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## Black Genealogies Matter in U.S. Genealogy Tourism: A Content Analysis of Family Heritage Books and Plan for the HBCUHeritageHome.com

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Black Genealogies Matter in U.S. Genealogy Tourism:  
A Content Analysis of Family Heritage Books and Plan for the HBCUHeritageHome.com

by

Pamela E. Foster

Under the Direction of W. Patrick Wade, Ph.D.

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

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## ABSTRACT

The U.S. heritage tourism industry only minimally exhibits stories crafted by African-ancestored families about African-ancestored people. Instead, historians and other academicians typically provide site stories about people of African descent. These providers focus on the horrors of slavery and its negative aftermath to boost racial social justice activism, not on ancestral hero stories to foster descendants' positive ancestral self-identity. By focusing on images of Black carnage, the U.S. heritage tourism industry does not reflect African-ancestored people's chosen ancestral self-identities. African-ancestored families choose our ancestral self-identities in the stories we select for our published genealogies and in these books as they most attract us to heritage tourism sites. Yet, African-ancestored published genealogies had not yet been studied as a genre to understand how and why African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts focus on positive ancestral self-identity stories in these books and choose these stories in genealogy tourism. Therefore, to boost African Americans' well-being by maximizing our chosen ancestral storytelling as part of optimal U.S. genealogy tourism experiences, I implemented a two-part content analysis and application research project. First, I analyzed twenty-three African-ancestored genealogies published in the 21st century to understand how African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent ancestral self-identity in these books. I found that in a three-step process explained by the Agapic Agency Theory, the genealogy authors first heroize ancestors, then learn more about ancestors' lives, and finally arrive at ancestral home, where descendants retell ancestral stories and songs. Also among my findings is that these books address education as a core cultural value, particularly higher education, and even more particularly higher education at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Second, I applied the findings and heritage tourism literature best practices to establish along with other

members of the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community the HBCUHeritageHome.com genealogy tourism site and research institute, an ancestral home to celebrate, exhibit, further research, and further produce African-ancestored published genealogies. Others in the academy and elsewhere who work directly for African-ancestored Americans' intergenerational well-being can utilize my findings to assist in building positive ancestral self-identity through family heritage preservation, research, book publication, song production, and related positive genealogy tourism activities.

**INDEX WORDS:** African American genealogy, Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society (AAHGS), Country music, Global slavery tourism, Positive communication, Slavery

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this research to the honor and memory of Benjamin Franklin Greer (1833-1903) and Anna Mariah Clark Greer (1850-1942), the one among my eight sets of great-great-grandparents to whom I trace success in passing along to me their positive identity-shaping values of Christianity, higher education, and service. I also dedicate my work to all other U.S. antebellum enslaved people who likewise in their stories hold the power to positively shape descendants.

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## **1 INTRODUCTION: UNHOUSED AFRICAN-ANCESTORED GENEALOGY TOURISTS**

When Saidiya Hartman (2007) visited slave-trading castles in Ghana in 1996 and 1997 to honor and connect with her ancestors, she sought reflection of her self-identity forged as a New Yorker with ancestors who lived during and after slavery in Montgomery County, Alabama. She was “desperate to reclaim the dead” who spawned descendants with lives on and in cotton and other fields, in a place both she and they call home (p. 16). But with no aesthetic of belonging to specific forebears from Ghana, Hartman’s self-identification as “both a professor conducting research on slavery and a descendant of the enslaved” was not reflected in her experiences with Ghanaian slavery tourism site stories (p. 16). Ghanaian slavery tourism site stories largely depict generic indigenous people as succumbing to and resisting being captured, shackled, traded, and shipped from noble traditional cultures, thereby helping to create the current African diaspora that is fraught with continued oppression and resistance (Baharian et al., 2016; Bruner, 1996; Reed, 2016; Schramm, 2016). The basic storylines Hartman experienced during heritage tourism in Ghana repeat at thousands of other global slavery tourism sites across the world.

Worldwide global slavery tourism sites concentrate in the African, European, and North and South American countries that participated in the 16th- to 19th-century Atlantic Slave Trade. During this global commerce, approximately twelve million Africans traversed the Middle Passage to the Americas (Huell, 2020; UNESCO, 2018; Walvin, 2011). Partly as a result of the Atlantic Slave Trade, people of African descent outside of Africa now number one hundred forty million, compared with 1.4 billion living on the continent (Bryc et al., 2015; Living Legacy, 2017; Salas et al., 2004; Saleh, 2022). As the trade became history, indigenous Africans, diasporic Africans, and our ancestors evolved to our current roles as controversial story subjects,

site interpreters, and visitors in the global slavery tourism industry. The ongoing phenomenon of Hartman and other African Americans inadequately seeing our chosen ancestral self-identities reflected in global slavery tourism site exhibits about specific ancestors to whom we belong is the global communication macro-level problem herein addressed.

Ancestral self-identity is an understanding of self that is derived in any part based upon knowledge of or connection with ancestors in ancestral settings. More ethereally, ancestral self-identity relative to genealogy tourism site stories is conceptualized as “remnants of the experience still lived in the warmth of tradition, in the silence of custom, in the repetition of the ancestral” (Yanhong, 2020, p. 7). This conceptualization distills the problem of African Americans’ representation in genealogy tourism to “blackness as un/housed being” (Cervenak & Carter, 2017, p. 47). African Americans being unhoused in genealogy tourism prior to the herein detailed praxis research meant this consumer market did not have for its consideration an ancestral home full of traditional positive stories about scores of personal ancestors’ and thousands of cultural ancestors’ successes. No comprehensive site where ancestors via their cherished home values and customs serve as model behavioral heroes, defined herein as people held in high esteem as role models for ideology, values, and behaviors. No site where descendant families and scholars easily access underlying documents about these heroes’ experiences and traditions for further research. No site where descendant families congregate by the hundreds to utilize the site’s sufficient homey space, time, and other services while luxuriously and nostalgically performing ancestral selves.

African Americans faced this lack of an ideal genealogy tourism site full of ancestral heroes even while significantly patronizing the genealogy tourism industry. African Americans recently spent \$109 billion a year on U.S. tourism, and African American cultural travelers spent

an average of \$2,078 per trip (MMGY, 2021; Travel Pulse, 2018). African American cultural travelers' spending contributes to the U.S. heritage tourism industry's 2023 projected revenues of \$1.5 billion (IBISWorld, 2023b). This is as the industry includes no site that focuses on our chosen ancestral self-identities in stories about specific ancestors with whom we claim domiciled belonging. African Americans inadequately seeing our chosen ancestral self-identities in the U.S. genealogy tourism industry for which we provide stories and revenue is the national and intergenerational family mezzo-level communication problem herein resolved.

## **1.1 Background**

Also part of the global genealogy products and services industry valued at \$3.4 billion in 2021 and projected to boom to \$8.8 billion by 2030 (Verified Market Research, 2022), genealogy tourism sites are identity enhancers in action. Increasing in importance as genealogy booms, genealogy tourism sites are where processes of “(a) affirming ethnic identity (who am I?) and (b) (re)negotiating ethnic identity (what will I become?)” form a dialectic “at the very core of roots tourism and undoubtedly one in need of further examination” (Higginbotham, 2012, pp. 199-200). This is a call for examining the stories in roots tourism that provide future-enhancing dialogue between ancestors and descendants. My examination is of actions by ancestors of African origin and stories written by their U.S. descendants, many and not all of whom identify as African American. These descendants are herein sometimes described as African-ancestored, the preferred designation of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society (AAHGS), the United States' premier national Black genealogy organization. Founded in 1977, and with 2020 revenues of \$157,000 and a collection of nearly fifty years of archived newsletters, journals, programming documents, and more, AAHGS “preserve[s] African-ancestored family

history, genealogy, and cultural diversity by teaching research techniques and disseminating information throughout the community” (AAHGS, n.d., para. 1; IRS, 2020c). In keeping with people’s preferred identities, I refer to African Americans in this manuscript as Black, diasporan, and other characteristic adjectives and nouns, capitalized and not, according to the words speakers choose. Similarly, as my own identity is in this diasporic community as an embedded member of its U.S. genealogy enthusiast subset whose identity work I study, I use first-person singular and plural pronouns where relevant throughout this analysis and application research.

African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts’ chosen ancestral self-identity stories matter not merely because knowledge of family stories generally is acclaimed as personally enriching. These stories matter because family knowledge and positive identity stories empirically and closely correlate with people’s overall well-being. Research across disciplines clearly establishes that positive stories are correlated with developing positive self-identities and behaviors (Barge, 2003; Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Feiler, 2013; Fivush et al., 2008, 2010; George, 2018; Jordaan & Coetzee, 2017; Jordan, 2014; McKenna, 2010; McLean, 2015; Merrill et al., 2019). Often, African-ancestored identity is understood through a critical race theory (CRT) lens that focuses on structural power struggles (Baber, 2017; Bell, 2019; Benjamin, 2019; Crenshaw, 1989). GerDonna J. Ellis (2020), a lecturer at Boise State University who teaches oral communication, urges scholars and the American public to consider other theories to understand African Americans through our self-constructed positive identity stories:

Giving voice to people of color who do not identify with the oppression narrative, who highlight salient identity markers beyond race, and who feel like they are in positions of influence and thriving in their lives is worth exploring in future research. (pp. 92-93)

My herein detailed examination of conversations between ancestors and descendants that affirm and renegotiate positive ancestral self-identity develops a new theory that explains which

ancestral representations Hartman and other African Americans seek for our own ancestral self-identity crafting while reclaiming ancestors through roots tourism and why.

My examination so illuminates in part because it puts the conversation stories in physical space, consistent with the academy's findings that spaces, especially homey spaces, are a crucial communication medium through which people act out identity (Austin, 2020; Bowman, M. S., 2006; Bowman, R. L., 2006). So, as part of identity that reflects strength rather than deficit, connected are well-being and physical space, especially home, in establishing the salience of acting out chosen ancestral self-identity. Connecting identity performance and well-being, narrative performance theory "locates communication as family storytelling—how participants take family experiences and make them into stories for themselves and others, whether as family members, performance artists, or scholars" (Braithwaite et al., 2018, p. 212). Narrative performance theory connects family stories with present and future well-being:

[F]amily storytelling forms bodies and identities into small group cultures of memories, sensibilities, and possibilities....In storytelling, families imagine and re-imagine themselves in acts of sense-making and survival, holding onto and letting go of familiar-familial meanings and identities as new stories adapt to changing environments. (p. 212)

It is, indeed, then, ancestral self-performance in time and place and its impact on well-being that make genealogy tourism sites such profound identity enhancers in action. Because of their importance in domiciled identity-shaping and overall well-being, genealogy tourism sites and optimal story application at one such homey site are the focus of my research.

Genealogy tourism often is designated as or as a portion of heritage tourism, and it represents a panoply of terms related to roots tourism (Clarke, 2006). Regarding African Americans, the terms roots tourism, heritage tourism, genealogy tourism, ancestral tourism, personal heritage tourism, legacy tourism, diaspora tourism, and similar monikers used throughout scholarship and this text currently are synonymous with global slavery tourism. They

are synonymous because, until the herein implemented research, major sites of these tourism types around the world all focused on the Atlantic Slave Trade and/or its negative aftermath for stories of people of African descent (Skipper & Davidson, 2018). Genealogy tourism sites' focus on Black trauma stories extends in particular to plantations and three major African American heritage tourism sites in the United States.

In the United States, plantation tourism sites are the original contributors to the U.S. genealogy tourism industry's inadequate ancestral self-identity reflection problem for African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts. Scholars, interpreters, and visitors note that the country's approximately four hundred plantation tourism sites focus on Black trauma wherever Black stories are told (Adamkiewicz, 2016; Giovannetti, 2009; Johnson, 2015; Modlin, 2008; Modlin et al., 2011, 2018). Plantations evolved over time to presenting their current Black trauma storylines. Officially beginning with U.S. first President George Washington's Mount Vernon in 1860 and followed by such sites as seventh President Andrew Jackson's The Hermitage in 1889, plantation tourism sites originated to celebrate white Southern plantation life. These sites, therefore, traditionally have "said little about the lives of the enslaved within their tours and marketing" (Alderman, 2013, p. 377). At the same time, plantation tourism sites are "ground zero in understanding not just African American history but also how the modern tourism industry has tended to disinherit black travelers from their heritage" (p. 377). Plantations added Black trauma stories at the insistence of historians and other scholars and activists. Now plantations are among the most controversial heritage tourism sites for African Americans seeking positive ancestral self-identity in the U.S. genealogy tourism industry.

The controversy intensifies because the U.S. genealogy tourism industry, including plantations, largely has approached its historical and multifaceted problem of African

Americans' inadequate ancestral self-identity reflection by joining the rest of the global slavery tourism industry in increasing the number of slavery horror stories about people of African descent (Bright et al., 2018; Skipper & Davidson, 2018; Skipper & Thomas, 2020; UNESCO, 2013, 2019; US/ICOMOS, 2016). It now is standard fare, for instance, for U.S. plantation tour guides to point out and discuss dehumanization, marginalization, victimization, and other horrors in the fields, structures, and rooms within those structures "that were once workplace, refuge and home for the slaves who did the majority of the plantation's labor" (Harrison, 2008, p. 2). These additional plantation stories about African Americans attract some African American visitors, who tend not to return as repeat visitors (Clark et al., 2011). When African Americans do frequent plantation tourism sites, rather than stories of dehumanization, marginalization, victimization, and other horrors of slavery, stories of family are the draw.

Family stories attract African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts to plantations because of the stories' positive intergenerational lessons embodied in amalgamated places of work, hearth, and home settings (Gordon-Reed, 2008; Hoggard, 2014; McVeigh, 2014; Stanton, 2012). Given that African American genealogy tourists want to see ourselves as belonging to the exhibit subjects who reflect back to visitors positive ancestral self-identities forged in home settings, plantations ideally should depict more stories of enslaved people's "homeplaces" where our rich "personal stories" are models for descendants (Rose, 2004, p. 30). African American genealogy enthusiasts collect personal stories of home and about people to whom we belong by engaging in the practice of genealogy research (Beasley, 1997; Burness, 2021; Decker et al., 2021; Smith, 2016, 2017) and sometimes retelling the stories in published genealogies. In small and growing ways, some of these published genealogies are utilized in plantation exhibit stories to positively depict ancestral role models (Brown, 2010; Callum, 1978, 1979; Jackson, 2008, 2016, 2020;

Redford, 2005/1988; Rose, 2004, 2006, 2014, 2016; Wilson, 1985). African American genealogy books, then, are central both in understanding components of African Americans' chosen ancestor reclamation stories and in representing this consumer segment's chosen ancestral self-identities at plantation tourism sites. Therefore, I study African-ancestored published genealogies to establish an ideal U.S. genealogy tourism site that reflects African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts' chosen ancestral self-identities.

Published genealogies demonstrate how family stories fit into larger macro human histories and micro personal self-identities (Decker et al., 2021; Evans, 2021). Defined “rhetorically according to the people who participate in genres and make the forms meaningful” (Devitt, 2004, p. 3), published genealogies are book genre with the common salient feature of connecting descendants with ancestors. This definition from descendants' perspective is as opposed to genres being defined by scholars, who categorize books in such genres as fiction, short story, biography/autobiography, nonfiction, and narrative nonfiction (California Department of Education, 2018). Genealogies transcend these academic literary genres, which in turn help to form subgenres of genealogies.

Published genealogies date to antiquity and gained prominence in the Bible. The books of *Genesis* and *Acts* being most noted as and for their genealogies that fit the lives of Adam and Jesus into larger histories and personal identities. In assessing *Genesis*, Biblical scholar Brian Neil Peterson (2022) notes that “[t]he opening two verses of ch. 5 identify the purpose of the genealogical list of the chapter: to relate ‘the book of the generations of Adam’ (v. 1)...[T]he author clearly seeks to present a ‘reliable’ genealogy from Adam to Noah” (p. 68) and specifically in book form:

[O]nly Adam is said to have fathered a son (i.e. Seth) “in his likeness, according to his image”....As the archetype/father of all creation, the author makes it clear that all

subsequent generations carry the image and likeness of their forefather Adam. That is, all humanity carries the “image of God”. (p. 69)

In addition to connecting family members with God, Biblical stories of ancestry name inheritances and beneficiaries, akin to wills, and recount stories of who did what, with what historical and current results shaping descendants’ identities, and where.

Acclaimed for his Biblical scholarship on place-based identity, Willie James Jennings (2017) particularly looks to the book of *Acts* to explain domiciled genealogical identity in the Bible and how that relates to contemporary identity-shaping. He says that by physically acting in the world with Jesus, the disciples became “an irrefutable presence of an experience with Jesus even as they give space through their lives for Jesus himself to speak to others” (p. 18):

Jennings asks: “What if it seemed strange, odd, and even impossible for you to conceive of your identity apart from a specific order of space—specific land, specific animals, trees, mountains, waters, and arrangements of days and nights?” This relationship of kinship to a place and all its inhabitants, of receiving one’s identity from them, was (and is) the reality of many Indigenous worlds, which European colonizers have continuously devastated since the sixteenth century. (Cornell, 2023, p. 155)

The late distinguished humanities professor William C. Placher and Amy Plantinga Pauw (2017), who serves on the Columbia Series in Reformed Theology editorial board, concur with Jennings that “in the book of Acts and in every time and every place” people “conjure identity through their stories, weaving together a vision of the past of a people with implicit instruction about how they should see themselves in the present” (p. 8). The Biblical ancestral stories include tales of migration (Hiebert, 2023), wins, sins, losses, and redemptions, all also key features of published genealogies as these books have evolved.

Genealogy enthusiasts primarily of the nobility and in memoir form created the first published family heritage books in western culture by the 1570s (Deguin, 2020). In addition to focusing on place, these memoirs reveal the family even as they ostensibly are stories about the individual and pave the way for converse findings that more definitive genealogies reveal the individual even as they ostensibly are stories about the family (Weil, 2013). The earliest western memoirs help to show the breadth of what the published genealogy genre encompasses and similarities and contrasts among the subgenres. The first known published African American genealogy is a fictionalized family heritage published in 1837. Following that book, one peak in interest in publishing African American genealogies in sizeable numbers dates to the 1970s' and 1980s' spur in the wake of work by Alex Haley (1973, 1976a, 1976b, 2018; Haley & Ferris, 2008) and Carter G. Woodson (The Associates, 1985, 1986, 1987).

Despite its long history spiked by several booms, including the current high interest, publication of African-ancestored genealogies remains minimally documented. In partial evidence of the minimal documentation of African American genealogies, the Library of Congress' bibliography of these and related books, released in 2009 and updated in 2020, contains only two hundred twenty-three African American published genealogies. These books are listed among related works such as how-to books often called genealogies. Only sixty-five definite genealogies are listed as having been published in the 21st century (Connor & Johnson, 2009; Johnson, 2020). Not only are these books not yet well curated at the largest library in the world, neither until now had a suitable theoretical framework been developed to understand these privately- and commercially-published African American genealogies. Suitable frameworks to understand African American published genealogies are hinted at in a spate of how-to African American genealogy books (Barksdale-Hall, 2005; Blockson & Fry, 1991; Burroughs, 2001;

Rose & Eichholz, 2003/1978; Smith, 1983). But until the herein detailed research, a potentially effective lens had been neither well-defined nor derived from analysis of a set of published genealogies.

The need for suitable means to understand and explain family-facing privately-published and outward-facing commercially-published African American genealogies is evidenced in part by marked and until now unexplained differences between how African American descendants of antebellum U.S. enslaved people speak, in various settings, of our own ancestors and how current major genealogy tourism site providers and scholars speak of those same ancestors. These differences account for the heretofore dearth of African American genealogy enthusiasts' chosen ancestral stories presented for tourism. These framing differences are evident even at plantation tourism sites that lead the U.S. heritage tourism industry in showcasing descendants of the enslaved's positive ancestral stories. The Sotterley Plantation is such a leader as it increases representation of enslaved people as home dwellers based on descendants' published genealogies, on its way to over the long term transferring full site operation to descendants (J. K. Pirtle, personal communication, October 9, 2019; Pirtle, 2013).

Differences in storytelling about enslaved African Americans at Sotterley are evident based upon storyteller. For instance, African American descendant of Sotterley enslaved people Agnes Kane Callum (1978, 1979) speaks of her ancestors' lives in such terms as "from which experience he learned..." and "strength of character," while original site operators use such concepts and terms as suffering "social and economic gap" and suffering "paternalistic and racist attitudes towards blacks" when speaking about the same ancestors (Brown, 2010, pp. 66-67). Here we see a descendant's plantation story terminology points to positive ancestral qualities and values in which descendants can take pride and delight, while non-descendant site provider

terminology points to undesirable inheritances of suffering in victimhood with a focus on the brutal victimizers.

Callum (1978, 1979) shared stories from her published genealogies with Sotterley, where they remain the stories that most attract her family and other African American genealogy tourists. Delighting in the benefits to her family members of positive, self-selected ancestral stories, Callum says of the younger generations of her family and Sotterley that “to bring them here and show them, that is tremendous. Now, I think this really should be preserved...to make it understandable to the children, so they will have some faith in the plantation” (Historic Sotterley, 2011, 11:57-12:27). Callum elaborates by adding that “my people that are living today, they are proud. They are proud of our ancestors and, of course, the things that they did. I am lucky to be connected to Sotterley” (Historic Sotterley, 2011, 12:28-12:54). The differences between how descendants and others speak of enslaved African Americans and the benefits of positive ancestral storytelling are reasons to fully understand descendants’ ancestral story choices and framing processes. My research provides an understanding of these differences by focusing on descendants’ ancestral story choices and framing processes in our published genealogies.

How African American families create and circulate purposefully positive family stories of intergenerational home values in published genealogies demanded inquiry into the process and results of these books so that descendants’ chosen self-identity-reflecting ancestral stories can flourish at a U.S. genealogy tourism site. To provide a mechanism for fully understanding African American families via self-perceived collective identities in amalgamated home, educational, social, and other settings, “the role of media, communication and imagination in the formation of these communities needs to be critically interrogated” (Budarick, 2014, p. 150). In the herein detailed interrogation and implementation, I answer the demand to deconstruct and

elevate more into the U.S. genealogy tourism industry the storylines African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts choose to share in our published genealogies.

While published genealogies that feature plantations as ancestral homesites attract some African American descendants of enslaved people to genealogy tourism at plantations, the framing of these and other plantation stories repels other descendants. Repelled descendants cringe in part because “careful readings of plantation images suggest that slavery’s physical and psychic violence is always active within scenes of nostalgia” (Adams, 2007, p. 17). Given that African American plantation stories focus on violence and sexual and other exploitation, “even at museums where narratives and landscapes center on enslaved people, the presence of the master and enslaver within the same space ensures that once-enslaved people are always commemorated as less than fully human subjects” (Modlin et al., 2018, p. 335). In these and other ways, African American stories at plantation tourism sites often are hidden, minimized, maximized, or fetishized to achieve site providers’ goals amid growing ethnically and otherwise diversifying visitorship (Alderman et al., 2008, 2015; Bright & Carter, 2016; Cook, 2016, 2018; Cook & Bright, 2017; Eichstedt & Small, 2002; Johnson, 2018, 2019). African-ancestored descendants, then, have documented reason to reject plantation exhibits that others create about our ancestors for their own reasons and embrace self-authored exhibited ancestral stories for our families’ well-being. Similarly, the Atlantic Slave Trade and persistent injustices give scholars and others reason to embrace the horrors of slavery and their negative impact. Scholars are divided between advocating a focus on positive or negative African-ancestored stories at plantations, with those who prefer the negative often misidentifying the positive as apologia for slavery.

In all, scholars say the additional positive and negative African American stories being implemented at plantations to address the problem of African American representation in the

U.S. genealogy tourism industry present three overlapping and conflicting identity concerns for African-ancestored genealogy tourists: 1) African Americans are represented too little as experiencing home settings by connections to ancestors as life models, such that the omissions obscure day-to-day life values, behaviors, and successes to be bequeathed to descendants; 2) African Americans are represented too much as exploited by slavery and its negative aftermath, such that the exploitation obscures agency; and 3) African Americans are represented too little as exploited by slavery and its negative aftermath, such that the exploitation omissions obscure the depth and significance of the horrors and who should make amends for them. Just as antebellum plantations were sites where African Americans were the greatest assets, as physical and psychological laborers (Berry, 2017), contemporary plantations are “where the bodies of black slaves have once again become fodder for an innovating capitalist industry” (Miles, 2015, p. 118), now as story subjects, historical interpreters, and visitors in the \$1.5 billion U.S. heritage tourism industry (IBISWorld, 2023b). In part because of plantations’ persistent and latest variations of the U.S. genealogy tourism industry’s African American representation problem, stakeholders in African-ancestored public memory look beyond plantations for heritage tourism site stories that enhance descendants’ lives.

### ***1.1.1 Beyond Plantations***

A host of heritage tourism experts now doubt that plantations, in part because of their original mission, ever can meet African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts’ ancestral tourism needs. The leading group of plantation tourism scholars, for instance, asks, “should our focus be on other ways to effect change instead of trying to help reform site-specific plantation museums that...continue to valorize [white] ownership over [African American] activity?” (Modlin et al.,

2018, p. 340). As doubt developed that traditional plantation tourism sites can well represent African American identity, three recent additions joined the heritage tourism landscape to partially address the U.S. genealogy tourism industry's African American representation problem. These three sites are the Whitney Plantation, the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC), and the Legacy Museum.

Each of the three major African American heritage tourism sites addresses the African American representation problem by focusing on findings that plantations and other U.S. heritage tourism sites underrepresent the horrors of slavery and its negative aftermath. This conceptualization of the problem leads operators of these sites to focus on slavery horror stories and the horror of their aftermath. The three also somewhat address that heritage tourism representation of African Americans which focuses too much on horrors of slavery and its negative aftermath obscures agency, and they address that heritage tourism representation of African Americans which focuses too little on experiencing home settings by connections to ancestors as life models obscures day-to-day life values, behaviors, and successes to be bequeathed to descendants. Because of these final two conceptualizations of the U.S. heritage tourism problem regarding African-ancestored stories, the three also exhibit African American agency and family homelife, albeit to a much lesser extent than they present the horror stories.

The first of the three major new African American sites is the Whitney Plantation, which opened in 2014 in Wallace, Louisiana (Amsden, 2015; Calvente & García, 2020). This 2,000-acre nontraditional plantation tourism site's main exhibit displays hand-crafted statues of enslaved children as the site presents stories of such children being beaten, eaten, overworked, ill-clothed, ill-fed, denied education, and otherwise victimized during and following slavery (Golańska, 2020; Sims, 2018; Spears, 2020; Whitney, n.d.). The second recent major solution is

the NMAAHC, which opened in 2016 on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. (Bunch, 2015, 2019; Kelley, 2016; NMAAHC, 2016, 2017; Wilson, 2016). Housed in a 350,000-square-foot, crown-shaped building evoking a three-deck slave ship, the NMAAHC exhibits African Americans' "arc of history" (Ryzik, 2016, para. 2), pitting "uplift and tragedy seemingly on a fixed collision course" (Cotter, 2016, para. 10). The slavery exhibit at this site is "[o]ne of the most visited spaces" as it "tells the history of slavery and the paradox of freedom in the United States" (Grim et al., 2017, p. 54). The uplift at this site is in the form of hero stories of social and cultural icons not connected with most visitors' families.

The third recent major addition to the U.S. African American heritage tourism landscape is the Legacy Museum (EJI, 2022; Hasian & Paliewicz, 2020). This 11,000-square-foot site, joined by its 6-acre companion the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, opened in 2018 in Montgomery, Alabama. This site employs "unique technology to dramatize the enslavement of African Americans, the evolution of racial terror lynchings...legalized racial segregation and racial hierarchy in America" (Legacy Museum, n.d., para. 4). Violence depicted at this site includes people being boiled in oil, fingers and toes being severed and pickled for mementoes, and people amassing and being photographed to celebrate and disseminate the gore. While the Legacy Museum does not appear on the Alabama tour guide's top 25 list (Jain, n.d.), the site reports attracting the state's second-highest number of tourists and is expanding operations (EJI, 2022). Each of these three major U.S. sites of slavery and related horrors attracts African Americans among others to engage with violence committed against and human carnage of African-ancestored people.

Even as they mostly draw upon scholarly works in the history discipline for their core stories, the three major sites pay some homage to African-ancestored genealogy for stories and

address visitors' desires to connect our own identities with identities of specific ancestors. For instance, the Whitney Plantation and the Legacy Museum incorporate genealogy in part by featuring enslaved people's names inscribed on structures, a common heritage tourism practice (Araujo, 2020), and spaces for descendants to ceremonially both mourn and honor ancestors. The NMAAHC (n.d.a) offers genealogy in three key ways. One is a permanent exhibit of the Clara Ellis Payne family stories of people U.S. fourth President James Madison enslaved at his Montpelier plantation and their descendants (NMAAHC, n.d.c). This exhibit is featured in the NMAAHC's slavery section, which dominates the site by spanning the full basement floor. The NMAAHC's (2021b) second engagement with genealogy is the Robert Frederick Smith Explore Your Family History Center. This physical center succeeds the *Memory Book* interactive online site of African Americans' posted images and stories of ancestral artifacts, which began before the physical site opened (Davis, 2016). The center utilizes the NMAAHC's online and physical genealogical resource collection to help visitors "learn the basics of researching African American genealogy" (NMAAHC, n.d.b, para. 1).

The NMAAHC's third genealogy offering is an online exhibit about *Proud Shoes* (Murray, 1973/1956; PMCHSJ, n.d.), a hybrid genealogy and autobiography/memoir. Authored by Pauli Murray, the civil and women's rights activist who became the first African American woman Episcopal priest, the book was published in 1956, two decades before Haley's 1976 best-selling book and 1977 ratings-leading television miniseries, *Roots: An American Saga* (Bowers, 1992; Gerber, 1977; Green, 2020; Haley, 1973, 1976a, 1976b, 2018; Haley & Ferris, 2008; Hogan, 2019). *Proud Shoes* highlights Murray's positive inheritance of activism from her maternal ancestors, family members' education, and other lofty endeavors. The book also laments low points in her family history, largely attributed to continuing worldwide structural

racism and sexism linked to the Atlantic Slave Trade (O'Dell, 2001). Education stories include education at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Murray conveys stories, for instance, of her grandfather's service as a teacher of freedmen, her HBCU Howard University alumnus father's teaching and administrative work in the Baltimore public school system, her own race- and gender-based rejections from predominantly white schools, and her experiences at Howard University Law School, including graduating at the top of her class. In its focus on family pride, education, and positive inheritances, Murray's book is characteristic of other African American genealogies, which also focus on these three elements.

The *Proud Shoes* exhibit "gives rise to a better understanding of the critical role African American ancestry and genealogy plays in the history of the American family experience" (NMAAHC, 2021a, para. 4). This exhibit-opening claim that *Proud Shoes* helps people better understand African American genealogies' critical role in the history of American families is not accompanied by deep analysis of *Proud Shoes* or other African American published genealogies to help people understand these books. Such a fundamental textual content analysis of African American published genealogies, as here presented in my research, yields understanding of motivations, balance and distribution of elements, process, and broader praxis implications of the African American genealogy genre's storylines for optimal African American genealogy tourism representation. The broader praxis implications are for the HBCUHeritageHome.com as a new evidence-based practical, sustainable solution to the U.S. genealogy tourism industry's African American representation problem.

### ***1.1.2 The HBCUHeritageHome.com: A New Evidence-based Practical, Sustainable Solution***

That stories from published genealogies most attract African Americans to plantation tourism sites, that the three major U.S. African-ancestored heritage tourism sites focus on horrors of slavery and its negative aftermath, and that no major African American heritage tourism site focuses on the genealogy stories African American genealogy enthusiasts choose to publish all point to an additional way to address a portion of the U.S. genealogy tourism industry's African American representation problem. The additional way suggested by these facts to well represent African-ancestored customers in the genealogy tourism industry is to vastly increase African Americans' genealogy stories at a major genealogy tourism site and research institute based on the stories published in African-ancestored genealogies. This tourism and research site is the HBCUHeritageHome.com, which I lead a group of its users in establishing and further developing to reflect content choices in the studied African-ancestored published genealogies. The site is to immerse visitors in self-selected stories of ancestors' educational experiences at home and as extended to the higher education world.

In development for 2027 grand opening, the HBCUHeritageHome.com highlights African-ancestored published genealogies' education stories, dominated by and not limited to ancestral experiences with HBCUs. The herein detailed content analysis and application of African American genealogy book stories, in which higher education stories are centrally featured as they are in other African American heritage research findings (Johnson, 2000, 2021), results in a warm and homey, tradition- and custom-filled tourism and academic research site on a grand scale, surpassing the magnitude of the three major U.S. African-ancestored heritage tourism sites combined. Through my praxis research, then, the role several African-ancestored published genealogies at plantations and *Proud Shoes* at the NMAAHC play in providing stories

for heritage tourism site exhibits one family at a time is elevated beyond current settings. African-ancestored published genealogies are elevated both individually and collectively to play the leading role in providing stories and research text at the HBCUHeritageHome.com genealogy tourism site dedicated to African-ancestored families' positive genealogy tourism experiences. I am the lead researcher for the HBCUHeritageHome.com.

As lead researcher for the HBCUHeritageHome.com, I coordinate the other non-profit professionals. My academic service as coordinator is consistent with applied qualitative research in heritage tourism (Alivizatou, 2016/2012; Boyle, 2004; Okumus et al., 2022; Vergunst & Graham, 2017; Winter, 2013). A lead coordinator helps to mitigate observations that the “lack of one clear coordinator of activities makes it more difficult for different stakeholders to provide a holistic presentation of the site” (Mijnheer & Gamble, 2022, p. 17). A lead coordinator also helps to maximize realization and effectiveness of the potential that heritage visitor attractions (HVAs) possess across identity, well-being, economic, sociocultural, psychological, and sustainability realms (Gursoy & Nunkoo, 2019):

The involved stakeholders are all receptive to means of improvement and the involvement of one coordinator is seen as essential. It is evident that the value of local stakeholders and the importance of their involvement in the site as value co-creators is crucial to representing the local identity and thus providing a more authentic experience. However, managing stakeholder relations must be given priority, so local stakeholders can be motivated into adhering to the collective value of the HVA and setting aside personal distinctions that are antithetical to the spirit of collaborative innovations. (Mijnheer & Gamble, 2022, p. 17)

That an academician should so directly provide leadership and guiding knowledge for application in industry (Foster & Wiebe, 2010) is well understood and applauded in business and STEM disciplines and not yet so much in the humanities, including communication.

Drawing on her expertise in liberal education, experiential learning, and university-community partnerships, Clark University associate professor of management Mary-Ellen Boyle

(2004) acknowledges widespread “tensions” between the academy and the corporate sector (p. 43). She further observes that “[f]rom the perspective of those deeply rooted in the liberal arts, academic study of business management is equated with the pursuit of profit rather than with pursuit of knowledge and creation of public goods” (p. 43). So, while it may seem to some that scholar/users of a site have a conflict of interest, project development with academic partnership and guidance is a growing trend in industry in general as well as in the heritage tourism industry. The prominence of scholar/user partnerships reflects that such cooperation particularly satisfies the desires of traditionally otherwise overlooked stakeholders. I expand the communication discipline further into implementation of tangible public goods via my praxis research.

In addition to the lack of a major heritage tourism site utilizing African American genealogies as the core source for exhibited stories and none focusing on higher education as the core story focus to date, the current U.S. genealogy tourism landscape prior to the HBCUHeritageHome.com is missing other key components that help resolve the problem of inadequate chosen ancestral self-identity experiences for African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts. For instance, because 64 percent of 48,000 respondents in a recent African American tourism industry survey say cultural heritage attractions are their number one destination choice, 43 percent say they choose these destinations for family reunions, and genealogy tourists typically require multiple days for reunions and immersion in ancestral environments (Coffelt, 2018; Mandala, 2019; McCoy, 2011; MMGY, 2021; Morgan-Smith, 2018), it is notable that the three major African American heritage tourism sites are not designed for overnight stays.

Also, it is notable that the genealogy services the NMAAHC provides are to help patrons perform introductory genealogy research and not to help them publish a genealogy book, even as these books are heralded in a key NMAAHC exhibit as critical for understanding the history of

American families. Full-service representation in the current genealogy tourism industry climate comprises an eclectic mix of records about specific ancestors, travel packages to access the records, dynamic spaces for enacting ancestral stories, family reunion planning, specialized libraries, archival management of family and other institutional papers, and much more (Ashley et al., 2021; Hedlund & McDonald, 2018; Kluin & Lehto, 2012). Therefore, to accelerate the positive impact of published African American genealogies, among the HBCUHeritageHome.com's services will be assisting families with publishing these books, as well as collecting, digitally archiving, and managing an ongoing bibliography of published African American genealogies for sustained research. Also for sustained academic and family research and congregation, the site will offer digital access to the full archives of ancestors' early higher education records as well as overnight stays.

As heritage tourism research and providers' efforts to date had not resulted in a full-service genealogy tourism site that reflects descendants of U.S. antebellum enslaved people's genealogical self-identities and ancestral role models from published genealogies, timing may have been a factor. The timing of my research plays a critical role in its conception and success. In addition to the still accelerating genealogy boom, the current recognition of the duty to enact racial social justice in public memory is a catalyst for achieving success with the HBCUHeritageHome.com genealogy tourism site and research institute. Public memory scholars' current advocacy for social justice in tourism means the industry "must be more equitable and just" in order "to make real the possibility of tourism being 'a servant to building society, citizenry and well-being' (Tourism Alert and Action Forum, 2020)" (Benjamin et al., 2020, pp. 476-477). This obligation is "a call to arms...to drive the conversation, to critique, and to take action" in the genealogy tourism industry (pp. 478-479). With respect to the U.S.

genealogy tourism industry's problem of inadequate representation of African American genealogy stories, this imperative is an urgent prompt for deeper understanding of and practical application faithful to providers' and tourists' selected genealogical self-identities when those providers and tourists are African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts. My research to maximize African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts' well-being regarding genealogy tourism answers this command to discuss, critique, and correctively act in the genealogy tourism industry.

Understanding African American genealogy enthusiasts' stories published in genealogies permits this population's storytelling techniques to drive ancestral self-identity story presentation at the HBCUHeritageHome.com. This African American genealogy tourism site and research institute features overnight stays and a focus on genealogical higher-education identity.

Achieving the detailed below significant scholarly, social, community, family, cultural, and economic benefits from this praxis research on African American genealogy enthusiasts' selected stories in published genealogies required clear comprehension in five key knowledge areas. First, I needed to process what African-ancestored genealogy is. Next, what is known so far about how African American genealogy contextually operates in heritage tourism. Third, how genealogy tourism site providers operate. Fourth, the broader heritage tourism literature and research gap. Finally, how to design and implement an effective methodology for such an in-depth project. Each of these required knowledge and implementation preparation components is addressed in order below, followed by my research findings, application, and conclusions.

### ***1.1.3 African-ancestored Genealogy***

Defined herein as participation in the identity-reenforcing cultural practice of learning and sharing ancestral honor and inheritances, genealogy is "a personal interest in one's

forebears” and “identity—the genealogists’ identity far more than their ancestors” (Weil, 2013, pp. 2-3). The practice and study of genealogy, which began in antiquity and grows in popularity, situates people’s identities within families, ethnicities, regions, countries, and broader cultures (Beasley, 1997; Clemens, 1912; Haydon, 2010; Johnson, 1969; Shapiro, 2019; Smallwood & Gubnitskaia, 2018; Twells et al., 2018). After Americans of the 1800s spawned the first U.S. boom in genealogy via tourism, records research, and book writing relating them to ancestors of the colonial and Revolutionary War periods (O’Gorman, 1995), later Americans laid the groundwork for the current genealogy boom by additionally anchoring identities to ancestors of the Civil War and its antebellum and postbellum periods (Lovett, 1983).

Demonstrating African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts’ ancestral connection to the Civil War and its antebellum and postbellum periods, 57 percent of respondents in a recent national survey of African American adults say they have ancestors who were enslaved, an average of 82 percent of respondents ages fifty and older say African-ancestored identity is extremely or very important to them, and 63 percent of respondents under age thirty say Black identity is extremely or very important to them (Cox & Tamir, 2022):

When it comes to learning more about their family histories, Black adults for whom Blackness is very or extremely important (81%) are more likely than those for whom Blackness is less important (59%) to have spoken to their relatives. They are about as likely to have researched their family’s history online (36% and 30%, respectively) and to have used a mail-in DNA service such as AncestryDNA or 23andMe (15% and 16%) to learn more about their ancestry. (p. 11)

These results reinforce the importance of oral history in African American genealogy. These results also are consistent with Baharian et al.’s (2016) finding that an estimated 82 percent of African Americans’ ancestors lived in Africa before the start of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 17 percent lived in Europe, and admixture occurred primarily in the South prior to the Civil War.

Bobby L. Lovett (1983), the late African American historian and long-serving dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at HBCU Tennessee State University, traces that Southern admixture and other early American interracial relations. He notes that some representations in African American genealogy stories derive from the reality that “millions of civilians who were black, white, or members of other ethnic groups serviced the fighting men” during the Civil War (p. 92). He adds that, “[i]ndeed, here was a war during which upper- and lower-class families, native settlers, and newly arrived immigrant groups could claim to have participated in one of the nation’s most dramatic events” (p. 92). The Revolutionary War and the War between the States relate identities of all Americans who trace ancestry to these events’ times and places. Thus, Loyalists, Patriots, Unionists, and Confederates are common American genealogical identity markers. African Americans developed a genealogy tradition in this uniquely American context.

Many African Americans trace ancestry to the U.S. colonial period and many more trace it to the antebellum and Civil War periods. Underscoring the importance of both sides of the Civil War in American ancestry, Lovett (1983) says it was “unthinkable for any respectable Southern family not to have had some relative who had served in the Confederate Army, and Northerners eagerly sought photographs of a relative holding the tattered... ‘Old Glory’” (p. 92). That many African-ancestored people trace ancestry to the U.S. colonial period and a preponderance trace it to the antebellum and Civil War periods account for the importance of plantations, other sites of enslavement, and connections to slaveholding and abolitionist family members in African American genealogy. U.S. cultural heritage is joined by Biblical genealogy ideas in African-ancestored published genealogies.

Drawing upon Biblical knowledge of genealogies aids in understanding African American genealogical identity. Understanding is aided by considering Trinitarian notions of

being made in the image of God because “[l]ike the divine persons, true human persons gain their self-identity in and through their relations with others” (McDougall, 2005, p. 161). African American genealogy enthusiasts, then, often assess early American ancestral evidence in such “communal terms as freedom for and with another person” as part of “the prophetic charge to practice an inclusive ethic of self-giving love to the other” (p. 162). People practice agency in choosing the other people with whom one shares time, stories, songs, books, tragedies, triumphs, and more. Correctly understanding the social/cultural capital at play via the likes of Christianity, education, music, and more in African American identities especially related to the Civil War’s initial and lingering issues of freedom and family/work ties is aided by a genealogical lens that specifically illuminates both descendants’ and ancestors’ social agency. This agency encompasses the ability to effectively identify and utilize available social capital. A lens that highlights Christianity in social agency helps to clarify African American published genealogies because African American genealogy features Christian experiences, traditions, practices, and values in articulating agency through other people and institutions.

In search of illuminating lenses to explain agency in genealogy, modern academia turned attention to the agency embedded in multiple disciplines. The study of genealogical agency as a self-identity function emerged first in anthropology and sociology and now flourishes across a growing array of academic disciplines (David & Jones, 2019; Kramer, 2011; Mills, 2003, 2004; Mills & Mills, 1981; Morby, 1989; Portwood, 1999). Of particular interest among genealogy’s agency functions are genealogy as performance in tourism (Basu, 2007; Frew & White, 2013; Gardiner, 2017; Meethan, 2004; Murdy et al., 2018; Ramshaw, 2014; Santos & Yan, 2010; Winter, 2014) and genealogy as a critical/cultural practice (Sleeter, 2015, 2020; Tyler, 2005). I combine genealogy’s tourism and critical/cultural contexts as African-ancestored genealogy

enthusiasts apply them to permit a detailed analysis yielding a unique understanding of genealogy's affective, historical, and personal realms within which authors convey both positive and negative aspects of life (Haidt et al., 1993; Mehtiyeva & Prince, 2020; Parham, 2008). Just as understanding genealogy books involves multiple realms, so too does creating the books.

Writing genealogy books includes a host of mass, small-group, interpersonal, and intrapersonal communicative identity-shaping activities, such as interviewing family members, consulting old newspapers, and photo editing. Central among these activities is “family and friends chattering away at kitchen tables, telling tales, remembering weddings, funerals, and graduations” (Woodtor, 1999, p. xi), which are among the ways of collecting and sharing oral history. Oral history is a particularly prevalent source in the African-ancestored genealogy writing process. It largely is because U.S. genealogy tourism sites underprivilege oral history that they fail to fully capture the stories of African-ancestored genealogy books. Genealogy book writing is “a powerful example of a life-writing practice where the documentation of a life is researched and fitted into a story of one’s origins” (Rak, 2017, p. 479). Even when family details and relationships seem weak on paper, “[g]enealogy nonetheless seems to promise knowledge and connection, and it appears to make self-knowledge available” (p. 480). Exercising mass communication techniques to create a genealogy from weak and other evidence requires a willingness to implement the necessary tasks.

Willingness to undertake the multiple tasks involved in writing genealogy books reflects both the fervent desire to know and the positive correlations with knowing one’s roots:

The desire to know who one is through family ancestry is a powerful one, verging on obsession for many of its practitioners. For people whose records (and even family memories) have been destroyed because of enslavement, forced displacement, and genocide, the act of doing genealogy has potential as reparative work. (p. 480)

For African Americans in particular, then, “[g]enealogy is...a productive site for thinking about the desire for roots and the construction of identity” (p. 480). Writing genealogy books extends genealogy’s near obsession with self-knowledge creation beyond the communication inquiry sphere of multi-faceted identity construction to, along with touring ancestral sites, a communication inquiry stage of identity enactment via representation in genealogy performance. This performance venue is where various purposes and elements of genealogy stories, from education to identity-reflection (Moon, 2010), combine, conflict, and otherwise interact.

Genealogy is performed in story choices. Descendants choose our ancestral footsteps. From among the documents and substories of the infinite family story, “the genealogist has to choose to pursue one family line and abandon another, in effect choosing what is going to be part of a family story and what will not” (Rak, 2017, p. 479). Leading Black genealogy authority Tony Burroughs (2001) advises African Americans to choose genealogy stories purposefully “to have a legacy of our ancestors’ struggles, successes, and failures so that we can...emulate their successes and use them as inspiration for the future,” and he asserts that genealogy is “important for young folks to develop a sense of heritage and identity” (pp. 35-36). Scholars find that it is the right genealogical stories, chosen with purpose, which benefit descendants by providing role models to emulate, inspiring us, and grounding us in family heritage-based identity. Even the right stories newly learned have positive implications for descendants.

The relationship between genealogical stories and self-identities is one in which long-known and newly-discovered ancestral success stories positively correlate with descendent success stories. This correlation is demonstrated in episodes of genealogy television programs, which are exploding in worldwide popularity as part of the genealogy boom (BYU Broadcasting, 2010; Gates, 2014, 2016, 2019/2017; Good, 2020; Goodrum & Smith, 2021; Lunt, 2017). For

instance, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., the Harvard University African American literature and cultural theory scholar and genealogy television show host, gathers genealogical information that guests did not know and consistently depicts African American genealogies as both intergenerational identity- and thus outcome-shaping performances. In Gates' work, "you see the same thing: that success in the present day is a function of an opportunity that was created two, three, four, or five generations previously" (Gladwell, 2016, 01:09:19-01:10:01). The imperative to understand both the story choices and the relationship between what is included in African-ancestored genealogies and descendants' self-identity outcomes guides the purpose of this research.

## **1.2 Purpose of This Research**

While much of the foundation is understood about the identities scholars and others craft about early African American free and enslaved people and their descendent families (Billingsley, 1968, 1974, 1992, 2007; Clarke, 2005; Hattery & Smith, 2007; Hill, 1999/1972; Painter, 2007; Sheldon & Turner-Vorbeck, 2019; Staples, 1999), no comprehensive research before mine provides a foundational understanding of the intergenerational identities African Americans craft in genealogy books. Nor had a mechanism both for disseminating these genealogical identity stories in U.S. genealogy tourism and for promoting their ongoing publication, research, and researchers in this traditional yet emerging African American transdisciplinary rhetorical identity sphere in the academy previously been established. The knowledge I have contributed to foundational understanding of African Americans' intergenerational self-crafted identities can be extended by interdisciplinary scholars, African American genealogy enthusiasts who write genealogy books, and our families.

Reinforcing the knowledge-building possibilities of ongoing research on what African Americans emphasize and de-emphasize while crafting self-identities from a multitude of possible relational storylines, “[g]enealogy can be seen as a political practice where race-class-gender within social memories can contribute to diverse stories from new standpoints in American history” (Hackstaff, 2010, p. 658). Among the relational storylines are those involving historical connections, attitudes, behaviors, values, experiences, races, ethnicities, religions, class statuses, and other lines of community engagement. People in the fields of each of these storylines and more can benefit from understanding African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts’ chosen ancestral storytelling. People in business and donor fields also can benefit by understanding how to connect their brands with and most effectively financially support stories that correlate with positive African American ancestral self-identity.

Perhaps most opportune now for scholars, business leaders, and other social influencers to understand and imperative to enact those understandings of African Americans’ chosen intergenerational stories in genealogy performance is that African Americans currently more than ever have the ability to superbly craft these stories. Director of African American Studies at the College of Charleston, Kameelah L. Martin, and Elizabeth J. West (2018), an English professor at Georgia State University, observe that “[i]n the 21st century, the descendants of the enslaved are truly able to ‘go back and fetch’ the origins of their past in tangible ways as a means to understand the present and to move, assertively, into the future” (p. 46). The extensive knowledge-building possibilities of prioritizing published genealogies in U.S. African American genealogy tourism and ongoing research on these books undergird my research purpose. These knowledge-building possibilities stem from the context of African American genealogy enthusiasts now being unhoused in genealogy tourism and under a genealogy book-prioritizing

scenario becoming both the providers and consumers of our chosen stories during genealogy tourism. This scenario is a marked departure from how African American genealogy currently contextually operates in heritage tourism.

### ***1.2.1 How African American Genealogy Contextually Operates in Heritage Tourism***

African Americans' genealogical voices currently are hinted at, getting louder, and not yet at the forefront as fodder for African American genealogy tourism exhibits and research. These voices are limited even as scholarship shows that performing genealogy through travel is "the presentation of a genealogical self" and a way to reflect "a coherent and desirable story of the self" (Prince, 2021a, p. 2). The forefront eludes African American genealogical stories not because heritage tourism site providers have not tried an array of solutions to African American identity representation challenges, but because the solutions underprivilege the published genealogy as a key and growing source of African Americans' own communicative identity-making. Therefore, through an appropriate framework that foregrounds African American self-created identities, I contribute to the academy and the U.S. genealogy tourism industry by ascertaining and applying how and why African-ancestored family history storytellers represent stories as we do in published genealogies. It is because the chosen content of genealogy stories among African Americans previously was and still is understudied that so little until now is understood about how such story choices can work at a genealogy tourism site to represent self-identities grounded in specific ancestral people and homes to which African Americans choose to belong.

My approach of using African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts' desired family heritage book story choices as a line of inquiry for ancestral self-identity representation in U.S. genealogy

tourism answers the call of scholars for more research on issues of identity as performed at genealogy tourism sites. Some such scholars “are hoping to open up this area of tourism to critical research” (Watson et al., 2012, p. 1). The expansion is desired because genealogy tourism research traditionally “comes across as lacking in creativity, rigor and theoretical sophistication, despite the rich empirical data about social interaction, emotion, cultural awareness, identity and embodied experience that this area of research regularly turns up” (p. 1). My research answers this call by explaining the affect and performativity processes involved in story presentation based on published genealogies during African-ancestored genealogy tourism. Both the affect and performativity processes involved in story presentation during heritage tourism site visits can reinforce or run afoul of how African Americans desire to self-identify, creating friction between African-ancestored descendants’ choices and how genealogy tourism site providers currently operate.

### ***1.2.2 How Genealogy Tourism Site Providers Currently Operate***

Managers of genealogy tourism sites select the stories the sites present. In so selecting, site providers meet their identity-influencing aims, which historically are based on global, national, regional, and other goals that may or may not be consistent with the familial and personal goals of the African American genealogy enthusiast visitors at these sites (Dela Santa & Tiatco, 2019; Glassberg, 1996; Hillyer, 2015). Because the worldwide boom in genealogy is hoisting African-ancestored genealogy tourism to new heights in tourists’ senses of self and so much can go wrong with identity representation, who presents identity at genealogy tourism sites, based upon what and why for what audience, especially warrants a praxis study:

Heritage sites around the world are not simply pre-existing destinations for history buffs, nostalgia seekers or homecoming diasporans to visit. Rather, heritage sites are made, and

often they are commodified, in the context of tourism that aims to deliver financial returns to state-based and private stakeholders while simultaneously pledging the fulfillment of anticipated desires for tourists....What is included, excluded, emphasized and obscured at heritage tourism destinations corresponds with how individuals and groups make sense of the past and how identifications with places are made meaningful through the act of visitation. (Reed, 2012, p. 97)

This assessment underscores that heritage tourism site providers create sites to further identity-influencing aims based on goals that may or may not be consistent with the familial and personal goals of many of the African American genealogy enthusiast visitors at these sites. This is because site managers choose what to include, exclude, emphasize, and obscure in heritage tourism site offerings, and those choices correspond with how people make sense of ourselves and the past (Timothy, 2011; Timothy & Guelke, 2008; Timothy & Teye, 2004; Wallace, 1996). As site managers' selections mesh or conflict with U.S. African diasporans' self-conceptions of identity, those selections impact the quality of African American travelers' experiences at genealogy tourism sites.

The primary determinant of the quality of African American travelers' experiences at genealogy tourism sites is how well the enduring tension between slavery horror stories and ancestral honor stories is resolved. In resolving the tension in favor of family stories, "some segments of the black population are accused of rejecting public representations of slavery and plantation life that are perceived as harsh and belittling to African American people" (Bankole, 1999, p. 203). The horror stories focus that belittles does not reflect how some African-ancestored people choose to identify. As genealogy booms, it is more important than ever to understand and purposefully select genealogy tourism site stories, including stories of enslaved ancestors, for this population's genealogy tourism experiences. Satisfying site providers' and audiences' story goals matters for achieving maximum site success. These goals are particularly not well understood when African American well-being is pursued via opposite collective

storylines of suffering and thriving. How people negotiate ancestral horror stories and ancestral honor stories raises questions of which genealogy tourism sites foster African Americans' well-being, which thwart it, how, why, who owns victims' pain, who owns victors' joy, and so many other ethical concerns. This story conflict elevates the importance of better understanding the genealogical stories African Americans choose to publish, for, it is what people do in context, when we are retelling and being attracted by family stories (Klimow & Schoepf, 2023), that reflects our agency guided by deep-seeded beliefs.

Because the agency that includes identity guides people's choices, even people within the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast co-cultural creator and consumer community can misunderstand the African American genealogical conundrum of negotiating slave ancestor horror stories and ancestral hero stories as self-defining identity choices. For instance, some in this community want people outside of this identity group to consume the slavery horror stories in public so that outsiders grasp the gravity of slavery even as we choose the ancestral honor story focus in our published genealogies and other family stories. We in our own stories choose to connect ourselves with honorable ancestors whose actions we can emulate through social relationships with our deceased relatives akin to parasocial relationships. Genealogy books are a medium through which descendants form parasocial relationships with ancestors, such that ancestors through these books, rather than celebrities through social and other media, are the identity and behavioral influencers.

Minimally at plantations and other U.S. heritage tourism sites, genealogies are a medium of identity connection with ancestors. Thus, African American genealogies and other genealogies "[r]ather than simply passively documenting who our ancestors were, they are the narratives we construct to actually make them our ancestors" based upon how we identify with the ancestors

(Zerubavel, 2012, p. 10). Understanding which stories African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts deem appropriate for positive ancestral self-identities and how those stories are presented in published genealogies and in genealogy tourism experiences is important in part because if “too much emphasis is placed upon the mere presence of Black memorials rather than the appropriateness of those monuments,” one can forget that “the motivation behind memorialization matters” (Kay, 2019, p. 3). The foregoing discussion well-establishes that for African Americans’ desired ancestral self-identity representations, including in U.S. genealogy tourism, Black genealogies matter.

Therefore, the purpose of this content analysis and application is to deeply understand descendants of U.S. colonial and antebellum free and enslaved people’s self-created identities as presented in 21st-century published genealogies and to employ that understanding to implement a genealogy tourism site/research institute that perpetually presents, celebrates, honors, further researches, and more widely disseminates African Americans’ desired ancestral self-identities. The research goal is to explain how 21st-century published African American genealogies represent self-selected collective identities and, thereby, provide our chosen stories for genealogy tourism site exhibits. The research aim is to describe and amplify the overarching content of 21st-century published African American genealogies. The practical aim is to establish with other stakeholders the HBCUHeritageHome.com genealogy tourism site and research institute faithful to the answers to the following research questions.

### *1.2.3 Research Questions*

The general research question and sub-questions I answer in this dissertation are:

RQ: How do African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent **ancestral self-identity** in 21st-century published genealogies?

RQ1: How do African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent **colonial and antebellum U.S. enslaved and free people of African descent** in 21st-century published genealogies?

RQ2: How do African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent **social/cultural capital** in 21st-century published genealogies?

RQ3: How do African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent **ancestral honor and inheritances** in 21st-century published genealogies?

Answers to these questions reveal authors' selected ancestral self-identity themes, processes of meaning making, and how African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts' story choices best can be presented and further studied at an African American genealogy tourism site and research institute (Dusdal et al., 2020; Lewis et al., 2020; Prince, 2021). Given the purpose of this study and my research method detailed in Chapter 3, explaining the answers to these questions permits understanding the large themes and concepts in these books. Answers for my purpose do not require and do not involve counting stories or comparing one author's treatment with another's and, thereby, do not identify or provide granular understandings of each story type. The answers permit an applicable overarching understanding of the essence of the studied books by examining questions that are grounded in and that fill a knowledge gap in the heritage tourism literature.

## **2 LITERATURE: U.S. HERITAGE TOURISM HISTORY TO PRESENT AND GLOBAL SLAVERY SITES**

Heritage tourism encompasses everything related to visiting historic landmarks and places of particular importance to people from certain cultures and visiting contemporary communities where people live and work in a traditional manner associated with heroes of the past's values. Heritage tourism derives its genealogy tourism and related monikers, such as roots tourism, legacy tourism, personal heritage tourism, and diaspora tourism, from frequent travel by families and genealogists alike to an array of sites for family heritage celebration, documentation, connection, and additional research. At its core, "personal heritage tourism relates to the performances, cognitive processes, emotions, and imagination used in order to convey meaning unto the social relations, mundane activities, landscapes, sites, and objects specifically related to one's past" (Prince, 2021b, pp. 14-15). This understanding situates African American heritage tourism sites ideally as ancestral home, anchored in traditional cultural values and to be visited by African Americans as spiritual descendant dwellers, not as strangers. The notion of tourists seeking ancestral heroes at home as we select and embody genealogy tourism site stories is one to keep high in mind regarding African-ancestored published genealogies, as heroes at home is the overall destination goal for the genealogy book authors as well.

Because of its heavy use by genealogy enthusiasts, the heritage tourism industry, including its \$1.5 billion U.S. sector, intersects the \$3.4 billion global genealogy products and services industry (IBISWorld, 2023b; Klareld, 2023; Verified Market Research, 2022). In the global genealogy products and services industry, providers and consumers create, display, market at the three-million-attendee annual RootsTech conference and elsewhere, and purchase products and services reflecting people's chosen ancestral self-identities. Heritage tourism

industry providers range from traditional and industrial museums to documentary intergenerational landscapes, education history sites, and religious sites that help people identify with ancestral lifeways. These sites thus shed light on and aid achieving visitor self-identities and provider goals. Often generically referred to as museums, heritage tourism sites can be particularly influential as cultural identity-shapers. Cultural space and race scholars Deborah F. Atwater and Sandra L. Herndon (2003) note that “[i]n any culture, museums are both significant arbiters of public memory and the spaces in which that memory is interpreted. In the best-case scenario, museum experiences may even be liberating” (p. 71). Genealogy tourism activities can be liberating as genealogy tourism addresses genealogy seekers’ identity needs by connecting us with stories, ways of life, attitudes, and values significant in the lives of both seekers and our ancestors. The U.S. genealogy tourism industry’s impacts thus span individual, cultural, social, and economic realms. Because of genealogy tourism’s wide-ranging impacts, satisfying African American consumers in the U.S. genealogy tourism industry is imperative.

To meet the belonging-at-home and otherwise positive identity needs of African American consumers in the U.S. genealogy tourism industry, essential is assessing literature about historical and current stories about Africans and African diasporans at U.S. and global heritage tourism sites. Examination of how heritage tourism sites tell stories of slavery and other aspects of African American ancestry, including both which stories are presented and the theoretical explanations for those representations, provides points of comparison with how African American genealogy enthusiasts tell ancestral stories in published genealogies. The context of genealogy and heritage tourism research is scholars’ focus on addressing genealogical agency (Morby, 1989; Sleeter, 2015, 2020; Tyler, 2005). Thus, agency, specifically African-

ancestored genealogy enthusiasts' agency, is the focus of my research as it relates to genealogy and heritage tourism literature.

Scholars study heritage tourism agency in several ways. Who has agency to provide stories and how they use it is a key historical and current heritage tourism literature discussion point (David & Jones, 2019; Kramer, 2011; Mills, 2003, 2004; Mills & Mills, 1981). In addition to who has agency to provide stories, how people embody the freedom of using interpretive agency at sites also is studied as genealogy tourism performance (Basu, 2007; Frew & White, 2013; Gardiner, 2017; Meethan, 2004; Murdy et al., 2018; Ramshaw, 2014; Santos & Yan, 2010; Winter, 2014). Scholars study performance agency from the perspectives of both sites' enduring storytellers/tour guides/reenactors and transitory visitors. Research so far has produced exploratory understandings of stories African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts consume during global slavery tourism, including at plantations and other U.S. heritage tourism sites. These understandings have come from scholars asking who provides heritage tourism site stories, who tells them, and who consumes them, all of whom exercise agency in interpreting the content with the goal of shaping visitor identities in directed ways.

Scholars' current questions arise as heritage tourism site stories about Africans and African diasporans are both increasing and cluster around crimes, perpetrators, and victims in power struggles at the outset of, during, and following the Atlantic Slave Trade (Beck, 2019; Getz et al., 2020; Parry, 2018). Sites that focus on slavery horror stories do so for good reason, according to some scholars, including Alana K. Dillette (2021), an assistant professor in the Payne School of Hospitality and Tourism Management at San Diego State University and initiative coordinator for that school's Research for Tourism (RESET) research center. She says global slavery tourism sites' story selection goal is to bring accountability to power structures

responsible for continuous marginalizing of underrepresented groups. At the same time, in RESET research she finds that slavery horror stories did not meet the ancestral self-identity needs of the African American roots tourists to Ghana whom she studied. Like Hartman (2007), these tourists “experienced a different kind of twoness, realizing that although they came in search of home, they are in fact just tourists looking from the outside inwards” (Dillette, 2021, p. 424). Dillette says her findings:

support the notion argued by W.E.B. Du Bois’ theory of Double Consciousness, that African-American identity is significantly marred by continued issues of everyday racism, stereotypes and internal conflict between two significantly different identities....Through the experiences participants gained travelling to Ghana, they became more acutely aware of their position of privilege in the global society. Essentially, travelling to Ghana allowed participants to gain a sense of rootedness in an identity that they otherwise would not have experienced. (p. 424)

Achieving ancestral rootedness, then, is what heritage tourism research finds is the result of ideal genealogy tourism. In short, heritage tourism involves inner rootedness connected to the public sphere. Tourists achieve this goal through genealogical agency. Yet, often African-ancestored Americans’ chosen ancestral self-identity representations designed for rootedness conflict with representations intended to indict macro power structures. Thus, to better achieve our chosen rootedness reflected in public memory, African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts must resolve the conflict between ancestral slavery horror stories and ancestral hero honor stories.

To resolve the conflict between ancestral slavery horror stories and ancestral hero honor stories, African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts must focus on our chosen ancestral self-identity representations designed for rootedness at home. Understanding African-ancestored Americans’ chosen ancestral self-identity representations designed for rootedness at home and our stories’ amplification in the public sphere, therefore, are the desired outcome of my research. My research prioritizes the “need to recognize the public significance of these private histories”

(Parham, 2008, p. 13). The notion that even as genealogy tourists seek home, we face a conflict that must be resolved between outward-facing stories aimed at indicting macro power structures and inward-facing stories aimed at positive ancestral self-identity is one to keep high in mind regarding African-ancestored genealogy tourists, as resolving this story conflict to reach ancestral home is the overall modus operandi in African-ancestored published genealogies. The tension-breaking mechanism is anchored in stories' role in developing diasporan self-identities.

Understanding stories' role in the development of diasporan self-identities presented outwardly and inwardly at heritage tourism sites requires attention to conscious and subconscious processes by which people create ways of being and are transformed by those creations. Better understanding the communicative processes related to heritage tourism site stories permits fundamental categorization of the stories' roles in identity negotiation among African American diasporans during heritage tourism visits. Again, four major categories of thought apply to global slavery tourism stories and how the stories shape African diasporans' identities. These four schools are thanatourism; Eurocentrism; classical, or homeland, diasporan theory; and postmodern, or hostland, diasporan theory. These four theories that undergird heritage tourism site stories exhibited and interpreted by African-ancestored people and others about our forebears are explained next in the context of the history and current increase in user-supplied stories in the U.S. and broader global heritage tourism industries.

## **2.1 U.S. Heritage Tourism Industry History and Present State**

U.S. family heritage tourism sites, which began in 1860 with the opening of President George Washington's Mount Vernon plantation and grew to include the likes of the National Monument to the Forefathers by 1889 (O'Gorman, 1995), capitalize on story to convey and

celebrate the elements of heritages selected by the site founders. This capitalization includes reinterpreting presented stories as operators see fit to meet evolving site visitors' documented or perceived desires. Museum studies expert Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (2000) notes that every visual element of display, from lighting to height, is a goal-oriented narrative component at heritage tourism sites. These components at traditional, modernist heritage tourism sites offer "a one-way method of mass communication" conveying operator intent (p. 151). By contrast and more importantly in the current postmodern heritage tourism context, she says, is what visitors first see in the mind's eye and how that then shapes what visitors see through the physical eye when they arrive at sites:

Where the tangible material objects of a cultural group have largely been destroyed, it is the memories, songs and cultural traditions that embody that culture's past and future.

In the modernist museum, display is the major form of communication....In the post-museum, the exhibition will become one among many other forms of communication. The exhibition will form part of a nucleus of events which will take place both before and after the display is mounted. (p. 152)

Here Hooper-Greenhill points to the massive community participation expected to become standard fare at 21st-century museums, including site stories being provided by site visitors who are deeply grounded in honored ancestors before visiting a site.

Hooper-Greenhill (2000) makes clear that users provide heritage tourism sites with memories, songs, and cultural traditions through which users embody cultural pasts and futures. A host of other scholars also emphasize that today's genealogy tourists increasingly bring our own ancestral memories, songs, and traditions to sites and sing them in the ancestral spirit irrespective of site providers' dominant power-struggle message intent (Clifford, 1997; Macdonald, 1997; Rosoff, 2003; Stanton, 2006; Timothy, 2011). This finding that users focus on ancestral memories, songs, and cultural traditions is one to keep firmly in mind, as the genealogies studied in my

research exemplify memories, songs, and cultural traditions in their content for conveyance at the HBCUHeritageHome.com. Sites that often feature visitor-supplied content include living culture performance sites where interpreters focus on embodying the lives of people of yore. Through the array of provider types that includes provider/users, heritage tourism's history of solely government and white leaders making story content and interpretation decisions is giving way to increased story control by users across a variety of heritage tourism user demographics and industry segments.

Cultural historian James Clifford (1997) underscores the still emerging storytelling role of heritage tourism site visitors as he recounts how Native American elders utilize materials from the Portland Museum of Art's Rasmussen Collection. He says these Americans "referred to the regalia with appreciation and respect, but they seemed only to use them as *aides-mémoires*, that is, occasions for the telling of stories and the singing of songs" (p. 189). Again, telling stories and singing ancestral songs is what modern tourism site visitors increasingly do via the memories visitors bring to sites. The stories a site tells and the stories visitors bring to sites are co-present weapons in the battle for salience taking place in what Clifford calls the museum "contact zone" (p. 192). This zone, where stories of the past meet stories of the present, hosts debates over intended outcomes and unintended consequences. The conflict between African American slavery horror stories and ancestral honor stories invigorates debate over the outcomes of heritage tourism site stories.

Some outcome debates arise from the U.S. heritage tourism site practice of ascribing intentional "behavior" to some story subjects and more passive "expression" to other story subjects, with the latter applied to those whom site providers believe verifiable information to permit speaking more authoritatively has been insufficiently created and preserved (Clifford,

1997, p. 198). Pointing out how users now pre-imagine and enact behavioral stories of our ancestors as well as ascribe high value to our ancestors' expressions, activist museum scholar Nancy B. Rosoff (2003) insists that everything, including user worldview, tells a story at heritage sites. In this user-agency vein, she predicts the Smithsonian's Native American museum facilities "will be welcoming places that incorporate the special spiritual requirements of all Native people" (p. 79). So, as the storytelling role of users at heritage tourism sites continues to grow, provider/users continue to tell our own ancestral stories and sing our own ancestral songs from a spiritual grounding to meet our own ancestral self-identity goals, independent of officials' historical storylines. That traditional site providers possess insufficient information to speak authoritatively about some story subjects while descendants speak authoritatively about our ancestors is a heritage tourism phenomenon that prompts use of African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts' published genealogies to tell our site stories.

Further reinforcing the ascendancy of user agency in heritage tourism, heritage scholar Sharon Macdonald (1997) credits the Gaelic revival in Scotland, especially since the mid-1980s, as the cultural impetus for the 1993 opening of Aros: The Skye Story, a heritage center on the Scottish Isle of Skye. But as much as this center represents a new interpretation in keeping with changing societal trends, Macdonald makes clear that neither in the case of Aros nor of other sites does a new interpretation immediately, if ever, replace other interpretations. So, while one interpretation focuses on some aspects of the lives of common crofters, another site may focus on other aspects of common life, and still other sites may tell stories of various aspects of aristocratic lairds' lives. This multi-existence of sites that tell different stories of similar subjects augurs for the HBCUHeritageHome.com with its focus on family stories co-existing with other heritage tourism sites that focus on slavery horror stories of African-ancestored people. The trend

of descendants interpreting material through our own ancestral eyes and ears at heritage tourism sites is part of the broader 21st-century media trend of microtargeting in heritage tourism.

Microtargeting increasingly is exemplified at industrial museums. From their emphasis on social relations among mill town workers to their unraveling of the psychology of coal miner self-identity, industrial museums reveal how the workplace is another institution that, along with schools and churches, shapes family. Industrial museums thereby have become among the dominant site providers for genealogy tourism as workers' descendants seek to learn more about our ancestors' lives. As heritage tourism research pioneer Mike Wallace (1996) clamors for museums to raise questions about political power, he notes that families' social mores and relational power also can be explored at industrial museums. These sites, he says, are poised "to inform visitors about great historical processes that have drastically affected their lives, and thus to empower them by enhancing their capacity to understand, and perhaps change, their world" (p. 89). Wallace, who won the 1999 Pulitzer Prize in History for co-authoring *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898*, is a distinguished history professor in the John Jay College of Criminal Justice and the Graduate Center at City University of New York. He is typical of scholars who observe site users taking on more agency in telling our own cultural stories and want traditional site providers and industrial museums to retain relevance by empowering users with embodiments of historical processes that have drastically affected us and our ancestors.

Other leading heritage tourism scholars also point to empowered users through industrial museum tourism performance focused on descendants' ancestors. Dallen J. Timothy (2011), for instance, notes that "[t]he Rust Belt region of the USA, including parts of the upper midwest and the northeast, is home to many industrial relics that have become salient tourist attractions" (p. 373). Timothy, the Julie Ann Wrigley Global Futures Laboratory senior scientist and professor in

the School of Community Resources and Development at Arizona State University, adds that some of these sites that still produce products are finding “a way of supplementing production-related income via entrance fees, guided tours and souvenir sales” (p. 377):

Research shows that most industrial sites either break even or make a notable profit in their tourism endeavors, and in most cases there is little overhead risk involved because the attraction itself already exists. While many industrial locations have gift shops and cafes, some sites are more conducive to retail sales and boutique shopping. (p. 377)

Timothy overviews some of the numerous ways site providers generate revenue for sites’ sustainable futures. Such resource generation and deployment are for U.S. African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts as users/providers to control at the HBCUHeritageHome.com. This decision-making role in resource acquisition and allocation is the site’s economic benefit for the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community. Via each management decision, genealogy tourism site providers either overtly elicit or covertly convey stories that embrace and/or perpetuate co-cultural group narratives. At the same time, descendant visitors bring our own memories and can control resources to enjoy ancestral stories in the ways we choose, regardless of provider intent.

Like Timothy (2011), historical anthropologist Cathy Stanton (2006) notes the key role of visitors’ own intergenerational stories as she explains the origins and outcomes of public history in the former textile mill town of Lowell, Massachusetts. She studied the debut of documentary intergenerational landscapes at heritage tourism sites. These are landscapes that include “such concepts as ‘narrative design’ and ‘experience architecture,’ essentially the storyboarding and enhancing of existing landscapes so that they more clearly communicate a particular set of images and stories” (Stanton, 2006, p. 25). She finds that descendants brought their own stories to the inaugural U.S. documentary intergenerational landscape heritage tourism site. She

cautions, however, about what she calls a characteristic flaw of culture-led storytelling in contemporary landscapes of industrial museums:

Even when the officially sanctioned narratives are unusually critical and challenging...as they are in Lowell, these “communicative spaces” are highly selective about what they actually communicate. And despite the good intentions of many of the people who shaped these landscapes, they do not provide maps for actual participation in or conversation about the relationships of power and modes of production in the world we live in now. (p. 67)

Here Stanton, like Wallace (1996), Clifford (1997), and other scholars, underscores that museum interpretation is, indeed, a rhetorical act expressing differences of perspectives, expectations, and communicative agency. She also underscores that increasingly and perplexingly to herself and others, descendants of site story subjects choose to use our agency to sing ancestral hero songs over ancestral horror songs regardless of the officially sanctioned narratives that focus on structural power’s infringements on our own and ancestors’ lives. My research eliminates this confusion with respect to African-ancestored descendants by explaining why and how we choose to use our agency to sing ancestral hero over ancestral horror songs in our published genealogies for desired heritage tourism stories.

In addition to museums that center around ancestor work life, other micro-targeted genealogy tourism sites also elicit descendant and broader cultural experiences tailored for users. These sites help to round out the heritage tourism industry’s varied segments. These sites include museums that center on education and those that center on religion, such as the Ark Encounter, which opened in 2016 in Williamstown, Kentucky, and the Museum of the Bible, which opened in 2017 in Washington, D.C. (Gannon & Wagner, 2018; Roberts & Eyl, 2019). Two examples of education museums are the Mansfield Female College Museum (MFCM) in Fairfield, Louisiana (MFCM, n.d.), and the Museum of Education in Columbia, South Carolina:

[The Museum of Education] serves as a “public square”—a venue for open discussion and the examination of educational issues. This “pedagogical space” offers an opportunity to creatively complicate how research is disseminated and presented. Opened to the public in 1977, the museum’s programs are oriented toward educators, students of various ages, and the general public. Paramount to all of the museum’s programs, exhibitions, and initiatives are the ideals of social justice, integrity, intellectual spirit, and creativity. When patrons walk through the doors or visit our website, the Museum invites them to engage with important people, events, and ideas, and to consider how this information could make life better for their communities, for their students, and for themselves. (University of South Carolina, n.d., para. 1)

Key for the Museum of Education as indicated here is that it upholds ideals of social justice, integrity, intellectual spirit, and creativity as it operates both online and in person. These also are pillar ideals of the HBCUHeritageHome.com.

Likewise utilizing both online and physical platforms to advance its ideals, as now is the norm in heritage tourism, the prime example of a religious-oriented heritage tourism site is the Creation Museum (Lynch, 2013; Rosenhouse, 2015; Slack, 2008). The Creation Museum opened in 2007 in Petersburg, Kentucky. This \$27 million, 75,000-square-foot site with 2019 revenues of more than \$43.5 million (McGehee, 2022) is dominated by a labyrinth that guests travel through the Bible’s book of *Genesis*. The embodied movement is akin to how African-ancestored families at the HBCUHeritageHome.com travel our families’ education heritage through our published genealogy books. Overall, microtargeting sites designed, built, and enmeshed with memories by their primary users, which thereby focus on users’ positive cultural traditions, is a 21st-century heritage tourism trend (Lynch, 2013; Rosenhouse, 2015; Slack, 2008). While microtargeting is a heritage tourism trend, mass appeal is another, playing out especially at plantations and other global slavery tourism sites.

Timothy (2011) joins Wallace (1996) in providing much of the scholarly history of heritage tourism, laying the foundation for the current focus on mass appeal to advance political, conservation, customer-service, financial, and other provider goals. Rhetoricians take site

analysis a step further by meticulously applying tenets of rhetoric to assess the interactions between the sites and the people who engage with them (Appiah, 2006). Together, these scholars and those in related disciplines long have understood that heritage tourism sites are rhetorical artifacts and rhetorical performances in brick, stone, steel, marble, and concrete that convey public and private memory. African Americans' quest for better ways to tell self-crafted stories at heritage tourism sites includes both micro- and macro-targeted sites and stems from our inaugural limits in heritage tourism. African-ancestored tourists' positive ancestral self-identity representation has been limited in heritage tourism in part because U.S. cultural leaders originally settled upon colonialism as the rhetoric for the country's foundational heritage tourism site storyline.

### ***2.1.1 Settling on Colonial Foundational Storyline***

Colonialism is America's original and foundational public memory story, repeatedly employed at heritage tourism sites. Even the old South of Virginia and the old Spain of Florida could connect to the U.S. historical interpretation that privileges colonialism once the notion was ingrained (Schnee, 2011; Trask, 2012; Wallace, 1996). Scholars draw clear links among the ideals of colonial New England, the New York-based national colonial revival movement, and the Southern strands of colonialism built upon the same ideals (Brown, 2000; Erll & Nünning, 2008; Hillyer, 2015; O'Gorman, 1995). Cultural historian Briann Greenfield (2020) is one such scholar who demonstrates how seamlessly the South fits into the national colonial story, given her notion that the South's own direct history is too harsh to serve in all its particulars as the American ideal. She notes that cultural geography "was not a barrier" as architect Theodate Pope Riddle used Virginia's Mount Vernon architecture as the model for the summer retreat she built

for her parents in Farmington, Connecticut, in 1898 (para. 5). Wallace (1996) also touts Americans' obsession with colonialism to explain in part the success of Virginia's Colonial Williamsburg heritage tourism site that John D. Rockefeller, Jr. began funding for approximately \$80 million in the mid-1930s. The 301-acre Colonial Williamsburg site now is the world's largest living history museum and the United States' highest-revenue producing heritage tourism site. Its 2020 sales were \$190 million (IRS, 2020a), nearly 13 percent of the total U.S. heritage tourism industry. So, America's largest heritage tourism site is steeped in both colonialism and the South.

Georgia State University historian Jeffrey Trask (2012), an unofficial advisor on my research, similarly connects the South and New England to the broader North's colonialism story. Noting that the two regions shared in providing material and psychological artifacts for the national colonial revival movement that New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art greatly advanced, he says, "[i]ronically, the Old Dominion, birthplace of the preservation movement, ultimately served as the Metropolitan's best resource for elite period rooms" (p. 164). Social and cultural historian Reiko Hillyer (2015) traverses much of the same ideological ground in detailing how both St. Augustine, Florida, and Richmond, Virginia, found colonial pasts they could promote to garner goodwill for investments and tourism. St. Augustine chose its colonial Spanish origin, even though its centuries-long attraction to people of African descent led some tourism advocates initially to be "fearful that the 'Africanization' of Florida would discourage northern settlers" (p. 53). But fears notwithstanding, Hillyer posits that "by the 1830s one prominent local resident remarked that the town was 'full of Northerners to overflowing'" (p. 54). Similarly, Northern tourists traveled to Richmond in 1870 "in search of the ruins of the Confederacy," and had by the 1910s "secured northern investment by promising a stable

workforce and colonial pedigree” (pp. 133-134). Such was the beginning of the colonial foundation in U.S. heritage tourism.

The colonial foundation in U.S. heritage tourism remains evident to today in part because it was born in prevailing power structures. Wallace (1996) says of the colonial-oriented founders of American heritage tourism that “from the mid-nineteenth century on, most history museums were constructed by members of dominant classes and embodied interpretations that supported their sponsors’ privileged positions” (p. 4). Given the salience of original provider political ideology in setting and still influencing heritage site goals and the potential negative impact on visitors when provider and visitor group ideologies are at odds, Wallace concludes from several case studies that providers should avoid offensive dominant narratives. That means site providers should put stories in context by telling narratives larger than those of the particular heritage site, and they should maximize effective use of technology. The latest technologies now are both widely used and advocated in genealogy tourism (Chang, 2016). As an example of why and how to avoid offensive dominant narratives, Wallace examines operations at Colonial Williamsburg. He puts this major American site that celebrates the post-Jamestown 17th- and 18th-century British colonial capital of Virginia in the context of Mount Vernon, the plantation home of U.S. first president George Washington, his family, and approximately three hundred enslaved people.

Because of its pioneering status as the first U.S. heritage tourism house, Mount Vernon became an interpretive model for later U.S. heritage tourism sites, including Colonial Williamsburg. Wallace (1996) says early advocates of preserving American memory sites and presenting their stories to the public were motivated “to create a rallying point for nationalist forces” (p. 5) and, as such, the sites solely told stories that “enabled the elite to associate themselves and their class with the virtuous and glorious dead” (p. 7). To overcome their

colonialism origins, he says, Colonial Williamsburg and other dominant sites should exhibit in ways permitting everyone to see ourselves in the stories. This universal view recognizes that the U.S. heritage tourism market has grown too large and heterogeneous, as part of the genealogy boom, for a homogeneous master story to satisfy all visitors desires. Blurred and expanded storylines are part of a strategy to not offend anyone.

### ***2.1.2 Change Now Dominates the U.S. Heritage Tourism Industry***

While the socially dominant colonialism theme initiated and continues to prevail in U.S. public memory, time added other providers and stories for consumption at heritage tourism sites. Specifically, in the 1960s, “Black, feminist, Native American, and antiwar...activists began producing history in order to grasp the deep-rooted nature of the processes they were protesting against and to dismantle those readings of the past that provided powerful justifications for the status quo” (Wallace, 1996, p. 21). These groups began putting into public spaces history their antecedents had been producing for millennia. This expansion resulted in part in more African American stories at small sites and related heritage tourism venues that provide a master co-cultural narrative (Curtis, 1996a, 1996b). Also, both to assuage critics’ feelings related to misrepresentation and non-representation and to compete with sites telling stories from the critics’ deep-seeded perspectives, older heritage sites began to ask and augment their sites with answers to additional key interpretation questions from a critical perspective. These new questions include: whose memories are being shared, who is sharing them, how are they being shared, to what end are they being shared, and to what extent are the current storytelling practices advancing the site’s and visitors’ stated goals? The variety of interpretive offerings now available at heritage tourism sites demonstrates current momentum consistent with more stories

being provided and ancestrally-interpreted by African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts, such as at the [HBCUHeritageHome.com](http://HBCUHeritageHome.com).

So far, the look at heritage tourism scholarship shows that colonial interpretations once thought to best meet societal needs and particular providers' and tourists' goals have changed and will change as tourist needs and other factors of site interpretation continue to evolve. Sites are evolving particularly in user-guided directions accelerated by the genealogy boom. Building on the increase in user agency trending in heritage tourism, the U.S. heritage tourism industry is further evolving from its colonial beginnings. Among the current changes is a push for diversification at existing and new small and large sites. This trend has led to African Americans' ancestors being increasingly represented at large sites globally and in the United States, such as at plantation tourism sites and the three large African-ancestored U.S. sites that tell a counternarrative of colonial and contemporary suffering.

Each of the U.S. heritage tourism industry changes is occurring amid continued scholarly and community questions about who are the story providers, audiences, and purposes. Among the array of subject possibilities and tourism site types, stories of the horrors of 16th- to 19th-century slavery in the Western world dominate at global slavery tourism sites that African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts visit seeking ancestral connection. But unlike at the [HBCUHeritageHome.com](http://HBCUHeritageHome.com), where African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts are the site's story providers and target audience, African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts' needs tend not to be met at plantations, the three major African American heritage tourism sites, or other global slavery tourism sites because African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts seldom provide the stories or are global slavery tourism sites' target audience.

## **2.2 African-ancestored Genealogy Enthusiasts Seldom Global Slavery Tourism Sites' Target Audience**

Stories of 16th- to 19th-century slavery in the Western world prevail at global slavery tourism sites, which are designed and marketed to attract world audiences. In promoting this phenomenon, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) now aggressively advocates that everyone visit global slavery tourism sites. The Paris-based international organization wants people to tour any of the world's thousands of slavery exhibits, including at the forty-eight global slavery tourism sites it has designated as world heritage sites. This extra push for slavery tourism is part of the 25th anniversary of the Slave Route Project that UNESCO launched in 1994 to thematically connect and bring attention and visitors to world slavery tourism sites. UNESCO also considers the push a critical component of its proclamation of the years 2015 to 2024 as the International Decade for People of African Descent. The theme for the commemorative decade is "People of African descent: recognition, justice and development" (UNESCO, 2013, para. 10). The theme is enacted by recognizing people of African descent as worldwide slavery's victims.

In its pursuit of African-ancestored people's recognition, justice and development, UNESCO's Slave Route Project has become ubiquitous for shunning positive recognition and development derived from uplifting family stories in heritage tourism, in favor of promoting slavery horror stories (Forss et al., 2005). The organization touts that it "has become a reference and a major actor on an international scale," having "succeeded in inscribing the question of the slave trade and slavery on the international agenda" and "played a decisive role in their recognition as crimes against humanity" (UNESCO, 2019, para. 3). The Slave Route Project officially was launched in 1994 in Ouidah, Benin:

At its first meeting the Committee submitted recommendations for the elaboration of project activity to the Director-General of UNESCO and the decision was made to give priority to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, with additional attention given to the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean slave trade routes. At the outset of the Slave Route Project, the following objectives were defined....

- To put an end to the silence surrounding this episode in history by bringing universal attention to the issue of the transatlantic, Indian Ocean and Mediterranean slave trade and slavery, and elucidating their underlying causes and modus operandi;
- To objectively highlight the consequences of the slave trade—in particular the interactions between the peoples of Europe, Africa, the Americas and the Caribbean, and the pluralism inherent in the ensuing intercultural dialogue; and
- To contribute to the establishment of a culture of tolerance and peaceful coexistence between peoples. (Forss et al., 2005, p. 2)

UNESCO (2019) says it specifically is promoting slavery tourism because organizational leaders must “demonstrate why and how exploring this tragedy can help us to establish the link between a tragic past, a complex present and a future to be invented together” and such tourism “must contribute to the debates on the burning issues of reparations, reconciliation and living together that are increasingly stirring up societies affected by slavery” (para. 7).

U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris demonstrated the importance of global slavery tourism sites when she visited the Cape Coast Castle in Ghana in March 2023. She announced U.S. leadership in supplying “more than \$100 million to support stabilization in Ghana, Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, and Togo, including at least \$86 million over the next three years in support of the 10-year plan” to implement “the U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability” (Harris, 2023, para. 2). Harris said of the Africans captured and brought to the site during the Atlantic Slave Trade that “[t]hey came to this place of horror—some to die, many to starve and be tortured, women to be raped—before they were then forcibly taken on a journey

thousands of miles from their home to be sold by so-called merchants and taken to the Americas, to the Caribbean to be an enslaved people” (qtd. in Inveen, 2023, para. 17).

Similarly, Toyin Falola (n.d.), vice president of the International Scientific Committee of UNESCO’s Slave Route Project, argues in *The African Diaspora: Slavery, Modernity, and Globalization* (2013) that creation of the African diaspora could be the most important event in modern African history. He finds that the human resource drain in one place has fertilized so many other places that the world is peppered with diasporans who are irrevocably connected to economic and political developments in Africa. Because of this macro history, it is Falola’s vision that slavery, colonialism, racism, poverty, and underdevelopment are the core themes, all in negative ways, of the current lives of African diasporans. This view drives the slavery horrors focus of UNESCO’s commemorative decade and its heritage tourism promotion to African diasporans and others.

Site providers, UNESCO, and high-profile visitors are not alone in social advocacy for global slavery tourism. Travel blogger influencers are among those joining UNESCO and other genealogy tourism industry stakeholders in promoting visits to slavery tourism sites around the world. For example, a post on [Destinationtips.com](http://Destinationtips.com) says “Slavery was not only an issue in America...but a worldwide scourge,” adding:

Today there are some excellent museums dedicated to this topic, such as the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool, the Ancient Africa, Enslavement and Civil War Museum in Selma, Alabama and the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C. Most of what remains to commemorate this era are simple monuments, humble historical markers and modest memorials to slavery scattered across the globe. (Forth, 2016, para. 1)

Here, the general idea of global slavery tourism is advocated, with the scourge nature of slavery compelling people to want to learn as much as possible about slavery’s horrors, perhaps in as much variety as possible and in as many places as possible.

Likewise, even as travel blogger [Islandgirlintransit.com](http://Islandgirlintransit.com) admits suffering sadness, disbelief, and anger when visiting slavery tourism sites, she says that “[a]s an Afro-Caribbean woman I have always felt compelled to learn as much as possible about the slave trade. As a traveler, part of that education comes from visiting slavery heritage tourism sites. But I have always struggled with excursions of this nature”:

On the one hand, I am enamored by the charm and allure of these physical reminders of our past. Imposing forts and stately plantations. Vintage architecture and archaic weaponry. Some, well preserved structures; others, broken remnants. All hauntingly beautiful.

Aesthetically speaking, these places represent unparalleled levels of artistry. If I’m honest, I’ll admit that I’m as motivated to visit them to capture their magnificence, as I am to learn about their history. And that’s where things get sticky for me. Because beneath all that beauty there is darkness....

The truth is that there will never be a “right” way to portray what happened during this era. But, the more time I spend touring slavery heritage tourism sites, the more I realize that there is indeed a wrong way to do it. (Sylvester, 2018, paras. 1-4, 8)

Even with no clear understanding of how to portray slavery for maximum benefit to African-ancestored people, slavery tourism sites around the world are entrenched in slavery horror story exhibition.

In search of the right way(s) to tell and interpret African-ancestored tourism stories, scholars examine the array of entities promoting global slavery tourism, why, and with what impact. To better understand the exploratory conclusions of heritage tourism thinkers, I next examine corpus texts, related literature, and public discourse about global slavery tourism sites’ stories for key theoretical and conceptual findings about the identity-crafting stories African American diasporans consume at these sites, followed by reviews of the literature and public discourse on stories at plantations and then at the three major African-ancestored heritage tourism sites. My review includes discourse beyond scholarship because, as indicated by the

global slavery tourism discourse above, scholarship does not capture the relevant universe to be considered in designing optimal genealogy tourism experiences for African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts. The most important discussions about African-ancestored stories at heritage tourism sites take place neither in scholarship nor public discourse, but between and among those whose ancestral self-identity is most affected by site decisions—members of the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community. As an embedded member of the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community, as detailed in Chapter 3, I am privy to these discussions and privileged to be able to prioritize the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community’s discussions in my work.

As for global slavery tourism scholarship, a 2019 search of the term “UNESCO slavery tourism” in all EBSCO databases yields forty-nine articles published in English, related specifically to the Atlantic Slave Trade or its resultant slavery, and not focused on slavery tourism sites in the United States. Typically, articles appear in such journals as *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, *Museum International*, *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, *International Journal of Tourism Research*, and *Journal of Pan African Studies*. Less frequently, articles are in such journals as *Social Science Journal*, *Theatre Journal*, *Poetics*, and *Material Religion*. I detected no articles in the highest-impact journals in the tourism, leisure, and hospitality management discipline, which are *Tourism Management*, with an impact score of 13.79; *Journal of Travel Research*, with an impact score of 10.87; *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, with an impact score of 10.54; and *Annals of Tourism Research*, with an impact score of 10.42 (Resurchify, 2022).

Global slavery tourism scholarship begins in earnest with examinations of UNESCO’s 1994 Slave Route project and develops to robust levels in the 2000s, with articles focused on

sites in such areas as the United Kingdom, Ghana, and Barbados. The examinations largely are case and comparative studies on sites in places where the 16th- to 19th-century Atlantic Slave Trade was orchestrated, executed, and further diasporized. This scholarship finds the four theories that govern global slavery tourism story presentation—thanatourism, Eurocentrism, homeland diasporic theory, and hostland diasporic theory. Each theory’s application to global slavery tourism stories is elaborated upon in turn below. See Table 2.1 for an illustrative tool that summarizes these theories’ provider and user goals and displays the theories’ distribution among sites in the reviewed articles and in UNESCO’s (2018) *Legacies of Slavery: A Resource Book for Managers of Sites and Itineraries of Memory*, which advocates and instructs global slavery tourism sites.

*Table 2.1 Diasporic Theories Applied to African American Identity-Shaping in Global Slavery Tourism Literature.*

<b>Identity-shaping story theory</b>	<b>Site identity goal</b>	<b>African-ancestored visitor identity goal</b>	<b>Number of the 49 sites in reviewed literature</b>	<b>Number of the 48 sites in UNESCO’s <i>Legacies of Slavery</i></b>
Thanatourism	Shape victims to raise world consciousness of all heinous aspects of slavery	Self-worth for social justice	49	48
Eurocentrism	Shape victims to raise world consciousness of slave traders’ complicity in the global crime of slavery and maintain heroes	Self-worth for social justice	19	14
Classical diasporic theory/Homeland	Shape visitors’ positive image of locale to spur economic development support	Knowledge of and some connection to Africa	18	8
Social condition diasporic theory/Hostland	Shape victims and victors of the global slave trade	Knowledge of and positive identity connection to ancestors	12	26

### ***2.2.1 Thanatourism***

The earliest articles on global slavery tourism introduce debates on thanatourism, or dark tourism. Dark tourism sites vividly display stories of slavery's spiritual, environmental, and human carnage in deliberately repulsive imagery. These stories permeate scholarship and practice in the global slavery tourism industry (Kankpeyeng, 2009; Schramm, 2011; Mowatt & Chancellor, 2011; Reed, 2012; Seaton, 2013; White, 2017). Tourism researchers J. John Lennon and Malcolm Foley (2000) debuted the "dark tourism" term for thanatourism, noting that visiting sites of "death, disaster and atrocity is a growing phenomenon in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries" (p. 3). They and others attribute the phenomenon in part to many people's "anxieties about postmodern life: the condition of our present era that is characterized by cultural decentralization, spatial disorientation, and disassociation from traditional institutions" (Miles, 2015, p. 116). Tourism sites in the thanatourism category also focus on other human rights abuses and topics such as genocide, war crimes, state-sponsored terror, internment, and incarceration. Thanatourism messages focus on dynamic imagery and other techniques to heighten viewer shock value. Thanatourism permeates the scholarship regardless of type or location of the slavery heritage site, and regardless of whether the identities crafted are Eurocentric, homeland oriented, or hostland oriented.

In thanatourism storytelling related to the Atlantic Slave Trade, every horror that can be presented is emphasized in stories of slavery's victims and perpetrators, with each new detail of atrocity aimed at advancing human understanding of acts of evil versus human social consciousness. Providers and advocates of tourism site slavery horror stories strive to reduce human atrocities and their negative impact while increasing positive human behaviors. In

the *Legacies of Slavery* book, UNESCO (2018) explains the importance of sites that focus on slavery's horrors:

We acknowledge that slavery and the slave trade, including the transatlantic slave trade, were appalling tragedies in the history of humanity not only because of their abhorrent barbarism but also in terms of their magnitude, organized nature and especially their negation of the essence of the victims....(p. 2)

Contrary to UNESCO's justification of the atrocity stories, tourism scholars Aaron Yankholmes and Bob McKercher (2015) in "Rethinking Slavery Heritage Tourism" argue that the thanatourism framework obscures subtleties of power relations and other contestations of African and African diasporan agency. Agency is a key way people of African descent and others overcome victimhood narratives and find pathways of power to conquer obstacles, make effective decisions, and create life on one's own terms (Rowe, 2022). Yet, portraying white slavers, their white descendants, and unrelated white people as the primary people of agency and of power and privilege is necessary when the goal for presented stories is that they encourage public demand for someone to be held accountable for historical distress among 16th- to 19th-century enslaved people of African descent and contemporary distress among their descendants.

In pursuit of justice for people of African descent, the more than two hundred-fifty members in sixty-five countries of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience are required to direct themselves to telling humanity's ugly stories. To alternatively choose the aesthetic stories of family tradition as stories of conscience, recognition, or development for African-ancestored people is considered an erasure of history, for, the ugly is more real and more useful than the beautiful for achieving these sites' stated goal (Sites of Conscience, n.d.). Historian Tiya Miles (2015) focused her research on intimately experiencing how stories of enslaved people are told in heritage tourism in order to understand these stories:

‘Dark tourism’ often highlights the most sensationalist and macabre aspects of slavery, from salacious sexual ties between white masters and black women slaves to the physical abuse and torture of black bodies to the supposedly exotic nature of African spiritual practices. (p. 115)

This kind of story presentation meets a site’s goal of shaping victims to raise world consciousness about slavery’s horrors while forgoing African diasporans’ visitor identity goal of self-worth for social justice. It forgoes development in favor of a narrow, ugly form of recognition and an unproven strategy for pursuing justice. The challenges of thanatourism stories at global slavery tourism sites coexist with complications fueled by global slavery tourism site stories grounded in Eurocentrism.

### ***2.2.2 Eurocentrism***

Stories at slavery tourism sites in Europe are moored in the fact that European countries and companies financed and otherwise operated the Atlantic Slave Trade. These sites also reflect the classical theory of diaspora, which conceptualizes people as torn from a homeland and longing to return to it. This is because Europeans were the primary owners of Caribbean plantations. Therefore, slavery tourism sites in Europe are in such places as England, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and France and reflect these countries’ slavery relationships to African and Caribbean countries. The European ports that operated the most slave ship voyages between 1700 and the end of the British slave trade in 1807 are Liverpool at 5,300, London at 3,100, and Bristol at 2,200 (Beech, 2001, p. 89). Each of these locales, among others in Europe, presents slavery at heritage tourism sites. With respect to African American tourists, the sites’ primary goal is to shape visitors’ identities as victims of the slave trade with the thought that such self-imagining will lead people to effectively raise world social consciousness of slave traders’ and others’ complicity in the global crime of slavery and the world will reap the benefits

of such effectively raised consciousness. The thinking is that once a critical mass of people understands the crime, those aware will do what is necessary to ensure that perpetrators, dead or alive, face justice. Unintentionally, portrayed perpetrators also increasingly face victims' anger and revenge (Baker, 2020; Baumeister et al., 1990; Gurri, 2021; Karadima, 2020; Taylor, 2020; Quinn, 2020). The enduring world slavery crime generally is presented at European global slavery tourism sites as a structural, general one, with few clear villains. The anger and revenge also are generalized across multiple targets.

With respect to mass audiences, which include mostly Europeans, the purpose of stories at European global slavery tourism sites largely is to maintain European heroes. Toward that end, there is one unquestionable victor in these stories, William Wilberforce. U.K. scholar John G. Beech (2001) describes the gist of Britain's typical slavery tourism site story as "some good Englishmen campaigned long and hard against this evil trade" and "eventually Good, in the form of the anti-slavery movement and in the person of William Wilberforce, triumphed over Evil" (p. 88). In honor of Wilberforce's abolitionist work, HBCU Wilberforce University, the university's hometown of Wilberforce, Ohio, and many other towns and monuments around the world bear his name (Wilberforce, 1982/1797). Founded in 1856, Wilberforce University is America's fourth HBCU. The school follows Cheyney University in Cheney, Pennsylvania, founded in 1837; Miner Normal School for Colored Girls (now the University of the District of Columbia, with apportion on Howard University's campus) in Washington, D.C., founded in 1851; and Lincoln University in Chester County, Pennsylvania, founded in 1854.

These earliest HBCUs lay the foundation for more than two hundred-fifty HBCUs, including the Black Mammy Memorial Institute, founded in 1910 by revered Black educator Samuel F. Harris in Athens, Georgia (Patton et al., 1980), that have employed, educated, and

provided family inspiration and uplift for African Americans. HBCUs' foundational role in Black culture in part is demonstrated by ancestral graduates, sports rivalries, information in widely circulated student newspapers, and alma mater homecomings for generations of African-ancestored people (Foster, 2012, 2013b, 2014b, 2016a; Kennedy Haydel, 2016). Wilberforce University officially describes the school's eponym as "the great eighteenth century abolitionist, William Wilberforce, who said 'We are too young to realize that certain things are impossible....So, we will do them anyway,'" adding that "[i]t was this can-do spirit that infused Wilberforce University with strength to persevere" (Wilberforce University, 2022, para. 2). The university, formed and named to strongly associate higher education with freedom, now is among the 101 remaining HBCUs. This is after more than 150 HBCUs have closed and others are in a weakened state (Baylor, 2010). It is because of their close association with freedom that education-related stories are prevalent in African-ancestored genealogies.

Another representative example of Eurocentrism at global slavery tourism sites manifests at the Georgian House in Bristol (Beech, 2001). Here the Eurocentrism theme, as in the case of Wilberforce, also plays out in the form of great man history, or hero maintenance as it focuses on one of European sites' general goals. In an exhibit titled "A Respectable Trade?", the site presents the story of John Pinney, who owned sugar plantations in the West Indies and ran slave ships. Beech says that while "the focus of the program was the slave trade, a wide exposure to Caribbean culture was provided, and, to a lesser extent, to African culture. In particular there was a series of community-led exhibitions on current issues" (p. 97). While the focus here is European hero maintenance, this story also meets the site goal of shaping African diasporans to see ourselves as victims of the slave trade so we will better join in raising world consciousness of slavery's negative effects and agitate for reparations.

In addition to its focus on great man history, European slavery tourism also focuses on the notion that the horrors of slavery have been hidden from Europeans and the rest of the world. While Britain's history with African enslavement was not "officially" present in the U.K. national school curriculum until 2009, that year hardly begins public engagement with what some call a "hidden" history. "In fact on closer inspection it became evident that the history was not hidden; rather it had been overshadowed by the privileging of other histories" (Smith et al., 2004, p. 156). But now, as part of its crafting of the story of the River Thames, the Museum of London Docklands, for instance, portrays British participation in the slave trade until the U.K. abolished slavery in 1807 as a tale unearthed from hidden depths. In response to some Museum of London Docklands visitors feeling ashamed by facing something kept hidden from them, heritage professionals, policy makers, and the like explain why the atrocities of slavery were hidden and now must be exhibited to the world with great penetration (Beech, 2001). The River Thames story is an example of Eurocentrism in that the effort here relates to telling stories of slavery in London—not shaping identities of people of African descent. Put simply, in pursuit of publicizing slavery's horrors, global slavery tourism sites in Europe privilege Europeans and marginalize African diasporans.

Even when the Museum of London Docklands (2019) attempts to prioritize African diasporans in its exhibit storytelling, its target audience is limited to those who see the Caribbean or Africa as home and the concept of unveiling from hiddenness still prevails. For example, "The story of the Krio people of Sierra Leone has been largely overlooked in the history books but is of huge significance when looking at the story of not only the museum and the surrounding Docks, but of migration and the slave trade in London," a museum exhibit placard says. In this text, concepts of marginalization and hiddenness result where triumph of positive heritage could

otherwise prevail with different storytelling components and framing. For instance, given that “[i]n these cultures, rice is not only a staple food and a primary crop but also has very important social value” (Jackson, 2008, p. 138), the social value of rice that is quite visible in Krio culture, rather than the drudgery of producing it, could be maximized in storytelling. Examples of Eurocentrism, including great man history, in global slavery tourism are widespread and are ironic, given sites’ intention to indict white men for the Atlantic Slave Trade and its aftermath.

The Eurocentrism focus of slavery heritage tourism site stories is consistent with the classical theory of diaspora, which conceptualizes people as torn from a homeland and longing to return to it. Still, the Eurocentrism focus is on the people who did the tearing, the people who caused the longing, and the person who persevered in convincing the British Parliament to pass the 1807 act abolishing the slave trade throughout the British Empire, although slavery itself continued in the British colonies until 1838 (Nasar, 2020). The Eurocentrism focus, like thanatourism, stands on the notion that as more people know more details of abuse by people of European descent against people of African descent the better will be the lives of people of African descent. Despite being lured with marketing and promotion, African diasporans are not the target audience at slavery tourism sites in Europe and tend not, in turn, to reach our identity-shaping goal at this form of global slavery tourism site. While the target audience for European sites of slavery is Europeans, based upon who is heroized, the target audience for the third category of global slavery tourism site stories is African Americans seeking connection to the African homeland.

### ***2.2.3 Homeland Focus***

The original theory of African Americans' ancestral storytelling derives from the classic Greek notion of diaspora. Classical diasporans are people forcibly dispersed from, nostalgically longing for, and wanting to return to and politically help a homeland (Budarick, 2014). When global slavery tourism sites present themselves as weavers of stories of nostalgic and wronged homelands, they have the financial pockets of African American tourists most in mind, as these pockets are the deepest among African diasporans in the \$2.3 trillion global tourism industry (IBISWorld, 2023a). U.S. Black travelers spent \$20.2 billion on international travel alone in 2019 and \$129.6 billion on combined domestic and international travel. This compares with Black travelers in the U.K./Ireland's combined domestic and international travel spending of only \$9 billion, Black travelers in Germany's domestic and international travel spending of \$8.1 billion, Black travelers in Canada's domestic and international travel spending of \$7.8 billion, and Black travelers in France's domestic and international travel spending of \$5 billion (MMGY, 2021). Homeland focus sites designed for non-continental diasporans are in such places as Ghana, Nigeria, Benin, Senegal, Madagascar, the Western Cape, and Kenya, places where Africans were captured for the Atlantic Slave Trade (Bruner, 1996; Singleton, 1999; Essah, 2001). African Americans visit these sites in search of an ancestral home that often eludes us (Dillette, 2021; Florida International University, 2015; Hartman, 2007). We often fail to reach home at these sites because visitor goals and site provider goals are not the same.

These sites have as their goal shaping visitors' positive emotion toward and image of the African locale so as to spur the visitor in supporting economic development in the long-lost homeland. While laudable and not inconsistent with visitors' goal, Africa's slavery tourism sites' provider goal does not wholly overlap African American visitors' goal of knowledge of and the

feeling of some connection to Africa (Reed, 2016; Teye & Timothy, 2004; Worden, 2009; Yankholmes et al., 2009). Optimal visitor connection and belonging often require specific evidentiary reason(s), such as knowledge of specific ancestors or identification with a particular ethnic group within a country, now often aided by DNA testing. To facilitate connection, sites typically feature such elements as a “Garden of Reverence” a “Hall of Prayer” and “a ‘Wall of Return’, where each visitor can etch his or her name (for a fee), and a ‘Meditation Lawn’,” where people can ponder unknown African ancestors (Schramm, 2016, p. 83). Outsiders beyond the U.S. government and state officials, as announced and embodied via the recent visit by Vice President Kamala Harris (2023), also assist Africa with descendant connection and supporting economic development.

Eric Anthony Sheppard, founder of the Diversity Restoration Solutions tourism and international project development firm, for example, responded to African Americans’ interest in visiting slavery tourism sites in Africa by launching a program called Africa Homecoming Pilgrimage Orientation, which helps this consumer segment engage in acts of African social-economic restoration. This is one activity among hundreds in the now cottage industry of aiding international genealogical travel to Africa (Schramm, 2016), given that a component of classical diasporan theory is desire to help the homeland. Despite the goal of economic development and U.S. participation in achieving the goal, slavery tourism in Africa is underperforming (Asempasah & Bentum, 2023; Lwoga & Adu-Ampong, 2020; Otoo et al., 2021), particularly in attracting people seeking home for family reunions. Global slavery tourism in Africa also is detrimentally affecting locals.

The story focus at slavery tourism sites in Africa is home for African diasporans living around the world. The story focus is so much for visitors living outside the continent that locals

say their own cultural riches and sacred spaces are trampled upon and ignored in favor of slavery horror stories for international tourists:

[T]he local population is now almost excluded from the site. Formerly, the area around the river was regarded as a sacred grove, and because of that it was also separated from its surroundings. No farming activity was allowed, and access to it was limited to ritual experts who would sacrifice to the river God. With the recent developments, those local religious associations have given way to a new notion of sacred space that is linked to the memory of the transatlantic slave system. (Schramm, 2016, pp. 83-84)

While locals may get short shrift at sites on the African continent, visitors from around the world are welcomed with open arms.

The welcoming people back to Africa as homeland global slavery tourism theme is most evident in Ghana, where President Nana Akufo-Addo promotes the notion of Ghana as home for members of the African diaspora in part by designating 2019 as the “Year of Return” (Knott, 2019, p. 1). He then invited and still wants people to come to the country’s vast array of slavery tourism sites and be motivated to economically help Ghana. The Elmina Castle in Ghana is one of the most popular sites of what is sometimes called “the door of no return” before people were packed onto slave ships. Officials now call it a “door of return” (p. 1). Recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site, the Elmina Castle was the first trading post built on the Gulf of Guinea, and it is the oldest European building in existence south of the Sahara Desert. The castle became one of the most important among approximately forty slave castles built along the West African coast from Senegal to Ghana to orchestrate the Atlantic Slave Trade.

In 1471, the Portuguese established the Elmina Castle as a trading settlement. In 1596, the Dutch tried unsuccessfully to seize the fort from the Portuguese. In 1637, the Dutch were successful in seizing the fort from the Portuguese. In 1642, the Dutch were even more successful in their seizure, taking over the whole Gold Coast that Portugal had controlled from the outset. The slave trade continued under the Dutch until 1814, when control was again contested and

shared. Then, in 1872, the British took control of both Elmina and the whole Gold Coast. In addition to stories of the atrocities Africans underwent in being captured, held, and ship packed, this is the story the site tells (Schramm, 2016; Prayag et al., 2018). Thus, in its hero stories related to European countries conquering, winning, ceding, and re-winning control of operations of massive forts that served as slave trading posts and slave shipping ports, homeland slavery tourism incorporates much Eurocentrism. Also, as it publicizes violent evils and evildoers in stories of capturing, shackling, and shipping Africans, homeland slavery tourism incorporates much thanatourism. Moving away from European and African sites, global slavery tourism sites also flourish in places where Africans were put to work in slavery. These are places people of African descent now call home after enslaved ancestors arrived as transatlantic slave ships' cargo on hostland shores in the Americas, including the Caribbean.

#### ***2.2.4 Hostland Focus***

The final theory underlying stories that global slavery tourism scholars analyze and assess for impact on African diasporan visitors focuses on receiver countries in the Americas to which ancestors were first put to work as a result of the Atlantic Slave Trade. Hostland-focused global slavery tourism sites are in such places as Haiti, the Bahamas, Barbados, Columbia, Cuba, Guatemala, and Brazil—the country that imported nearly half of Africa's enslaved people, at 5.5 million (Araujo, 2021). Broadening the conceptualization of African Americans as people dispersed from, nostalgically longing for, and wanting to return to/politically help particular African countries permits separating diasporans by how we shape identity. African Americans shape identity along a spectrum bearing identification with elements of an African ancestral homeland on one end and identification with elements of our American historical hostland turned

contemporary homeland on the other end. Scholars who view African-ancestored identity-shaping as more nuanced than connection to an African country as homeland are postmodernists who further granularize “identity as an act of on-going creativity, rather than as a static and timeless entity” (Kehoe, 2015, p. 315). Further granularizing identity development processes permits understanding diasporas as “deterritorialized imagined communities which conceive of themselves...as sharing a collective past and common destiny...existing beyond the nation state with its fixed boundaries” (Werbner, 2002, p. 2). This is a more detailed understanding of diasporic self-identity than the homeland focus as it prioritizes traditional values developed in the disparate hostland countries where ancestors made new homes and achieved varying degrees of success in reaching personally set goals.

In adopting this more detailed understanding of diasporic self-identity, leading diasporic media scholar John Budarick (2014) calls on researchers to examine how people consume “media to challenge cross-border solidarities in ways that fundamentally undermine prevalent understandings of the media and diaspora relationship” (p. 139). Budarick adds that diasporas “form through connectivity rather than ethnicity” (p. 144) and he, thereby, exerts key similarities with other foundational diaspora scholars:

[Robin] Cohen’s (1995, 1996) discussions of diaspora are far from simple ethnic essentialism, but also acknowledge hybridity, imagination and communication. As he says, “In the age of cyberspace, a diaspora can, to some degree, be held together or re-created through the mind, through cultural artefacts and through shared imagination” (Cohen, 1996: 275). Indeed, Cohen’s (1995, 1996) expansion upon the classical victim diaspora and his emphasis on diasporic success in the host-land speaks to the cultural studies’ celebration of hybridity and transnational imagination as modes of resistance to the strictures of the nation state (Brazier and Mannur, 2003; Hall, 1990). (p. 142)

Here Budarick makes clear his postmodern, critical cultural studies understanding of diaspora, emphasizing that identity “consciousness and experiences are maintained and transformed through the production, exchange and consumption of mediated and unmediated symbols, ideas

and materials” (p. 143). These symbols, ideas, and materials that are modes of resistance and focus on success in the new country are embedded in part in family memories and artifacts conveyed in published genealogy book stories that sometimes in turn are conveyed at heritage tourism sites. Thus, I study these books to understand African American diasporic self-identity and apply their story focus in the U.S. genealogy tourism industry.

Sites in host countries align with the social condition theory of diaspora, with its emphasis on new experiences arising in new lands. This approach focuses on the multiple ways people identify with homelands and hostlands and even complicates what constitutes a homeland. The typical diasporan attracted to these sites is who British Marxist cultural theorist Stuart Hall (1997) calls a “hybrid social agent” (p. 143). Site goals are more for shaping visitors as victors at these sites than at any other site theme type. In keeping with the genealogy turn, visitors’ goal at these sites is to construct knowledge of and positive identity connection to ancestors (Chambers, 2001; Séraphin & Butler, 2013; Camargo & Lawo-Sukam, 2015). Akin to sites in Africa, slavery tourism sites in hostland countries in part depend upon African American tourists. These sites also present “rhetoric where the white tourist is seen as a cash cow” (Séraphin & Butler, 2013, p. 2).

The Douradinho industrial site in Redenção, Brazil, is exemplary of presenting stories with both the mass audience omnipresent thanatourism focus on violence as well as a specific hostland identity focus for Afro-Brazilians. The site tells the story of Colonel Simião Jurumenha, who in 1873 bought a sugarcane farm and built the Douradinho cachaça factory. Also known as pinga, caninha, and other names, cachaça is a distilled spirit made from fermented sugarcane juice and is a revered Brazilian cultural identifier (Silva et al., 2020). This cultural reverence in storytelling then dwarfs the injustice of slavery for visitors experiencing the intensity of the labor

once required to make the drink. One visitor speaks of her tour guide and shares that she thinks of the work to make cachaça and its outcome:

As we walk around the premises he explains the cachaça brewing process and talks about the last days of slavery.

In the museum he points out the original round, flat millstones and subsequently to the wall, on which is a drawing of two slaves using manpower to turn these stones to grind the sugarcane in order to extract the juice. The drops of sweat around the slaves' heads characterize the details of this museum's images, making them more alive than I have seen anywhere else. (Karinmarijke, 2021, paras. 2-3)

The tourist then was able to connect the salience of the work to the salience of a positive cultural tradition in her daily life. Such stories as these in Brazil and elsewhere in hostland countries are examples of how “ethnic tourism has emerged as an alternative to bring development to their historically marginalized and discriminated residents” (Camargo & Lawo-Sukam, 2015, p. 25).

While site rhetoric and criticism at hostland global slavery tourism sites still frame stories in African-ancestored people's marginalization and victimization from discrimination as is typical across site types, some local visitors to hostland sites can see ourselves reflected positively in warm traditions that immediate ancestors have passed on to descendants as the ancestors gained skills and culture while performing work and home tasks and revelries during slavery.

In sum, around the world, wherever enslaved people of African descent were traded, captured, lived, and worked from the 16th to 19th centuries, stories of slavery and of present-day African-ancestored people are told at heritage tourism sites. Informational fodder for these stories typically comes from historians. African Americans, therefore, face a genealogy tourism challenge in developing a sense of belonging to a home full of specific ancestors we know by name, story, and family connection. Initial global slavery tourism scholarship focused on horrors of slavery being minimized at the sites, and worldwide effort now is aimed at increasing both the number and injustice content of the stories. Subsequent scholarship shows four key themes of

global slavery tourism stories, these themes explain the focus on death and horror in thanatourism, valorization of European economic and social activity in Eurocentrism, depiction of African Americans as African descendants separated from home in classical homeland focus, and depiction of African descendants as tradition-revering home dwellers in the Western world in hostland focus. My findings on global slavery tourism scholarship are not unlike social and cultural comparative historian Ana Lucia Araujo's (2021), who says that "depictions of human bondage in museums and exhibitions often fail to challenge racism and white supremacy inherited from the period of slavery" (p. i). She finds that stories of white people primarily are stories of wealth, refinement, achievement, and positive legacies, while stories of Black people primarily are stories of submission, victimization, resistance, and rebellion.

Global slavery tourism scholarship and cultural discourse related to the Atlantic Slave Trade answer how global slavery tourism sites depict enslaved people and slavery's negative legacies while leaving unanswered the extent to which these depictions reflect how African Americans choose to genealogically represent enslaved ancestors. These choices are printed in our published family stories. Global slavery tourism scholarship serves as an encompassing field of study that includes plantation tourism scholarship. As is the case with global slavery tourism sites in general, plantation tourism sites also valorize most white actors and show most Black actors as victims. This is even as at in-country sites African Americans are much more likely to know ancestors by name and have available hero stories about ancestors that connect descendants to those ancestors. To provide better understandings of this story dynamic, U.S. plantation tourism scholarship also assesses site stories' relationship with African American well-being, as plantations increasingly feature African Americans as story subjects, tellers, and consumers.

### **2.3 African Americans at U.S. Plantation Tourism Sites as Story Subjects, Tellers, and Consumers**

In addition to exploring global slavery tourism sites outside the United States, academic debates and public discourse over stories told at heritage tourism sites also explore U.S. plantations. Scholarship with a primary focus on Black people in U.S. plantation tourism began in earnest in the 1990s and is growing ever more robust. This scholarship approaches U.S. plantation tourism sites as global slavery tourism sites with a U.S. hostland focus, and it often compares these sites to plantations in other hostland countries, such as Brazil. Grounded in such disciplines as history, archeology, geography, and tourism, researchers in the niche plantation tourism field have employed a variety of approaches to answer their questions. These include great man history, social history, cultural history, agricultural history, legal history, economic history, anthropology, archeology, ethnography, Atlantic studies, cross-cultural comparisons, microhistory, macrohistory, feminism, and CRT (Wilkie, 1995).

Despite the communication discipline's expertise in analyzing rhetorical forms and other storytelling techniques, this discipline is underrepresented in plantation tourism scholarship. A 2023 search of the term "plantation tourism" in the Communication & Mass Media Complete academic database yields only two articles (Clark et al., 2011; Vaughn, 2008). Traditionally, descendants of people enslaved in the United States significantly capture communication scholars' attention in one key way: communication scholars study African-ancestored people as victims of enculturated racism, leading to calls for structural change at macro levels (Atwater & Herndon, 2003). Communication scholars also study African-ancestored descendants as resistant media consumers and producers, leading to theorizing about resistant agency at the micro, individual level. Minimally studied is public history site story selection at the family mezzo level. As my research analyzes African-ancestored family story selection and applies the findings

in public history site story selection at the family mezzo level, it is a unique contribution to the communication discipline.

Still limited in the genealogy tourism story realm, communication research explores social contexts of how media and audiences interact to socialize people and institutionalize societies. Scholars in this and related disciplines interrogate an ever-widening array of communication sources, mediums, processes, and stages, as well as short- and long-term attitudinal, cognitive, emotional, physiological, and behavioral impacts and implications with respect to media policy makers, the general public, and segmented audiences or special interest groups. The more knowledge produced and publicly disseminated regarding the hows, whys, and impacts on enslaved people's descendants of communication at heritage tourism sites, the better equipped we descendants and other motivated practitioners will be to provide communication research-based solutions to an array of societal problems and amplify what already is working well to stave off would-be problems within the African-ancestored genealogy tourism community.

Across the scholarly disciplines, plantation tourism researchers use similar approaches in assessing visitor experiences based on site story selection. For their analyses, transdisciplinary scholars rely on a core set of data that includes information from participant observation, surveys, interviews, websites, and printed promotional material (Rahier & Hawkins, 1999). As secondary sources they rely on literature about plantation slavery as an institution and literature about specific people who lived on plantations, rarely—albeit effectively—including African-ancestored published genealogies among the story sources. The secondary sources in turn rely on underlying information from archeological findings, legal statutes, court documents, plantation records, plantation diaries, memory, intergenerational family communication, oral history,

interviews, letters, historical newspapers, photographs, and autobiographies/narratives of enslaved and formerly enslaved people. Newer research also sometimes assesses the use of DNA testing results (Bryc et al., 2015; duCille, 2000; Harmon, 2015; Jenkins, 1998; McKittrick, 2013; Salas et al., 2004).

After the surge in plantation tourism began in the United States in the 1960s, scholars in the earliest literature on these sites to the contemporary era debate whether and how Black life is insufficiently depicted (Carter, 2016; Gutek & Gutek, 1996). The current prevailing view is that Black suffering and resistance stories are not told enough. Even rhetoric of resort and residential sites not designed to tell historical stories but to reveal rhetorical realities of Southern nostalgia is critiqued for lack of Black suffering and resistance stories:

The road north through Florida towards Georgia and South Carolina is dotted with billboards particular to the American South. A glass of iced tea aside a swinging lawn chair invites you to sit down and have a sip as your eyes survey a lush green lawn, a gleaming white manor house, and...a wide old oak tree dripping with Spanish moss....Altogether, the billboards link opulence to the word “plantation.” They project images of the romanticized South of *Gone with the Wind*....

Yet while 21st-century plantations cultivate this cachet, notably—and perhaps not surprisingly—absent is the history of the laborers who did the cultivating that made a romanticized luxurious past thinkable in the first place. In short, then, the pairing of the word plantation with luxury resorts and residences in the twenty-first century empties the word of its potency, rendering it devoid of politics, place, or history. It erases the violent and exploitative character of the plantation economy in the antebellum South, and the slave labor—the bloody stain on the fabric of American history—upon which it relied. It also erases the way these scars persisted long after plantation slavery ended in the long legacy of legal and extralegal modes of subjugating African Americans after emancipation. (Urus, n.d., paras. 1-2)

This depiction and bitter assessment of the plantation aura are replicated in discussions of slavery tourism sites throughout the United States.

Of the approximately 400 plantation tourism sites that stretch across America, most are in Kentucky, Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi,

and Louisiana (Eichstedt & Small, 2002; Modlin et al., 2018). Among the most important U.S. plantation tourism sites are Mount Vernon—which was the first (Pribanic-Smith, 2016), Monticello, Montpelier, Nottoway, Boone Hall, Oak Alley, Laura, the Hermitage, and Colonial Williamsburg—which often is thought of as an urban plantation and amasses the highest revenues in the \$1.5 billion U.S. heritage tourism market (IBISWorld, 2023b).

The most common theory scholars apply to plantation tourism research is CRT within a cultural studies framework. These researchers take on the role of activists in print for social improvement. They utilize their findings as a basis for recommending what plantation tourist sites should do differently and how so to minimize the existence or effects of racism today (Butler et al., 2008). This approach, like that of promoters of broader global slavery tourism, is utilized because this group of scholars understands history to be best used as “a weapon in the fight for racial equality” (Dagbovie, 2005, p. 299). Among the most venerable historians of U.S. slavery who share this thinking is David W. Blight (2002), the Yale University history professor who serves as director of that university’s Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition. Blight counts the article “If You Don’t Tell It Like It Was, It Can Never Be as It Ought to Be” (2009/2006) in his prolific body of work. This article implies that the time when things will be as they ought to be as a result of incessantly telling slavery horror stories is never, as that is when all the stories of “like it was” will be told. Telling the slavery horror stories and telling the ancestral honor stories form a tension in African-ancestored U.S. genealogy tourism. Reflecting the omnipresent tension between slavery horror stories and ancestral honor stories, the three most common lines of inquiry identifiable in plantation tourism literature through the CRT lens are the proportions and kinds of stories about Black life that are told at the sites, use of Black interpreters such as tour guides/docents and reenactors to tell the

stories, and the presence and roles of Black tourists at the sites. These three lines of inquiry are explored in turn below.

### **2.3.1 Stories**

A cluster of scholarship on plantation tourism sites is nestled in the notion that stories about Black life on plantations are insufficiently told. While serving as Benjamin Banneker Professor of American Studies and History at George Washington University and historian emeritus at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History, James Oliver Horton (2009/2006) was a leader in the discussion of the content and role of slavery stories at plantation and other U.S. heritage tourism sites. He and his wife, George Mason University professor emerita Lois E. Horton, edited one of the seminal texts in the field, *Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory* (Horton & Horton, 2009/2006). He argues that telling stories at U.S. heritage tourism sites of slavery's brutality is not of value for vague ideals of getting history right, but for the very survival of Black Americans. He adds that "[a]s we seek to confront our national history and its relevance to our present and future, the history of slavery matters a great deal" (Horton, 2009/2006, p. 55). Because the mechanism by which public discussions of slavery's horrors improve Black people's present and future is an unstated assumption, it is unclear in this scholarship how this story focus is crucial for Black people's survival.

Clearer is how other public portrayals of violence against African Americans improve Black people's past and present. It is well documented, for instance, that the violence depicted in the 1852 bestselling novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* spurred abolition (Halpern, 2018), the violence depicted on television in the 1960s of Civil Rights marches spurred the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act (Echols, 2022; Nimitz, 2016), and the violence depicted on social

media and elsewhere of the 2020 George Floyd beating spurred current increased donations to Black causes such as HBCUs (Bouvier, 2020; Bouvier & Machin, 2021; Gasman et al., 2022, 2023; Kumah-Abiwu, 2023; Sailofsky, 2021). Each of these benefits resulted from capitalizing on then contemporary violence and materialized in close time proximity to the paraded violence. But undocumented in Horton's work and elusive in wider scholarship is how perpetual depiction of historical violence against Black people in public spaces specifically or contemporarily enables Black Americans' survival or otherwise directly assists us. Useful data and analysis in this regard would be that which shows that as slavery horror depictions rise, so too does African Americans' well-being. Also useful would be a model of how the benefits are conveyed to African Americans and evidence-based predictions of what level of public slavery carnage now would maximize its benefit to this population. My research shows that as ancestral honor depictions rise in published genealogy books, so too does African Americans' presented well-being. My research also provides an evidence-based predictive model and application of how the benefits of ancestral hero honor stories work to increase this population's chosen ancestral self-identity.

Historian Joanne Melish (2009/2006) enters the discussion of what stories should be told at plantations today by detailing the ways in which stories about Black life on plantations are shared in isolated and small places. She argues that "[t]he containment strategy seems closely linked to the mechanics of denial" (p. 114). In overall public presentation of African American and general American family heritage, she favors the dominance of slavery horrors (Melish, 2016). Similar are the findings of leading plantation tourism scholars Derek H. Alderman and E. Arnold Modlin, Jr. (2008) in their key contribution to the discussion of Black people's stories being insufficiently told at plantation tourism sites. From a textual analysis of materials on the

websites of twenty plantations in North Carolina, they conclude that “[n]eglecting or misrepresenting the enslaved at Southern plantation tourism sites is not simply a matter of semantics but deeply involved in perpetuating a ‘symbolic annihilation’ of the African American experience” (p. 278):

While 65% of plantation websites made some textual reference to slavery, there is a great deal of variation in these references both in absolute terms and relative to other themes frequently used in representing the plantation landscape....Among those plantation websites that show a sensitivity to slave history, they employ at least two discourses that still run the risk of misrepresenting the enslaved even as they devote needed attention to this marginalized population. They are the discourse of the individual (a)typical slave, which reduces discussions of slavery to the biographies of just a few, often unrepresentative slaves; and the discourse of the good or exceptional master and the faithful slave, which places more importance on enhancing the reputation of White plantation owners than addressing the real historical factors that constrained the choices and options available to the enslaved. (pp. 278-279)

This assessment soundly argues for a heritage tourism focus on slavery horror stories. This assessment also is consistent with researchers’ general findings of one or more of three elements with respect to Black people and plantation tourism stories.

The three general findings of plantation tourism scholarship with respect to Black people and plantation tourism stories are 1) stories of Black people are not told enough, 2) stories of the wrong kind of Black people—unrepresentatively successful people—are told, and 3) white people get simultaneously elevated in the telling of stories about Black people, thereby counteracting the story goal of convicting white people for the ills of slavery and its negative aftermath. Also, plantation tourism scholars detail successes and challenges of plantation tourism site operators’ expansion beyond narratives of the graceful, opulent, and useful lives of plantation owners and their families (Benjamin et al., 2016; Carter et al., 2011; Rose, 2004, 2006). The narrow interest and difficulty traditional plantation tourism site operators demonstrate in expanding to more family-oriented stories of African-ancestored people is why African-

ancestored genealogy enthusiast visitors looking for these stories look beyond plantations and specifically to the HBCUHeritageHome.com for these stories. While genealogies provide a focus on family stories, historical works by such scholars as Eugene D. Genovese (2017) provide a focus on planter power, wealth, and personality in stories for traditional plantations.

Discussion about what stories plantation tourism sites should tell about slavery has its roots in part in debates over U.S. slavery's role in the history of African American life. The history of African American life is divided into five chronological periods, according to Ira Berlin (2009/2006), the distinguished University of Maryland professor who is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and served as 2002-2003 president of the Organization of American Historians. The first period is charter, starting with Africans' 1619 arrival in Jamestown, Virginia; the second is plantation, burgeoning as the slave trade grew; the third is revolutionary, with the Civil War and abolition as its highlights; the fourth is migration, the massive move of many to the North from the South in the early to mid-1900s; and the fifth is freedom, the current state (p. 8). Of the era that plantation tourism scholars analyze, Berlin notes a sharp decline to "degradation of black life with the advent of the plantation" (p. 10):

Members of the Plantation Generation worked harder and died earlier than those of the Charter Generation. Their family life was truncated, and few men and women claimed ties of blood or marriage. They knew little—and probably did not want to know more—about Christianity....Few escaped slavery....The biographies of individual men and women, to the extent that they can be reconstructed, are thin to the point of invisibility. Less is known about these men and women than about any other generation of American slaves. (p. 11)

Here Berlin portrays Black plantation life in a debased state that is similarly depicted in plantation tourism site stories.

But the portrayal of Black plantation life in a debased state obscures rich biographies of plantation ancestors—including family life, Christianity, and slavery escapes—that African American descendants carry with us to today through family stories. These stories are derived

from oral history, plantation records, Freedmen's Bureau records, higher education records, wills, diaries, newspapers, and many other sources (Connor & Johnson, 2009; Johnson, 2020; Lawson, 1988). Berlin (2009/2006) proclaims a growing interest in the United States among all races for stories about the nation's slavery past (p. 1), laying a foundation for plantation tourism scholars' debates over which stories about enslaved people should be told at these sites and how so. The core questions center on how to focus on horrors of slavery, for mass audiences, or on honors of enslaved ancestors, for the micro audience of enslaved's descendants.

***Focus on horrors.***

Leading the academy's focus on slavery's horrors are Berlin (2009/2006) and such fellow scholars as Ulrich Bonnell Phillips (1918), Kenneth Stampp (1956), Thomas J. Durant and J. David Knottnerus (1999), and Thavolia Glymph (2008). The books and journal articles by these and other scholars document slavery's violence and other injustices. This scholarship serves as the secondary sources upon which plantation tourism researchers rely when they argue that plantations should tell more stories about plantation owners' and managers' physical and psychological abuse of enslaved people. This is the negative storyline. This storyline entails displays of material culture and related stories that include jails, chains, whips, beating posts, auction blocks, worn and tattered shoes and clothes, sugar cutting sickles, cotton picking bags, tobacco and rice store houses, meal serving trays, heat averting fans, and the like. In short, the items include anything that enslaved people utilized to perform assigned duties or that others utilized to violently punish them when or warn them in advance of when they did not perform as demanded. Also included here are the accouterments of resistance, items related to everything from running away to slowing down work.

These stories include significant attention to injustices in lives of people who escaped slavery by running away with the help of the Underground Railroad and/or other resources. Such people include Ona Judge, who self-emancipated from President George Washington's ownership when she was at the executive mansion then located in Philadelphia so that she would not return to Mount Vernon and become lady's maid to Washington's newly married step-granddaughter, Elizabeth Parke Custis Law. Judge's story is told among other reenactments at the Mount Vernon plantation tourism site (Ona Judge, n.d., p. 1). Self-emancipation stories (Johnson et al., 2005) are in a story category that social and cultural anthropologists Jean Muteba Rahier and Michael Hawkins (1999) advocate and call "black" narratives "produced from below" (p. 205). These stories are "from the perspective of the descendants of slaves who contest and defy white supremacist claims to objectivity and authenticity, in order to demand the visibility of their forefathers and their experiences of dehumanization" (p. 205). A group of scholars led by the Monticello plantation's director of education and visitor programs, Linnea Grim, concurs that the plantation tourism industry now nearly universally shows slavery horrors to connect visitors with "its legacy in the present U.S. society" (Grim et al., 2017, p. 54). In addition to stories from below of horrors committed against African Americans and our ancestors are stories from above that focus on what descendants decide honors our ancestors.

***Focus on honors.***

An opposing argument to focusing on stories of what enslaved people were forced to do, how they resisted what was demanded of them, and how they were violently punished for or deterred from resisting is one that stresses focusing on enslaved people's moral, psychological, and physical accomplishments. This is the positive storyline. Positive storylines of honorable

behavior by enslaved Americans are reflected in the literary romanticism and realism eras from the late 18th to early 20th centuries (Chesnutt, 1905; Harris, 1880, 1892, 1899a, 1899b, 1918). Such stories honor enslaved people's work and the results of their work and other behaviors, such as buildings they erected, furniture they crafted, labor efficiency techniques they instituted, and acts of kindness, education, and loyalty they performed for their own and their owners' family members as part of lives valuing beneficial human relationships.

Positive stories, also emphasized in published African American genealogies, show enslaved Americans enjoying both the natural land and that which they built and otherwise created by hand. The people in these stories embrace, are energized by, and positively contribute to their environments. In this argument, scholars advocate the same work-related material culture items as do their counterparts, such as building materials, cooking utensils, and field instruments. Yet, the stories related to these items focus not on forced labor and violence as the driver of behaviors and attitudes, but on the enslaved's agency of self-emancipation, structures erected, recipes mastered, volumes of crops reaped, work ethics, spiritual connections, positive personal relations, and the like. In this argument, scholars also advocate explorations of enslaved people's pleasures in reading, writing, crafting, polishing crystal and silver, carving wood, and otherwise enjoying and improving their man-made and natural environments. These scholars and practitioners of positive ancestral stories do not acknowledge the ability of some people to marginalize or remove the humanity from others, as humanity is inalienable and practitioners place our families at the center, not at the margins, of our stories.

Positive ancestral stories focus on beneficial legacies. Material culture items that support stories of beneficial legacies are skilled trade instruments, floral and animal care tools, Bibles, other books, letters, diaries, banjos, fiddles, quilts, family photographs that can include legal

owners, Christmas ball gowns, and other clothes worn on celebratory occasions.

Accomplishments and home pleasures such as learning to read, gardening, corn shucking, feeding and nurturing children, and singing then are shown to have positively impacted the enslaved, succeeding generations, and world culture through beautified built and cultivated environments; cooking, sewing, and other craft-making legacies; Christianity; music making; and general personal development, culture, and wealth creation spread intergenerationally and across the world.

Berlin (2009/2006) illuminates content for possible use in these kinds of plantation tourism site stories:

The American economy was founded upon the production of slave-grown crops, the great staples of tobacco, rice, sugar, and finally cotton, which slave owners sold on the international market to bring capital into the colonies and then the young Republic. That capital eventually funded the creation of an infrastructure upon which rests three centuries of American economic success. In 1860, the four million American slaves were conservatively valued at \$3 billion. That sum was almost three times the value of the entire American manufacturing establishment or all the railroads in the United States, about seven times the net worth of all the banks, and some forty-eight times the expenditures of the federal government. (p. 2)

Here, despite his contention that the lives of plantation enslaved people were debased, Berlin makes clear some of the wealth of personal enterprise and related topic areas available in discussing the value of enslaved people's work in helping to build the United States, descendants' communities, and our families. His assessment raises the question of what value descendants place on our ancestors' previous and our own current economic, social, and cultural building activity. Authors of Black genealogy books answer this question in our stories.

Also within the realm of positive storylines of the enslaved at plantation tourism sites are tales of enslaved and free Black people joining slaveowners and their sons in Confederate service. African Americans served primarily in such roles as body servants and cooks, while

other enslaved men and women helped to care for and maintain the homefront (Jordan, 1995; Levine, 2009/2006; Tucker, 2018; Wesley, 2007). Edward C. Smith (1990), a retired assistant anthropology professor who founded and co-directed the Civil War Institute at American University, explores the context of this general storyline in his article “Calico, Black and Gray: Women and Blacks in the Confederacy.” He notes of African Americans that “they had it within their power to wreak wholesale havoc throughout the South” and even though they “could, with attendant risks, have escaped to nearby lines, few chose to do so and instead remained at home and became the most essential element in the Southern infrastructure to resisting Northern invasion” (p. 13). Like Lovett (1983), Smith committed himself as a Black scholar to documenting some of free and enslaved Black people’s roles in aiding themselves and fellow Southerners during the Civil War. He grieves that some Black people today are slow to honor this aspect of our ancestors’ lives and he delights in our increasing reverence for having stories of ancestors’ Confederate service told at plantation sites.

In addition to stories of Confederate service, other stories of enslaved people delighting in relational aspects of life rather than blistering “under the bitter burden of slavery” (Clarke, 2005, p. 189) also are among stories scholars examine at plantation tourism sites. Underlying works for these stories include those by such eclectic writers as Annette Gordon-Reed (2008), Edward Ball (1998), John W. Blassingame (1977, 1979), Erskine Clarke (2005), John F. Baker (2009), and Genovese (1974). Arguing for the equity if not primacy of African American family oral history and traditions in family and national identity, Gordon-Reed’s scholarship on stories of the Sally Hemings family as part of U.S. third President Thomas Jefferson’s family and his Monticello plantation is pioneering in relational storytelling. It won her a host of awards, including the 2009 Pulitzer Prize in history, the 2009 George Washington Book Prize, the 2008

National Book Award in nonfiction, the 2008 *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year award for nonfiction, and a 2008 National Book Critics Circle Award finalist designation for biography. Gordon-Reed's work led to more relational stories being told at Monticello, which after opening in 1923 began in the 1950s to include slavery horror stories in its tours and was named by UNESCO in 1987 as the first U.S. house on the World Heritage List.

In one of Monticello's latest advancements, Hemings' room was excavated. It opened to the public in 2018 (Daley, 2017). Near Jefferson's own room, Hemings' room now is used at the site to tell more stories of the relationships among Jefferson, Hemings, and their six children together. Lucia Stanton (2012) also has written extensively on tourism at Monticello and how the relational stories of the Hemingses and other enslaved people are told. As a former senior historian at the Thomas Jefferson Foundation at Monticello, Stanton has produced work that both predates and builds upon Gordon-Reed's work. She has earned a reputation as a scholar of the people Jefferson enslaved. Researchers often credit Stanton both for Monticello's advancement in telling relational Black stories and for the site's service as a catalyst for other plantation tourist sites to tell comparable stories of home. The emphasis here is on the word "home," stressing the interpersonal communication between enslaved people and owners who lived and worked in a shared home environment. This emphasis also depicts how warm and tradition-filled memories of home in textual, visual, sonic, and material artifact form are passed on to African-ancestored descendants.

Like Gordon-Reed's work, Ball's (1998) work also explores interpersonal relationships, as well as potential unsavory reactions to them. He recounts, for instance, that Peter Henry Martin, who had been enslaved by Ball's ancestors the Isaac Ball family, on a plantation in South Carolina, expressed genuine affection in a series of letters he wrote to Ball family members until

his death in 1933. Upon reading the letters, a grandson of Martin was pleased with his grandfather's noble character but not with how some other Black people would view his ancestor. He said that if his grandfather "were to tell the average black youngster about his association with the Ball family, they [average Black youngsters] would resent it so much. They would be so angry, because of his kind feelings toward the white people, that they would do something to him" (pp. 199-200). The anger, theoretically, stems from thinking that Black people's kindness to white people fuels white people's oppression of Black people, as well as from some Black people's lack of knowledge and embrace of transracial relational stories in our own ancestry. The books I study explore these relationships.

Work that regularly shows relationships of loyalty and kindness between African Americans' ancestors and white people in the ancestors' lives extends beyond work by Monticello scholars, Ball, and others. These relationship stories also are evident, for instance, in genealogy television (Edge, 2017; Gates, 2016; Lunt, 2017). When the late longtime Georgia Congressman John Lewis appeared on the Henry Louis Gates, Jr. genealogy program *Finding Your Roots* in 2012, for instance, Lewis learned that he has ancestors whose loyalty to owners he embraced:

Gates—Does it bother you at all to read that your ancestors were loyal to their master during the Civil War?

Lewis—No, it doesn't disturb me. It's the relationships. You can be around people, you, you become family. (Cory, 2012, para. 85)

Here Lewis demonstrates an understanding of the love of life and people that his enslaved great-great grandparents exhibited. Both the ability to exhibit this love and the acts it inspires are part of what I later explain in detail in this research via the Agapic Agency Theory.

Contrarily focusing on white oppression of Black people, Julia Rose (2016), whose background as a visitor, worker, and researcher at four historical plantations in Louisiana undergirds her specialization in the ethics of slave life representations at historic plantations, wants eliciting mourning in visitors to be a tour site goal. The mourning is to honor ancestors for their suffering. She also wants plantations conveyed as enslaved people's "homeplaces" where their rich "personal stories" are told (p. 30). But this vision comes amid her and other scholars' acquiescence that existing plantation sites never can fully honor enslaved people's lives and positive stories:

Historic plantation museums are not fully positioned to commemorate a pluralistic memory of our enslaved and free ancestors; however, this present generation of museum staff is bringing into focus the historical presence of our enslaved ancestors, challenging the long-standing white-centric memory of who we are historically as Americans. (p. 30)

Echoing a notion proposed by social ethicist Claudia Eppert (2000), Rose advocates that "museum educators consider the approach of remembrance learning, the pedagogical practice of bringing together stories of a collective past with the learners' feelings and understandings of their own position in the present" (p. 30). This approach permits descendants to use positive ancestral self-identity stories to embrace plantations as ancestral homes.

Such a remembrance learning approach accommodates sentiments of and akin to those of Hightower Theodore Kealing, the 1896-1912 managing editor of the *A.M.E. Church Review* and former president of HBCU Paul Quinn College. Kealing was a self-confident African Methodist Episcopal Church leader who credited his family heritage and education for his success (Russaw, 2011). Kealing (1903) often heard and retold cherished memories of positive stories relaying fondness and kindness exhibited by formerly enslaved people to their former owners:

[T]he old ties of love that subsisted in so many instances in the days of slavery still survive where the ex-slave still lives. The touching case of a Negro Bishop who returned to the State in which he had been a slave, and rode twenty miles to see and alleviate the financial

distress of his former master is an exception to numerous other similar cases only in the prominence of the Negro concerned. (p. 168)

Kealing adds that he knows “of another case of a man whose tongue seems dipped in hyssop when he begins to tell of the wrongs (committed against) his race, and who will not allow anyone to say in his presence that any good came out of slavery, even incidentally; yet he supports the widowed and aged wife of his former master” (pp. 168-169). The positive sentiments expressed by and recounted about enslaved people make clear that it matters not only what is in stories, but who interprets them, in word and body, to achieve desired remembrance.

### ***2.3.2 Interpreters***

That a Black person with Kealing’s self-confidence grounded in family history, education, and church, is one who recounts stories of enslaved people’s kindness to owners speaks to plantation tourism scholars’ discussion of just who should be telling stories of enslaved people at plantation sites. Most discussion argues that when Black people serve in roles as docents, reenactors, and the like, stories of Black people are and will be better told. Black interpretation at plantation sites unofficially began in 1845 when enslaved Alfred Jackson took on the role of telling stories of himself, his family, and his owner’s family as visitors flocked to The Hermitage after U.S. seventh President Andrew Jackson’s death. Jackson kept up the docent role when the site officially opened as a tourist attraction in 1889 until his own death and burial at The Hermitage near the president’s tomb in 1901 (Barna, 2020; The Hermitage, 2022; Swanson, 2019). So, Black interpretation in U.S. plantation tourism is older than the industry itself, and it continues to today.

While saying they generally believe better Black stories are told at plantations when Black people tell them, Rahier and Hawkins (1999) recount what they call a counter example.

They say that during “one of our visits to Oak Alley, the interpreter in charge of our group was a young black woman dressed in a bright red antebellum dress” and “[w]hile she led us through the first floor rooms giving a profusion of detailed information about the various pieces of furniture, she never uttered the word ‘slave’” (p. 210). Likewise in other public history settings, some “black women reenactors occupy an image associated with idealized femininity. This appropriation of southern belle iconicity destabilizes past and contemporary representations, rooted in southern mythology” (Davis, 2012, p. 308). Many African-ancestored interpreters take their roles seriously as conveyors of much-needed information to multicultural audiences, with a focus on the needs of African-ancestored genealogy tourists. One such living historian is Cheyney McKnight (2022), who posts videos of her nationwide reenactments to educate her 236,000 YouTube subscribers and other viewers. She explains that “[a]bove all I wanted to honor the ancestors, because it was their guidance who brought me here” (Para. 1). In short, interpreters matter in plantation genealogy tourism. They matter also at plantations beyond the United States.

Reflecting the notion that interpreters matter in African-ancestored plantation genealogy tourism beyond the United States, a group of Black reenactors ignited a firestorm recently in both Brazil and the United States over African-ancestored interpreters. The controversy began after *The Intercept* news website, which debuted in 2014 with funding from eBay founder Pierre Omidyar, posted an article headlined “Tourists Visit Plantation in Brazil and Are Served by Black Slaves” (Olliveira, 2016). The article begins:

BUCOLIC SCENERY, VERDANT fields, pleasant weather. It would be the perfect setting for sipping on a coffee and relaxing on a farm in the Paraíba valley of Rio de Janeiro state in southern Brazil, if there had not been so much blood spilled here. The region, enriched by the exploitation of slave labor on coffee plantations, was also known for the particular brutality with which slaves were treated. Those days have passed but the

region's economy has gained a second wind: it now appears on the state's cultural map, advertising a form of tourism that glorifies its past while naturalizing racism and slavery.

If, in the year 2016, you would like to be served by a black person dressed as a slave, you can visit, for example, the Santa Eufrásia Plantation in Vassouras. Constructed around 1830 and located in the Vale do Café, or Coffee Valley, it is the only private plantation protected by Rio de Janeiro's Institute of National Historic and Artistic Patrimony. (paras. 1-2)

Both the article's content and comments on it reflect overwhelming disapproval of what for some is a stigma associated with Black reenactors at plantation tourism sites.

One responder, for instance, says it "is horrifying to know that in Brazil this is even acceptable (though, from all that I have heard about racism against African-Brazilians, I shouldn't be surprised). Thank you for this piece Cecilia, I hope it makes rounds around the internet and sparks outrage for bringing to light such a ludicrous 'tourist attraction'. The nerve!" Another says, "Extremely important that people know what is going on on this plantation, so we can stand against it." And a third says, "This is disgusting, backwards and utterly reprehensible behavior for any modern society seeking progress. Glad to see Brazil exposed for this longstanding ignorance" (Olliveira, 2016, Comments). Olliveira updated the next day that:

After this article was published, Diadorim Ideia, a communications firm that developed Rio de Janeiro's Culture Map in partnership with the State Secretariat for Culture, informed *The Intercept* that the Santa Eufrásia Plantation had been removed from the map. In an email, the company stated that the decision was made because the plantation "is being associated with practices with which we vehemently disagree." (para. 23)

Amid the strength and near unanimity of these comments against Black people's own reenacting choices, there are slight nuances.

One commenter, for instance, says that while she does not want Black people telling plantation stories while wearing period clothing, she does want the horror stories told. Referring to Black reenactors, she says, "I'm not talking about anything such as this." But, instead, "something that would let folks know how bad it really was. In fact, it has sometimes been a

struggle to get historical acknowledgement rather than a glossing over” (Olliveira, 2016, Comments). This commenter exemplifies the often discussed and not until the present research resolved issue of tension between slavery horror stories about African-ancestored people and ancestral hero stories at U.S. genealogy tourism sites. Countering the notion of glossing over the horrors is the notion of going too far, into the realm of the trauma pornography of thanatourism:

In the USA we have “Colonial” Williamsburg, Virginia, where black people in said heritage plantation only hold jobs slaves would have held before emancipation. It’s a great way to show your family how America “could have been” and revel in a few moments of fantasy apartheid. It feels a bit similar to the glass window in Memphis, TN, where you can have the fantasy gun-barrel-view of James Earl Ray’s fatal shot on MLK. These places are a bit like zoos; on one hand they provide disconnected people context for a world they don’t know, on the other hand they make suffering a pornographic experience. (Comments)

Joining this commenter in stressing the psychological damage to descendants that accompanies acting out stories of pornographic suffering, another commenter says no Black people or others should perform at a plantation.

This additional commenter who rejects Black slavery reenactors at plantation tourism sites finds it cruel that “weddings are widely held in plantations today in the United States, spaces synonymous with brutality and suffering of black people.” The commenter adds that “the narrative provided by tour guides at these plantations are sanitized” and “many people in the United States and throughout the Americas are loyal to their colonial past and safeguard their colonial mentality. The cruelty of humanity” (Olliveira, 2016, Comments). It is notable that it is not solely or necessarily the slavery horror stories, but the re-embodiment of them, that raise some people’s ire. The potential negative impact of controversy over which ancestral stories descendants choose to act out in heritage tourism is eliminated at the HBCUHeritageHome.com, as descendants embody positive ancestral stories here and do not shape our choices based on others’ possible rejection of how we choose to tell our own ancestral self-identity stories.

The public outcry about Brazil's Black reenactors was topped more than twenty years earlier in 1994 when a Black reenactor stood on an auction block at Colonial Williamsburg:

The reenactment was organized by the director of the Colonial Williamsburg African-American department, and officials said that they intended to depict real-life situations and the truth. Before, during, and after the reenactment, members of two leading civil rights organizations and others protested. The activists believed that the auction was degrading and a gross trivialization of African-American heritage. Lewis Suggs, history professor at Clemson University, does not support something as graphic as the staging of a slave auction without preliminary preparation of the audience. He feels that the nation has not dealt with the issue on an education level, and he is ambivalent about it being used for entertainment. (Phillip, 1994, p. 24)

Because of its lead in implementing scholarly advice to promote U.S. heritage tourism's appeal to mass audiences, Colonial Williamsburg after this reenacting firestorm took and continues to take steps to diversify the stories, interpreters presenting stories, and story contexts on its grounds.

For instance, in its effort to make its reenacting more generally appealing to all audiences, Colonial Williamsburg planned for 2018 multiple performances of the following six reenactments depicting stories about African-ancestored people:

- "Journey to Redemption" features reenactors who "explore the complexities of portraying the enslaved and the slave owners. Directly following, join the conversation about slavery, racism, and healing."
- "Who Owns You" showcases "three 18th-century Williamsburg female slaves" showing how laws impacted their lives. "As property, these women and their offspring could be bought, sold, inherited or freed and much of their future was determined by who owned them."
- In "An American Story: Aggy of Turkey Island" enslaved woman Aggy is selected "by her master to fulfill the role normally held by a wife" and is "forced to navigate the world she will never be welcomed into while separated from the enslaved community in which she was raised."
- In "Wetherburn's Tavern" tourists are afforded "a glimpse into the private lives of Henry Wetherburn, his family, and his slaves, who made the tavern one of the most successful of the 1750s."

- In “John Rollison: Free Negro and Merchant” visitors meet a Black man “who was never enslaved, but owned slaves.”
- In “Public Goal” tourists guide themselves through cells of a prison where “Thieves, runaway slaves, debtors, and political prisoners” waited for their trials and punishment. (Colonial Williamsburg, 2018, Events)

In addition to its reenactments to appeal to mass audiences, Colonial Williamsburg also now is planning Black education reenactments specifically to appeal to African American audiences.

Responding to a new archaeological find and African American heritage tourists’ demonstrated interest in our ancestors’ educational experiences, Colonial Williamsburg’s new Black education reenactments highlight the Anglican Church’s role as the first baptizer and first formal educator of African Americans (Foster, 2022). Plans for these reenactments materialized after archaeologists found on the nearby campus of the College of William & Mary what they have identified as the oldest surviving building in which formal education of African Americans took place (Lee, 2020). The school was one of many operated by the Rev. Thomas Bray and his followers as the foundation of formal Black education in America. As part of a project led by Maureen Elgersman Lee, director of the William & Mary Bray School Lab, the school structure is being moved to Colonial Williamsburg to serve as the setting for the new reenactments. Centered around this structure, the new reenactments are to tell stories of the beginning of African Americans in the Church of England in the U.S. colonies, development of early African American education in the Anglican Church, and resultant growth of African American Episcopal Church-based higher education at such HBCUs as St. Augustine’s, Fort Valley State, and Voorhees universities.

Colonial Williamsburg’s and other sites’ continuing efforts yet seeming inability to optimally frame enslaved people’s stories at plantations, Black people’s choices in enacting our ancestors’ and our own identities through heritage tourism stories, and other people telling

African American ancestral stories all hamper attracting more Black tourists among the predominantly white American and growing international tourists at plantation sites.

### **2.3.3 Tourists**

Amid the challenges to increased Black tourism at plantation sites, tourism scholars and site workers continue to advocate for more Black tourists. They claim in part that such an increase would add to the quality of questions other tourists ask and the ensuing conversation during tours (Rose, 2014, 2016). A plantation tourism site interpreter shares on the Vox.com news website some of her experiences with what can happen in the absence of Black tourists. She writes under the headline “I Used to Lead Tours at a Plantation. You Won’t Believe the Questions I Got About Slavery”:

Up until about a year ago, I worked at a historic site in the South that included an old house and a nearby plantation. My job was to lead tours and tell guests about the people who made plantations possible: the slaves.

The site I worked at most frequently had more than 100 enslaved workers associated with it— 27 people serving the household alone, outnumbering the home’s three white residents by a factor of nine. Yet many guests who visited the house and took the tour reacted with hostility to hearing a presentation that focused more on the slaves than on the owners. (Biser, 2017, paras. 1-2)

While still making clear that most interactions she had with museum guests were positive, the interpreter recounts a number of comments she found distasteful.

Among the distasteful comments are “dragging all this slavery stuff up again is bringing down America”, “They lived in a nice house here, and they weren’t being beaten. Do we know why they wanted to leave?”, and “Yeah, well, Egyptians enslaved the Israelites, so I guess what goes around comes around!” (Biser, 2017, paras. 3, 6, 15). She adds that, “I was often asked if the slaves there got paid, or (less often) whether they had signed up to work there. You could tell

from the questions — and, not less importantly, from the body language — that the people asking were genuinely ignorant of this part of the country’s history” (para. 7):

I also met guests from all over the country who, by means of suggestive questioning of the “Wouldn’t you agree that...” variety, would try to lead me to admit that slavery and slaveholders weren’t as bad as they’ve been made out to be.

On my tours, such moments occurred less frequently if visitors of color were present. Perhaps guests felt more comfortable asking me these questions because I am white, though my African-American coworkers were by no means exempt from such experiences. (paras. 8-9)

Biser notes here that just as serving mostly non-African mass audiences is the rationale for African-ancestored people as story subjects at plantation tourism sites, serving these audiences and site interpreters is the rationale for African-ancestored people as visitors at plantation tourism sites as well. As the presence of African-ancestored people as visitors at plantation tourism sites is a factor in other visitors’ reception, just that there is such a wide range of races, cultures, and goals among visitors sets the stage for challenges at heritage tourism sites.

Amid the wide range of races, cultures, and goals among visitors, African Americans’ experiences and story choices at plantation tourism sites are far from prioritized or well-studied in scholarship. When scholarship breaks out African Americans’ genealogy tourism story choices, it tends to be contradictory and to glean information about those choices only in comparison with other visitors’ experiences. For instance, under a continuing National Science Foundation (NSF, 2014) award that initially paid out more than \$445,000, scholars whose work provides a basis for many plantation tourism sites increasing their slavery horror storytelling now are rethinking what their earlier work has wrought. These scholars now are grappling with more African Americans being invited to these sites while increasingly non-African diasporans are visiting and seeing more African American carnage on display amid site providers’ and non-

descendant visitors' limited understanding of African-ancestored genealogy tourists' ancestral self-identity story choices.

Key in the limited scholarship on African Americans' plantation tourism story choices is findings from a survey of more than a thousand tourists at the Laura Plantation in Louisiana. Scholars found that Black visitors are least interested of all in seeing slavery exhibits, white Americans are next most interested, and foreign born visitors are most interested in stories of slavery at the plantation (Butler et al., 2008). About the audience members on whom they most focused, the researchers “speculate that most white visitors to tourist plantations do not seek out the messy and potentially uncomfortable history of slavery and the enslaved while on vacation” (p. 300):

Instead, like most tourists, they want an escape from daily routine while at the same time seeking a confirmation of their existing beliefs.

Critical Race Theory posits that stories have naming power. Clearly, dominant narratives at historic plantation sites have long been maintained by a white elite class at the expense of the enslaved and African American history in general. There is evidence of an increasing inclusion of the enslaved at the plantation museums; however, this movement is slow and evolutionary—not revolutionary. It is quite likely that market demand, rather than a political movement, will cause the counter narrative of slavery to upset and challenge dominant narratives associated with the tourist plantation. (p. 300)

So, as many tourists shy away from slavery horror stories at plantations, it is clear that provider goals and not market demand currently are driving the increase in presenting slavery horror stories at plantation tourism sites. On the other hand, amid findings that Black tourists are least interested in seeing or hearing slavery portrayed at plantation tourist sites, these tourists visit more when family stories are exhibited. Therefore, market demand by African American tourists is driving the increase in ancestral honor stories in U.S. genealogy tourism.

Somerset Place plantation, in Creswell, North Carolina, for instance, is heavy both on stories brought to the site in published genealogy form by African American descendants of

people who lived and worked there and on descendant visitation when those stories are exhibited (Durrill, 1992; Harrison, 2008; Redford, 2000, 2005/1988). Heritage tourism scholar Wilson M. Hoggard (2014) notes that:

Often heritage tourism is subject to who is telling the collectively accepted or the officially accepted version of history. Another problem heritage tourism faces is the responsibility of portraying everyone's history accurately. Interpretation is often questioned when it comes to how a site should portray certain topics, especially when the topics are sensitive to racial differences. Topics that center on slavery often impact people in different ways. Site managers or tour guides may choose to lessen the impact of slavery at a particular location during a tour by simply referring to slaves as servants. Alternatively they may choose to show focus mainly on the painful experiences of slaves at a particular location and talk less about the life of the plantation owners....

Somerset Place, a state site, had the largest majority of African-American visitors. The two guides from Somerset Place listed the number of African-Americans as 65% and 45% respectively. The reason for the high percentage was the large homecoming events held at Somerset Place that attract many African Americans to the area. (pp. 2, 36)

Somerset Place is one of the most celebrated examples of the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts' attraction to positive ancestral stories in public memory spaces. The genealogy book stories that attract African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts to this site reinforce that story options in genealogy tourism go well beyond stories that simply refer to enslaved people as servants and stories that focus mainly on the painful experiences of the enslaved at a particular location. Options include stories of home and family, and African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts choose these stories both in our plantation tourism site visits and in what we publish in our family heritage books.

Overall, it is family-generated stories, proven consistent with successful descendant life outcomes (Duke, et al., 2008; Fivush et al., 2008, 2010; Gladwell, 2016), which attract more African American genealogy tourists to plantation tourism sites. African Americans' presence for family stories at plantations and publication of such stories in our family heritage books demonstrate our choice of these ancestral stories when it comes to uplifting our families. In

contrast, the negative feelings of stigma and public contestations ensuing from plantation slavery horror stories show that such stories are inconsistent with both African American well-being and UNESCO's stated mission "to contribute to the establishment of a culture of tolerance and peaceful coexistence between peoples" (Forss et al., 2005, p. 2).

Still, as non-African American tourists dominate visitorship at plantations, site providers trump market demand in deciding to increasingly display slavery horror stories for the primary purpose of educating non-African Americans. By making these decisions, white people who decide which plantation stories to display both retain control of African American ancestral heritage experiences and are racist, according to archaeologist Teresa S. Moyer (2015) in *Ancestors of Worthy Life: Plantation Slavery and Black Heritage at Mount Clare*. After analyzing this Baltimore, Maryland, plantation, Moyer says that in the minds of plantation operators:

there is nothing wrong or insidious in choosing to focus on the part of history that is of the most interest to them. Making black history difficult to access physically or financially, or erasing it entirely, may not have been intentional or overt to the people preserving Mount Clare. But racism can be a habit of thought whereby whites habitually ignore or forget blacks in their pursuit of promoting their white ancestors, an act that may seem natural and unremarkable to them but is insidious to others....

Visitors traditionally have received the most exposure to elite whites' most estimable or admirable accomplishments, social mores, and contributions, and considerably less exposure to the resilience, hard work, and creativity of enslaved blacks. It casts elite whites in a favorable light without providing visitors all of the information they need to form their own opinions. (p. 5)

In other words, Moyer says, "Black life tends not to be interpreted to visitors with depth or breadth" (p. 5). Portrayals that increasingly display horror stories of enslaved people's lives, with no focus on positive stories in such areas as ancestors' most estimable accomplishments, social mores, contributions, resilience, hard work, and creativity, then, cast African Americans in a shallow, unfavorable light. This stigmatized light serves providers' goal of crafting victims and

victors of the global slave trade by educating the public about slavery's horrors and does not serve African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts' goal of knowledge of and identity connection to heroic ancestors as we seek positive ancestral self-identity via stories that honor our ancestors.

Regardless of who is cast favorably in stories, who tells the stories, and to what audience, some scholars concur in concluding that descendants of enslaved people and other members of the African diaspora simply should not go to plantation tourism sites. Abstaining from plantation visits is for the sake of African Americans' emotional well-being, according to plantation tourism scholar Jessica Adams (2007). She argues that as violence against African-ancestored people always is active in plantations' nostalgic stories, "the plantation is reduced to a 'home' precisely as part of the process that attempts to separate slavery from the meaning of the plantation" (p. 17). Whether participating in plantation tourism is a part of African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts' expression of ancestral selves or not, the use of ancestral stories from African-ancestored published genealogies at these sites contributes to positive ancestral self-identity and senses of ancestral home for descendant families, as reflected in increased and repeated visitorship when these stories are a site's focus.

African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts bring to plantation tourism sites ancestral joy stories published in mostly small-press and small-run genealogies. These genealogies until now had not been studied as an identity-crafting genre for African Americans seeking positive ancestral self-identity in the U.S. genealogy tourism industry. Published genealogies are books of ancestral identity reflection in which authors speak for collective family selves to selves and others about ancestors (Nayar, 2016). Genealogy expert Sharon DeBartolo Carmack (2022) divides books in the genealogy genre into what I simplify as six types based on their dominant

feature. These are narrative, life story, fictionalized, how-to guidebooks, edited letters and diaries, and technical. Each of the six types is explained next, including by example.

Narratives are the most common genealogy type, comprising everything not otherwise categorized. Narrative genealogies tend to cover the highest number of generations. They can but do not necessarily stick close to the standard narrative arc, with protagonists and antagonists, quests, obstacles, climaxes, and resolutions. These books are of a variety of page lengths in the tens and hundreds and are published by a wide range of presses, including commercial, cultural, academic, and private. Life story writings are autobiographies, biographies, or memoirs (Deguin, 2020), often published by major commercial presses, such as Simon and Schuster. Fictionalized genealogies rely upon author imagination to interpret sources, including oral history.

Guidebooks, or how-to books, recount research steps and identify sources largely to aid others in their genealogy quests. Edited letters and diaries stray little from their predefined set of primary document pages. Finally, technical books are written by someone outside the family and often, in the case of African-ancestored genealogies, are published by historical societies or by cultural presses dedicated to African American books in the humanities.

African-ancestored published genealogies are published genealogies that focus on and are not necessarily limited to ancestors of African descent or ancestors of the author(s) (Bennett, 2019; Berry, 2015; Greenidge, 2023; Kirkels & Dickon, 2020; Madden, 1992; Young, 2017). African-ancestored published genealogies also often are community genealogies, such as *Free Negro Heads of Families in the United States in 1830: Together with a Brief Treatment of the Free Negro* (Woodson 1925), *Our Kind of People: Inside America's Black Upper Class* (Graham, 1999), *African American Topeka* (Camp, 2013), and *Family Legacies: Our History Told Through Stories and Tributes* (LCRA, 2020). African-ancestored published genealogies

regularly contain features of more than one type. As is the case with genealogies in general, African-ancestored genealogies span and overlap the six genealogy types of narrative, life story, fictionalized, guidebook, edited letters and diaries, and technical, yielding an array of different combinations of hybrids.

In the most prevalent book category, the narrative category that most generally is understood as genealogies, an exemplary African-ancestored genealogy is Dorothy Spruill Redford's (2000) *Somerset Homecoming* (2005/1988). This is the book that has provided stories for exhibits and events that most attract African Americans to the Somerset Place plantation in Creswell, North Carolina. Those exhibits and events to date have attracted more than two thousand descendants of the working plantation's enslaved people and owners. The success of Haley's work spurred Redford's work, and the success of Redford's work has helped spur among members of the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community the notion that African American published genealogies can play an even greater, exponentially greater, role as genealogy tourism site story fodder expressly for the benefit of African American genealogy enthusiasts' families beyond the plantation. The remaining five forms of African-ancestored published genealogies are more prevalent in the academic and commercial press, less generally thought of as genealogies, and round out the genre.

In the life story category, a prime example is Pauli Murray's (1973/1956) *Proud Shoes*, interchangeably typed as autobiography and memoir and the featured genealogy exhibit at the NMAAHC (Green, 2020; O'Dell, 2001; NMAAHC, 2021a; PMCHSJ, n.d.). Also exemplary in the life story category is Sarah Lawrence Lightfoot's (1988) *Balm in Gilead: Journey of a Healer*. In describing this "stirring portrait" of Lightfoot's mother, distinguished child psychiatrist Margaret Cornelia Morgan Lawrence (1914-2019), the publisher on the jacket front

flap says the book “is a mirror to an extraordinary black family, tracing its legacy of preaching, teaching, and healing...” The book simultaneously conveys “a legacy of sorrow: the pain of racism, the destructive hierarchies of skin color and gender which pervade black as well as white society” (Lightfoot, 1988). Publishers and authors of life story books often identify the books as something other than genealogies and direct them toward specific reader markets. For instance, Elizabeth J. West’s (2022) *Finding Francis: One Family’s Journey from Slavery to Freedom* is author-identified as a biohistoriography aimed at the young adult market.

In the fictionalized category, two prime and epic examples are Alex Haley’s (1976a) *Roots: An American Saga* and Lalita Tademy’s (2001) *Cane River* (Bowers, 1992; Gerber, 1977; Green, 2020; Haley, 1973, 1976b, 2018; Haley & Ferris, 2008; Hogan, 2019). While scholars criticize Haley for not presenting documentary evidence for all his claims, *Roots* arguably is the most important book in American history for impact on genealogy practice. Haley’s work encouraged people not only to practice genealogy themselves, but also to author how-to books teaching others effective strategies in genealogy research. The African-American genealogy guidebook subgenre sprang from his work (Blockson & Fry, 1991; Burroughs, 2001; Rose & Eichholz, 2003/1978; Smith, 1983). In the guidebook and how-to category, exemplary is Gwendolyn Midlo Hall’s (2005) *Slavery and African Ethnicities in the Americas: Restoring the Links*, which includes an online database searchable for enslaved ancestors.

In the edited letters and diaries category, works are collated from received and sent letters and from diaries, such as that of Mary Johnson Sprow, and later published. Sprow, who was born in 1887 to formerly enslaved parents, began writing a diary in 1916 at age twenty-one and died in 1981 at age ninety-four. Her diary captures rich family conversations, photographs, and more to reveal her personal, emotional, and social life, according to Elizabeth Clark-Lewis (1994,

1997, 2000), longtime director of the Public History Program at Howard University, an AAHGS cofounder, and a great niece of Sprow. Clark-Lewis (2000) says in *I am a Proud Woman* that Sprow's diary provides "a different view from historians who emphasize the victimization of America's domestics" (p. 33). Contrary to historians' and other scholars' representations, Clark-Lewis says, Sprow's writings "stress the power and autonomy of a working-class woman" (p. 33). The stability of letter and diary texts' voices in general and Sprow's in particular "helps us again realize why the women who have been 'domestics' [or anything else others denigrate] will themselves write the correctives to this culture's misconceptions about them" (p. 33).

While Sprow's diary is unpublished as a whole, exemplary in the published edited letters and diaries category of genealogies is *Emilie Davis's Civil War: The Diaries of a Free Black Woman in Philadelphia, 1863-1865*, edited by Judith Giesberg (2014). Davis' diary entries cover the centrality of religion in her life, political and military news about the Civil War and her reactions to it, and general information about daily life among free African Americans in Philadelphia. Works built primarily from letters and diaries often are both the richest and most academically understood as historical record (Clark-Lewis, 1994; Wilson, 1996) because the words already were in the academically privileged writing form before being published in book form. African-ancestored genealogy books also can be based largely upon other pre-existing texts, such as newspapers (Thompson, 2022) and internet postings.

Finally, in the technical category, exemplary are Lawrence Otis Graham's (2009/2006) *The Senator and the Socialite: The True Story of America's First Black Dynasty* and William W. Falk's (2004) *Rooted in Place: Family and Belonging in a Southern Black Community*. Graham's book is a genealogy of the family of Blanche K. Bruce (1841-1898) and his wife,

Josephine Beall Willson Bruce (1853-1923). The son of his enslaver father and enslaved mother, Bruce is the second African American to serve in the U.S. Senate and the first to serve a full six-year term, having done so from 1875 to 1881. Falk's book is a white man's account of a Black family also not otherwise connected with his own, based primarily upon years of research on the rural South and on oral history interviews with members of the Black extended family in the Georgia-South Carolina low country that is the subject of the book.

In scholarship that addresses audience reception of Falk's African-ancestored genealogy of sorts, one can see race-based reasons that research on African-ancestored published genealogies is warranted in the academy. For instance, a professor who taught the book in class finds an inquiry-worthy "difference in comments from African American and white students":

Several of the black students easily generalized the experiences of the family and community that Falk studied and related to the stories in a personal way. They talked about how well this book represented an African American family and other African American institutions. White students, on the other hand, were less likely to find generalities in the experiences of the Black family that Falk studied.

White students more typically commented that the book was useful for understanding this town or family, but focused more on the fact that these experiences were unique. One African American male, who was particularly enthusiastic about this book, said: "This book parallels life in an African American community. I actually saw some relatives amid these people. I think it's real accurate; the descriptions are of some people that I've probably known and see on a daily basis." (Barton, 2006, pp. 522-523)

These kinds of discussions ensue from the public presence of African-ancestored published genealogies. Because of their accessibility and authorship, technical genealogies of African-ancestored families have the greatest public presence by increasingly being taught on college campuses and garnering the most media attention in the genre.

Along the same lines of white students not thinking Black family heritage stories are typical or optimal in joyous framing (Barton, 2006), a white reviewer of *Rooted in Place* first notes a key similarity in his same-race identity with the book's author before critiquing the book:

My major criticism may emanate from a key difference: Falk adopted the rural south; I ran away from it. This “voting with our feet” may be revealing. I may have told a less flattering story, one that acknowledged some of the costs resulting from the decisions made by A.C. and his family. Do we really want to romanticize family and community ties that have kept all of A.C.’s children in Colonial County? Do these ties reflect negative social capital? Further, I would have stressed a bit more strongly how the wealthy and powerful (also read “whites”) in Colonial County have acted to constrain the choices available to A.C. and his family and community. I probably would have pointed out how they do this while attending church on Sunday, greeting their black neighbors with smiles, and telling racist jokes in private. But again, the void in our understanding of the rural south cannot be filled by one book. Not even a fine one like Falk’s. This is A.C.’s story; Falk makes a significant contribution by sharing it. (Morgan, 2006, p. 262)

These reception examples highlight how embeddedness in African American family heritage can influence understanding of Black family stories. The role of embeddedness underscores the benefit of my membership in the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community as I analyze African-ancestored published genealogies and apply the findings in the U.S. genealogy tourism industry.

While existing scholarship explores African American genealogy as individual published books, as descendants’ choices for stories at plantations (Hoggard, 2014; McVeigh, 2014), and as a practice (Barksdale-Hall, 2005; Blockson & Fry, 1991; Burroughs, 2001; Gardner, 2003; Rose & Eichholz, 2003/1978; Smith, 1983), African American genealogies as a book genre applied as the sole source for genealogy tourism site stories had not been studied before the present research. Difficulty identifying and, therefore, collecting African-ancestored published genealogies may contribute to minimal study of these books prior to my research. For instance, though the African American published genealogy book tradition both predates and has boomed since *Roots*, the Library of Congress, the largest library in the world, maintains a selected list of only two hundred twenty-three African American published genealogies. My research aids better curation to permit more in-depth study of African-ancestored published genealogies.

The Library of Congress list of African American genealogies includes a mere sixty-five published in the 21st century (Connor & Johnson, 2009; Johnson, 2020; Lawson, 1988). Additionally, the Library of Congress' 1910 bibliography of American and English genealogies since 1847 contains 3,750 entries with none identified by title words or otherwise as being about an African-ancestored family (Hanson & Gilkey, 1910). Similarly, the universal library cataloging codes for genealogy, MDS 929 and CS1-3090, do not have extensions that narrow the categories to African-ancestored, African American, or some related subset. Currently, more than 37,000 books are cataloged at MDS 929 and CSI-3090, and based on available data (So & Wezerek, 2020), the best estimate is that 3 percent, or more than 1,100, are African-ancestored published genealogies. These approximately 1,100 include how-to books and books led by people other than descendants.

Given the limited cataloging and scholarship of African-ancestored genealogies, it is unclear when African American nonfiction genealogies originated, how they developed, and their reception by or effect upon writers and other family members. It generally is understood that the first African-ancestored fictionalized genealogy was published in 1837—Victor Séjour's (2004/1837) hybrid short story/autobiography, *The Mulatto*. Through its representation of physical and psychological effects, Séjour's story inaugurated the literary delineation of slavery's submission versus rebellion binary (Piacentino, 2007, 2011). This is the enduring tension between horror stories and hero stories about enslaved ancestors, the tension which Black family heritage books release in a process I explain and apply in the herein detailed research.

Though African-ancestored genealogies, which focus on ancestral victory stories, heretofore had neither been studied as a genre nor been implemented as a strategy for displaying African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts' chosen ancestral stories on a massive scale in the U.S.

genealogy tourism industry, their deployment in a growing number of plantation tourism site exhibits is having a positive limited impact. The African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts' published books that have been utilized so far at plantation tourism sites focus on presenting joy stories of collective victorhood, stories in which ancestors are made more heroic in the context of slavery's horrors. The stories boost reverence for both descendants and our ancestors by focusing on ancestors engaging in such day-to-day activities in their Christian lives as Bible reading; beautifying living spaces; finding honor, duty, innovation, and beauty in industry; playing and singing banjo and fiddle music; relaxing, contemplating, and praying in the natural environment; maintaining affective and effective relations with owner and former owner family members; engaging in positive group storytelling; and being educated and educating themselves and others (Callum, 1978, 1979; Jackson, 2008, 2016, 2020; Redford, 2005/1988; Wilson, 1985). The African American genealogy enthusiasts who publish family genealogies are descendants of free and antebellum enslaved people who participate in the identity-reinforcing cultural practice of learning and sharing ancestral honor and inheritances (Evans, 2021; Weil, 2013; Williams, 2004). This group's stories that connect us with ancestors are published in genealogies and these books are the analyzed and applied artifact of my research.

Genealogy book producers combine retrospective and archival approaches to "utilize oral history, archival documents, material culture, and explorations of space to construct and reconstruct family stories and to make meaning of the past, inserting their familial microhistories into global macrohistories" (Barclay & Koefoed, 2021, p. 3). As genealogists, otherwise known as family historians, these intrapersonal communicators whose names are printed as authors of African American genealogies write with story input from family members who communicate among ourselves to derive positive ancestor-infused collective identities. Toward maximizing

African Americans' positive ancestral self-identity in U.S. genealogy tourism, the framing, purposes, and content differences among user- and other-generated stories is meaningful and consequential in differing ways (Green & Jenkins, 2014). The study herein shared provides understanding of African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts' self-selected stories and how members of this descendant population are taking charge to display and study our own chosen ancestral self-identities in the U.S. genealogy tourism industry.

Further summarizing understandings of U.S. plantation tourism scholarship with respect to people of African descent, we see a re-Blackening of plantations as a proffered solution to unsatisfactory representation of African American ancestry in U.S. heritage tourism. Plantations once overflowing with Black workers showed far fewer such workers as story subjects when they opened to heritage tourism. Now increasingly African Americans are featured in plantation tourism stories and questions arise about the ends achieved by various kinds of representation, chiefly as victims or victors. Plantation tourism scholarship debates African Americans' roles as providers of plantation storylines, which now largely come from historians. African American descendants of U.S. enslaved people also increasingly are providers and reenactors of genealogical stories for public display at plantations, and African American genealogy tourism site visitorship rises when these stories prevail.

Plantation tourism scholarship answers how plantation tourism sites variously depict enslaved people and to what effect. This scholarship leaves unanswered how plantation representations of African Americans compare with and can be improved upon by African Americans' desired genealogical depictions in a broader array of self-generated published family stories at a U.S. genealogy tourism site dedicated to the ancestral stories we select. As scholars continue to drive plantations to the dark story side, African American families are bringing

positive ancestral stories to and collecting such stories from plantations. These stories are shown to enhance identities for intergenerational success. That traditional plantations have fallen short in the ancestral representation which millions of African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts seek has helped give way to three major recent additions of African American heritage tourism sites. These three major sites, unlike traditional plantations, focus on African Americans, and all three, like traditional plantations, depict African Americans primarily through slavery-related horror stories and minimally through positive ancestral self-identity stories.

#### **2.4 The Big 3 Focus on Horror Stories**

To explain African Americans to broader American and world populations, particularly as victims of slavery and other racism, three large heritage tourism sites joined the landscape of U.S. options available for African American ancestral self-identity shaping. Colloquially called the Big 3, these African American heritage tourism sites are explained by postmodern, or hostland, diasporan theory. The first of the three, the Whitney Plantation, opened to tourists in 2014 in Wallace, Louisiana. Its 2020 revenues were \$839,000 (Cause IQ, 2020). Scholars and others probe this site's cultural contribution in part because its offerings poignantly raise the heritage tourism discipline's foundational questions about who decides on stories, what story frameworks should prevail, and who profits from whose pain and glory (Commander, 2018). White German immigrant Ambroise Heidel started the plantation in 1752 and more than three hundred-fifty Black enslaved people worked to build it into a prosperous sugar, rice, and indigo plantation.

Then a white native New Orleanian of financial means and other resources, John Cummings, invested in storytelling at the Whitney Plantation in the early 2000s as a tourist site

to teach visitors about the history of the Atlantic Slave Trade, to memorialize more than 100,000 people enslaved in Louisiana, and to tell audiences of Black descendants and others stories of the enslaved and their enslavers. Commercial author David Amsden (2015) says, starting in his early sixties, Cummings spent “15 years and more than \$8 million of his personal fortune on a museum that he had no obvious qualifications to assemble” (p. 3). Amsden writes of visiting the site in its debut season:

Cummings, for his part, has been on the grounds every day since the Whitney opened, where he is in the habit of approaching visitors as they enter and telling them how they should feel afterward: “You’re not going to be the same person when you leave here”—a line that some found more grating than endearing. Inwardly, though, he was constantly making notes on what could be done to improve the experience.

“Look, we’re not perfect, and we’ve made a lot of mistakes, and we’ll make more,” he said one afternoon as the sun set across the sugar-cane fields that surround the plantation in much the form they did when slaves worked them 200 years ago. “We need all the help we can get—not financial, but we need brains.” (p. 14)

Cummings exemplifies why people question who provides heritage tourism site stories, who is the audience, and what is the desired effect.

After examining the opening of the Whitney Plantation, Amsden (2015) reveals several ways descendants of people enslaved in Louisiana benefit from the site. For instance, they can search for their ancestors’ names on a “number of memorials” that “dot the grounds, including a series of angled granite walls engraved with the names of the 107,000 slaves who spent their lives in Louisiana before 1820” (p. 2). He notes that approximately half of the site’s opening-day visitors were Black, and “professors, historians, preservationists, artists, graduate students, gospel singers and men and women from Senegal dressed in traditional West African garb” outnumbered “genteel New Orleanians eager for a peek at the antiques inside the property’s Creole mansion” (p. 2):

More than a few of the 670 residents of Wallace—90 percent of whom are black, many the descendants of slaves and sharecroppers who worked the region’s land—have voiced their

bewilderment over the years. So, too, have the owners of other tourist-oriented plantations, all of whom are white. Members of Cummings's close-knit family (he has eight children by two wives) also struggle to clarify their patriarch's motivations, resorting to the shoulder-shrugging logic of "John being John," as if explaining a stubborn refusal to throw away old newspapers rather than a consuming, heterodox and very expensive attempt to confront the darkest period of American history. (pp. 3-4)

Answering Cummings' call for brainpower, Joy Banner, a native and resident of Wallace, serves as the Whitney Plantation's director of media and marketing.

An assistant professor of marketing at Huston-Tillotson University and a descendant of Whitney Plantation enslaved people, Banner operates a local restaurant and launched the inaugural chapter of *Coming to the Table*. This organization convenes descendants of both the enslaved and their enslavers to address legacies of slavery. Communication and cultural studies scholar Lisa B. Y. Calvente and historian Guadalupe García (2020) find that even though Banner markets the Whitney Plantation as the counternarrative to plantation gentility, the site "refuses to pander to the expectation of sensationalized violence that many of the region's tours exploit when they do include tales of slavery" (p. 12). Still, cultural studies philologist Dorota Golańska (2020) notes that violence is palpable throughout the Whitney Plantation, particularly at its central exhibit, where "visitors are meant to experience the grim feeling of helplessness and misery. This is one of the most meaningful moments of the plantation tour" (p. 151). Overall, violence prevails at the Whitney, and local descendants of the plantations' enslaved people neither are much attracted to the site nor had a significant role in what is included at the site.

Criticizing that the public had little role in what is included at the Whitney, Gaila Christine Sims (2018) finds the key to this site's horror stories is enslaved people's perception of the drudgery of work. In one example of her findings, she notes a tour guide saying of African Americans that "the house would not have been beautiful in their eyes. It was just work" (p. 34):

Throughout our tour of the Big House, the tour guide described each room from the perspective of the enslaved, commenting especially on how much work would have been involved with preparing food, cleaning, and taking care of the men and women who owned the house. (p. 34)

So, according to this Whitney storyline, beauty in the results of arduous work in daily chores, colonial architecture, furniture, and the like, was and is not to be beheld by African Americans historically or currently. This storyline runs counter to storylines African-ancestored genealogical enthusiasts convey in published genealogies, which highlight ancestral hard work, beauty, and joy in a variety of ways, including in daily chores, architecture, and furniture. My praxis work examines and amplifies these storyline differences.

The second of the three major African American sites is NMAAHC, opened on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., in 2016. It is unclear how much of the \$1.8 billion in fiscal 2021 revenue of the Smithsonian Institution, the NMAAHC's parent organization, was generated by heritage tourism at the NMAAHC (IRS, 2020b). Lonnie G. Bunch, III (2015), founding director of the NMAAHC and subsequently secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, views subjugative African American stories in public memory for their power to positively shape African American identities indirectly through elevated knowledge for Americans in general. This is as opposed to positive African American stories directly elevating African Americans' identities. Bunch wants African American history stories to be the focus in public primarily so that American and world audiences, including African Americans ourselves, can value African Americans' contributions to American life:

Far too frequently, the interpretation of African American history is still viewed as exotic, ancillary, or a necessary palliative that shows a commitment to, or at least, the recognition of an underserved audience. Rather than being viewed as a separate but equal presentation, the interpretation of this history, this culture must be seen as the quintessential American story: a history that profoundly shapes us all regardless of race or region. African American history, then, is a wonderful lens that illuminates what it means to be an American. Only by viewing the African American experience through this broader

framework can we find a new integration that allows all who visit these museums and historic sites to better understand how much American notions of resiliency, freedom, spirituality, and hope were shaped by an African American narrative, and how much of America's national identity has been forged in the fires of the African American experience. (p. x)

As the museum prioritizes the fires in African American life, Bunch makes clear here that his understanding of the core of African American life is suffering and that the ultimate value of exhibiting that historical and cultural suffering in public spaces is its service to America's identity-shaping.

In other words, when enslaved people's descendants have achieved maximum benefit from public memory story choices, that success can be measured not in African Americans' height and breadth of positive ancestral self-identities and behaviors but in the broader community's level of understanding that African Americans play an indispensable role in shaping America. As empirical evidence is not offered for the general American knowledge levels about African American history and culture that correlate with what improvement levels in African American life, Bunch's notion here is theoretical and untested. The theory's underlying assumption is that what Americans think is of more potential benefit to African Americans than is what African Americans ourselves think and do and that the greater potential can be actualized to African Americans' benefit.

Bunch's appeal to universal audiences with broad public memory preferences well beyond the complex set of needs of the African American genealogy enthusiast community is consistent with current trends in heritage tourism. Scholars find that the major players in the U.S. heritage tourism industry as a whole now focus on both mass audiences and slavery horrors in some way nearly everywhere that stories of African-ancestored people are told (Reaves, 2020). Current heritage tourism exhibits about African-ancestored people thereby are for the direct

benefit of American tourists and international visitors in general, not for African-ancestored visitors in particular to boost positive ancestral self-identity. The slavery horrors focus provides tourists with a negative image of African Americans in slavery via “its legacy in the present U.S. society” (Grim et al., 2017, p. 54). Tourism site providers champion the negative legacy stories as part of the mass-audience strategy.

Further promoting the mass-audience strategy, both the American Association for State and Local History and the National Council on Public History advise heritage tourism sites to cater to no particular audience’s needs but instead to try to be all things to all people:

The tourism market has become a diverse marketplace, and despite staffing and research limitations, there are opportunities and incentives to delve deeply into all of the stories that have influenced your site. It is easy to be completely drawn into the standard “hero narrative” and remain there. This is a limited perspective that often excludes indigenous people, people of African descent, the LGBTQ community, women across cultures, and people from diverse ethnic or class backgrounds. Take everyone into consideration, especially if a particular group has had a minor role in your story thus far; everyone has a point of view that should be taken into consideration. This is not a matter of political correctness. It is good history, and it will expand your audience. (Reaves, 2019, para. 12)

This text reinforces that mass-audience heritage tourism site operators and their promoters call for broadening story messaging to attract diverse audiences and that they understand hero stories generally to be antithetical to stories of African ancestry. African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts, on the other hand, are looking for stories of warm and tradition-filled ancestral home, of ancestral heroes, during genealogy tourism to reach our goal of knowledge of and positive identity connection to ancestors. The stories effective in achieving this African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast goal are inconsistent with mass-audience stories of Black carnage in slavery.

While mass audiences are being attracted to Black heritage at tourism sites, African Americans who visit for important ancestral self-identity work are missing the tailored messages

that lead to achieving our specific goal. African American genealogy tourists, therefore, bear the cost of the expansive, mass-audience view, as these tourists are left subject to an abundance of site stories purposed for other audiences as well as stories well-intentioned for African Americans, but not based on empirical evidence of improving enslaved people's descendants' well-being. To resolve the U.S. genealogy tourism industry's problem of inadequate African-ancestored self-identity reflection, I herein examine through content analysis and implement African-ancestored families' chosen ancestral stories as expressed in published genealogies. For African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts and our families, this implementation means creating what we choose rather than, and for some in addition to, agitating for entities created by others for other purposes and broader audiences to exhibit our chosen stories at pre-existing heritage tourism sites. The content analysis and implementation, then, are womanism in action (Contu, 2018, 2020), as explained later, in Chapter 3, Section 3.1, Analytical Skills, Genealogy Interests, and Conceptual Framework.

The third recent major addition to the U.S. African American heritage tourism landscape is the Legacy Museum, opened in 2018. Its full name is The Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration; The National Memorial for Peace and Justice. The Legacy Museum and its parent operation, the Equal Justice Initiative, posted revenues of \$134 million in 2021 (EJI, 2021). This museum focuses on the ugly legacy of lynching in the United States, offering memorial bricks and detailed stories of the hanged. In analyzing this site, Marouf A. Hasian, Jr. and Nicholas S. Paliewicz (2020) say America forgot about lynching and the site is an effective reminder. It is a "hauntology" connecting lynching to mass incarceration, they contend, in praising the site for being "unlike more traditional civil rights museums, which tend to highlight the progress that has been made" (p. 168). These scholars confirm and extend historian

Susan A. Crane's (1997) understanding of how personal memories often clash with historians' and other site providers' interpretations at sites of conflict and trauma. Communication scholars A. Susan Owen and Peter Ehrenhaus (2014) detail a similar clash over immersive lynching reenactment. These clashes continue to raise questions about whether descendants of people who experienced an atrocity are the custodians of the human rights culture surrounding that tragedy, including how to frame the stories, or whether the custodians of such culture are operators of the sites that remember these violations, as peace studies scholar Terence E. Duffy (2001) argues.

In all, the three major African American heritage tourism sites initially inspired scholarship that explores and celebrates more telling of horror stories of slavery and other racism as these historical truths negatively impact African Americans to today. As the genealogy boom has raged worldwide and nationally, major debates since have developed about these three and other sites of slavery and its aftermath's horrors. These debates are over the merits of African American ancestral exhibits designed for general audiences to further contemplate America's race atrocities versus exhibits designed for African American enslaved people's descendants to connect with and honor ancestors. Such debates include reasons for highlighting descendants' positive inheritances that enslaved and other ancestors imbue through leadership (Loritts, 2009) versus negative inheritances of injustices ancestors suffered in colonial and subsequent America. While the preferred story focus of current major site providers is amply explored, remaining to be well understood is the chosen story focus of African American genealogy enthusiasts who increasingly in published genealogy books provide fodder worthy of analysis for genealogy tourism site content. This unexplored area is the gap my research fills in Black genealogy tourism literature.

## **2.5 Black Genealogy Tourism Literature Summary and Gap Present Research Fills**

Because world history includes the 16th- to 19th-century Atlantic Slave Trade that brought at least twelve million Africans to enslavement across the Atlantic Ocean, as smaller slave trade routes extracted even more Africans from their homelands, African diasporans' genealogical pursuits form a distinct field within identity-shaping. This field is steeped in clashes between slavery horror stories shaping African-ancestored people's identities and ancestral honor stories shaping our identities in world, national, and co-cultural stories. Heritage tourism sites primarily choose the slavery horror stories. For this reason, prior to the establishment and ongoing development of the HBCUHeritageHome.com genealogy tourism and research site, African Americans' only consideration for a major site in U.S. genealogy tourism was sites featuring slavery horror stories, including plantations.

Plantations are particularly important in African American ancestral public memory because of their ubiquity, stateside locations, and attractiveness to Black visitors when genealogy book stories are exhibited at these sites. In addition to global slavery sites and U.S. slavery plantations, other kinds of African American genealogy tourism sites include parades, cultural festivals, industrial museums, education institution museums, shipyards, Civil Rights museums, and any other site or event people visit for stories that have played a role in the lives of 16th- to 19th-century captured, enslaved, or formerly enslaved people of African descent or their more recent descendants (Clark, 2005; Curtis, 1996a, 1996b). Africans' long-term global movements over the course of human history render nearly inevitable their descendants' short-term travels these days to reconnect with ancestral spaces (Timothy & Teye, 2004; Timothy, 2011). To help understand this inevitability, foundational texts in heritage tourism explore heritage tourism undertaken by members of the African diaspora and engage with core texts in diaspora studies

(Timothy, 2011). Overall, heritage tourism often incorporates characteristics of pilgrimages, such as personal connections to spirituality and transcendence, while people seek identity connections. Family stories are attractive at these sites, including at plantations.

The literature shows that U.S. African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts seek knowledge of and positive identity connection to ancestors during genealogy tourism. We seek this knowledge and connection as part of social, political, cultural, and ideological self-imagining (Morgan, 1997). Positive ancestral victor stories also permeate other African-ancestored self-identity rhetoric (Blassingame, 1977; Duan, 2012; Ellis, 2020; Jones, 2004/2003; Koslow, 2021; Meisel, 2018; Wright, 2003). Choosing positive identity connection to ancestors is a phenomenon well explained by scholarly explorations of the colonial development of U.S. heritage tourism and its current use by other cultural communities, such as the Gaelic and Native Americans. But beyond the general positive tenets of genealogical and collective memory stories as defined by foundational scholars in these two fields (Nora, 1989; Ricoeur, 1983; Russell, 2006), no conceptual framework in the literature until my research well explains African Americans' focus on positive ancestral victor stories in genealogies. To understand positive ancestral victor stories as presented from our published genealogies at genealogy tourism sites, an appropriate framework is necessary.

Theoretical frameworks that most approach a lens for understanding African American family joy stories presented at genealogy tourism sites incorporate African diasporic identity-shaping, connections to U.S. colonial and Southern homesteads, internal agency, hope, and God's love through the identity, intimacy and infinity of story and time (Dunn & Love, 2020; Graesser et al., 2011; Gravlee, 2000; Jackson, 2003; Jackson, 2002, 2004, 2018; Richardson & Jackson, 2004; Tara, 2019; Weil, 2002/1947). Incorporating other scholars' attempts to date at

explaining concepts included in ancestral joy stories in African Americans' identity-crafting, I have developed both an appropriate framework and an explanatory theory to understand the ancestral self-identity stories African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts publish in our genealogies. The development of a framework and a theory for understanding the important yet not widely understood 21st-century African-ancestored published genealogy genre are hallmarks of my research.

Amid the dearth of empirical evidence that their *modus operandi* helps them meet their long-term goals, activist museum practitioners and scholars increasingly advocate stories of hate and injustice in heritage tourism venues. To them, concentration on stories of people of modest economic means rather than the wealthy, for instance, inherently means a focus on oppression and away from beauty (Timothy, 2011). This concentration thrives even as specialty heritage sites attract descendants of the sites' story subjects who tell the ancestral stories and sing the ancestral songs in terms of beauty and without a focus on state oppression (Clifford, 1997; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; Macdonald, 1997; Rosoff, 2003; Stanton, 2006; Timothy, 2011). Such is the state of the U.S. African-ancestored genealogy tourism industry I improve with my applied research.

The herein reviewed scholarship and public discourse on identity stories at heritage tourism sites exposes the problem of dominant public memories antithetical to African American positive ancestral self-identity. This is the question of tension between slavery horror versus enslaved honor stories. The scholarship also shows how site users bring our own ancestral stories and songs to sites, including sites where descendants increasingly are becoming site providers. Yet, for all the explanations and potential solutions this literature offers for African-ancestored people not seeing enough of our chosen ancestral self-identity stories at heritage tourism sites, no

researcher previously had deeply explored how a widely expanded role for published genealogies in genealogy tourism offers a viable solution. So, African Americans' stated problem of inadequate genealogical representation loomed even as genealogy booms.

My research fills the gap of deep understanding of African-ancestored published genealogies and their U.S. genealogy tourism industry application. It does so by expanding an already proven positive use of African-ancestored genealogies. Just as published books of African American families have provided ancestral story fodder at plantation tourism sites and the NMAAHC, these books also can set story standards for public presentation of African American genealogical stories beyond the previously utilized settings, as I describe in Chapter 5. To well develop the HBCUHeritageHome.com genealogy tourism and research site's expansion of the positive use of African-ancestored published genealogies in U.S. genealogy tourism, I employed the well-crafted method described next in Chapter 3, Methodology.

### **3 METHODOLOGY: EMBEDDED WOMANIST TEXTUAL CONTENT ANALYSIS AND APPLICATION**

To address unanswered questions in previous African-ancestored genealogy tourism research and apply the findings in the genealogy tourism industry, my overall research question and sub-questions focus on the so far underexplored 21st-century published African American genealogy. These books are a minimally understood and ever more popular identity-shaping genre that I apply in the U.S. genealogy tourism industry in accordance with the answers to these questions:

RQ: How do African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent **ancestral self-identity** in 21st-century published genealogies?

RQ1: How do African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent **colonial and antebellum U.S. enslaved and free people of African descent** in 21st-century published genealogies?

RQ2: How do African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent **social/cultural capital** in 21st-century published genealogies?

RQ3: How do African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent **ancestral honor and inheritances** in 21st-century published genealogies?

Answering these questions provides a clear understanding of the self-representation presented in the African-ancestored genealogy book genre. A clear understanding of ancestral self-representation in the African-ancestored genealogy book genre is a necessary precondition for designing a heritage tourism site and research institute that centers these books as African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts' chosen ancestral self-identity crafting for maximum benefit to descendants. Such design is the application portion of my research, detailed in Chapter 5.

Genealogies have been presented in book forms since antiquity, including the Bible and books in the 1570s. Yet, in reviewing Alison Light's book *Common People: In Pursuit of My Ancestors* (2015), Ben Highmore (2014), a professor of cultural studies at the University of

Sussex who specializes in the social and cultural history of homes, sees “family history as a new genre of non-fiction” (para. 1). That an intellectual could designate public family history as a novel or emergent genre is possible because of the dearth of scholarship on genealogies as a book genre. I was able to build upon this limited genealogy book genre scholarship, specifically with respect to African Americans, to show how the growing genre of African-ancestored 21st-century published genealogies is an identity-shaping source ripe for exponentially greater use as African American genealogy tourism site story content. I was able to theorize ancestral self-identity representation in 21st-century published African American genealogies and apply the findings in co-founding the HBCUHeritageHome.com genealogy tourism and research site by embracing my womanist ideology and status as an embedded member of the African-ancestored genealogy community.

Actualizing additional positive potential for African Americans’ ancestral self-identity to be gained from self-crafted genealogy stories in genealogy tourism sites being exhibited in broader and more concentrated ways than they yet have been required of me a deep understanding well beyond what current African American heritage tourism site story and reception analysis provides. Other scholars primarily have utilized website analysis (Alderman & Modlin, 2008; Carter, 2016), surveys and interviews separately or together (Bright & Carter, 2016; Bright et al., 2018, 2019; Butler et al., 2008; Carter et al., 2014), and participant observation among other means (Carter et al., 2011; Durrill, 1992; Harrison, 2008; Jackson, 2020) to assess African American genealogy tourism site story content and its impact. So far, these scholars’ exploratory work has underemphasized the genealogical voices of African American descendants of U.S. antebellum enslaved people. These scholars’ and others’ work

establishes a base upon which my research builds to fundamentally understand and then to enact African American genealogy enthusiasts' genealogy tourism site story choices.

To develop insights that build upon existing explorations, my work required an explanatory approach permitting deep understandings. Therefore, to probe and perpetuate African Americans' own sources for genealogy tourism site stories, I excluded previously popular exploratory approaches, such as assessing site stories and reaction thereto via website analysis and participant observation, as potential methods for my work. Instead, I conducted a textual content analysis on published genealogies for application in designing a genealogy tourism and research site focused on the stories in African-ancestored family heritage books. Content analysis is a proven effective method for gaining extensive insight (Frey et al., 1999; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lindlof & Taylor, 2011; Ridder, 2014). The application portion of my method ensures that my research population and not solely the academy benefits from my work (Alivizatou, 2016/2012; Boyle, 2004; Vergunst & Graham, 2017). The content analysis and application method is consistent not only with my research questions and mission, but also with my analytical skills, genealogy interests, and conceptual framework.

### **3.1 Analytical Skills, Genealogy Interests, and Conceptual Framework**

My conceptual framework reflects analytical skills gained from previous study and research as well as nearly two decades of enacted genealogy interests. My framework encompasses pragmatic positive communication research foci born of womanism embedded in my ancestral identity and is directed more pointedly by critical/cultural heritage. Throughout the research herein detailed, I utilize positive scholarship, which focuses on "positive subjective experience, positive individual traits, and positive institutions" to provide knowledge to

“improve quality of life” (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 5). Positive communication scholars call on 21st-century peers “to understand and build the factors that allow individuals, communities, and societies to flourish” (p. 5). As “individuals become hopeful about the future, their personal well-being improves as they perceive themselves as better able to cope with adversity and more likely to achieve desirable goals, which is likely the result of increased self-esteem” (Barge, 2003, p. 63). This positive lens necessitates action based on research.

My sphere of action is African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts’ experiences in the U.S. genealogy tourism industry. Therefore, further focusing my positive lens, I have employed a critical/cultural heritage conceptual framework, understood to increasingly dignify people’s heritage via in-group targeted research and application agendas (Alivizatou, 2016/2012; de Jong & Rowlands, 2016/2007; Shome, 2013; Vergunst & Graham, 2017). This approach carries as its mission “addressing the critical issues that face the world today, the larger issues that bear upon and extend outwards from heritage” (Winter, 2013, p. 533). For me, Falola (2013) well explains that the broader issues that bear upon and extend outwards from African-ancestored heritage are “in relation to previous and ongoing struggles of black people for rebirth, progress, justice, and racial uplift” (p. ix). My research process to address rebirth, progress, justice, and racial uplift in the context of African American heritage in U.S. genealogy tourism includes critical assessment and implemented, sustained action, as demonstrated by creation of the HBCUHeritageHome.com genealogy tourism and research site based on my content analysis findings. My critical heritage perspective, including positiveness and application, is nestled within my womanist worldview.

Since Alice Walker (1983) introduced this conceptual lens in 1979 and named and popularized it in 1983, other scholars and activists also have utilized womanism in our own ways (Floyd-Thomas & Gillman, 2005; Hudson-Weems, 1993; Moore, 2016; Musanga & Mukhuba,

2019). At its most basic level, the womanism lens clearly sees the daily improvement of the world through Black women's guidance (Bornstein et al., 2019; Collins, 1996; Taylor, 2019; Thomas, 2019). Womanism, both the lens and what it sees, is effective in relational, communicative, and uplifting being. Womanists "just act in the course of everyday life, and the nature of these actions varies widely from person to person" (Phillips, 2006, pp. xxiv-xxv). In my womanism, identity is in relived encounters with ancestral experiences in the warm traditions of home, in the customs acted out in ancestral ways. My version of womanism relies on the self-sufficient power of God's love. This power permits only love to guide vision. It is through this Christian agency lens that I came to understand African Americans' ancestral self-identity shaping in genealogy books and performance at the genealogy tourism site implicated by my genealogy book analysis.

In addition to my positive pragmatism and critical/cultural heritage framework being enmeshed in womanism, so too are my ontology, epistemology, and axiology rooted in womanism. Ontologically, from my constructivist/interpretivist stance, I understand the nature of being is that identities are created, forged in the balance between inside and out. Identity formation takes place internally via interpretations of ancestry in such forms as religion, broader agency, and abilities and takes place externally via interpretations of political and institutional factors, such as national and world stories about one's ancestors and relational contemporaries. Epistemologically, I understand origin, nature, methods, and limits of human knowledge to be such that building upon inherent and home-taught knowledge, people's firsthand experiences and empirical study findings are key components of what counts as evidence. It is how we interpret the evidence that expands or limits how much more we can know.

I believe people when our actions, including speaking, reflect our knowledge of positive experiences. When people do not do what we say we want done, ontologically, that is evidence to me that our experiences to date, the stories we have internalized as models to date, do not provide us with what it takes to accomplish our stated goals. The absence of such goal achievement signifies insufficient internalized stories to create a legacy of memories that enable success. Axiologically, I am an aesthete and a genealogical Christian steeped in the values of Christian love of God, self, family, country, and others, the Episcopal Church, and exploration of the whole of life through this lens (Foster, n.d., 1998, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2008, 2013a, 2013c, 2014b, 2014c, 2015a, 2017, 2018a, 2018c, 2018d, 2023; Torres, 2006). These elements of my ideological framework are critical in conducting and assessing my work, and they are evidenced in part by my embeddedness in the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community.

My embeddedness in the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community is multifaceted and longstanding. It includes nearly two decades of extensive reading of African-ancestored genealogies and related books, extensive touring at plantation and other heritage tourism sites, and ongoing formal and informal discussions with others in the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community. Over the years, members of this community and I have toured and discussed our concerns about U.S. heritage tourism sites we visit for positive ancestral self-identity. This user group identified the ongoing phenomenon of inadequately seeing ancestral self-identities reflected in exhibits about specific ancestors with whom we claim domiciled belonging. It is because of our experiences that members of the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community now choose to control decisions about which of our ancestral stories are told in public and how.

My embeddedness in the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community also includes having authored a genealogy such as those I study and apply with members of the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community for this dissertation research. The genealogy I authored is a seven-generation family heritage book titled *With the Faith of Benjamin: How the Greer Clan of Alabama Thrives From 1860s Reconstruction Through the Dawn of the 21st Century* (Foster, 2004). Penned as part of a host of 50th-anniversary family reunion activities in Prattville, Alabama, including debut of a family quilt I sewed, the book reveals several areas of concentrated family interests. These key focal areas of ancestral inheritances are Christianity, service, and education. Higher education mentions in the book include my Smith College matriculation and relatives' matriculations at such places as other Seven Sisters and Ivy League schools, such as Wellesley College and Harvard University, and HBCUs, such as Harbison Institute in Beaufort, South Carolina, and Mary Holmes Seminary in West Point, Mississippi.

My embeddedness in the African-ancestored genealogy community also includes having co-founded in 2005 the Nashville chapter of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society (AAHGS), which was named AAHGS 2021 Chapter of the Year. I served as the chapter's first president and later served as secretary and treasurer. I also have served on the AAHGS national board as special projects chair—leading the Slave Grandchildren Remember oral history project that reveals memories of people's interactions with formerly enslaved grandparents (Foster, 2018b) and the HBCU Newspaper History Project archive of student newspapers (Foster, 2012)—and most recently as recording secretary. The fellow-author and organizational-leadership aspects of my embeddedness in the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community connect me wholly within this community. This embeddedness undergirds

my ability to have successfully conducted this in-depth analysis and application project, highlighted by establishment of the HBCUHeritageHome.com, engaging with both the community of authors and our work.

My embeddedness includes having presented at AAHGS annual conferences since 2005. Presentations include several covering whys, ways, and means to include ancestral higher education stories in genealogy research (Foster, 2012, 2013b, 2014a, 2015b, 2016a, 2016b). These presentations are excellent grounding for my findings in and application of the studied genealogy books. Also, as keynote speaker for the 2013 AAHGS annual conference in Nashville, I highlighted how and why to include research on family music experiences in genealogy accounts (Foster, 2013a). This presentation largely was based on two books I wrote about Black people and country music, *My Country: The African Diaspora's Country Music Heritage* (1998) and *My Country Too: The Other Black Music* (2000). These are the first and now nearly uniformly cited books on the international history of Black people and country music (Dyck, 2021; Feder, 2006; Gussow, 2010; Lee, 2019; Mack, 2020; Martin, 2019; Parler, 2017, 2020; Pecknold, 2013; Wever, 2011). These pioneering books highlight African-ancestored people's early prolific banjo and fiddle playing (Dubois, 2016) and later participation in more than 1,500 country recordings, including nearly 500 *Billboard* country chart hits. I have presented extensively elsewhere on these books, including on the song *Carry Me Back to Old Virginny* (Bland, 1878). My ancestral grounding and research in country music are the foundation for the creative way I utilize music to help to explain what is happening in the studied genealogies. I particularly utilize the *Carry Me Back* song to help explain the Agapic Agency Theory of 21st-century published African-ancestored genealogies.

My AAHGS presentations in 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022 focused on global slavery tourism, plantation tourism, preliminary findings of my African-ancestored published genealogies analysis, the Anglican Church in early Black higher education, how a particular book was read at early HBCUs, and an overview of the HBCUHeritageHome.com. Each of these presentations was both part of and helped to refine my dissertation research as here presented. I also serve as an editorial board member for the *Journal of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society*, which permits me to see shorter family heritage research, including writers' initial focus. This experience reinforces my familiarity with African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts' choices in ancestral storytelling.

I have used my overall analytical skills and insights gained from previous study, nearly two decades of enacted genealogy interests, and my conceptual framework that includes embeddedness in the African-ancestored genealogy community to fully understand and perpetuate how the identity process works in my studied texts of African American published genealogies. To arrive at this understanding and appropriately privilege in the U.S. genealogy tourism industry the voices of African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts from our published family heritage books, I meticulously selected effective data sources and analysis procedures.

### **3.2 Data Sources and Analysis Procedures**

Building upon previous research, I have come to understand how the African-ancestored intergenerational self presents its heritage to itself by creating and presenting in published genealogy books collective family memories and meanings (Fiveish et al., 2008, 2010; Fowler, 2005, 2007; Furstenberg, 2007; Harris, 2014; Nash, 2002). I have come to this understanding to create optimal genealogy tourism experiences for the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast

population. I achieved my research goal by first understanding African Americans' genealogy books' overall process and strategies of meaning-making in representing cultural heritage identity (Kimbrow, 1998; Logan, 1996; Peterson, 2002/1999). To gain this understanding, I have relied significantly upon my insider status as a member of the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community. This reliance is part of the in-group targeted research and application demanded of my content analysis and application method within a critical/cultural heritage framework (Alivizatou, 2016/2012; de Jong & Rowlands, 2016/2007; Vergunst & Graham, 2017; Winter, 2013), grounded in positiveness and womanism (Phillips, 2006; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

My study group, as authors of the herein examined genealogy books, is African American genealogy enthusiasts. This population is a thought leader group whose purpose is to uplift families through intergenerational family storytelling (Baba, n.d.). My insider status maximized my ability to interpret the texts in part by reading between the lines of these authors' work (Owen, 1998). As African American genealogy enthusiasts are most likely to have "lived with" (Lyon et al., 2017, p. 35) enslaved ancestors and are fueled by these ancestors' stories, this is an ideal population in which to explore ancestral self-identity-shaping stories for African American public memory site representation. This insider view by "community experts who have gained knowledge through their own lived experiences" qualifies members of my population study group, including me, as "experients" (p. 35):

Experients often have a variety of reactions in public history situations where they encounter historical constructions of events they know well: they are gratified that someone thinks that what they lived through merits historical examination, but they often perceive that the public historian is not getting it completely right. "That's not the way it was!" a veteran will insist...."You've got it all wrong" a visitor will write....These particular types of interactions raise important questions for the public historian: Who owns history? The historian who has studied many facets of the period, contextualized

events, and developed a coherent interpretation? Or the experient who has gained authentic knowledge from a particular point of view? (p. 35)

Understanding African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts as experients regarding our enslaved and other colonial and antebellum ancestors reinforces this population's superiority in agency to decide what visitor experience we want, including how we want our ancestors depicted.

Whether experients or others select genealogy tourism site stories underscores the continuing "need for scholarship that ensures that the enslaved are seen and heard, thus providing a potential resource for heritage tourism practitioners as they take on the challenge of re-imagining the memorialized South" (Carter et al., 2011, p. 129). While public historians conclude that intellectuals and experients should share in deciding which and how enslaved African Americans' stories are told in public (Lanier & Burney-Scott, 2020), members of the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community choose to control a growing share. The AAHGS 2018-2022 president, Gene Stephenson (2019), says AAHGS members are "honored to help get more into the public the ancestral stories we work so hard to gather and share with our own families" (para. 1). Members of this community are the people for whom story presentation either aids or thwarts reaching our ancestral connection and self-identity goals for visiting a site. Therefore, as multiple entities other than African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts currently make site story decisions for this consumer population, I privilege the experient African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community as both consumers and providers of our genealogy tourism experiences. Researching these experients' often small press run and privately published genealogies required accessing and organizing them, which my insider status also aided.

As limited curation of African-ancestored published genealogies to date prevents precisely identifying, quantifying, conducting a census of, or randomly sampling the growing and estimated 1,100 genealogies written by any of the current 38 million members of the U.S.-

born Black population or previous members (Connor & Johnson, 2009; Johnson, 2020; So & Wezerek, 2020; U.S. Census Bureau, 2020), my research warranted a purposive convenience sample of outward- and inward-facing works (Coyne, 1997; Lindlof & Taylor, 2011; Maloney, 2018). Of the general types of published genealogies (Carmack, 2022) that I have consolidated to six, the present study is delimited solely to the narrative category of African-ancestored genealogies, the core of both African-ancestored and other published family heritage books.

While all published genealogy types contain characteristics of multiple types, any book that I or other book authors or critics identify primarily as a life story type autobiography, individual biography, or memoir, or as a fictionalized, guidebook, edited letters or diaries, or technical version of genealogy is beyond the scope of my studied texts. In scope, the criteria for inclusion in this study are: 1) narrative book about African-ancestored family with at least one ancestor who was enslaved in the United States prior to 1865, 2) published since 2000, and 3) obtainable.

Effective sample sizes for grounded theory studies generally range from twenty to forty (Marshall et al., 2013) and “any qualitative sample size over 30 (per market/geography) becomes too unwieldy to administer and analyse” (Boddy, 2016, p. 429). Therefore, I selected a mixture of thirty African-ancestored genealogies published since 2000 by major American publishers and those published privately in anticipation that I would reach relevant coding saturations by then and thirty would be a sufficient and wieldy number to analyze for deep understanding. I collected the books through commercial booksellers, private publishers, and directly from my own and authors’ libraries. I excluded no book that met my criteria and ended my search when I reached thirty books. I prepared the texts for analysis by photocopying and scanning all the texts, including front and back covers and jackets, and then converting the scans to electronic text files.

For the sake of clarity, I corrected minor spelling and punctuation human or computer errors when reviewing and assessing the scanned data.

As a researcher's coding, conceptualizing, and determining themes are precisely for analyzing rich qualitative information from phenomenological sources (Miles et al., 2014), and genealogies qualify as such sources, I utilized close reading to perform two-cycle coding on family stories from my purposive convenience sample of African American genealogies. I started with codes for African American genealogy scholar Roland Barksdale-Hall's (2005) twelve categories of African American ancestral honor. These twelve are God, motherhood, extended family, discipline, respect for elders, ancestral land, transmission of knowledge, the arts, gendered division of labor, interpersonal and spiritual relationships, rites of passage, and overall sharing, caring, and honoring (pp. xix-xx). I then added codes for triumphs and losses, guided by work of Gates (2019/2017), which lays the groundwork for understanding 21st-century African American genealogy in part by reinforcing that as African Americans, "we must celebrate our triumphs at the same time we memorialize our losses" (p. x). My final set of initial codes were social capital, housing, jobs, religion, and education, also based on existing literature (Billingsley, 2007; Loury, 1976, 2016, 2019, 2020a, 2020b; Morgan, 2006, Morgan, 2010). This last set of five initial codes to further ground my investigation brought my total initial codes number to nineteen.

Specifically to determine the last set of five initial codes, while coming to understand how triumphs and losses are shared in African American genealogies across Barksdale-Hall's (2005) twelve categories, I kept high in mind two other ideas documented as key in African American family success. The first of the two key ideas that further guided my inquiry is that social capital is a recurring, enabling theme in life, including African American life (Harris &

Graves, 2010; Hardy et al., 2019; Loury, 1976, 2016, 2019, 2020a, 2020b, Morgan, 2010).

Therefore, of importance in analyzing genealogies for my study was understanding how African American social capital is built and deployed intergenerationally. In addition to specifically asking about social/cultural capital in RQ2 and coding for it, the other key idea I kept in mind is Black family success expert Andrew Billingsley's (2007) notion that the quality of housing, jobs, religion, and educational institutions does not merely impact, but determines family functionality. Thus, I added the final four of the nineteen initial codes as housing, work, religion, and education.

After familiarization readings of the texts with the above ideas in mind, I closely read to apply the two cycles of coding, beginning with initial guidance and open coding of each book's text. This process captured the particulars of identity-making in home, higher education, work, and other settings mentioned in the books and resulted in more than three hundred fifty-two codes. This coding was part of Coding Cycle 1, and it included affective coding that "investigates subjective qualities of human experience by directly acknowledging and naming those experiences" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 86). Capturing, naming, and explaining the emotions that coincide with stories was a key part of my coding task. This capturing of emotion is appropriate for studies that specifically analyze "intrapersonal and interpersonal participant experiences and actions" (p. 86), as my study does in assessing ancestral self-identity in the family heritage book context. I also captured the values, attitudes, and beliefs that are so intricately connected to emotions and behaviors. I coded in an iterative and recursive process by continuing to assess data in cycles and immediately comparing it with already collected and coded sources, adjusting coding and other processes as necessary when justifications for such adjustments arose.

I then analyzed the codes to double-check the accuracy and usefulness of the original codes, adjusting and adapting them as warranted. This was part of Coding Cycle 2. This step is where I pared down to three hundred fifty-two codes and identified the logical relationships among my coded pieces of data. This step eliminated, consolidated, or expanded codes that were ill-used and proceeded until all codes were clear, analyzed, and aggregated to concepts, which then were properly themed. I also created visual representations and selected other explanatory aids for my findings; clearly depicted relationships among codes, concepts, and themes to share as best I can what I have learned about how identity works in my studied setting of 21st-century African-ancestored published genealogies; and, most importantly, I applied (Contu, 2018, 2020) the content analysis findings, given that my method within the positiveness of a womanist critical/cultural heritage framework demands application.

I coded and analyzed by hand on paper and then completed coding in NVivo for computerized analysis assistance (DeCoster, 2004; Mason, 2002, 2010; Morse, 1994; Morse & Chung, 2003). While I initially intended to combine qualitative and quantitative analysis with the help of SPSS to determine correlation rankings within my data (Fiese & Spagnola, 2005; Mason, 2002; Miles et al., 2014; Ong & Puteh, 2017; Riffe et al., 2005; Statistics Solutions, 2013b), it proved both too cumbersome and unnecessary for answering my research questions to include quantitative analysis in the current work. Such analysis clearly still is called for to understand these books story by story and to help assess any differences between inward- versus outward-facing texts. Quantitative analysis will be conducted in future research. For the current study, I began by coding some of the books with the highest page counts, then roughly alternated among high and low page counts and publisher type, and proceeded past theoretical saturation and inductive thematic saturation until I reached confirmed inductive thematic saturation of several

new books adding no new codes. This process permitted as large as possible a set of codes from the early books to help guide and gauge coding progress to my two saturation goals. My coding order also left a variety of books, including high page-count books most likely to add new codes, available for confirming inductive thematic saturation.

Among the several saturation processes identified as meaning, theoretical, inductive thematic, a priori thematic, and data saturation, I achieved the two kinds of saturation relevant to my data, providing adequate both depth and breadth for my findings. The two relevant kinds of saturation for my project are theoretical saturation for depth and inductive thematic saturation for breadth (Sebele-Mpofu, 2020). To achieve depth, I analyzed my data in a continuous comparison process that focused on constant improvement of my developing theory, based upon deepening understanding of my data. As the number of codes and number of entries in each code grew, I constantly and iteratively evaluated for theoretical saturation of my data so it would lead to a well-developed theory with no unclear elements remaining. I was confident of having reached theoretical saturation (Saunders et al., 2018) at book twelve when it was clear that each new entry to a code was substantially like something already there, such that new additions to any particular code added nothing intellectually to the ideas that already were clarifying the elements of my developing theory. I also noticed that the number of new codes generated by each new book began to dwindle after book twelve, alerting me that I was progressing toward my second saturation measure, inductive thematic saturation.

Inductive thematic saturation focusses on the distinctiveness and number of new codes added with each new book, rather than on the completeness of entries in theoretical categories, as does theoretical saturation. Toward inductive thematic saturation, I noticed that fewer and fewer new codes were being generated by each new book after the twelfth book until the number of

new useful codes generated reached zero at the twentieth book. At that point I was assured that any new texts would not yield useful information beyond what I had found so far because “[i]f the number of new concepts per interview....decreases, then there must be a point after which soliciting more interviews is not going to be useful (i.e., diminishing returns). When that point is reached, then the concepts derived from the data have become saturated” (Rowlands et al., 2015, p. 43).

No added information in codes and no new codes could be added from my last analyzed books. These final books yielded only further detail, such as a specific ancestral marriage place that did not add depth to the code for mentions of marriage in the family. No new substantive codes could be added beyond mentions of ancestral marriage places in general. Such was the same with all ideas captured in my coding, in that the last books coded added nothing substantively new, different, or evidently insightful, only more examples of the ideas I already had found. I reached theoretical saturation of no new depth in codes at twelve books. When no new books added new codes, I reached inductive thematic saturation at twenty books. When three additional books added nothing substantially new, I had surpassed and confirmed inductive thematic saturation (Guest et al., 2020) at a dataset size of twenty-three books. This dataset is 35 percent of the sixty-five definite African American genealogies the Library of Congress (Connor & Johnson, 2009; Johnson, 2020) lists as having been published in the 21st century.

While two-cycle coding with initial guiding categories in mind is a well-established data analysis technique in qualitative research for deep analysis (Creswell, 2007), the curiosity that drives the pursuit to find out how something operates cannot always best be contained in a predefined structure. For that reason, as I pursued understanding how African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent ancestral self-identity in 21st-century published genealogies, I

did not limit myself to naming, coding, and visually connecting constructs. The choice not to so self-limit acknowledges that “passive following of methodology recipes is not a skill,” given that the most enlightening researchers are those who “learn actively to recognize, confront and make decisions about key research issues for themselves” (Mason, 2002, p. 4). This flexibility opened my research to analysis directions that elevate it far above mere descriptive accounts of processes of desirable identity-making and into the psycho-social realm of fundamentally advancing knowledge for the well-being of all who can follow these processes of African-ancestored identity representation. My finding of the fundamental role of music in explaining these books’ content is an example of this analysis open-mindedness. Building upon the strong presence of music, particularly country music in African American heritage, I utilize songs as an analysis tool to help explain what is happening in the studied books. The songs are written, musically performed, and recorded by a variety of Black and white artists.

For the application portion of my project, my method was to invite all interested in the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community to volunteer to help design a genealogy tourism and research site that applies the themes and otherwise reflects the content and context of our published genealogies. Invitation formally began in October 2019 by online and in-person direct solicitation and by word of mouth at the annual AAHGS conference. The stakeholder group includes research assistants, the special projects chair of the AAHGS board, authors of African-ancestored genealogy books, a business professor specializing in heritage tourism, and college students interested in becoming more deeply involved in genealogy. The implementation team members concentrate on specific areas such as physical site, website, grants, databases, and other general and organizational capacity development. The implementation team follows the

same organizing steps as do other major nonprofit organizations, including applying for 501(c)(3) federal tax exemption status, which is in progress.

Typical implementation steps also include training, which stakeholders have undergone or are undergoing in our respective areas of concentration. With focuses on grant writing and organizational capacity development, my personal training has included grant writing sessions conducted by the Georgia State University Office of Research Development and the University of Georgia Small Business Administration StartSmart Program, which issued me a project development certificate in March 2022. Training and planning are ongoing. No major grant has yet been received and applications will continue to be submitted. One student training contract was secured in August 2022 and other contracts for training educators are in negotiation. Feasibility was a well-considered factor of my work, ensured in part by the quality and commitment of the application team, evidenced by members' experient status, their voluntary decision to participate, and the dataset size.

The dataset size of twenty-three books captures the present era, is small enough to have permitted deep and rich engagement with all the data, and is large and broad enough to have permitted theoretical saturation and inductive thematic saturation (Creswell, 2007; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Mason, 2002; Morse, 1994; Morse & Chung, 2003; Statistics Solutions, 2013a). The genealogies dataset is broad in the sense that it spans the two main publisher categories of African American narrative genealogies, i.e. outward-facing books, published by the commercial press with target audiences beyond the family, and standard books, privately published with target audiences of the families chronicled in the books. My dataset also is targeted, in that it includes African American genealogies solely from the 21st century.

Developing a two-cycle coding process and amassing an implementation team, as described above, ensured that I was sufficiently intimate with a working subset of the African-ancestored genealogy community and my texts to ask, answer, and implement answers to my research questions. These questions elicit how African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent ancestral self-identity, including through stories of colonial and early U.S. enslaved and free people of African descent, social/cultural capital, and ancestral honor and inheritances, in 21st-century published genealogies. Given that the purpose of my research is to deeply understand African Americans' intergenerational identity-shaping via family stories and apply the knowledge, it also was important to consider how rhetorical, social psychological, and historical approaches to storytelling can be assistive. I, therefore, was mindful of these approaches while answering my research questions.

Among the rhetorical approaches I kept in mind in my analysis and application processes are several key points from the tradition building on social theorist Kenneth Burke's (1973) concept of "literature as equipment for living". One such point is that "some literary forms seem to be used reliably to help people adjust to agriculture lifestyles, while other forms seem better adapted to urban and industrial situations" (Brummett, 1984, p. 161). Another is that "by examining what people are saying, the critic may discover what cultures are celebrating or mourning—and the critic may recommend other ways of speaking which may serve as better equipment for living" (p. 161). A third is that while some stories foster "trained incapacities," "there are ways of speaking about war, victory, civil unrest, marital problems, etc., which will reliably equip us to live through those situations" (p. 161). Keeping in mind that people demonstrate ways of speaking positively through situations helped me to identify such speech in the analyzed books for current and future analysis, including rhetorical, analysis.

Based upon my analysis of the content of 21st-century published African-ancestored genealogies and incorporation of genealogy tourism best practices, stories to be exhibited at the HBCUHeritageHome.com are both uplifting and the descendants' own. The stories thereby will meet African American tourists' expectation that when we travel "the experience will be a positive one" (MMGY, 2021, para. 4). Such a challenging project to optimize U.S. genealogy tourism for African-ancestored Americans by centering our self-created genealogy book stories at a community-designed mega genealogy tourism site and research institute demanded high quality work. Therefore, I commensurately applied multiple strategies to achieve quality assurance.

### **3.3 Quality Assurance**

As is best practices in applied qualitative research, stakeholders and I committed to full engagement and communication with each other throughout the research process. This engagement extends from planning through implementation and initial development so far and will continue through further development, evaluation, and adaptation (Canfield et al., 2022). Our engagement includes that stakeholders and I designed and executed an innovative data collection method in 2019 for a research project that had two parts and feeds into my dissertation research. The first part of the 2019 research was a participant observation of African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts at an AAHGS pre-conference tour of family exhibits from a published genealogy and standard owner family exhibits at the Sotterley Plantation in Maryland. The second part was a survey I administered while presenting on plantation tourism research at the annual AAHGS conference. The thirty-three participants in that tourism observation and survey research provide rich user data about plantation story choices that I had in mind during this

analysis and application project. Stakeholders and I later together decided upon the particulars of application of the themes I found in the studied published genealogy texts. We in the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community also will make each subsequent site decision.

Through ongoing communication, I am assured that the other stakeholders active in this project concur with my content analysis findings and we concur in turn to apply the content analysis findings via the [HBCUHeritageHome.com](http://HBCUHeritageHome.com). This genealogy tourism site and research institute is being fully developed for online and on land rollout to enact the themes I detected in the studied books. Implementation team members purposefully let our unique data and circumstances rather than a methodological template guide our steps because “[a]ny template applied to a research question or context it does not fit or applied without appropriate adjustments to accommodate the specific epistemology, sample, setting, or data is likely unsuitable” (Köhler et al., 2022, p. 185). Overall, the quality of the application portion of my research is assured by intimate involvement from start to finish of the researcher, users, owners, and designers of the application. Each of these stakeholders is a member of the same African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community that for years has discussed and now has resolved the problem of African Americans inadequately seeing our chosen ancestral self-identities reflected in U.S. genealogy tourism exhibits about specific ancestors to whom we belong. The quality of this project extends from its centering of stakeholders to its analysis lens and other key components.

While quality assurance always is crucial for effective research, that my qualitative research runs so counter to other scholars’ critical race and trauma lenses for understanding enslaved people’s and their descendants’ identities through the Atlantic Slave Trade introduces an additional reason readers must be able to scrutinize the quality of my work. Therefore, I

undertook key actions to make sure that my scholarly peers can assess the truthfulness of my research within the four key realms of confirmability, dependability, transferability, and credibility. To ensure confirmability of my subjective analysis, in addition to stating my positionality above, I followed the standard qualitative research practice of remaining constantly aware of my own positionality and how it impacts data collection, analysis, interpretation, and conclusions. My positionality led me to gather diverse texts, analyze and interpret the data with descendant flourishing as the goal, experience my own ancestral self-identity journey while researching, and draw conclusions that center African-ancestored descendants' direct well-being.

I also diligently heeded the admonition to each qualitative researcher to “resist the temptation to use your research to showcase ego-centric or confessional tales about yourself, which may do little to illuminate your research practice or problem, or to help you to make sound research decisions” (Mason, 2002, p. 5). This is especially important so that my embedded status in the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community whose work I analyzed, themed, theorized, and applied is my greatest research tool rather than a limitation. Other researchers, therefore, can confirm my findings with similarly-minded African Americans in relevant realms. I also herein ensure confirmability by permitting readers to clearly follow my evidence chain. Readers see and can self-evaluate key portions of data via my strategic quoting from the studied texts. In “presenting data as evidence” and making sure these quotations are visible in my manuscript, I employ a block-quote technique in Arial 10 font, visibly different from the Times New Roman 12 font of my regular text. This technique “helps readers discern quite easily what organizational members said from the interpretations” I draw and “[c]onsequently, the trail of authorial logic between data and interpretation is more apparent” (Golden-Biddle & Locke, 1997, p. 76).

To ensure dependability, I engaged in ongoing discussions with my African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts author population. The ability to make my work dependable through ongoing engagement with members of this population is one of the primary benefits of my embeddedness as a fellow author of an African American genealogy, an AAHGS leader, and an AAHGS presenter through 2022. Discussions of my preliminary and later findings took place throughout the research in official AAHGS presentation discussions and casual discussions with AAHGS members and others in the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community. Among the feedback was praise for the creative accuracy of my analysis, encouragement to analyze voices by gender, add detail about early Black college graduates, rate sites for how well they meet African-ancestored genealogy tourists' goals, and focus on the fact that African-ancestored genealogy voices largely are Black women's voices and that fact's role in these voices being heretofore underutilized in genealogy tourism. In incorporating others' comments, I kept in mind that "the feedback obtained from a participant (or nonparticipant member of the population of interest) is an important source of validation—but it is not decisive" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 279). I ultimately relied upon my judgment to put participant and nonparticipant comments into context and make revisions in accordance with duplicated feedback. This process establishes that my research study's findings are consistent and repeatable with me as a stable, dependable investigative instrument.

To ensure transferability of my findings to my wider population, I utilized the herein extensively described research processes, including my assumptions and contexts central to the research, and thickly described my findings. While qualitative research is not explicitly subject to external validity in the sense of its findings being generalizable to whole populations or subsets of populations outside of those in a particular study, "it is possible for thickly

described data to give readers a good basis on which to decide whether a study's claims might 'transfer' to their own situations....especially as they concern the 'cultural consistency' of social practices" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 273). I, thus, make explicit connections to and suggestions regarding the cultural and social contexts that surround my data collection, analysis, application interpretation, and conclusions. It is "not the naturalist's task to provide an index of transferability, it is his or her responsibility to provide the database that makes transferability judgements possible on the part of potential appliers" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316). Other researchers thereby can make evidence-based judgments about suitable transfers. Transferability, then, is an outcome I have achieved in the herein presented research largely by providing thick description and recommendations for further research, not by directly aiming at transferability.

To ensure credibility, the primary technique I utilized is prolonged engagement with the social environment of my study, including with related cultural phenomena and research. My work's emic elements of autoethnography and participant observation, because I examine a specific population of which I am a part and underexplored communication genre of which I am an author, lend my findings to increased credibility as engagement time increases (Fetterman, 1998). Thus, my positionality statement in Section 3.1, Analytical Skills, Genealogy Interests, and Conceptual Framework includes detail of my engagement with the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community since 2004. Also, that no in-depth findings exist on my specific researched artifact—the 21st-century African-ancestored published genealogy as a genre—necessitates that my findings be moored in some way to what already is known in genealogy and broader contexts for the new findings to have credibility. Therefore, prolonged engagement with memory, genealogy, and related scholarship within the community of African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts is perhaps the most crucial step I took to assure myself and readers of the

quality of my work. As a result of this emic engagement, I include connections between my findings and other scholars' findings in memory, genealogy, and related scholarship, as well as in published African-ancestored genealogy text outside my dataset. Also to ensure credibility, I utilized peer debriefing, which bolstered the understanding that many African-ancestored people do not yet know they have higher education-related ancestors or other relatives to heroize (Foster, 2017).

Finally, I ensured credibility by how I managed saturation. My saturation processes are well managed by heeding qualitative business scholar Favourate Y. Sebele-Mpofu's (2020) admonition "to define fully the form adopted, explicate the steps followed to achieve it and how it was ultimately achieved. In short, narrow the scope of saturation and contextualise it to your research" (p. 2). These saturation processes are best practices recommended by other scholars as well, in their effort to raise the rigor of qualitative research (Marshall et al., 2013). Given that I sought to develop a theory explaining what is happening in the books I studied, I aimed for both theoretical saturation and inductive thematic saturation. I assessed that I had reached the depth of theoretical saturation after coding the twelfth book, when I was putting no new substantively different information in each code, only reinforcing previous code entries even as I added new code names. I reached the breadth of inductive thematic saturation after coding the twentieth book, when no new, even nominal, codes resulted from that coding.

After reaching the two forms of saturation I sought for credibility, I further ensured the rigor of my work by coding three additional texts. While I reached inductive thematic saturation after the twentieth book added no new additionally explanatory codes, I further ensured the credibility of my work by additionally coding a typical inward-facing book of medium size, then a large outward-facing book, and then a large inward-facing book. When none of these three

varied books added any new codes, I had confirmed inductive thematic saturation. My coding of additional books even after reaching my saturation goals increases the credibility of my work because “[d]ue to the logical uncertainty of saturation...if saturation has been achieved, the researcher is recommended to add 2 to 3 personal interviews or 1 to 2 focus group interviews to further confirm” (Yang et al., 2016, p. 511). Even though “saturation can be achieved in a narrow range of interviews (9-17) or focus group discussions (4-8), particularly in studies with relatively homogenous study populations and narrowly defined objectives” (Hennick & Kaiser, 2022, p. 9), as is the case with my studied genealogies, I added rigor to my work by defining, achieving, and surpassing two relevant saturation types at twenty-three books. My choice of and defined procedures for a content analysis and application method, my positionality, the items selected for study, and implemented quality assurance measures combine to ensure the usefulness of my research findings and application, which are detailed next respectively in Chapters 4 and 5.

#### 4 FINDINGS: DEEP ROOTS, KNOWLEDGE, SELF, & CONNECTIONS

The research findings in this chapter and application presented in Chapter 5 achieve my research purpose of deeply understanding descendants of antebellum enslaved people's self-created identities as presented in 21st-century published genealogies and employing that understanding to implement a genealogy tourism site/research institute to perpetually present, celebrate, honor, further research, and more widely disseminate these desired ancestral home-related identities. I effectively utilize African-ancestored published genealogies to accomplish this purpose. I utilize African-ancestored published genealogies to accomplish this purpose by deeply understanding descendants of antebellum enslaved people's self-created identities as presented in these books and establishing with these and other descendants a major genealogy tourism and research site to highlight these books' key stories. The general research question and sub-questions I ask and answer of the texts to achieve deep understanding are:

RQ: How do African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent **ancestral self-identity** in 21st-century published genealogies?

RQ1: How do African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent **colonial and antebellum U.S. enslaved and free people of African descent** in 21st-century published genealogies?

RQ2: How do African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent **social/cultural capital** in 21st-century published genealogies?

RQ3: How do African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent **ancestral honor and inheritances** in 21st-century published genealogies?

The understanding of African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts' chosen stories that is employed to design a genealogy tourism site/research institute permits perpetual presentation, celebration, honoring, further researching, and more widely disseminating African Americans'

desired ancestral home-connected identities. Answers to my questions permitted ascertaining the meaning-making process of chosen ancestral self-identity presented in published genealogies and the implications of these choices in genealogy tourism performance, embodied movement (Prince, 2021a, 2021b), at the HBCUHeritageHome.com African American genealogy tourism site and research institute. In this chapter, I detail my content analysis findings, and in Chapter 5, I outline my findings' application for optimally utilizing these genealogies one family at a time and collectively to sustain satisfying African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts' demonstrated ancestral self-identity story choices in U.S. genealogy tourism.

To increase well-being and self-determination of the U.S. African-ancestored genealogy tourism community's families, the herein detailed content analysis findings result from examining twenty-three purposively and conveniently selected 21st-century published African American genealogies so that these families' chosen stories can be exhibited and further studied at the HBCUHeritageHome.com maxi-service genealogy tourism and research institute. My analysis and application resolve a representation problem in public memory for African Americans seeking positive ancestral self-identity in the U.S. genealogy tourism industry. The representation problem for African Americans seeking positive ancestral self-identity in the U.S. genealogy tourism industry is the ongoing phenomenon of inadequately seeing ancestral self-identities reflected in exhibits about specific ancestors with whom we claim domiciled belonging. This national and intergenerational family mezzo-level communication problem meant that for African Americans seeking positive ancestral self-identity in the U.S. genealogy tourism industry there was no comprehensive site exclusively based on our genealogies to consider for travel and other genealogy services in the more than \$3.4 billion global genealogy products and services industry in which we are story subjects and buyers (Verified Market

Research, 2022). As a result of my research, African-ancestored genealogy tourists no longer will be unhoused, as we have in development a genealogy tourism home based on our published genealogy books.

African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts publish genealogy books that reflect our chosen, domiciled identities. In quests for positive ancestral self-identity like what we experience in published family heritage books, we find that global slavery tourism sites, U.S. plantations, and the three major African-ancestored sites across the U.S. heritage tourism landscape cater only minimally to African American genealogy. These sites' goal with respect to stories of African-ancestored people is highlighting, holding people accountable for, and eliminating racial social injustice. Therefore, when these sites tell stories of African-ancestored people, they focus on the brutalities of the Atlantic Slave Trade's history and negative aftermath for the benefit of broader audience knowledge. Though they attract African Americans among their broad-based visitorship, these sites, the literature and practitioners show, follow a story strategy that is not designed to elevate our ancestors by showing these ancestors in a positive light. Presentation of our ancestors in a negative light is a requirement for instead highlighting enslavers and others who perpetrated violence and other injustices against African Americans.

The literature and cultural discourse also acknowledge the differences between genealogy stories and history stories, note the major dilemma as deciding which story type to elevate and why regarding African Americans' ancestors, and do not resolve this dilemma in public memory (Araujo, 2018; Bankole, 1999; Blockson & Fry, 1991; Horton, 2009/2006; Piacentino, 2007, 2011; Rose & Eichholz, 2003/1978). Heritage tourism sites that choose to highlight slavery horror stories include the Whitney Plantation in Louisiana, the NMAAHC in Washington, D.C., and the Legacy Museum in Alabama. Continuing the U.S. heritage tourism industry's focus on

Black trauma where Black stories are told, the International African American Museum (Reichelmann & Hunt, 2022) is scheduled to open in South Carolina in 2023 to connect diasporan slavery stories from all the Americas, Europe, and Africa.

Plantations currently dominate the inadequate genealogy tourism landscape for African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts in the United States. Plantations also are a heritage tourism site type where African-ancestored published genealogies increasingly serve as site story fodder even as slavery horror stories also increase and prevail (Redford, 2000/1989, 2005; Tademy, 2001). The rising yet still small positive role for African-ancestored published genealogies in providing stories at plantations positions these books for greater use as fodder for African-ancestored U.S. genealogy tourism stories. Details of this greater use as shown first in my content analysis findings and then in the findings' application follow the basic information below about the genealogies I studied for this research.

#### **4.1 The Studied Genealogies**

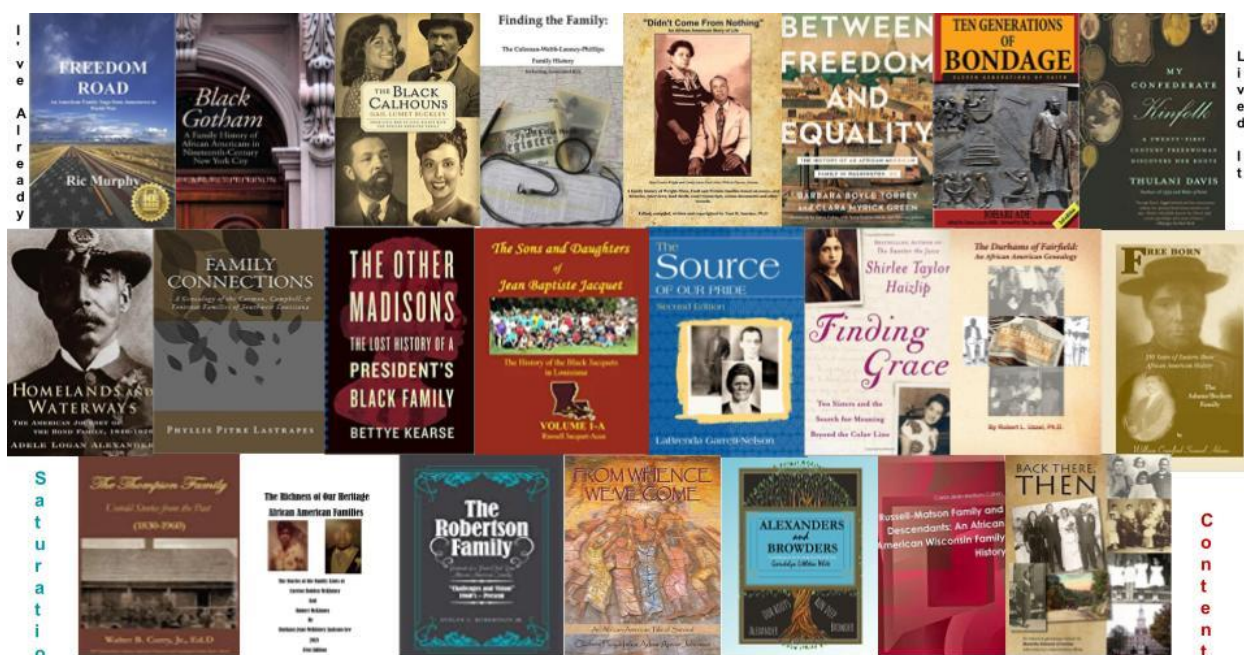
I collected for analysis a purposive convenience sample of thirty African-ancestored narrative genealogies published in the United States in the 21st century. I chose the number thirty in anticipation that this would be a sufficient and not overwhelming number to study to reach theoretical saturation and inductive thematic coding saturation. The studied African-ancestored genealogies range from commercially popular to rare. I gathered the physical texts in part from my own and colleagues' libraries, utilizing my embeddedness in the African-ancestored genealogy community. I conducted a two-cycle coding analysis on the books' text, reached theoretical saturation at twelve books, and confirmed inductive thematic saturation at twenty-three books, after three books yielded no new codes. The studied sample constitutes a most

recent subset of published African-ancestored genealogies, released between 2000 and 2021, and the books are herein studied as a genre form of African-ancestored identity writing.

The studied books range from forty-two to four hundred sixty-one pages. Seven are small books up to one hundred-fifty pages (CALVIN, WHITE, ROBERTSON, JR., JOHNSON, JACKSON-LEE, CURRY, JR., and ADAMS), seven are medium-size books between one hundred-fifty-one and two hundred-fifty pages (CRICLOW, UZZEL, HAIZLIP, GARRETT-NELSON, JACQUET-ACEA, KEARSE, and LASTRAPES), and nine are large books of more than two hundred-fifty pages (ALEXANDER, DAVIS, ADE, TORREY & GREEN, SANCHEZ, WEB, BUCKLEY, PETERSON, and MURPHY). Beginning with the analyzed books' covers, including titles, authors create with these books the image we want of and for our families. Exemplary title phrases in this regard are "Free Born," "Eleven Generations of Faith," "The Source of Our Pride," "Finding Grace," "The Richness of Our Heritage," and "Didn't Come From Nothing." Cover images often include honored ancestors' photographs, ethereal images of ancestral passageways, or family names. See Figure 4.1 for the studied genealogies' cover images. In addition to the first impressions conveyed by book covers, basic demographics of the people who write and the entities that publish 21st-century African-ancestored genealogies also illuminate the books I studied.

This contextual information about the authors and publishers aids in understanding my content analysis findings and application. See Table 4.1 for a profile of the studied books and authors, including publisher and book binding. Authors of the studied books are typical of the published author subset of members of the African-ancestored genealogy community, and the books are published by commercial, academic, and independent presses, as also is typical of this genre. Members of the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community skew toward women who are age fifty-five and older and are highly educated. This community's demographics are

indicated in part by demographics of attendees of the annual AAHGS conferences. In 2022, for instance, AAHGS' annual conference attendee demographics were 13 percent published authors, 79 percent age 55 and older, 62 percent holders of terminal and master's degrees, and 27 percent holders of bachelor's degrees (AAHGS, 2022). Based upon biographical information in the dataset of studied books, the authors are 78 percent holders of terminal and master's degrees and 13 percent holders of bachelor's degrees.



Sample of 23 African American Family Heritage Books (2000-2021) Analyzed As a Genre

*Figure 4.1 Cover Images of the Studied Genealogies show the 23 African-ancestored narrative genealogies analyzed in this study, depicting initial family identity that authors choose to convey (Author).*

*Table 4.1 Profile of the Studied Genealogies and Authors. This profile of the studied genealogies and authors shows 16 books authored by women, 7 authored by men, 13 published independently, and 10 published commercially.*

Book#	Book Title	Pub. Yr.	Publisher/Pub Type 1 Inward/Private, Independent 2 Outward/Commercial, Academic, Cultural	#Pages/ Dimensions/Binding 1 @8.5"x11" 2 @6"x9"  1 Hardcover 2 Softcover	Earliest Ancestor Birth Year	Earliest Ancestor 0 African 1 Enslaved 2 Free 3 White 4 European	Author Last Name	Author Gender 1 F 2 M	Author Education 1 Doctorate 2 Master's 3 Bachelor's 4 Other/Unknown
1	<i>Free Born: 350 Years of Eastern Shore African American History: The Adams/Beckett Family</i>	2007	Heritage Books/1	140/2/2	c 1650	1	ADAMS	2	4
2	<i>Ten Generations of Bondage, Eleven Generations of Faith: The Lewis and Green Family History. 3rd edition</i>	2017	Sakhu Shule Publications/1	284/2/2	1740	1	ADE	1	3
3	<i>Homelands and Waterways: The American Journey of the Bond Family, 1846-1926</i>	2000	Vintage Books/2	276/2/1	1846	2	ALEXANDER	1	1
4	<i>The Black Calhouns: From Civil War to Civil Rights with One African American Family</i>	2016	Grove Press/2	364/2/1	1830	1	BUCKLEY	1	3
5	<i>The Russell-Matson Family and Descendants: An African American Wisconsin Family History. Second Edition</i>	2016	Lulu Press, Inc./1	42/1/2	1833	1	CALVIN	1	2
6	<i>Back There, Then</i>	2014	Blackwell Press/1	153/1/2	c 1830	1	CRITCHLOW	1	3
7	<i>The Thompson Family: Untold Stories From the Past (1830-1960)</i>	2018	Renaissance Publications/1	123/2/2	1830	1	CURRY, JR.	2	1
8	<i>My Confederate Kinfolk: A Twenty-First Century Freedwoman Discovers Her Roots</i>	2006	Basic Civitas Books/2	283/2/2	1724	4	DAVIS	1	1
9	<i>The Source of Our Pride: The Garrett, Neely, and Sullivan Families—Two Hundred Years of African American History, Beginning in Laurens County, South Carolina, Second Edition</i>	2000	Family Tree Press/2	195/1/2	c 1790	0	GARRETT-NELSON	1	1
10	<i>Finding Grace: Two Sisters and the Search for Meaning Beyond the Color Line</i>	2004	Free Press/2	193/2/1	c 1893	4	HAIZLIP	1	2
11	<i>The Richness of Our Heritage, African American Families: The Stories of the Family Lines of Corrine Bolden McKinney and Robert McKinney</i>	2021	Barbara Jean McKinney Jackson-Lee/1	113/1/1	c 1820	1	JACKSON-LEE	1	2
12	<i>The Sons and Daughters of Jean Baptiste Jacquet: The History of the Black Jacquets in Louisiana</i>	2021	Jacquet Publishing/1	216/1/2	c1770	3	JACQUET-ACEA	2	4
13	<i>From Whence We've Come; An African-American Tale of Survival</i>	2021	AuthorHouse/1	110/1/2	17th century	4	JOHNSON	2	2
14	<i>The Other Madisons: The Lost History of a President's Black Family</i>	2020	Houghton Mifflin Harcourt/2	226/2/1	17th century	4	KEARSE	1	1
15	<i>Family Connections: A Genealogy of the Carmon, Campbell, &amp; Fontenot Families of Southwest Louisiana</i>	2016	Phyllis Pitre Lastrapes/1	238/1/2	1835	1	LASTRAPES	1	2
16	<i>Freedom Road: An American Family Saga from Jamestown to World War</i>	2019	Franklin Pearson Publishing/2	461/2/2	c 1600	0	MURPHY	2	2
17	<i>Black Gotham: A Family History of African Americans in Nineteenth-Century New York City</i>	2011	Yale University Press/2	446/2/1	1823	2	PETERSON	1	1
18	<i>The Robertson Family: Portrait of a Post-Civil War African-American Family—Challenges and Vision 1860's-Present</i>	2021	AuthorHouse/1	102/2/2	1856	1	ROBERTSON, JR.	2	2
19	<i>"Didn't Come From Nothing": An African American Story of Life, Third Edition</i>	2019	Brightwater Ventures, LLC/1	302/1/1	c 1820 & c 1830	1	SANCHEZ	1	1
20	<i>Between Freedom and Equality: The History of an African American Family in Washington, DC</i>	2021	Georgetown University Press/2	297/2/1	1773	1	TORREY & GREEN	1	1
21	<i>The Durhams of Fairfield: An African American Genealogy</i>	2015	Eakin Press/2	176/2/2	1753	3	UZZEL	2	1
22	<i>Finding the Family: Coleman-Webb-Looney-Phillips Family History, Including Associated Kin</i>	2015	Pilnut Press/1	326/2/2	1810	1	WEBB	1	2
23	<i>The Alexanders and The Browders: A Compelling Journey through the Lineage—From Whence We Come</i>	2021	Gwendolyn Littleton White/1	78/2/2	c 1800	1	WHITE	1	2

Some African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts use research partners to write family heritage books. In the case of the family of descendants of Captain George Pointer, for instance, the book herein studied is authored by the research partners Barbara Boyle Torrey and Clara Myrick Green, two white women researchers. When discussing their book in public, Torrey and Green often appear with a member of the family of Pointer, who is the book's hero. One such co-presenter is James Fisher, an eighth-generation descendant of Pointer. Fisher appeared with Torrey and Green in 2022 at the Thomas Balch Library in Leesburg, Virginia. Fisher and another research partner, Tanya Hardy, worked with Torrey and Green to complete the published story of Captain George Pointer's family.

Publishers of the studied books range from commercial to independent. Among the publishers is Family Tree Press, one of a growing number of self-publishers booming as the genealogy turn in the academy and the broader culture continues. The analyzed book from this publisher is written by one of two herein studied authors who refer to their subjects as their spouse's family, not their own family, making their books hybrid narrative and technical genealogies. One of the spousal writers is Celia Webb, the white half of a Black/white interracial couple writing about the family of her husband, Mack Webb. The couple collaborated on this book as they have on several others. Their other collaborations include a 2019 songbook collection of gospel tunes, the *Webb's Wondrous Tales* children's book series, and a self-publishing guide. After generally understanding the authors and publishers of the genealogies under investigation, I was ready to delve more deeply into what these books are doing and how by analyzing codes, concepts, and themes to answer my research questions.

## 4.2 Codes, Concepts, Themes, and Answers to Research Questions

I began the coding process with nineteen initial codes suggested by the literature. These initial codes cover twelve categories of African American ancestral honor: God, motherhood, extended family, discipline, respect for elders, ancestral land, transmission of knowledge, the arts, gendered division of labor, interpersonal and spiritual relationships, rites of passage, and overall sharing, caring, and honoring (Barksdale-Hall, 2005, pp. xix-xx). Also included in the initial codes are triumphs and losses (Gates, 2019/2017, p. x). Rounding out the initial codes are social capital (Harris & Graves, 2010; Hardy et al., 2019; Loury, 1976, 2016, 2019, 2020a, 2020b; Morgan, 2010) and quality of housing, jobs, religion, and educational institutions (Billingsley, 2007). After the initial codes, I then generated additional codes based on topics mentioned in the texts that go beyond or further granularize the initial codes. My coding process yielded three hundred fifty-two total codes, alphabetically ranging from Accomack, VA, which is mention of this locale for genealogy tourism or other purposes, to Zillow, etc., which is use of real estate websites in family research. See Codebook in Appendix A for my complete set of codes and definitions.

While the themes I detected help to clarify answers to my research questions, the themes are much broader than the questions and therefore overlap questions. Similarly, no exemplary text contains only one concept as it helps to illuminate that concept. I explain the concepts, themes, and theory below via text and song. I also utilize two Paul Laurence Dunbar poems and a Henry O. Tanner painting to clarify the Agapic Agency Theory that I find explains the studied books' process to ancestral self-identity. I find that listening to, viewing, and understanding the songs, poems, and painting are integral to comprehending how authors operate in the studied genealogies. Therefore, Appendix B contains internet links to audio and lyrics of the songs, a

video clip about the painting, and video clips of the poems, utilized as explanatory aids. This appendix also contains links to creative works authors mention in the book passages here shared. In particular, the explanatory songs help to show how African-ancestored genealogy book authors relieve the tension inherent (Bankole, 1999) between ancestral slavery horror stories and ancestral hero honor stories.

#### ***4.2.1 Story Tension Release in Answer to Overall RQ***

The overall question I answer in the present research is how African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent ancestral self-identity in 21st-century published genealogies. Previous literature has identified tension between how heritage tourism sites convey ancestral horror stories focused on oppression by official actors and how descendants convey ancestral homey hero stories focused on our ancestors' human greatness, including with spirituality and songs, without explaining how ancestral spiritual singing relieves the tension (Bankole, 1999; Clifford, 1997; Horton, 2009/2006; Macdonald, 1997; Piacentino, 2007; Rosoff, 2003; Stanton, 2006). Descendants utilize an agency of Godly and ancestral love, which I term and explain below as agapic agency, to choose to sing ancestral hero songs louder than ancestral horror songs. Because of the pall of the Atlantic Slave Trade, the specter of slavery horror stories to be overridden by ancestral honor stories is omnipresent, even when not explicitly stated. Authors of the analyzed African-ancestored genealogies relieve tension between horror versus honor stories to result in a positive, homey, authoritative feel in the same manner that songs relieve musical tension.

Musical tension in songs is relieved by pitch change. The pitch change occurs by dropping a half tone to a major note or rising a half tone to a minor note. In our published

genealogies, African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts demonstrate reducing pitch and thereby communicating in the major notes. The major notes achieved by lowering pitch to relieve musical tension result in a voice of assured authority, with calmness and, thereby, the ability to live, hear, and retell stories of ugly turned to beauty. In this manner of speaking, one creates statements, as opposed to the questions and uncertainty which are conveyed via raised pitch. Raised pitch is an unsettled, negative-feeling sound. The voice of ancestral self-identity, then, is a voice of knowing, internal knowing, without need or desire for external verification.

While their value are acknowledged in this way of speaking, externally-vetted records are not a requirement for the lowered pitch, major notes voice. As also is the case with notes, “Major chords evoke more positive emotional responses than Minor chords” and “it is known in the musicological literature that the association of positive emotions with Major chords and negative emotions with Minor chords is culture-dependent” (Kolchinsky, et al., 2017, pp. 8-9). Because they are authored within the culture of intergenerational family focus, the herein studied and applied African-ancestored published genealogies center largely around home and speak of literal and figurative ancestral homes in lowered pitch and major chords. The key of life, the studied genealogies reveal, is making all negatives less negative (Rim & Song, 2016) via story framing. Such framing, for instance, highlights ancestors’ labor skills during oppression and what one knows over the difficulty in coming to know it.

Several sample passages from the texts which exemplify the authoritative voice of literal and figurative ancestral homes are:

Only gradually did I come to see Emma as an intriguing woman who, though seemingly content with her life, was consistently denied the opportunities needed to reach her greatest potential. She had few financial assets and little authority outside her home. Emma never accomplished anything traditionally designated “of note” or worked with or for institutions that preserved records of her contributions. Winking slyly at Virginia’s laws that denied slaves any education, her owners gave young Emma a rudimentary exposure to the ABCs. Still, she remained only minimally literate, and

never kept a diary, composed sonnets, or even—when finally allowed to do so in 1920—voted. Yet she was not silent, though discovering and interpreting her muted voice has been difficult. She was a treasured wife, mother, grandmother, and comrade, as well as a fine seamstress, cook, and gardener. Emma Bond was also a memorable teller of stories, a singer of songs, an herbalist and medical practitioner lacking certification. But all too often, we have been persuaded that the lives of “invisible,” “ordinary” women such as she are not meaningful or worthy of preservation and recreation. Toward the end of the American Civil War, John Robert Bond, a mulatto sailor from Liverpool serving with the Union navy, found himself looked upon as decreasingly English, increasingly black. In Virginia, he met and married a former slave named Emma Thomas. They migrated north, settled down, bought a home, and raised their children in a town that included few Negroes or southerners, but many long-time Yankees plus a plethora of European newcomers. John was propertyless when he and Emma met, and only recently a family of white Virginians had considered her their lawful property; but in Massachusetts the Bonds became property owners. By the banks of an old millstream they found no land of milk and honey, yet stitched and patched together a satisfactory new life for themselves and their kin.

—ALEXANDER

He attended church on a regular basis, taking his family along also. He was one of the first deacons at Smyrna Baptist Church and was well acquainted with the ministers of the church whom he and Charlotte often entertained in their home. Charlotte was a Christian also, but hardly the mild-mannered individual that her husband was. She was highly emotional and spirited with a fiery temper. Despite this, she was a good wife and mother. Because she was so young when she married Isaac, Isaac had to teach her everything, especially about cooking. As a result, she became an excellent cook. Isaac was a farmer and entrepreneur. He and Charlotte bought 90 acres of land on which they had a syrup mill and on which they built their home.

—CURRY, JR.

I am aware of three homes that were built on the property during Crawford Robertson’s lifetime. The original home was located several hundred feet from the home that I was familiar with as a young lad and grew up loving. This home still exists and currently has occupants. It was built in 1906 by my grandfather and another gentleman. The workmanship and design are still a marvel and still admired by many who are aware of its history. Its functionality has endured for 112 years. My Aunt Myrtle L. Robertson spent all of her ninety-five years in this home, with the exception of nine months. She died in 2002.

—ROBERTSON

Before leaving his old home, he wrapped the Bible in newspaper, tied it with string, and placed it on a bookshelf that was to be sent to his new home. The bookcase arrived at the new house. The Bible did not. Gramps was distraught. He assumed that his most cherished possession had been mistaken for trash, and he never forgave himself for not being more careful.

—KEARSE

Harmon and his sons Huey and William arrived at the Lewis plantation in Marion County, Mississippi, on a hot summer day. A wealthy man, he had at least seven children who each owned homes in the area. Lewis owned over 1000 acres. He was a wealthy man. His brothers and a sister lived in the area. Benjamin Lewis envisioned a fine home for his family. Harmon and some of the other slaves were very good carpenters. They cut the wood and built Benjamin’s home from the ground up. And what a fine home it was! It was a 5-bedroom Victorian that was grand in style. A neat white porch, just right for drinking iced tea while enjoying the warm weather, surrounded the entire home. Then they built their own one-room cabins. The slave cabins were small and dark, and they were a stark contrast to the grand home they built for Ben Lewis. The tiny log cabins had dirt floors where the enslaved slept on wooden slats that were covered with burlap. Tom once said that Massa had a finer home for his chickens than he did for his slaves. At times, Benjamin loaned some of his slaves to his brothers who lived on nearby plantations.

—ADE

The authoritative, positive over negative, voice of ancestral home is joined in the studied texts by literal and figurative references to song in ancestral memory. See Appendix B. Some sample passages from the texts which exemplify song in ancestral memory are:

My mother sang *Summertime*, an aria from the Gershwin opera *Porgy and Bess*, as a nap time song when I was a toddler. Both parents loved Jazz. I heard their sorrow as they mourned over the decline of Billie Holiday's health.

—JOHNSON

I grew up in New York City hearing abbreviated versions of those stories about my great-grandfather Bond, but until recently did not know that my favorite childhood song, *Keemo, Kimo*, a tongue-twisting nonsense ditty, also played a part in the many-dimensional family legacy. Unlike the pop tunes, lullabies, Mother Goose and A. A. Milne verses that virtually every girl and boy of my age and era committed to memory, that song seemed uniquely mine. None of my colleagues (African American family friends and neighbors, or first-to-third-generation Jewish European Americans at school) had heard it. I begged my mother to sing it with me, yet neither she nor I knew its origins. When I finally asked her, my mother, who by then suffered from senile dementia, could not recall the first name of her Grandmother Bond, whom she scarcely had known. Mother remembered only that in her own early years she had referred to her as "Grandmother in Boston." I since have learned that she was born Emma Thomas, and also discovered that slaves in southeastern Virginia (and apparently there alone), where Emma had grown up, often sang *Keemo, Kimo*. She probably learned it in childhood and passed it on to her firstborn—my grandfather. Hence, it came to my mother, and then to me.

—ALEXANDER

Years later, a nostalgic white writer would remember the era when enslaved blacks met for recreational activities. The writer sentimentally recalled moments of song among Henry Moss's slaves. The report said, "There was singing, there was shouting when they all got 'religion.' They were a happy, irresponsible set of children, well fed and well cared for, but Abraham set them free and the old days are gone forever." The meetings that whites did not attend—the secret ones—had a covert nature, as noted by Wash Wilson, enslaved in Ouachita Parish.

*When de niggers go round singin' 'Steal Away to Jesus,' dat mean dere gwine be a 'ligious meetin' dat night. Oat de sig'fication of a meetin'. De masters 'fore and after freedom didn't like dem 'ligious meetin's, so us natcherly slips off at night, down in de bottoms or somewheres. Sometimes us sing and pray all night.*

—SANCHEZ

I am reminded here of the gospel song by R. C. Ward, "Think of His Goodness to You":

*When waves of affliction sweep over the soul, And sunlight is hidden from view, If ever you're tempted to fret or complain, Just think of His goodness to you.  
The world may forsake you, and those whom you trust May prove to be false and untrue;  
There's one you can trust even unto the end; Just think of His goodness to you.  
Misfortune's dark cloud may hang over the way, Despite your best efforts to do; The Savior is guarding your treasure up there; Just think of His goodness to you.  
When dear ones are taken away from you here, You loved with affection so true, Look unto the Savior for strength to endure, And think of His goodness to you.*

These words from R. C. Ward appropriately describe the presence of God with the Robertson family that has endured to this day.

—ROBERTSON, JR.

Amazingly, one of minstrelsy's most prominent stages was the Chatham Theater, the very same place where the Tappan brothers had conducted their interracial abolitionist meeting that led to the 1834 riot. A theater before the Tappans turned it into a chapel, by 1839 the building had reconverted to its original purpose. It was there that T. D. Rice, best known for his Jump Jim Crow performances, appeared, as did Dan Emmett and his famed Virginia minstrels. It's there that you could follow the travails of Jim, hero of "de New York Nigga":

*When de Nigger's done at night washing up de china, Den he sally out to go and see Miss Dinah, Wid his Sunday go-to-meetins segar in his mouth.*

So many stereotypes make their way into the song. The narrator happily invokes the N-word; he sings in a dialect that gets more pronounced with each verse; Jim is hardly a man, since he must wash china; whites mock his dandified appearance; it's obvious that he can't keep a woman since he later finds Dinah on the street with none other than "Arfy Tappan" (raising the specter of amalgamation); and at the Bowery he finds Rice acting "de brack man" and bringing "de money in." But, never mind, you won't get to see the performance anyway, "Cause de neber hab rom to let in de nigga." The black elite avoided places like Church Street and the Chatham Theater. In both their political activism and their social lives, they put their trust in appearing respectable, keeping company with respectable people, and patronizing respectable venues.

—PETERSON

One of the fondest memories of my childhood is sitting at the dining room table, listening to my father read "Little Brown Baby" by Paul Lawrence Dunbar. My younger sisters sat on his lap and I in the chair next to my mother. The poem starts like this:

*Little Brown Baby wif da spa'klin eyes, Who's Daddy's baby and who's daddy's chile?  
Come to yo' pappy an' set on his knee. What you been doin' suh-makin' san'pies?  
Look at dat bib-yoo's es du'ty ez me. Look at dat moouf dat's mer/asses, I bet:  
Come hyeah Maria an' wipe off his han's Beez gwine to ketch you an' eat you up yit, Bein'  
so sticky and sweet-goodness lan's! Who's pappy's darlin' an who's pappy's chile?*

My father always started off the poem by stopping periodically to catch the dialect, but near the end, he recited the words as if he were ready to burst into song, having gotten into the rhythm of the words. The entire house was still. Everyone was taking in the pictures created by the words of the poem's author and the conviction in the robust tenor voice of the speaker. For me, I cherished those family moments; how many daddies sat at home with their little girls to read to them? My favorite lines were "Little Brown Baby with sparklin' eyes," and "Who's pappy's darlin' an Who's pappy's chile". There's a line in the poem that says the boogey man is going to come and get the child. Daddy looked into the den to pretend the boogey man was coming to get us as he read. We would scream with delight! Daddy has always been an awesome storyteller, whether there was a moral to his tale or not—although most of the time there was! There were always quotes from his grandmother, like "a hard head makes a soft behind," or "as long as I have my two feet, I can do it myself".

—JOHNSON

In the words of Agathe Babineaux, a Louisiana slave from Lafayette Parish:

*We have dance outdoors sometime. Somebody play fiddle and banjo. We dance de reel and quadrille and buck dance. De men dance dat. If we go to dance on 'nother plantation we have to have pass. De patterrollers come and make us show de slip. If dey ain't no slip, we git beat.*

—SANCHEZ

Mandy and the other slaves who survived the Middle Passage—not a few of them raped aboard the ships—must have dug deep into themselves to hold on to their humanity....The women honored childbirth, menarche, courtship, marriage, and death with rituals of joy or solemnity. Everyone, male and female, old and young, stole time to dance to the banjo.

—KEARSE

The above examples of authoritative voice in speaking of ancestral home and song demonstrate that African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts' technique for representing ancestral self-identity can be explained as lowering voice pitch to major notes to break tension between horror and hero stories. While not stated explicitly in each passage, African-ancestored genealogy books always have as part of their context the negative horrors of the Atlantic Slave Trade, which authors in the studied books overpower with ancestral honor stories. The phrase "three chords and the truth", used as a description of country music by Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame member Harlan Howard, as the title of several albums by various artists, and as the title of a book about parts of the country music industry and lifestyle by Laurence Leamer (1997), reinforces the role musical sounds play in making palatable the otherwise unpalatable, negative truths, such as the horrors of slavery.

The three chords so prevalent in America's hearth music are the C, F, and G chords in the C major scale. The major D and E sounds also are prevalent in the process of breaking tension by lowering pitch. Singing the drop in pitch in the case of African-ancestored published genealogies is akin to twang, the vocal quality most associated with country enunciation. Twang is accomplished by constricting the vocal chords, permitting only the clearest sound to emerge, achieving loudness with little effort, and retaining the most possible air (Sundberg & Thalén, 2010). In the case of African-ancestored genealogies, the air is the air of ancestral spirit. The tension-breaking lowered pitch and major chords sound that tells positive stories louder and more clearly than negative ones is exemplified in a host of quintessential country and other

American songs about home. These are songs that turn sad, longing, and forlorn feelings into beautiful human experiences in story.

One way to understand how African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent ancestral self-identity in 21st-century published genealogies is to experience how the metaphor of lowered pitch and major notes and chords in these books works in exemplary home songs. Ten exemplary songs about home that help to explain how African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent ancestral self-identity in 21st-century published genealogies are *Home* by Blake Shelton (2007), *I'm Already There* by Lonestar (2001), *Take Me Home, Country Roads* by John Denver (1971), *Sing Me Back Home* by Merle Haggard and The Strangers (1967), *I Sang Dixie* by Dwight Yoakam (1988), *Carolina in My Mind* by James Taylor (1968), *Almost Home* by Craig Morgan (2002), *No Place Like Home* by Randy Travis (1986), *Tobacco Road* by Lou Rawls (1964), and *Cradled in Arms* by Foy Vance (2019), the chorus of which one reviewer says is “wonderfully uplifting” (Fenney, 2019, para. 3). Each of these home songs transforms the seemingly sad experience of missing or bemoaning home into a beautiful remembrance of home. See Table 4.2 for a list of the ten quintessential home songs that exemplify the domestic goal of African-ancestored published genealogies as well as other songs that similarly illuminate the seven concepts, the three themes, and the Agapic Agency Theory that I found at work in the studied 21st-century published African-ancestored genealogies.

As part of understanding the books, I recommend listening to the home songs now in Appendix B to understand the essence of the books I studied before reading further about my findings and application. I also recommend referring to Appendix B again and listening to the other ten songs and video clips about the poems and painting when the artistic output is mentioned in text. It is important to remember that most of the explanatory songs are in the

country music tradition that is steeped in African American banjo and fiddle playing, includes more 1,500 country recordings and more than 500 *Billboard* country chart hits written or performed by people of African-descent, and evocatively expresses African-ancestored sentiments. Keeping African-ancestored heritage in country music in mind may mitigate any temptation to see the explanatory songs as diluting rather than illuminating African-ancestored voices (Bishop & Watson, 2022; Burns, 2020; Dyck, 2021; Feder, 2006; Foster, 1998, 2000; Gussow, 2010; Hammond, 2011; Hill, 2011; Lee, 2019; Mack, 2020; Martin, 2019; Parler, 2017, 2020; Pecknold, 2013; Wever, 2011).

*Table 4.2 African-ancestored Genealogies Analysis shows how the Agapic Agency Theory works through 3 themes and 7 concepts, with 10 explanatory home and 10 other songs that illuminate the herein studied 21st-century published African-ancestored genealogies.*

<b>AFRICAN-ANCESTORED GENEALOGIES ANALYSIS</b>	
<b>3 Themes and 7 Concepts</b>	<b>20 Explanatory Songs</b>
GOAL: Home (Positive ancestral self-identity)	<i>Home; I'm Already There; Take Me Home, Country Roads; Sing Me Back Home; I Sang Dixie; Carolina in My Mind; Almost Home; No Place Like Home; Tobacco Road; Cradled in Arms</i>
PATH: Agapic Agency Theory	
1. Deep Roots (Spirit) Purpose of Genealogy Book Ancestors Speak Description of Ancestors	<i>He Walked on Water Daddy's Hands Voices Coal Miner's Daughter</i>
2. Deep Knowledge (Mind) Experiences World History	<i>This Ain't Nothin' Fancy God Bless the USA</i>
3. Deep Self (Body) Genealogy Tourism and Research Values	<i>Who I Am The House That Built Me You've Got to Stand for Something</i>

With lyrics such as “And I know, I’m in your prayers~Oh, I’m already there,” “A silver tear appearing now, I’m cryin’, ain’t I?~I’m going to Carolina in my mind,” and “Listen to me son while you still can~Run back home to that Southern land!”, each of the home songs embraces sadness to convey the beauty of having the feeling of savoring the hearth of home. Listeners identify the emotional valence of words by detecting the pitch and vocal timbre accompanying the words, not by dictionary denotations of words, “and, for sad words, they are also slower in arriving at a correct identification of the word’s emotional valence when sung with an emotionally incongruent timbre” (Spreadborough & Anton-Mendez, 2019, p. 407). In other words, told and interpreted in the right voice, any story can be an uplifting and fulfilling one. The stories in these songs incorporate the bad in life and overshadow it with the good, just as do the stories African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts utilize in telling family stories to arrive at ancestral self-identity in our 21st-century genealogy books.

The authors’ technique in these books is as opposed to harping on the ugly of what precipitated the feeling. The precipitator in these songs and in some family stories is separation from or dysfunction at home. Both in quintessential home songs and in African-ancestored published genealogies, home is presented as so sacred a place that no physical or mental state is permitted to stand between people and positive identification with our ancestral homes. Authors seek to see ourselves as ancestrally homed. Again, both the songs and genealogies focus on major notes by lowering pitch because “minor chords are connected with more negative words, while major chords are associated with more positive words” (Motivans, 2019, para. 6). Not only do the studied genealogies represent ancestral self-identity as seeking home in an authoritative, positive tone that can be understood in musical terms, they also represent ancestral self-identity in the classic pattern known to lead to expertise in any endeavor.

The classic pattern known to lead to expertise in any endeavor is step 1) watch and study someone doing something, step 2) do it yourself, and step 3) teach someone else to do it. This pattern plays out in the examined genealogies in that the writers first study the essence, the spiritual feel of ancestors. It is only from and through a grounding in this ethereal ancestral hero honor that authors then use their minds, their intellect, to read the records, including oral histories and records of horror stories. Fully retaining ancestral heroism unsullied and even elevated by reading the record, authors then arrive at an embodied ancestral self-identity story that maintains and even bolsters ancestral self-identity by retelling the ancestral stories to teach others. This pattern shows that it is only in the retelling of ancestral stories, not merely in knowing and savoring them for oneself, that genealogy book authors arrive at the expertise of both ancestral- and self-knowledge, coinciding with their own positive ancestral self-identity.

Another overall way African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent ancestral self-identity in 21st-century published genealogies is by incorporating a heavy dose of ancestral education stories within the pattern of assured, uplifting, and fulfilling storytelling. Each book conveys education as a family value reflected in both ancestors and authors and utilized as social capital. Several sample passages from the texts which exemplify education stories are:

In 1940, he accepted an assignment to become principal of a new school, and Gramps moved, with his wife and three young children, from one small Texas town to another....Many plantation owners believed that black people lacked the ability to read, write, or 'figger.' The slaves knew this was not true. As Jim grew up, he hid behind the door and listened in on Victoria and Susan's lessons. His father saw him hiding there but did nothing. "Allowing Jim to learn," Mom speculated, "was Madison's way of showing love for his son."

—KEARSE

Their oldest son, Luther W. Crichlow, graduated from Howard University and Alfred Theological Seminary, served as an Army chaplain in World War II, went with his wife as missionary to Jamaica for five years, and then was pastor of the People's Church (1946-58) until his death at age forty-eight.

—CRICHLOW

This hospital was named for Rev. G. L. Prince, president of Mary Allen College, who had previously served as pastor of Galveston's Avenue L Baptist Church, one of the oldest black churches in

Texas; and as president of the National Baptist Convention of America, see Avenue L. Baptist Church; Handbook of Texas Online, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/iva2.html>. G. L. Prince Hospital was built in 1950, with Dr. James Hilliard, Jr. serving as medical director. The Ford Foundation helped to underwrite the 24-bed facility with several grants. The hospital included an X-ray department, major and minor operating rooms, kitchen, nursery, laboratory, and personnel quarters. Both Dr. Hilliard and his wife, Edna, a registered nurse, served as instructors in Mary Allen College's vocational nursing program.

—UZZEL

Further examination of this record revealed that William specified that one square acre is "designated, reserved, and set aside for the establishment of a public school." According to an interview with, Mary (youngest child of Victoria Carmon Fontenot), a couple of attempts were made to create a school. The first attempt was unsuccessful, while the Lazaro School was later triumphant. The Lazaro School was sanctioned by Evangeline Parish School Board.

—LASTRAPES

Despite the gasworks' proximity, neither gaslight nor town water supplied Gouldingsville. Yet above that dingy community, atop Mount St. James (Worcester's most elevated escarpment) by the city's southern boundary, rose the spires of Fenwick Hall, testament to the celestial splendor of the Catholic Church and its metaphorical proximity to God. It was one of only two buildings which then comprised the College of the Holy Cross. Instructors at that seminary (founded in 1843 as New England's first Catholic college) belonged to the Jesuit order. A majority of the several hundred students who attended Holy Cross in the early 1870s hailed from out of town, out of state, even out of the country. Despite their dominant Protestantism, Worcester's elites as well as its working-class Catholics welcomed and supported an institution of escalating reputation and scholarship in their unpretentious, mid-Massachusetts city. From the time of its inception, Holy Cross welcomed Catholic boys from around the country and the world. Its first valedictorian, James Healy, was the son of an Irish-born planter and the Georgia slave who became his companion. John Bond had been born to an Irish mother and a black father, but (except for the significant gender reversal and his lighter skin) James Healy's ethnic and racial heritage resembled that of the English-born former sailor. Other children from the Healy family also attended Holy Cross before dedicating themselves to the church or, in one instance, a life at sea. When the school's first building burned in 1852, the affluent Healys contributed to its reconstruction. The Healy boys' ambiguous appearance meant that they might not be readily recognizable as "colored," but they seem to have made no deliberate attempts to conceal their racial heritage when they were Holy Cross students and then instructors. Rather, they identified themselves as Catholics, neither Negro nor white, and even participated in classmates' antiblack high jinks. They were handsome fellows and gifted clerical scholars, further endowed with ingratiating personalities. James Healy had served his church in Boston during the Civil War when he helped to defuse the city's ugly draft riots, and ultimately became bishop of Portland, Maine—the first of his (unacknowledged) race to achieve that exalted rank in America's Roman Catholic Church.

—ALEXANDER

When Corrine was only six years old in 1930 her family became a part of the "Great Migration" and moved from Arkansas to Chicago, Illinois. I am not sure if Corrine began kindergarten or first grade in Arkansas. We do have a photo of the one room school house that was available to them, but while some of her siblings appear on that photo, she does not. So far as we know all of Corrine's education took place in Chicago. We believe she attended Medill Elementary School and Smyth High School. She graduated High School in 1942. She did complete a couple of semesters of Business College but I am not sure where.

—JACKSON-LEE

She may have sent her Perkins children to the fledgling school for blacks hosted by Reeves Colored Methodist Episcopal Church. It is probably here that Mary Ann came to know the former Yankee soldier Charles William Wright, a newcomer to Lake Charles. And in early 1868, Mary Ann left the

service of a white home once more—but this time to move into her own home. Upon her marriage to Charles William Wright, Mary Ann never again worked for anyone other than her own family. They made their home in the adjoining city of Westlake and the couple held a marriage ceremony, possibly at the fledgling Colored Methodist church in Lake Charles or in a private home. Her brother Webb, and likely other family members, attended the wedding. Recognized as man and wife, they did not immediately file legal marriage documents, perhaps not seeing a pressing need. Relatively early on, Charles recognized that his increasing wealth could make inheritance laws an issue.  
—SANCHEZ

Though details about Simon Peter Alexander, Jr. are sketchy, he was an extraordinary property owner of land, which he left to Easter to provide for and educate their sons and daughter, a privilege for a “black girl” of that time. Easter sent her daughter to a state college called Branch Normal College in Pine Bluff, where she studied and was taught to play the piano by Zachery Butler.  
—WHITE

Rev. Durham moved to Greenville, South Carolina, where he studied for three years. He hired a tutor in Latin and Greek to help him prepare for admission to the senior preparatory class of South Carolina University. He enrolled in 1874 and stayed until the school was closed by the “Redeemers” government elected in 1876. He transferred to Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia, and in 1880, he graduated from Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. After a brief pastorate in Columbia, South Carolina, Rev. Durham returned to Nashville, where he enrolled at Meharry Medical College, where he received the degree of Doctor of Medicine and the designation of valedictorian of his class. After medical school Rev. Dr. Durham moved to Society Hill, South Carolina, where he served the community as both pastor and physician then served eight years as missionary of the American Baptist Public Society and as secretary of the state Baptist convention. He eventually returned to the pastoral ministry.  
—UZZEL

Prairie View A. M. & N. was located about fifty miles due west of Liberty County, situated atop a gentle rise in the plains where the grounds petered out into undulating waves of amber and green grasslands that stretched to the edges of the Texas sky. During Reconstruction, a seminary for white girls called Alta Vista had occupied what, a decade later, would become the heart of a new campus for Negroes. That college, established in 1879, became the state’s foremost school for blacks. As a land-grant institution and a subordinate adjunct to (all-white) Texas A. & M., Prairie View qualified for supplemental funds under provisions of the federal Morrill Acts. It focused on teacher training and prepared three-quarters of the state’s Negro educators. But like Hampton and Tuskegee, the famous “colored” institutes that it emulated, Prairie View really was more a trade and high school than a college. Enrollment hovered around nine hundred during Aaron’s student years. The YW and YMCA were active, with Bible study and weekly chapel attendance mandatory, grace sung before all meals, and *Stand Up for Jesus* everyone’s favorite hymn. Young men wore uniforms of “serviceable blue material [and] brown campaign hats similar to those worn by the United States Army.” The school had fifteen brick or wooden academic buildings and thirty residential cottages, and its sixteen hundred-plus acres made it the “second largest physical plant of any Negro institution in the country.” Principal E. L. Blackshear, a disciple of Booker T. Washington who maintained that the “life of constant labor in the fields made of the ex-African savage a sane, healthful, virile, cheerful and useful laboring class,” led the thirty-person, all-Negro administration and faculty.  
—ALEXANDER

It is believed that Rev. Sandy Garland helped to organize the Virginia Seminary at Lynchburg. One of our ancestors (Betsy’s grandson and Lucy’s nephew) Professor Henry Stewart is at the top center in this photo of some of the Seminary’s faculty before 1920.  
—CRICHLLOW

Further highlighting the importance of education in Black family heritage stories, several of the studied books also revere education within special sections of the books. One book, for instance (GARRETT-NELSON), contains a nine-page section titled “Colleges and Universities Attended by Members of the Garrett, Neely, and Sullivan Families”. This education section includes the names of more than two hundred-fifty family members as well as the one hundred twenty-eight higher education institutions they attended. Among the schools named are HBCUs Barber-Scotia and Vorhees colleges, Ivies Columbia and Yale universities, and other schools such as Georgia Institute of Technology and Temple University. Schools with the highest numbers of family attendees, about ten or more, are City University of New York and HBCUs Benedict College and Florida A&M and Howard universities. Similarly representative in highlighting the importance of education in Black family heritage, another of the analyzed books (ROBERTSON, JR.) focuses on education in part by devoting fourteen of its one hundred two pages to the topic in two separate sections. The sections are titled “Role in Establishment of Secondary Education for Blacks in Hardeman County” and “Educational/Professional Pursuits and Successes of Children, Grandchildren, and Great Grandchildren of Crawford Robertson”.

To give a clearer picture of how home, education, and other storylines are used to represent ancestral self-identity in the studied genealogies, the next sections of my dissertation elaborate in turn upon the themes and concepts at play in answering my more specific research sub-questions. Each theme and concept is explained in part by a song that breaks musical tension via the lowered-pitch twang of comfort and assurance. The themes, concepts, and songs help to contextualize answers to how the studied books specifically address colonial and antebellum U.S. enslaved and free people of African descent (RQ1), social capital (RQ2), and ancestral inheritances (RQ3).

#### ***4.2.2 Deep Roots Theme of Ancestral Elevation and Its Concepts in Answer to RQ1***

The first sub-question I answer is how African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent colonial and antebellum U.S. enslaved and free people of African descent in 21st-century published genealogies. To arrive at the answer, I first had to understand the concepts that interact to form the Deep Roots theme in these books and the theme itself, for the theme provides the context for the answer. The Deep Roots theme relates to heroizing ancestors and is explained by its underlying concepts. Twenty-two of the three hundred fifty-two elemental codes I detected in the texts aggregate to three concepts that in turn aggregate to form the Deep Roots theme. The three concepts are 1) Purpose of Genealogy Book 2) Ancestors Speak and 3) Description of Ancestors.

The first of the three underlying concepts for the Deep Roots theme is the Purpose of Genealogy Book concept. This concept captures any codes related to author mentions of why the book was written, including for whom and with what intended outcome. Several sample passages from the texts which exemplify the Purpose of Genealogy Book concept are:

On a personal level, I want to claim a form of belonging I've never had. On a broader social level, I've become so frustrated by the lack of historical accounts about the black elite prior to the Harlem Renaissance that I'm determined to fill this void. I can no longer ask questions of the older generation who have long since passed. But I want to recover a family history to pass on to the younger generation.

—PETERSON

As this is defined as a genealogical publication, the goal is to provide the reader with an historical account that begins with our progenitor, Louisa John (Mammy Noone). This woman was my great-great grandmother. It is because of her that each of us is here today. Since her birth in the 1840's, at least seven generations have been born. It is her blood that flows through our veins, and she has directly or indirectly impacted the lives of over 22,000 descendants.

—LASTRAPES

The Durhams of Fairfield are truly a remarkable family with a great and noble legacy! If the reading of this book will inspire Durhams and others to have a greater appreciation for this legacy, then these humble efforts will be well rewarded. You cannot really know who you are unless you know where you came From!

—UZZEL

Despite the frustration of genealogy research, [Tanya Hardy] believes strongly that "looking for our

ancestors is one of the best ways to honor them. The joy of bringing past centuries to life through the stories of individual families is worth all the frustration it takes.”

—TORREY & GREEN

A song that well exemplifies and summarizes the Purpose of Genealogy Book concept is *Daddy's Hands* by Holly Dunn (1986). See Appendix B. Composed in the key of D major as a Father's Day gift for her father, the song conveys high positive emotion as it portrays Dunn's successful process of understanding a positive ancestral role model in her life, a loving father heading a loving household. Ultimately, creating, conveying, and living in stable, loving intergenerational families at home is what African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts literally and figuratively are doing in our published family heritage books.

The second of the three underlying concepts for the Deep Roots theme is the Ancestors Speak concept. This concept captures any codes related to writers speaking in the voice of an ancestor or stating that the ancestor told the writer something in person or in spirit. Several sample passages from the texts which exemplify the Ancestors Speak concept are:

“John Maddison—that's spelled with two d's,” Mom said, beginning the saga of the Other Madisons, “was our first white ancestor in America. His son, John Jr., kept that spelling, but his grandsons, John the third, Henry, and Ambrose, spelled it with one d.” John Sr. was a poor English boy with big plans. Shrewd too. He became skilled at making boats and saved up his money to buy passage to America. He had learned about the headright system. It began in Virginia as a way to deal with the labor shortage....I wondered how her voice sounded. Over the years since then, I began to feel so close to her that I sometimes imagined her speaking to me.

—KEARSE

This third edition continues the account of my family with new genealogical finds, images, and even incorporates a trip to Africa! The DNA chapter has been significantly updated, improved, and lengthened while some portions are rearranged. As before, this book is dedicated to Mary Louise Wright, 1897-1985, who told her children and grandchildren many stories of life in Lake Charles, Louisiana.

—SANCHEZ

Initially, attempts were made to substantiate the precise historical tales of which I had been informed through conversations. But, that initial research was the catalyst for additional investigations. Since then, five publications have been researched, compiled, and self-published. Each of the five chronicles was an updated version of previous publications.

—LASTRAPES

A song that well exemplifies and summarizes the Ancestors Speak concept is *Voices* by Chris Young (2010). See Appendix B. Composed in C major, this song embraces directly spoken and remembered words of wisdom that loving parents and grandparents share with the singer for his well-being. As it is a thank-you dedicated to positively influential relatives, the song inspired Young to offer his fans the opportunity to make requests for personal recordings of dedications to honored family members in their lives. He then gifted fans their own dedications in polished song form. Both *Voices* and the user-inspired family heritage songs that say what ancestors said in various families exemplify the Ancestors Speak concept.

The final of the three underlying concepts for the Deep Roots theme is the Description of Ancestors concept. This concept captures any codes mentioning ancestors' physical, vocational, or avocational description, including color of eyes, skin, and hair, occupational descriptions, and ethnic classifications. Several sample passages from the texts which exemplify the Description of Ancestors concept are:

I don't even know who enslaved his family. I do know that this family has a mixture of several ethnic identities, as attested in my own DNA, which will be referred to later in this research. Though the unknowns are perplexing, this is reality for most African American families. The key is to accept it and move forward. I hope that this research demonstrates that that is what the Robertsons have attempted to do.  
—ROBERTSON, JR.

It was 1865. The Civil War was over. Everything my great-great-grandfather Moses Calhoun—the thirty-five-year-old patriarch of the black Calhouns of Atlanta, Georgia—wanted for his future was at hand....Moses had all the attributes for success in freedom: he was literate; he had been the favored slave of one of Georgia's most powerful men; he had lived in a town, not on a plantation; and his family was intact....On the whole, their lives seemed generally quite sunny. They went to college, they went to war, they married their childhood sweethearts, and they raised families. This book is about an extended family with "stars" in every generation, North and South, but Moses' great-granddaughter, my mother, Lena Mary Calhoun Horne, born in 1917, became one of the brightest stars in the family during the second half of the twentieth century.  
—BUCKLEY

There are stories to tell in this history book that some may find disheartening. Stories of slavery, of death, of family deceit, of betrayal, of infidelity and illegitimate children, and other stories that many may find unsettling. Never-the-less, there are many more stories of the good times and highlights of Jacquet family members that must be told—the field workers who toiled day and night, the

musicians, priests, teachers and athletes who left behind their legacy to be passed on, gene by gene.

—JACQUET-ACEA

A song that well exemplifies the Description of Ancestors concept is *Coal Miner's Daughter* by Loretta Lynn (1971). See Appendix B. Composed in C major and utilizing the classic country major notes and chords, this song describes Lynn's father by his primary occupation and what he did in broader ways, as writers do of intergenerational relatives in the studied African-ancestored published genealogies. Grounding a relative in service to humanity, including to family members, based on the "what" of the person, this song summarizes the Description of Ancestors concept in the analyzed published African-ancestored genealogies.

The three concepts of Purpose of Genealogy Book, Ancestors Speak, and Description of Ancestors combine to form the Deep Roots theme. The Deep Roots theme conveys ancestral elevation, the depth of spiritual and heroic connection to and reverence for ancestors that authors display. The Deep Roots theme often shows up in the books' titles, per Figure 4.1 and Table 4.1 above, as well as in dedications and acknowledgments. Among the keywords that illuminate the Deep Roots theme are spirit, heart, love, and sixth sense. A quintessential song that helps to explain the Deep Roots theme is *He Walked on Water* by Randy Travis (1990). See Appendix B. Composed in the key of D major, this song makes clear that ancestral reverence simply is, is by descendant choice; it is not dependent on outside verification for its being. The song conveys this message as the singer speaks of one of his two maternal great-grandfathers with lyrics such as "his teeth were gone, but what the heck" and "if the story's told, only heaven knows~But his hat seemed to me like an old halo~And though his wings, they were never seen" both followed by "I thought that he walked on water." By its grounding in ancestral reverence and heroism, this song summarizes the Deep Roots theme.

Having in mind the theme of Deep Roots and its underlying concepts of Purpose of Genealogy Book, Ancestors Speak, and Description of Ancestors, I can answer RQ1. My first research sub-question is, How do African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent colonial and antebellum U.S. enslaved and free people of African descent in 21st-century published genealogies? I find that in the context of U.S. slavery and its aftermath, African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts do what other scholars and racial social justice activists only hint at. The herein studied authors represent colonial and early U.S. enslaved and free ancestors of African descent by resolving the tension between slavery horror stories and ancestral honored hero stories that others only speak about (Bankole, 1999). This horror/honor tension heretofore had been spoken about but resolved neither in the literature about African American genealogy tourism stories nor in African-ancestored genealogy tourists' lived experiences.

Authors of the African-ancestored family heritage books resolve the tension between slavery horror stories and ancestral honored hero stories by speaking of ancestors with great reverence in the context of home. They describe words of wisdom they received from ancestors, and they describe enslaved ancestors not merely as enslaved but by the work they did and then praise the work as part of creating heroism. In carrying out the Deep Roots theme, authors describe ancestors as heroes, ranging from everyday heroes to extraordinary heroes, whose actions deliberately were for the benefit of their children and their children's children ad infinitum. Heroic actions include Revolutionary and Civil war service, land ownership, and educational pursuits. The ancestors are described as people who contributed to the world in a variety of labors, most notably as creators of homes full of positive memories and as teachers of their children.

Keeping in mind that the context of the Atlantic Slave Trade is omnipresent whether specifically mentioned in a passage or not, several passages that convey how authors resolve the tension between slavery horror stories and ancestral honored hero stories in representing colonial and early U.S. enslaved and free people of African descent are:

Calvin and Rachel Russell were people, who the records show, were successful business people who farmed in areas of Wisconsin being newly inhabited by African Americans in the mid-nineteenth century.

—CALVIN

Caesar Tarrant was not the first African American child born in Virginia, or even in my home town, I'm sure, as he was born 120 years too late for that- around 1740. There is a school named after him now because he was a local hero. While enslaved he became a boat pilot, expert in the local waterways, and he served heroically in the navy during the American Revolution. Afterwards he was returned to slavery. He was so gallant under fire, however, that the white pilots who performed the same service during the war petitioned for him to be honored with his freedom and the state legislature made it so. It then took him decades to get his one or two members of family out of bondage and they, in turn, had to carry on the effort to liberate the others into the next century, decades after his death. One son, Sampson Tarrant, probably never made it out and a grandchild was left in bondage.

—DAVIS

Over the course of my narrative I deepen my lens as more archival material about my great-grandfather's life became available to me from the 1850s on. As a consequence, Philip White emerges as the hero of my book. Nevertheless, I've been frustrated in my efforts to gain access to what Morrison called "the unwritten interior lives" of nineteenth-century black Americans. My most intimate glimpses of my great-great-grandfather and great-grandfather have come ironically enough from their scrapbook page memorials. I learned to read between lines and between items. I came to realize that four of the poems placed to the left of Philip White's obituary were in fact indirect commentaries on what my great-grandfather had cared about so passionately in life. "Why Johnny Failed, Good for a Boy to Learn" speaks of the difficulty of educating black children. "To Trinity" is a paean to the mother church that gave birth to St. Philip's. "References" pays homage to a dead man whose life had centered not so much on public affairs as on the "little home ... and wife and children three." And "If We Only Understood" is a mysterious plea not to judge a person's external appearances "knowing not life's hidden forces." The scrapbook page, I realized, memorializes both a public and private life.

—PETERSON

The tension resolution between the horrors of slavery and the heroism of ancestors is the equivalent of authors sonically dropping the pitch of what they say about ancestors' slavery and freedom experiences in colonial days, early America, and the antebellum era. The lowered pitch results in the authors speaking with authority about venerated ancestral heroes' homegrown Christianity, secular work, educational pursuits, and other guidance for their progeny, not just

their children, for generations to come. It is with the Deep Roots conception of heroic ancestors in their hearts, in their spirits, that authors of the studied books then interpret records about family heritage. Contours of this interpretation are explained via the Deep Knowledge theme, which underlies the answer to RQ2.

#### ***4.2.3 Deep Knowledge Theme of Positive Interpretation and Its Concepts in Answer to RQ2***

The second sub-question I answer is how African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent social/cultural capital in 21st-century published genealogies. Social/cultural capital is herein understood as the informal networks, connections, and communicated knowledge that facilitate people reaching their goals at home and in society, including the social value of family heritage knowledge (Loury, 1976, Morgan, 2010). To arrive at the answer to RQ2, I first had to understand the concepts that interact to form the Deep Knowledge theme in these books and the theme itself, for the theme provides the context for the answer. The Deep Knowledge theme relates to interpreting ancestral records and is explained by its underlying concepts. Seventy-two of the three hundred fifty-two elemental codes I detected in the texts aggregate to two concepts that in turn aggregate to form the Deep Knowledge theme. The two concepts are 1) Experiences and 2) American and World History.

The first of the two underlying concepts for the Deep Knowledge theme is the Experiences concept. Experiences cover the codes that tell life anecdotes, including occurrences in relations with former owners and other white people. Experiences include songs sung at home, books read, tragedies undergone, games played, Horatio Alger story arcs, etc. Authors generally say their ancestors had fulfilling experiences and overcame unfulfilling experiences, both by the

grace of God. Several sample passages from the texts which exemplify the Experiences concept are:

The history of the author's family is a story of remarkable men and women who came out of bondage on the Eastern Shore of Virginia and Maryland into positions that brought them personal dignity, pride and independence, and helped build this country over a period of 350 years.  
—ADAMS

The history of the Garretts is fraught with the same gaps in information that bedevil the vast majority of African American families that came out of slavery, although much of our family's history is documented by public records (beyond mere census data)...Our earliest known ancestor in America was an African who, we know, must have been an extraordinary individual because he somehow purchased his own freedom in 1819. The African's Garrett descendants have followed in his footsteps by consistently distinguishing themselves over the generations, beginning with men such as his grandson, Isaac ("Ike") Garrett, who was a property owner soon after the Civil War, and his great-grandsons, Wister Lee ("Wick") Garrett, who was a large landowner, and Casper George ("C.G.") Garrett (whose life was memorialized in published sources detailing his prominence in South Carolina in the early part of the twentieth century).  
—GARRETT-NELSON

Marie Ann Raymond's descendants...say that while Oscar Raymond was away fighting in the Civil War and declared dead, she married Jolivet Jacquet and had the two Jacquet sons but "...one day, *Vieux Pop (Oscar)*, just reappeared after years. *Vieille Mom (Maristine)* and *Vieux Pop (Oscar)* were then back together..."  
—JACQUET-ACEA

A song that well exemplifies the Experiences concept is *Fancy* by Reba McEntire (1990). See Appendix B. Composed in the key of F# major, this song turns the ugly truth of living in poverty and having a mother turn you out to make money into a beautiful truth of the substance of life. It also makes clear that with the inspiration of family, people act, and we reach the goal of those actions only via effective personal connections, often outside the family. The song perfectly exemplifies how the genealogy book authors manage ugly truths, conveying them as merely part of the tracks on which the authors and ancestors engineered their trains, with help along the way.

The second of the two underlying concepts for the Deep Knowledge theme is the American and World History concept. This concept covers codes that explain or reflect upon the big occurrences in American and world history. The American and World History concept

includes major occurrences and their results, such as the Atlantic Slave Trade, wars, signing of the U.S. Constitution, Supreme Court decisions, and the Great Migration. Several sample passages from the texts which exemplify the American and World History concept are:

The largest number of slaves were exported from the Bight of Benin (bight means gulf or bay) formerly known as the Slave Coast. The second largest exporting region was the Bight of Biafra with over 1.5 million slaves shipped (13.7% of the total shipped). Major trading ports of Bight of Biafra included Calabar and Bonny, both located in present day Nigeria, and the Port of Bimbia located in present day Cameroon. DNA results show this is the region where the Webb family and the Phillips male line originated, specifically from Cameroon. This may well be true for other parts of the family. The majority of slaves traded from the Cameroon coast came from inland invasions as well as from the neighboring Bataga, Bassa, and Bulu. Four groups accounted for 62 percent of the people carried out of the River and from Bimbia during the trading period: the Tikari, Douala-Bimbia, Banyangi and Bakossi, and Bamileke. The Bamileke Chiefs and Kings were the major suppliers of slaves that left the coasts of Cameroon during the Atlantic slave trade.

—WEBB

The system was set up on fear. The tools of slavery told the story. Whips. Thumb screws. Slave collars. All were used to keep enslavement in place.

—ADE

The Gowen family was fortunate in that they were able to acquire land permits, buy land and rent sizable tracts of land during a period when the African slave trade was escalating. For a brief period in history, Africans and other indentured servants were treated equally, able to live freely with their colonial neighbors once their indentureship had ended. The first African arrivals were looked upon as indentured servants, not as chattel property. They were able to buy their freedom after a work period of seven to ten years. The first Africans in the colonies, the Angolans, were able to fundamentally read and write, and practiced Catholicism, all of which made it difficult for the religious Englishmen to treat them as enslaved. Without the indentured servants, specifically the Angolans and their knowledge of farming, the Jamestown colony might have failed. Due to their tremendous service to the colony, ensuring the colonists' survival, the first Angolans were accepted into mainstream colonial culture. The Angolans intermarried with each other, white Europeans, and Native Americans—and their progeny became less African in appearance, and more American in attitude and expectations. However, as more Africans arrived in greater numbers, the English colonists began to look at future African generations not as worthy neighbors and partners, but as subservient workers.

—MURPHY

A song that well exemplifies the American and World History concept is *God Bless the USA* by Lee Greenwood (1984). See Appendix B.

In his signature song with major rebounds in popularity when U.S. patriotism rises, Greenwood gives a heartfelt rendering of viewing the record through the ancestral hero lens. Noting that “the flag still stands for freedom”, he proclaims the American social contract and the heroes who protect it as part of his capital. This is akin to what some African Americans experience during global slavery tourism in Africa, when they realize their social capital privileges as Americans (Florida International University, 2015). This Greenwood song also well summarizes the American and World History concept as it highlights that what some people valorize, others choose to demonize, and all major national and world occurrences have whatever role in family stories that the storywriters choose for the stories to have. National and world history stories in the studied books also reinforce that it is a national, public story, one connected to the public sphere that the authors are learning about in our private family stories.

The Experiences and American and World History concepts aggregate to form the Deep Knowledge theme. Deep Knowledge is an underlying meaning of the stories presented in 21st-century published African American genealogies in that the stories are evidence that such stories are obtainable. Via this theme, writers convey that no matter one’s individual experiences, ancestral experiences, or what others, including in records, say or do not say about one’s ancestors, one can deeply know ancestors by maintaining or elevating their glory when reading the outside or family record and ultimately use that knowledge to deeply know self. This is a broad message about life that the genealogy book writers convey. The theme of a story is important because a story’s theme is part of the reason the author drafted the story, even if not explicitly stated as the reason. Among the keywords that illuminate the Deep Knowledge theme are mind, head, hope, see, hear, and smell.

A song that well exemplifies the Deep Knowledge theme is *This Ain't Nothin'* by Craig Morgan (2008). See Appendix B. Heavy on G, C, and D major chords, this song conveys the importance in life of knowing the correct things that lead to happiness and usefulness, which is dependent upon the interpretive lens. While a news reporter in the song thinks a man has lost all that is dear to him after a tornado ravages his community, the man makes clear that he knows what really matters in life. What matters are loving relationships with spouses, parents, siblings, friends, and country as enacted in his service, perseverance, patience, memory, and agency to capitalize on the positive. He exemplifies this knowledge in part by using for good the hand that he still has after he lost his other hand, a brother, and his best friend in the Vietnam War, lost his father in a coal mining accident, and held the hand of his wife of fifty years as he watched her wither and die. Reading records and living through experiences with a perspective of abundance such as the song demonstrates separates the optimistic people on an ancestral mission from pessimists who blow where the winds of events and others', such as news reporters', structural ideologies go. Ultimately, the role of ancestral and firsthand experiences along with national and world history stories in the studied books is to provide understandings of life through macro lenses that maintain or elevate the Deep Roots ancestral hero status.

Having in mind the theme of Deep Knowledge and its underlying concepts of both Experiences and American and World History, I can answer RQ2. My second research sub-question is, How do African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent social/cultural capital in 21st-century published genealogies? In discussing the knowledge and relationships that assisted ancestors' and their own development, authors of 21st-century African-ancestored published genealogies make clear that the communication choices of which sources people use, how they read the sources, which people interact with whom, and what they teach each other all are

consequential stories to be told of family journeys. The degree to which relationships and communication skills are effective dictates the quality and realm of social capital.

While sometimes speaking of American and world social structures as restricting African Americans' social capital, authors of the studied books also imply that the overall U.S. structure, particularly as laws improve, aids the quality of their family's lives. Unpleasant experiences in these books are understood as the essence of life only in ways that retain ancestors' strong positive auras. Positive experiences are spoken about by including names of people who assisted in the positive experiences. The authors typically first note positive attainments in ancestors' lives, such as freedom from enslavement, property purchases, business success, and educational attainments. The authors then tell the stories behind these attainments, what made them possible, what communication transpired. In so telling the backstories, authors keep family members' agency of effective interpersonal communication skills in the forefront while explaining the assistive role of personal connections. The personal connections conveyed in ancestors' and authors' own lives serve to provide understandings of life through mezzo and macro lenses that maintain or elevate the Deep Roots ancestral hero status.

Several passages that convey how authors represent social/cultural capital in 21st-century African-ancestored published genealogies are:

After weeks of poring over the microfiche records for Henrico County, Virginia, I finally found the name of James D. Halyburton, with the list of slaves that he owned at his residence in Richmond. Quickly scanning the list, my heart nearly burst when I saw the entry for a "mulatto female slave, age 45." I knew instinctively that, though she was nameless, here was the documentary evidence of my great-great grandmother, the mother of Edward Everett Morris. Living in the Halyburton household, he had been named after one of the Judge's Harvard classmates, presumably with certain privileges accorded to him because of their special relationship.  
—HAIZLIP

From what we now understand, George and his family were living on the farm owned by his mother, Sarah Jordan or Flenory Bolden. Sarah owned nearly 200 acres of land and made her living as a farmer. When her husband, James, died in 1916, the farm became more difficult for her to manage on her own. I am not sure exactly what year George made the move from his own home to his mother's but at some point this is what happened so that he could help her manage her land and

farm...Corrine had a profound love for family and cherished friends. For over forty years she hosted a Christmas holiday open house in her home for friends and family. She did all the cooking and provided food and drinks to all. For all the other holidays she would often host family to assure that members gathered and celebrated this gift of caring family. Many friends were received at her home at various times of the year. She loved to entertain and maintaining friendships was a priority of hers. Until her death she had friends that she had made in childhood and with whom she had maintained contact for over 70 years.

—JACKSON-LEE

By the early 1960's, the shoe business had slowed down considerably, forcing Daddy to go into another line of business. He heard that a family on Monaco Street, which, at the time was one of the most exclusive areas in Denver, was looking for a chauffeur. Daddy had never had a chauffeur's job, but he considered himself a quick study, and he liked to drive. When he got to the house on Monaco, a maid came to the door. "Hi, I'm Ophelia," she said. "You must be T.T. Lewis." "I am." "Come on in. Mr. Friedman will see you shortly." Ophelia led Daddy down the hall to a parlor. There were four other men in the room, all waiting for an interview for the chauffeur's job. All of them were talking about their previous chauffeur's job. Tommie listened carefully, thinking to himself. "Well, I don't have any chauffeur experience, but I've got more class than these guys. I have a good chance of being hired." Finally, Ophelia came and took Daddy back for his interview. Mr. and Mrs. Friedman were sitting at the end of a long oval table. They asked Daddy to take the seat next to them. "Hello, (Mr. Friedman looked down at the paper), T.T. How much experience do you have chauffeuring?" asked Mr. Friedman. "None." was the reply. "Do you have a chauffeur's license?" "No but I can get one." "Okay." said Mr. Friedman. "Tell me about yourself." Daddy and the Friedmans talked for a long time that day. They talked about chauffeuring, but they talked about many other things too. Mr. Friedman was having a good time, because Daddy could be funny and could talk about almost anything with anybody. But he remembered that other people were waiting for him and decided to get back down to business. Finally, he said, "T.T., the job pays \$60 per week. If we were to hire you could you work six days a week, and sometimes come in on a Sunday?" "I can certainly work six days a week, but on Sunday, I spend the day with my family. I can't work on Sunday." "Can't work on Sunday?!" Mr. Friedman was incredulous with this bit of news. "That's right," said Daddy "I just want to be up front with you, Mr. Friedman. I can work hard, I can work long, and I am a good driver. But I can't work on Sunday." "Ok," said Mr. Friedman. "You can take a seat back in the parlor with the rest of the men. Me and Mrs. Friedman will make a decision in just a few minutes." Ophelia took Daddy back to the parlor, and he sat down. Then she disappeared again through the double doors. The four men sat in the parlor and talked about their interviews. Rufus, the big one on the chair near the door said, "Boy! That Friedman is sure a tough nut to crack. The man doesn't even smile." "That's right," the man on his left, said. "He's all business. He one stuffy old man! What'd you think T.T.?" "Well, I didn't think he was bad." Daddy said. "I might even hire him!" They all laughed at that. Finally, Ophelia returned and told the other men that they could go. Then she turned to Daddy. "T.T., Mr. Friedman wants to see you again." Daddy walked back to the table and sat down. "T.T., I'll tell you the truth." Mr. Friedman said. "I have never had anyone come in for an interview that impressed me like you did. You seem comfortable in any situation, and you have a class. I know that you don't have any experience, and won't agree to working on a Sunday. But I like you, T.T. You're a good, hardworking man. I appreciate a man who puts his family first. Can you start on Monday?"

—ADE

The Hardeman County Court (Commission) is mentioned prominently in the county's history. I had the honor of serving thirteen years on the commission representing the Whiteville area. During those election cycles, I never had an opponent. In a small community (or county) it is obviously easy to have contacts with people doing positive things. As with my family, some may have been direct and some indirect. The Robertsons have had these opportunities going back many generations and have used them to their advantage. As I conclude this family journey to date, I am optimistic and hopeful that more positive history is to be made by Robertsons going forward.

—ROBERTSON, JR.

Personal connections facilitate Deep Knowledge gained in part through emotional intelligence and communication skills. These connections that aid African Americans' successes are with white people, including owner and former owner family members, neighborhood and family friends, schoolmates, and fellow members of churches, fraternities, sororities, and other mutual-aid and self-help groups.

By giving credit where credit is due for the assistive roles of others in family members' successes, authors underscore the importance of emotional intelligence, including effective communication skills, in maintaining the assistive relationships that bolster lives. Once people understand their own and ancestors' life experiences within governance and social structures, including how people interacted with others, as read through the ancestral hero spirit lens, they are ready to experience the published genealogy texts' final theme in actualizing the positive ancestral self-identity that is authors' stated or unstated ultimate pursuit in these books. This Deep Self positive ancestral self-identity result is indicated in the answer to RQ3.

#### ***4.2.4 Deep Self Theme of Positive Ancestral Self-Identity and Its Concepts in Answer to RQ3***

The third sub-question I answer is how African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent ancestral honor and inheritances in 21st-century published genealogies. Ancestral honor and inheritances are ancestors' day-to-day life values, behaviors, and successes that are identified, reproduced, and often exceeded by descendants using ancestors as parasocial life models. The positive legacies received from enslaved and other early ancestors that authors write about are in stark contrast to the stigmatized negative legacies of slavery prolifically exhibited in U.S. and worldwide heritage tourism exhibits featuring African-ancestored people. To arrive at the answer to RQ3, I first had to understand the concepts that interact to form the Deep Self

theme in the studied books and understand the theme itself, for the theme provides the context for the answer. The Deep Self theme relates to positive ancestral self-identity and is explained by its underlying concepts. Two-hundred fifty-eight of the three hundred fifty-two elemental codes I detected in the texts aggregate to two concepts that in turn aggregate to form the Deep Self theme. The two concepts are 1) Values and 2) Genealogy Tourism and Research.

The first concept underlying the Deep Self theme is the Values concept. The Values concept covers codes relating to philosophies held dear and acted upon. The values authors ascribe to ancestors are the same values they identify in themselves and other descendants. Each of the mentioned values fits into one or more of fourteen categories I coded. These fourteen are Ancestral Death, Culture, Dignity, Education, Emotional Intelligence, Family, Financial Security, Freedom, Friendship, Hard Work, Non-church Service, Religion, Resistance, Role Models, and Self-Confidence. Several sample passages from the texts which exemplify the Values concept are:

Had we been allowed to see ourselves as unworthy, inferior creatures who deserved to be left on the “wrong” side of the color line, my life would have been entirely different. It is unlikely that I would have excelled in school, gone to a Seven Sisters college, attended Harvard University, and experienced some of the finest things that America can offer its most fortunate children....Some people just don't know, investigate or, sadly, care enough about their origins to take the time to find out. I was once this way, but I can now feel special in that I know from whom and where my family has grown and expanded.

—HAIZLIP

I clearly recognize that I have no story without my family. Any success that I have had is inextricably intertwined with my family. I also recognize that young people and children unborn need to know the story of a family that emanated from humble beginnings dating back before the Civil War. I know that without God this story would not be possible.

—ROBERTSON, JR.

We flaunted our American middle-classness, I now realize, and gave no thought to the time, a hundred years earlier, when our ancestors stood on platforms to be appraised and parceled out. Later, a photograph of me receiving a certificate for best academic achievement appeared in *Jet* magazine. I had done a good job of representing my father's family, the Wilsons, and my mother's family, the Madisons. But I thought the whole thing foolish. There was pressure not just to achieve but to broadcast that achievement. I resented being put on display.

—KEARSE

A song that well exemplifies the Values concept is *You've Got to Stand for Something* by Aaron Tippin (1991). See Appendix B. With classic country emphasis on C, F, and G major chords, this song is all about how the values we live by determine the outcomes of families' lives intergenerationally, as the offspring value the same things as the progenitors. Given this message of the song, the song well summarizes the role of values in the studied African-ancestored family heritage books.

The second concept undergirding the Deep Self theme is the Genealogy Tourism and Research concept. The Genealogy Tourism and Research concept covers codes that mention travel to access family information, including archival records, memories, and oral history.

Several sample passages from the texts which exemplify the Genealogy Tourism and Research concept are:

I remembered that my father's Cousin Helen still lived in the area. So I went back out Mack's Lane to the main road to check at the Post Office. The clerk in the office wasn't able to help me, but she suggested that I check at the Methodist Church just "back up the road a way." Then I got lucky, because there were several people gathered in the church yard cleaning up after a dinner. Not only did they know Helen, but one man said he would show me where she lived. He got in his car and led me a few miles back toward St. Michaels to her house.

—ADAMS

To the myriad of other relatives, cousins, and friends including Aunt Arlie, Aunt Essie, Charley Lewis, Jr., Charles Willis, Archie Aubrey, Mary White, John and Ernestine Stovall, Earline Hayes, Mrs. Minnie Walker, Mozilla Walker, Cousin Girtha, Cousin Aggie, James Walker, The Courtney's, The Willises, Lee Jur, John Richards, Irma West, Rodell, Dorothy Ingram, Sinclair Ingram, Edith Lowery, Parnese Lowery, Aunt Bert, Aunt Clara, Barbara Walker, and all of those who often, without ever having met me, would invite me into their homes, and share the memories just because I was "family."

—ADE

Armed with the references we had found, my wife and I set off to the Eastern Shore of Virginia and the court records at Eastville. While on a visit to Salisbury my wife, Carolyn, visited the Eastern Shore History Library at Salisbury State University, her alma mater, to see if there was any information on the Beckett family. Next I checked the courthouse in Accomack where I looked at death certificates, marriage licenses and birth registries. In that courthouse I found a surprise. There was a marriage license for a Recie I. Beckett to a Mr. Colebum dated 1895.

—ADAMS

A song that well exemplifies the Genealogy Tourism and Research concept is *The House That Built Me* by Miranda Lambert (2009). See Appendix B. In the key of F major, this song depicts a woman returning to her childhood home to reclaim her memories from the house in which she formed her core values and skills. The song conveys the singer's and genealogy book authors' willingness to take whatever steps are necessary to reach home. As literally and figuratively returning to ancestral homes to reclaim memories so they can find themselves is what the genealogy book authors are doing to prepare the books and what genealogy tourists physically are acting out, this song well summarizes the Genealogy Tourism and Research concept.

The underlying concepts of Values and of Genealogy Tourism and Research aggregate to form the third theme I find in the studied texts, the Deep Self theme. The Deep Self theme is the ultimate underlying purpose of the family stories. It is the positive ancestral self-identity unstated goal of the authors. To the degree that positive ancestral self-identity is stated as a goal in similar words, it is a goal the authors want family members and other African-ancestored descendants of early and later America to reach. That the self who knows, honors, and is honored by heroic ancestors is possible and highly beneficial is the books' broad message about life and underlies why the authors shared the stories. Beyond their stated purposes, the authors want readers to know that positive ancestral self-identity is achievable, able to be embodied, for all via ancestral hero knowledge. Among the keywords that illuminate the Deep Self theme are body, hands, feet, mouth, faith, works, taste, and touch. A song that well exemplifies the Deep Self theme is *Who I Am* by Jessica Andrews (2000). See Appendix B. As the singer tells of how, no matter her stumbles or future, she is deeply satisfied with her life and knows it will continue to be good because of her solid ancestral past, she personifies the ancestral self-confidence that is the pot of gold awaiting all who reach ancestral home. In so doing, she makes the song epitomize and

summarize the Deep Self theme conveyed in the herein studied African-ancestored 21st-century published genealogies.

Having in mind the theme of Deep Self and its underlying concepts of Values and of Genealogy Tourism and Research, I can answer RQ3. My third research sub-question is, How do African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent ancestral honor and inheritances in 21st-century published genealogies? Unlike the negative inheritances of slavery that take center stage in U.S. heritage tourism stories about African-ancestored people, positive inheritances from honorable ancestors, aspects of life in which to take delight, are what the studied genealogies most convey. Descendants' attributes are ascribed to ancestors in myriad ways in the studied texts. One way is that authors first identify a value or characteristic in themselves, then historically explain its presence in other family members. Another way descendants connect our own characteristics to those of our ancestors is to first identify a value or characteristic in ancestors, then bring the value forward to our own lives. A third way descendants connect our attributes to those of ancestors is to first identify a value or characteristic in ancestors, then bring the value forward to other family members' lives.

Keeping in mind that as family storytellers, authors particularly identify with family storytellers in their ancestry, several passages that convey how authors represent ancestral honor and inheritances in 21st-century African-ancestored published genealogies are:

I was looking for Mandy. After walking in Coreen's footsteps and realizing how connected I could feel to my ancestors, I wanted to walk where Mandy had walked and see what she had seen....I assumed knowing her deeply would help me become an unflinching *griotte* who understood and had reconciled all that it means to be among the Other Madisons....[T]he Other Madisons might struggle sometimes to know how to live our lives, but when we share our stories, we build a sense of togetherness, and we learn who we are.  
—KEARSE

Each family legend has been thoroughly researched to capture the historic times in which Cornwall Murphy family members lived and the challenges of which they endured and persevered. These legends and stories, passed from one generation to another, have now been artfully captured for future generations to enjoy and share. Each hero in the Cornwall Murphy family has been

accurately depicted to document the historical significance of these brave men and women, their contributions to the greatness of this nation, and their enduring legacy for their descendants.

—MURPHY

The first women and men to walk away from bondage reinvented the race, redefined the terms of American citizenship, and spread that blend of African and Euro-American culture created in bondage in the antebellum South. Never has one group of people acted on such a large scale in so many regions of the country to push this society to honor its foundational principles. They taught the rest of us how to do it and yet there is no cultural memory of those millions. They are freedom's "Greatest Generation." Like most people, I grew up knowing more about one side of the family than the other. In our family nothing was ever said about my mother's people, though we all knew there was a Mississippi plantation, and a master-housekeeper, race mixing-inheritance-squabble story. This particular mix is common, so it was as if we knew already the story and its meaning. My family story as a Davis was so complete, so textured, layered, and present, that when I looked in the mirror, I could connect every feature on my face with someone in my father's family. I had a Davis nose, Davis mouth, and Davis hairline. I had my Dad's hands, and might have gotten my hair from the undetailed report of blood from Madagascar or from the often heard reports of Indian blood that black folks talked about. Still, I was complete, whole.

—DAVIS

The writers identify ancestors' heroic actions and values as inheritances that writers and other descendants enjoy not perchance, but by deliberate enacted intent on the part of various ancestors and deliberate re-enacted intent on the part of descendants by naming and embracing the intergenerational characteristics. Authors identify ancestors as heroes in part for passing along desired characteristics.

Authors' creation of ancestor heroes permits inclusion of horror stories in published African-ancestored genealogies that serve not only to comment on horrors of individual family members' discrimination suffered amid global and U.S. slavery and oppression, but also and more importantly serve to elevate both ancestors and descendants above the horrors. Ancestors and descendants then are imbued with characteristics of thriving lives, characteristics that have lived on and will live on intergenerationally. Ultimately, authors embody the inherited ancestral values through retelling ancestral stories, living out their own heroism in the company of loving other family members at ancestral home. Considering the above summarized primary ways that African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent ancestral self-identity in 21st-century

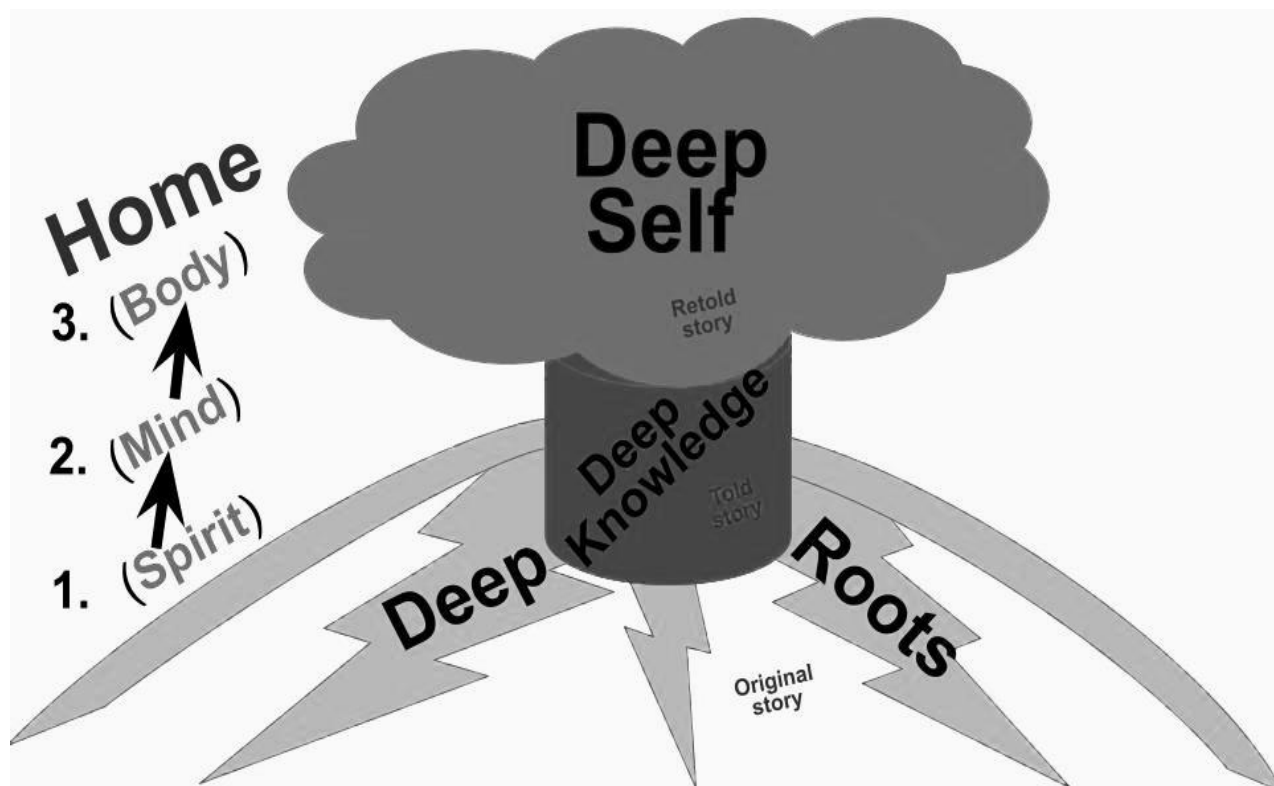
published genealogies led me to an emergent theory that explains how the three key themes of Deep Roots, Deep Knowledge, and Deep Self work together to reach ancestral home.

### **4.3 Emergent Agapic Agency Theory of African American Published Genealogies**

In coming to understand how the themes of Deep Roots, Deep Knowledge, and Deep Self work together in 21st-century African-ancestored published genealogies, I was able to develop a theory that explains what is happening in these books. The theory that explains this process is the Agapic Agency Theory. Agapic agency is a gift with which God has graced some people, permitting them to take the herein explained ancestral path to a self who is surrendered to God's will, grace, and love, exhibiting the ultimate well-being. See Figure 4.2 for how 21st-century African-ancestored published genealogies take authors through a three-step process that leads to ancestral home, the place of positive ancestral self-identity. While the ancestral self-identity achieved in the books is depicted as the result of a linear process, the process of genealogy research is a circular and recursive one, with enthusiasts always potentially able to find new reasons to valorize ancestors and new data to read through a revered ancestor lens.

According to the Agapic Agency Theory, during the process of crafting ancestral self-identity, descendants are seeking ancestral homes, filled with ancestral heroes to whom the descendants belong, with an abundance of information available about ancestral heroic activities, and with the ability to be spiritually in touch with and act out ancestral virtuous deeds. Descendants arrive home when they walk in ancestral footsteps, retelling the ancestral stories in the leaves, the pages, of the books. Ancestral stories are first spiritually known via Deep Roots, second intellectually understood by interpreting oral history and other records for Deep Knowledge, and third embodied by positive ancestral self-identity to reveal Deep Self. Deep

Roots, Deep Knowledge, and Deep Self, then, are both the three themes present in the studied Black genealogy books and the three components that interact consecutively to form the Agapic Agency Theory.



*Figure 4.2 Agapic Agency Theory of 21st-century African-ancestored published genealogies shows that genealogy enthusiasts first use spirit to connect with the Deep Roots of high ancestral reverence, then use the mind to read records through that ancestral spirit lens to gain Deep Knowledge, then embody ancestral values to arrive at the Deep Self of ancestral home, the desired state of positive ancestral self-identity (Author).*

The Deep Roots are where ancestors live out their original stories in all the stories' splendor and horror. This is the soil, going back generations, from which the rest of the family, including the authors, for generations forward get their nutrients. Maximizing the ancestral spirit

source here permits the retained portion in subsequent generations also to be as great as possible. This is why heroization is a crucial first step for positive ancestral self-identity. Even if descendants later read stories told about ancestors through a lens that belittles or stigmatizes ancestors, descendants in the retelling of those stories still are left with sufficient ancestral positivity to internalize if the ancestral heroization initially was great enough to absorb the hero reduction and keep well nurturing the family tree. The Deep Knowledge phase is for learning the stories, what the ancestors and contemporaries experienced, by listening to what a variety of people and other records have to say. This is where one discerns material qualities about the people and media sources telling the stories. Considering the sources here optimally results in prioritizing direct sources from the Deep Roots and those nurtured by the Deep Roots as most veracious, most connected to the self. The final, Deep Self, phase is the time for retelling the best, most uplifting family stories. That means retelling the ugly in life to the extent one chooses as part of the story filled with beauty. Here authors sense worth in themselves and explain it by charting their agapic agency paths from Deep Roots high ancestral veneration through the Deep Knowledge interpretation of records to the ultimate exhibition of positive ancestral self-identity. The authors' way of retelling ancestral stories is akin to speaking in lowered pitch and major notes using twang, which retains as much ancestral positive spirit as possible.

Based upon the explanation above, the Agapic Agency Theory meets the qualifications of an effective communication theory in that it identifies components of a communication process, explains relationships among the components, and predicts outcome (Baran & Davis, 2009; Krieger, 2023). This theory explains the content of the 21st-century published African American genealogies I studied. Following is elaboration on the components of the Agapic Agency Theory.

Again, the first component of the Agapic Agency Theory is the Deep Roots theme of highly honoring ancestral homes and people. Home is a place of original stories being lived out with family, the place to return to, to retell and sing the ancestral stories. It is the place of ancestral blood and soil where the spirit reigns. The road home begins with Deep Roots. As previously noted, the Deep Roots theme that I detected in the studied genealogies can well be understood via the song *He Walked on Water* by Randy Travis (1990). The Deep Roots theme also can well be understood as it plays out in the Agapic Agency Theory via the poetic lines of America's first nationally renowned poet of African descent, Paul Laurence Dunbar, in *The Corn-Salk Fiddle* (1896). See Appendix B. Among the poem's stanzas is:

*And you take a stalk that is straight and long,  
With an expert eye to its worthy points,  
And you think of the bubbling strains of song  
That are bound between its pithy joints —  
Then you cut out strings, with a bridge in the middle,  
With a corn-stalk bow for a corn-stalk fiddle.*

This stanza conjures examining ancestors for the finer points in their original story. First grasping that the ancestors are straight and long with other fine points later permits imagining and learning through told story in oral history and other sources how that fineness works and can be productively repurposed in descendants. Ancestral fineness then is acted out in creation of an ancestrally-assured self by adding to and retelling and singing the ancestral stories. The key here is that the first step is identifying ancestors' worthy points, their finer qualities, their heroism.

The second component of the Agapic Agency Theory is the Deep Knowledge theme of reading ancestral records such that the descendant retains the spirit of ancestral heroism. One acquires Deep Knowledge by having and examining life experiences based on long-term benefit and by understanding meaningful anecdotes and big-picture influencers in ancestors' lives such

that ancestors serve as role models for descendants who find dignity and service in work and play based on the quality of their human relationships. As previously noted, the song *This Ain't Nothin'* by Craig Morgan (2008) helps to clarify the Deep Knowledge theme that I detected in the studied genealogies. *The Banjo Lesson* (DeWitt, 2017) painting by Henry Ossawa Tanner (1893), in depicting intergenerational values transmission, also helps to explain the Deep Knowledge theme. See Appendix B. In a combination of the American realism and French impressionism styles, this painting on exhibit at the Hampton University Museum solemnifies African-American intergenerational knowledge transfer from a worthy source.

This painting reinforces the importance of human relationships in learning what matters most, as a member of the older generation teaches a member of the younger generation how to play the banjo:

In *The Banjo Lesson*, Tanner's desire to show us his vision of the resilience, spiritual grace, and creative and intellectual promise of post-Civil War African Americans is fully realized. The scene is staged within the small confines of a log cabin with the cool glow of a hearth fire casting the scene's only light source from the right corner, enveloping the man and the boy in a rectangular pool of light across the floor. The boy holds the banjo in both hands, his downward gaze a reflection of his focused concentration on his grandfather's instructions. The older man holds the banjo up gently with his left hand so that the boy is not encumbered by its weight, yet the staging shows us that the man wants the boy to come into the realization of the music and its rewards through his own intuition and hard work. (Khalid, 2016, para. 8)

It is noteworthy that it is the banjo, so central in both early African American life and later ridicule of that life, which is the instrument of knowledge transfer. This depiction restores the dignity of the instrument, just as African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts convey ancestral dignity in published genealogy books. The Deep Knowledge phase is where family members and others use story to tell about the ancestors' original occurrences. This is where descendants listen to oral history and examine other records for understanding. It is where, fed by basic bread and water, the mind reigns and takes in what it will. This is where one learns the ancestral stories and

songs optimally under the tutelage of heroic ancestors so the stories can be retold to self and other descendants.

Finally, incorporating ancestral honor with positive interpretation of experiences and records leads one then to embody the Deep Self of positive ancestral self-identity. This is where descendants savor, sing, and otherwise retell the learned ancestral stories for generations to come. It is the land of milk and honey where the body lives out its positive ancestral self-identity. In the leaves of family heritage books, the nurturing, sweet juices of the tree's fruit return to the soil as the stories are retold, ready to repeat their process of positively infusing the generations. Deep Self is the place of ancestral self-actualization. As previously noted, the song *Who I Am* by Jessica Andrews (2000) helps to clarify the Deep Self theme that I detected in the studied genealogies. The poem *A Banjo Song* (Williams, 2010) by Paul Laurence Dunbar (1899) also helps to understand the Deep Self theme. See Appendix B. This poem captures the perfect peace of home, of self surrounded by happy intergenerational family heroes as role models, which both embodying ancestral self-identity and playing the banjo engender. Among the poem's verses is:

*Den my fam'ly gadders roun' me  
In de fadin' o' de light,  
Ez I strike de strings to try 'em  
Ef dey all is tuned er-right.  
An' it seems we're so nigh heaben  
We kin hyeah de angels sing  
When de music o' dat banjo  
Sets my cabin all er-ring.*

As is the aura in the *A Banjo Song* poem, Deep Self at home with loving kin, all ritually and traditionally singing the ancestral honor songs, is where one arrives after undergoing the genealogy book writing process.

In theory summation, the Agapic Agency Theory via its component Deep Roots, Deep Knowledge, and Deep Self themes explains that in the herein studied genealogy books, descendants' path to ancestral home, where we actualize positive ancestral self-identity, is a three-step process. The process begins with spirit, flows through the mind, and finally is expressed in the body by what we do with who we are. The process in reverse reflects faith, hope, and love, with love being the greatest of these and faith being dead without works (*Geneva Bible*, 1599, 1 Cor. 13:13, James 2:26). Love directs embracing the ancestors' best qualities, hope directs learning the ancestral stories, and faith directs acting out the ancestral stories by retelling them. As exemplified in the published genealogies, the Agapic Agency Theory explains the gamut of some enslaved people's and their descendants' affection for their work, affection for their banjo and fiddle music, affection for the beauty of their natural and built plantation and other environments, and affection for members of owner families. The reverence among descendants for the ancestral sentiments passed on to us then permits descendants to be Divine in living our own empowered lives. Agapic agency permits those graced with it to see and delight in heroism in ancestors, keep that heroism at the forefront when assessing records about ancestors, and ultimately delight in high God- and ancestor-based self-identity. This worldview permits descendants to reflect upon being created in the image of God and of the ancestors. Following are several examples of what this equipment for living helps descendants do.

One example of what agapic agency permits people to do is revealed in a story recounted by U.S. radical abolitionist Wendell Phillips. The story is about the famous Toussaint L'Ouverture, a leader of the 1791-1804 Haitian Revolution. In an 1861 speech Phillips delivered in both New York and Boston, he in discussing the Haitian slave revolt says of L'Ouverture that before he slaughters others' slaveholders, "he places his master and mistress on shipboard,

freighted and vessel(ed) with a cargo of sugar and coffee, and sent them to Baltimore.” Showing additional kindness by L’Ouverture toward his former owner family members, Phillips goes on to say that “never afterward did he forget to send them, year-by-year, ample means of support.” And in showing that L’Ouverture was not alone among Haitian slave uprising leaders in showering acts of loyalty and kindness upon his former owners, Phillips adds that “of all the leading negro generals, each one saved the man under whose roof he was born, and protected the family” (para. 10). These acts show social capital at work in that personal relationships contribute to reaching one’s goals. The revolutionary goals could be reached in this case only after exercising the loyalty intertwined within the personal relationships, and stories abound of former owners, such as Thomas Jefferson, helping to orchestrate favors for some of their formerly enslaved people.

Through the lens of agapic agency, even the most venerable scholars of American enslavement who often prioritize violence also invariably convey the diversity, nuance, and spirituality of their subjects’ lives and relationships. Genovese (1974), for instance, is among the scholars whose work focuses upon and applauds African American ancestral spirit as he denounces the Lost Cause in the academy:

I have chosen...to tell the story of slave life as carefully and accurately as possible. Many years of studying the astonishing effort of black people to live decently as human beings even in slavery has convinced me that no theoretical advance suggested in their experience could ever deserve as much attention as that demanded by their demonstration of the beauty and power of the human spirit.... (p. xvi)

Through the lens that magnifies and sanctifies what is beautiful, the agapic agency lens, it makes sense that some descendants of enslaved people see plantation life as more than barbaric, based on what others did there, and instead Divine, based on what God Divinely did and their own

ancestors Divinely did, experienced, remembered, and passed down to descendants regarding home.

Conveying a lens that magnifies and sanctifies the beautiful, a song that well exemplifies the Agapic Agency Theory is *Carry Me Back to Old Virginny* (Roush, 2012). See Appendix B. This enduring hit published in 1878 so well helps to illuminate my new theory which explains African-ancestored published genealogies that I discuss it in more detail than I discuss the songs that help to understand the home goal, seven concepts, and three themes I detected in the dataset of books. In *Carry Me Back to Old Virginny*, prolific composer James A. Bland (1854-1911) transcends the horrors of slavery via the emotional appeal of memories of home. *Carry Me Back* is one of the most controversial songs in American history, with former Virginia governor L. Douglas Wilder playing a significant role in having it removed as the Virginia state song (Baker, 1989). Wilder was the first African American to serve as governor of a U.S. state since the Reconstruction era, and the first African American ever elected as governor. The song is so misunderstood because some people have so strong a desire to indict others for the wrongs of the Atlantic Slave Trade and its negative aftermath that they target purveyors of kindness and love of home indiscriminately as catalysts for or at least perpetrators of those wrongs rather than understanding the critiqued behavior. My herein presented research explains agapic agency behavior, and this song clarifies my Agapic Agency Theory through its spirituality, humanity, and genius in breaking the tension between slavery horror stories and homey ancestral honor stories.

In deconstructing the spirituality, humanity, and genius of Bland's work, one finds that the song's speaker faces the realities of both being formerly enslaved and claiming his home. Breaking the tension between slavery horror stories and ancestral home stories, Bland achieves

his goal of sacralizing home in this song by employing religious transformation, vivid language of natural beauty, the word “old” as a term of endearment, authentic plantation vernacular, and the major notes and chords typical of the banjo and fiddle music that permeated Black plantation life. It is because the major notes resulting from lowered pitch are what form the voice in which authors of my studied books speak of ancestral home that this song in the voice of a Black character composed by a Black banjo and fiddle lover well explains the voices in the books. The song overpowers images of the horrors of slavery with the reality of a plantation as a formerly enslaved man’s beloved, sacred home. His sentiment resonates despite the widespread scholarly view of scholars of enslavement that the sensory pleasures of farming and otherwise enjoying God’s land must disappear because “violence of the slave-holding plantation system, of course, transformed this bucolic vision into a living hell” (Nesbitt, 2004, p. 21). The agapic agency that Bland clearly conveys in *Carry Me Back* remains an anathema when attempted to be understood as a resistance message through a CRT lens. But through the lens of African American agapic agency, it makes perfect sense that the song conveys the epitome of home.

Esteemed 20th-century African American scholar and educator Kelly Miller (1939) echoes the sense of Bland’s song as the epitome of home in a letter to the editors of the *New York Herald Tribune*. He tells the editors that “Carry Me Back” is in a league with Daniel D. Emmett’s “Dixie” and two of Stephen Foster’s most famous songs—“Old Folks at Home” and “My Old Kentucky Home”—as they all “express with lyric power the Negro’s endearment for locality and attachment to home and birthplace” (para. 3). Vying with *Oh, Dem Golden Slippers* as the most popular in Bland’s approximately seven hundred-song catalog, *Carry Me Back* has been played on parlor pianos in millions of homes around the world. The song also has been

recorded by scores of commercial musicians, including Black stalwarts The Mills Brothers and Louis Armstrong, Marian Anderson, and Ray Charles. See Appendix B.

One way *Carry Me Back* represents the Agapic Agency Theory as the theory operates in African American published genealogies is that it exemplifies the agency to sing the memory songs one wants to sing as one wants to sing them. An example of this agency is in the lyric and other changes some recording artists institute. The Mills Brothers and Armstrong (1937), for instance, keep “darkey” while twice changing “massa” to “master” in their recording. Anderson (1951) changes “old darkey’s heart” to “old tired heart.” She also records the first part of the song as written and repeats verse 1 rather than singing verse 2 that speaks of expecting to join massa and missis in heaven. Anderson was so moved by the song’s call for home that she included it as a regular part of her concert repertoire, even as the finale:

One very hot summer night in Jackson, Mississippi, Anderson sang for an audience of 4,000 enthusiastic people. At the end of the program, she performed several encores, including her customary sign-off, “Ave Maria,” but the audience remained in place, begging for more. She obliged with the old American song, “Carry Me Back to Ol’ Virginny,” which she asked the audience to join her in singing. The crowd raised its voice with, as Anderson described it, “wonderful eagerness and unanimity.” (Tedards and Horner 1988, *The DAR Controversy* Section, para. 10)

Like Anderson, Charles included this song as a regular in his repertoire. He recorded the song multiple times, including once for his 9-11 tribute album titled *Ray Charles Sings America* (Charles & Ritz, 2004).

In the included version of multiple recordings, Charles omits words and makes multiple word changes. Among the word changes, he converts “this old darkey’s heart” and “this old darkey’s life” to “this old life of mine” and “massa and missis” to “mother and father” (Charles, 1960). The agency to sing the songs one wants to sing as one wants to sing them also is reflected in the broader understanding of racial social justice, including in public memory, as expressed in

the song *A Change is Gonna Come* by Sam Cooke (1964). See Appendix B. This song is a Civil Rights anthem of Black dignity and self-determination, including by owning our own words in song and story and reaping the financial and other benefits therefrom (Shaffer & Gunn, 2006). The song thereby expertly expresses the context of ongoing change in genealogy tourism, in which one African-ancestored family at a time, as expressed in our published genealogies, passes on the ingredients of enriched, useful lives to subsequent generations for a thriving community.

While some scholars and others think only Black people with no self-respect or regard for the dignity of our heritage would write or record a song that speaks of beauty in the work, land, and people of a plantation ancestral home, the history of Black people and country music as well as the lives of Bland and some of the Black people who recorded *Carry Me Back* show otherwise (Foster, 1998, 2000). Despite its creation in the heyday of white attempts to snuff out Black power during Reconstruction, and given the caliber of the song's composer, audience, and recording artists, *Carry Me Back* stands up to scrutiny as an exceptional rhetorical artifact depicting agapic agency. Amid the array of other tales and theories of Black life, the Agapic Agency Theory as exemplified in *Carry Me Back* best represents how stories operate in 21st-century African-ancestored published genealogies.

Overall, I find that the twenty-three herein analyzed African-ancestored published genealogies represent ancestral self-identity via seven key concepts, three themes, and an emergent theory. A catalogue of songs and other creative outputs in Table 4.2 and accessible in Appendix B heightens understanding of the concepts, themes, and theory. The first of the seven concepts, Purpose of Genealogy Book, conveys what authors say is why they created the books. The Ancestors Speak concept conveys direct, indirect, spiritual, and literal conversations between ancestors and descendants, including the authors. The Description of Ancestors concept

conveys how ancestors are defined in physical, occupational, ethnic, and other terms. The Experiences concept conveys anecdotes about ancestors' lives included in the books. The American and World History concept conveys mentions of momentous events in American and world history that authors discuss as impacting their family's lives. The Values concept conveys the material and intangible items family members hold dear for their role in members success stories. The final concept, Genealogy Tourism and Research, conveys visiting homes and other sites where ancestral stories are found, remembered, and retold. The seven concepts I found in the texts aggregate to three themes.

Again, the three themes conveyed in the studied texts work in chronological order to demonstrate the emergent Agapic Agency Theory. The Agapic Agency Theory explains that the authors' path to ancestral self-identity begins with Deep Roots, which relates to heroizing ancestors; next moves to Deep Knowledge, which relates to reading records through the hero ancestor lens; and ends with Deep Self, which relates to being comfortably at home surrounded by loving relatives to whom one belongs and retelling the family stories. The Agapic Agency Theory thereby makes clear the order and components of descendants' positive ancestral self-identity achieved by authoring the books. In answer to my specific research questions of the texts, authors speak in a lowered-pitch, clear twang to convey the beauty of ancestral lives overpowering the ugly that is an integral part of humanity. I find that the authors heroize ancestors and thus make them larger than any negative experiences, that they detail personal relationships to convey how social capital works in ancestral worlds, and that whatever good authors convey about ancestors they also identify as present in the authors themselves and in other descendants.

The above summarized findings of my content analysis paint a comprehensive picture of what is happening and how it is happening in 21st-century African-ancestored genealogy books so it also can happen at an ideal African American genealogy tourism and research site for African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts' families' optimal genealogy tourism experiences. With a clear understanding of my findings, I next explore the quality of these findings. The high quality of my findings and, therefore, their effectiveness as applied at the HBCUHeritageHome.com, is evidenced in part by their strong and deep connections to established knowledge in the broader genealogical and related fields. How I apply the findings is in Chapter 5, following the description below of my findings' deep connections to established knowledge.

#### **4.4 Deep Connections to Established Knowledge**

In partial demonstration of the high quality of my findings, this section applies my thematic and theoretical findings to relevant existing literature. In so doing, this section capitalizes on my prolonged engagement with the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community and texts relevant to our interests. Specifically, I utilize communication theory, musical memory, and genealogy-related work to partially demonstrate the credibility of my findings. Key in this credibility-confirming process is asserting my findings' consistency with African-ancestored genealogy texts outside my studied dataset and showing my findings' strong connection with what one particular African-ancestored genealogy text outside my dataset conveys. I begin with my findings' connection to communication theory, musically-expressed memory, and genealogy work. I then move to my findings' connections to Black higher education in contemporary public memory activity and U.S. Black culture scholarship.

#### ***4.4.1 Connection to Communication Theory, Musical Memory, and Genealogy Literature***

In showing that authors of the herein studied genealogies carry out the process explained by the Agapic Agency Theory, my findings connect well with previously established theories that help to explain family communication processes (Braithwaite et al., 2018). For instance, the Agapic Agency Theory incorporates the social construction theory's tenet of families being "created in interaction rather than an inevitable reality" (p. 267). The first step of the Agapic Agency Theory, the Deep Roots phase, explains that it is the relatives with whom authors choose to be connected and belong, choose to heroize, not a predetermined set of people, who constitute the key extended family members in the studied books. Similarly, both the Agapic Agency Theory and the social learning theory explain "the process by which individuals learn behaviors through observation" within the pervasive and institutionalized family structure (p. 290). It also is in the Deep Roots phase of the Agapic Agency Theory that descendants generally observe ancestors for their essence as a critical first step before being able to properly read ancestral stories told in sources.

The second, Deep Knowledge, phase of my theory of African American published genealogies connects well with narrative performance theory's claim that "not only do families tell stories, but making stories is one way of doing family" (Braithwaite et al., 2018, p. 210). It is in the second step that people have their own experiences, hear family stories, and thereby learn more about their ancestors' experiences, ideally as interpreted through powerful, heroic roots. Additionally, the third step of the Agapic Agency Theory, the Deep Self phase, explains the importance of retelling the family stories as the embodiment of reaching positive ancestral self-identity.

Finally, the Agapic Agency Theory is credible and applicable because its claims are consistent with proven claims of the uses and gratifications theory. Uses and gratifications focuses on how people “use media to gratify their own needs and desires” (Braithwaite et al., 2018, p. 337). Not until the herein detailed research was it so clear that having heroic ancestors is such a need for African Americans and that a way we fill this need is by publishing family heritage books. Nor was it heretofore so clear that heroic ancestors are a precursor to our own positive ancestral self-identity, which I show stems from ancestral elevation in the studied books.

My findings’ connections with pre-existing research on family communication go beyond theories. For instance, just as I find that embodying, retelling the ancestral stories is the third step in the three-step Deep Roots, Deep Knowledge, Deep Self process, so too do Emory University psychologists Marshall P. Duke, Amber Lazarus, and Robyn Fivush (2008) find that the embodied retelling of family stories is what provides the stories’ positive benefit for family members:

[R]egular family dinners, yearly vacations, and holiday celebrations occur in families that have high levels of cohesiveness and...they contribute to the development of a strong sense of what we have called the *intergenerational self*....It is this intergenerational self and the strength and guidance that seem to derive from it that are associated with increased resilience, better adjustment, and improved chances of good clinical outcomes. In that learning about one’s family is part of a large and complex ongoing process of family narrative coconstruction, we do not propose that knowledge of family history, per se, renders people stronger and more resilient. Rather, knowledge of family history seems to have potential as a marker—an index—that reflects that ongoing complex process. Other components of the process that might similarly serve as markers might be a family’s level of intergenerational communication, family cohesiveness, the presence of intrafamilial support systems, high levels of narrative coconstruction and presence of rituals that maintain continuity despite inevitable ups and downs that occur in all people’s lives. (Duke, et al., 2008, p. 270)

The authors make clear here that social capital helps to create the stories that descendants retell via ancestral embodiment in social settings, and that the retelling in turn accounts for descendant

well-being. It also is the retelling of family stories that accounts for descendant well-being in the herein analyzed genealogy books and applied findings.

Given that sufficient knowledge of ancestral stories precedes consistent retelling of such stories, Fivush and Duke co-developed a twenty-question family knowledge assessment called Do You Know? (DYK) and Fivush assisted me in adapting the assessment to also inquire about knowledge of enslaved ancestors. The assessment adapted for use at the HBCUHeritageHome.com is called Do You Know Enslaved Ancestors? (DYKEA). See DYK and DYKEA in Appendix C. Reached through exhibits, games, re-enactments and more, maximum knowledge of and basking in ancestral heroism is the goal at the new genealogy tourism site implicated by my findings, as my findings and other research show that family knowledge precedes the positive ancestral self-identity people express, an identity that is well-adjusted and delights in retelling family stories.

In addition to my work comparing favorably with previously existing communication theories and family knowledge work, it also compares favorably with existing genealogy applications and musical memory and genealogy literature. For example, in the blossoming world of genealogy television (Klareld, 2022), Harvard University public scholar Henry Louis Gates, Jr.'s *Finding Your Roots* program regularly shows how participants incorporate ancestral horror stories by overshadowing them with ancestral honor stories in their genealogies. In a 2023 episode in which African-ancestored comedian Niecy Nash is one of the guests exploring her family heritage, the show promotes that it helps guests “decode scandals hidden within their roots, exposing secrets that their ancestors concealed and celebrating the virtue of accepting one’s relatives—whoever they may be” (PBS, 2023, para. 1). Amid the scandals and the secrets, Nash says learning more about her family heritage “is one of the best things I’ve ever done in my

life. Even with the hard parts, there's...an added value to the knowing" (PBS, 2023, 1:32-1:42). Authors of the published genealogies also stress the importance of knowing family heritage as a form of social capital, and they incorporate ancestral horror stories in their books by overshadowing those stories with ancestral honor stories. They sing the ancestral honor songs louder.

Given that descendants speak and sing ancestral honor stories and do so louder than we speak ancestral horror stories, it in hindsight is no surprise that it is via musically-expressed memory that I came to understand how African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent ancestral self-identity in 21st-century published genealogies. As my own ancestry is infused with music expressed in twang and major chords, this music helps me understand how others represent their ancestry. Absent my own background combination embedded in the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community, country music, the church, and womanism, museum studies experts also convey findings on genealogy tourism processes. Despite emerging from a different framework, these museum studies findings strongly connect with my understanding of how the African-ancestored genealogy books work. Specifically, museum studies scholars have found that heritage tourism visitors increasingly deeply identify with ancestors before visiting a site, then interpret the site through ancestral lenses, and then experience ancestral self-identity by literally and figuratively singing the songs that honor ancestors (Clifford, 1997; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; Macdonald, 1997; Rosoff, 2003; Stanton, 2006, Timothy, 2011). This is the same process I find to take place in the books I studied, a process replicated in application at the [HBCUHeritageHome.com](http://HBCUHeritageHome.com).

Along with the literature substantiating song as a means heritage tourists use to honor ancestors, the literature also substantiates my finding of why the songs work. The reasoning

behind the process of first elevating ancestors, then reading the record and experiences through that puffed-up lens, and then self-expressing in prose and song in an authoritative low pitch that retains maximum ancestral air is substantiated in both memory and broader genealogy literature. In the memory field, expert Pierre Nora (1989) reasons that the culprit for public memory clashes such as the U.S. genealogy tourism industry currently faces with respect to stories of African-ancestored people is that people conflate stories of history and stories of memory, failing to distinguish that the two story types serve different gods, sing different songs.

Alternatively, he says, other people devalue to near extinction the God that memory serves in universally human battles for beautiful life and against undignified death. Memory's divinity is that it "is life, borne by living societies founded in its name":

Memory installs remembrance within the sacred; history, always prosaic, releases it again. Memory is blind to all but the group it binds...History, on the other hand, belongs to everyone and to no one, whence its claim to universal authority. Memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects; history binds itself strictly to temporal continuities, to progressions and to relations between things. Memory is absolute, while history can only conceive the relative. At the heart of history is a critical discourse that is antithetical to spontaneous memory. History is perpetually suspicious of memory, and its true mission is to suppress and destroy it. (Nora, 1989, pp. 8-9)

So, history documents and memory monuments. History criticizes via horrors and memory valorizes via honors.

The mission of effective public memory is to cohere one's own group with a gloriously positive storyline and, thereby, conquer in the battle to elevate one's own group collective values into the public sphere as dominant (Nora, 1989). The intrinsic value of positive own-group stories also is evidenced in broader research on the role of stories in shaping identity and the kinds of stories that most benefit people who have been traumatized by life circumstances (Adler et al., 2016; Assman & Czaplicka, 1995; Kiser & Baumgardner et al., 2010; Kiser & Donohue et al., 2010). African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts, then, who seek positive ancestral self-

identity, use documented history in the studied genealogy books only to memorialize and valorize, not victimize, or otherwise demonize, our ancestors. Some authors show ancestral greatness in contrast to the gravity of societal ills ancestors overcame and other authors only minimally include people outside the family and the family's social capital groups in our published stories. To the extent that the books critique racist state behavior and systemic processes, they honor ancestors even more for their agency in overcoming the horrors of history even as other relatives and non-relatives succumbed. Ultimately, the books are about honoring ancestral memories. Thus, the U.S. genealogy tourism site implicated by the studied books' content is not a public history site, but a public memory site to maximize chosen positive ancestral self-identity experiences of African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts and our families in the U.S. genealogy tourism industry.

In the genealogy literature realm, my findings that 21st-century African-ancestored published genealogies elevate ancestors to hero status reflected onto descendants comport with others' findings on and execution of the mission of genealogies. For one, that such a high portion of what is happening in the books I examined is occurring in the Deep Self realm—two hundred fifty-eight of three hundred fifty-two codes—correlates with the notion that genealogy really is more about descendants than ancestors (Little, 2011; Weil, 2013). Also, Saginaw State University English Department Chair Eric Gardner (2003) conducted one of the rare recent surveys of U.S. published genealogies and relays findings akin to my own.

Garner (2003) finds that the genealogy books he examined “all begin with the ‘Immigrant’—an idealized progenitor constructed as a stunning combination of religious pilgrim, pioneer, patriot, and entrepreneur” (p. 149):

Specifically, the function of the pedigree is to establish the descendant's right to high position (moral, social, financial, etc.) by highlighting the worthy progenitor.

Consider, for example, John Chase's 1928 *The Descendants of Thomas and Aquila Chase*, which opens with an illustration of a stone tablet the author placed in the New England Historic Genealogical Society....John Chase in effect creates an American coat of arms, emphasizes the idealized progenitor, and then very actively ties himself to that progenitor, thus asserting his place in the succession. (pp. 149-150)

So, creation of ancestors as heroes, interpretation of records and experiences through that highest ancestral appraisal lens, and embodied sensation of descendant selves as basking in ancestral light is well-acknowledged in the limited research so far on published genealogies as a genre. This acknowledgment is consistent with my findings.

In another example of how my findings connect with others' genealogy work, the African-ancestored genealogies I analyzed are by no means merely names, dates, occupations, and events, as likewise is the case with other published genealogies, according to genealogy scholars Alison Light (2015) and Ben Highmore (2014). In reviewing Light's work, Highmore notes the complex content in published genealogies:

Today the internet and regional record offices around the country are buzzing with people tracing their genealogies, looking up long-dead ancestors. The vast majority of this work is kept in the family or posted online for millions of us to ignore. Light offers another path: family history not as a catalogue of names, dates, occupations and events, but as a generational history of interconnected people, where the historian's task is to get a sense of how a life was made and what it felt like to make it that way. This isn't history from below so much as history from inside, to use the author's neat phrasing. (para. 1)

While by no means part of a new tradition, as published genealogy books of interconnected people's generational histories date to antiquity, authors of the books I analyzed likewise take readers to varying degrees inside the homes of ancestors. They enter familial and other relationships and go inside ancestors' heads as descendants authoritatively make our own sense of how ancestors' and our own lives fit into the broader human experience.

Finally, among connections between my findings and relevant memory and genealogy work, I note that based upon close reading of my full potential dataset, the content of the seven

books I collected for possible analysis and did not utilize in this study because I reached the two kinds of saturation I sought before adding them to my analysis is consistent with my findings (Bennett, 2019; Foster, 2004; Greenidge, 2023; Haywood, 2021; Madison, 2015; Marshall, 2017, 2019). Michelle Haywood (2021) in *Shade of an American Tree: A Family History of East DC Settlers* demonstrates in vivid form how other African American published genealogies substantiate my findings. She poignantly conveys how my three detected themes of Deep Roots, Deep Knowledge, and Deep Self operate together in the Agapic Agency Theory at work in the African-ancestored published genealogy genre. Because Haywood's words are in a 21st-century African-ancestored published genealogy as are the words I analyzed for the herein detailed study, I highlight her in-population status by sharing her words below in the same distinct Arial 10 block text I use to share words from the studied genealogies.

Text that well conveys the Deep Roots theme:

My tree was forced to grow under shady conditions. Deep roots....of my tree worked hard....My ancestors include Patriots who took pride in the responsibility of procuring arms for the Continental Army in 1776. Union soldiers. Confederate soldiers. Buffalo Soldiers, including one who stormed San Juan Hill with the Rough Riders. And one Tuskegee Airman who served the Tuskegee Director while another Tuskegee Airman uncle survived capture by the Axis powers....Much more aware of the countless, amazing accomplishments of the people history overlooks, I've learned to see the invisible (cheerleader-like) pyramid upon which celebrated figures stand....There are many ancestors whose names and faces and races, whose personalities, stories, talents, accomplishments and failures I won't know. But I feel them too, spiritually, and it lifts me.  
—HAYWOOD

Text that well conveys the Deep Knowledge theme:

I'm not talking about the shades of light I see from people through Humanvision. Not talking about the shades of skin of Africans who survived the Middle Passage. Or the shades created when the blood of slaves intermingled with Loyalists and Patriots and Confederates and Native Americans. Shade, here, doesn't refer to the shady, devious, unscrupulous manner in which African-Americans have been treated throughout the history of America. It's not the shade that comes out of nowhere casting on us the chill and darkness of the unenlightened. I'm not talking about the public unreliability or the constant shading off of our human rights through Jim Crow or today's police brutality. I'm not referencing shade cast(e) on our people at all. I'm talking about....[t]hat *cool* shade where I find protection from the worst atrocities because my tree has already grown strong from

centuries of tribulation. A just shade. Just, in that it's earned. Earned through the experiences of my family's soul journey.

—HAYWOOD

Text that well conveys the Deep Self theme:

I never expected that learning about my ancestral tree would breathe new life into me. But here I am, energized by the souls that preceded me and more connected than ever to those still with me today. Reflecting in and on the shade in which I sit today, I'm overwhelmed with honor, love and the gifts of what my ancestry teaches me. And just so I'm clear, here, when I say shade, I'm not talking about the gorgeous green inner light and outer shade of my Sainly leaning ancestral tree....I'm talking about the virtual comfort created as my ancestral tree shields me from the trials and oppression of generations past....I imagine their spirits smiling in well-deserved pride of the fruits of their existence. I am a daughter of this tree....It's from this space that I commit to carve new history befitting this tree. I know that life is not a place of rest. The time to Rest in Peace will come, as it has for my ancestors. 'Til then, I'll hustle through life. Much as they did, but differently. I'm cool with that. I'll get to jumping life's hurdles and charting new courses for the next generations to follow, in a minute, after I bask in this shade of my American tree.

—HAYWOOD

In addition to the above strong connections between my findings and relevant communication theory, musical memory, and genealogy work, strong connections also exist between my findings and Black higher education in African American contemporary public memory activity and cultural scholarship.

#### ***4.4.2 Connection to Black Higher Education in Public Memory Activity and Scholarship***

Just as my content analysis of published African-ancestored genealogies finds a concentration of education stories and my findings application explained in Chapter 5 yields more Black higher education stories in public memory, so too does the contemporary HBCU renaissance result in more Black higher education stories in the U.S. public sphere (AP, 2021; HBCU Today, n.d.; Kabugi, 2020; Nietzel, 2021; WGR, 2022). The contemporary HBCU renaissance is part of “an age of turbulence and revolt” that crescendoed over several years and exploded with massive protests and riots after a police officer in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 2020 held his knee on George Floyd’s neck until the unarmed Black man was dead (Gurri, 2021,

p. 1). The killing spurred millions of people to join the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement that began in 2013 in response to the acquittal of the killer of another Black man, Trayvon Martin (BLM, 2020a). Movement members marched and otherwise agitated for “a world free of anti-Blackness, where every Black person has the social, economic, and political power to thrive” (BLM, 2020b, para. 2). The ongoing agitation has resulted in toppling of statues, brand logos, and other elements in the public sphere deemed to counter African Americans’ preferred self-identity representations (Bonaparte, 2020; Kalaitzandonakes, et al., 2023). The agitation also has resulted in increased attention and donations to HBCUs (Gasman et al., 2022, 2023; Kumah-Abiwu, 2023). Also notably, the agitation has resulted in proposals and concrete steps to uplift African Americans’ higher education heritage to help answer the 21st-century cry for racial social justice, including in public memory.

Among those offering a solution to the African American public memory problem by grounding the Black foundational story in its U.S. higher education tradition is John Tomasi, a faculty member at Brown University. Speaking at a university-wide talk to consider the antecedents and aftermath of public memory clashes in 2017 in Charlottesville, Virginia, Tomasi asks “[a]t this historical moment, what new public monuments should be erected?” and reminds his audience that “Brown’s history is both wondrous and terrible” (Honig et al., 2017, 50:49-52:10). He proposes a monument honoring Ruth Simmons, the first Black person and first woman to serve as Brown’s president, having done so from 2001 to 2012, and first Black president in the Ivy League. Simmons joined Brown after serving as president of Smith College from 1995 to 2001, also the first African American to hold that post. From 2017 to 2023 she served as the first 21st-century woman president of a co-ed HBCU, Prairie View A&M University. At Brown in 2003 Simmons, as so many U.S. college administrators now have,

commissioned a campus committee to research the university's connections to slavery. Such campus research leads to deeper explorations of Black people's relationships with higher education institutions (Harris et al., 2019; Patton et al., 2022). These research projects include identifying and availing to descendants ancestral documents about African-ancestored people historically connected with the schools as enslaved and free workers and students, a process the HBCUHeritageHome.com accelerates.

But it is not Simmons' glass-ceiling breaking or obvious achievements necessarily for which she should be honored, says Tomasi, who served on Brown's committee to investigate the university's ties to slavery. Noting that public memories are to inspire further greatness in the future, Tomasi says it is Simmons' family story-informed values about the best educational settings for African Americans and others for which she should be honored. She exemplified these values in her 2001 first Brown Convocation Day address. Remembering that convocation day, Tomasi says "[s]ome might say that we should erect a monument to Ruth Simmons because she was Brown's first Black president and the first in the Ivy League. Perhaps. But I think the real reason that we should honor Simmons is because of values that she used her position as president to defend that day" (Honig et al., 2017, 55:34-55:59). Tomasi then quotes Simmons to demonstrate why she should be memorialized in a campus statue:

While other types of communities devised covenants so as to avoid conflict, our covenant is rooted in quarrel and opposition. We encourage ideas and opinions to collide in the service of learning. We freely trespass boundaries, we criticize each others' views, test every theory. No idea is beyond range or out of bounds. (qtd. in Honig et al., 2017, 56:00-56:31)

He adds that "[t]his is a difficult and lofty vision of university life" (56:33-56:40). Tomasi believes honoring Black educational achievement in public spaces should extend beyond a Brown University statue of Ruth Simmons.

Another idea Tomasi proposes to answer the current cry for racial social justice in public memory with a focus on African American higher education is a statue honoring Inman Page.

Page is one of Brown's first African American graduates:

[I]n 1877, Page's classmates, most all of them white, elected Page to be their class orator. They did not choose Inman Page because he was Black. Indeed, according to some accounts, they may have chosen Page despite the fact that he was Black. Why did they choose him? They chose him because Inman Page was manifestly the greatest, most brilliant orator at Brown. At that moment, the Brown community affirmed their commitment to a precious and common ideal of university life. That ideal is that we search out and we honor individual excellence wherever we find it. I hope Brown will consider erecting a statue to Inman Page in the act of oration. (Honig et al., 2017, 52:41-53:59)

Proposed public monuments honoring Simmons and Page join existing and recently announced other projects honoring African Americans' higher education foundational story in pursuit of racial social justice in public memory. Among the many others is a monument honoring businesswoman Mellody Hobson, with her name retiring that of cancelled U.S. and Princeton University president Woodrow Wilson on a Princeton residential college building to be renamed and refurbished before being reopened in her name in 2026 (BOTWC, 2020; Bouvier, 2020; Bouvier & Machin, 2021; G, 2020).

The above discussion of African American education in public memory shows that the application of my genealogies analysis findings by way of ancestral higher education experiences being embraced, researched, and embodied at the HBCUHeritageHome.com is part of a trend toward more African American education in public memory. Buttressing the new proposals and plans for more Black education stories in public memory is African Americans' longstanding depiction of higher education as a, if not the, key theme of our foundational story (Anderson, 1988; Harris, 1997; JBHE, 2014; New America, 2015). I, too, find that African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts position education as key in our 21st-century published genealogies. As is

the case in the studied genealogies, African Americans honor the educators and educated in our collective memories and scholarship for their effective service of inspiration to our youth and broader communities (Siddle Walker, 1996, 2018; Siddle Walker & Byas, 2009). The educators and those who value education are heralded as trumpeters for triumph via uplifting stories, can-do stories, what's-in-you-that-makes-it-possible stories (Foster, 2014a, 2016b; Rashad & Leggs, 2020; Tyree & Cathcart, 2014). Following is a brief explanation of the context of African Americans' longstanding depiction of higher education as a priority in our foundational story. This explanation joins the public memory trend toward African Americans in education settings in reinforcing the quality of my findings.

Just as the genealogies I studied elevate education in their success stories, so too does arguably the most venerable scholar on 19th- and 20th-century Black life, W. E. B. Du Bois (1935), put great stock in Christian higher education's dominance in African American thriving rather than suffering:

Had it not been for the Negro school and college, the Negro would, to all intents and purposes, have been driven back to slavery. His economic foothold in land and capital was too slight in ten years of turmoil to effect any defense or stability....But already, through establishing public schools and private colleges, and by organizing the Negro church, the Negro had acquired enough leadership and knowledge to thwart the worst designs of the new slave drivers. (p. 667)

Du Bois adds that all who built and attended these schools “deserve to be remembered and honored,” for “[w]ithout them there can be no doubt that the Negro would have rushed into revolt and vengeance and played into the hands of those determined to crush him” (p. 667).

Similarly, Woodson, who drew attention to African American community genealogies in 1925 with the publication of *Free Negro Heads of Families in the United States in 1830: Together with a Brief Treatment of the Free Negro*, also wrote seminal books that enshrine effective higher education as the key to African American families' thriving (Harris, 1994;

Woodson, 1919, 1933). Among Woodson's (1933) renowned quotes about African American education in *The Mis-Education of the Negro* is that "[a]bove all things, the effort must result in making a man think and do for himself" (p. 3). Authors in the analyzed genealogies also celebrate ancestors' doing for themselves, with the help of others, through education. Therefore, the HBCUHeritageHome.com celebrates all African-ancestored people who built, otherwise worked for, and attended educational institutions. Most African Americans have ancestors among those honored here.

The African American higher education collective memory includes slavery and racism in the storyline among surmounted obstacles to and catalysts for education. The African American higher education storyline does not place others' sins as something that has prevented or can prevent African Americans' Godly freedom. Much of African Americans' earliest education began in slavery and some HBCUs began on plantations (Oakwood University, 2016; O'Donnell, 2020; Saunders & Nagle, 2018; Tougaloo, 2018; Washington, 2008/1899, 1903). People of African descent and others evidence higher education as foundational in Black life in part through scholarly research on first Black students. Students examined in this research realm include antebellum students at such schools as Yale, Wesleyan, and Washington and Lee universities as well as Amherst, Bowdoin, Dartmouth, Middlebury, and Oberlin colleges. First Black student scholarship subjects also include postbellum students at such schools as other Ivies, the Seven Sisters, the University of Pittsburgh, and Bates, Berea, Colby, Colgate, Elutherian, Grinnell, Hamilton, Pomona, and Williams colleges (Barksdale-Hall, 2005; Evans, 2006; Evans et al., 2002; Foster, 2014b, 2015a, 2015b; McLaughlin, 2023; SAQ, 2016). These schools and others contain ancestral records that families use in our genealogies. Records include recommendation letters that clergy members wrote to accompany students' entrance

applications. These letters along with the stories that got people to college demonstrate social capital at work among this form of agency's many deployments conveyed in the studied books.

The first four HBCUs were founded before the Civil War—Cheyney University in 1837 in Pennsylvania, Miner Normal School for Colored Girls in 1851 in Washington, D.C., Lincoln University in 1854 in Pennsylvania, and Wilberforce University in 1856 in Ohio. From their founding, HBCUs continued to form through the 1960s. These schools enjoyed strong nationwide actualizing support from churches, some government entities, and the Black and general publics. These supporters together founded, funded, and sustained more than two hundred-fifty HBCUs, including one in the U.S. Virgin Islands, to educate African Americans ad infinitum in freedom. Some current HBCUs still claim their Christian heritage. Morris Brown, for instance, names “Christian Faith” as one of its core values, saying the school is “consciously dedicated to the purposeful and intentional expression of God’s revealed truth” (Morris Brown College, 2015, no. 8). The schools educated the educators and still tout education’s role in Black social mobility. Multiple church denominations directed financing and pedagogy at early HBCUs to produce successful African American leaders and other creators largely in the worlds of education, business, the Church, and Christian homemaking, also known as Republican motherhood (Chambers, 1978; Foster, 2016b; Jones, 1917; Kemeny, 2013; Kennedy Haydel, 2016; Walker, 2009).

HBCU alumni include the likes of Martin Luther King, Jr., many of the student activists of the 1960s, and millions of individual African American family members who quietly thrive, as suggested in the herein studied published genealogies. HBCUs even serve as final resting places for African Americans’ family members and other leaders (Oakwood University, 2016; Middleton, 2021). Most HBCUs now have closed primarily due to financial and academic

accreditation weakness and 101 HBCUs remain open. These schools now award approximately 10 percent of college degrees granted to African Americans compared with more than 30 percent in the 1970s and more than 90 percent through the 1920s, and the most common major no longer is education (Dupree et al., 2009; Gasman, 2006, 2007; Gasman & Bowman, 2012; Gasman et al., 2010; Hartshorn & Penniman, 1910; Hill, 1985; NCES, 2019, 2020; Toldson et al., 2020). So, across the African American cultural landscape, in memorials, scholarship, music, movies, and more, the HBCU imprint is discernable, as it is in the alumni family members celebrated in the herein studied genealogies.

Given their wide historical reach, HBCUs collectively are rich archives and public memory sites of African American genealogy stories (Evans et al., 2002; Jones, 1917; Kemeny, 2013; U.S. Congress, 1993; U.S. Department of Education, 1991). Documented stories at these schools include triumphs and tragedies, with the focus overwhelmingly on triumphs that beget more triumphs (Drewry & Doermann, 2001; Du Bois, 1903; Fisk, n.d.; Foster, 2012, 2016a; Hill, 1985, 1994; Lovett, 2011; Moon, 2020; Willie et al., 2006). The millions of archival records and hundreds of record types that contain African Americans' ancestral stories currently awaiting retelling are dispersed among HBCUs' archives, their church founders' archives, and other repositories across the country. Ancestral education records include payroll rosters, progress reports, catalogues, entrance applications with student addresses among other information, recommendation letters, acceptance letters, student writings and other projects, event programs, transcripts, student newspapers, yearbooks, photographs, letters from parents, alumni news with updated addresses, and so much more. Even as repositories increasingly are availing ancestral educational institution records, the records are not yet fully and readily available, and wide dispersion of the records is part of why the process is slow. Therefore, access to ancestral higher

education institution records is promoted, accelerated, and organized through the HBCUHeritageHome.com. Full availability of ancestral education records serves most African-ancestored Americans, as that is who has rich ancestral stories in HBCU records.

Each of the forty-three million African-ancestored Americans currently can claim an average of 100 HBCU and other higher education institution students and workers as ancestors (JBHE, 2004; Rose & Eichholz, 2003; U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). These are ancestors whose stories are ripe for the telling, and increasingly descendants want to tell them. In 2008, for instance, African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast Vicky posted with great joy in one of the growing number of online forums on African American genealogy, the website Afrigeneas.com, that she “found where my paternal gr-grandfather James D. Davis graduated from Meharry in the class of 1891” (Afrigeneas, 2008, para. 1). Similarly, Howard University television and film professor emerita Paula Whatley Matabane had reason for exuberance when she found her mother in Tuskegee Institute documents in the William Levi Dawson papers, 1903-1990, at Emory University. Dawson was director of the Tuskegee Institute choir when Matabane’s mother was a student and a first soprano soloist there:

To my joy and exhilaration, I saw my 18-year-old mother standing fourth from the end of the third row of choristers in the chancel of the historic Tuskegee Institute Chapel. My heart leapt with joy to see my beautiful young mother dressed in a lovely white dress (that I’m sure her mother or sister Garland made for her) with a corsage pinned on her left side, holding her songbook to “Hiawatha’s Wedding-Feast” by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. (qtd. in Burkett, 2014, para. 2)

Here Matabane shares the exhilaration common among African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts who tell stories from ancestral higher education records. Access to the records permits this and other discoveries.

Fletcher F. Moon, an associate professor and head reference librarian at Tennessee State University, also attributes to records access what he calls a fascinating ancestral higher education

story discovery. Moon says “[i]t was a blessing to find information related to my mother, Lakie Ramey (Moon), in the Bennett College newspaper from the early 1940s via the (HBCU Newspaper History Project).” He adds that “[e]ven though the writers misspelled her first name as Lakey, the issues indicated several of her musical activities involving singing and playing piano” (F. F. Moon, personal communication, January 13, 2015). Meharry Medical College, Tuskegee Institute, and Bennett College join the more than two hundred-fifty HBCUs and other higher education institutions where early American enslaved and free people and their descendants thrived (Anderson, 1988; Dupree et al., 2009; Hartshorn, 1910; Lovett, 2011; Willie et al., 2006). While some descendants have noted success in accessing the ancestral education records they seek, repositories have not yet digitized all records and sometimes are hesitant to share records with descendants. Hampton University, for instance, recently replied to a request for ancestral records access by saying “[u]nfortunately as an official student record we cannot provide a copy of that information unless you are the last living family member and we receive a notarized letter stating that” (C. Allen, personal communication, February 24, 2022). Maximizing ease of accessibility for all ancestral records from all schools, HBCUs and others, is how the HBCUHeritageHome.com fulfills the records access part of its mission.

In a final reinforcement of my findings, Du Bois (1968) concretized the essence of the three-step agapic agency process of African-ancestored published genealogies while on his deathbed completing his autobiography. As he requested that music be played during his transition to the ancestral world, he wrote, “Teach us Forever Dead, there is no Dream but Deed, no Deed but Memory” (p. 423). In other words, in the ancestral stories is wisdom that orders both the ancestors’ and our own steps and we are able to continue their work and do our own well only by properly remembering their actions and then acting ourselves in embodying and

retelling their stories for generations to come. Inheritors of positive Black family heritage traditions must know the positive stories to be equipped to sing them and pass them along to future generations. Yet, inheritors of the African American education cultural legacy include Black people who claim status as first-generation college students, unaware of rich ancestral education stories. Insufficiently available records of our ancestral education stories prior to the full rollout of the HBCUHeritageHome.com contributes to why some people do not yet know our HBCU and other African American higher education ancestry. A drastic increase in and marketing of access to African American higher education records, therefore, is one of the implications for the HBCUHeritageHome.com.

As demonstrated above, my findings that African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts in our published genealogies heroize ancestors' educational and other pursuits, read records through the hero lens, and then maximize positive ancestral self-identity by embodying heroic ancestral values and behaviors are replicated in communication theory, musical memory, genealogy, and higher education activities and literature. I find that the process these books follow is explained by the Agapic Agency Theory. Based in part on their strong connections to existing memory and Black culture work, my findings on how 21st-century African American published genealogies represent ancestral self-identity are credible. Armed with clear and credible findings, relevant heritage tourism literature, and my embeddedness in the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community, I was enabled to effectively apply my content analysis findings to establish the HBCUHeritageHome.com genealogy tourism site and research institute. This major site is established to cater to African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts' ancestral self-identity representation choices. Details of the application portion of my research project follow in Chapter 5.

## 5 APPLICATION: ANCESTRALLY HOME AT THE HBCUHERITAGEHOME.COM

In the context of the growing and diversifying U.S. genealogy tourism industry that heretofore included no major site focused on African-ancestored genealogy, I conducted a content analysis and application of twenty-three African-ancestored genealogies published in the 21st century to understand and further exhibit these books at a full-service genealogy tourism site and research institute. These are the research questions I asked and answered for application:

RQ: How do African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent **ancestral self-identity** in 21st-century published genealogies?

RQ1: How do African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent **colonial and antebellum U.S. enslaved and free people of African descent** in 21st-century published genealogies?

RQ2: How do African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent **social/cultural capital** in 21st-century published genealogies?

RQ3: How do African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent **ancestral honor and inheritances** in 21st-century published genealogies?

Answering these questions via content analysis directed the contours of the HBCUHeritageHome.com, the application portion of my project. Like other successful modern tourism destinations, this site joins with stakeholders at its outset to gather information necessary to offer stakeholder-driven experiences from visitors' perspectives (Mijnheer & Gamble, 2022; Zhang et al., 2018). In the case of my project, the knowledge gained is ancestral story choices and how those choices work in published genealogies. The process then is utilized to enhance visitor positive ancestral self-identity experiences at an ideal genealogy tourism and research site.

My content analysis shows that in 21st-century typical African-ancestored genealogy books, authors seek ancestral home. Authors arrive home, a place of the most positive ancestral self-identity, via a three-step process. Step one is hold ancestors in valorized esteem, step two is learn more about family through the lens of ancestral honor and reverence, and step three is arrive at the place of family traditions and customs, retelling the family stories that create and sustain the author. The Agapic Agency Theory explains how this ancestral self-identity process works in the pages of African-ancestored genealogies. Stories in the examined texts are further explained in musical terms, as the stories express a reverence for home and ancestors in the same major notes and chords, in lowered pitch twang, as does traditional country music. Given that my research is a praxis study as described in Chapters 1 and 3, my findings of the content analysis and tourism best practices are applied (Contu, 2018, 2020) by implementing the HBCUHeritageHome.com. The HBCUHeritageHome.com African American genealogy tourism site and research institute, therefore, carries out the Deep Roots, Deep Knowledge, and Deep Self themes of the Agapic Agency Theory.

As the HBCUHeritageHome.com is the ultimate solution implicated by my findings, I join members of the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community in establishment and long-term development of this national nonprofit organization incorporated in Georgia (EIN 88-3731486). The user/owners of this institution bestow upon ourselves the gift of maximally positive ancestral self-identity by creating and celebrating ancestral heroes in the luxury of time, space, and family heritage books. Given that “[t]he Internet has provided the tourism industry with information and technological tools and resources to access a vast scape of tourism products and services” (Senbeto et al., 2021, p. 14), the site is both online and physical. Opposite of how The Legacy Museum employs “unique technology to dramatize the enslavement of African

Americans, the evolution of racial terror lynchings...legalized racial segregation and racial hierarchy in America” (Legacy Museum, n.d., para. 4), the HBCUHeritageHome.com utilizes unique technology to dramatize the comforts and traditions of ancestral home. African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community nonprofit professionals formally established the HBCUHeritageHome.com in August 2022, and the organization’s professionals continue to develop the project by conducting research, scouting sites, soliciting and carrying out speaking and training contracts, applying for grants, and assisting descendants in creating unique ancestral exhibits for future presentation.

This work is in advance of planned online rollout in 2024 and physical rollout in 2027 for the 50th anniversary of both *Roots* the television miniseries and AAHGS’ founding. Both *Roots* and AAHGS inspired and continue to inspire African-ancestored genealogy. The year 2027 also is the 50th anniversary of the Museum of Education and the 20th anniversary of the Creation Museum, among the kinds of entities with which the HBCUHeritageHome.com will collaborate over the years to carry out its mission. In its fullness, the new tourism site and research institute will provide ancestral research, family heritage gatherings, and related experiences that connect home values with educational and societal values to elevate thousands of African Americans’ chosen ancestral self-identities via self-crafted stories dominating at a U.S. genealogy tourism industry site of, by, and for us. Deeply understanding African Americans’ self-created, ancestor-based identities and displaying those selves and ancestors at a family heritage gathering and research site help to meet African Americans’ demand that the heritage tourism industry provide belonging to known ancestors in the voices these visitors choose.

Unlike the major heritage tourism sites that take cues from historians, politicians, and activists who favor Black trauma stories, the HBCUHeritageHome.com is part of the sustained

movement in heritage tourism to focus on visitors' specific cultural traditions and apply best practices in response to these visitors' market demand (Lynch, 2013; Rosenhouse, 2015; Schnee, 2011; Slack, 2008; Wallace, 1996). As such, the new site boasts features of other modern museums, such as industrial museums (Timothy, 2011) and museums about the history of education (University of South Carolina, n.d.). Via the HBCUHeritageHome.com, African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast families have the means to exercise our desire for a family heritage gathering site purposely designed to display our chosen ancestral stories. Here we find the tourism liberation that scholars say is possible (Atwater & Herndon, 2003). Specifically, by selecting the stories published in our family heritage books as genealogy tourism fodder, members of the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community claim our chosen ancestral storytelling in public memory. By claiming our stories for genealogy tourism, we are moving assertively into the growing space of user-supplied exhibits at created sites of memory where the creators' heroes are both our story subjects and our ancestors (Clifford, 1997; Macdonald, 1997; Stanton, 2006; Wallace, 1996). Full utilization of the new site's services permits for my study population families, at an even higher level, the embodiment of ancestral joy and ancestral self-identity that authors of the herein studied African-ancestored published genealogies exhibit in their printed pages.

With all design and content created by the families who own the site and whose ancestors' stories are told at the site, the HBCUHeritageHome.com will focus on traditional positive stories about scores of personal ancestors' and thousands of cultural ancestors' successes. It will immerse visitors in ancestors' educational experiences at home and as extended to the higher education world, including at HBCUs (Bec et al., 2019). Here ancestors enacting their cherished home values and customs will serve as model behavioral heroes about whom

descendant families easily access underlying documents for further research. Also at the HBCUHeritageHome.com, descendant families will utilize the site's sufficient homey space, time, and other services to luxuriously and nostalgically perform ancestral selves. Guests will linger at our leisure in the beauty and splendor of the site's landscape and building architecture, designed to be awe-inspiring (Bourdieu & Darbel, 1991; Duncan & Wallach, 1980; Zukin, 1995), as are God and the ancestors.

The new institution will archive, research, exhibit, and connect users to freely available ancestral higher education records, family papers collections, published African American genealogies, and related materials for perpetually understanding and increasing African American positive identity via the genealogy genre. The site will implement the most innovative techniques for sustainable family heritage gathering and institution stewardship. The HBCUHeritageHome.com specifically serves the needs of African American family heritage gatherers, of scholarly researchers of all things related to African American genealogies, and of people who honor and support African American genealogy enthusiasts and scholars in three key ways dictated by my genealogies content analysis. These are via a research institute, a library and archives, and a family heritage gathering complex, each explained in order below.

### **5.1 Research Institute**

Reflecting the Deep Roots theme of the Agapic Agency Theory of how 21st-century African American published genealogies operate, the HBCUHeritageHome.com's research institute is infused with ancestral honor. To elevate these books to the status of an ongoing think tank research object for social development is the height of honor. That these books deserve this kind of intense, ongoing study and discussion makes them and members of the owner families

written about in the books heroes before study on them even begins. Ancestral heroism is the first step in the agapic agency process. The institute is the think tank where academicians ply our trade by ferreting out the fertile roots of African-ancestored life in all its splendor to be perpetually analyzed as the spiritual grounding for descendants' further interpretation of ancestral lives. Through the institute that could affiliate with a higher education institution, scholars compete for academic research fellowships and contracts to explore African American published genealogies and related work. This think tank research leads to institutional reports, public and private curricula and other educational programming, academic journal articles, special journal editions, digital humanities exhibits, and other scholarly output.

The educational programming provides research and evidenced-based training and activities to maximize positive ancestral self-identity among African-ancestored Americans, wherever we are. Training places are unlimited, including schools, colleges, prisons, churches, and homes. Training topics include pedagogy, communication, and family heritage research. Training is for descendants directly and all who impact descendants' lives, including teachers, administrators, family members, and other responsible parties. Hosting undergraduate, graduate, postdoctoral, and faculty fellowships for scholars of African American genealogy research furthers the HBCUHeritageHome.com's educational and charitable purpose by increasing the general public's and the academy's number of scholars studying and general understanding of African American family heritage and what to emphasize for optimal success. These scholars also represent a pipeline for higher education faculty diversity as they demonstrate skill in innovative research based on holdings in the site's library and archives. The overall atmosphere of elevated ancestors created at the think tank provides the context for examining records at the institute's library and archives.

## 5.2 Library and Archives

The Library and archives is where visitors will carry out the Deep Knowledge theme of the Agapic Agency Theory of published African American genealogies. While scholars compete for research grants through the HBCUHeritageHome.com's research institute, African-ancestored families will secure genealogy book publishing/family reunion grants to fully utilize the library and archives as well as the genealogy tourism lodging and exhibition spaces explained below. Families' grant application fees will reflect their ownership in the site. This capital and psychological asset is held in trust for all legatees, for current and future family members' benefit. Knowing they have a rich financial and knowledge ancestral bequest permits some people to act out/act into that richness. The library and archives' resources will cover the range of information descendants and scholars require to understand and bequeath ancestral educational experiences that increase the family trust fund (Morgan, 2010). These resources include collected, curated, digitized, and audioized genealogy books; family papers; and higher education records. The library and archives will utilize the latest technologies to provide interactive online and physical resources.

Given that the Library of Congress' bibliography of African American genealogies and related books, published in 2009 and updated in 2020, contains only two hundred twenty-three definitive African American genealogies (Connor & Johnson, 2009; Johnson, 2020), among an estimated 1,100 possibilities, an acquisition priority for the HBCUHeritageHome.com's library and archives is all extant African-ancestored published genealogy books, in hard copy and digital form. Some of these books are scattered throughout collections at the Allen County Public Library in Fort Wayne, Indiana, the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture in Charleston, South Carolina, the Wilson Library in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, the

Newberry Library in Chicago, the Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland, Ohio, and the New York Public Library in New York City, including at its Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Additionally, the Auburn Avenue Research Library in Atlanta holds a unique set of books that could be categorized as genealogies. These are family reunion booklets that have been left behind at local hotels from family reunions and otherwise donated. These booklets in the tens and hundreds of pages then are library bound in hard covers for long-term preservation. A special exhibit and other programming around these books is in the planning stage. In addition to all extant African American genealogies, other collecting and curating items for family and scholar research at the HBCUHeritageHome.com's library and archives include family songs (See Appendix B for examples), family Bibles, Bibles and textbooks of early African American education, African American family papers, and the newly-published African American genealogies the site helps families produce, resulting from successful family grant applications.

The HBCUHeritageHome.com helps families produce heritage books so that more families can experience the Agapic agency process authors of the studied genealogies experience. That the great benefit accruing to subject family members derives not only from researching family heritage stories but also from physically displaying and revisiting the stories in book form in home libraries, living rooms, and other reading and gathering spaces is evidenced in part by both the Bible's and Gates' *Finding Your Roots* program's insistence on providing book forms of genealogies. In the case of Gates' *Finding Your Roots* program, the show gives each genealogy research subject a hardcover book called *The Book of Life*, documenting the show's findings about the guest's family (NHPBS, 2023). Thus, the in-person experience and video record the show provides for families is deemed insufficient, incomplete

without the hardcover book. Also, among the books analyzed for the current study and other known African-ancestored published genealogies are hardcover books with the visual appeal to be displayed in prominent places in home libraries and on coffee tables, to be regularly consulted and discussed by family members. Therefore, to further the benefit of published family heritage books for each member of African-ancestored families, the HBCUHeritageHome.com is committed to an interactive online and travel process that helps families, especially with authors outside of the academy, publish these books at rates of hundreds per year in beautiful form that encourages each member of extended families to engage with the books.

The library and archives at the HBCUHeritageHome.com engages in all activities concerned with amassing, preserving, curating, and availing access to hard copy and digital formats of ancestral higher education records, published African American genealogies, hard copy and digital scans of African American family papers collections, and related materials. Availing these resources furthers the HBCUHeritageHome.com's educational and charitable purpose by increasing the supply and accessibility of fodder for inspiring, identity-elevating, African American published genealogies. Spiritually infused by our family heritage books, African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast families then are ready to retell, sing, the ancestral stories at the HBCUHeritageHome.com's family heritage gathering complex.

### **5.3 Family Heritage Gathering Complex**

Genealogy Tourism at its best culminates in family reunions, in the warmth and traditions of home. This is where family members carry out the Deep Self theme that maximally self-actualizes in tourism form. In a typical ancestral self-actualization process, after individuals and small groups of family members travel to gather information, we use the information and

experiences to further develop ancestral stories, and we then optimally share the stories at various venues and in various formats with broader numbers of family members, such as at family reunions. Therefore, the family heritage gathering complex is key among the three components of the HBCUHeritageHome.com. Even while spending \$109 billion on U.S. tourism in 2019, up 73 percent from \$63 billion in 2018 (MMGY, 2021; Travel Pulse, 2018), African Americans lacked an ideal family heritage gathering site prior to the HBCUHeritageHome.com. Genealogy tourism families utilize the site's homey space, time, gift shops, eateries, and other provided services to indulgently perform ancestral selves for days at a time at the family heritage gathering complex. As is the aura in the *A Banjo Song* poem, Deep Self at home with loving kin, all singing the ancestral honor songs, is where one arrives at the HBCUHeritageHome.com's genealogy tourism complex.

Given that no one can speak better for and about African-ancestored families than these families ourselves, each family exhibits and embodies our own stories from our published genealogy books at the family heritage gathering complex. Here descendants reenact self-selected ancestral hero experiences in an educational setting as opposed to reenacting ancestral slavery horror and homey experiences on a site known for slavery, such as a plantation, thus increasing descendant participation and reducing outsider denunciation. Becoming the sole story providers/owners is the key feature of this space that African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts were missing in the U.S. genealogy tourism industry prior to my research. Rather than historians telling our stories for other audiences with a focus of slavery's horrors and our chosen stories competing with others' preferred stories, as is typical at national and world heritage tourism sites that tell stories of African-ancestored people, this site tells stories of, by, and for descendants with a focus on ancestral honors.

In all, having the stories of more than two hundred-fifty HBCUs and African American education in general explored at a single site as here described incorporates many of the features of heritage tourism that scholars say are crucial for site success. These features include enlightening visitors about ourselves, strengthening patriotism, addressing all senses and the imagination, and, most importantly, exercising user/provider agency to navigate the politics and social structures of historical interpretation and current representation (Brown, 1995; Timothy, 2011; Wallace, 1996). Capitalizing on any success sites of slavery horror have in improving African-ancestored people's lives, the HBCUHeritageHome.com's crucial role is successfully navigating the politics and social mores of the U.S. genealogy tourism industry's historical interpretation and current representation of African Americans, which primarily is via slavery horror stories. The HBCUHeritageHome.com is for the sake of positive African-ancestored identity creation and maintenance for generations to come. As I settle into this work of hearth and home, I share below key conclusions of this years-long praxis research project. My conclusions cover my findings and application, their wider usefulness, and further research.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS: FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

The study herein presented examines and sustainably resolves the problem of African Americans inadequately seeing ancestral self-identities reflected in U.S. genealogy tourism exhibits about specific ancestors with whom we claim domiciled belonging. This is a national communication and intergenerational family communication mezzo-level problem. The problem also has international macro dimensions, as African American travelers also frequently are unsuccessful when seeking genealogical home at global slavery tourism sites around the world (Dillette, 2021; Florida International University, 2015; Hartman, 2007). The resolution is the HBCUHeritageHome.com African American genealogy tourism and research site, which centers African-ancestored published genealogies as the source of genealogy tourism exhibits and research grounded in the African American education experience.

These are the questions for which I applied the answers to establish the HBCUHeritageHome.com African American genealogy tourism site and research institute as a solution to African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts inadequately seeing our chosen ancestral self-identities reflected at the U.S. genealogy tourism sites to which we provide stories and revenues:

RQ: How do African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent **ancestral self-identity** in 21st-century published genealogies?

RQ1: How do African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent **colonial and antebellum U.S. enslaved and free people of African descent** in 21st-century published genealogies?

RQ2: How do African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent **social/cultural capital** in 21st-century published genealogies?

RQ3: How do African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts represent **ancestral honor and inheritances** in 21st-century published genealogies?

Previous and other contemporary attempts to resolve this problem focus on increasing slavery horror stories presented at U.S. heritage tourism sites, including at plantations. These attempts fail to capture African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts' ancestral self-identity needs because the proffered solutions do not prioritize African-ancestored people's chosen ancestral storytelling, as presented in this population's published genealogies. Understanding and applying how stories from 21st-century African-ancestored published genealogies work permitted me to design with the African-ancestored genealogy community a major genealogy tourism and research site to lead in studying, producing, and exhibiting Black genealogy books.

Via a content analysis and application research method, I have come to understand and implement home-grounded ancestral self-identity stories. Specifically, I have added to the world's knowledge an understanding of what African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts seek in published family heritage books, how we achieve it, and how we and even more people can achieve it at a genealogy tourism and research institute. I understand the genealogy book identity process as a three-part harmony expressed in low pitch. The clear-voiced, soothing sound is achieved by combining ancestral honor, as expressed in the authoritative voice of the Grace of God or some other spiritual voice, with experiential research to lead to the most positive ancestral self-identity.

The Agapic Agency Theory explains how this ancestral self-identity process works in the pages of African-ancestored genealogies published in the 21st century. Along with other members of the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community, I translated this process to optimal African American genealogy tourism experiences at the HBCUHeritageHome.com. The Agapic Agency Theory explains how stories in 21st-century published African-ancestored genealogies provide the power of the direction of love. Home is the goal indicated by the Agapic

Agency Theory. The goal is achieved by maximally revering specific relational ancestors, finding the heroism in their lives; interpreting ancestral records so as to maximally retain ancestral elevation; then lowering pitch in retelling the stories, thereby experiencing positive ancestral self-identity. Understanding how the process works permits identifying and including any inputs missing from the process. Therefore, prescriptively speaking, if Deep Roots—big, heroic ancestral home memories—are missing, one must create them. Only with spirit-infused ancestors can one then gain the kind of Deep Knowledge, not skewed toward others' negative portrayals, which is acquired by reading the record and experiencing life through the Deep Roots of uplifting ancestral spirit. This prescription includes examining inherently uplifting ancestral records, as education records often are. Then one can achieve maximum ancestral self-identity, the Deep Self, enacted and embodied in all one does and is, including during genealogy tourism.

Also prescriptively, just as songs well explain the Deep Roots, Deep Knowledge, and Deep Self themes as aggregated from the codes and concepts I detected in the studied genealogies, so too do songs work to reinforce the Agapic Agency Theory while providing content for singing the ancestors. Given the ancestrally-infused author well-being expressed in the studied books and the significant role of songs in understanding these books, my findings augur for African-ancestored families to make it our habit, our tradition, to create and publish genealogy books and ancestor-honoring songs. These books and songs are central in honoring the ancestors at the [HBCUHeritageHome.com](http://HBCUHeritageHome.com). They join other creative expressions such as painting, sewing, ceramics, woodworking, and stone etching, as ways of honoring ancestors at the site.

Overall, the African-ancestored published genealogy of the 21st century is its own book genre, understudied and thus still minimally understood by racial social justice activists and

scholars. Some activists and scholars promote stories of who has done whom wrong and how egregiously so (Abram, 2005; Horton, 2009/2006; Sandell, 1998; Timothy, 2011). They choose this storyline as a weapon to pierce the American foundational story of slavery and colonialism. Weaponized storylines are explained by thanatourism, which focuses on the most vile, racist, ugly parts of African-ancestored people's heritage stories. At the same time, my work and that of other social justice activists and scholars seeks positive recognition of African American lives.

Positive recognition at genealogy tourism sites comes from stories of the most beautiful parts of African American agency in building entities that aid family and larger community, such as positive personal relationships, homes, roads, extended families, schools, churches, and uplifting cultural traditions. African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts elevate these stories in our published genealogies. Positive stories about ancestral life on college campuses particularly connect African Americans' stories to those of one of our greatest documented familial, cultural, and social values: higher education. This is a realm of our lives that has produced metric tons of records, most that have yet to be accessed by descendants for uplifting ancestral stories. Descendants reenacting self-selected ancestral hero experiences in an educational setting as opposed to reenacting ancestral slavery horror experiences on a plantation site increases descendant participation and reduces opportunity for stirring outsiders' ire. Thus, the [HBCUHeritagehome.com](http://HBCUHeritagehome.com) avails and showcases the stories in these records in the ways descendants choose and in ways that neither are dependent upon nor particularly repel outsider approval.

The herein detailed content analysis and application research on selected ancestral self-identity stories in 21st-century African American published genealogies serves beneficiaries well beyond the African-ancestored genealogy tourism community. Beneficiaries include educators at

both the college and secondary levels, for instance, as they acquire story paths for culturally responsive online and in-person family heritage instruction that is engaging for everyone and uplifting in particular for African American students (Lewis et al., 2020). The next section discusses in more detail a range of benefits of my well-executed work, even amid the study's limitations.

## **6.1 Benefits and Limitations of This Research**

I accomplished my mission to provide significant benefits for others through my research. I accomplished my mission by resolving the ongoing problem of African Americans inadequately seeing ancestral self-identities reflected in U.S. genealogy tourism exhibits about specific ancestors with whom we claim domiciled belonging. Overall, as genealogy research, coursework, and cultural practice extend across the African American community and both secondary and post-secondary curricula (Bottero, 2015; Cross, 2020; Driessnack, 2017; Jacobson, 1986; Keischnick, 2022; Sturdevant, 2020), my research offers significant academic, social, cultural, and economic benefits. These benefits are explained in turn below.

### ***6.1.1 Benefits for the Academy***

The overall scholarly significance of my research is that it answers Elaine B. Richardson and Ronald L. Jackson's (2004) long-term call among calls of other leaders in African American rhetoric to expand the core canon of Black rhetorical forms and understandings thereof to focus on this population's identity-creation and sharing. My study expands Black rhetorical theory and practice to include the published and exhibited African-ancestored genealogy as a distinct genre form central in identity communication. In addition to broadening the canon and its overall

conceptualization to include African-ancestored genealogical performance, my work provides the academy across disciplines an alternative way of understanding African-ancestored genealogical identity.

The alternative way of understanding African-ancestored genealogical identity is through the womanist framework of Black women's self-sufficient power of God's love (Jackson, 2003; Mary Holmes Seminary, 1906; Phillips, 2006). This framework permitted me to develop the Agapic Agency Theory to explain the ancestral self-identity process in 21st-century African-ancestored published genealogies. Developing the Agapic Agency Theory to explain my studied texts was possible because I grounded the theory in the texts' positive storylines as opposed to assessed phenomena through common critical lenses that prioritize oppression and trauma (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Hamburger et al., 2020; Leys, 2000; Owen & Ehrenhaus, 2014; UCLA, 2009, 2021; Womack, 2016). The new lens was necessary because the trauma lens often does not apply to African-ancestored people's self-conceptions (Ellis, 2020) and does not apply in understanding genealogy book writing. My utilization of an illuminating framework of the agency of love and development of an effective theory for understanding the important yet not widely understood 21st-century African-ancestored published genealogy genre are hallmarks of my research.

My identity research pioneers in examining genre-wide self-conceptions in African American published genealogies, thereby providing understanding of ancestral honor and inheritances as represented by U.S. antebellum enslaved people's descendants. This knowledge is a particularly useful contribution to the positive communication field and broader academy in part because these relevant African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast voices by genealogy definition focus on proclaiming for family members and interested others family stories shown to

correlate with family members' well-being (Hendry & Ledbetter, 2017; Jones & Ackerman, 2018; Leykin, 2015; Wagner, 2006; Zerubavel, 1995, 2012). The academy, by contrast, does not yet and by relational definition never can value African-ancestored positive stories as descendants do.

Communication scholar and advisor on my research Patricia G. Davis (2016) is a leader in the prevailing academic understanding that descendants of U.S. enslaved people's choice to focus on uplifting ancestral memories complicates our understandings of how our family histories fit in with more generalized memories of enslavement. In her award-winning work *Laying Claim*, Davis says family memories that offer a "significant discursive focus" on such themes as "privileging a positive view," "uplift," "triumphalism," "moral boosterism," and "celebratory orientation" is discourse that "obscures the systemic and intrapersonal violence, familial separation, sexual coercion, insurmountable economic burdens, and social death characteristic of enslavement and its legacy" (p. 146). But I find in our published genealogies that instead of ignoring or obscuring ugly, descendants of U.S. enslaved people put ugly in its place. Ugly is a part of our world. It is not our world. Beauty is our world with parts of ugly in it. Infused with the ancestral heroism in these books, we are socially alive, able to focus on our positive legacies in retelling uplifting stories for our own and our family members' well-being while being clear-eyed about both racial and other challenges and how to surmount them in part by effectively utilizing social capital.

As descendants of U.S. enslaved people's ancestral memories increase in popularity, other scholars via my research can further understand the African-ancestored genealogy genre's positive communication strategy, thus broadening the evidentiary foundation for upcoming research and criticism on African American identity representation. Also relevant to the

communication discipline is that as my research analyzes and applies public history site story selection at the family mezzo level, it is a particular contribution in a discipline where research on plantation tourism, including African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast families' plantation tourism, is minimal. Also for the communication discipline, my research advances the so far limited practice of scholarship being directly applied in industry.

Most beneficial in the long term for the academy is the pipeline my work will provide for African American faculty and students to racially and ideologically diversify higher education (Little, 2014; Skipper et al., 2017). This pipeline is through the research institute resulting from my textual content analysis and application. The research institute is a think tank (GSU ISC, 2020; GSU RCA, n.d.; Highlander, n.d.; SBCA, n.d.). The think tank includes visiting professorships; faculty, post-doctoral, and graduate research fellowships; and undergraduate scholarships for those who advance the site's transdisciplinary research about the African-ancestored genealogy genre of positive African American communication. The pipeline includes people adept at teaching and learning about cultural stories in public memory (Foster, 2018a; Greer & Grobman, 2016). It also includes people who can transfer to other arenas African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts' effective strategy for reaching maximally positive ancestral self-identity, competence, and service. This pipeline produces researchers and educators for people across the demographic spectrum, including for people of the youngest to the oldest ages. Recent social research and popular discussion of African American studies course frameworks and lackluster African American educational achievement (Keengwe, 2023) affirm that the scholarly benefit of effectively teaching U.S. slavery's descendants is intertwined with my work's primary benefits for society.

### ***6.1.2 Benefits for Society***

The well-being via positive ancestral self-identity of African-ancestored Americans of all ages, for the ages, is the greatest social benefit of my work. The knowledge I have produced about how ancestral stories work in African American genealogies and how effectively to apply these stories in tourism and sustainable research paves the way for further effective well-being creation via family history education. My work yields massively increased family heritage knowledge, a proven correlate to well-being (Duke, et al., 2008; Fivush et al., 2008, 2010). By focusing on education, the application of my work honors the request of W. E. B. Du Bois to celebrate education as the gateway to Black freedom. The genealogy tourism stories that emerge from this research also are time-sensitively significant in the 21st-century age of increased attention to heritage representation in the battle for U.S. racial social justice reform.

In recent years alone, the identity representation battle has manifested in people toppling monuments to Confederates and other violence (Elgat, 2017; Taylor, 2020). Underscoring this social significance, “improper management of collective memory could lead to the resurgence of conflict, or even to a cycle of revenge wherein past wounds justify present violence” (Licata et al., 2007, p. 563). My research to optimally reflect African American self-selected identity in U.S. genealogy tourism effectively manages memory in a way that Black families say boosts knowledge and confidence within our young. The aim is for the young then to be not prepared for revenge but equipped to learn and do even more good. Black families hereby serve ourselves and society. Businesses, philanthropies, and other entities that want to connect their brands and resources with and most effectively financially support stories that correlate with positive African American ancestral self-identity also are benefitted by the HBCUHeritageHome.com as a social partner. The HBCUHeritageHome.com is a service to society to the extent it correlates

with adding productive U.S. citizens. Because of the HBCUHeritageHome.com's user ownership, endowment funding, and correlation with positive intergenerational identity, the benefits of my research are long term. The HBCUHeritageHome.com accords with contemporary U.S. educational needs, Du Bois' wish for education as foundational in Black self-understanding, and the sober nature of the problem of racial social injustice in public memory. As significant as the social benefits of my research are, even these social affordances are not its greatest benefits.

### ***6.1.3 Benefits for African-ancestored Genealogy Tourists***

The so-far stated scholarly and social significance of my work is sufficient for standard research benefits. Yet, the pragmatic and other components of my worldview prevented me from deeming my research design complete if it did not include application and the application benefits did not most inure to the people whose stories I studied. Therefore, the ultimate benefits of my research are the economic gains enabling site decision-making and the cultural gains enabling maximally positive ancestral self-identity that accrue to the population I serve. Achieving benefits for this population is why my research culminates in my establishing with this population a U.S. genealogy tourism site and research institute focused on African Americans' chosen collective genealogical representations. The created U.S. genealogy tourism site and research institute is the HBCUHeritageHome.com, of, by, and for families in the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast population. The site is incorporated as a nonprofit organization, is developing over the next several years for public rollout, and perpetually will develop to continuously satisfy African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts' families desires. The site's key features are family-provided stories and state-of-the-art best practices in genealogy

tourism, including technological innovations (Baggio & Baggio, 2020; Bec et al., 2019; Han et al., 2021). In the 21st century, technological innovation in genealogy tourism is standard fare, part of best practices in enabling sites to meet consumers' needs.

Some scholars criticize genealogy as reinforcing ancestry-based hierarchies, monetizing the near sacred, and elevating groups over individuals (Hjorthén, 2022; Morgan, 2021; Saunders, 2023). The current most celebrated scholar on American genealogical history is Francesca Morgan (2021), a history professor at Northeastern Illinois University, who stresses that African-ancestored people initially were and still are limited in our ability to complete genealogies. We are limited, she says, in the evidence bases, especially textual records and roots travel, available to researchers of African ancestry versus researchers of white ancestry because of deficiencies in social networks, time, knowledge, and financial resources. While these deficiencies reinforce ancestry-based hierarchies, she says, they do not prevent the pursuit of family history as an act of defiance in a racist world. We at the HBCUHeritageHome.com also say that because of our design strategy, African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts will be able to complete published genealogies and tourism stories because of our assistance in providing the social network of likeminded families, sufficient time for research and family gatherings, and education and training from practitioners and scholars. These services will be provided at the affordable price of the family grant application fee, which transforms site users to site owners and endowment builders, as well as consumers. Users of sites becoming the providers of those sites is a growing trend in heritage tourism (Clifford, 1997; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; Macdonald, 1997; Mijnheer & Gamble, 2022; Rosoff, 2003; Stanton, 2006; Timothy, 2011; Zhang et al., 2018). This trend mitigates ancestry-based hierarchies, monetizing the near sacred for traditional owners' benefit, and elevating dominant groups over everyday hero individuals.

As the cultural and economic engine for African American genealogy tourism, the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast population is prioritized in every facet of my research. Deeply understanding African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts' self-created, ancestor-based identities and displaying those selves and ancestors at a genealogy tourism site help to meet African American travelers' demand that the tourism industry "stop taking them for granted" (Marcus, 2020, para. 1). A major U.S. genealogy tourism site and research institute that focuses on reflecting African Americans' nostalgic ancestral self-identities is the ultimate solution herein presented to address the communication mezzo-level problem of African American genealogy tourists heretofore inadequately seeing our chosen genealogical self-identities reflected in the U.S. genealogy tourism industry. In tracking the process of arriving at this ultimate solution, the herein detailed research provides insights about and implications for optimal African American genealogy tourism experiences. These insights are based upon results of the current study and both fill a gap in and are otherwise grounded in existing literature. While I, like other researchers, want to inspire confidence in myself and my readers that I have come to the most plausible and useful understanding of my data, I also understand that no amount of quality control can surmount all methodological and other limitations.

#### ***6.1.4 Limitations***

The findings herein presented are known to be applicable only to my studied set of books. These books are written in the 21st century by people in the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community. The current African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community primarily includes men and women, mostly women, age fifty-five and older who are highly educated and have demonstrated the other requisite monetary and spiritual resources and

attributes to complete a genealogy book. These authors write mostly about Christian ancestors. I present no evidence that the ancestral self-identity process in the books I studied is applicable to African-ancestored genealogies written by authors in other age, gender, religious, and income groups or in times other than the 21st century. Other racial social justice activists and scholars who currently seek usefulness to African-ancestored communities by focusing on the ugliness and strife in African ancestry can consider my findings' applicability in other demographics and times. In addition to limitations in applicability, limitations in research design also impact my research.

Given that researcher-stakeholder relationships require a significant amount of time to build, maintain, and effectively utilize, a common limitation of applied research is that insufficient time is devoted to building a working team in conjunction with stakeholders (Canfield et al., 2022). I mitigated this limitation by having a relationship with my stakeholder community long before the formal research began and then including this community from the very beginning of the formal process. Because we together identified the problem we were going to solve, we all were committed to solving it. This commitment now extends beyond the end of my dissertation to full development and long-term sustainability of our agreed upon solution of the HBCUHeritageHome.com. My population embeddedness and employment of cultural responsiveness throughout the research process—from initial idea to solution advancing African Americans' self-proclaimed identities—permitted respect for and understanding of frequently externally misunderstood nuances of the African American experient population under study (Rakow, 2011; Rodriguez et al., 2011). This means I was able to intricately understand and ferret out for scrutiny elements of genealogies that may elude other researchers not so embedded, gleaning substantial amounts of information and understanding from any lesser amounts of data.

Another limitation of this kind of research is reviewers have limited or no access to stakeholders when assessing the efficacy of a solution. I mitigate this limitation by both being a stakeholder myself and including other stakeholder voices in my text for reviewer analysis.

In addition to the key common limitation of underutilization of stakeholders by both researchers and reviewers in solutions-driven, user-participation research, the content analysis portion of my research also harbors significant inherent limitations. The first limitation of my qualitative analysis work is that to understand it, one must forgo the CRT lens that often colors research related to African Americans, given that it does not apply here, just as it does not apply in some other African American identity inquiries (Ellis, 2020). Under the CRT approach, scholars examine “institutions so that, ultimately, the public can hold [the institutions] accountable for harmful outcomes” (Benjamin, 2019, p. 422). I minimized this limitation in my research by explaining and utilizing the Agapic Agency Theory, as it captures some of what CRT and trauma frameworks do not. Through the agapic agency lens, one can see African American family stories in such a way as to closely examine the stories’ direct beneficial outcomes, for which people hold ourselves and our God accountable.

That my findings, analysis, interpretations, and conclusions are understood via agapic agency could leave some who understand African American life through CRT and trauma theory lenses thinking that people who live by uplifting stories are accepting, reinforcing, and perpetuating unjust social conditions (Baber, 2017; Bell, 2019; Crenshaw, 1989). To minimize this limitation, temporary suspension of the CRT framework is necessary while trying to understand my work. Given how widespread this theory is in attempting to explain Black life, it is a major limitation of my work that a CRT lens cannot be used to understand it. So long as one sees the world through the lens of Black subjectivity in power relations, a genealogy story’s

value is measured by what it does to identify, absolve, or punish victimizers rather than by what it does to catalyze or thwart African American positive ancestral self-identities.

Should readers later measure the value of stories by what they directly do for African Americans' positive development, inner development that manifests itself in outer development—keeping the focus on my study population—what African American genealogy enthusiasts see in our family histories and what I explain and amplify in the herein detailed research may become more widely incorporated into understandings of positive reality worthy of expanding. Additionally, my positionality, clearly stated in Chapter 3, should go far in disavowing that I accept, reinforce, or perpetuate unjust social conditions. Contrary to continuing unjust social conditions, reducing such conditions has resulted from my research, writing, and teaching career to date, and I expect such reduction to result from my dissertation and subsequent research.

Some scholars also think hedging my ethical commitments and worldview would be an effective strategy to shield my work from CRT adherents' criticisms. Instead, I further mitigate the limitation of others' misunderstanding by having no fear in clearly stating and claiming my ethical commitments and worldview and making no universal statements about applicability to other populations in assessing my population's values exemplified, reinforced, and perpetuated through published genealogies at the [HBCUHeritageHome.com](http://HBCUHeritageHome.com). Further projecting my population's genealogical voices that heretofore were little understood both within and outside themselves into the public sphere contributes to rather than limits a well-rounded view of African American life. My research permits deep understanding of my population's work and offers this population's identity-shaping genealogy strategies for others to examine, emulate, critique, and otherwise engage.

Among the other major challenges of content analysis is that documents can be difficult to find. I mitigated this weakness by choosing as objects of study genealogies which my longstanding embedded membership in the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community helped me procure. Another major limitation of analyzing social texts is that the veracity of the writing and writer bias is not necessarily discernable or eliminable. I turn this typical limitation into an asset by being concerned with what the texts subjectively mean for the subject families rather than with the texts' objective factual accuracy. Another inherent limitation of qualitative content analysis is the lack of clarity among researchers in this area about what kind of saturation to pursue, why, and when it is reached (Marshall et al., 2013). To mitigate this limitation, I adopted the general idea in this field of research that "any qualitative sample size at...more than 30 in-depth interviews could be considered large and would require justification" (Boddy, 2016, p. 429). I, thus, expected I would reach the two kinds of saturation appropriate for my study by thirty books. When I reached theoretical saturation at twelve books and inductive thematic saturation at twenty books, I further mitigated the saturation drawbacks of the content analysis method by exercising the best practice of coding several more sources to double-confirm (Yang et al., 2016, p. 511) that I had reached inductive thematic saturation, which was at twenty-three books.

Other drawbacks/criticisms of content analysis include organizational challenges of dealing with copious amounts of qualitative data, developing a coding strategy that other researchers can understand and implement, following the data through a long and recursive analysis process, and arriving at a plausible interpretation that rings true for population members in and outside of the set of study participants and engages with the literature. To address inherent organization and analysis challenges, I created and implemented an effective plan to get the texts

into digital and otherwise analyzable form, designed an efficient paper and electronic data input and analysis system, and well explained my coding process. This quality assurance plan includes focusing on reflexivity, having population members review the information for accuracy, and connecting my findings with multiple studies of the same phenomenon of collective African American intergenerational family stories and other relevant research.

Potential limitations herein named and unnamed notwithstanding, the significance and implications of my research questions, the appropriateness of my selected method, and my research abilities permitted findings that in a revolutionary way aid my population, the academy, and others. I have laid the groundwork for maximum positive benefit of African-ancestored published genealogies in U.S. genealogy tourism. I have done so by conducting the undergirding research and co-establishing the optimal site for African Americans' chosen ancestral representation in U.S. genealogy tourism and research. The undergirding research explains my population's uplift techniques through story and demonstrates how the self-selected stories serve in creating a space for further study and implementation of the stories. My work aids in understanding the constructs, meaning mechanisms, and application of African American genealogical identity-shaping for their benefit in providing ideal genealogy tourism for the African-ancestored genealogy enthusiast community.

Relying on a wide body of personal relationships and literature, I well designed a research project that yields both scholarly and socially significant knowledge production and action. My findings most benefit my study population, for, as anthropologist and critical heritage scholar Yujie Zhu (2021) says in *Heritage Tourism: From Problems to Possibilities*, “(m)ismanaged development of heritage tourism might lead to neoliberal injustice in the forms of economic exploitation and dispossession” because “the ethics of heritage tourism are closely

associated with the well-being and self-determination of communities” (p. 62). The benefits and limitations of my research combine both to permit experiential understanding of 21st-century African-ancestored published genealogies, with their ancestor heroism and attention to education, and to leave unanswered important other questions related to use of African-ancestored published genealogies beyond the herein laid solid foundation. Therefore, I propose several recommendations for further research.

## **6.2 Recommendations for Further Research**

Previous research has made clear that by combining genealogy’s tourism and critical/cultural contexts, “future research could establish the challenges and opportunities of developing a sense of place based not only on generic historical narratives and national identity, but also on very personal and emotional stories where a desire to connect with current local traditions, culture and everyday life is also important” (Mehtiyeva & Prince, 2020, p. 101). The textual content analysis and application I herein present is in part an answer to this call for future research. Still, even as I have established a broader opportunity for African American published genealogies to serve as story fodder in U.S. genealogy tourism, remaining to be established by future research are even more of the particulars of how and why these books work for Black family members as they do.

Given the demonstrated importance of African-ancestored genealogy books in African American ancestral identity-making, much more needs to be known about how these books began and have evolved over time, how they work at the story level and at the artifact level within homes, how they are created, and how they are exhibited. Increased knowledge of these processes could provide streamlining and intervention avenues to increase the substance and

breadth of these books' positive identity-shaping impact. The HBCUHeritageHome.com's ongoing research will address these and other key issues in Black family identity-making. Site organizers "share the aspiration to enhance the [communication] field's practical and theoretical relevance while increasing its empirical rigor, not merely for the field itself but in the larger interdisciplinary dialogue concerning politics and economy, culture and nature, human and technology, society and world" (Fuchs & Qiu, 2018, p. 230). As more lines of research are explored, some deserve particular attention.

It is noteworthy, for instance, that I analyzed only twenty-three of the estimated 1,100 published African American genealogies. Analyzing more genealogies in more varied ways, including quantitative research, will yield greater implementable understandings. Further research if not a big data census on these books, further examination of other documents and artifacts that express agapic love, and particularly further examination of this love as expressed in country/banjo music, critically acclaimed novels by African Americans, and recorded words by the enslaved could contribute to advancing construction and application of the Agapic Agency Theory at work in benefitting Black lives in a variety of contexts.

Also, I analyzed the books only for overarching themes, not for granular detail of stories. Not presenting here in my manuscript more of the text of the studied genealogies and not analyzing these books at the story level limits knowledge of the specifics of what stories are in these genealogies and how specific stories work. Therefore, further research in these areas, particularly by rhetorical analysis, is warranted. It also is noteworthy and demanding of further inquiry that the voices of African-ancestored published genealogies, mostly Black women, have until now been only minimally examined and applied as U.S. genealogy tourism storytellers. Our womanist wisdom remains mostly at home even as heritage tourism scholarship focuses on

public memory agency and on growth in the industry of increasingly user-provided songs and stories to honor ancestors in public memory.

My content analysis findings and application, based on the herein detailed research on 21st-century African-ancestored published genealogies, generally point to a need for additional positive communication research, particularly in the family heritage realm, as positive communication is what the studied books use. A current key player in the positive communication field, U.S. Black joy scholar Tara A. Bynum (2023) argues that the “focus of scholars on early African Americans to date has been on one story: trauma. The truth is so much more nuanced than that” (paras. 2, 3):

[O]ne might conclude that the primary work of the rhetoric produced by African Americans has been essentially in protest against [exploitation, marginalization, isolation, degradation, and annihilation], thereby utilizing all of the verbal skills at their command to mount a verbal assault upon such conditions in the hope of challenging, persuading, cajoling, frustrating, exhausting, and so on in order to prepare the ground for the seeds of Black liberation. Dominant and necessary as this rhetorical approach has been in the struggle of a people, where the word has been their primary defensive and offensive weapon, a closer look into aspects of African American rhetoric reveals the active presence of strong ideological and epistemic foundations regarding what it means to be in the world and to engage the world. (Wright, 2003, pp. 85-86)

This is a call I echo for African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts in our ongoing identity-crafting to resist the temptation to convert even our family stories into stories about oppressors having done and continuing to do us wrong.

Critical genealogy scholar Christine Sleeter (2015, 2020) is among the scholars who advocate focusing on structural power struggles in family heritage. Fellow genealogy scholar Avril Bell (2022) goes even further in advocating that social criticism dominate family heritage stories:

The critical study of one’s own family history is a relatively new field that sits at the intersection of family genealogical research and scholarly research. While family historians/genealogists are primarily interested in their own family’s story, critical family

history work is more focused on using the author's family to explore the social context in which they lived, particularly the dynamics of power and inequality between social groups. (p. 21)

Bell adds that “we should reaffirm” that “how a life is organized matters for the well-being of the person who lives it” (p. 21). My work finds that African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts in our published genealogies achieve well-being by utilizing positive communication.

Because well-being had not been maximized for African Americans at U.S. genealogy tourism sites, I researched African-ancestored genealogies to determine the writers' chosen stories that then could be amplified at an optimal genealogy tourism site. My research shows that the HBCUHeritageHome.com is the optimal genealogy tourism site for African-ancestored descendants of the U.S. colonial and Civil War eras to display, further research, and act out our chosen ancestral self-identity stories. Because of this site based on African-ancestored published genealogies, African-ancestored genealogy enthusiasts no longer will be “un/housed” (Cervenak & Carter, 2017, p. 47) or disinherited from our heritage (Alderman, 2013, p. 377) in the U.S. genealogy tourism industry. Thus, my content analysis of family heritage books and application at the HBCUHeritageHome.com leave no doubt that Black genealogies matter in U.S. genealogy tourism.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A      Code Book

<b>American and World History</b>	Mentions of American and world history
Incidents in American and World History	Mentions of incidents in American and world history
Slavery, Capitalism, or Enslaved People in General, Not an Ancestor	Capitalism and slavery or enslaved people in general, not involving an ancestor or in any way related to the Atlantic Slave Trade
Africa	Capitalism or slavery incidents in Africa that do not directly involve known ancestors
Eden, Non-capitalism or Slavery-related Incident in African History	Non-capitalism or slavery incidents in Africa that do not directly involve known ancestors
Middle Passage	Transportation during Atlantic Slave Trade
Bight of Biafra and Nigeria	Bight of Biafra and Nigeria as place of capture during Atlantic Slave Trade
Congo	Congo as place of capture during Atlantic Slave Trade
Dakar, Senegal, West Africa	Dakar, Senegal, West Africa as place of capture during Atlantic Slave Trade
Caribbean, West Indies Capitalism or Slavery	Mentions of capitalism or slavery incidents in the Caribbean, West Indies, that do not directly involve known ancestors
Barbados	Mentions of capitalism or slavery incidents in Barbados that do not directly involve known ancestors
Cuba	Mentions of capitalism or slavery incidents in Cuba that do not directly involve known ancestors
Haiti	Mentions of capitalism or slavery incidents in Haiti that do not directly involve known ancestors
Puerto Rico	Mentions of capitalism or slavery incidents in Puerto Rico that do not directly involve known ancestors
U.S. Virgin Islands, Not Education	Mentions of capitalism or slavery incidents in the U.S. Virgin Islands that do not directly involve known ancestors
Europe	Mentions of capitalism or slavery incidents in Europe that do not directly involve known ancestors
Germany	Any mention of Germany in family history
Indentured Servitude	Indentured servitude as system or person
England	Any mention of England in family history

Portugal	Any mention of Portugal in family history
Spain	Mentions of Spain in the family history
Ireland	Mentions of Ireland in the family history
Slave Trade	Mentions of the Atlantic Slave Trade
England	Mentions of England in the Atlantic Slave Trade
Portugal	Mentions of Portugal in the Atlantic Slave Trade
Spain	Mentions of Spain in the Atlantic Slave Trade
WWI	Mentions of WWI as a world event rather than an event in which a specific family member was involved
Mexico	Mentions of capitalism or slavery incidents in Mexico that do not directly involve known ancestors
U.S. History	Incidents in U.S. History
1619 Jamestown	Mentions of 1619 Jamestown
1620 Pilgrims	Mentions of 1620 Pilgrims
1776 Boston	Mentions of 1776 Boston
1787 Constitution	Mentions of 1787 Constitution
1830 Indian Removal Act	Any mention of the 1830 Indian Removal Act
Confederacy	Any mention of the Confederacy in the family
Mammy	Mentions of mammy in slavery that do not directly involve known ancestors
Master	Mentions of slave masters that do not directly involve known ancestors
Nigger	Mentions of Nigger
Slave Rebellions	Mentions of Slave Rebellions
Nat Turner	Mentions of Nat Turner Slave Rebellion
U.S. Slave Ship Ports	Mentions of U.S. ports in which ships carrying enslaved passengers docked
Organizations in American and World History	Organizations in American and World History
British Royal African Trading Company	Mentions of British Royal African Trading Company
Colonization Society	Mentions of the Colonization Society
The Virginia Company	Mentions of The Virginia Company
People in American and World History, Not Authors	Mentions of people in American or world history who are not primarily known as authors

Commonly Known People in American and World History, Not Authors	Commonly known people in American and world history, not authors
Abraham Lincoln	Mentions of Abraham Lincoln
Dred Scott	Mentions of Dred Scott
Founding Fathers	Mentions of Founding Fathers
George Washington	Mentions of George Washington
James Madison	Mentions of James Madison
Thomas Jefferson	Mentions of Thomas Jefferson
Frederick Douglass	Mentions of Frederick Douglass
Jefferson Davis	Mentions of Jefferson Davis
Supreme Court Justice Roger B. Taney	Mentions of Supreme Court Justice Roger B. Taney
Not Commonly Known People in American and World History, Not Authors	Not commonly known people in American and world history, not authors
<b>Ancestors Speak</b>	Writer is speaking in voice of deceased ancestor, stating that ancestor told him or her something, or stating they were drawn to do something by ancestral speaking to the soul
Ancestors Speak Directly to Descendants	Ancestors speak directly to descendants
Ancestors Speak Indirectly through Authors to Descendants	Ancestors speak indirectly through authors to descendants
Thoughts Attributed to Ancestors	Mentions of thoughts attributed to ancestors
<b>Experiences</b>	Mentions of anecdotes, including experiences in relations with former owners and other white people
Discipline Action	Mentions of disciplining family or community members
Discipline Infraction	Mentions of infractions leading to discipline of family or community members
Discrimination	Mentions of racial or other discrimination in family history
Historic	Mention of an ancestor's involvement in a historical event, such as the Chicago Fire or the Atlanta Race Riot
Migration	Mentions of migration
Relations with Former Owners and Other White People	Relations with former owners and other white people
Negative Relations with Former Owner Family Member(s)	negative relations with former owner family member(s)
Positive Relations with Former Owner Family Member(s)	Positive relations with former owner family member(s)

Segregation	Mention of a family member living in a racially segregated community
Violence	Mentions of violence
Community Racial Violence	Mentions of community experiences with racial violence, including race riots
During Slavery Violence	Mentions of violence during slavery
Family Racial Violence	Family experiences with racial violence
Spousal Violence	Family experiences with spousal violence
<b>Genealogy Tourism and Research</b>	Mentions of travel to access family information, including archival records and oral history
Documents and Other Sources	Mentions of documents and other sources used in the family research
1850 & 1860 Slave Schedules	Any mention of the 1850 Census Slave Schedule
Bible	Mentions of family information in a Bible
Birth Certificate	Mentions of birth certificate
Bond	Any mention of a legal bond used in family research
Books	Books named as being used in the family research
Census—1870 Census	Mentions of gathering information from Census record(s)
Church Records	Mention of using church records for family history
City Directory	Mention of use of a City Directory for family history research
Court Documents	Mentions of court documents
Civil Case Documents	Mentions of civil case documents
Divorce Case Documents	Mentions of divorce case documents
Racial Discrimination Case	Mentions of racial discrimination course case documents
Slave Owner Redress	Court cases filed by slave owners to recoup value of own or slaves' work
Criminal Case Documents	Mentions of criminal case documents
Property Deeds, Land Records	Mentions of property deeds and other land records
Deed	Any mention of real estate deeds in the family history
Wills	Mentions of wills
Death Certificate	Mentions of death certificates
DNA	Mention of use of DNA testing as part of telling the family story
Freedmen's Bureau records	Mentions of The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (Record Group 105) as a source of ancestral information
Freedom Certificate	Mentions of freedom certificates

Letters	Mention of letters as a source for genealogical information
List of Free Black People	Mentions of the List of Free Black People
Marriage Records	Mentions of marriage records
Newspaper	Mention of finding family information in a newspaper
Oral History and Imagination	Mentions of oral history used to tell family story
Photographs	Mentions of photographs
Proof Standards	Mentions of genealogical proof standards
Pullman Porter records	Mention of use of Pullman Porter records for family information
Records Not Found or Not Yet Used	Mentions of records not found
Scrap Books	Any mention of scrap books as a source of family history
Shipping Records	Mentions of shipping records
Slave Narratives	Any mention of any of the slave narratives
Social Security Application or Index	Mention of Social Security application or index used in family heritage research
Tax Lists	Mentions of tax lists
Voter Registration Records	Mentions of using voter registration records in family research
Zillow, etc.	Use of real estate applications in family research
Book Writing and Editing	Mentions of book writing and editing
Assistance	Mentions of any assistance received in researching and publishing book
Attitude	Conveyance of attitude/sentiment about book writing and editing
Bibliography	Use of bibliography printed in book
Endnotes and Footnotes	Use of endnotes and/or footnotes in book
Index	Use of index in book
Physical Process	Mentions of physical process of book writing
Thinking Process	Mentions of any thought processes related to book writing
Exclusions	Mentions of what is excluded and why
Oral History	Mentions of oral history used to tell family story
Scholars Met With or Work Cited	Scholars met with as part of research process
Travel	Mentions of travel for book
Africa	Genealogy tourism and research visits to Africa
Bight of Biafra and Nigeria	Visits to Bight of Biafra and Nigeria
Congo	Visits to Congo

Dakar, Senegal, West Africa	Visits to Dakar, Senegal, West Africa
Archives and Museums Visited	Genealogy tourism and research visits to archives
Legacy Museum	Visits to Legacy Museum
NMAAHC	Visits to National Museum of African American History and Culture
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture	Visits to Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture
Whitney Plantation	Visits to Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture
Family Reunions	Family reunions mentioned in books
Homes of Family and Friends	Visiting Family or Friends for Fellowship and Information and Memory Sharing
Other Visited Places	Genealogy tourism to places other than visiting family and friends, family reunions, the NMAAHC, the Legacy Museum, the Whitney Plantation, or traditional plantations
Accomack, VA	Visits to Accomack, VA
Accomack, VA, Courthouse	Visits to Accomack, VA, Courthouse
Accomack, VA, Library	Visits to Accomack, VA, Library
Annapolis, MD	Visits to Annapolis, MD
Annapolis, MD, Hall of Records	Visits to Annapolis, MD, Hall of Records
Caroline County, MD	Visits to Caroline County, MD
Caroline County Library and Courthouse	Visits to Caroline County Library and Courthouse
Eastern Shore, MD	Visits to Eastern Shore, MD
Eastern Shore History Library at Salisbury State University, MD	Visits to Eastern Shore History Library at Salisbury State University, MD
Eastville, VA	Visits to Eastville, VA
Eastville, VA, Courthouse	Visits to Eastville, VA, Courthouse
McDaniel, MD	Visits to McDaniel, MD
Methodist Church in McDaniel, MD	Visits to Methodist Church in McDaniel, MD
Post Office in McDaniel, MD	Visits to Post Office in McDaniel, MD
Plantations, Traditional	Genealogy tourism and research visits to plantations
Eyre Hall Plantation	
Montpelier	Mentions of visiting the Montpelier plantation for family research
<b>Description of Ancestors</b>	Any mention of ancestors' physical description, including of eyes, skin, hair, or ethnic classification
Black or African	Any description of ancestors as Black or African

European	Any description of ancestors as European
Mulatto, Quadroon, and the Like	Any description of ancestors as mulatto, quadroon, and the like
Native American	Any description of ancestors as Native American
<b>Purpose of Genealogy Book</b>	Mentions of why author created book
Author	About the genealogy book author
Dedication	Dedication section of book
Epilogues and Afterwords	Epilogues and Afterwords
Fill African American Void in American History, Indict White People	Mentions of book's purpose being to fill African American void in American history, indict white people
Forewords, Prefaces, and Prologues	What is said in forewords, prefaces, and prologues
Honor, Celebrate, Belong to Ancestors	Mentions of book's purpose being to honor, celebrate, or belong to ancestors
Inspire Family-Future Generations Enlightenment and Guide	Mentions of the book being meant to inspire family members, including future generations, as enlightenment and guide for living
Ownership as Teller of Own Story	Mentions of ownership as teller of own story
Publisher	Mentions of book's publisher
Tangible Record	Mentions of authoring the book to have a tangible record of ancestry
Teach Others How to Do It and Expose Challenges	Content or stated purpose to help teach other genealogy researchers how to undertake their tasks
Title	Mentions of book's title
<b>Values</b>	Philosophies held dear and acted upon
Ancestral Death	Any mention of something relating to an ancestor's death
Ancestral Bequests or Wills	Mention of an ancestral will or other legal document bequeathing possessions
Cause of Ancestral Death	Statements indicating valuing knowing cause of ancestral death
Location of Ancestral Death or Burial	Statements indicating valuing knowing location of ancestral death or burial
Ritual Related to Ancestral Death	Mentions of funeral, ritual, memorial, etc. related to ancestral death
Culture	Mentions of family's cultural elements
Beauty	Mentions of beauty
Clothing	Mentions of clothing
Food	Mentions of food
Games and Toys	Mentions of games and toys

Movies	Mentions of movies
Music	Mentions of music
Non-Biblical Books, Authors, and Quotes	Mentions of/quotes from non-Biblical books and authors
African American Genealogies	Mentions of other African American genealogies
African American Genealogy How-to Books	Mentions of African American genealogy how-to books
Non- <i>Roots</i> African American Genealogies	Mentions of African American genealogies other than Alex Haley's <i>Roots</i>
<i>Roots</i> and Alex Haley	Mentions of <i>Roots</i> and/or Alex Haley
Non-Bible or Genealogy Book Mention or Quote	Mentions of/quotes from book other than the Bible or other genealogies
Periodical Newspapers and Magazines Not School-related	Mentions of periodicals (newspapers and magazines) not school-related
Education	Any reference to education
Higher Education	Higher education mentioned
Family Higher Education	Higher education discussed in relation to family members, including author
NYU	Mention of New York University in family heritage
Salisbury State University	Mentions of Salisbury State University
U.S. Naval Academy	Mention of this higher education institution.
Nonfamily Higher Education	Higher education discussed in relation to nonfamily members, including white people
K-12 School	Mention of a K-12 school
Family K-12	K-12 education mentioned with respect to a family member, including author
K-12 School Named	Specific name mentioned of K-12 school
Nonfamily K-12	K-12 education mentioned with respect to a nonfamily member or members, including white people
Emotional Intelligence	Conveyance of emotional intelligence
Adaptation	Conveyance of situational adaptation
Determination and Perseverance	Conveyance of determination and/or perseverance
Equality	Mentions of equality
Against Equality as a Racial Goal	Conveyance of opposition to equality as a racial goal
Pro Equality as a Racial Goal	Mentions of approval of equality as a racial goal
Fairness	Mentions of fairness

Freedom	Mentions of freedom
Colonization Society in Family	Mentions of Colonization Society in family, not in general
Generosity, Kindness, and Compassion	Mentions of versions of generosity, kindness, compassion, etc.
Gratitude	Expressions of or about gratitude
Against Gratitude	Expressions against gratitude
Pro Gratitude	Expressions in favor of gratitude
Honesty	Expressions about honesty
Humor	Uses of and references to humor
Joy	Expressions about joy
Pain Management	Expressions about pain management
Positively Inspiring and Encouraging Others	Expressions about positively inspiring others
Pride vs. Dignity	Mentions of pride and/or dignity
Family	Any references to family as a value of the clan in question or members thereof
Ancestral Birthplace(s) and Living Spaces	Mentions of ancestral birthplaces
Cultural	Mentions of cultural aspects of family members' lives
Manumission	Mentions of manumission
Alabama	Alabama mentioned as a place of family activity
Owner-family parentage	Mentions of slave owner or member of slave owner's family as parent of someone who also possesses African ancestry
Restrictive Laws	Mentions of racially restrictive laws
Dwellings	Mentions of family dwellings
Geographical	Mentions of geographical locations of families
Continent	Mentions of a continent in family life
Africa	Mentions of Africa in family life
Cameroon	Mention of Cameroon in family history
Dakar, Senegal, West Africa	Mentions of Dakar, Senegal, West Africa, in family history
Europe	Mentions of Europe in family history
Landscape	Ancestral birth and dwelling landscapes
State	Ancestral birth and dwelling states
Arkansas	Arkansas mentioned as a place of family activity
Colorado	Mention of family in Colorado

Connecticut	Any mention of family in Connecticut
Florida	Mentions of the state of Florida in family story
Georgia	Mention of the state of Georgia
Illinois	Any mention of family in Illinois
Louisiana	Louisiana as a place of family activity
Maryland	Maryland as a place of family activity
Massachusetts	Any mention of family in Massachusetts
Mississippi	Mentions of Mississippi as a place of family activity
New York state	Mention of an ancestor living in the state of New York
North Carolina	North Carolina mentioned as a place of family activity
Tennessee	Any mention of ancestors in Tennessee
Virginia	Mentions of Virginia in family
Washington, DC	Mention of ancestors in Washington, DC, area
Aunt	Any mention of aunts, great-aunts, etc.
Children	Any mention of someone's offspring
Cousin	Any mention of cousins, including first, second, times removed, etc.
Family Names	Mentions of reasons for family names
Family Tree	Mentions of/use of family trees
Five Times Great-Grandparents or Higher	Any mention of five times great-grandparents or higher
Five Times or Higher Great-Grandfather	Any mention of five times or higher great-grandfather
Five Times or Higher Great-Grandmother	Any mention of five times or higher great-grandmother
Grandparents	Any mention of grandparents
Grandfather	Any mention of grandfather
Grandmother	Any mention of grandmother
Great-Grandparents	Any mention of great-grandparents
Great-Grandfather	Any mention of great-grandfather
Great-Grandmother	Any mention of great-grandmother
Great-Great-Grandparents	Any mention of great-great-grandparents
Great-Great-Grandfather	Any mention of great-great-grandfather
Great-Great-Grandmother	Any mention of great-great-grandmother
Great-Great-Great-Grandparents	Any mention of great-great-great-grandparents

Great-Great-Great-Grandfather	Any mention of great-great-great-grandfather
Great-Great-Great-Grandmother	Any mention of great-great-great-grandmother
Great-Great-Great-Great-Grandparents	Any mention of great-great-great-great-grandparents
Great-Great-Great-Great-Grandfather	Any mention of great-great-great-great-grandfather
Great-Great-Great-Great-Grandmother	Any mention of great-great-great-great-grandmother
How Far Back and How Recent	Mentions of how far back and/or how recent are the family stories
Indentured Servant Ancestor	Mentions of an indentured servant ancestor
Intergenerational Values and Inheritances	Depictions of anything as an intergenerational value or inheritance
Author Mentions of Self	Authors' mentions of self receiving an intergenerational value or inheritance
Nonauthor Ancestral Honor and Inheritances	Mentions of other family members', not author's, ancestral honor and inheritances
Marriage	Mentions of marriage in the family
Husband	Mentions of husband
Wife	Mentions of wife
Overall Family Circumstance or Outcome	Mentions of overall family circumstance or outcome
Survival	Mentions of survival
Tragedy, Trauma, Struggle, Failure, and Loss	Mentions of tragedy, trauma, struggle, failure, and/or loss in family
Triumphant, Thrilling, Fascinating, and Thriving	Mentions of family as triumphant, thrilling, fascinating, and/or thriving
Parents	Mentions of parents
Father	Mentions of Father
Mother	Mentions of Mother
Siblings	Mentions of siblings, including halves, adopted, accepted, etc.
Brother	Mentions of brother(s)
Sister	Mentions of sister(s)
Slave Ancestor	Any mention of enslaved ancestor(s)
Producing Children	Mentions of producing children
Purchase, Sale, Gift of Slave Ancestor	Mentions of purchase, sale, gift of slave ancestor
Relationship with Owner(s)	Mentions of relationship with owner(s)

Uncle	Any mention of uncles, great-uncles, etc.
Financial Security	Mentions of financial security
Freedom	Mentions of freedom
Manumission	Mentions of manumission
Friendship	Mention of friendship playing a role in an ancestor's life
Hard Work, Non-teaching Profession	Mentions of challenging work in field other than teaching
Against Service Jobs	Conveyance of opposition to service jobs
Banking	Mentions of banking
Carpentry	Any mention of a family member working in carpentry
Coal	Mentions of coal
Cooking and Lodging	Mention of preparing food and providing shelter, as is done at a bed and breakfast
Cotton	Mentions of cotton
Driver	Reference to work as a chauffeur or cart driver
Engineering	Mention of engineering as a family member profession
Funeral Home	Mention of family members involved in the funeral home service
Gardening, Cooking, Canning, Sewing, Quilting, Laundry, etc.	Mentions of home life arts and crafts, such as gardening, cooking, canning, sewing, quilting, laundry, etc.
Medical Fields	Mentions of ancestors working in any of the medical and related fields
Nurture Work	Mentions of nurturing
Plantation farming or sharecropping	Mention of an ancestor working as a farmer on land owned or rented
Pro Service Jobs	Mentions of service jobs in a positive light
Pullman Porter	Mention of a family member working as a Pullman Porter
Shoemaking	Mention of the craft of shoemaking in the family
Steel	Any mention of working in the steel industry
Tobacco	Mentions of tobacco as work industry
Non-church Service	Service to community/humanity as an expressed family value
Charity and Benevolent Organizations	Mentions of charity and benevolent organizations
Civil Rights Activism	Mentions of Civil Rights activism in family
Military	Any mention of military service in family
Civil War	Any mention of the Civil War in family

Korean War	Mentions of Korean War in family
Revolutionary War	Any mention of the Revolutionary War in family
Spanish American War	Mentions of Spanish American War in family
Vietnam War	Mentions of Vietnam War in family
War of 1812	Mentions of War of 1812 in family
WWI	Any mention of WWI in family
WWII	Any mention of WWII in family
Voting	Mentions of service to country by voting
Pride vs. Dignity	Mentions of pride or dignity
Religion and Spirituality	Any references to embracing/participating in spirituality, religion, Christianity, and the like
African Methodist Episcopal	Mentions of African Methodist Episcopal Church
Anglican	Mentions of Anglican Church
Baptist	Mentions of Baptist Church
Buddhist	Mentions of Buddhists or Buddhism
Church of God in Christ	Mentions of Church of God in Christ (COGIC)
Congregationalist	Mentions of Congregationalists
Episcopalian	Mentions of Episcopalians or Episcopal Church
Methodist	Mentions of Methodist Church
Muslim	Mentions of Islam or Muslims
Presbyterian	Mentions of Presbyterian Church
Resistance	Mentions of resistance
Role Model	Mentions of valuing ancestors for serving as role models
Self-confidence	Mentions of self-confidence

**Appendix B** Audio and lyrics of songs and other media utilized in Chapters 4 and 5 to help explain content, concepts, themes, and theory found in 21st-century published African-ancestored genealogies as well as application of the findings

<i>Summertime</i>	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NghjBMn6ZJM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NghjBMn6ZJM</a>
<i>Keemo Kimo</i>	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IlegpCXTk_A">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IlegpCXTk_A</a>
<i>Steal Away to Jesus</i>	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wo0AOf9b6fU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wo0AOf9b6fU</a>
<i>Jump Jim Crow</i>	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eX7MVfU8xxs">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eX7MVfU8xxs</a>
<i>Think of His Goodness to You</i>	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1OpF1BX_KqQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1OpF1BX_KqQ</a>
<i>Little Brown Baby</i>	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iv7Q5XfcUFc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iv7Q5XfcUFc</a>
<i>Stand Up for Jesus</i>	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8x7XfGHm7IE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8x7XfGHm7IE</a>

## HOME SONGS

- Shelton, B. (2007). Home [Song]. On *Pure BS*. Warner Bros. Nashville  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nUgruuACdAs>
- Lonestar. (2001). I'm already there [Song]. On *I'm already there*. BNA.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-0yqFovxPN8>
- Denver, J. (1971). Take me home, country roads [Song]. On *Poems, prayers and promises*. RCA.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1SKq\\_\\_Ba6hE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1SKq__Ba6hE)
- Merle Haggard and The Strangers. (1967). Sing me back home [Song]. On *Sing me back home*. Capitol.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aHiC0E6YmOs>
- Yoakam, D. (1988). I sang dixie [Song]. On *Buenas noches from a lonely room*. Reprise.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTWz-uFshTY>
- Taylor, J. (1968). Carolina in my mind [Song]. On *James Taylor*. Apple.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-yavrtEoc9g>
- Morgan, C. (2002). Almost home [Song]. On *I love it*. Broken Bow.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6hrIsTEkTCc>

Travis, R. (1986). No place like home [Song]. On *Storms of life*. Warner Bros.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0xSZwIjq6Hc>

Rawls, L. (1964). Tobacco road [Song]. On *Tobacco road*. Capitol.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nMXKEGNHSqw>

Vance, F. (2019). Cradled in arms [Song]. On *To Memphis*. Gingerbread Man; Asylum.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xueXD1z-sDc&list=RDMM&index=24>

## CONCEPT SONGS FOR DEEP ROOTS THEME

### Purpose of Genealogy Book

Dunn, H. (1986). Daddy's hands [Song]. On *Holly Dunn*. MTM.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sR-1ggqyEIE>

### Ancestors Speak

Young, C. (2010). Voices [Song]. On *The man I want to be*. RCA Nashville.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jiwxc3ru2L4>

### Description of Ancestors

Lynn, L. (1971). Coal miner's daughter [Song]. On *Coal miner's daughter*. Decca.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j8lchkhrxcE>

## DEEP ROOTS THEME SONG

Travis, R. (1990). He walked on water [Song]. On *No holdin' back*. Warner Bros.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=itI0tvaRxB8>

## CONCEPT SONGS FOR DEEP KNOWLEDGE THEME

### Experiences

McEntire, R. (1990). Fancy [Song]. On *Rumor has it*. MCA Nashville.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LsrrdppZoT4>

### American and World History

Greenwood, L. (1984). God bless the USA [Song]. On *You've got a good love comin'*.  
 MCA Nashville.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MYvUmhqa104>

## DEEP KNOWLEDGE THEME SONG

Morgan, C. (2008). This ain't nothin' [Song]. On *That's why*. BNA.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSdItuvBxc8>

## CONCEPT SONGS FOR DEEP SELF THEME

### Values

Tippin, A. (1991). You've got to stand for something [Song]. On *You've got to stand for something*. RCA Nashville.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XHIw6vs4z0w>

### Genealogy Tourism and Research

Lambert, M. (2009). The house that built me [Song]. On *Revolution*. Columbia Nashville.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nBgM5ZRzzjI>

## DEEP SELF THEME SONG

Andrews, J. (2000). Who I am [Song]. On *Who I am*. DreamWorks Nashville.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jd9zYKLepCw>

## AGAPIC AGENCY THEORY PAINTING AND POEMS

*The Corn-Stalk Fiddle* [[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=063O3ojM\\_UY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=063O3ojM_UY)] by Paul Laurence Dunbar (1896)

*The Banjo Lesson* [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=38uu6QxiWiM>] by Henry Ossawa Tanner (1893)

*A Banjo Song* [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbIexY3WOCQ>] by Paul Laurence Dunbar (1899)

**AGAPIC AGENCY THEORY SONG VERSIONS AND CONTEXT SONG**

Roush, T. (2012). Carry me back to old Virginny [Song]. On *Silver threads among the gold, music of 19th century America*. Tom Roush.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PyhQYOxTHaw>

The Mills Brothers featuring Louis Armstrong. (1937). Carry me back to old Virginny [Song]. Decca.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=noKAS9GGbI8>

Anderson, M. (1951). Carry me back to old Virginny [Song]. On *Marian Anderson sings lieder, songs and melodies, 1936-1951*. RCA Red Seal.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOTsDXvBICk>

Charles, R. (1960). Carry me back to old Virginny [Song]. On *The genius hits the road*. ABC Paramount.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hv1aRz0vu4Q>

## Carry Me Back To Old Virginny

Tuning: D-F#-A  
Key of D

~1878~

By: James A. Bland  
Arr: Merv Rowley 2011

The musical score is written for guitar and includes two vocal lines. The guitar part features a mix of standard and barre chords with specific fingerings indicated by numbers 1-4 on the strings. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into five systems, each with a measure number (1, 6, 10, 14, 19) at the beginning.

**System 1 (Measures 1-5):** Chords: D, D, G, D, D. Lyrics: 1. Car-ry me back to old Vir - gin-ny, There's where the; 2. Car-ry me back to old Vir - gin-ny, There let me

**System 2 (Measures 6-9):** Chords: D(b5), C#dim, D. Lyrics: cot - ton and the corn and 'ta - ters grow, There's where the; live 'till I with - er and de - cay, Long by the

**System 3 (Measures 10-13):** Chords: D, Em, D. Lyrics: birds warble sweet in the spring - time, That's where this; old Dismal Swamp have I wan - der'd, There's where this

**System 4 (Measures 14-18):** Chords: D, F#m, D, A, A. Lyrics: old dar-kie's heart am long'd to go, That's where I lab-ored so; old dar-key's life will pass a - way, Mas - sa and Mis-sis have

**System 5 (Measures 19-23):** Chords: D, D, D, D(b5), E7. Lyrics: hard for ol' mas-sah, Day af-ter day, in the fields of yel-low; long gone be - fore me, Soon will we meet on that bright and gold-en

*Carry Me Back to Old Virginy - p.2*

corn. shore, No place on Earth do I love more sin - cere - ly  
There we'll be hap - py and free from all sor - row,

29 than old Vir - gin - ny, the place where I was born!  
There's where we'll meet and we'll nev - er part no more.

33 *rit.* *Chorus:* Car - ry me back to old Vir - gin - ny, There's where the cot - ton and the  
corn and 'ta - ters grow, There's where the birds war - ble sweet in the

39 corn and 'ta - ters grow, There's where the birds war - ble sweet in the  
spring - time, That's where this old dar - kie's heart an long'd to go.

44 spring - time, That's where this old dar - kie's heart an long'd to go.

Cooke, S. (1964). A change is gonna come [Song]. On *Ain't that good news*. RCA Victor.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEBlaMOmKV4>

**GREER CLAN OF ALABAMA AGAPIC AGENCY THEORY EXAMPLE  
FAMILY-AUTHORED SONGS TO PROFESSIONALIZE FOR FAMILY  
FELLOWSHIP AT THE SITE**

**DEEP ROOTS THEME SONG**

Foster, P.E. (2023a). As far as I can see [Song].

**AS FAR AS I CAN SEE**

**Audio**

VERSE:                   LIKE ANY MOTHER  
                              I WONDER WHAT WILL COME OF  
                              MY PRECIOUS LITTLE BUNDLES OF JOY

                              LIKE ANY MOTHER  
                              I COVER YOU WITH MY LOVE  
                              IN HOPES THAT YOU'LL MAKE IT IN THIS WORLD

                              SO MUCH RIGHT CAN GO WRONG  
                              SO I PRAY ALL NIGHT LONG  
                              AND TEACH YOU ALL I KNOW IN THE DAY

                              I'M A WOMAN CONVINCED  
                              THAT YOU'LL TURN FROM YOUR SINS  
                              FOR MANY GENERATIONS TO COME

CHORUS:                 AS FAR AS I CAN SEE  
                              YOU'LL WALK ALONGSIDE JESUS  
                              AS FAR AS I CAN SEE  
                              YOU'LL ALWAYS BE WITH HIM

                              AS FAR AS I CAN SEE  
                              HE'LL BEAR YOUR EVERY BURDEN  
                              AS FAR AS I CAN SEE  
                              YOU'LL KEEP YOUR EYES ON HIM

VERSE:                 NO MATTER WHERE YOU GO  
                              I WANT GOD IN YOUR SOUL  
                              ALWAYS THERE TO BE A COMFORT TO YOU

                              NO MATTER WHERE YOU GO  
                              NO SOONER THAN YOU START OUT  
                              HE'LL SHOW YOU JUST WHAT TO DO

                              NOTHIN' RIGHT WILL GO WRONG  
                              IF YOU JUST HOLD ON  
                              AND DON'T PUSH HIS BLESSINGS AWAY

                              YOU CAN HAVE ALL THE BEST  
                              YOU CAN PASS EVERY TEST  
                              WITH GOD'S GIFTS OF FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE

CHORUS: (REPEAT)

BRIDGE: NOW DON'T YOU WORRY NONE  
THAT THIS IS A TALL ORDER

CLOSE: 'CAUSE I'LL WATCH OVER YOU  
AS FAR AS I CAN SEE

'CAUSE I'LL WATCH OVER YOU  
AS FAR AS I CAN SEE

Lyrics and composition by Pamela E. Foster and Anna Mariah Clark Greer (1850-1942) [pfoster@HBCUHeritageHome.com](mailto:pfoster@HBCUHeritageHome.com)

**DEEP KNOWLEDGE THEME SONG**

Foster, P. E. (2023b). Daddy, tell me a story [Song].

**DADDY, TELL ME A STORY****Audio**

VERSE: DON'T WANT TO GO OUTSIDE AND JUST PLAY  
 WON'T RIDE MY BIKE, THROW A BALL, NO, NOT TODAY  
 OH, DADDY, TELL ME A STORY

'BOUT HOW GOD MADE THE WORLD IN SIX DAYS  
 'BOUT A BASEBALL MAN NAMED WILLIE MAYS  
 OH, DADDY, TELL ME A STORY

CHORUS: TELL ME A STORY  
 EASE MY MIND  
 TELL ME A STORY  
 'BOUT THE GOOD TIMES  
 OH, DADDY, WON'T YOU TELL ME A STORY?

VERSE: DON'T WANT TO TURN OUT THE LIGHTS AND GO TO BED  
 I'LL BRUSH MY TEETH, SAY MY PRAYERS, BUT THAT'S IT  
 OH, DADDY, TELL ME A STORY

'BOUT WHAT LIFE WAS LIKE AS A LITTLE BOY  
 'BOUT THE FREEDOMS THAT YOU FOUGHT FOR  
 OH, DADDY, TELL ME A STORY

CHORUS: (REPEAT)

VERSE: I LIKE THE ONES WHERE THE BOYS ALWAYS GET THE GIRLS  
 WHERE THE HEROES DO WHAT'S RIGHT, THEY FACE FEARS  
 OH, DADDY, TELL ME A STORY

I KNOW IT'S REALLY PASSIN' DOWN OUR HISTORY  
 AND THEY'RE JUST SO DOGGONE GOOD TO HEAR  
 OH, DADDY, TELL ME A STORY

CHORUS: (REPEAT)  
 OH, DADDY, WON'T YOU TELL ME A STORY?

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 pfoster@HBCUHeritagehome.com

**DEEP SELF THEME SONG**

Foster, P. E. (2023c). Line of fire [Song].

**LINE OF FIRE****Audio**

VERSE: I BIRTHED A BOY NAMED STEPHEN ULYSSES ( ALFRED MATTHEW)  
 THAT WAS BACK IN 1873 (1882)  
 WHEN HE WAS NINE HE WENT TO THE COAL MINE  
 TO HELP OUR FAMILY

ONE DAY THAT SHAFT CLOSED IN  
 HE GOT CAUGHT IN THE EXPLOSION  
 OH, HOW I CRIED THE DAY HE DIED  
 AND NOW DELIGHT IS MY EMOTION

CHORUS: I CAN SEE MY CHILD GO UP IN FLAMES  
 I COULDN'T HAVE STOPPED IT ANYWAY  
 BUT I AIN'T STAKED ON HOW S/HE DIED  
 IT'S 'CAUSE OF HOW S/HE LIVES  
 THAT I'M PASSIN' DOWN THE LINE OF FIRE

VERSE: IN 1880 CAME MY BABY MARY E.  
 IN THE MIDDLE OF A BAKER'S DOZEN  
 SHE WAS MAMA'S LITTLE HELPER 'ROUND THE HOUSE  
 A HOMEMAKER TRAINEE

UP NORTH SHE TOOK A MAID'S JOB  
 CLEANIN' FROM HER HEART  
 SHE HAD TO KILL THE MORNIN' CHILL  
 THAT'S WHY SHE SWITCHED THAT GAS STOVE ON

CHORUS: (REPEAT)

BRIDGE: THEY LIVED TO MAKE LIFE BETTER EVERY DAY  
 DIDN'T JUST DREAM BUT WORKED TO A FRAY  
 SO ALIVE TO THIS HEART OF MINE  
 YEAH, THAT'S THEIR STORIES  
 I'M PASSIN' DOWN THE LINE OF FIRE

VERSE: MY BOY JOHN WILLIAM CAME IN 1885  
 WE WERE KEEN ON KEEPIN' THAT BOY ALIVE  
 SO WE TOOK THE TRAIN UP TO BIRMINGHAM  
 FROM FORTY MILES OUTSIDE

A CITY DOCTOR IS ONE HOPE  
 WHEN CONSUMPTION TAKES A TOWN HOLD  
 BUT IN THOSE DAYS THE RAILS WEREN'T SAFE  
 AND A FIERY WRECK TOOK MY BOY HOME

CHORUS: (REPEAT)

IT'S 'CAUSE OF HOW THEY LIVE  
IT'S 'CAUSE OF HOW THEY LIVE  
IT'S 'CAUSE OF HOW THEY LIVE  
THAT I'M PASSIN' DOWN THE LINE OF FIRE

© Pamela E. Foster via Anna Mariah Clark Greer (1850-  
1942) [pfoster@HBCUHeritageHome.com](mailto:pfoster@HBCUHeritageHome.com)

**Appendix C** Do You Know? (DYK) and Do You Know Enslaved Ancestors? (DYKEA) 20-question instruments to assess family knowledge

**DYK SCALE (SEE PAMELA'S REVISION TO DYKEA SCALE ON NEXT PAGE)**

To study how families pass on their history to succeeding generations, Emory University psychologists Robyn Fivush, Ph.D., and Marshall Duke, Ph.D., created a 20-question Do You Know (DYK) scale. Want to fill in the gaps in your own family history? Check out the questions below. Keep in mind that "it's not just knowing the information, but the process of sharing it that's important," says Fivush.

Please answer the following questions by circling "Y" for "yes" or "N" for "no." Even if you know the information we are asking about, you don't need to write it down.

1. Do you know how your parents met? Y N
2. Do you know where your mother grew up? Y N
3. Do you know where your father grew up? Y N
4. Do you know where some of your grandparents grew up? Y N
5. Do you know where some of your grandparents met? Y N
6. Do you know where your parents were married? Y N
7. Do you know what went on when you were being born? Y N
8. Do you know the source of your name? Y N
9. Do you know some things about what happened when your brothers or sisters were being born? Y N
10. Do you know which person in your family you look most like? Y N
11. Do you know which person in the family you act most like? Y N
12. Do you know some of the illnesses and injuries that your parents experienced when they were younger? Y N
13. Do you know some of the lessons that your parents learned from good or bad experiences? Y N
14. Do you know some things that happened to your mom or dad when they were in school? Y N
15. Do you know the national background of your family (such as English, German, Russian, etc.)? Y N
16. Do you know some of the jobs that your parents had when they were young? Y N
17. Do you know some awards that your parents received when they were young? Y N
18. Do you know the names of the schools that your mom went to? Y N
19. Do you know the names of the schools that your dad went to? Y N
20. Do you know about a relative whose face "froze" in a grumpy position because he or she did not smile enough? Y N

Source: Duke, M.P., Lazarus, A., & Fivush, R. (2008). Knowledge of family history as a clinically useful index of psychological well-being and prognosis: A brief report. *Psychotherapy Theory, Research, Practice, Training*, 45, 268-272.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1EA16LeEIKpLMFN1H62ekftB6pzyoL4qu/view?usp=sharing>

## DYKEA SCALE

To study how families descendent from U. S. enslaved people pass on stories of their ancestors to succeeding generations, Georgia State University Department of Communication Ph.D. student Pamela E. Foster, M.S.J., revised the 20-question Do You Know? (DYK) scale created by Emory University psychologists Robyn Fivush, Ph.D., and Marshall Duke, Ph.D. The revision is the Do You Know Enslaved Ancestors? (DYKEA) scale

Please answer the following questions by circling "Y" for "yes" or "N" for "no." Even if you know the information we are asking about, you don't need to write it down.

1. Do you know how **a set of** your **enslaved ancestors** met? Y N
2. Do you know where **one of** your **enslaved women ancestors** grew up? Y N
3. Do you know where **one of** your **enslaved men ancestors** grew up? Y N
4. Do you know where **some** of your **enslaved ancestors' children** grew up? Y N
5. Do you know where **some** of your **enslaved ancestors' children** met their **spouses**? Y N
6. Do you know where **a set of** your **enslaved ancestors** were married? Y N
7. Do you know what went on when you were being born? Y N
8. Do you know the source of your name? Y N
9. Do you know some things about what happened when your brothers or sisters were being born? Y N
10. Do you know which person in your family you look most like? Y N
11. Do you know which person in the family you act most like? Y N
12. Do you know some of the illnesses and injuries that **any of** your **enslaved ancestors** experienced when they were younger? Y N
13. Do you know some of the lessons that **any of** your **enslaved ancestors** learned from good or bad experiences? Y N
14. Do you know some things that happened to **any of** your **ancestors** when they were in school? Y N
15. Do you know the national background of your family (such as **Senegalese**, English, **Gambian**, German, **Ghanaian**, Russian, **Angolan**, etc.)? Y N
16. Do you know some of the jobs that **any of** your **enslaved ancestors** had when they were young? Y N
17. Do you know **some** awards that **any of** your **ancestors** received when they were young? Y N
18. Do you know the names of the schools that **any of** your **women ancestors** went to? Y N
19. Do you know the names of the schools that **any of** your **men ancestors** went to? Y N
20. Do you know about a relative whose face "froze" in a grumpy position because he or she did not smile enough? Y N

*ORIGINAL Source: Duke, M.P., Lazarus, A., & Fivush, R. (2008). Knowledge of family history as a clinically useful index of psychological well-being and prognosis: A brief report. Psychotherapy Theory, Research, Practice, Training, 45, 268-272. REVISION Source: Foster, Pamela E. (2018).*