cove near the mouth of the Mobile Bay before being destroyed by a hurricane in 1906. What makes Pilot Town utopian? And how does it compare to the various utopian settlements attempted in the United States during the same time period? Several more well-known utopian case studies are explored further here to better understand what defines a utopia and why the lower Alabama pilot village is thought of in this way. This research reviews and analyzes the archival record, collaborates with the descendant community, and includes a review of the existing archaeological record to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of Pilot Town as a utopia.

PILOT TOWN AT NAVY COVE: UNPLANNED UTOPIA

by

William Jonathan Glass

Thesis 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
Master of Professional
Studies
2021

Advisory Committee:

Dr. Kathryn Lafrenz Samuels, Chair
Dr. Matthew Palus
Dr. Paul Shackel

© Copyright by
William Jonathan Glass
2021

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the Glass house. Without the support of my wife, Valerie, and the patience of our two amazing children, Will and Stella, this work would not have happened. To show my appreciation, I will do my best not to bring up Pilot Town again for at least a couple of weeks.

A special mention and dedication are also due to two individuals who unknowingly shaped this research. George Bancroft (Banc) Marshall (1977-2018) first alerted me to the Pilot Town site many years ago upon learning I had taken an interest in Archaeology. Memories of that conversation have stuck with me ever since. Noel Read Stowe, Sr. (1938-2015) was at one time a professor of mine at the University of South Alabama. In his time as an archaeologist, Stowe amassed an impressive resume visiting and researching countless treasures on the Gulf Coast. To date, his Pilot Town studies remain the most extensive field investigations of this resource.

Acknowledgements

A great many people took the time to aid in this project. Without their assistance this research would not have been possible, nor worthwhile. To begin, a sincere THANK YOU is owed to Dr. Kathryn Lafrenz Samuels, who not only served as Committee Chair for this thesis but must also be applauded for her vision in creating and directing the newly formed Cultural and Heritage Resources Management (CHRM) distance learning program at the University of Maryland (UMD), making this work possible.

Fellow committee members Dr. Matthew Palus and Dr. Paul Shackel are to be graciously thanked for their guidance and commentary over the course of the research. Considerable appreciation should also be shown to various CHRM faculty and staff who contributed mightily to kickstarting this one-of-a-kind graduate program. Listed in order of introduction are: Dr. Matthew Palus, Dr. Matthew Edwards, Marie Archambeault, Sandra Massey Konzak, Dr. Joshua Samuels, Kelly Hockersmith, and Lyle Torp.

Invaluable collections of Pilot Town documents, literature, and photographs have been carefully compiled and made available for public consumption at multiple venues across Mobile and Baldwin counties, Alabama. To this end, certain individuals went above and beyond to make certain the investigator was presented with everything within their reach to help meet the goals of this project. In no specific order, sincere thanks are warranted to: Gabriel Gold-Vuckson, Director Fairhope Museum of History; Jeanette Bornholt, Genealogy & Alabama History Division Head Foley Public Library; Dana Foster, Cultural Resources Specialist at Fort Morgan State Historic Site; and Elizabeth Theris-Boone, Local History and Genealogy Mobile Public Library.

To my colleagues who allowed me to ramble on about Pilot Town over these many months, thanks for lending your ear and your encouragement. Natalie Ledesma provided cartographic analysis and site location mapping for the research while Amy Carruth doubled as sounding board and grammar police. Thank you both immensely for your contributions to this project!

As will be seen throughout the thesis, the primary goal of this project was to work with the descendant community, incorporating perspectives in addition to my own into the data recovery and interpretation of Pilot Town. The author is truly humbled and quite grateful to have shared time and thought with relatives of some of the former Navy Cove villagers. Shannon Pavel provided family background information and digital access to her line of the Dorgan family tree. Her uncle, John Alston Dorgan, kindly loaned family documents pertaining to Pilot Town for the betterment of this project.

Six oral histories were conducted during this research. Pilot Town descendants Capt. Patrick Wilson and Capt. Kirk Barrett of the Mobile Bar Pilots Association (MBPA) generously welcomed me into their home and workplace, respectively. They shared personal files, clarified their family connections to the resource, and explained some of the ins and outs of their truly fascinating profession. Pilot Town enthusiast Donnie Barrett aided and advised in numerous ways without hesitation. Over the years, Donnie has brought much needed attention and public awareness to Pilot Town. In addition to the current interview, he guided the author to several research institutions holding important subject matter documents and collections he knew to be important to this project. Donnie's passion for Pilot Town is unmatched, though I am quickly gaining steam. Descendant John Samuel Bishop, Jr. (Sammy) also maintains a keen interest in Pilot Town and is closing in on his book on this subject. The camaraderie established with Mr. Bishop over the course of this project will forever be cherished. I am blessed to have also made

the acquaintance of Pilot Town descendant and special collections librarian Ms. Jeanette Bornholt. I must now add myself to the list of lower Alabama residents indebted to Ms. Bornholt for her unwavering commitment to bringing local history to the fingertips of those in search of it. Her diligence in response to my unrelenting research questions has been so very appreciated. Last and never least is my ole pal, Billy Manders. The two of us reconnecting as a result of this research is icing on the cake. Getting to catch up and hear that great big laugh again brings a smile to my face every time. Thanks again for helping a brother out...and of course for being related to the late Pilot Town communard Capt. George Cook.

Table of Contents

Dedication	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iii
Table of Contents	vi
List of Abbreviations	x
Chapter 1. Introduction	1
Archaeological Investigations at Pilot Town/Navy Cove.....	2
Non-Archaeological Collections from Pilot Town/Navy Cove.....	5
Research Questions	8
Studying Utopias.....	10
Thesis Structure	11
Chapter 2. Historical Background.....	13
Bar Pilots.....	13
Town Life.....	18
Battle of Mobile Bay.....	21
Hurricane.....	23
Ownership	29
Cemetery	29
Impact	30
Chapter 3. Theory and Background Review	32
Utopia.....	32
Utopias	33
Shakers (1776-present)	33
Brook Farm (1841-1846)	34
Oneida (1848-1880)	35
Pullman (1880-1895)	36
Utopian Traits	38
Excavating Utopias	39
Pilot Town Historical Record	41
Chapter 4. Methods and Data Collection.....	45
Approach.....	45
Consent and Archiving.....	47
Obstacles	47
Data Collection	48
Qualitative Analysis.....	49
Chapter 5. Archival Records on Pilot Town.....	51
Archival Results.....	51

Letter from Confederate Lieutenant Robert Tarleton (1864)	52
Southern Trust (1890)	52
Particulars of the Killing of Bullock (1891)	53
From the Sea (1898).....	54
Before and After the Storm (1908)	54
Diary of the Storm (1912).....	56
A Brief History of Baldwin County (1928)	57
Only Tidal Wave in History of County Destroyed Navy Cove (1939)	58
Letter to the Editor (1949)	59
Storm of 1906 (1958).....	59
Terrifying 06' Hurricane Along the Coast Recalled (1960)	60
Baldwin County Circuit Court deposition (1963).....	61
In 1906, Hurricane Strikes Coast (1974)	61
Pilot Town—Vanishes with the Wind (1984).....	62
Well, I've Never Met a Native (1986)	62
Descendants Inherit Auction Proceeds (1994).....	63
Washed Away (2000)	64
Voices From Pilot Town (2000)	65
Letter to the Editor (2000)	65
Heritage of Mobile County, Alabama (2002)	66
Pilot Town Exhibit Taking Area by Storm (2007)	66
The Mobile River (2015)	67
Pilot Town historical plaque (2017)	67
Archival Analysis.....	68
Chapter 6. Oral Histories on Pilot Town	70
Oral History Results.....	70
Was Pilot Town a Utopia?	71
Was settlement planned or did it develop naturally?	73
Did any external factors also motivate the settlement?	74
Were there shared communal duties or cooperative living arrangements?	75
How about communal spaces?.....	76
Tell me about the work	76
Were they all equals?	77
Was the village self-sufficient?.....	78
What do we know of the community?	79
How about private ownership?	80
Why not split up the land?	80
Do you think they thought of their village as utopian?.....	81
Oral History Analysis	81

Chapter 7. Conclusion.....	85
Bibliography	90

List of Figures

Figure 1.1. Sample of unprovenienced Pilot Town collection housed with Fairhope Museum of History. Photo by Jon Glass (author).....	6
Figure 1.2. Utopia Crescent maker's mark seen on whiteware fragment recovered from Pilot Town. Photo by Jon Glass (author).....	7
Figure 1.3. Surviving wood table from John Ladnier home. Alabama Historical Commission–Fort Morgan Collection. Photo by Jon Glass (author).....	7
Figure 1.4. Early pilot boat (photo courtesy of Fairhope Museum of History).....	9
Figure 1.5. Ladnier on Pilot Boat at Point Clear (photo courtesy of Fairhope Museum of History).....	10
Figure 2.1. Unknown residence at Pilot Town (photo courtesy of Alabama Historical Commission–Fort Morgan Collection).....	15
Figure 2.2. Unknown residence at Pilot Town Town (photo courtesy of Alabama Historical Commission–Fort Morgan Collection).....	15
Figure 2.3. Unknown residence at Pilot Town (photo courtesy of Fairhope Museum of History).....	16
Figure 2.4. Unidentified men and dog on common area (Workbench Hill) at Pilot Town Town (photo courtesy of Alabama Historical Commission–Fort Morgan Collection).....	20
Figure 2.5. Unidentified men and dog on common area (Workbench Hill) at Pilot Town (photo courtesy of Capt. Kirk Barrett).....	20
Figure 2.6. Post-hurricane John Ladnier home at Pilot Town Town (photo courtesy of Alabama Historical Commission–Fort Morgan Collection).....	24
Figure 2.7. Post-hurricane Capt. James Duggans house at Pilot Town (Oct 1906) Town (photo courtesy of Alabama Historical Commission–Fort Morgan Collection).....	25
Figure 2.8. Post-hurricane Capt. John Smith house at Pilot Town (photo courtesy of Alabama Historical Commission–Fort Morgan Collection).....	25
Figure 2.9. Post-hurricane Capt. William Johnston house at Pilot Town (photo courtesy of Alabama Historical Commission–Fort Morgan Collection).....	26
Figure 2.10. Workbench Hill where Navy Cove survivors were saved by troops from Fort Morgan (photo courtesy of Alabama Historical Commission).....	26
Figure 2.11. John Ladnier House-James Duggan House-John Smith House, Navy Cove Sept. 1906 (photo courtesy of Alabama Historical Commission).....	27
Figure 2.12. Andrew Dorgan House (photo courtesy of Fairhope Museum of History).....	27
Figure 2.13. Norville's looking south (photo courtesy of Fairhope Museum of History).....	28

Figure 2.14. Pilot Town hurricane survivors the morning after (photo courtesy of Fairhope Museum of History). Pictured in the back row from left: John Ladnier, Joseph H. and E.F. Norville, William Wilson, Gertrude Ladnier and an unknown soldier. Front row from left: Capt. and Mrs. T.A. Johnston, and Mr. and Mrs. Cash.....	28
Figure 3.1. Historical plaque for Pilot Town. Photo by Jon Glass (author)	42

List of Tables

Table 2.1. Founders of the Mobile Bar Pilot’s Association (MBPA).....	18
Table 2.2. Pilot Town/Navy Cove residents listed on 1872 deed (620 acres)	19
Table 3.1. Utopian Traits.	39
Table 5.1. Utopian Traits (including Pilot Town).....	69

List of Abbreviations

ARLH-Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage

CHRM-Cultural Heritage and Resource Management

HAER-Historic American Engineering Record

IRB-Institutional Review Board

MOA-Memorandum of Agreement

MBPA-Mobile Bar Pilots Association

NPS-National Park Service

NRHP-National Register of Historic Places

UMD-University of Maryland

Chapter 1-Introduction

As archaeologists, we must make attempts in our work to capture key informant memories and passed-down knowledge that may be available to our research before it falls by the wayside. Without these attempts, we immediately limit our understanding of a place and time. Descendant groups hold many of the answers we seek. They can also bring to light important research questions not yet considered. While the archaeological record provides us clues to the past, by itself, it is merely one part of a story. In certain cases, shovels and trowels may be the primary and perhaps only recourse for data recovery. However, when studying historic period sites, other avenues of information must be pursued to maximize comprehension of a cultural resource. Collaborating with stakeholders to incorporate other perspectives produces vital data concerning the places and the people who made them.

With this aim in mind, the current research works with a descendant community to inform the research questions. What makes Pilot Town utopian? And how does it compare to the various utopian settlements attempted in the United States during the same time period? In addition to participant engagement, this study also includes an in-depth analysis of the recorded history concerning the chosen resource. Lastly, and as will be briefly discussed below, there exists an archaeological record for the chosen resource. These three avenues of information are triangulated within this research to gain a more integrated holistic understanding of the site. Although landowner permissions did not allow for additional excavations to be performed at this time, a combination of other data recovery methods were implemented to reveal new evidence and answer the research questions.

The research subject is Pilot Town. It is also referred to as the village at Navy Cove. Archaeologically speaking, it has been dubbed “St. Andrews Point” and later Sites 1Ba117 and

1Ba118, although the trinomials have since been combined as Site 1Ba117. Geographically, Navy Cove is situated on the Mobile Bay shoreline east of Fort Morgan and up to St. Andrews Bay. This stretch of the peninsula has been a base for human activity extending back thousands of years. French, Spanish, British, and ultimately U.S. naval forces later utilized this locale during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries due to it containing deeper water within a shallow Mobile Bay. The advantages here were many. And due to its rich history, Pilot Town is one of Alabama's most treasured and endangered resources. As such, the author is currently in the process of nominating Pilot Town to the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage (ARLH). Prior archaeological testing at Site 1Ba117 has determined the prehistoric component of the site is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

Archaeological Investigations at Pilot Town/Navy Cove

Archaeological investigations conducted at Pilot Town/Navy Cove, beginning in 1934 by the University of Alabama, documented the exceptionally preserved prehistoric shell middens and deposits dating to the Woodland and Mississippian periods. Geologist Dr. Walter B. Jones noted two distinct shell middens separated by about 400 m. These cultural deposits were later assigned state trinomials 1Ba117 and 1Ba118, as transcribed from Jones's earlier notes of the site. His notes indicate a variety of shells were present, mostly oyster, although it is unclear if any testing was performed. Jones also described the site as being located at the Village of Navy Cove, where 30 homes and a graveyard were destroyed by the 1906 storm. He is undoubtedly referring to Pilot Town.

Archaeologist Dr. E. Bruce Trickey visited the area a short time later as he worked to develop a chronological framework of the Mobile Bay area (Trickey 1958). Presumably in the 1950s, Trickey conducted a small excavation at Site 1Ba118. Trickey dubbed the site "St. Andrews

Point” and mentions the site jutting out into the bay. “Village debris and shells” were reported to 36 inches below the surface. A 5-ft square pit was excavated into the midden. Late Woodland ceramic variations dominated the collection (Trickey 1958:389).

Nearly a half century later, between 1998 and 2000, three cultural resources compliance investigations were conducted on portions of the Pilot Town property during the pre-construction permitting process for residential and high-rise condominium development. Archaeological Services, Inc. performed a Phase I Cultural Resources Assessment from December 1998 to January 1999 (Stowe 1999a). The consultants returned in the summer of 1999 for Phase II testing and determined the site warranted listing to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) (Stowe 1999b). A final visit to the site in December of 1999 included additional subsurface testing concerning a proposed utility trench for the ensuing development (Stowe 2000). The most recent documented visit to the site by archaeologists was in 2011 in response to the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and its affect to historic properties located along the Gulf Coast (Ostahowski and Hanlon 2014:157).

The initial survey by Stowe in 1998 included the heart of the former Navy Cove Village, or Pilot Town. The investigation verified midden deposits at both locations as well as other intermittent locations across the landform. The settlement of Pilot Town and cemetery were also identified (Stowe 1999a:15). Subsurface cultural material connected the areas between Sites 1Ba117 and 1Ba118, therefore these sites were combined. They are now referred to as Site 1Ba117 with site dimensions extending approximately 740-x-250 m.

Pilot Town features and artifact scatters recorded during the Phase I survey included a linear surface scatter of bricks and historic material along the shore, two large brick cisterns (one square and one circular), and the associated cemetery (Stowe 1999a:20-21). Four stone markers

were reported at the cemetery, which was dug into the prehistoric shell midden. Buried here are Charles Wallace (died 1866), Carmelite Walsh (died 1892), Mahala Ann Dorgan (died 1869), and Charlie Wallace (died 1874) (Stowe 1999a:22). Following the Phase I survey, Archaeological Services, Inc. recommended Phase II testing for Site 1Ba117 to determine site eligibility.

Phase II testing in 1999 called for three 1-x-1 m units and six 1-x-2 m units. Artifact concentration was high with shell and prehistoric ceramics dominating the collection. Primarily Woodland vessel fragments were encountered but a minor Mississippian component was also verified. Copious amounts of faunal material were encountered as well as an abundance of saltwater and brackish species of fish. Also, recovered were shark teeth, mammal and bird bone, several species of mollusk, and two human molars. Lithic artifacts were limited to a few flakes, a sandstone gorget fragment, a quartz hammerstone, and a Washington projectile point (Stowe 1999b:79-86).

Historic period material was found in smaller quantities and appears to not have been the focus of the Phase II testing project. Cut nails lead this assemblage with other notable artifacts such as porcelain buttons, a metal button, ceramics [blue shell edged, flow blue, blue transfer print, polychrome banded ware, porcelain], a .58 caliber “Union” Minnie Ball, and a kaolin pipe bowl fragment also being collected (Stowe 1999b:79-86). Stowe (1999b:59) and crew also investigated the Pilot Town cemetery as part of this study. The Charlie Wallace grave marker was absent at the start of the field project but had “reappeared” by the time the crew had completed the fieldwork (Stowe 1999b:59).

Stowe concluded Site 1Ba117 produced significant data with more to contribute to our understanding of human history and prehistory despite the natural disturbances and reports of

metal detecting and illegal collecting at the site. A memorandum of agreement (MOA) was recommended for avoidance, preservation, and mitigation of this resource (Stowe 1999b:64).

Stowe returned to the site in December 1999 at the request of the landowners to determine depth and nature of archaeological deposits along a potential utility corridor. Results were expected to add to the previous data and provide a basis for the MOA. This final investigation by Archaeological Services, Inc. entailed only shovel testing. Shovel test results identified 85 linear meters of intact, well preserved, prehistoric midden deposit. Another segment identified the Pilot Town occupation with at least one house foundation being located (Stowe 2000).

In 2010 and 2011, HDR visited Site 1Ba117 three times during the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill response (Ostahowski and Hanlon 2014:157). Two shell-tempered sherds (Mississippian) and a large sand mound were reported in August 2010. In January 2011, HDR performed two shovel tests along the sandy beach in the northern portion of the site. Both tests were negative.

Non-Archaeological Collections from Pilot Town/Navy Cove

Although a thorough analysis of the various Pilot Town surface collections and donated assemblages alone would make for a worthy research project, that is not the sole focus of the current study. Having said this, knowing some of these collections are housed nearby and accessible, arrangements were made to look over some of this material. Among the known collections is an extensive assemblage of Navy Cove artifacts (Pilot Town and prehistoric) now deposited with the Fairhope Museum of History. It is possible these are some of the objects displayed in Pilot Town exhibits in Fairhope and Gulf Shores that paid tribute to the former community at the hurricane centennial in 2006. However, the true origin of this collection is unknown to the researcher and the assemblage is unprovenienced. Nevertheless, it is substantial. And it reflects well the material culture and even the economic status of the prior owners. The

Pilot Town collection at the museum is dominated by fine decorated ceramic kitchenware pieces although glass bottle fragments, bullets, iron hooks, smoking pipe fragments, buttons, belt buckles, a harmonica reed, porcelain figurines, and a folding knife were also observed within the numerous boxes labeled “Pilot Town” (Figure 1.1). Copious amounts of diagnostic ceramics have been recovered with the collection reflective of a substantial settlement. Admittedly, all boxes were not opened and unpacked. However, from what was seen, it was a makers’ mark on the underside of a piece of dinner ware that stood out as being especially curious to this researcher and this research. The Crescent Pottery (Trenton, New Jersey) used the “Utopia” mark from 1900-1902 (Barber 1904) (Figure 1.2). Lastly, the Fort Morgan Historic Site is in possession of a small ornate wooden table which survived the 1906 hurricane (Figure 1.3). The donated table reportedly once furnished the John Ladnier home at Pilot Town.



Figure 1.1. Sample of unprovenienced Pilot Town collection housed with Fairhope Museum Of History. Photo by Jon Glass (author).



Figure 1.2. Utopia Crescent maker's mark seen on whiteware fragment recovered from Pilot Town. Photo by Jon Glass (author).



Figure 1.3. Surviving wood table from John Ladnier home. Alabama Historical Commission – Fort Morgan Collection. Photo by Jon Glass (author).

As mentioned above, a thorough analysis of the existing archaeological collections was not performed during the current research. Notwithstanding, cultural material, particularly historic ceramics, can be essential to analyzing a society. Although the dates of occupation at Pilot Town are not in question, ceramic collections can be highly informative and useful in answering various other questions related to a settlement. As mentioned by Bower (2009) when quoting American anthropologist James Deetz..."The individuality and value of various aspects of pottery provides information about many important characteristics of American society including, but not limited to, the social status of those who owned the ceramics, the economic relations of ceramics to food consumption, and the trading and selling of wares in different areas around the country." The unprovenanced Pilot Town collection appears to consist mainly of imported ceramics. This is no surprise considering the economic well-being of the pilots, the access they had to the cargo coming into the port, and the fact that many of them migrated from Europe. However, it would be remiss not to mention that occurring at the same time as the Pilot Town settlement, just up the Mobile Bay along the Eastern Shore, were several large-scale kiln sites mass producing high quality local wares. It is not yet known to what extent local ceramics were acquired by the Pilot Town residents.

Research questions

Of all the human activity to have occurred at Navy Cove, it is the early nineteenth to early twentieth century bar pilot settlement that will be explored further here. Due to the shallowness of the Mobile Bay at an average of 10 feet, bar pilots have long been navigating vessels through the narrow ship channels to avoid the ever-shifting sand bars (Figures 1.4 and 1.5). Spanning approximately 75 years, Pilot Town was a thriving and unique communal settlement along the south Alabama coast before tragically being leveled by a hurricane in 1906. The written record refers to it as utopian—but why? A host of subsidiary questions immediately follow from this.

Was this some place of intended social reform or resistance? If so, to what? Are there records to support this idea? What do the descendants of Pilot Town know and think? Did external factors (philosophical, social, religious, etc.) also influence this settlement? These are among the questions asked of family members and key informants throughout the research. Numerous utopian experiments sprung up across the country during the nineteenth century for various reasons. In posing this research it is hoped internal family documents and inherited knowledge can illuminate what life was really like at Pilot Town.

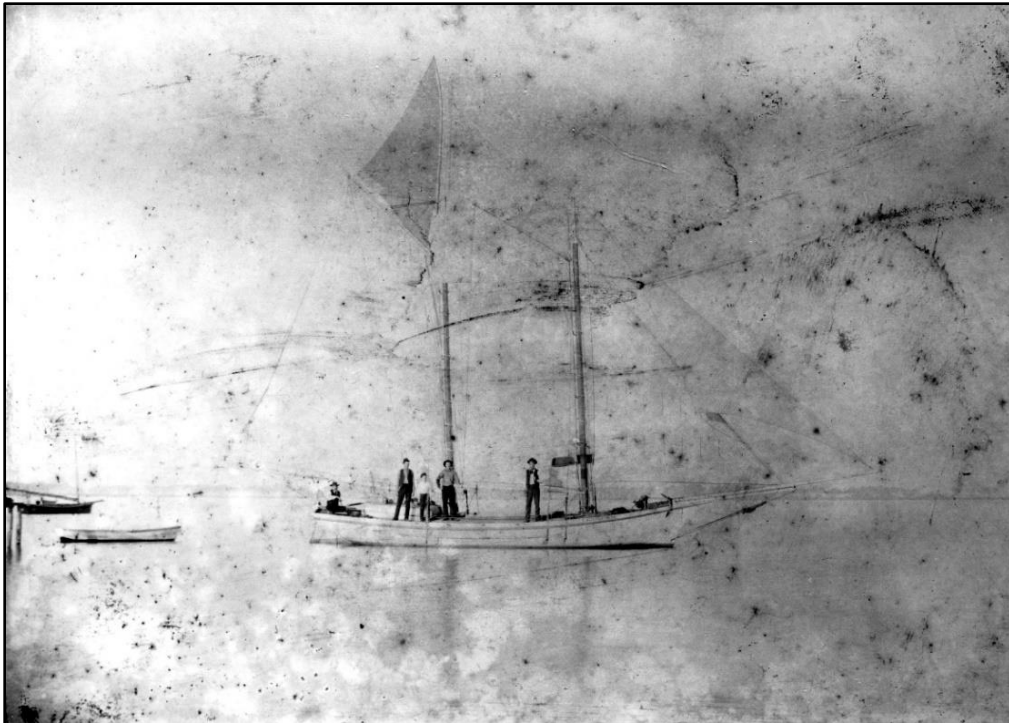


Figure 1.4. Early pilot boat (photo courtesy of Fairhope Museum of History).

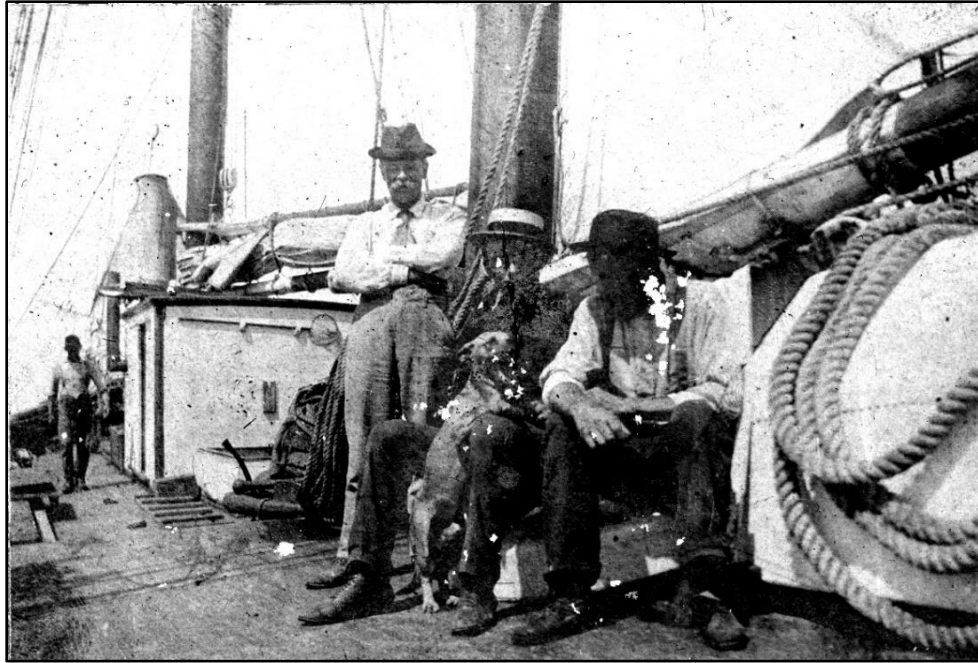


Figure 1.5. *Ladnier on Pilot Boat at Point Clear (photo courtesy of Fairhope Museum of History).*

Studying Utopias

Utopian experiments were based on shared principles such as social reform, self-improvement, or theology. For the most part these communities have been short-lived, particularly the secular ones. According to Sargent (1991:48) the first true secular communitarian experiment in America began in the 1820s. Social reform and political issues were determining factors for these practitioners, who were in search of a better way of life. Communal members preferred a cooperative life as opposed to a competitive one (Sargent 1991:57). Understanding what motivated these unique communities and their commendable attempts to transform society can help to address the imperfections of culture today. Societal issues such as disenfranchisement, inequality, and class struggle to this day remain hot button topics. Through alternative society research, whether viewed as successes or failures, a better recognition of the underlying problems of mainstream society can be achieved.

This thesis evaluates Pilot Town, Alabama as a utopia. The research shines a light on who sees it this way and why. Attempts are made to discern some of the decision-making that set this community apart from other remote coastal communities. The findings are hoped to not only produce a more comprehensive knowledge of the former pilot village in lower Alabama but to also determine where Pilot Town fits in when compared to other utopian settlements.

Thesis structure

Chapter 2 provides the historical backdrop for Pilot Town. The second chapter puts the utopian settlement in the historical context of place and time. The history and importance of piloting are presented here along with the formation of the town and then later the pilot association. Also discussed within this section is the village cemetery and a short summary of the hurricane that destroyed the village on September 27, 1906.

Chapter 3 details the theoretical background for the thesis. Several well documented utopian experiments are summarized here and used as case studies for the sake of comparison. Utopia is defined in this chapter by Sir Thomas More, who first introduced the term to the literary world in 1516. Following the chosen utopian examples discussed in this chapter a comparison table is constructed to show and highlight traits or characteristics attributed to utopias. The table is followed by rationales for excavating utopias. Also found in this third chapter is a list of archival sources contributing to the current work.

Chapter 4 reviews the methods and data collection strategies employed. The fourth chapter begins with a revisit of the research questions. The purpose and approach to data recovery are detailed along with identification of potential obstacles which may be encountered. Plans for

archiving and participant consent are also addressed in this chapter as is an explanation of the qualitative analysis being conducted.

Chapter 5 lays out the archival results and analysis. Interpretation for the selected passages is given as an introduction to each source followed by excerpts pulled directly from the available archives. The borrowed passages are in quotations and represented just as they were said. Sources include books, journals, newspaper articles, a soldier's personal letter, a school paper, and a court deposition. An analysis of the archival results follows, and the aforementioned utopian trait/characteristics table is updated to include the results of Pilot Town side by side with the other selected utopian experiments.

Chapter 6 brings forth the oral history results and analysis. Introductory interpretations are provided for each relevant passage obtained over the course of the six descendant and/or stakeholder interviews conducted during this research. The pertinent passages are in quotations and were either offered freely or in response to questions regarding certain topics or categories. The questions or topics are categorized based on the list of shared traits or characteristics established in Chapter 3. Further analysis follows the oral history results.

Chapter 7 concludes the findings of this thesis. Final interpretations from the differing approaches to data recovery undertaken during this research are summarized. Lastly, the question of whether Pilot Town is a utopia is answered.

Appendix A offers a series of historic maps and a current aerial of the subject area. Appendix B is a copy of the sample interview guide.

Chapter 2-Historical Background

Pilot Town

Situated on a small strip of beach near Fort Morgan in south Baldwin County, Alabama, lies the remains of a former nineteenth and early twentieth century commune commonly known as Pilot Town (Appendix A). The Navy Cove settlement was founded by and made up entirely of lower sandbar boat pilots and their families. There were no property deeds or fences dividing the land; yet, many houses once lined this narrow peninsula, flanked by marshlands, the Mobile Bay and the open Gulf of Mexico. This unique location has long been favored for human occupation. Dense prehistoric shell middens to this day pave the edges of the shore revealing evidence of many of its first inhabitants.

The Port of Mobile, Alabama is situated approximately 30 miles northwest of Pilot Town across the Mobile Bay. King Louis XIV of France appointed the first official pilot for this area in 1711 (Sledge 2015:216). Local expertise has guided ships between the bars at the mouth of Mobile Bay and up to the Port of Mobile ever since (Smithweck 2017:22).

Bar Pilots

Alabama attained statehood in 1819. As described by Dunne (1988:12), the Territorial maritime acts regarding pilotage were quickly adopted. The first Americans granted pilot licenses for the Mobile Bay were James Rooney and Richard Dailey in 1817 (Smithweck 2017:75). That same year, as detailed then by genealogist William Dorgan Chadick (1985:39), Andrew Dorgan and sons Timothy and Andrew, Jr. moved to southern Alabama following service in the U.S. Navy, including the Battle of New Orleans in 1815. With this maritime experience the Dorgans were eligible to become bar pilots on Mobile Bay. Andrew fell ill and died in 1817 and it is uncertain if

he served as a pilot here. It is known though that his boys (Andrew Jr., Timothy, and John Daniel-2 years old in 1817) stayed and began the first of many local piloting legacies of the Mobile Bay. The demand for the work was high and as a result competitive. As Holt (1938) describes, the cotton boom saw an influx of non-local pilots to the area following the growing season to help meet the demand during the shipping months. By 1839, Mobile had become the primary exporter of cotton, surpassing New Orleans.

Several decades later, the Alabama State Pilotage Commission was established in 1852. The commission, still to this day, determines the number of needed pilots, manages the application and apprenticeship process, and grants or denies pilot licenses. As is detailed in the Alabama State Pilotage Commission Administrative Code, Chapter 710-X-1-01, unless exempt, ships are required to take aboard a bar pilot “to help prevent ship collision, stranding and damage, with attendant loss of life and property and perhaps even environmental damage” (Smithweck 2017:23).

Some of the archival materials state that as early as the 1820s the first couple of houses had been built along a narrow dune ridge between Navy Cove and St. Andrews Bay (Parker 1965; Bunch 2000e; Rich 2001; *Yore Lore* 2018:5). Undated photographs of some of the homes and occupants are provided (Figures 2.1-Figures 2.3). Variations in the size and style of the Pilot Town residences are evident.

By 1833, there were six pilots licensed for the outer (lower) bay. The pilots consisted of Harvey Curtis, James Giles, Andrew Dorgan, Jr, John Daniel Dorgan, Lima Dunmore, and Robert Bruce. An 1820 map does not show structures. The 1847 Coast Survey map is the earliest discovered map showing structures at Pilot Town (Appendix A). Subsequent available maps from 1857, 1877, 1889, and 1897 showing the Navy Cove village with more or less the same layout (12

structures) over these years although by 1897 a thirteenth structure is represented (see Appendix A).



Figure 2.1. Unknown residence at Pilot Town (photo courtesy of Alabama Historical Commission–Fort Morgan Collection).



Figure 2.2. Unknown residence at Pilot Town (photo courtesy of Alabama Historical Commission–Fort Morgan Collection).

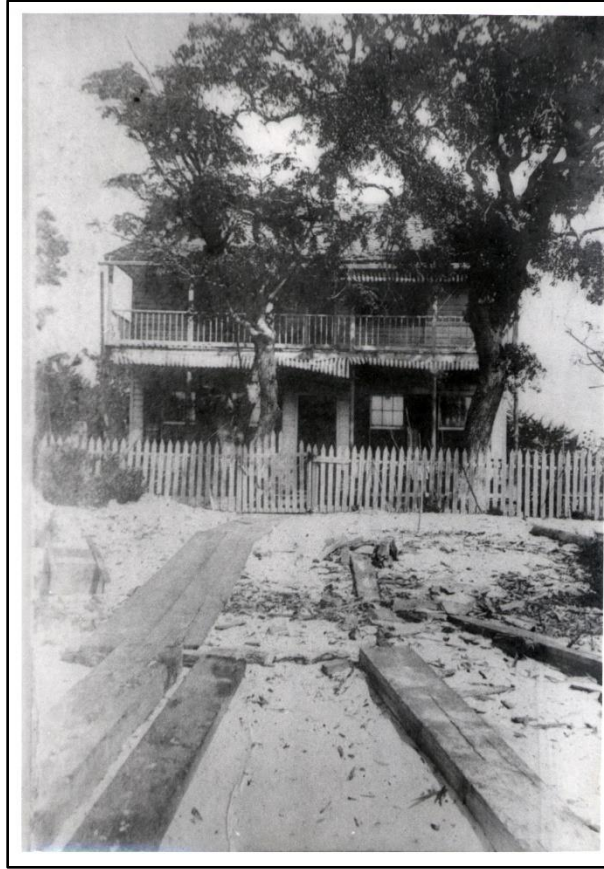


Figure 2.3. *Unknown residence at Pilot Town (photo courtesy of Fairhope Museum of History).*

Early on, the pilots worked independently. They positioned themselves in trees along Dauphin Island and Mobile Point to scan the horizon for incoming ships. Once sighted, they would race their small boats to the incoming vessel with the first to arrive being awarded the job (Norville 1994). The pilot then boarded the ship and navigated it to the anchorage where cargo could be transferred to smaller shallow draft vessels which could reach the upper bay. At this point, each of the pilots maintained their own boat. The 1842 Mobile City Directory lists two different pilot categories, one for the Mobile Bar (lower or outer bay) and the other being the Upper Bar (Chadick 1985:94).

In the mid-nineteenth century, the lower bay pilots consolidated to more effectively provide their services by working together. Census records from the 1850s and 1860s lists close to 20

families at Pilot Town with “Pilot” listed as head of household occupation (*Yore Lore* 2018:5). Interestingly, many of the pilots were of European birth (Ireland, Holland, Scotland, England, and Sweden). The fact that so many of these families brought with them such diverse backgrounds adds to the intrigue of the Pilot Town settlement.

In 1865, sixteen bar pilots formed the Mobile Bar Pilots Association (MBPA) (Table 2.1). This private business venture continues to operate today although the name has since changed to Mobile Bar Pilots, LLC (Mobile Bar Pilots, LLC 2006). Prior to the turn of the twentieth century, the Lower Bar pilots merged with the Upper Bar pilots to form the Mobile Bar and Bay Pilots Association. From this point forward, two pilot boats were kept on duty at all times. Pilot Boat No. 1 was kept 12 miles out in the Gulf of Mexico. Pilot Boat No. 2 anchored near the Mobile Bay ship channel entrance (Dunne 1988:20).

In the United States pilotage waters, navigation duties are shared between the pilot and the master/bridge crew (American Pilots’ Association 2015). There are currently about 1,000 bar pilots in the United States. Fourteen currently serve the Port of Mobile and smaller surrounding ports (personal correspondence with Capt. Kirk Barrett). Pilots must guide all types of ships (tugboats, oil rigs, barges, container ships, and even cruise ships) through the local waters. While in motion and up to speeds of 12 knots, the pilot boat pulls alongside the vessel until the bar pilot can reach the ladder and climb aboard the incoming craft. Once on the vessel, a series of verbal exchanges between pilot and master transfer responsibility of the ship to the local pilot, who navigates the vessel safely into port (Alabama Seaport 2010:4).

<i>Table 2.1 Founders of the Mobile Bar Pilot's Association (MBPA) (Smithweck 2017)</i>		
<i>Pilot</i>	<i>License Date</i>	<i>Birthplace</i>
Joseph Clemons	1843	North Carolina
Frederick Smith	1850	Holland
James Coyle	1850	Pennsylvania
Andrew S. Dorgan	1850	Navy Cove
Samuel F. Wilson	1852	Pennsylvania
John R.B. McIntosh	1852	Mississippi
William Thomas Norville	1852	Maryland
William Charles Johnston	1852	Scotland
Charles Wallace	1852	Sweden
Colin James Campbell	1857	Scotland
Edward Dorgan	1859	Navy Cove
William C. (O'Connor) Wilson	1859	Ireland
William Haywood	1859	England
Joseph Green	1859	Connecticut
Peter Weeks	1865	Sweden
George Roger Cook	1865	Maryland

The unique and vital role of bar pilots to the shipping industry had and still has significant impacts to local, national, and international commerce. Pilot Town was home base for these Alabama pilots and their profession during the early nineteenth through the early twentieth century. The current pilots now operate out of nearby Dauphin Island (Mann 2015). Although the boats and technology have changed over the years, the need for this expertise has not.

Town Life

According to historical accounts, the pilots established an “ideal” or “utopian” existence at Navy Cove (Chapman 2007; Comings and Albers 1928; *Southern Star* 1890; Bunch 2000a-i). Interestingly, for much of their habitation, they did not own the land. In 1872, 14 pilots pooled \$338 to purchase 620 acres from the Estate of Commodore and Jean Lafitte adversary A.P.K Jones

(deceased), of which included their Pilot Town village (Bunch 2000c). The original 14 pilots listed on the 1872 deed included: Edward Dorgan, Andrew S. Dorgan, William T. Norville, Peter Weeks, George Cook, Frederick Smith, William Johnston, Harvey C. Wilson, Carmelite Wallace, Danna (Denny) Ladnier, John Ladnier, Benjamin Midgette, James Coyle, and David Coster (Table 2.2). An undated photograph of some of the Pilot Town residents atop Workbench Hill is seen in Figures 2.4 and 2.5.

<i>Table 2.2 Pilot Town/Navy Cove residents listed on 1872 deed (620 acres) Deed Book 46 Probate Records of Baldwin County, Alabama</i>		
<i>Resident</i>	<i>Occupation (1870 census)</i>	<i>Ownership</i>
Edward Dorgan	pilot	1/14
Andrew S. Dorgan	pilot	1/14
William Thomas Norville	pilot	1/14
Peter Weeks	pilot	1/14
George Roger Cook	pilot	1/14
Frederick Smith	not listed	1/14
Harvey Curtis Wilson	boatman	1/14
William Charles Johnston	pilot	1/14
Carmelite Wallace (Charles Wallace widow)	keeps house	1/14
Danna (Denny) Ladnier	not listed	1/14
John Ladnier	oysterman	1/14
Benjamin Midgette	lighthouse keeper	1/14
James Coyle	not listed	1/14
David Coster	boatman	1/14



Figure 2.4. Unidentified men and dog on common area (Workbench Hill) at Pilot Town (photo courtesy of Alabama Historical Commission—Fort Morgan Collection).



Figure 2.5. Unidentified men and dog on common area (Workbench Hill) at Pilot Town (photo courtesy of Capt. Kirk Barrett).

The families never divided the property. Doors were not locked. All was shared. The bonds formed at Pilot Town were strengthened further by numerous marriages within the community. What began as simply a small mariner village made up of skilled lower bar pilots and their families soon became a self-sufficient coastal community. The natural wonders of the cove and bordering St. Andrews Bay provided a seemingly endless supply of fish, crab, and oysters. Citrus trees covered the upland areas. Residents also raised pigs and chickens here. Fresh water was captured by two large brick cisterns constructed by the villagers. Homes were built to have a clear view of the sea and the bay as the pilots were on constant lookout for vessels coming or going (*Southern Star* 1890). There were no roads, but everyone had a boat, as did the mailman. The white sandy beaches extended for miles providing the ultimate playground for residents and visitors to collect shells, swim, and explore (Ladnier 1908; Rich 2001).

While some lived here year-round, many of the residences were second houses with primary homes being in Mobile where some of the children attended school (Bunch 2000d). Though, according to the 1880 census, Pilot Town had its own school. The 1870 census lists John B. Walpool as “School Teacher” (Ancestry.com 2021). Ten years later, Adelia and Minnie McKay are listed as “School Teacher” while Margaret McKay “Keeps House.” Other non-pilot occupations listed on the census records for Navy Cove between 1860-1900 are Butcher, Stevedore, Oysterman, Fisherman, Laborer, Boat Man, Steamboat Man, Sailor, U.S. Orderly Sergeant, Light House Keeper, Fort Keeper, Bookkeeper, Domestic Servant, Carpenter, and Doctor.

Battle of Mobile Bay

The idyllic location of Pilot Town could not prevent it from escaping the tension brought on by the Civil War. In fact, it assured it. As it had been during the War of 1812, Navy Cove was

overtaken by federal forces again in August 1864. Thousands of Union troops seized the area and wharf to carry out the land attack on Fort Morgan. Overwhelmingly, the pilots sided with the Confederacy, many even playing pivotal roles in the cat and mouse game of running the federal blockades stationed at the mouth of the bay. While dangerous, running the blockades was also a lucrative endeavor. A good runner could earn \$5000 a month, payable in gold (Bunch 2000b).

Through these efforts several pilots were captured and jailed. Historian Doris Rich claimed that William Christopher O'Connor (Black Bill) Wilson was captured at Fort Morgan and sent to a New York prison after refusing a \$50,000 payment and home on the Hudson if he would pilot the Union fleet into Mobile Bay (*Yore Lore* 2018:5). Wilson survived prison and returned later to lower Alabama. Despite not legally ever becoming an American citizen (born in Ireland) he considered the South his "country" to the extent he fought for and went to prison for aiding the Confederacy. Wilson exclaimed, "I'd see the whole Yankee fleet damned and in hell before I'd betray my country" (*Mobile Register* 2000a).

Captains William T. Norville, Andrew Dorgan, and George Cook also assisted the Confederate States Navy (Bunch 2000b). These pilots helped Captain Horace Hunley in the Mobile Bay as he worked to develop the first submarine. The second of Hunley's three experimental vessels was towed to Pilot Town for adjustment following an unsuccessful attack on the blockade. It ultimately sank at Navy Cove amid bad weather. Throughout the blockade, Cook and others would sail small round bottomed vessels ("yawls"), typically at night, to meet and board Confederate sailing ships loaded with supplies and munitions from the Gulf of Mexico. The pilots would then lead the vessel through the mouth of the bay into the Mobile Ship channel. Other times they would transport cotton to English ships anchored in Havana, Cuba. Cook would be thrown in the dungeon at Fort Morgan on more than one occasion upon returning home to Pilot Town. Union

officers would visit the pilot's houses at night and open the shutters to make sure they were there (Werneth 1984). Capt. William T. Norville was captured by a federal ship when attempting to skirt the blockade on the runner *John Scott*. He was imprisoned for over two years in Fort Warren, Massachusetts after refusing to assist the Union fleet (Dunne 1998:20).

Hurricane

On September 27, 1906, with little warning, a powerful hurricane tore through the Alabama Gulf Coast, destroying Pilot Town and killing well over 100 along the coast. Fifty-three Pilot Town residents were left to contend with the angry storm with virtually no defense. The wife and four sons of Captain Dennis Ladnier were among those who did not survive as they were swept from their roof by a tidal wave. Captain William Johnston, pilot of 53 years, also lost his life in the storm at Pilot Town (Midgette 1912). Maude Midgette (1912), daughter to Captain Benjamin Franklin Midgette, later recalled the harrowing events detailing the September 1906 hurricane at Navy Cove and the days preceding in her "Diary of the Storm." Twenty-one-year-old Maude, and a few others had begun packing to depart as their summer at Navy Cove was ending and they were to return to Mobile. But the rain continued to fall with the winds intensely strengthening. It became clear the boat they had signaled for their return to Mobile would not be coming. The Gulf waters behind them were now washing over their land and into the bay. Families scurried from house to house in the dark toward more stable homes and higher ground. Most sought refuge in Captain John Ladnier's newly built two-story home. But even the two-story Ladnier home became too dangerous for sheltering as it began to disintegrate right before their eyes. Once the kitchen detached and washed away a decision was made for all to head for the highest point, a 40 ft. sand dune, known as "Workbench Hill." A human chain of over 40 individuals was formed and together they waded through the chest deep water toward the hill a short distance away. Survivors Midgette

(1912) and Sidney Ladnier (1908) describe lying on their backs, clutching one another to keep from being blown away by the unrelenting wind. By daybreak, the full picture of the damage was realized. Bits and pieces of three houses were all that remained (Figures 2.6-2.14). Pilot Town was no longer.



Figure 2.6. Post-hurricane John Ladnier home at Pilot Town (photo courtesy of Fairhope Museum of History).



Figure 2.7. Post-hurricane Capt. James Duggans house at Pilot Town (Oct 1906) (photo courtesy of Alabama Historical Commission—Fort Morgan Collection).



Figure 2.8. Post-hurricane Capt. John Smith house at Pilot Town (photo courtesy of Alabama Historical Commission—Fort Morgan Collection).



Figure 2.9. Post-hurricane Capt. William Johnston house at Pilot Town (photo courtesy of Alabama Historical Commission–Fort Morgan Collection).



Figure 2.10. Workbench Hill where Navy Cove survivors were saved by troops from Fort Morgan (photo courtesy of Alabama Historical Commission–Fort Morgan Collection).



Figure 2.11. John Ladnier House-James Duggan House-John Smith House, Navy Cove Sept. 1906 (photo courtesy of Alabama Historical Commission—Fort Morgan Collection).



Figure 2.12. Andrew Dorgan House (photo courtesy of Fairhope Museum of History).



Figure 2.13. Norville's looking south (photo courtesy of Fairhope Museum of History).



Figure 2.14. Pilot Town hurricane survivors the morning after (photo courtesy of Fairhope Museum of History). Pictured in the back row from left: John Ladnier, Joseph H. and E.F. Norville, William Wilson, Gertrude Ladnier and an unknown soldier. Front row from left: Capt. and Mrs. T.A. Johnston, and Mr. and Mrs. Cash.

Ownership

The former Pilot Town settlement is currently privately owned as it was purchased through a court ordered auction in 1998. With the land never being divided among the 14 pilots listed on the 1872 deed, each originally shared a 1/14 ownership in the property, as tenants in common. Proceeds from the sale of the approximate remaining 300 acres were ultimately split between attorneys, Pilot Town descendants, and heirs to a railroad company that had previously acquired some of the land (*Mobile Register* 2000b). This unique case is believed to have been the longest running court case in Baldwin County, spanning 40 years (Bunch 2000i; Davidson 2001).

Plans to develop the property during the late 1990s and early 2000s were met with opposition by the public, state, and federal agencies. In addition to the significant archaeological deposits as well as sensitive environmental habitat (located within the Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge buffer), a Pilot Town cemetery is also located here. Pilot Town and the adjacent 100 or so acres remain undeveloped today although it is again up for sale. Correspondence with the current landowner reveals approximately 500 ft. of the peninsula (northernmost portion) is now underwater. A cartographic regression analysis confirms much of the strip of land that held the houses is now part of the bay. This includes the two brick cisterns, which have since collapsed into the surf. The cemetery is believed to be on slightly higher ground and remains above sea level.

Cemetery

The current condition and true size of the cemetery is unknown. In 1999, four headstones of former Pilot Town inhabitants were reported at the cemetery during archaeological investigations conducted by Noel R. Stowe two decades ago. The archaeological report lists Charles Wallace [died 1866], Mahala Ann Dorgan [died 1869], Charlie Wallace [died 1874], and

Carmelite Walsh [died 1892] as the four identified interments (Stowe 1999a:22; 1999b:59-60).

Charles and Charlie Wallace were father and son. The four stone tombstones are inscribed:

Charles Wallace-died 29 Oct. 1866, age 56. A Mobile Bay Pilot. A Native of Sweden who departed this life at Navy Cove.

He spent a useful life in the fateful discharge of his duties as a man, a citizen, a husband, and a father. As a pilot of Mobile Bay during 30 years, no danger ever deterred him from the performance of his calling. Calm in the storm and strong in his good conscience, he was at all times ready to answer his maker's call. Let him sleep the sleep of the just.

Mahala Ann-Sacred to and in memory of Mahala Ann. Daughter of M.L. Coster and wife of A. Dorgan. Died 30 Mar. 1869. aged 26 years 8 months and 7 days.

An affectionate wife, a loving mother, an obedient daughter and a constant Christian. She has been called to her final home where no sorrow, sickness, pain, nor death can enter. Cause, ye mourners seek to languish O'er the grave of her you love pain and death, and night and anguish. Enter not the world above.

Charlie Wallace-In Memory of Charles Wallace Born April 30 1854, Died November 15 1874

Carmelite Walsh-In Memory of Carmelite Walsh Born Oct 12 1830 Died April 12 1892

Local historian David Smithweck (2017:150) also indicates four burials at Pilot Town; however, Charles Wallace is the only burial also described by Stowe. Smithweck's research suggests earlier use of the bar pilot cemetery beginning with pilot Matthew A. Sibley [died 1829], followed by Thomas Dorgan [died 1840], Samuel Wilson [died 1852], and finally Charles Wallace [died 1866]. According to Stowe (1999a:22) the cemetery was believed to have been damaged by looting, neglect, and hurricane disturbance.

Impact

It has now been over 100 years since Pilot Town was decimated by the hurricane. However, generations of bar pilots on the Alabama Gulf Coast continue to play a critical role in local, regional, and international commerce made possible by their trade. Maritime historian Kevin

Foster stated that “without the bar pilots who took up residence at Pilot Town in the early 1800s, Mobile may not have made it as a port” (quoted in Bunch 2000a).

Chapter 3-Theory and Background Review

Utopia

In 1516, Sir Thomas More first coined the word *utopia*, in his fictional satire of the same name, as a place of social and political perfection. His term translates in Greek to “good place” and also “no place” (Tarlow 2002:299). Throughout the book, More portrays an enlightened, cooperative society of shared ideas and resources as an appealing alternative to the nobility, materialism, and class distinctions inherent on the nearby mainland. The artificial island had been intentionally separated from the main landmass by construction of a canal (More 2020:76). Utopia’s inhabitants sought a more representative form of governing and a community where all citizens worked together and were thereby equals (More 2020:69-70). Land was to be worked, not owned. More’s (2020:81) Utopia reveals no place as private with residents swapping uniformly built houses every 10 years. Work tasks were either farming in the countryside or city related trades performed at two-year intervals depending on housing assignment. The homes, owned by the state, remained unlocked. All was shared and money held no value by its citizens (More 2020:105-106). Within the cities, meals were communal and prepared in turn (More 2020:95).

More’s (2020:82-83) Utopia describes a capital city with numerous other cities each having elected representatives to assist managing the commonwealth. Cities were equally spaced and uniform in appearance (More 2020:79). In the country, “families” were made up of 40 male and female workers, two slaves (criminal or war prisoner), and a leader. Tremendous importance was placed on the family, which was the foundation of society. As such, marriage was held in the highest regard. Various religious beliefs were accepted with the caveat that immortality awaits all in the afterlife. Workers could be shared between the cities and permission to travel and visit could be granted by permission of the prince. Although More’s Utopia took the shape of a kingdom,

governance was seemingly democratic in nature as officials, including the prince, were elected rather than inherited.

Moore's vision of communal harmony and equality likely inspired many of the alternative communities formed in the U.S. during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. According to communitarian scholar Donald Pitzer (1997), over 300 "Utopian" communities were established during this time. Reasons behind these designed utopian communities vary but each was an effort to improve or create a better place through shared ideas. Some were specifically intended to increase profits while others were an outright rejection to the growing industrial capitalistic system of the time. Other substitute societies were brought on by desire for social or political change while others intended to strengthen spiritual or religious commitment. What they all have in common, though, is that they each wanted something more and they did something about it. One way or another, they rebuked society and at least temporarily chose a new way of living. A few examples of American Utopian-esque experiments are summarized below.

Utopias

Shakers (1776-present)

The first of these Quaker offshoot settlements which sprung up in America did so in eastern New York in 1776. Nearly two dozen Shaker communes soon followed across New England, the Midwest, and even the southeastern United States (Sargent 1991:39). Today, a single Shaker community survives and resides in Maine, though it claims just two active members. The American Shakers were first led by Ann Lee(s) (Mother Ann) until her death in 1784. Joseph Meachum and Lucy Wright subsequently held the movement together while establishing a system of equal, dual authority (Sargent 1991:39). Members would convert and join these egalitarian

settlements, known as “families,” although they had no genetic relationship to one another. They also welcomed and took in orphaned and unwanted children which allowed them to expand their base. As Sargent (1991:39) points out “all acts were acts of worship.” This includes the orderly way in which they moved in straight lines and with 90 degree turns. Through simplicity, a perfect life on earth could be attained (Sargent 1991:39). And as a cohesive group, they found a combined strength more apt to resist the outside world and its unholy temptations. Equality, communal living, order, confession, pacifism, and celibacy are among the many other tenets of this deeply devout society. As with many utopian communities, belongings were shared. They also designed their own distinctive clothes, another outward signal of breaking from the mainstream (Tarlow 2002:310; Sargent 1991:40). Over the years, Shaker economies transitioned from primarily agricultural to manufacturing. Villagers sold produce, crafts, seeds, and furniture to external markets through their many successful businesses (Tarlow 2002:311; Sargent 1991:40). Despite stringent rules and vows not to procreate, the Shakers are the longest enduring American Utopian experiment (Paul 2017).

Brook Farm (1841-1846)

Brook Farm, or the Brook Farm Institute of Agriculture and Education, was a secular utopian experiment, centered around a 175-acre farm near Boston, Massachusetts between 1841-1846. The community was founded by Transcendentalist George Ripley, his wife Sophia, and over a dozen intellectuals including Nathaniel Hawthorne, Horace Greely, William Allen, and Charles Anderson Dana. As such, Brook Farm has also been dubbed a “literary utopia” (Preucel and Pendery 2006:6). At its peak, Brook Farm claimed up to 120 members (NPS 2017). Ripley and his fellow communards believed the sharing of labor as well as educational equality would promote social, spiritual, and mental growth among its followers (Preucel and Pendery 2006). While the

Brook Farmers preferred dispersed residences, they choose communal dining to facilitate social interaction. Work tasks were rotated with each of the members to participate equally. Ultimately, though, a lack of structure and order did prove to have its limitations at the farm. Work hours began being recorded as some members were thought not to pull their weight in the fields. Poor yields forced the community to take out additional mortgages. Within a few years, Brook Farm converted to a more organized and rigid Fourierism model.

Charles Fourier was a French philosopher and leading voice on utopian socialism. His ideas influenced Brook Farm as well as other communes in the nineteenth century. Fourier rebuffed the idea of communal property and advocated instead for a joint-stock partnership system. With Brook Farm facing financial difficulty it was decided to make the transition in hopes of creating a more prosperous economy and ultimately becoming more self-sufficient. Each of the members purchased a share for \$500, entitling voting rights and securing a spot for one child to be educated at the institute. Private property was considered essential. Dividends were paid but kept minimal to foster communal growth. Members paid for their boarding and received payment for their work (Sargent 1991:54). Just as the new communal phalanstery building was being constructed and the community was being expanded, a large fire put an end to the Brook Farm settlement in 1846 (Preucel and Pendery 2006:16).

Oneida (1848-1880)

The Oneida Perfectionist was a Christian commune originating in central New York with smaller branches later extending into New Jersey, Connecticut, and Vermont. Editor and author Spencer Klaw (1993:7) describes the Oneida as one of the most successful attempts to build a society where men and women lived together as brothers and sisters sharing the fruits of their common labor with absolute equality. It was here that Perfectionists could “purge themselves of

the selfishness inherent in private ownership” (Klaw 1993:74). “Nothing was private, in sex or anything else” (Klaw 1993). The Oneida were shaped by the religious belief that Christ’s Second Coming had occurred previously, and perfection and absence of sin was achievable in this world. Community founder and spiritual leader John Humphrey Noyes presided at the top of the community and was considered “Father” to the entire family. His vision of shared property, possessions, and complex marriage became the foundation for these religious settlements. The Oneida rejected monogamy and considered all members married to the group. Loyalties were to the community (Klaw 1993: 292). Child rearing was also a communal practice and believed to be the responsibility of the village (Klaw 1993:7). Procreation pairings were sorted by committee (Sargent 1991:46) and decisions were usually arrived at by consensus. Individual criticisms and grievances were aired openly at town meetings with decisions being made together or not at all (Sargent 1991:47). The Oneidans were adept at various forms of manufacturing, most notably silver flatware. They also operated a sawmill, gristmill, cannery, and at times even foot peddled various items to contribute to the communal coffers. At its peak, Oneida claimed over 300 members. The community lasted over three decades, due in large part to hard work and adaptability. To ease the burden of labor, duties were rotated (Klaw 1993: 99-100). Nevertheless, the commune collapsed shortly after an unsuccessful transfer of leadership after “Father Noyes” abruptly fled the country in 1879 to avoid arrest on charges of sexual immorality. The following year, the community’s property and factory were transferred into a corporation, Oneida Community, Ltd (Klaw 1993:5).

Pullman (1880-1895)

Planned company towns such as Pullman, Illinois aimed to advance the capitalist, industrial system by creating an entirely self-sufficient town. Depaul University Professor Jane Eva Baxter

(2012) refers to Pullman as a social experiment which drew from utopian principles to perfect the American capitalist system, rather than reject it. Author and professor emeritus Stanley Buder (1967:92) exclaims “Here was an American utopia that people wanted to succeed.”

Adding Pullman as a case study in this exercise was not without hesitation as the paternalism and industrialization Pullman is known for were some of the very reasons many of the utopian settlements were formed. Nevertheless, the company town has been referred to as utopian, and as a result, it has been added here for comparison.

The town of Pullman was built at the height of the Industrial Revolution in the late nineteenth century just beyond the outskirts of Chicago for the manufacturing of sleeper rail cars. American businessman and industrialist George Pullman believed that by elevating the moral and social standing of his workers this would further protect his business interests (Buder 1967; Baxter 2012:654). His “model town” included the first indoor shopping mall in the Midwest, elegant libraries, parks, banks, theaters, post office, stables, playground and playing fields, company stores, school, a four-story hotel, and one and two-story duplexes for the workers (Buder 1967:62). A non-denominational church was available for various worship and, with the exception of the Greenstone Church, all other buildings were made of brick to exhibit a feeling of uniformity. Nevertheless, it had its share of shortcomings. Pullman’s social and capitalistic experiment proved to be short-lived despite the beautiful surroundings and improved amenities (indoor plumbing, electric lighting, sanitary conditions, etc.) not previously available to many of the workers (Baxter 2012:652). As Baxter (2012:653) points out, the town layout was designed not simply for aesthetics and social engineering but to also regulate behavior. Social needs were not only to be met, but they were to be directed and shaped (Buder 1967:70). And with the town under company control its residents were not only unrepresented but unable to purchase property (Buder 1967:82).

An economic depression beginning in 1893 led to significant wage decreases at the factory and numerous layoffs yet no reductions in rent or adjustments to the company sold goods were made (Snell 1970). Tensions boiled over and the result was one of the most significant strikes in American labor history. A year later, the Illinois Supreme Court ruled to end the monopoly and company ownership at Pullman (Snell 1970).

Utopian Traits

When studying utopias and other alternative settlements, as seen in the examples above, there are defining characteristics that contrast them from mainstream society. Table 3.1 identifies many of these utopian traits recognized during the background research. The utopian attributes were then entered into a data table for side-by-side case study comparison. As the table was populated during this review, it revealed various similarities as well as differences among the particular social experiments highlighted in this chapter. Apart from Pullman, the other four settlements began as places of resistance. Also, they each rejected capitalism, preferring a cooperative society to one of competition. One of the consistent tenants of utopianism is communal ownership. However, even this trait was not universally shared in the provided case studies. For instance, Brook Farm communards believed private ownership was critical to achieving enlightenment and maintaining individual integrity. A spatial distancing from major urban areas was also noticed during this review as another commonly held utopian attribute. Lastly, it is worth mentioning that the various communitarian social experiments tended to evolve in their beliefs and actions, at times necessitated by a lack of resources and funding.

<i>Table 3.1 Utopian Traits (Y=Yes) (N=No) (CL=Cooperative Living) (SR=Social Reform)</i>					
	<i>More's Utopia</i>	<i>Shakers</i>	<i>Brook Farm</i>	<i>Oneida</i>	<i>Pullman</i>
Physical Labor	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Leadership	Y	Y (at first)	Y	Y	Y
Egalitarian	Y	Y	Y (at first)	Y	N
Belief that their model would spread	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Social engineering	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Planned or developed organically	Planned	Planned	Organically (initially)	Planned	Planned
Communal Ownership/Capital	Y	Y	N	Y	N
Rejected Capitalism	Y	Y	Y	Y (at first)	N
Shared Labor	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Distinctive change in appearance	Y	Y	N	Y	N
Spatial distancing from major urban area	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Religious based	N	Y	N	Y	N
Cooperative Living or Social Reform	CL & SR	CL & SR	CL & SR	CL & SR	SR

Excavating Utopias

Archaeologist Sarah Tarlow (2002:306) convincingly argues that the potential for archaeological research at former utopian communities is much greater than simply filling in gaps of the historical record and site histories. Excavating these sites can not only reveal site layout, activity areas, and use of space within these settlements, the archaeology can also illuminate the lives of those who lived there and the alternative society in which they chose. The material culture found at these sites can confirm or contradict established views or rules of a particular society. With the benefit of archaeological findings, we can better understand the degree of success a commune was able to achieve toward their goal of societal improvement.

We must also keep in mind that not all settlements, especially short-lived experiments, and those that formed more organically, have contributing written documentation concerning the

motivations and organization of the commune. In these instances, archaeology may be the only available record. However, concerning well-documented utopias, when able to combine the archaeological record with the arrangement of landscapes as well as architecture, when extant, the result is a deeper, more integrated interpretation than any one source can be on its own (Van Bueren and Tarlow 2006). Van Bueren and Tarlow further argue that artifacts are often the only record of certain activities, which otherwise may have been thought mundane or unworthy of documenting. They contend that even these details should not be overlooked as they “may provide an unedited perspective on how utopian visions played out in daily life and decision making” (Van Bueren and Tarlow 2006:2).

Archaeological investigations at Brook Farm produced valuable data regarding the relocation of utopian-period buildings, thereby generating the first accurate map of the settlement (Preucel and Pendery 2006:16). The archaeology was able to answer questions on how the transforming ideologies were represented in the cultural landscape and built environment. The excavations also cleared up documented contradictions in the written record regarding some of the structures. Furthermore, subsurface testing confirmed communal dining practices as all dinnerware was found at the Hive and not the individual residences. These findings are evidence of the types of social engineering found at utopian settlements. This is important because without archaeological support we are left to rely on partial historical accounts which may reflect the interests of individual authors (Preucel and Pendery 2006:6).

Baxter (2012:653) states that archaeology at intentionally planned communities, such as Pullman, can elucidate research topics such as landscape use and consumerism. Baxter suggests that the archaeological evidence becomes the source for more historical questions, meant to cause a reanalysis of the documentary archive. The hotel grounds and the backyards at Pullman showed

no archaeological evidence of use from the period before the strike. Daily trash removal and the absence of privies were undoubtedly factors in the minimal recoveries of household items. In the case of Pullman, the cultural material (excluding brick), or lack thereof, reinforces the notion that the controlled and forced environment designed to create a “model society” instead led to its certain demise.

Pilot Town Historical Record

Was the Pilot Town settlement at Navy Cove influenced by ideas of utopianism? The Pilot Town archival record draws several parallels to the baseline utopian ideals described by More and imitated by numerous others during this time period. The recently placed historical marker near the site describes the Pilot Town village as utopian (Figure 3.1). Furthermore, numerous articles, assorted documentary sources, and local lore also define this settlement as a utopia. But was it really? The current research aims to find out.



Figure 3.1. Historical plaque for Pilot Town. Photo by Jon Glass (author).

Various collections of Pilot Town archival documents have been previously compiled and made available for viewing at different local repositories. Venues housing Pilot Town and/or Navy Cove collections are the Foley Public Library (Genealogy and Alabama History Division), the Mobile Local History and Genealogy Library, the Fairhope Museum of History, Fort Gaines, and the Fort Morgan State Historic Site.

In March 2000, *Mobile Register* staff reporter Joey Bunch penned numerous articles concerning Pilot Town as part of a three-day series called “Camelot on the Cove: The Pilot Town Legacy.” This well-crafted and thorough collection of articles and stories was the starting point for the current background literature search for this project. The newspaper search continued via

Newspapers.com as key words “Pilot Town,” “Navy Cove,” and “pilot” were among the various search entries used to access the local and regional digitized newspaper records associated with Pilot Town, Alabama with results dating back to the mid-nineteenth century. A considerable amount of newspaper articles were obtained during this online query, some of which do relate to the research question and/or at least provide further context and color to the former pilot settlement. Various other sources were also discovered over the course of the background review which included family histories provided by key informants and interviewees, assorted compilations from local historians, census records, legal documents, previous archaeological reports, and historic maps and aerials of the area.

Additionally, published memoirs of two former Pilot Town residents also provided invaluable detail regarding the village, and of course the fateful hurricane. These first-hand accounts of life at Pilot Town include Sidney Ladnier’s 1908 “*Before and After the Storm. Navy Cove, Alabama*” and Maude Midgette’s 1912 “Diary of the Storm, September 26-27, 1906.” A 1994 four-part video series, The Way it Was.....a Maritime History of Mobile Bay, produced by Alabama Public Television and narrated by Pilot Town descendant Warren Norville was discovered, becoming a part of the background research. Books by David Smithweck (“Mobile Bay Bar Pilots”) and John S. Sledge (“The Mobile River”) provided bits of information on Pilot Town and the bar pilots. The *Alabama Seaport Magazine* and the local weekly publication *Lagniappe* contained articles regarding Mobile Bay piloting. The Baldwin County Historical Society journal *The Quarterly* and the Baldwin County Genealogical Society newsletter *Yore Lore* also contributed to the research. The Baldwin County and Mobile County, Alabama Heritage Committee books were reviewed as was the 1928 *A Brief History of Baldwin County* by L.J. Newcomb and Martha M. Albers. These sources each contain information on the history of Navy

Cove, piloting in the area, and/or short narratives on some of the individual pilot families that came before. Lastly, background research included the National Park Service Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) for “Pilot Schooner ALABAMA (ALABAMIAN),” a former pilot boat for the Mobile Bar Pilots Association.

Chapter 4-Methods and Data Collection

As stated in previous chapters, the current research aims to determine how Pilot Town became settled and how it functioned. Were its occupants inspired by other intentionally attempted “utopias” of the time period or maybe perhaps the popular utopian literary works on the subject? Or instead, was Pilot Town simply a geographic location where the Mobile Bay bar pilots settled to better offer their service? Some archaeological investigations (Stowe 1999a-b) have occurred at Pilot Town; albeit, with the primary focus being the prehistoric occupation of the site. While continued excavations are certainly warranted and recommended at Navy Cove, they are not necessary for this project. Additional fieldwork is also not currently permissible as it is not in the interest of the present-day landowner. A goal of the current research is to collaborate with the descendant community in the data recovery and interpretation of the site. Can this data augment what has been learned from the archival record and the limited archaeological testing performed at the site? To supplement the existing data, the research consists of working with relatives of the Pilot Town residents as well as other valued stakeholders in a semi-structured oral history interview process to collect descendant and key informant perspective data on the formation and social dynamic of the former Pilot Town community.

Approach

Passed down knowledge through subsequent generations was hoped to provide reliable insight into the motivations for establishing the community and how it functioned. Data concerning the social dynamic, leadership, rules, public spaces, ownership, and communal activities was collected to inform the results of the research question. Preliminary archival research discovered

several families of the original bar pilots which settled Pilot Town remain on the Alabama Gulf Coast. Stakeholders were initially contacted by phone to determine participation willingness.

The research subjects include descendants of Pilot Town occupants as well as a non-relative key informant. Over the course of the investigation, a total of six oral histories/interviews were performed, complementing the historical and archaeological records of Pilot Town. Two of the interviewed descendants are current members of the Mobile Bar Pilots Association, LLC.

The oral histories and interviews lasted between 30-70 minutes. Due to research restrictions and safety measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, some conversations were conducted remotely. Interviews were conducted one-on-one and recorded either by phone or in person through hand-held microphone recorder. Conversations were then transcribed through Otter.ai software with the researcher carefully reviewing the transcription afterwards for errors or unclear dialogue. Transcription text was then sent to the participant to verify its accuracy. At the onset of the recorded conversation, the participants were identified, establishing their connection to the former Pilot Town resident(s). The participant was then encouraged to discuss their background and connection to the resource. At times, the interviewer redirected the conversation back toward the topic of Pilot Town and its supposed utopianism. Questions varied somewhat depending on the participant and their connection to the former village; however, a selected group of core questions regarding the origin, formation, and intent of the settlement were asked in each interview. Both closed and open-ended questions were presented. The participants were encouraged to elaborate as desired, which provided glimpses into their understanding of the topics in question. A sample interview guide is provided in Appendix B.

Additionally, other non-utopian related questions were asked to shed further light on the former community. For instance, there is some uncertainty in the historic record of who and how

many former residents lay buried at the abandoned Pilot Town/Navy Cove cemetery. Another goal of this project was to inquire whether improved access to the cemetery would result in future visits.

Consent and Archiving

The University of Maryland Institutional Review Board (IRB) deemed the current research oral history, therefore not requiring IRB review. Nevertheless, best practices for participant data collection were observed and followed throughout the course of the project. Prior to interview or recording of any kind, research participants provided either written or verbal consent for their contribution. A consent form outlining the purpose of the project was provided to each participant ahead of each interview. The form included the researcher's contact information should there be a need to reach the investigator with any questions or concerns. Informants were made aware their responses and their name could be selected for inclusion in the research paper. No participants asked for their perspective to remain confidential.

The oral history audio recordings and transcribed digital file will be archived locally at the Foley Public Library's Alabama, Local History and Genealogy Division in Foley, Alabama. These files will also be offered to the state archive and other local libraries and historical societies that have shown and continue to show interest in the project.

Obstacles

It was made clear at the onset of the interview that any questions could be skipped should the interviewee become uncomfortable responding to a topic(s). Sensitive topics included discussion and concern for the Pilot Town cemetery. Some of the intended participants have ancestors buried at Navy Cove and the cemetery is not easily accessed. Another point of stress was thought to be possible relationships with other descendant families. Ironically, the cooperative

living and communal ownership decisions the Pilot Town settlers made long ago did lead to strife and conflict amongst some of the descendants years later as various families had different intentions and beliefs for what should have been done with the land their families once co-owned. Finally, the 1906 hurricane that ended the settlement presented a potential uncomfortable subject for some, particularly those who lost members of their family in the storm.

Data Collection

Through the course of each interview pertinent research topic data was obtained through discussion, conversation, and questioning. Existing documentation such as the historic roadside plaque, newspaper clippings, and the 1872 deed of co-ownership of the land suggests Pilot Town may have been more than just a cooperative living environment or labor community. Descendant engagement was employed to get at the heart of this supposition. Were the residents influenced by other utopian communities springing up across the nation during this time? And why did they not stake off the land in some way? It was hoped that some of the participants would have informed thoughts and perhaps even family documents to answer questions concerning Pilot Town as a utopia. Unpublished papers, journals, records, photographs, or even biographies detailing the town and its occupants could illuminate the origin and influences of Pilot Town. Undocumented stories, recollections, and even opinions from Pilot Town stakeholders regarding the Navy Cove settlement all contribute to the collaborative data available. This year (2021) marks 115 years since the storm ended the Pilot Town/Navy Cove settlement. Considering the time lapse, the investigator was aware that pertinent research data could vary greatly among participants. Additionally, the investigator believes that an absence of supporting data to show Pilot Town as an intentional alternate to mainstream society also informs the research question. Utopian experiments did not

conceal their plans to redefine society. They expected to succeed and become a model for other communities. If Pilot Town had similar intentions, there should be data to support this notion.

Data collection and analysis for this project is two-fold. In conjunction with the oral history interviews and collaborative data recovery and interpretation, this study also focuses on the written record of Pilot Town and the numerous articles, papers, archaeological reports, journals, poems, pictures, and maps available. Comparing the written history of the former pilot village at Navy Cove with descendant and other stakeholder perspectives enhances our understanding of Pilot Town, Alabama.

During analysis, the researcher revisited the Pilot Town/Navy Cove documents compiled over the course of this project. And as discussed in the Theoretical and Background Review section, utopias (fictional or attempted) share many common characteristics (see Table 3.1). In an effort to discover applicable data concerning Pilot Town as a utopia, a methodological review and analysis of the archival record will also be performed.

Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative data (interview data and documentary sources) being obtained during the current research is being captured and analyzed using the “descriptive coding” or “topic coding” method. Bernard and Ryan (2010:75) describe coding as the organizing of themes into codebooks and applying codes to various sets of text. Saldana (2015:4) further explains, “in qualitative data analysis, a code is a researcher generated construct that symbolizes and thus attributes interpreted meaning to each individual datum for later purposes of pattern detection, categorization, theory building, and other analytic processes.” With these coding definitions in mind, the recovered research data is being broken down bit by bit, labeled and linked accordingly. The reason being,

as Richards & Morse describe (2007:137), as cited by Saldana (2015:8), coding leads the analysts “from the data to the idea, and from the idea to all the data pertaining to that idea.”

For the recorded interviews, coding begins with the written transcription. Saldana (2015:103) advises a quick and spontaneous line-by-line review of the material. Descriptive codes will summarize and identify the text in such a way that upon a secondary or even tertiary cycle of analysis, pertinent passages related to the research question will be more easily identified. For instance, code examples such as “family”, “piloting”, “town-life”, “ownership”, “houses”, “cemetery”, and even “unrelated to research question” are being made in the margins of each printed passage. The parsing of text throughout the documents brings to the surface the primary content of each response or paragraph. Post-it notes, color coding, highlighting, and underlining are also being employed. Through coding, patterns of repetition emerge throughout the transcribed interviews as well as the archival record.

Another coding technique frequently used during qualitative research, also being utilized during this analysis, is cutting and sorting. When referencing Lincoln and Guba (1985:347-351), Bernard and Ryan (2010:67) point out that this coding method includes identifying quotes or expressions of seeming importance and arranging them into related piles. Such keywords and expressions of importance identified during the analysis include the aforementioned utopian traits and characteristics provided in the previous chapter. Results and interpretations follow the collection of all data and extraction of relevant information.

Chapter 5-Archival Records on Pilot Town

Archival Results

In conjunction with the oral history interviews and collaborative data recovery and interpretation, this study also focuses on the archival record of Pilot Town and the many articles, papers, archaeological reports, journals, poems, pictures, maps, and court filings. The researcher has revisited each of the numerous Pilot Town/Navy Cove documents gathered over the course of many months for this project. And as discussed in the literature review in Chapter 3, utopias (fictional or implemented) share many common characteristics. The re-review and continued analysis of the Pilot Town archival record consisted of highlighting portions of the literature indicative of utopias and communal settlements or which otherwise highlight life at Navy Cove.

Much of what has been written about Pilot Town, Alabama centers on the storm that brought the village to an abrupt and unceremonious ending. Though, there are other informative materials which have been found. These documents routinely romanticize the Navy Cove settlement. The stories and articles hint that this place was special. “Camelot on the Cove,” “Garden of Eden,” and “tropical paradise” are among the descriptions dubbed by historians and reporters alike when referring to the former pilot settlement in lower Alabama (Bunch 2000a-i; Watson 1984). Why is this place different? Is it not simply that a group of lower bar pilots found an unclaimed and advantageous piece of dry land from which to operate? Or could it be that this settlement was in fact influenced or motivated in some way by alternative philosophical, social, religious, or political thought occurring throughout the country during the nineteenth century?

Listed below are relevant passages from the Pilot Town archival record. The sections of text which apply to the research question have been extracted here and provided verbatim. They

are listed in sequential order of the time of their writing. Also provided is an introductory paragraph detailing the source as well as a summary of the pertinent data in each entry.

Letter from Confederate Lieutenant Robert Tarleton (1864)

The excerpt below was written by Confederate Lieutenant Robert Tarleton in an 1864 letter to his girlfriend, as referenced in Sean Michael O'Brien's 2001 book titled *Mobile, 1865 Last Stand of the Confederacy*. Tarleton is a Confederate Alabama artillery officer at Fort Morgan. Although an outsider, he is declaring the nearby coastal village of Pilot Town worthy of protection. At this time (1860s) the homes are described as modest utilitarian structures, which suggests unplanned development. Tarleton states:

“The city (Pilot Town) is well worth fighting for. It is simply a long straggling row of dilapidated one-story houses, paintless and shapeless, built immediately on the shore-the sandy beach serving as the main street and promenade of the village, and being adorned with various canoes and skiffs hauled up on shore for safety.”

Southern Trust (1890)

The *Southern Star* is the newspaper of Ozark, Alabama, located in Dale County. The passage below comes from an 1890 newspaper clipping from this periodical titled “Southern Trust.” The author of this article opines on the beauty of the land, the hospitality of the people, and the abundant resources found at Navy Cove. Concerning the unique land agreement, or southern trust as it is referred to here, the article contends that a cooperative living pact was made around the 1820-1830s by earlier generations of pilots to keep the land to themselves in order to protect their livelihood. Communal ownership made this possible. This article is the first indication discovered within the written record to refer to a unique and cooperative living arrangement at Pilot Town. The passage also touches on the pilotage fees alerting the reader that the pilot service is a for-profit operation.

“Alabama has what is probably the oldest trust or combination in the United States today, and people who believe that combines are of recent origin, will be surprised to know that this one has been in operation for the past sixty or seventy years.

These people have erected their houses with broad piazzas in the front and rear, and that is a rather difficult question for a stranger to determine, from the outlook, whether he is entering the parlor or the kitchen. Their homes are so built for a double purpose. These people are on the constant watch for vessels coming up to the city or going out to sea, and have constructed their houses so that they can command a full view of both sea and bay, thus receiving the full benefit of the breeze, no matter from which direction it may come.

These bay pilots for the purpose of keeping out competition, entered into a compact, at least their fathers and grandfathers did, by which it was agreed that none of them should ever dispose of or mortgage any land or property at this place to an outsider, and today the land cannot be obtained at any figure, and the compact is held as if sacred. Although the writer will acknowledge in justice to these brave and honest people, that the prices charged for pilotage are commensurate with the work actually performed, and for true hospitality, they have few equals.

There is no spot in the United States more beautifully situated for a summer resort than this lonely peninsular, and as for surf bathing there is no place superior. The beach is as white as the driven snow as far as the eye can reach, and in the waters may be found at all seasons of the year, fish, oysters and crabs in abundance. On the Gulf side, extending for many miles from the shore, is what is called the outer bar, and when the sea is lashed into fury by the winds, the large billows come rolling in, and are dashed asunder by the obstruction, and the spray is swept high in the air, forming a silvery sheen that is beautiful to behold. At the extreme point of the peninsular, grim and silent, stands Fort Morgan, but the visitor sees no sign of the tremendous bombardment it received at the hands of Admiral Farragut, while the one sentry, as he stops to look seaward, is the picture of loneliness, and is thinking, no doubt, of loved ones far away.”

Particulars of the Killing of Bullock (1891)

An 1891 newspaper clipping in the *Jacksonville Republican* reports the fatal end of a one-time friendship between two Mobile men occurring at Navy Cove. In addition to the pilot village, the waters surrounding Navy Cove were popular fishing locations.

Mobile, Oct. 17.-“The particulars of the killing of Dr. Seymour Bullock, a prominent ex-Federal soldier at Navy Cove, by T.P. Brewer, are as follows. For some time bad blood had existed between the two men. This originated from a petty quarrel. Brewer tells the story of the fatal affray. He learned that Bullock had threatened to kill him on sight, and accordingly kept out of the doctor's sight. Thursday, he went fishing and took his gun with him. Bullock was reported to have

left Navy Cove and gone some miles of the bay. Brewer was fishing, and suddenly there was a flash of a gun and bullets whistled around his head. He looked up and saw Bullock some distance off about to fire again, and then Brewer discharged his weapon, a double-barrel shotgun, with fatal effect. Four buckshot struck Bullock and he died instantly. There were no witnesses to the affray. Bullock's body was brought here (Mobile) and will be interred with military honors.”

From the Sea (1898)

The quoted text below comes from an 1898 newspaper clipping titled *From the Sea* published in the *Birmingham News*. This short write-up details a successful two-week boating excursion between the Navy Cove pilots and prominent businessmen and other community leaders across the state. The message below was found in a corked bottle lifted from the shore near Navy Cove a year after its writing. As guardians of the bay, the Alabama pilots were certainly men of influence.

“The following was brought to the Item office yesterday, having been picked up on the south beach of Navy Cove last Tuesday in a champagne bottle cork very tight: August 30, 1897-On Board Ship on Gulf of Mexico. The following party, after enjoying a two weeks cruise with the Pilots of Mobile Bay are returning home, hoping that others may be so fortunate as to have so jolly a time at some period, we are, very respectfully, F.L. Pettus Selma, Ala.; John B. Knox, Anniston, Ala.; Charles Waller, Greensboro, Ala.; John McQueen, Birmingham, Ala.; S.A. Wood Montgomery, Ala.; P. Coleman, Montgomery, Ala.; T. Smith, Mobile, Ala.; Norborne Clark, Mobile, Ala.-Mobile Item.”

Before and After the Storm (1908)

Former Pilot Town resident and storm survivor Sidney A. Ladnier had his *Before and After the Storm* published in 1908. Sidney was born at Navy Cove in 1881 and around the time of the storm he was employed as a boatsman at Fort Morgan. He later became a poet and author, often providing historical information and/or nostalgic remembrances concerning early Baldwin County history in his letters to the editor of the local newspapers. His *Before and After the Storm (1908)*, written two years after the hurricane destroyed the village and claimed five relatives, offers an

inside glimpse into life at the cove. The excerpts below detail his perspective of the many recreational activities, various flora and fauna occurring there, and the carefree mentality of the Pilot Town residents. He portrays an egalitarian setting with the pleasures found at Navy Cove as sublime as any place found on the coast. The attractions of the place must have been shared by the guests as the visitors were frequent with some even lobbying to be taken in as permanent residents. There is no indication of social engineering or even leadership.

“The little village was looked upon as a great summer place of comfort and happiness, and as great crowds of people would come from the city of Mobile, and from different parts of the northern states to spend their summer vacation, and enjoy the great salt baths from the Gulf of Mexico, you could see them at all times of the day, in little groups along the white sand engaged in catching crabs, and a little distance from the land, laying at anchor and rowing boats you could behold them engaged in the sport of catching fish, as it was wide world known for its great fishing grounds with large oyster beds, and just beyond the village of a distance of three or four blocks is a bay known as St. Andrews Bay, which is situated like that of a basin, containing one outlet, and its waters like that of a mirror. One could go in the bay and come back in no time of half an hour with any of the three articles he preferred crabs, fish, or oysters.”

“Navy Cove was situated on a peninsula-like place, and to this strip of land was built the residence and homes of many loved ones who have departed from us. Since the time they settled in the village, which is sixty years ago. The settlers of the village depended upon fishing and oystering for the support of their families, and they were as happy as the sweet singing birds of the wild woods, and they had no sorrows, or cares and were absolutely free from sickness as the salt air was so strong and refreshing gulf baths were like that of a tonic given for the disease. The pleasure and enjoyments of the inhabitants were as humble and sublime as could be found in any place along the coast. If one chanced to visit the village upon a night, would the heavens and skies were clear, and the moon shining in its glory they would see the inhabitants congregate and some one anticipate a stroll to the surf beach which is a short distance from the village. The path they have to stroll is strewn with wild flowers of many varieties and far above their heads, they gaze upon the sweet scented blossoms of the Magnolia, dear to enjoy to everyone who has had the opportunity to pluck one from the familiar and stately tree, as they stroll the path with their hearts filled with happiness, love they finally come to their designation point, the gulf beach to where the children are in their playful ways, building play houses in the sand in the bright moonlight, and not far away from his loved ones, or their older sisters and brothers, who are ever watchful with care, for they fear the little ones may go close to the seashore, and be swept away with the undercurrent, which is well known to all that bathe in the waters. And we look a short distance

up the beach and there we see groups of lassies and lads, of the age of nineteen and twenty, seated beside each other on the seashore, telling tales of fond affection, and thinking as they never did before. In the month of June, when all nature seems so grand is the time everyone loves to take this stroll over to the seashore.”

“As they turn their footsteps homeward and the moon is shining in its glory, one beholds a picture of a great snowstorm, as he sees nothing but sand. They in time reach their home for a good nights sleep, and the following morning they would gather on the coast of Mobile Bay, of the village, and after the beautiful setting of the sun, you could see a fire built on the beach. These fires were called coaxers, meaning the first that would be engaged in the enjoyments as were never dreamed of in the pleasant days. Not far from the village is a water lily pond, which is dear to the hearts of everyone who visited the place. The people made it a practice to visit the pond every morning for the gathering of the sweet scented lilies. The boys would carry the girls to the pond by way of rowboat, and after arrival, they would convey one of the small boats up to the pond, which was the only way of gathering the flowers. On their return home you could see all the girls all wreathed in lilies. They would carefully adjust the flowers into a vessel of water and the following morning the whole house would be scented with the fragrance. These people had all the coasters could ever crave. They would anticipate a cruise to St. Andrews Bay, and to this shady spot they would go as picnickers--ladies with baskets, prepared for the journey. These picnics were better known as oyster roasts and fish fry. The boys would be engaged in catching the fish, while the ladies would prepare a way to cook them.”

“They would stretch sails of canvas from one oak to the other for protection from the sun. The tables they would have spread with everything imaginable and to this place that would stay until twilight; then they would go to their homes. These oyster roast or picnics were highly appreciated by the inhabitants and especially the ones that were invited.”

“On spring mornings in the month of May and June, in passing the village of a distance of three or four miles I have heard the people say that passed this distance that they scented the sweet perfume of the magnolias when they began to blossom. The trees were so heavy one could go a distance of a mile and observe plainly the stately trees rolled in white with their bloom, as a great many people would come to visit the place they would carry away with them the orange blooms as a memorial to the place. Many visitors have gone from house to house begging for the inhabitants to take them as borders so as to get the change of climate.”

Diary of the Storm (1912)

Another former Pilot Town resident and storm survivor Maude Midgette published her account of the hurricane in 1912. Maude’s descriptive personal journal of the harrowing storm is titled *Diary of the Storm*. Maude was 21 at the time of the hurricane and was daughter to Capt.

Frank Midgette. Within the diary, Maude mentions a gate to the yard and fences as they are forced from their house for higher ground. She also mentions hearing the lonesome sounds of their two dogs barking as they fled. Maude and some of the others (unnamed) were preparing to return to Mobile from having spent their summer at their Navy Cove home(s). As described, this was a summer home, at least for her, but she does call it her home and she is unquestionably sentimental about it. She calls it ideal, irreplaceable. Her words below detail the boat ride back to Mobile after the storm while looking back at the destroyed village.

“Now the hour had come for us to leave “Navy Cove”, and when we were seated in the boat and had started on our way, every-one turned and looked back and what once had been “our home” for so many happy years, and now nothing of it remained but a very small piece of land here and there. We rejoiced over having escaped such a horrible death, still we were sad too, to think we were leaving our ‘dear old Navy Cove’, never to return (that is to live).

Many happy days, had we spent on that “dear little strip of sand” and through the woods gathering wild flowers and lovely pond lilies, and often strolling over to the south beach on moonlight nights with the one you loved best by your side, enjoying the refreshing breezes from the Gulf. Never again, are we to have such glorious times at ‘dear old Navy Cove’.

Never again, are we to enjoy the lovely bathing, boating, fishing, and crabbing. Oh! it makes one's heart ache to even think of it. We can not (so soon) realize that Navy Cove is no more, but when summer time comes, it will be sadly missed; and we will all long so much to be a way down there, enjoying ourselves.

One in our crowd suggested we should find another Navy Cove, and (all who were there in the storm) move to the same place. That would seem something like home but go where we will, we will never find an ideal spot, like the ‘Cove’.”

A Brief History of Baldwin County (1928)

The 1928 book *A Brief History of Baldwin County* written by L.J. Newcomb Comings and Martha M. Albers includes a synopsis on Pilot Town called “*Navy Cove*.” The write-up quotes the words of former Capt. Joseph H. Norville. Joseph Norville was a second-generation pilot born at Navy Cove in 1862. He later went on to serve in the state legislature. The passages below describe the village as “self-sufficient” and an “existence approaching the ideal.” He too recalls

the abundant wildlife, social activities, and frequent visitors to the village. Norville speaks of the settlement as a community of equals. This was home.

“His description of the life at Navy Cove, when he was a boy and young man, and until the time of the storm, brings vision of an existence approaching the ideal; of a condition where neither poverty nor riches were known and a community where all were neighbors in the truest meaning an often misused word.

There were no locks upon the doors, no bars at the windows. There was no representative of the force and power of the law, for none was needed. St Andrews Bay, immediately to the east--now on the charts as Andrews Bay to distinguish it from the Florida estuary of the same name--was literally paved with the finest oysters, which could be gathered by hand when the tide was low. Wild ducks, including mallards and canvasbacks, came early and remained throughout the winter. Fresh and saltwater fishing, the best and most various, could be enjoyed at all seasons.

At night, when the weather was fine, the young people would build fires of driftwood at points along the beach, and there all would congregate to talk and sing; to love and laugh, and live.

One mile to the south, the Gulf dashed its surf upon a long smooth beach, the sand hard-packed where wet and flaky and white as snow where it was dry. But boys and girls did not go in swimming together then, as is now the custom.

Each family had its city friends who went to the Cove in summer, and there was interchange of visits between Mobile and the village at all seasons of the year. But, as a rule, the residents of the Cove were sufficient unto themselves for their own company and entertainment. Their wants were few and were abundantly satisfied. The young people owned their boats and sailed where they wish to go. Dances were frequent at the homes and other points along the Baldwin County shore, and these were attended by sailing parties, all neighbors and friends.

It was the constant association with the water from their earliest youth that made the Navy Cove boys among the most skillful small boat sailors in the world and caused them to follow naturally into the chief business of their fathers and uncles.

But there was never a hotel or boarding house at the village and there was no thought of commercializing the attractions of the place. It was just home, and that's all.”

Only Tidal Wave in History of County Destroyed Navy Cove (1939)

A 1939 *Baldwin Times* newspaper recollects the 1906 hurricane in a short article titled *Only Tidal Wave in History of County Destroyed Navy Cove*. The writer is not mentioned; however, the

article was likely written by an outsider. And this is the first documented reference to utopia, although the author does not fully commit. The article describes the self-sufficient happy village as almost utopian and suggests the commune was disconnected from the rest of society. Social gatherings, recreation, and gardening are briefly mentioned. A large family atmosphere is imagined as the labor was shared and no locks and bars were needed in the village.

“On September 5, 1906 no happier village in the state could have been found than tiny Navy Cove, three miles east of Fort Morgan on Mobile Bay. The next day six of the forty inhabitants were drowned and all of the 14 homes of the village had been completely destroyed in the only destructive tidal wave in the history of the county.

The fate of the tiny fishing village seems even more cruel when one realizes that the people there lived in an almost Utopian fashion. Locks and bars were not known and there was no evidence of law. By fishing, hunting, and raising small gardens, the people supported themselves and thought no more of the rest of the world, but spent their time in dancing, gossiping and fellowship with neighbors.”

Letter to the Editor (1949)

The response of former Pilot Town resident and storm survivor Sidney A. Ladnier is seen in a letter to the editor of *The Onlooker* (Foley newspaper) on August 19, 1949. In this piece, Mr. Ladnier is reminiscing of the citrus harvests at Navy Cove and nearby Shell Banks. As noticed also in his “*Before and After the Storm (1908)*,” Mr. Ladnier’s evocative descriptions of Navy Cove demonstrate his strong feelings for his former home place.

“It was a large, beautiful tree with the largest crop of oranges I have seen in many years. This orange tree carried me back in memory, to my boyhood days when the native sweet oranges grew along the shores of Shell Banks and Navy Cove. The trees were large and their crops were large every year. At one time, seven barrels of oranges were gathered from one large tree that grew in Navy Cove.”

Storm of 1906 (1958)

The quoted text below was pulled from a ninth-grade school report paper written in 1958 by Baldwin County teenager and resident Gwen Ryan Riebe titled *Storm of 1906*. The paper

followed an oral history interview of her grandfather Joe Callaway regarding the 1906 hurricane. The Callaways settled further up the Fort Morgan peninsula in the Lagoon community. The bounty of natural resources found at Navy Cove are again repeated here as is the shared labor of fishing, oystering, and crabbing.

“Navy Cove was a small village on the coast of Mobile Bay, about one quarter mile from the Gulf of Mexico, and four miles east of Fort Morgan. It was looked upon as a great summer resort. Large crowds from all parts of the United States came in the summer to enjoy their favorite sports of fishing, swimming and crabbing. St Andrew's Bay, which is situated about four blocks from where the village stood, was known to produce the best flavored oysters throughout the state. One could go out into the bay and in an hour's time, come back with any of three articles (seafoods) he preferred-oysters, fish or crabs. The settlers of Navy Cove depended on fishing in oystering for their living. Being humble people, they enjoyed a pleasant way of life.

These people hold the land of Navy Cove dearer to them than any land shall ever be, but the once happy land now lies in ruins. The village was never rebuilt, and the Navy Cove of today consists of a fishing camp, the Serof and a few summer homes.”

Terrifying '06 Hurricane Along the Coast Recalled (1960)

A 1960 *Montgomery Advertiser* article by Doris Rich was found titled “Terrifying '06 Hurricane Along the Coast Recalled.” Doris Rich was a local author and historian of Baldwin County, Alabama. Passages below from this article recount the various community gatherings which took place at Navy Cove. The regular parties, dances, and bonfires at the cove are assumed to have formed naturally by the residents with no engineered social motive taking place. Ms. Rich also mentions the occupation of piloting being passed down from father to son.

“Residents enjoyed parties together almost every Saturday night. And once or twice a year made the trip to Mobile by boat.

Each Navy Cove family had city friends, who went by boat from Mobile to the Cove in summer, and enjoyed the driftwood fires on the beach. Everyone sailed where they wished to go, and there were frequent dances at homes along the shore. Navy Cove boys were skillful small boat sailors, and followed in their father's

footsteps to pilot vessels across Mobile bar into the bay, and to the point where they were taken over by river pilots.”

Baldwin County Circuit Court deposition (1963)

A 1963 Baldwin County Circuit Court deposition was discovered providing some insight into life at Pilot Town. The relevant exchange below is a Q and A between one time communard Ellen Josephine Nicholls, daughter of Capt. John Joseph Smith, and counsel, Mr. J.B. Blackburn. In the responses below Ms. Nicholls is answering questions regarding her former Navy Cove home. Ms. Nicholls was born in Mobile in 1876. According to her testimony she was a part time resident of Navy Cove, returning to Mobile in the winter. Ms. Nicholls states her family purchased their house/share from M.M. Moore, presumably Capt. Robert M. Moore in the 1880s. The house was then improved and enlarged to add a second story. She further describes the front and back yards as having been bricked. The purpose of these brick features is not added. The yard was cared for with trees and bushes being planted by her mother.

Q: What was there when you first knew it, and any additions, or anything that he might have made, your father? A: Well, he did not add to it at all. I can remember when he had the house all done over, you know, and had it made larger, the upstairs and everything, and it was a long narrow building at first. Q: Now, do you recall about what year it was that he worked over the house? A: Well, I was, I expect I was about 7 or 8 years old then. Q: And in those days how frequently did you see the property? A: Well, we lived there every summer of my life, and in Mobile in the winter time. Q: At that time, how did you go there, Ms. Nicholls? A: We moved back and forth in a boat. Q: That was the only way you could reach it? A: That was the only way. We did not have cars then. Q: How long did those improvements remain on that property? A: Just as long as the house stayed there, until that hurricane and tidal wave in 1906. Q: When you were there the last time was there anything on the old home lot that made it easy for you to distinguish where the old house was? A: Yes, the front yard was bricked and the backyard was bricked, and those bricks were still there. Q: Was there anything else there when you last saw it that was there before 19--A: The trees my mother planted, oh, when I was a little girl, was still living. Q: Any flowers there of any kind? A: No, I expect people going through had taken all the rose bushes and everything up.

In 1906, Hurricane Strikes Coast (1974)

Another newspaper clipping written by historian Doris Rich concerning Pilot Town was observed and titled “In 1906, Hurricane Strikes Coast.” This unsourced article is found within the Pilot Town folder at the Fairhope Museum. Ms. Rich rehashes the abundance of resources available at the cove. She also contends several more houses had been built beyond the 13-14 which are often cited and depicted on maps. Interestingly, she also states that these were two-story homes, which suggests many of the homes had been significantly modified or rebuilt.

“Navy Cove had been a pleasant place to live with about 18 nice two-story homes overlooking the water. St Andrews Bay had the finest oysters in the world which could be gathered by hand. Wild ducks, mallards and fresh and saltwater fish were abundant. It was said the perfume of the magnolia blossoms could be detected five miles from shore and flowers and vegetables of many varieties were bountiful.”

Pilot Town—Vanishes with the Wind (1984)

A 1984 newspaper clipping titled “Pilot Town—Vanishes with the Wind” was also located. This unsourced article, written by Brad Watson, is found within the Pilot Town folder at the Fairhope Museum of History. The selected passage is just one sentence as much of the article focuses on the 1906 storm and the environmental habitat at the time the article was written. Nevertheless, the selected description makes the claim that Pilot Town residents believed they had a paradise unto themselves.

“This was a village where bar boat pilots lived with their families, and they considered their home a paradise.”

Well, I've Never Met a Native (1986)

The 1986 book *Well, I've Never Met a Native—Stories of the Coastal People of Alabama* includes a reference to Pilot Town. Book author and Baldwin County native Joy Callaway Buskens recalls a conversation with Ms. Hazel Nelson Parker, who is reminiscing about Pilot Town. Both are descendants of Rev. Elisha Nelson, who with his wife Eliza Jane, settled the nearby Shell

Banks community further east up the Fort Morgan peninsula beginning in 1842. Ms. Parker mentions the Navy Cove residents were not kin. This was mostly true in the beginning. But over time the families became more and more connected through their offspring. The passage highlights a disparity in the economic class of the pilots compared to other coastal professions. The Pilot Town communards enjoyed luxuries not experienced in many households. The pilots were well compensated and that set them apart from the other settlements on the peninsula.

“The Navy Cove bunch were not kin. They kept to themselves. Most of them were bar pilots and made good money, and most of the Shell Banks and Lagoon folks were fishermen and considered not well off. Money makes a difference. They had bigger, better homes. Two stories with even carpet on the floors. She said she never knew any of her folks to have carpet on the floor, or a two-story home then. The Navy Cove people had a lot of people from Mobile visit them. They had more room and more money. They had prestige. The typical two-story home of the bar pilot had widow walks with a porch around the top. From up there, one could see the ships coming near the Fort and they would go and meet them there.”

Descendants Inherit Auction Proceeds (1994)

A *Fairhope Courier* newspaper article titled “Descendants Inherit Auction Proceeds” was revealed. Excerpts from this 1994 article by Bob Hyer speak to the essence of the Pilot Town community as a truly unique place. The property here was not divided and this is atypical. Communal ownership is a utopian trait. The labor sharing, such as building the town cisterns together, is an example of cooperative living though not necessarily utopian. The article seems to correctly point out that the town evolved slowly and organically. And contrary to the book passage above *Well, I've Never Met a Native* (1986), many of the villagers were related, at least by marriage. With this in mind, it is easy to see why the communards felt such a strong sense of trust and security at the village.

“Navy Cove was named for a Navy shop established during the war of 1812 by the American Navy. The bar pilots of lower Mobile Bay began to settle next to Navy Cove long before the Civil War.

The Cove was a natural safe harbor. The pilots and their families played cards and chess with the Confederate soldiers, fished and oystered in the cove and St. Andrews Bay. Pilot Town slowly grew and prospered. The villagers built two large cisterns for collecting water. During the Civil War, the bar pilots ran the blockades of the federal gunboats.

In 1862, bar pilots McLeod and Donaldson wrote in their diaries, “We kept the Cuban schooner *Havana* anchored off Navy Cove, for three days, waiting for a favorable wind and dark night to run past the two federal gunboats anchored three miles off either side of the channel, leading to the gulf.”

Attorney George Moore of Mobile, representing some of the pilot descendants, is quoted in the article: “You have to remember Pilot Town was quite communal. The pilots and their families would build small homes with a place for their hogs and chickens, and someone would build another house around the bend. There were no deeds and no property was ever divided.”

Descendant Quincey Godwin stated “They were all family, they all trusted each other. The bar pilots were taking ships through the channel way before the Civil War, so some of the families were there for a long time. They never saw any reason to divide it all up.”

Washed Away (2000)

The 2000 *Mobile Press Register* article by staff reporter Joey Bunch titled “Washed Away” was a segment in Part 1 of a 3-day series called “Camelot on the Cove: The Pilot Town Legacy.” In this article Bunch points out that the residents had been squatting on the land for half a century before they made the decision to collectively purchase and own it. A photo caption in this article claims as many as 30 homes were believed to have existed at Pilot Town. He describes the land as a tropical paradise. Former resident Dolores Ladnier compares it to Camelot.

“1840s-Brothers, cousins, and sailing buddies establish a commune called ‘Pilot Town’ for families and friends of sandbar pilots.”

“Thirty-four years before the storm, 14 bar pilots had pooled their money-\$338-and bought 620 acres that included Pilot Town, where they and their elders had been squatters for more than 50 years. They never divided the property, owning all of it equally.”

“And others besides bar pilots were invited to come and build a house in the secluded, tropical paradise at no cost for the land. Citrus grew wild, oysters paved the bottom of nearby St Andrews Bay, soldiers from the fort and ships from around the world brought culture that couldn't be found in Atlanta.”

“The original people never drove stakes and said this part is mine this is yours. This thing was like Camelot sister Dolores (Ladnier descendant) said of Pilot Town before the storm. They were so happy and so peaceful. If they're looking down here now, they're thinking. Boy, what a mess our descendants made of that thing.”

Voices from Pilot Town (2000)

“Voices from Pilot Town” is another article comprising Part 1 of the 3-day series “Camelot on the Cove: The Pilot Town Legacy” by *Mobile Press Register* reporter Joey Bunch. The following are quotes from former Pilot Town residents. The first is another mention of the many parties had at Pilot Town. The second quote refers to the connection these individuals had to the water and the natural progression of following in their father’s footsteps.

“There was a party somewhere nearly every Saturday night, but we had to walk to them in groups. If we had cars, or even carriages, the going would have been too slow through the sand.” Survivor Miss Vernon Raines, Sr. as quoted in 1959.

“Everyone young and old had his own boat and sailed wherever he wished.... It was the constant association with the water from early youth, which made Navy Cove boys among the most skillful of sailors and cause them to follow naturally the chief business of their fathers.” Bar pilot Captain Joseph Norville as quoted in 1923.

Letter to the Editor (2000)

A 2000 Letter to the Editor by Donnie Barrett compliments the recently published *Mobile Press Register* series “Camelot on the Cove: The Pilot Town Legacy” by Joey Bunch. While Mr. Barrett was lobbying for public awareness to help preserve the resource as it was then being examined for development, he makes the argument that the resource is a site of significant heritage.

“If ever there was a Gulf Coast paradise of pristine white-sand beaches, clear deep water, sea oats, needle rush and salty air, this is it. Hidden on a point out into the bay, Pilot Town has no roads, piers or houses and is one of the very few unmolested barrier island habitats left on the entire Mobile Point.

The 1906 hurricane brought a tragic end to the town. People saw their loved ones drown in an agonizing human calamity. Walking the eerie beach here is like strolling the decks of the Titanic, with personal possessions still awash in the surf.

Under the old oaks along the shore is the atmosphere of a chapel except where the recent machinery has done its damage. This place is special.”

Heritage of Mobile County, Alabama (2002)

A brief summary and family history of William Christopher O’Connor Wilson (Black Bill) was found. Descendant Mrs. Elizabeth “Beth” O’Connor Wilson Covan provides this narrative in the *Heritage of Mobile County, Alabama*. Mrs. Covan acknowledges the settlement as a commune. Of particular note is that the pilots co-owned vessels in addition to the land, prior to forming the MBPA.

“They settled at Navy Cove (Pilot Town), an oasis that once existed near Ft. Morgan in Baldwin County. It was here that sandbar pilots established a commune for their families and sailing buddies. Bill was part owner of and piloted the “Relief” during 1858-1861. As a pilot of the lower bay, he and his family were blessed. Food was plentiful and nature's beauty abounded.”

Pilot Town Exhibit Taking Area by Storm (2007)

Curt Chapman wrote a 2007 newspaper article named *Pilot Town Exhibit Taking Area by Storm*. This unsourced article is found within the Pilot Town folder at the Fairhope Museum. The article includes an interview of former Fairhope Museum Director Donnie Barrett, who describes the Pilot Town exhibit he coordinated in 2006 entitled *Pilot Town: One Hundred Years After the Storm, the Diary of Maude L. Midgette*. As quoted in the article Mr. Barrett considers Pilot Town a utopia. The men and women performed separate duties but all for the betterment of the village. The combination of the bountiful natural resources and the beauty of the landscape created an endless playground for the kids and adults alike, with the main concern being the exposure to the inevitable storms along the coast.

“The utopia, which existed in the 19th and early 20th centuries, was decimated by the 1906 hurricane. The area bordering Saint Andrews Bay and Navy Cove was the home of Native Americans before bar pilots settled along the shore. Many are buried there.”

“Their social life was somewhat international as well, Barrett said. The culture was shaped by a wealth of visitors from other countries and they had lots of parties to welcome them.”

“The waters off Pilot Town were teeming with fish, according to Barrett, and the bottom was “paved with oysters.” He added, “You didn’t need a wagon, or a car because you could go anywhere you wanted on a boat.”

“While women cooked and preserved food and the men worked, the children could often be found in the bay, where some speared sharks and hung on for the ride. Their lives were mostly carefree, at least until the winds began to shift.”

The Mobile River (2015)

The 2015 John Sledge (author and Architectural Historian for the City of Mobile) book titled *The Mobile River* includes a Pilot Town mention. Sledge paints a leisurely existence at Pilot Town. That is at least up until there was money to be made. Prior to organizing, the pilots competed fiercely against one another. The work was extremely physical. But the payoff could be substantial.

“During the 19th century more than a dozen pilots occupied a little village near Fort Morgan known as Pilot Town. Here they idled fished, swam, and played with their 18 foot yawls to the accompaniment of the booming surf. One antebellum visitor to pilot town reported a “likely widow’s kind of public-house”, where he hung out with the pilots and drank rum while puffing Havana cigars. When a sail was spotted however, all thought of leisure vanished, and the pilots raced one another out to the vessel, the winner getting the job. Competition was fierce and with good reason. Pilotage fees were calculated by how much water a vessel drew.”

Pilot Town historical plaque (2017)

Lastly, the 2017 historical marker for Pilot Town is recalled below. The plaque was erected by Baldwin County Historic Development and Baldwin County Commission with the text being provided by Pilot Town enthusiast Donnie Barrett. The marker unequivocally describes Pilot Town as a utopia. This stems in part from the absence of property lines and the communal ownership which occurred there.

“On the western shore of St Andrews Bay, (north of here), bar pilots established a community in the 1830s, known as Pilot’s Town. The pilots monitored the mouth of Mobile Bay while working on a large sand dune they named “Workbench Hill,” and would rush out to sell their services to arriving ships. Fort Morgan officers

housed their families in the settlement and large socials were held there, often entertaining international guests. The town grew into a Utopian community with a short railroad to Fort Morgan, a cemetery, and many homes, but no property lines. The September 26, 1906 hurricane swept their community and all their homes into Mobile Bay and the town vanished. The only survivors were tied to oak trees on top of "Workbench Hill". Property lines could not be determined so homes were never rebuilt. Most of the cemetery stones were removed to build a boat launch in the 1960s and were subsequently lost."

Archival Analysis

The written archival record is especially nostalgic. Some of these accounts are by individuals born at Navy Cove who clearly held this place close to their heart their entire life. Some lived through the harrowing hurricane that almost ended their lives and did take the lives of some in their community. The effects of that tragic event were long lasting on many of the survivors, and this is evident in the written record. But the quotes and stories of life at Pilot Town before the September 1906 hurricane describe a community as grand as can be found. The beauty of the place was undeniable. This truth is repeated throughout many of the articles. The abundance of natural resources there assured the location was more than sufficient to support a long-term community. The remoteness of the settlement afforded a sense of security that would have been unlikely in nearby Mobile. They chose this place to not only work from but to build their lives together. They brought their families here. And they collectively decided to own it all together.

The pilots earned a good living and the community clearly thrived. Homes were improved and built larger. Families grew and they grew together as so many of the offspring began to marry into other piloting families. Interestingly, piloting was not a prerequisite for community membership as numerous other professions are listed within the census records. While Pilot Town began as a labor community, it became much more than that. The families welcomed visitors regularly, especially during the summer months. There was a camaraderie with their closest neighbors, the soldiers at nearby Fort Morgan. Servicemen can be seen in some of the pictures at

Pilot Town. There are also mentions of activities and games being played together and there are reports of the soldiers' family members being housed at Pilot Town. In addition, a great many pilots and other residents in the community played instrumental roles in the war effort in the early 1860s. Except for the years during the war and the isolated shooting between the two Mobile men up the cove, there are no reports of conflict or even struggle at the cove.

The pilots were competitive. Initially, they had to be. But they adapted to better suit their interests. The written record has yet to produce evidence suggesting Pilot Town was an intentional utopian experiment. Likewise, there has been no indication in the available archival record to show the Navy Cove pilot village was also an attempt to reform society in some way in addition to being the headquarters for the lower bay pilots. The designated utopianism within the written record at this site appears to stem from the communal balance and harmony these coastal residents enjoyed and the ownership decisions they made allowing them to achieve this wealth. Below is the utopian trait table first introduced in Chapter 3. Based on the archival data collected and presented, the table has been populated to now include the Pilot Town findings (Table 5.1).

<i>Table 5.1 Utopian Traits (Y=Yes) (N=No) (CL=Cooperative Living) (SR=Social Reform)</i>						
	<i>More's Utopia</i>	<i>Shakers</i>	<i>Brook Farm</i>	<i>Oneida</i>	<i>Pullman</i>	<i>Pilot Town</i>
Physical Labor	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Leadership	Y	Y (at first)	Y	Y	Y	N
Egalitarian	Y	Y	Y (at first)	Y	N	Y
Belief that their model would spread	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Social engineering	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Planned or developed organically	Planned	Planned	Organically (initially)	Planned	Planned	Organically
Communal Ownership/Capital	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Rejected Capitalism	Y	Y	Y	Y (at first)	N	N
Shared Labor	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Distinctive change in appearance	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N
Spatial distancing from major urban area	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Religious based	N	Y	N	Y	N	N
Cooperative Living or Social Reform	CL & SR	CL & SR	CL & SR	CL & SR	SR	CL

Chapter 6-Oral Histories on Pilot Town

Oral History Results

A total of six oral history interviews were made possible over the course of this research. Five of the interviews included relatives of former Pilot Town residents. In no particular order, they are: Ms. Jeanette Bornholt (Sidney Eugene Dorgan relative by marriage), Capt. Kirk Barrett (Aquilla Norville relative by marriage), Capt. Patrick Wilson (Samuel F. Wilson descendant), John Samuel Bishop, Jr. (John Alexander Ladnier descendant), and Billy Manders (George Cook descendant). The sixth interview was granted by local Pilot Town enthusiast Donnie Barrett. Mr. Barrett authored the text for the Pilot Town historical marker. He is unrelated to the former Pilot Town communards.

As can be seen in the sample interview guide (see Appendix B), a series of questions were prepared to form the basis of each interview. Many of the questions stemmed from the utopian traits revealed during background research. The oral histories began with the participant providing their personal connection to Pilot Town. Core questions on key topics such as architecture, town life, conflict, utopia, and cemetery were visited during each interview. Specific questions were also prepared and presented which were customized to the individual research participant and their family history. As has been mentioned throughout this thesis, one of the main goals of the research was to collaborate with the descendants in the data recovery process. Stakeholder perspectives have been used to generate interpretations and analysis to assist in answering the research questions.

Pertinent responses acquired during the oral history are listed below in direct quotes. They were identified utilizing the qualitative data coding methodology discussed in Chapter 4. These

excerpts have been further placed in categories derived from the list of characteristics associated with utopias as identified in previous chapters. Among these often-utopian traits are planned communities, places of resistance, shared labor, co-ownership, anti-capitalism, social engineering, a distinctive change in appearance, cooperative living, social reform, religious based, egalitarianism, and a belief their model would be adopted by others. There is some crossover with the responses as some of these passages could be placed into more than one category.

Was Pilot Town a Utopia?

Mr. Donnie Barrett considers it utopian. He had read it being described in this way and the atypical tenant in common land ownership agreement supported this notion in his mind. Capt. Kirk Barrett makes the point that the houses were built before they owned the land. He sees the utopian aspect stemming from the fact that they did not own the land and therefore there were no property boundaries to squabble over. Ms. Bornholt believes the utopianism likeness comes from the family atmosphere and the fact that a great many of the residents do over time become related. She also states that living by the water and the passion they had for piloting and sailing may contribute to the idea of it being considered a utopia. Mr. Bishop is unconvinced of the Pilot Town utopian parallels. Admittedly, he is unsure of the reasoning behind the decisions to purchase and hold the land together. But he views the former settlement as a labor camp. He refers to the highly competitive boat races the pilots engaged in the early days to win the job. Finally, Mr. Manders mentions nearby Fairhope as being utopian but had not heard Pilot Town described as such.

To those unfamiliar, Fairhope is located on the eastern shore of Mobile Bay about 20 miles north of Pilot Town. Although unrelated to the mariner village at nearby Navy Cove, Fairhope is also described as a utopia. It was settled in 1894 beginning as a Single Tax Colony when a group of settlers from Des Moines, Iowa came to the area and formed the Fairhope Industrial Association.

The Single Tax philosophy they shared, they believed, would give them a “fair hope” of success. By 1907, the town had acquired over 4,000 acres. The land was communally owned and privately leased with much of the inland areas set aside for farming. People were free to build whatever size house they desired or improve the land however they wanted without being taxed for the fruits of their labor. In the 1970s, a court battle resulted in the Colony being no longer able to control the market price of its lots. Less valuable properties had to pay a rate based on the value of total properties, which have increased dramatically in the last 50 years as more and more people find the area attractive" (Carruth and Warner 2021).

“Well, you know, I had read a hard reference to that but then it was supportive, everything would kind of support that, the way they did this or the way they did that or their fishing or their oystering or later on when they tried to define who had land and found there were no land lots, no lot lines, and all that, just kind of supported the idea that it was a utopian community.” (Donnie Barrett)

“But the Pilot Town by Navy Cove, they built their own houses, their families lived there. But they didn't own title to that land. They just built their house in the same area. And nobody worried about property boundaries. I think that's probably where the utopia came from. Because they weren't feuding with each other over property lines.” (Capt. Kirk Barrett)

“The Dorgan family were all known as bar pilots as far as I can remember, what I've studied. It was close knit. So I can see where they might say a utopia for Pilot Town because they all lived there together and as a family unit that would make them closer. And of course, living by the water is another aspect. They had to love what they did. They did pass it down in the family, positions. And it was very competitive. I do remember talk of that. But it was a unique place. I've always heard it called Pilot Town. But that was local legend, because it was Navy Cove. But those people lived out there. Very little way of getting elsewhere other than by boat. And they lived by the sea. They had small gardens and so forth, but they lived off the sea. The oysters, the shrimp, the fish that was bountiful in that area at that time.” (Jeanette Bornholt)

“I think there was a love for that type of occupation. It was passed down. You saw very few of the descendants refusing, hey, I'm not going to be a bar pilot. No, they were brought up with it, they loved it. So, it was passed down, like doctor to doctor, that type of thing. So, I think in that respect, it's something they loved. So yeah,

there could be a utopia type of feeling with that. It's my life and I'm doing what I love.” (Jeanette Bornholt)

“I kinda take issue with the issue of utopia, not that I'm doubting your research. To me, it's the reason why they lived together, why they bought the land together? They really didn't divide the land up. They said okay, this is where I'm gonna put my house, this is where I'm gonna put my house, this is where I'm gonna put my house, I'm gonna have my garden here, etc, etc, this is gonna be public land. There was something like 600 acres of land there. But when it came time they all looked out for the ships coming in and they had, basically a race to see who got there first. And the first one that got there had the right to pilot it in.” (John Samuel Bishop, Jr.)

“The perspective would be gleaned from the towns closest to them. And as you and I talked about Fairhope being that...and I've always heard that about Fairhope and they proclaim that (utopia). But I never physically heard Pilot Town being described as that. But having spoken with you, obviously there's something to it. I wish I knew more, like I said, but the stories I heard were just about some of the things that happened during the storm and racing out to the boats, but I never heard the actual town described as that. But obviously it's on the marker and other families have backed that up then obviously there's something to it. I just never heard it.” (Billy Manders)

Was settlement planned or did it develop naturally?

Mr. Donnie Barrett believes it was unplanned. He states that the settlers just put up their house wherever they wished due to their being no lot lines. He notes that Fairhope was different, it was planned. Pilot Town evolved naturally. Mr Bishop also suggests the construction was unplanned. Ms. Bornholt cannot speak to the planning but does know the houses to have been aligned in a row on the beach.

“It was unplanned. I remember a reference saying when someone came in and wanted to build a house there, they said okay, there was a place right there. And so they said there were no lot lines, and you just went in there and just built your house around where you wanted to and then on that same reference, it said that if there was a legal problem, the men would just take care of it. If it was some kind of problem, the men would just take care of it. In other words, they, they were the lawyers, and the judge, and the hangman.” (Donnie Barrett)

“Without plans, different from Fairhope. You know they (Fairhope) planned it. And I think it (Pilot Town) just happened. Here came another one. Here came another one. Here came another one.” (Donnie Barrett)

“I would assume that they pretty much mapped out in their mind where they wanted to put their own houses. As far as the building of it, I wouldn't think it would be too long after the signing of the land deed and buying the land.” (John Samuel Bishop, Jr.)

“You know, I'm not sure about that. I do remember reading an account and someone also in the family had mentioned that they were like in a row very near the beach. It wasn't like built way back so they were near the beach, I guess because they were on the more safer side of the cove, thinking that they wouldn't have problems as far as a hurricane or winds or water. They felt more safe. But the fact was once the storm comes through that proved detrimental, but they were like in a row.” (Jeanette Bornholt)

Did any external factors also motivate the settlement?

Each of the interviewees believe it was strictly the occupation that led to the settlement.

No outside influences or philosophical views are known to have been contributing elements to the formation of the pilot village.

“No, I think, personally, just studying the history and knowing it. From what I have studied and from the family, there was a need there to serve as a pilot. And it just existed. I'm sure there were differences of opinion, like anything else. I've never read or seen anything that said that they all got there because of religious purpose or anything like that. No. It was just needed as far as an occupation, more than anything.” (Jeanette Bornholt)

“My guess is I bet not. And it would just be how it all fell into place.” (Donnie Barrett)

“Pilot town was located on a tongue of water, which had deep water access for those boats to race out of. So, I don't think it was based on any kind of like, ideal society that like a communist society would envision. I think it's just because it was, they all just agreed to settle there and not argue with each other. And it was just a real nice place. I think that would be my guess where they get utopian came from. But it wasn't until the 1840s that they actually started realizing that, hey, we don't have to race each other if we keep a pilot boat offshore. But it's rough offshore. You have to have bigger boats. Bigger boats mean bigger crews. Bigger crew means you have to pay workers to man that crew. So, they consolidated to save expenses to buy bigger boats, and they're actually in the 1840s-1850s there were up to a dozen pilot

organizations, and they finally consolidated. Some of the boats were owned by a number of them. Some of them were owned by a couple.” (Capt. Kirk Barrett)

“I am just talking...but you got to think you're talking people that are born in another country and left for whatever reason, they wanted to come to America. I mean, they were definitely from Europe, definitely from Ireland, you know, wherever. You've got to think you had some people that were successful enough, strong willed enough, talented enough to make that move, to get there, to establish a business, to be proficient in a profession that is not for the weak of heart. And they had to be the most eclectic group, that thinks that was their new horizon. You know, why else would it have happened? I can't believe they got there and just, you know, were disappointed and just made do. I think at that day and age, you turn the page and you cut the business, or you do this, or you do that. But, you know, they were from all walks of life. Got to think that was a very interesting time.” (Capt. Patrick Wilson)

“I think it was a matter of location for work. I am not trying to shoot down your utopian theory. I do believe it was utopian in a sense that it was a great place to live, because that's where they could live, they had bountiful harvests, they had a great place to live, etc, they could work together, stuff like that. But as far as a single tax, temperance, abolitionist issues, probably not. I mean, probably not. I'm sure they all were highly opinionated. And if I am any indication of any of my ancestors, I know I'm probably opinionated on a lot of subjects. So, I'm pretty certain they were highly opinionated.” (John Samuel Bishop, Jr.)

“No, not that I heard. I mean I would imagine that there were lots of issues like that they would have had to grapple with when they started to form the pilotage association. But for all that I ever heard and all that ever really made sense to me was that's just where you would go, that's the closest place at a point where the ships would be coming in. It just seemed that that would be the place that would make the most sense.” (Billy Manders)

Were there shared communal duties or cooperative living arrangements?

Capt. Kirk Barrett has no knowledge of communal duties or cooperative living arrangements. Mr. Bishop and Ms. Bornholt surmise the communards worked together to construct each other's houses as well as the cisterns and all other necessary improvements. This was a remote location. And they were heavily reliant on themselves and one another to meet their needs.

“I'm not familiar enough to answer that question, unfortunately. Never really heard any stories about that.” (Capt. Kirk Barrett)

“And as far as the construction is concerned, I would think there they probably worked together. You help me, I'll help you kind of scenario. That was quite common, not only down there, but in communities across the south and the east and west and in the north in small communities at that time. So, I wouldn't doubt that that happened.” (John Samuel Bishop, Jr.)

“You know, I can't see them bringing anyone in. When you think of the isolation of that area, and comparing it to other settlements, and studying the history of these other settlements and that, like Plash Island, what we call Plash Island today and so forth. They boated a lot of that stuff over. They did it themselves, the cisterns...and neighbor helping neighbor. It was just one of those things you did. I can't see them sitting there idle, waiting for a ship to come in and not doing anything and helping them with that. So, I'm almost sure that's what the mode was then. You helped everybody.” (Jeanette Bornholt)

How about communal spaces?

Capt. Kirk Barrett mentions Workbench Hill as a common area. Workbench Hill was a large sand dune that served as the highest elevation on their strip of land. It was also the pilot's workshop area. This is where the men would have fixed and repaired items in need of attention.

“I do know that I got a photograph of Workbench Hill and I know that was a common area that like, the rigging on ships on their pilot boats they had to share and stuff like that. So, I do believe they did share some of the stuff. Obviously, the property was shared but each individual house was their house, even though it wasn't deeded to them. But they respected that, hey, this is the Norville house or this is the Ladnier house. They did respect that boundary.” (Capt. Kirk Barrett)

Tell me about the work

Ms. Bornholt assures they all had a deep passion for the work. It was dangerous but they loved it. Initially, they competed against one another. Every man for themselves. You had to win the race to win the job. Capt. Patrick Wilson acknowledges the organization that came later developing a working protocol. The pilots found a better way to offer their services and protect their livelihood. Due to the expertise required and remoteness of the settlement piloting naturally became a family affair.

“They would actually have members of their family that would watch and take off and not say anything to anybody else, take off so that being the first one to take it.

So, it was very competitive for that type of occupation. But you know, they had to love it. Of course, some of them lost their lives in the storms, and the danger of going on and off. They just used small boats. It's not like today with big motors behind it. So, they oared out there and then would have the cream of the crop have gotten the ship. They knew their waters, they knew their waters. But even that, weather conditions and waves and that type of thing would come up suddenly. They didn't have the predictions we did. You know what looked like a thunder head coming in might be a big squall." (Jeanette Bornholt)

"But you just grew up just being a kid of the water, you know, and obviously your dad had you stepping and fetching, and you just had to work for it. That's what's funny. When I came in, he goes, Patrick, you know you're gonna be beat up because your related to this and nepotism is gonna be thrown at you even though it's pretty much dead. But, you know, you will appreciate it afterwards because that's how back in the day it was, you just came up and you had to do it. It was family business for survival." (Capt. Patrick Wilson)

"They obviously split it and had organization enough to have lower bar pilots and upper bay pilots and they had kind of working arrangement and/or rules. I don't know what they were. Because like I said my dad would even say they would piggyback. So, they had, you know a working protocol." (Capt. Patrick Wilson)

"And they certainly had to have a love for it. Because otherwise I don't think they would have stayed in an occupation that would have the dangers it did have. But they had a love for it. They did. The Dorgan's, especially. I do know it passed down for generations." (Jeanette Bornholt)

Were they all equals?

Mr. Bishop believes there would have been some level of seniority at the village but doubts there were elected leaders of the community. Ms. Bornholt infers they organized democratically for their benefit, thus being represented equally. Mr. Manders agrees a consensus would be needed on certain decisions affecting the entire community. Mr. Donnie Barrett does not expect there to have been an individual leader. He describes the work arrangements as diplomatic and roughly utopian, working as a team and taking turns. Capt. Kirk Barrett confirms the shared ownership of the first vessel operated by the Mobile Bar Pilot Association (MBPA). As equal business partners, this would seemingly make them equals in the village. He notes though that the organization would

have its rules for governing. Interestingly, he also attributes the forming of the MBPA to the ending of the war, which had decimated the available fleet of watercraft.

“As far as seniority or leadership is concerned, I think there were probably de facto leaders, and that was probably the senior people or older people in the neighborhood, depends on whoever they may be at the time. Were they elected, probably not. I doubt it.” (John Samuel Bishop, Jr.)

“I guess I have no idea what really brought it on that they thought they should organize almost not like a union, but an organization to look out for the benefit of each other. And then they would come over and stay here, they would take turns, because actually their home was in Mobile. But it's like a summer home like Battles Wharf, Montrose, all those. They got out of the city during the summer months. Where the bar pilots, they just took turns because of their occupation. So, it wasn't like a full-time residence.” (Jeanette Bornholt)

“When you're trying to do that and your values for your community grow or become more needy, I mean you have to start to have some sort of consensus on what to do there.” (Billy Manders)

“You know they would race to catch the boats, and then they got more diplomatic and they threw lots into turns, you know, going out to meet the boats. And so that didn't indicate a leader, it just indicated you know, roughly utopian organization.” (Donnie Barrett)

“Well, the pilots in 1865, because all the pilot boats prior to the Civil War, were either confiscated by the North or were used as a blockade runner. They got captured. So, they lost a lot of their wealth during the war. And they came together, pulled the resources and bought one pilot boat. And they shared ownership of that. And they formed the Mobile Bar Pilot Association. And the association had their rules of how they govern, how they determined what order you went, for what turn to make sure they had equal amount of jobs. They decided to take the company's expenses, pay all their bills, and what was left over they divided equally. And that's to this day, we still do it that way. Everybody is paid the same salary. That's how we split the pot.” (Capt. Kirk Barrett)

Was the village self-sufficient?

Ms. Bornholt describes the village like a small farm. Even though they had boats they were isolated and had to survive as best they could. Mr. Bishop responds similarly in that they had other means than fishing and oystering for sustenance. He also envisions life at Pilot Town being a real struggle, despite its beauty.

“They had free range cattle, obviously hogs and so forth. You had certain areas that you could, you know, grow a garden, you had to.” (Jeanette Bornholt).

“But it's cold down there. And there's a lot of bugs down there. You know, the weather turns bad in a heartbeat. And so I mean, I'm thinking it was probably a rough life. I'm sure they had some kind of cows and goats and stuff or whatever, chickens. But I mean, they didn't survive solely on fish. But I'm pretty certain it was probably a rough life. Even though we read that all the oysters are bigger than you've ever seen in your life or anything like that, it's crap. Find somebody else. That's somebody's glorification.” (John Samuel Bishop, Jr.)

What do we know of the community?

Mr. Manders highlights the necessity to pull together as the location was transitioning from a work site to a settlement for their families. Mr. Bishop recognizes the communal aspect of the town and that the residents undoubtedly relied on each other within the community as well. In this light, he accepts the utopian interpretation. Ms. Bornholt alludes to the social gatherings occurring at the village. Capt. Patrick Wilson describes the settlement as one that could easily be mistaken as a permanent vacation in which you sometimes had to clock in for work.

“Geography means a lot but eventually if you're trying to come together as a town or a community then other things definitely have to get hammered out, especially, when you're talking about the volatility of that time leading up to the Civil War. I would imagine a lot of things had to be ironed out to kind of coexist.” (Billy Manders)

“They would all pitch in and they would help each other. I do believe there was that kind of utopia going on. As I said earlier, I do believe each one had, in fact I read one document that they had gardens and they had pretty much no locks on the house and there were no hotels or anything like that. The guests stayed, they stayed at the houses. They had an informal school for the kids and church came every so often. But there was no structure. Each house took turns, from what I understand. I think they did work together.” (John Samuel Bishop, Jr.)

“You know, it was just a wonderful place. They had boats. So, for kids, for the families, for all this, I mean they just kind of lived, you know, the sailboats, fished, shrimped. They had an abundance, you know, the bounty from the water, and it was just a way of life.” (Capt. Patrick Wilson)

“Oh, I imagine a bonfire down on the beach. We do that today. Yeah, that type of thing and oysters and that type of celebration getting together. It's a normal need to socialize.” (Jeanette Bornholt)

How about private ownership?

Ms. Bornholt corroborates that the residents had their own homes. They had their personal possessions and their own homes.

“Everybody had their own home. You had that competition there in the beginning. And so you know, you're not going to be around them 24-7. I think they had their own homes and things. Of course, I'm sure they had picnic days or gatherings, you know, some sort of little celebration of stuff together like any other time, community, you're going to have that. But then as far as what I can read and have studied, they had their own individual homes.” (Jeanette Bornholt)

Why not split up the land?

Mr. Bishop remains puzzled by the decision to co-own the property. And the decision to continue to hold it that way is one he has been unable to answer. Ms. Bornholt implies that the town evolved over time and those that got there first built wherever they wished. Capt. Patrick Wilson admits he is unsure of the reasoning behind the atypical co-ownership decision. But he raises an interesting point that there may not have been a better option. Then again, there remains the possibility that the stakeholders decided later against chopping up the land and instead made a collective decision that it was all or none.

“My friend, that is the \$64,000 question! I'm gonna give you one further. Why did they buy it all together? Why did they buy it? Why'd they put all their names on one deed?” (John Samuel Bishop, Jr.)

“You know, I would not know. I do know that I, when we did research, especially when these cases came up, you couldn't find it as individual type (here, here, here). It probably is who got there first staked out their spot. Squatters rights so to speak.” (Jeanette Bornholt)

“I have no knowledge on that, and don't know. Look in the rearview mirror, you know, you could say a lot, but no idea. And my uncle even, I remember dad saying of my uncle who went through the courthouse, he goes, it's...it's unbelievable. It is

what it is. That's how they purchased it. I don't know if that's how they needed to purchase it, how the deal went, who knows? If some people were soft on it and some needed the help of them, so they said let's do it together, or if they just got together and said, you know, hold on, we're doing everything as one. No telling. But that history, I've been told is one of the craziest land deals of the state.” (Capt. Patrick Wilson)

Do you think they thought of their village as utopian?

Ms. Bornholt portrays a rather sublime existence at Pilot Town. Mr. Bishop has a more pragmatic understanding of the village. Capt. Patrick Wilson regards the community as a large family unit. A great number of them did become relatives. Some of the families lived their part time while others stayed there permanently. Capt. Wilson makes the point that the families were brought there for a reason. They had created their own community and they treasured it.

“Well, you know, when you live on the beach and kind of do what you want, I think you would have a certain mind, hey, this is the life.” (Jeanette Bornholt)

“No. I wouldn't know. I wouldn't know how to answer that. I don't think so. I think they pictured themselves probably as just working and parents and mothers and wives and survivors.” (John Samuel Bishop, Jr.)

You know it wasn't like they couldn't go to Mobile. They were in Mobile, back and forth, and kept their families there for a reason. You know there were so many people that married within the families, you know so many people now want to take off and go and do this and that, I'm sure that didn't change, probably more so back then everybody was spreading their legs trying to create their own destiny. I don't know that but like I said, other than to really understand it, they just had a common denominator, it was life on the water. They were sailors. They lived on the water, in much harsher times. And unfortunately, all they had was a barometer to know when storms were coming. But everything I have heard and I know, I would think that they really cherished that. And it was real.” (Capt. Patrick Wilson)

Oral History Analysis

The utopian trait table updated in the previous chapter based on the archival record mirrors the results following the oral history interviews. While the descendant perspectives on Pilot Town are less sensationalized than the archival record they tell the same story. And the story is that Pilot

Town was a labor community. Piloting is what brought these families together. In the beginning, they competed against one another. They raced to the incoming ships with the fastest being awarded the job. But by the 1840s, the pilots found a better way. They began to organize and work together in small groups sharing ownership in various boats. Following the war, the various groups organized further establishing the pilot association.

The town formed organically although the date of the first pilot structure at Navy Cove is still unknown. The first house built may have been that of pilot Timothy Dorgan sometime in the 1830s. The 1840 census lists Timothy (license 1837) as residing in Baldwin County, Alabama. The same 1840 census shows his brother and fellow pilot, Andrew Dorgan, Jr. (license 1833), living in Mobile, Alabama. The earliest observed map showing structures at Navy Cove is 1847. By this time, a line of thirteen buildings are depicted. The 1880 census lists 21 occupied dwellings at Navy Cove. Regardless of who built the first house, when, and how many, the current data shows Pilot Town to have evolved naturally rather than being that of a planned settlement or intentional community. But by the time the 1872 deed was signed granting 14 head of households actual ownership to the land they had long ago commandeered, the houses were built. This would have made divvying up the land less necessary.

So they continued to share the land. The pilots continued to share the work. Communal bonds were further strengthened by countless marriages interweaving the families. From all accounts the commune flourished. New pilots and families joined the village replacing those that left, retired, or passed on. Visitors were drawn to the place for recreation and leisure. Memoirs of former occupants speak of frequent parties and bonfires. These social engagements formed naturally. There is no indication of intended social engineering or attempts at societal change occurring at Pilot Town.

Moreover, no sign of town leadership is seen through the research although community elders were likely. The Mobile Bar Pilots Association (MBPA) elects a president to preside over organizational matters. The village, however, does not appear to have been governed. The residents were on equal footing. This we know from the way they split the land and profits. Community membership was not even limited to being a pilot or joining the pilot association. Denny and John Ladnier never became members of the MBPA, although they may have done some piloting. As mentioned earlier in the thesis, many other professions are noted within the census records.

The current research did not reveal Pilot Town as having been a place of resistance or reform, characteristic of some utopian experiments. Utopian settlements also shared a belief their model would be duplicated by others. There is no evidence of that occurring here. The pilots were capitalist. They were opportunists. These men were skilled boat captains intent on building something together to ensure the protection of how they earned their living. Fortunately, for them, they were able to utilize and acquire a well-suited and desirable location not only for work but also for the pleasure of their families.

There have been other pilot settlements. The Mississippi River pilots built a settlement on piers in south Louisiana around 1860, which also appropriately became known as Pilottown. The Crescent River Port Pilots still operate out of this location today; however, the residents have since moved to drier ground following the wrath of Hurricane Katrina. It is assumed by this author and also the interviewees that when comparing other pilot towns, they would likely share many similarities. Presumably, work camps such as these are tight-knit, family-oriented communal work spaces often found in remote and difficult to access environments beyond the reach of most. Similar organizations may also split their profits. They may also share ownership of their buildings and their vessels. These are common business practices. But utopia goes beyond partnership. To

that end, it is presumed by this investigator that the nostalgic and romanticized utopian designation assigned to Pilot Town, Alabama is unique to the pilot settlement at Navy Cove.

Chapter 7-Conclusion

Everyone has their own perspective, this author included. And for the most part there are basic truths about the former pilot village disputed by no one who participated in the research. The passage of time, though, has made some details concerning Pilot Town somewhat cloudy, as revealed in the interviews. Fortunately, though, there is a considerable archival record of the site which provides a colorful glimpse into the settlement. The written record is noticeably sentimentalized. Personal accounts of those that once lived there or those that visited describe the most idyllic place to have ever existed. Articles and descriptions of Pilot Town over 100 years later continue to perpetuate the Navy Cove village as a special place, utopian in fact. The unfortunate irony is that the tragedy that ultimately befell the place and ended the settlement plays a role in the romanticized way in which it is remembered.

But Pilot Town does feel different. It was different. What began as an impromptu work base for the early Alabama bar pilots ultimately became a thriving community of numerous families. Invited guests and visitors spent weeks and even months in the summer at these cottages soaking up the beauty of the place. The Navy Cove pilots created a serendipitous existence at Pilot Town for themselves and their families. They formed their community, chose their neighbors, and up until the storm, enjoyed a mostly leisurely life at the cove. Initially a bar pilot labor community, it later evolved into a larger coastal commune supported by various seafaring occupations.

The transformation at Navy Cove from competition to cooperation should not be ignored. Gaining consensus on the issue, which had to have been integral to the success of the community, may have been a hard sell for some. Certain pilots and/or their boats had to have been faster than

others, maintaining a clear advantage. Yet, they all decided to unite and share the responsibilities and profits of piloting Mobile Bay.

What if the 1906 hurricane had missed Pilot Town? How much longer do the pilots remain at Navy Cove? The Mobile Bay channel was dredged in 1886 and again in 1896 to greater depths allowing the large steamers to continue through the channel. Nevertheless, the lower bay pilots and the upper bay pilots continued the tradition of swapping pilots in the lower bay. The Navy Cove pilots chose to remain at their seaside enclave. By this time, the village had seemingly morphed into one large familial unit. So many of the homes became linked through younger generations of marriage and family creation. Knowing this geographic area well and the interest that rapidly increased regarding real estate along the Fort Morgan peninsula, it is assumed the village at Navy Cove would have continued well into the twentieth century despite there no longer being a need to be stationed there for work.

But as fate would have it, the 1906 hurricane upended the village, reducing it to rubble. The storm completely changed the landscape at Navy Cove as have many hurricanes since. The absence of property lines perhaps complicated decisions to rebuild. And the trauma encountered by those who remained at the village during the storm was surely too much for some to ever consider having to repeat.

So, we must rely on the memories of the place to bring it back to life. As mentioned above, the documented remembrances are nostalgic. Nostalgia is an emotion of loss. But it can also provide a sense of hope or longing for a better future (Smith and Campbell 2017:612-627). Professor Laurajane Smith and researcher Gary Campbell, in their oral history study concerning nostalgia and industrial heritage, go on to state that nostalgia “selects particular aspects of the past that are emotionally valued and singles them out for particular attention”. This is true with Pilot

Town. The village is defined in the historical record as a utopian and/or almost utopian commune. Other designations of “Camelot” and “paradise” and “ideal” have also been used to describe the unique settlement. This place was resourceful and bountiful and beautiful. But it is the way in which they lived at Pilot Town that has drawn the attention and envy of so many. The vision, the determination, the hard work, the cooperation, the adaptability, the family atmosphere, these are the qualities that have been decided worth remembering for Pilot Town. These are the memories that have helped shape and preserve the heritage of this site. Fortunately, the heritage continues and now includes the roadside historical marker. The importance of memorializations such as these is summed up nicely by French historian Pierre Nora, who explains “without commemorative vigilance, history would soon sweep [these places of memory] away” (Nora 1996, quoted in Shackel 2018:7).

The current descendant interviews/oral histories conducted during this research describe the former community in similar ways although some do have a more pragmatic interpretation than their ancestors before them. Smith and Campbell (2017:623) describe a progressive use of nostalgia...“It is not about yearning for days gone by, but acknowledging those days – recognizing them and understanding their moral worth, and using that recognition as a point from which to ‘carry on,’ and to make a new and improved future.” By and large, this sentiment was shared by each of the oral history participants. The Alabama pilots made their mark on the history of the Gulf Coast. And although the current surviving descendants are several generations removed from the shared life their ancestors chose at Navy Cove, there remains a pride among the stakeholders about what occurred at Pilot Town. And as can be expected, each of the participants feels strongly this story should continue to be told.

It should also be pointed out that additional descendant perspectives may be made possible by future researchers to build on what has been learned here. Other Pilot Town stakeholder participation was sought during this research; however, the constraints of time prevented further involvement. In addition, Pilot Town makes an interesting case study for similar communal settlements described as utopian. It should also be contrasted with other pilot settlements. The cooperative living arrangement at Navy Cove prospered up until the storm. This is abundantly clear in the archival record. It is also reaffirmed in the cultural material. Furthermore, the Pilot Town habitation should be considered when future researchers are comparing alternative settlements, examining what constitutes a utopia, as well as an analysis of the viewpoints from which they are seen in this light.

To date, no definitive internal family documents from the former occupants have been uncovered to reveal that the communards believed themselves to be creating a purposeful and intentional utopian settlement. It is curious, though, that a superficial review of some of the cultural material collected from the site bears a “Utopia Crescent” maker’s mark on the underside of a plate (see Figure 1.2). But when considered with all data collected during this study, this observed trademark appears at this time to be merely coincidental to the research questions.

For certain, Pilot Town shared several of the common utopian traits (communal ownership, egalitarian, shared and physical labor, and cooperative living) identified during this study. However, it did not subscribe to a great many of the other characteristics (anticapitalism, social engineering, social reform, leadership, distinctive change in appearance, restrictive rules, planned development, and a belief the model would spread) attributed to utopias. The current research highlights various types of utopias and acknowledges significant differences within these communities. The pilot village at Navy Cove was not a transient commune welcoming those that

championed a particular cause or those seeking change or enlightenment. This was a competitive labor community that organized and came together as one to protect their way of life. Although Pilot Town was not shown to have been any sort of attempt at reforming society, it did achieve what so many utopian experiments of the time could not, long-term success. For the better part of a century, the Pilot Town settlement more than lived up to Sir Thomas More's utopian definition of "good place." And ever since the fateful storm on September 27, 1906, it has become the duty of historians, archaeologists, descendants, and concerned citizens to keep Pilot Town from becoming a "no place."

Bibliography

Alabama Seaport. (2010). Mobile Bar Pilots: Channeling Commerce for 300 Years. The Official Magazine of the Alabama State Port Authority. 4-6.

American Pilots' Association. (2015). Pilotage in the United States. Electronic document available online at http://www.americanpilots.org/pilotage_in_the_us/index.php, accessed April 2020.

Ancestry.com. (2021). United States Federal Census. Baldwin County, Alabama. 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880 U.S. Census, Population Schedule. Accessed January 2021.

Baldwin Times (1939). "Only Tidal Wave in History of County Destroyed Navy Cove". February 2, 1939.

Barber, Edwin Atlee (1904). Marks of American Potters. The Crescent Pottery, Trenton, N.J. Retrieved from <http://www.trentonhistory.org/Made/Marks.html>, accessed February 2021.

Barrett, Donnie (2000). Letters to the Editor. *Press Register* (Mobile, AL). May 21, 2000.

Baxter, Jane Eva (2012). The Paradox of a Capitalist Utopia: Visionary Ideals and Lived Experience in the Pullman Community. 1880–1900. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 16 (4): 651–65. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23355812>.

Bernard, H. Russell and Gery W. Ryan (2010). Analyzing Qualitative Data: Systematic Approaches. Sage Publications.

Birmingham News (1898). *From the Sea*. Electronic document available online at <https://www.newspapers.com/image/605788348/?terms=navy%20cove&match=1>, accessed March 2021.

Bower, Amy (2009). *A Guide to Historic Ceramics in the Antebellum South*. Rhodes Institute for Regional Studies.

Buskens, Joy Callaway (1986). *Well, I've Never Met a Native-Stories of the Coastal People of Alabama*. Published by Quill Publications, Columbus, Georgia. Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 86-90380.

Bunch, Joey (2000a). "Bar Pilots: Key to a thriving port. 'Camelot' on the Cove. The Pilot Town Legacy". *Mobile Register*. March 19, 2000.

(2000b). "History of a Lost Town by the Sea. 'Camelot' on the Cove. The Pilot Town Legacy". *Mobile Register*. March 20, 2000.

(2000c). "Famed Foe of Lafitte was first to own Pilot Town. 'Camelot' on the Cove. The Pilot Town Legacy". *Mobile Register*. March 20, 2000.

(2000d). "Life in Pilot Town". 'Camelot' on the Cove. The Pilot Town Legacy" *Mobile Register*. March 19, 2000.

(2000e). “The long fight: Descendant’s wage war over Pilot Town land”. ‘Camelot’ on the Cove. The Pilot Town Legacy”. *Mobile Register*. March 21, 2000.

(2000f). “Washed Away”. ‘Camelot’ on the Cove. The Pilot Town Legacy”. *Mobile Register*. March 19, 2000.

(2000g). “Voices from Pilot Town”. ‘Camelot’ on the Cove. The Pilot Town Legacy”. *Mobile Register*. March 19, 2000.

(2000h). “Pilot Town appears to have steered relocation of Baldwin County Seat”. ‘Camelot’ on the Cove. The Pilot Town Legacy”. *Mobile Register*. March 20, 2000.

(2000i). “Tricky Sailing for Pilot Town developers. ‘Camelot’ on the Cove. The Pilot Town Legacy”. *Mobile Register*. March 21, 2000.

Buder, S. (1967). *Pullman: an experiment in industrial order and community planning, 1880-1930*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Carruth, Amy and Emily Warner (2021). *Research Design to Conduct Archaeological Monitoring for the Fairhope Arts Alley Transit Hub Project, Baldwin County, Alabama*. Prepared by TerraXplorations, Inc. Prepared for the City of Fairhope.

Chapman, Curt (2007). “Pilot Town Exhibit Taking Area by Storm”. Unknown newspaper clipping dated January 31, 2007 found in Pilot Town collection housed at Foley Public Library.

Chadick, William Dorgan (1985). “The Lineage of Timothy and Joana Dorgan of Whitewell, County Cork, Ireland”. Compiled and Edited by William Dorgan Chadick. Library of Congress Catalogue Number 89-050520.

Circuit Court of Baldwin County, Alabama (1963). “Deposition of Mrs. Ellen J. Nicholls”. Eleanor J. Nicholls, ET AL. vs. Bivie L. Kinard, ET AL. J.P. Karr, Official Court Reporter for Sixth Judicial Circuit, Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

Comings, L.J. Newcomb and Albers, Martha M. (1928). *A Brief History of Baldwin County*. Fairhope, Ala.: Baldwin County Historical Society.

Covan, Elizabeth (O’Connor) Wilson (2002). “O’Connor-Wilson-Myers”. *The Heritage of Baldwin County, Alabama*. Heritage Publishing Consultants, Inc. Clanton, Alabama. Submitted by H.M. Wilson.

Davidson, Lee (2001). “Future of Pilot Town eyed”. *Press Register*. July 23, 2001.

Dunne, William Matthew Patrick (1988). “Pilot Schooner ALABAMA (ALABAMIAN)”. Written historical and descriptive data, Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service, Department of the Interior. HAER No. MA-64.

Holt, David (1938). *Bar Pilots of Mobile Bay*. Copied from Mobile Post. May 1938.

- Hyer, Bob (1994). "Descendants Inherit Auction Proceeds". *Fairhope Courier*. October 12, 1994.
- Jacksonville Republican (1891). *Particulars of the Killing of Bullock*. Electronic document available online at <https://www.newspapers.com/image/308598270/?terms=particulars%20of%20the%20killing%20of%20bullock&match=1>, accessed March 2021.
- Klaw, S. (1993). *Without Sin: The Life and Death of the Oneida Community*, Allen Lane, New York.
- Ladnier, S.A. (1908). *Before and After the Storm. Navy Cove, Alabama*. Shepard Printing and Stationary Company, Foley, Alabama.
- (1949). Letters to the Editor. *The Onlooker* (Foley, AL). August 25, 1949.
- Mann, Eric (2015). "Bar None. Bar pilots defend exclusivity of rare, lucrative career." *Lagniappe*. October 29, 2015-November 4, 2015.
- Midgette, Maude M. (1912). *Diary of the Storm, September 26-27, 1906*. Baldwin County Historical Society Quarterly vol. 5 no. 3, April 1978.
- Mobile Bar Pilots, LLC. (2006). History. Electronic document available online at <http://www.mobilebarpilots.com/history/>, accessed April 2020.
- Mobile Register (2000a). *The legend of 'Black Bill'*. Electronic document available online at <https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/0FB2D84E2BEE97AF>, accessed August 2020.
- Mobile Register (2000b). *Important dates in long-running suit*. Electronic document available online at <https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/0FB2D84E2BEE97AF>, accessed August 2020.
- More, Thomas (2020). *Utopia*. Tran. Dominic Baker-Smith. Great Britain: Penguin Random House UK, Print.
- National Park Service (NPS). (2017). Utopias in America. Department of the Interior. Electronic document available online at <https://www.nps.gov/articles/utopias-in-america.htm>, accessed May 2020.
- Nora, Pierre (1996). "General Introduction: Between Memory and History." *In Realms of Memory, Conflicts and Divisions*, edited by P. Nora and L. D. Kritzman, 1–20. Vol. I. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Norville, Warren (1994). *The Way it Was...a Maritime History of Mobile Bay*. Videorecording, Public Television Service/Mobile, Alabama.
- O'Brien, Sean Michael (2001). *Mobile, 1865 Last Stand of the Confederacy*. Praeger, 1st edition.

Ostahowski, Brian, and Alison Hanlon (2014). *Archaeological Investigations in Support of the MC252 (Deepwater Horizon) Oil Spill Response in the State of Alabama*. Conducted by HDR Environmental, Operations and Construction, Inc. Prepared for Gulf Coast Incident Management Team.

Parker, Prescott A. (1965). "Tom and Kitty". Submitted by Eloise Wilson to the Baldwin County Genealogical Society in 1977. Volume IV No 2.

Paul, C. A. (2017). The Shakers – A utopian community. *Social Welfare History Project*. Retrieved from <http://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/religious/the-shakers-a-utopian-community-founded-in-u-s-1776/>, accessed December 2020.

Pitzer, D. (1997). Preface. In Pitzer, D. E. (ed.), *America's Communal Utopias*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, pp. 3–13.

Preucel, R., and Pendry, S. (2006). Envisioning Utopia: transcendentalist and Fourierist landscapes at Brook Farm, West Roxbury, Massachusetts. *Historical Archaeology* 40(1): 6-19.

Rich, Doris (1960). "Terrifying '06 Hurricane Along Gulf Coast Recalled". *The Montgomery Advertiser*. June 19, 1960.

(1974). "In 1906, Hurricane Strikes Coast.". Unknown newspaper clipping dated September 9, 1974 found in Pilot Town collection housed at Foley Public Library.

(2001). "Bar Pilots and Pilot Town". *The Heritage of Baldwin County, Alabama*. Heritage Publishing Consultants, Inc. Clanton, Alabama. Submitted by Jeanette Bornholt.

Richards, Lyn and Morse, Janice M. (2007) *Readme First for a User's Guide to Qualitative Methods*. Sage Publications.

Riebe, Gwen Ryan (1958). "Storm of 1906". *Ninth grade school paper published in Joy Calloway Buskens' 1986 book Well, I've Never Met a Native-Stories of the Coastal People of Alabama*.

Saldana, Johnny (2015). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Sage Publications.

Sargent, Lyman Tower (1991). *The Social and Political Ideas of the American Communitarians: A Comparison of Religious and Secular Communes Founded Before 1850*. Penn State University Press: Utopian Studies, 1991, No. 3 (1991), pp. 37-58.

Shackel, Paul A. (2018): Structural violence and the industrial landscape, *International Journal of Heritage Studies*.

Sledge, John S. (2015). *The Mobile River*. Published by the University of South Carolina Press.

Smith, Laurajane and Gary Campbell (2017). 'Nostalgia for the Future': Memory, Nostalgia and the Politics of Class." *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 23 (7): 612–627. DOI:10.1080/13527258.2017.1321034.

Smithweck, David M. (2017). *Mobile Bay Bar Pilots, Including Pilot Town and Navy Cove 1711-2017*.

Snell, Charles W. (1970). National Register of Historic Places Inventory nomination form (Pullman Historic District), held at the SHPO office, Tallahassee, Florida.

Southern Star (1890). "Southern Trust". Author unknown. Electronic document available online at Newspapers.com, accessed June 2020.

Stowe, Noel R. (1999a). *A Phase I Cultural Resources Survey of a Portion of the Bar Pilot Land LLC Property, Southwestern Baldwin County, Alabama*. Conducted by Archaeological Services, Inc. Prepared for Barry A. Vittor and Associates, Inc. Mobile, Alabama.

(1999b). *Phase II Cultural Resources Testing of Archaeological Site 1Ba117 Fort Morgan Peninsula, Baldwin County, Alabama*. Conducted by Archaeological Services, Inc. Prepared for Barry A. Vittor and Associates, Inc. Mobile, Alabama.

(2000) *Phase II Investigations at 1Ba117: Utility Trench Testing. An Appendix to the Report "Phase II Cultural Resources Testing of Archaeological Site 1Ba117 Fort Morgan Peninsula, Baldwin County, Alabama"*. Conducted by Archaeological Services, Inc. Prepared for Bar Pilot, LLC and Barry A. Vittor and Associates, Inc. Mobile, Alabama.

Tarlow, Sarah (2002). Excavating Utopia: Why Archaeologist Should Study "Ideal" Communities of the Nineteenth Centuries. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 6: 299–323.

Trickey, E. (1958) A Chronological Framework for the Mobile Bay Region. *American Antiquity*, 23(4), 388-396. doi:10.2307/276488.

Van Bueren, Thad M. and Sarah A. Tarlow (2006). The Interpretive Potential of Utopian Settlements. *Historical Archaeology*. Vol. 40, No. 1, Daring Experiments: Issues and Insights about Utopian Communities, pp. 1-5.

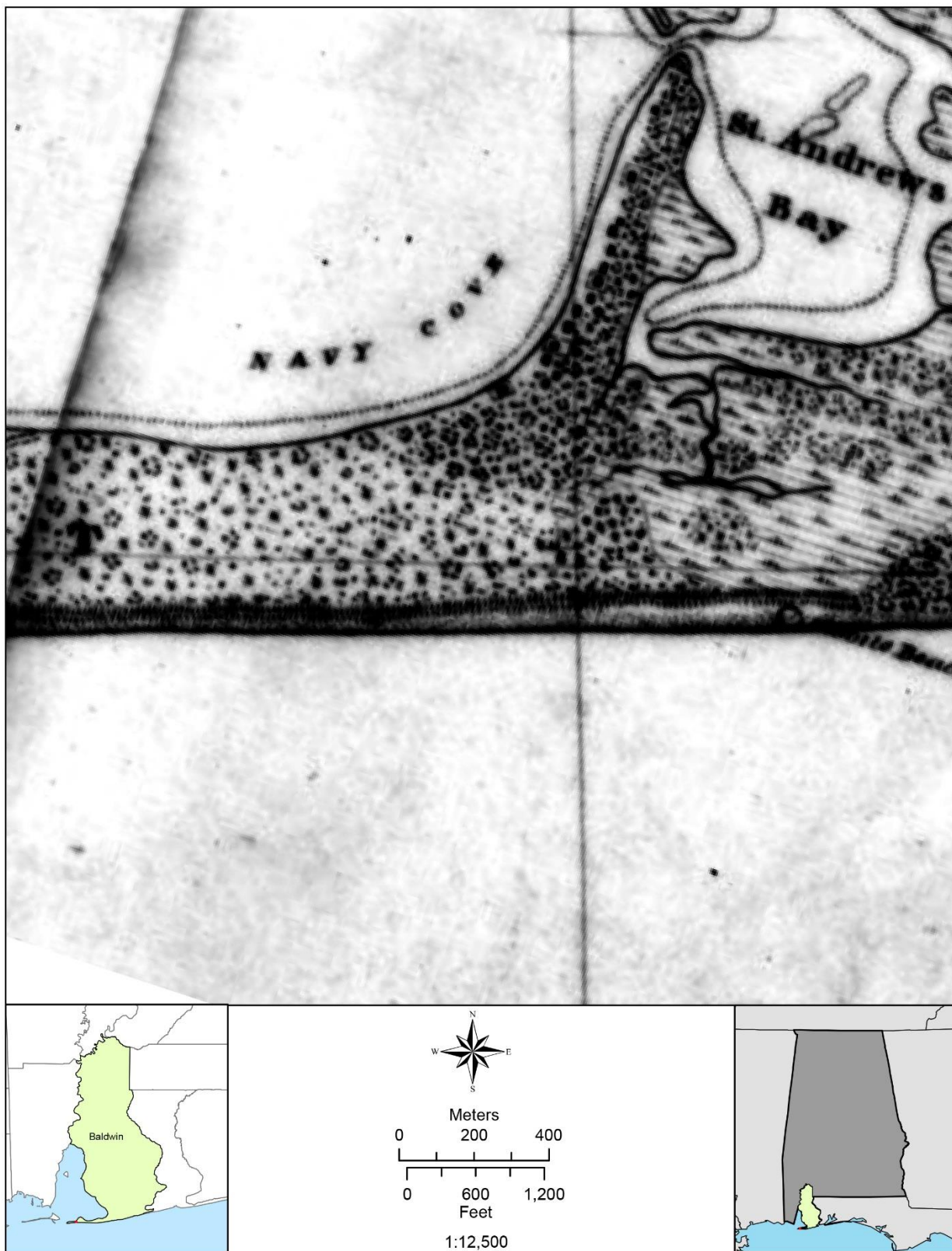
Watson, Brad (1984). "Pilot Town-Vanishes with the Wind". Unknown newspaper clipping dated November 24, 1984 found in Pilot Town collection housed at Fairhope Museum of History.

Werneth, George (1984). "Rebel Scope Proud Part of Mobile Families' Past". *Mobile Press Register*. March 18, 1984.

Yore Lore (2018). "Bar Pilots". Baldwin County Genealogical Society. Volume 26, No 1. accessed at <http://baldwingenealogy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/YORE-LORE-Jan2018.pdf>

APPENDIX A

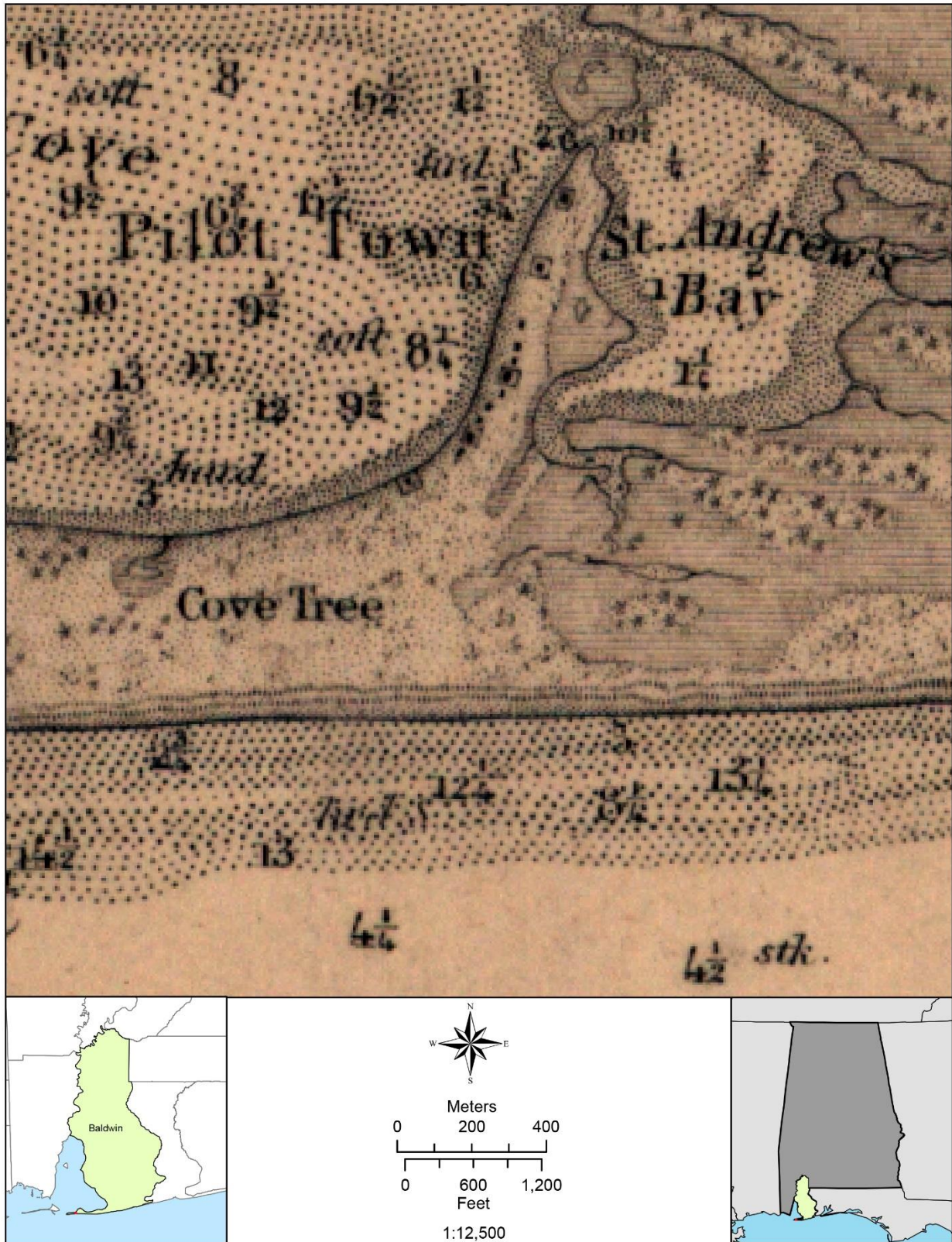
MAPS



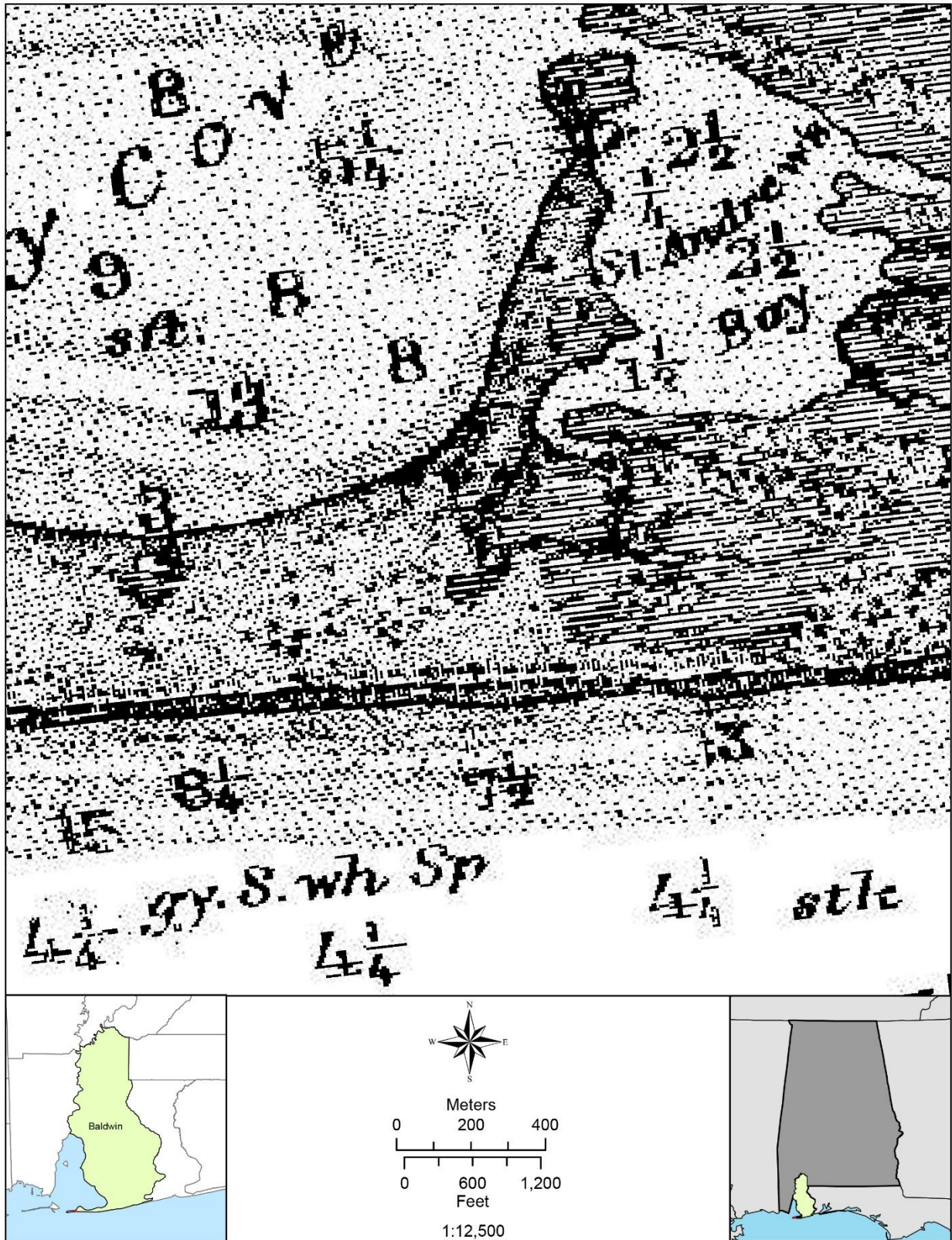
1847 Coast Survey Map showing Pilot Town settlement lining the peninsula.



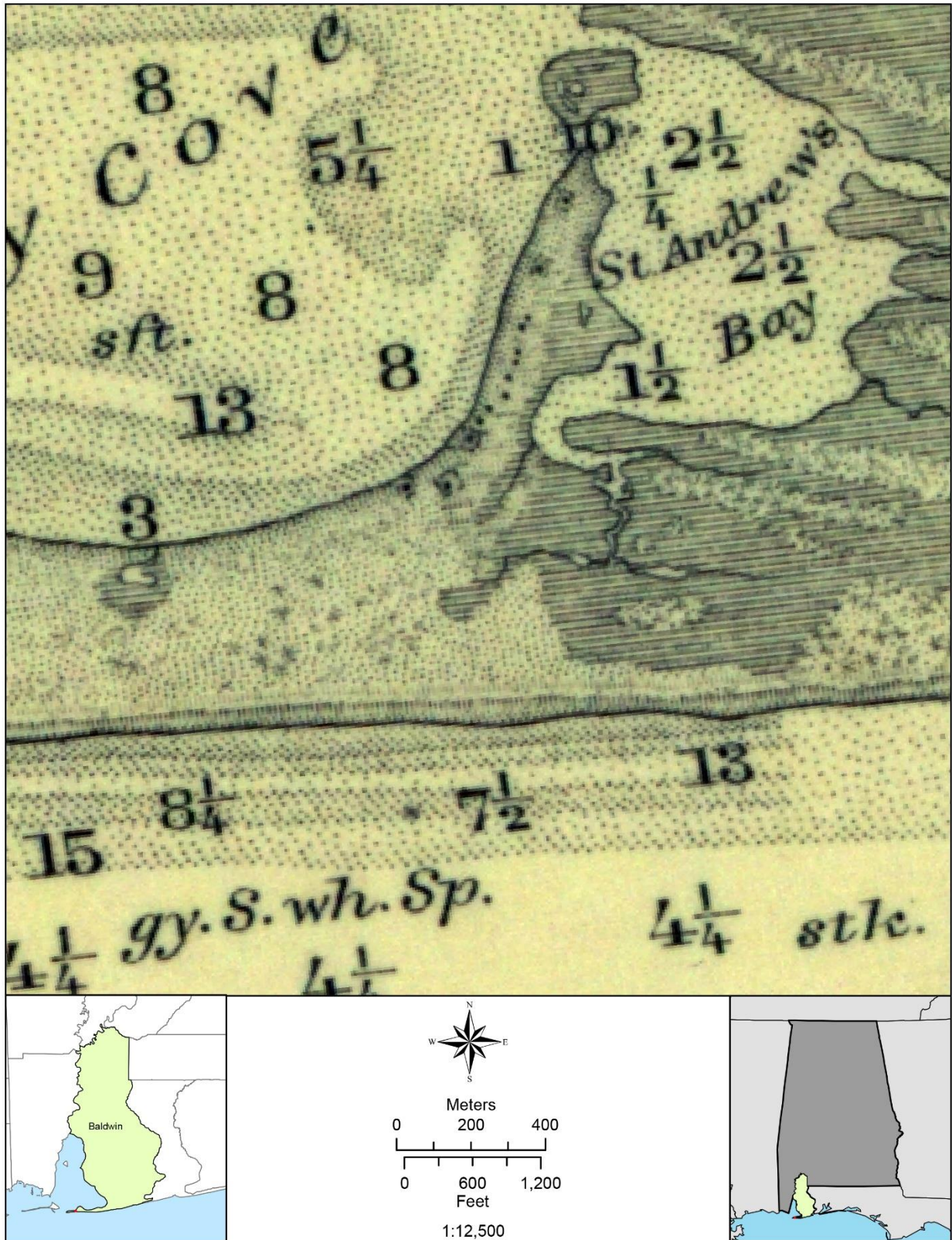
1857 Coast Survey Map showing Pilot Town settlement lining the peninsula.



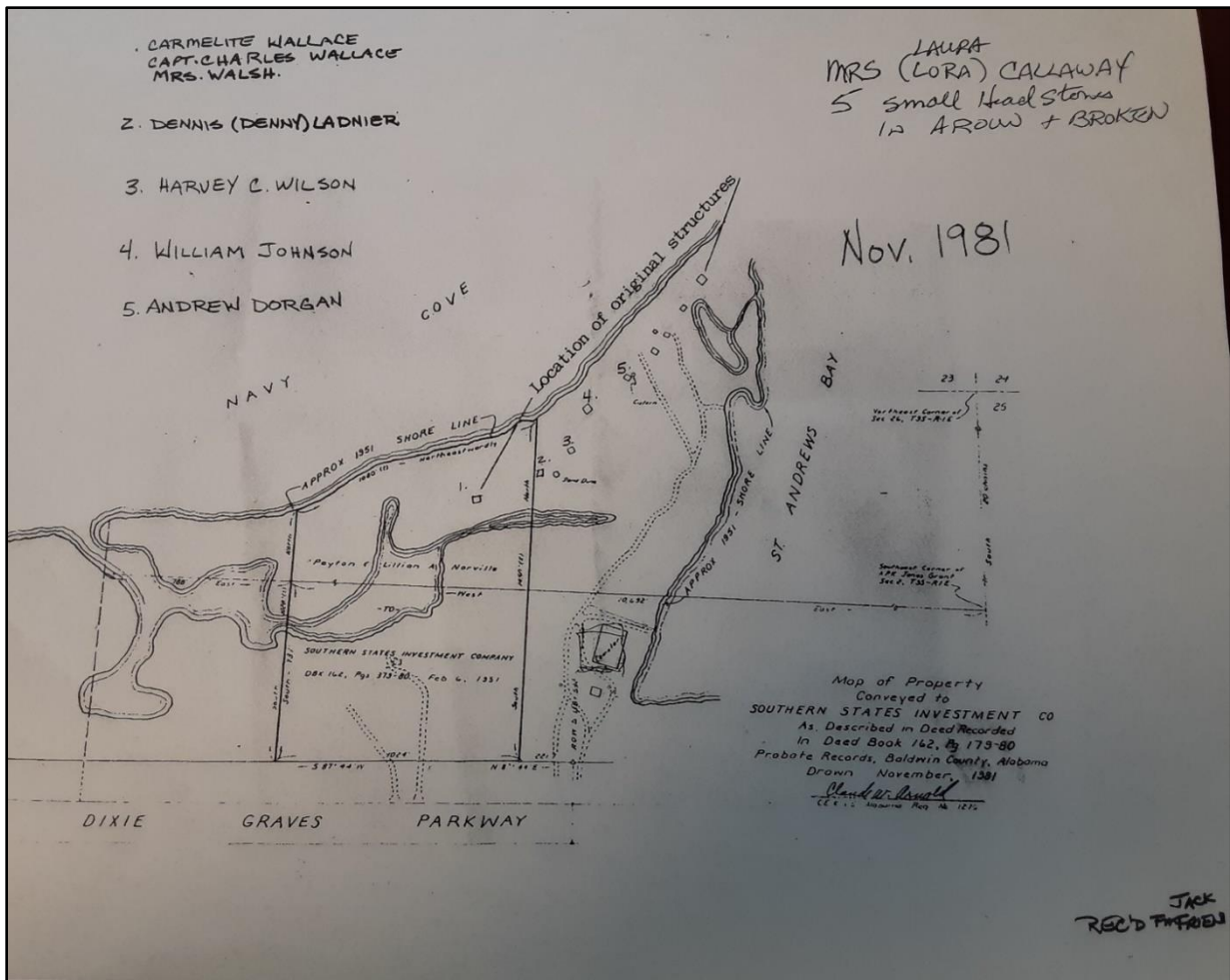
1877 Coast Survey Map showing Pilot Town settlement lining the peninsula.



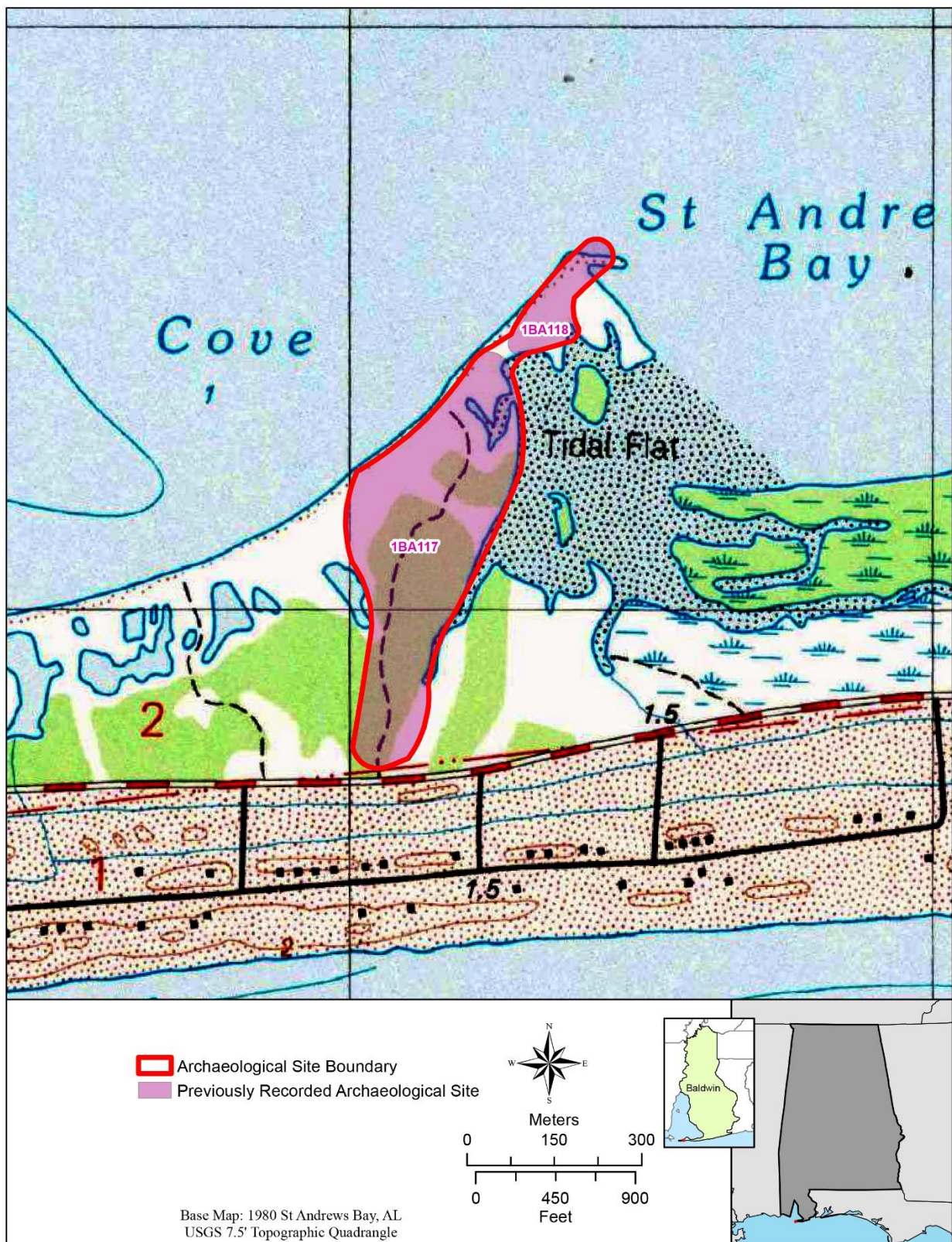
1889 Coast Survey Map showing Pilot Town settlement lining the peninsula.



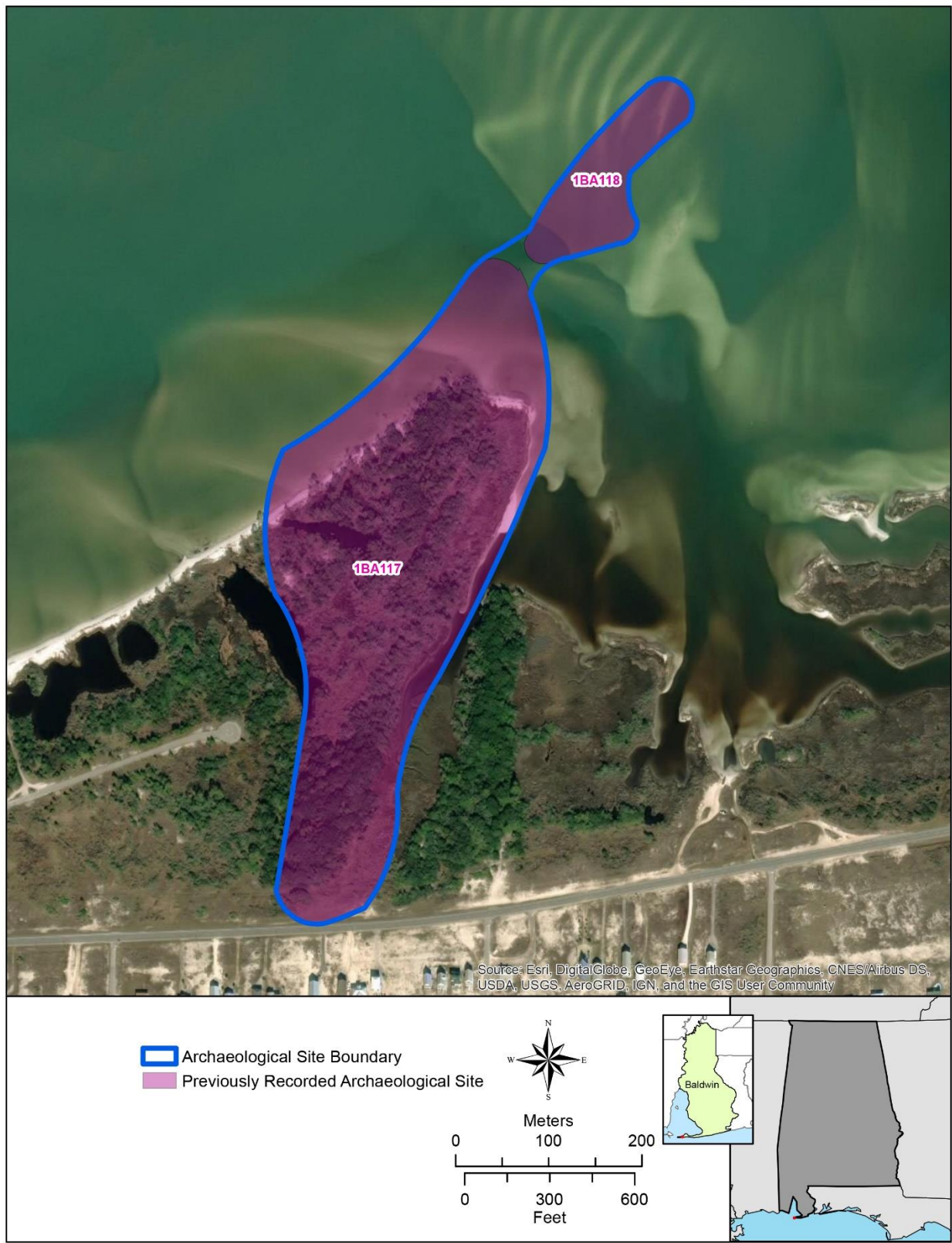
1897 Coast Survey Map showing Pilot Town settlement lining the peninsula. An additional (13th) structure can be seen on this map.



Partial site layout (dated Nov. 1981) (courtesy of Fairhope Museum of History).



1980 St. Andrews Bay topographic map showing Pilot Town (1Ba117 and 1Ba118).



Current aerial showing Pilot Town (1Ba117 and 1Ba118).

APPENDIX B
SAMPLE INTERVIEW GUIDE

Pilot Town (Navy Cove) Interview Questions:

FAMILY

-Which of your relatives lived at Pilot Town?

When and why did they settle in coastal Alabama?

-How did the settlement of Pilot Town shape your life?

-Is your family still piloting?

If yes, who? If no, why?

-Was Pilot Town a permanent or secondary home or summer house for your family?

What years did they reside at Pilot Town?

-Did members of your family marry into other piloting families from Pilot Town?

If so, who?

ARCHITECTURE

-What is the order of the first houses built at Pilot Town?

-Who built the houses? Who built the cisterns?

-Was there any plan or design considered for the homes or were they built piecemeal?

CONFLICT

-Why did the town sell to the railroad and how many acres?

Would this have been a unanimous decision?

-How were disputes between the occupants settled?

TOWN LIFE

-Many of the early bar pilots were born in Europe. Were there language or cultural barriers at Pilot Town?

-Was there a school at or near Pilot Town?

-Were all spaces public?

-Was trash buried or otherwise removed?

-Were domestic duties shared?

If so, explain.

-Were there any rules?

If so, how were they set?

-Was there seniority or leadership in the village?

-Was there a church or place of worship to attend at Navy Cove?

-Historic accounts mention visitors coming to purchase oysters and even fish and hunt. Were these arrangements individually made or did the entire town benefit from these transactions?

-Did this pilot town settlement differ from others of similar function?

If yes, how so?

-Were others (non-pilots) invited to join the community as suggested in the Pilot Town Legacy article?

-Did all outer bar pilots live at Pilot Town?

-Did factors, other than functionality for providing their trade, affect or influence the start of this settlement?

UTOPIA

-Do you believe the Navy Cove bar pilots thought of their settlement as utopian?

-Is there reason to believe community founders were influenced by utopian literary authors or other examples of communal settlement occurring across the country in the nineteenth century?

-Was there any attempt to divide the land after the storm?

-Were there any distinctive social, religious, or philosophical views shared by the community differing of those held in Mobile or other nearby cities and towns?

CEMETERY

-Which of the former Pilot Town residents are buried there?

-If cemetery access were improved would you visit the cemetery?

If so, what steps would you take to restore the cemetery?