

## Examining Structural Racism in Jim Crow–Era Illinois

**T**his chapter examines the contours of racial ideologies and their impacts on social dynamics in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Illinois by undertaking historical, archaeological, and comparative studies of three African American communities. In addition to overt acts of racism and racial violence, African American communities in the nineteenth century combated various forms of structural and aversive racism that diverted economic opportunities away from them and presented challenges for households to overcome (Gaertner and Dovidio 1986; Kleinpenning and Hagendoorn 1993; Kovel 1970). I examine such dynamics using examples from archaeological and historical analysis of three communities in Illinois: New Philadelphia, Brooklyn, and the Equal Rights settlement outside of Galena. The study employs research questions that confront multiple social dynamics that impacted dispositions in the past and continue to influence the present. This project analyzes past multiethnic and racial dynamics using interdisciplinary methods and active engagement with the perspectives expressed by multiple stakeholders, including members of descendant and local communities.

New Philadelphia was the first town in the United States that was planned in advance and legally registered by an African American (Walker 1995 [1983]). It grew as a demographically integrated community from 1836 through the late 1800s. Brooklyn was the first African American town to be incorporated under a state legal system in the United States (Cha-Jua 2000). It was a community started by families escaping Missouri plantations in the late 1820s and grew through the late 1800s. Equal Rights was a rural settlement of several African American households near Galena, started in the 1870s, with residents who utilized church congregation networks and entrepreneurship to overcome racial and economic challenges of the late nineteenth century. Research concerning such communities can expand our understanding of how social networks, racism, and developing markets influenced the ways in which individuals and households made choices in shaping the natural, social, and built environments and in developing social relationships, cultural traditions, and economic strategies.

headed up this effort. The higher degree of significance and evidence for an NHL designation is evident in the fact that over 80,000 properties in the United States have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but fewer than 2,500 have received the higher recognition as an NHL. The National Park System Landmarks Committee approved this nomination on October 29, 2008, followed with approval by the National Park System Advisory Board on December 3, 2008. The nomination received official support from U.S. senators Barack Obama and Richard Durbin, among others, and the Secretary of the Interior issued final approval on January 16, 2009. Thus the past incidents of racism that sought to erase the accomplishments of Frank McWorter and the residents of New Philadelphia did not succeed in attaining such an elimination of those accounts within American history.

The active engagement of researchers and community members has enriched the multiple perspectives we draw from the lessons of New Philadelphia's history. For example, we have discussed the lessons that can be conveyed to broad audiences by focusing on the events that led to the railroad's bypassing New Philadelphia. One alternative is to concentrate upon this incident to emphasize that racial ideologies can lead to economically irrational conduct that causes net losses overall (Fennell 2009). By understanding the distortive and irrational conduct generated by racial ideologies, we can heighten public awareness of such past actions in our ongoing struggles against the contours of racism in today's society (Leone et al. 2005; Shackel 2003). Such a lesson can be advanced by concentrating on the racial ideologies that shaped the actions of managers of the railroad company and on the deleterious effects their actions imposed upon the residents of New Philadelphia, leading to the demise of the town.

However, opportunities for learning would be lost if that were the only message advanced by these studies of New Philadelphia's history. Descendant community members raised the concern that such condemnations of racism should avoid singularly emphasizing European Americans as those who had agency and freedom of choice that in turn impacted the lives of African Americans. We can also emphasize lessons from this community's history that concentrate on the choices made by African American families to overcome the adversities and obstacles created by incidents such as a railroad bypassing their town (Leone et al. 2005; Shackel 2003). Researchers are thus working to expand the future scope of the project to follow the histories of families as they departed New Philadelphia and pursued new opportunities elsewhere.

### Brooklyn, Also Known As Lovejoy, Illinois

Brooklyn was established as a settlement of free and enslaved African Americans escaping and fighting against bondage. An antislavery activist named "Mother" Priscilla Baltimore encouraged 11 families of free and enslaved African Americans

to depart the area of Saint Louis and establish this community across the Mississippi River in 1829. From then until its platting in 1837, the settlement consisted of an all-black community. While it grew as a community of both African Americans and European Americans through the nineteenth century, Brooklyn's population continued to be composed largely of African American residents. Brooklyn included residents engaged as artisans, craftspeople, merchants, farmers, and laborers, and they voted to incorporate the town in 1873 (Cha-Jua 2000: 31–32).

A new, expanded research project will provide a basis for highly valuable data comparisons of Brooklyn, the Equal Rights settlement, and ongoing studies of New Philadelphia. As Sundiata Cha-Jua (2000: 35) has observed: "Perhaps Brooklyn, during the antebellum period, more closely resembled what Free Frank had envisioned" for New Philadelphia. "The communities initiated by Free Frank and 'Mother' Baltimore had much in common; both emerged from African American self-activity, and both became spaces hospitable to Blacks fleeing the fetters of slavery. During this period, Brooklyn differed from New Philadelphia mainly because it was a majority-Black town and offered the opportunities to join organizations and participate in Black-controlled institutions" (Cha-Jua 2000: 35). Both Brooklyn and the New Philadelphia community were active in the "underground railroad" aiding African Americans escaping bondage from the neighboring slave state of Missouri. Brooklyn has also been called *Lovejoy*, in honor of martyred abolitionist Elijah Lovejoy, killed in Alton in 1837 (Davis 1998: 267; Turner 2001: 77).

Cha-Jua's (2000) study of the history of Brooklyn shows evidence that the community was established and grew with ideals of solidarity and self-determination but that economic opportunities were channeled away from the town over time as a result of racism and political corruption. The town was initially attractive to African Americans escaping slavery who wished to live in a community with a majority of African American residents. In the postbellum period, Brooklyn presented newly arriving African American residents with the promise of participating in the economic growth of industrialization and new jobs in the region surrounding Saint Louis and its transportation hubs of river and rail (Cha-Jua 2000: 44). However, that promise proved fleeting. As new industrial employment grew in the East Saint Louis region of Illinois, those opportunities were not made available to workers living in Brooklyn, likely due to racial prejudices by commercial and industrial operators against such an African American community. Just as New Philadelphia was bypassed in 1869 by the economic advantages that a railroad connection would have provided, Brooklyn was bypassed by railroad, economic, and employment opportunities that were instead channeled to neighboring East Saint Louis (Cha-Jua 2000; Walker 1995 [1983]).

Brooklyn and New Philadelphia both serve as rare examples of early interracial farming and urban communities on the nation's evolving midwestern frontier (Cha-Jua 2000; Walker 1985, 1995 [1983]). Most studies in historical archaeology that



Aerial view of the Brooklyn area today, with the Mississippi River on the left (to the west) and the central residential area of Brooklyn marked by a star. Courtesy of U.S. Geological Survey archive collections, Denver, Colorado, with an overlay by the author.

concentrate on African American subjects have concerned the pre-emancipation era (Leone et al. 2005). Like Brooklyn, the history of New Philadelphia presents very different research potentials. The histories of both communities involve the dynamics of racial uplift and the success of African American families and their abilities to survive and prosper in a racist society in both the pre- and postemancipation eras. The Brooklyn and New Philadelphia stories focus on the struggles for freedom, facing racism, and the efforts of small rural and urban towns to survive.

In this expanding study I am working to participate in an interdisciplinary, collaborative research project that will include University of Illinois (UI) Departments of Anthropology and African American Studies, the Illinois Transportation Archaeological Research Program (ITARP), and the Illinois State Museum, working in coordination with the Historical Society of Brooklyn (HSB) and the local and descendant communities. Among other pending tasks, members of the HSB have recently located new records of town government and family histories from the late nineteenth century that have not been studied previously and will be available for analysis in this project.

Archaeological and surface surveys have established that the archaeological record of Brooklyn lies intact beneath the extensive open spaces of current-day residential parcels. ITARP conducted a recording survey of the Brooklyn cemetery. Excavations at an adjacent site containing the remains of a late prehistoric period deposit have shown that archaeology sites remain intact in this general area, buried beneath layers of twentieth-century fill (Galloy 2003; Koldehoff and Fulton 2005). No archaeological investigations of the community of Brooklyn were conducted before the initiation of this proposed multiyear project (Koldehoff and Fulton 2005).

Researchers working with ITARP, UI, and HSB have gathered deeds, census data, tax records, oral histories, genealogical evidence, and other primary and secondary sources. The earliest deed references have been geo-referenced on the current landscape of the town. Those deed entries were also correlated with census data over the decades of the antebellum and postbellum periods to indicate the most likely locations of the earliest and later households in Brooklyn and changes in residential and business locations over time. Joseph Galloy and a crew of archaeologists with ITARP excavated test units and shovel test pit surveys in several residential lots of the existing town in the summer of 2008. These surveys and test units demonstrated that the archaeological record of Brooklyn's residents from the earliest years of the community onward exists intact beneath the open spaces of current residential properties (Galloy 2008). Future fieldwork should include additional surface surveys, geophysical surveys, and excavations to uncover and fully research the past households and business locations of this remarkable community.

Commemorating the heritage and history of Brooklyn are vital activities in the ongoing efforts of the local and descendant communities to combat the deterioration of their neighborhood by commercial operations that include strip joints and massage parlors. The aversive impacts of past racism have significantly constrained the economic health of this community, isolating it within a tangle of railroad tracks and transport lines that pass it by rather than incorporate it in a viable flow of commerce. One of the elders of the community and a famous member of the American Negro Baseball League, Prince Joe Henry (2007), captured the recent dilemmas facing Brooklyn: "Based upon the number of massage parlors in the community, it is understandable why it was labeled 'Sin City' several years back, but those who labeled it as such [were] unfamiliar with its history. Granted, prior to the strip joints' arrival, the town had undergone several lean years, which basically explains how this materialized. The outcome was cleverly manipulated with a promise of jobs that caught an unsuspecting mayor off guard. Though poverty stricken at the time, Brooklyn is historically rich."

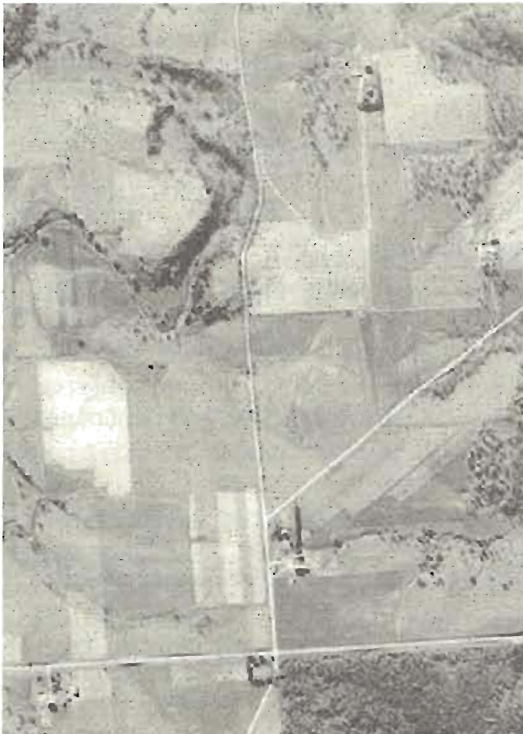
The Historical Society of Brooklyn was formed as a nonprofit organization by local residents committed to combating this declension. Their mission statement included a poignant, powerful charge: "Our land, our legacy was being sold piece by piece. Vice and corruption took over. Our elders fled or hid behind locked doors

in fear. The media, local and state officials have forecast our self destruction and demise. They are like vultures circling the wounded, patiently waiting for all signs of life to cease before moving in to consume flesh. They underestimate our resilience and tenacity” (HSB 2008).

This diversity of economic and community interests presents particular challenges for such a collaborative project to enhance and commemorate Brooklyn’s heritage. For example, many of the individuals who work in adult entertainment establishments are themselves struggling to navigate the harsh class and economic structures of the day. A project to enhance the pride of Brooklyn’s past and present will need to find a way to proceed with tolerance, empathy, and pride in seeking ways to better the lives all of who engage with the community.

### Equal Rights Settlement and Galena

Galena, Illinois, is well known for its history as a lead-mining center started in the early 1800s and as the home of Ulysses Grant (for example, Krausse 1970; Owens 1963). While Galena has been largely ignored in popular history accounts, historian



Aerial photograph (1946) of the agricultural landscape in Jo Daviess County, Illinois, on which the Equal Rights settlement site was located. Courtesy of U.S. Geological Survey archive collections, Denver, Colorado.

## Conclusion

Interdisciplinary studies concerning communities such as New Philadelphia, Brooklyn, and Equal Rights help to deepen our understanding of how racial ideologies, social networks, and developing economic structures influenced the ways in which individuals made choices in shaping their social and built environments and in developing economic strategies and cultural practices. Civic engagement in such research projects also significantly aids the members of current-day communities to enhance the recognition and visibility of their African American heritage and accomplishments and to combat facets of structural racism they are experiencing today.

## Acknowledgments

Some of the research results discussed in this essay are based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant Nos. 0353550 and 0752834. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this chapter are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation. I am also very grateful for the very generous funding support of the University of Illinois Research Board.

## References

- Campbell, S. W. 1970. *The Slave Catchers*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Cha-Jua, S. 2000. *America's First Black Town, Brooklyn, Illinois, 1830–1915*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Chapman, C. C. 1880. *History of Pike County, Illinois*. Chicago: C. C. Chapman.
- Davis, J. E. 1998. *Frontier Illinois*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Dovidio, J. F., and S. L. Gaertner 1998. On the Nature of Contemporary Prejudice: The Causes, Consequences, and Challenges of Aversive Racism. In *Confronting Racism: The Problem and the Response*, edited by J. L. Eberhardt and S. T. Fiske, pp. 3–32. London: Sage.
- Doyle, D. H. 1978. *The Social Order of a Frontier Community: Jacksonville, Illinois, 1825–70*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Ensign, D. W. 1872. *Atlas Map of Pike County, Illinois*. Davenport, Iowa: Andreas, Lyter & Co.
- Fennell, C. 2009. Combating Attempts of Elision: African American Accomplishments at New Philadelphia, Illinois. In *Intangible Heritage Embodied*, edited by D. F. Ruggles and H. Silverman, pp. 147–168. New York: Springer.
- . 2008. *Historical Landscapes of New Philadelphia*. Urbana: University of Illinois. Electronic document, <http://www.anthro.uiuc.edu/faculty/cfennell/NP/>, accessed April 19, 2009.
- Fennell, C., with contributions from A. Agbe-Davies, M. Bailey, J. Brown, G. Calfas, S. Collins, M. Davila, E. Deetz, K. Fay, T. Hailey, B. Haley, K. Hardcastle, M. Hargrave, C. Martin, T. Martin, A. McCartan, A. Morris, P. Shackel, C. Sumter, E. Sylak, and C.

- Valvano 2009. *New Philadelphia 2008 Archaeology Report*. Report on the 2008 excavations sponsored by the National Science Foundation Research Experiences for Undergraduates (Grant No. 0752834). University of Illinois, Urbana. Electronic document, <http://www.anthro.uiuc.edu/faculty/cfennell/NP/2008ReportMenu.html>, accessed May 13, 2009.
- Gaertner, S. L., and J. F. Dovidio (editors) 1986. The Aversive Form of Racism. In *Prejudice, Discrimination, and Racism*, pp. 61–89. Orlando, Fla.: Academic Press.
- Galloy, J. 2008. *Reports on Historical and Archaeological Surveys in Brooklyn, Illinois*. Illinois Transportation Archaeological Research Program, Belleville.
- Galloy, J. (editor). 2003. *Excavations at the Janey B. Goode Site (11S1232), St. Clair County, Illinois: Interim Report, Research Design, and Mitigation Plan*. Research Reports No. 92. Illinois Transportation Archaeological Research Program, University of Illinois, Urbana.
- Gertz, E. 1963. The Black Laws of Illinois. *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 56: 454–473.
- Grimshaw, W. A. 1876. History of Pike County: A Centennial Address Delivered by Hon. William A. Grimshaw at Pittsfield, Pike County, Illinois, July 4, 1876. Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield.
- Henry, P. J. 2007. Rediscovering Brooklyn: Come, Senators, Congressmen, Please Heed Joe's Call. *Riverfront Times*, 6 June. Saint Louis, Mo.
- Historical Society of Brooklyn, Illinois (HSB) 2008. *Our Story*. Electronic document, <http://www.brooklynillinoisourstory.com/>, accessed January 15, 2009.
- Kleinpenning, G., and L. Hagendoorn 1993. Forms of Racism and the Cumulative Dimension of Ethnic Attitudes. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 56(1):21–36.
- Koldehoff, B., and C. L. Fulton 2005. Constructing Context for African-American Archaeology in the American Bottom Region. *Illinois Antiquity* 40(3):8–11.
- Kovel, J. 1970. *White Racism: A Psychohistory*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Krausse, G. H. 1970. Galena, Illinois: Urban Land Use Change and Development of a Mid-Western Mining Town (1820–1980). Unpublished master's thesis, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb.
- Leone, M. P., C. J. LaRoche, and J. J. Barbiarz 2005. The Archaeology of Black Americans in Recent Times. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34:575–598.
- Matteson, G. 1964. "Free Frank" McWorter and the "Ghost Town" of New Philadelphia, Pike County, Illinois. Pike County Historical Society, Pittsfield, Ill.
- McMurry, S. 1988. *Families and Farmhouses in Nineteenth Century America: Vernacular Architecture and Social Change*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- McWorter, P. 2008. McWorter Family Statement to National Historic Landmarks Committee, Washington, D.C., October 29, 2008. Electronic document, <http://www.anthro.illinois.edu/faculty/cfennell/NP/McWorterNHLstatement.html>, accessed April 19, 2009.
- Mullins, P. R. 1999. *Race and Affluence: Archaeology of African America and Consumer Culture*. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.
- Owens, K. N. 1963. *Galena, Grant and the Fortunes of War: A History of Galena, Illinois during the Civil War*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University and the Galena Historical Society.



- Purser, M. 1992. Consumption as Communication in Nineteenth Century Paradise Valley, Nevada. In *Meanings and Uses of Material Culture*, thematic issue, edited by B. J. Little and P. A.
- Shackel. *Historical Archaeology* 26(3):105–116.
- Shlereth, T. J. (editor). 1989. *Material Culture Studies in America*. Nashville, Tenn.: Association for State and Local History.
- Shackel, P. A. 2003. *Memory in Black and White: Race, Commemoration, and the Post-bellum Landscape*. Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press.
- Shackel, P. A., with contributions from A. Azzarello, M. Bailey, C. Bauchat, C. Christman, K. Eppler, C. Fennell, M. Hargrave, E. Helton, A. Hsieh, J. Jacoby, C. King, H. Livingston, T. Martin, M. A. N. Colon, E. Pajuelo, M. Schroeder, E. Smith, A. Torvinen, C. Valvano 2006. *New Philadelphia Archaeology: Race, Community, and the Illinois Frontier*. Report on the 2004–2006 excavations sponsored by the National Science Foundation Research Experiences for Undergraduates (Grant No. 0353550). College Park: University of Maryland. Electronic document, <http://heritage.umd.edu/chrsweb/New%20Philadelphia/2006report/2006menu.htm>, accessed April 19, 2009.
- Simpson, H. M. 1981. *Makers of History*. Evansville, Ind.: Laddie B. Warren.
- Turner, G. T. 2001. *The Underground Railroad in Illinois*. Glen Ellyn, Ill.: Newman Educational Publishing.
- Walker, J. E. K. 1995 [1983]. *Free Frank: A Black Pioneer on the Antebellum Frontier*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.
- . 1985. Entrepreneurial Ventures in the Origin of Nineteenth-Century Agricultural Towns: Pike County, 1823–1880. *Illinois Historical Journal* 78(1):45–64.
- Warner, M. S. 1998. *Food and the Negotiation of African-American Identities in Annapolis, Maryland and the Chesapeake*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, Charlottesville. Proquest, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.
- Wild, M. 2008. Pragmatic Decisions in Equal Rights: History of an African-American Community in Jo Daviess County, Illinois. *African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter* September. Electronic document, <http://www.diaspora.uiuc.edu/news0908/news0908.html#4>, accessed April 19, 2009.
- Wolfe, H. S. 2008. *A Compilation of Primary Records of the Equal Rights Settlement, Jo Daviess County, Illinois*. Wolfe African American Collection Galena, Illinois.
- . 2004. The Fate of Jerry Boyd: A Case of Kidnapping and Murder in old Galena. *Illinois Heritage* 7(1):10–13.

The Materiality of  
  
**FREEDOM**

Archaeologies of Postemancipation Life

Edited by Jodi A. Barnes



The University of South Carolina Press

© 2011 University of South Carolina

Published by the University of South Carolina Press  
Columbia, South Carolina 29208

[www.sc.edu/uscpres](http://www.sc.edu/uscpres)

Manufactured in the United States of America

20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

The materiality of freedom : archaeologies of postemancipation life / edited  
by Jodi A. Barnes.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-61117-034-4 (cloth : alk. paper)

1. African Americans—History—1863–1877. 2. African Americans—History—1877–1964.  
3. African Americans—Material culture. 4. African Americans—Antiquities. 5. Social  
archaeology—United States. 6. Reconstruction (U.S. history, 1865–1877) 7. United  
States—Antiquities. I. Barnes, Jodi A.

E185.2.M38 2011

973.8—dc22

2011015291

This book was printed on a recycled paper with 30 percent postconsumer waste content.

# CONTENTS

List of Illustrations vii

List of Tables ix

Foreword xi

*Charles R. Cobb*

Introduction: The Materiality of Freedom—Archaeologies of  
Postemancipation Life 1

*Jodi A. Barnes*

Black History as Property: A Critique of the Making of a  
Post-Civil Rights Landscape 26

*Christopher N. Matthews and Eric L. Larsen*

White Privilege and Silencing within the Heritage Landscape: Race and  
the Practice of Cultural Resource Management 47

*Jennifer J. Babiarz*

Living Not So Quietly, Not So on the Edge of Things: A Twentieth-Century  
Bahamian Household 58

*Laurie A. Wilkie and Paul Farnsworth*

Reaching for Freedom, Seizing Responsibility: Archaeology at the  
Phyllis Wheatley Home for Girls, Chicago 69

*Anna S. Agbe-Davies*

Victorian Ideals and Evolving Realities: Late-Nineteenth- and Early-Twentieth-  
Century Black Dallas and an Engendered African America 87

*Megan Ann Teague and James M. Davidson*

“A place of recreation of our own”: Archaeology of the Boston Saloon 115

*Kelly J. Dixon*

Archaeology of Jim Crow-Era African American Life on Louisiana’s  
Sugar Plantations 136

*David T. Palmer*

From Slave to Citizen on James Island: The Archaeology of Freedom at  
Fort Johnson 158

*Carl Steen*

Examining Structural Racism in the Jim Crow Era of Illinois 173

*Christopher C. Fennell*

What Means *Gottesacker*? Leading and Misleading Translations of  
Salem Records 190

*Leland Ferguson*

BaKongo Cosmograms, Christian Crosses, or None of the Above:  
An Archaeology of African American Spiritual Adaptations into the 1920s 209

*Kenneth L. Brown*

Infrastructure and African American Achievement in Annapolis, Maryland,  
during the Twentieth Century 228

*Matthew M. Palus*

Race, Displacement, and Twentieth-Century University Landscapes:  
An Archaeology of Urban Renewal and Urban Universities 250

*Paul R. Mullins and Lewis C. Jones*

Excavating Inspiration: Archaeology at the Harriet Tubman Home,  
Auburn, New York 263

*Douglas Armstrong*

Epilogue: Reflections on Archaeologies of Postemancipation from a  
Student of Slavery 277

*Theresa A. Singleton*

Contributors 283

Index 287