CHILDREN, EDUCATION, AND JIM CROW: THE SELDOM TOLD STORY

by

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ABSTRACT

ZERA CAMILLE RICHARDSON. Jim Crow and Education: The Seldom Told Story. (Under the direction of DR. SARA L. JUENGST)

Rosenwald schools are under-documented in the archaeological record. However, these schools were of critical importance to education for Black Americans, particularly in the Jim Crow South. This paper presents the results of excavation and oral history interviews at a Rosenwald School in Iron Station, NC. We argue that this school was not only an important site of education but also a center for community, fellowship, and memory over time. Interviews with surviving students indicate that the school operated as a locus of fictive kin, and archaeological artifacts indicate continued use of the property even after the formal school closed. Thus, we see the Mount Vernon Rosenwald School as a palimpsest of the Black community over time.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would first like to acknowledge my mother, who has been a great source of support and inspiration throughout my educational journey. You always reminded me of how important education is and has been. Thank you all so much for loving and supporting me unconditionally. I would also like to acknowledge my amazing advisor, Dr. Sara Juengst, who helped me find my footing and direction within this field of study. I want to acknowledge the Mount Vernon Rosenwald School Board for inviting me to work on this project. It has forever changed my life. To the surviving students, Joe, David, and Rudolph thank you so much for taking the time out of your days to sit down and have a conversation with me. Your stories are impactful and inspirational. Finally, to my committee members, Dr. Sharon Watson and Colleen Betti, thank you both for coming on this journey with me and providing guidance and support.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my amazing sister and niece. Riley, it has been an absolute honor watching you grow up thus far. You are brilliant and talented and I cannot wait to see all the amazing things you accomplish. Through your consistent optimism that everything will be okay, I was able to push through so much and get to where I am today. Thank you for reminding me that the sun will always come out, even if it isn't today.

To my amazing sister, Rhea, you have inspired me more than you know. You are my biggest fan and you have always been there for me. When imposter syndrome came in and tried to take over, you were there to remind me that I am enough and I am worthy. Thank you for being an amazing support system and loving me unconditionally.

Finally, to my amazing dogs, Douglas, Severus, and Bellatrix, you all do not realize the peace you bring me. Thank you for reminding me to take a break and breathe.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The American Dream has long been thought of as equally accessible to all people. No matter the color of your skin or your sex, you can "pull yourself up by the bootstraps." But how can that be when people are not politically and socially equal? In 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment was enacted, abolishing all forms of slavery. After this point, different laws were passed that allowed the newly freed slaves to have similar rights as their white counterparts. The political momentum seemed to be going in the direction of an equal nation without regard to skin color. Unfortunately, this supposed equality took a turn in 1890, when Louisiana passed a law that required separate businesses and residential spaces for African Americans and white people. Louisiana lawmakers claimed that this did not violate federal mandates for equality because though the races were separate, the living conditions and access to services would still be equal. The "separate but equal" standard established by the Supreme Court in Plessy v. Fergurson (1896) supported racial segregation for public facilities across the nation (Hansan 2011, Kreisman 2017, Margo 1986).

History, or what we choose to remember as part of the formal record, is often dictated by those in power. Historically, the voices of many minorities are silenced and their histories have been whitewashed. The many heart-wrenching stories about minorities and their experience with structural violence are significantly muted and diminished compared to narratives of national pride and achievement. When it comes to the voices and stories of the African-American community, they are further diminished, due to the legacy of and continued racism associated with American slavery. During the Jim Crow era, African Americans were not allowed to be equal counterparts to white people. Moreover, their human rights were belittled and they were forced to endure physical, emotional, and financial hardships. However, while these stories are

increasingly documented, there is still much to discover about the conditions people faced and the strategies used to navigate challenges and hardships.

Additionally, the histories and stories of children are less frequently told, no matter the race. Children are the foundation on which society grows. Without their stories and experiences, we lose so much context and information. In addition, the experiences children have can establish patterns of behavior and opportunity that impact them their whole lives, making these early experiences critical to lifelong behaviors.

In the segregated South before the Civil Rights Act of 1964, schooling for African American children was often subpar at best. In 1912, Booker T. Washington and Julius Rosenwald (both will be described in more depth later in this paper) created a system of schools called the "Rosenwald Schools" (Amaido 2020). These schools focused on providing quality education to African American children within their communities. However, because these schools were aimed at educating Black children, comparatively less is known about them despite their relatively recent history.

Throughout this research project, I used archaeological and ethnohistoric methods to document the experiences of African American children in rural North Carolina at Rosenwald Schools. I document archaeological artifacts associated with education and school building use and interview surviving Rosenwald School students to more fully understand how these schools operated and the daily lives of the children who attended them.

Positionality:

I am a biologically female, black body. I am from the Bible Belt portion of the Deep South. Jackson, Mississippi, was my home for over 23 years. I have always been interested in everything that has to do with my community, including how certain events affect the children of

our community. I have also always been interested in how the past actively affects the present and the future. When I looked at certain disparities between white and Black communities today, the issues presented seemed far too familiar. I felt like I had heard the same issues before. Through my research, I want to be a vessel through which my ancestors can tell their truths and stories. I want to give a voice to the historically silenced. I will share our history.

My main interest is the education of African- American children. There is still a huge disparity when it comes to the educational path of Black children vs white that was blatantly on display during the recent COVID-19 pandemic. In their article researching educational disparities, Simon (2021) looks at how the recent pandemic helped to shed light on these educational differences between Black and white children. During the COVID-19 pandemic, students from African American or Hispanic backgrounds were 1.3 to 1.4 times as likely to struggle with getting the necessary technology as their white peers, and "more than two in five low-income households had only limited access" (Simon 2021). The main disparity is due to how money is allocated as it typically goes to predominantly white schools. "Schools with 90% or more of students of color spend $733 less per student" (Walker 2020). The government is more hesitant to give money to those schools that are predominately black. This ideological thought process goes back to the time of Jim Crow laws.

My research conducted at the Mount Vernon Rosenwald School is important for many different reasons. The first is the fact that the lives of African-Americans are very rarely heard. Secondly, if they are heard, they are heard by a white (typically male) professional who typically misinterprets the information they have. The last is that the stories of children are infrequently told. Whether it be due to race, ethnicity, age, etc, the voices of young children (who are

typically seen as socially not essential as they do not provide much political or financial gain) were never told.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Jim Crow and Education:

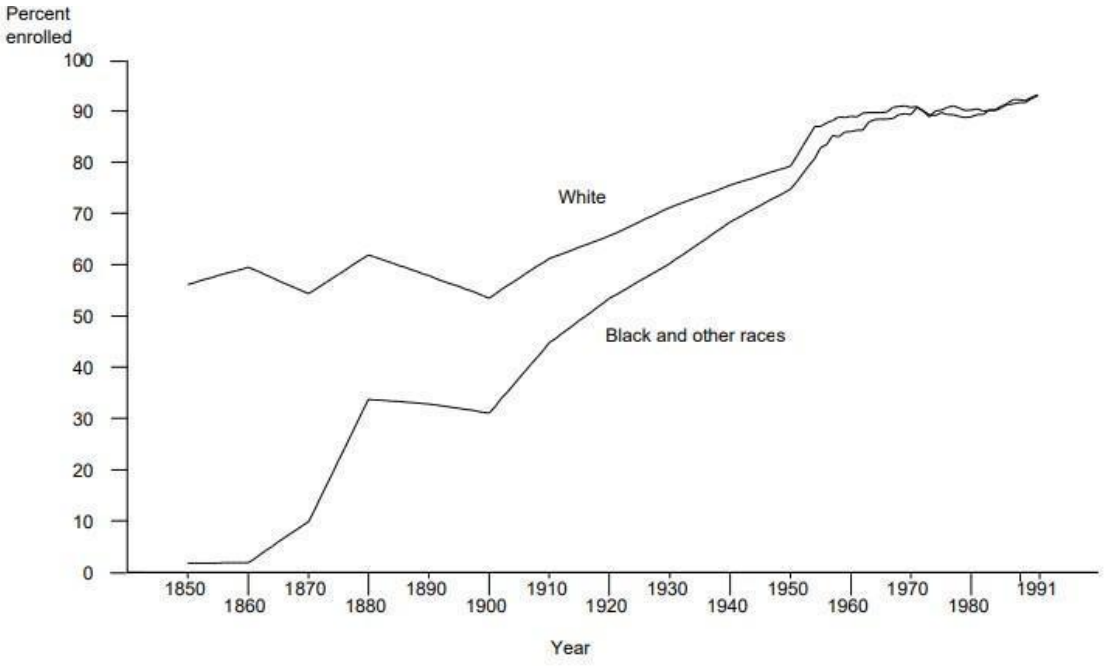
"Education is the key to economic success" (Booker 2020).

The right to a good education was a consistent fight for African American people. "Between 1900 and the 1940s, federal housing policies, the lending practices of banks, restrictive covenants, and discrimination by the real estate industry, individuals and vigilant neighborhood organizations, ensured that housing options for blacks were restricted to the least desirable residential areas" (Williams, 1999, p.178). The housing limits pushed African American families out of the city and into the rural countryside. In these areas, they were least likely to receive public financial assistance. Williams (1999) continues by stating, "[b]ecause the funding of education is at the local level, community resources importantly determine the quality of the neighborhood school" (p. 178). Adding to this, Berry (2009) states, "[g]enerally, white students had physically superior facilities, newer textbooks, and a longer school year than black students. Initially, however, black students noticed a much more visible distinction between the schools—they walked while the white students rode buses" (p.70). While their white counterparts were able to be driven to their nicer schools, African American children had to walk and be ridiculed by the bus riders as they passed them on the streets.

Along with the lack of funds, the curriculum for African American students was different from that for white students. "Racial categories were used to allocate educational resources and opportunity, while certain kinds of education were offered to different groups based on racist beliefs" (Givens and Ison, 2022, p. 4). The schools for Black children only taught them what they needed to take on agricultural jobs. "Rather, education was used as a method to create more

skilled farmhands and not as a method to move the formerly enslaved Blacks beyond the plantation" (Pinkney, 2016, p. 79). They were not taught any math, science, or social studies like the white students were. This was a "pass me down" from the time of slavery. Black children were only taught what they needed to know to be beneficial to white people once they were older. Slave-owning families were afraid to teach black children too much more as they did not want these children to grow up yearning for an education and a life past the plantation (Pinkney, 2016).

Another significant apparent disparity was the percentage of Black students that attended school vs the percentage of white students (Figure 1). "Blacks born between 1880 and 1910 completed on average three fewer years of education than whites." (Eriksson, 2020, p. 47). The information provided in Figure 1 is from the US Department of Commerce and looks at the percentage of Black and white students (ages 5 - 19 years) enrolled in school by year in 10-year increments. For the sake of this research, I will only be focusing on the period between 1860 - 1910 which is the period of time after Plessy vs. Ferguson and before the Rosenwald schools were introduced. In 1860, Black Americans along with other races had less than 5% of students enrolled in school compared to the approximately 60 percent of white students that were enrolled in the same year.



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970;* and Current Population Reports, Series P-20, *School Enrollment - Social and Economic Characteristics of Students,* various issues.

Figure 1. Source: Percent of 5- to 19-year-olds enrolled in school, by race: 1850 to 1991. From Snyder (1993).

While there are a number of ways this disparity in funding schools has been justified, a significant rationale, at this time in history, was how white people correlated crime to black education (Eriksson 2020). As a Baptist preacher, Rev. John Roach Straton was an anti-evolutionist and fundamentalist who had many opinions regarding the African American population in America (Straton and Szasz, 1968, p. 200). In one of his most profound speeches, Straton states, “As a race, the Negroes are peculiarly loveable. They are naturally industrious, good-natured, obliging, warm-hearted, hospitable, friendly, and loyal.” (Best, 2021, p. 387). With this, people thought that Straton was for desegregation and giving black people equal rights. On the contrary, Straton believed that separate but equal laws were needed to keep crime under wraps. “Strat[t]on thought that the positive correlation between increasing black

incarceration and increasing levels of black education between the end of the Civil War and 1900 showed that education actually increased criminality" (Eriksson, 2020, p. 47).

Straton believed that an educated Negro was a dangerous one. His remarks were used by city and state officials to uphold limiting the money that went to Black schools. A prime example of Stratton's words being used as justification for city officials not providing adequate funds to African-American communities is the Governor of Mississippi. In 1904, Governor Vardaman of Mississippi used Stratton's reasoning as justification when restricting funds for black schools (Hollandworth, 2008). While Straton was fueling the segregation campaign, Booker T. Washington was arguing the opposing side. Washington would soon become frustrated with the way white people looked at education and sought to fix the issue.

2.1 Booker T. Washington:

Booker T. Washington was a freed enslaved man from Alabama. "Born near Roanoke, Virginia, in 1856 to an enslaved mother and an unidentified white man who had his way with her, Washington worked in mines and did other manual labor in his childhood." (Aamidor, 2006, p. 46). Growing up, he was very interested in the rights of the African-American community. He was determined to be a part of the solution to the "Negro problem" and found different ways of learning how to read and write.

After receiving his freedom, Washington engulfed himself in getting rights for his people. Washington soon decided that he was frustrated with the education system and how it treated young black children. In August of 1900, Booker T. Washington wrote a response to John Straton's book entitled "Will Education Solve The Race Problem".

"'Will Education Solve the Race Problem ?' is the title of an interesting article in the June number of The North American Review, by Professor John Roach Straton, of Macon,

Georgia. My own belief is that education will finally solve the race problem." (Washington, 1900, p. 221). This was the opening line to Washington's rebuttal and is quite monumental as he is directly opposing the ideals of Reverend Straton. Washington is directly calling out Straton and telling him, as a Black man, that education is the answer to the race issue.

Throughout his response, he challenges the ideas that Straton had in his original book. He begins with the morality issue that Straton brings up arguing, "[e]xcept in rare cases, the uncertainties of domicile made family life, during two hundred and fifty years of slavery, an impossibility" (Washington, 1900, p. 223). He negates the rest of Straton's points and argues for better education for young Black children in the Southern states.

Shortly after replying to Straton, Washington realized that the only people who could change the way his people were living was to take control of the circumstances themselves. He began seeking out financial assistance to open new schools and reinvent the way young black Americans learned. "Frustration with the disbursement of funds by local county education boards and the general inadequacy of black schools led Washington to seek out Northern philanthropists, including but not limited to Rosenwald, to build new schools for rural blacks" (Aaronson & Mazumder, 2011, p. 826). He gave out pamphlets, wrote books and articles, and spoke at philanthropic events until his work finally fell into the lap of a wealthy white man who had similar concerns.

2.2 Julius Rosenwald:

Coming from a family of Jewish-German immigrants, Julius Rosenwald was born in 1862 in Springfield, Illinois. Growing up, his father was the president of B'rith Sholom temple, a place of worship for the Jewish faith. Julius was a very religious man and through his religion, he sympathized with the Black struggle early in life.

Growing up, Julius always found some way to make money. “One of his first business ventures came when he was twelve years old at the 1874 dedication of the Lincoln tomb at Oak Ridge Cemetery” (Aamidor, 2006, p. 46). At this event, he sold pamphlets and pocketed any money he made. “A high school dropout, he sold souve booklets door-to-door and played the organ in a Methodist church in Springfield, and at age 16 or 17 went to work in his uncles' retail clothing store in New York.” (Aamidor, 2006, p. 46). By age 23, Rosenwald started a company with his cousin and soon after, brought what would be known as the Sears Department Store to life.

Sears, Roebuck & Co. was a small struggling order catalog. It had mail-in order houses along with some other items. According to Aamidor 2006 (p. 47), “(h)is big innovations were to expand the catalog greatly and to guarantee everything in it.” From the time he became president in 1908 to the time he passed away as a chairman of the board in 1932, Rosenwald devoted much time and energy to his business.

2.3 Rosenwald and Washington

Although it is rarely acknowledged, Rosenwald and Washington had a good business relationship. After reading his autobiography, Julius felt an immediate connection to Booker T. This connection would grow into a friendship shortly after meeting in 1911. Amaido (2020) explores the relationship between these two historical figures. Washington and Rosenwald met in 1911 when Rosenwald introduced Washington to a crowd of fellow businessmen and philanthropists. He was taken aback by his guest and his vast knowledge and unique perspective of life. Rosenwald felt that Washington was outspoken in a way that he had never seen and felt the need to help him (Aamido 2020). From here, the two created a bond founded on a mix of similar backgrounds and beliefs. Both parties came from historically oppressed groups, so

Rosenwald was able to identify with more of the struggles the African-American community experienced.

2.4 Rosenwald Schools:

"In theory, it was to create "separate but equal" treatment, but in practice, Jim Crow Laws condemned black citizens to inferior treatment and facilities…In reality, Jim Crow laws led to treatment and accommodations that were almost always inferior to those provided to white Americans" (Hansan, 2011, p.).

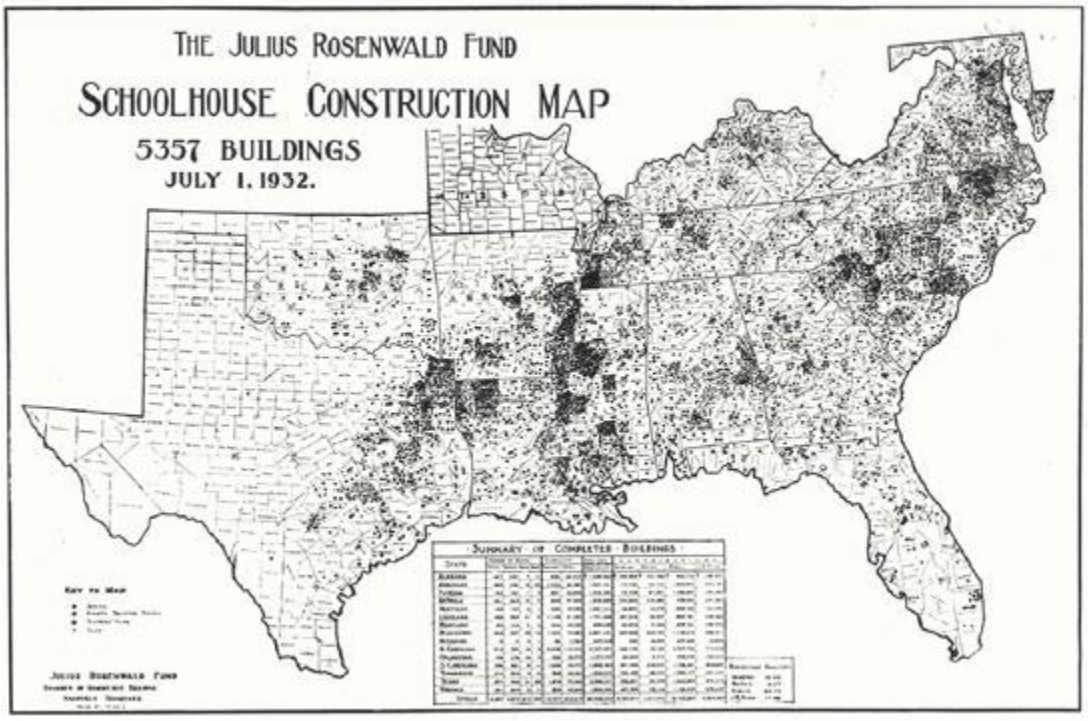


Figure 2 - Rosenwald school locations in the south-eastern United States (from The Daily Yonder)

The goal behind Rosenwald schools was to create educational facilities that would give Black Americans in the South the equal education that they were promised. The main obstacle Booker T. Washington and Julius Rosenwald encountered was how to get an adequate amount of funding to bring this goal to life. Rosenwald was a strong believer in putting money into the

things you want. “Rosenwald believed that, in order to be successful, communities needed to “buy in” to or make investments in, any educational endeavors. This view, coupled with Washington’s belief in black self-reliance, led to the use of a matching grant approach, whereby local communities had to raise anywhere from 75–90 percent of the funds for a new school” (Eriksson, 2020, p. 48). While the communities raised money, Rosenwald would get in contact with a nearby white education board to persuade them to run the facilities. Once this was done, Rosenwald would fund the remainder of the bill.

By 1912, Rosenwald schools began to be established all around the Southern states. By 1932, over 5300 buildings were established in the name of better education in the South (Aaronson & Mazumder, 2011, p. 823) (Figure 2). Unfortunately, Washington would not live to see these schools continue to expand as he transitioned into a new life on November 14, 1915. “By the time the program ended, we estimate that approximately 36 percent of southern rural blacks of school age could have attended a Rosenwald school” (Aaronson & Mazumder, 2011, p. 823). These schools changed the standard of education for black children and their teachers in the South.

2.5 Children in Archaeology

It has been well-documented that children of all cultures are important actors in society (Thomas 2008). Despite that, they are still rarely discussed in the archaeological record. In 1989, Grete Lillehammer wrote an article entitled, “A Child Is Born. The Child’s World in an Archaeological Perspective.” Throughout this article, Lillehammer discusses the issues surrounding archaeologists purposely leaving children out of the archaeological record when we are clearly finding the material remains of children (Lillehammer 1989). This article jumpstarted a new theoretical framework that evolved from gender archaeology. Archaeologists began to

realize that they cannot look at a site that clearly had children and not include said children in the archaeological record of that site.

Respectively, in their article, De Luca (2010) argues that although the literature regarding children in archaeology has flourished in the time since Lillehammer wrote her piece, there are still far too many pieces that leave children out of interpretations of sites. "Even today, when children's issues, in general, are higher on the agenda, the 'archaeological child' continues to be a minor issue and not placed at the heart of archaeology" (Lillehammer 2015 p. 82). There are multiple hypotheses on why this phenomenon occurs. "Perhaps the material traces children leave are minor and hard to interpret or are too difficult to untangle from those of adults" (Kamp, 2001, p. 2). On one hand, researchers believe that while they are active members of society, their status in society is deemed unimportant in reconstructing social and cultural structures. On the other hand, researchers believe that their material remains are too broad to describe and interpret (Kamp 2001).

Regarding children having a minor impact, children are more aware of the social and political atmosphere than one would like to admit. In their article looking at children in society, Betz and Kayser (2017) argue that the child's perspective helps give a more in-depth and accurate sense of society. Though their work is focusing on living children, the basic ideas and concepts can be transcribed into an anthropological framework. According to Bluebond-Langner and Korbin (2007), "[c]hildren are not only acted on by adults but also agents of political change and cultural interpretation and change" (p. 242). De Lucia (2010) adds to this by reiterating that children have agency in the environments they occupy. "Children were not just a part of households; they were omnipresent in most aspects of daily life" (De Lucia, 2010, p. 607). The decisions a parent makes is heavily influenced by the child/children.

In an article regarding children and archaeology, Kamp (2001) describes how the discussion of gender has made it difficult for archaeologists to interpret children's material artifacts. Children are generally ambiguous in terms of gender and gender roles, which makes it harder to interpret their artifacts. For this reason, archaeologists find it onerous to depict the meaning behind children's material remains. Does this mean that we should not still try to decode the meaning? According to Thomas (2008), "[v]iewing these relationships within specific cultural, geographic, and historic contexts, we can discern how children create meaningful experiences out of the spaces, places, and objects in their lives" (Thomas, 2008, p.41). Looking at children's artifacts in archaeology could give researchers an insight into different societal factors.

2.6 Black Children and Archaeology

This is the same way that we must look at children in history and archaeology. Not all children lived the same lives. Some experience little to no trauma growing up, and others experience an immense amount of trauma. Looking specifically at the articles written about children in archaeology, it is not surprising that most research is done by looking at children through a predominately white lens.

Throughout my research, I tried to find archaeological works written about African-American children during the time of segregation, I was met with a plethora of works that either dealt with African-American adults OR children in general. I had a hard time finding anything on African-American children during Jim Crow times. For example, I found a book written by Laurie Wilkie entitled, "Culture Bought: Evidence of Creolization in the consumer goods of an Enslaved Bahamian Family." This book discusses the archaeology of enslaved children. While

this was an interesting find, I was hoping to find something contemporary to my research topic. I also found an article on African children in Africa, but not in America.

I hypothesize that this literature is sparse because of the unique intersectional identities of African-American children. Not only were the children seen as not having as much agency in their society, they were also African-American and were dehumanized because of the color of their skin. My search results are a prime example of why more research like this needs to be done. We know from articles written about children in general that children are impacted and impacted on society such as the articles written by Thomas (2008), Lillehammer (2015), Kamp (2001), and many more. Thus, the lives of African-American children are valuable to investigate as they contributed to and were impacted by larger social processes over time and space.

2.7 How we remember the past

In today's society, Rosenwald schools are rarely discussed when it comes to Black education. When we are taught about education in the South, we are taught that the African-American community was helpless. No one did anything to help the education system grow and it was a bad situation from the time Jim Crow started to spread to 1954. Then boom, Brown vs Board of Education happened and everything changed. Recent research has combated this way of thought. "Yet Southern blacks born between 1900 and 1930, during the height of "Jim Crow," improved on their white counterparts and their Northern black peers in both schooling outcomes and even school" (Kreisman, 2017, p. 573).

"Above all, this challenging scholarship emphasizes African Americans as makers and shapers of history, not hapless victims" (Stikoff, 2021, p. 6). These African-American communities were fundraising over 50% of the projects' costs (Aaronson & Mazumder, 2011). They were working together to help their children live better lives. While Rosenwald gave them

the opportunity for this better education, the community banded together and raised the money. It is time to stop looking at these communities as passive actors in the past. They were actively pushing and trying to make their lives better. They were working to make the world a better place for future generations: for my generation.

2.8 Archaeology and Memories:

"How Americans remember the past is often reinforced by landscapes, monuments, commemorative ceremonies, and archaeology" (Shackel, 2001, p. 655). I will be using Shackel's approaches to memory and power to explain why this project matters. Memory is an important tool that is taken and manipulated by higher-status individuals if anthropologists and historians alike do not take a stand to write accurate histories.

As humans, social bonds and unity are vital. For Western societies, it is even more important for them to ensure that their nation is unified, even if it means throwing a different group under the bus. "[People] develop a collective memory by molding, shaping, and agreeing upon what to remember, although this process may not always be consciously planned" (Shackel, 2001, p. 655). It is why we have museums, autobiographies, memorials, etc. that are depicted in certain lights. In the United States, we have a very strong collective memory that our government continuously validates through various forms of media and propaganda. Within his article concerning memory, Shackel (2001) evaluates the way public memory is shaped and pushed to the public. He looks specifically at the Civil War and the way we remember it today through memorials and monuments. There are huge memorials of past wars and other huge events that paint the United States in the best light.

The Robert Gould Shaw Memorial sits outside Boston Common in Boston, MA. It was made to commemorate the 54th Massachusetts Infantry which was the first African-American

Northern volunteer regiment that marched into battle during the Civil War (Shackel 2001). They were led into battle by a white man named Colonel Robert Gould Shaw. “It was the first soldier's monument to honor a group rather than a single individual, although an explicit hierarchy exists in the representation” (Shackel 2001:65).

Figure 3 - The Robert Gould Shaw and 54th Massachusetts Regiment Memorial on Boston Common - National Park Services

The memorial (Figure 3) shows a group of African-American soldiers marching into battle on foot in the background. In the foreground, Shaw is on a large horse and is higher and more prominent than the soldiers themselves. This is the hierarchy Shackel mentioned. This memorial was not dedicated to the soldiers, but to Shaw alone.

In her book, Black Feminist Archaeology, Whitney Battle Baptise (2011) also talks about memory. She recalls how she read about Lucy Foster and her life in archaeology. Lucy Foster was a black woman who was a former slave from Massachusetts who was freed when slavery ended there in 1783. She explains that one historian misunderstood Foster’s documents and wrote that Foster had a son with her master. Battle-Baptise explains that after she went back through the documents, she realized that Lucy did not get pregnant by her master because she

was far too young to reproduce. “This small detail may seem insignificant but has always been a point of contention for me in Lucy’s life story” (Battle-Baptiste, 2011, p. 124). She urges the discipline to not be afraid to go back and double-check someone else’s work as researchers are also humans. “This is why it remains essential for us to look back, reflect, and at times even alter sites that were excavated and interpreted in the past” (Battle-Baptiste, 2011, p. 125). Humans are not perfect. They misinterpret things, they view things from different perspectives, and they have their own implicit biases. No matter what status, constructive criticism and revision are always needed.

Similarly, we are taught that disparities (especially in education) were not large gaps. The statistics listed above about the amount of money black schools were getting compared to white schools are rarely discussed. John Straton’s speech about the race problem is even more scarcely spoken about. Instead, educational materials and school curricula tell us to teach most American children about Brown vs. Board of Education to push the narrative that the United States was trying to be equal after a time of disparity. However, the need for and success of the Rosenwald schools are an important counter-narrative in terms of demonstrating that Black communities were resilient and adaptive, finding ways to improve their education without reliance on the government. This innovation during a time of deprivation and neglect is a powerful example of Black and American ingenuity that counters narratives more commonly told.

As archaeologists, we have the unique opportunity to educate others about the past with as few biases as possible. Recently, it has come to certain scholars’ attention that narratives were either being erased or rewritten. In the case of education during Jim Crow laws, we are taught about the triumphs like Brown vs Board of Education. We are seldom told about the educational disparities that were rampant in the United States, especially in the South. Moreover, these

schools are continuously being torn down and the history erased. “An unfortunate reality is that most historic Rosenwald School buildings have been demolished either by intention or neglect, yet the importance of these sites remains both within the context of written history and community memory” (Love and Mason, 2022, p. 126). Later in their text, Love and Mason (2022) discuss how archaeological and anthropological researchers hold a “a complimentary skillset and should partner with modern black communities and closely related professions to document the archaeological and research potential of these critically important sites” (p.136).

CHAPTER 3: ROSENWALD SCHOOLS

3.1 Alternate Methods of Investigation of Rosenwald Schools:

While some research is out there regarding Rosenwald schools, much of it concerns Julius Rosenwald and how he created the Rosenwald Schools. Very little research is dedicated to looking at the children that were directly impacted by the creation of this system. There is even less written about these schools in the anthropological realm. While there is a new movement that is advocating for more research on these schools to be done, to my knowledge, there have been three articles written about these schools from an anthropological standpoint. (Betti n.d., Love and Mason 2022, Ransom 2021). Two of which were archaeological studies and one was an oral history study. These three stories will be discussed in further detail later in this article.

3.2 Archaeological case studies

In 2015, an archaeological study was conducted on a Rosenwald school in Cave Spring, Georgia by Sara Love and Emma Mason (2022). This research design is very similar to the one conducted at the Mount Vernon Rosenwald school presented here. It was a community-based archaeological project with the initial goal of preserving the building and demarcating it as a historical site. They selected certain areas of the schoolyard and did standard shovel testing and screening. Within their artifacts, they had a lot of window glass, siding fragments, glass bottles, roofing materials, etc. When analyzing the artifacts, Love, and Mason (2022) involved the community to help paint better pictures of what the artifacts were. “The advancement of the project has come from those most closely associated with the site which has included not only alumni and the descendants of faculty and staff but also residents of Rome and Cave Spring, Georgia: teachers, students, architects, archaeologists, preservationists, and members of the Jewish community eager to see the rehabilitation of a site that was sponsored by a prominent

member of their faith" (Love and Mason, 2022, p.133). In the same way that Love and Mason (2022) involved the community in their analysis, I had the Mount Vernon Community also be the experts when I was analyzing the artifacts that were found at their site.

The second project was conducted by Colleen Betti. Her ongoing research was done on three Rosenwald schools in Gloucester County, Virginia: Bethel and, Woodville, and one non-Rosenwald Black school, Glenns/Dragon. Her aim with her research was to try and paint the picture of how education and school buildings changed over time. Each school represented different time periods and she also did some communal interviews as well. Within her research outcomes, she describes these schools as being communal spaces within their respective communities. As of this writing, she is still finishing up her dissertation and final conclusions.

3.3 Oral History

The history of oral history goes back to World War II. "Gradual acceptance of the usefulness and validity of oral evidence, and the increasing availability of portable tape recorders, underpinned the development of oral history after the Second World War" (Thompson 2007). While the theory and methods behind oral histories have changed since they emerged, the main use of oral history is still the same: collecting stories and narratives to preserve and amplify the voices of marginalized communities (Thompson 2007).

For example, Barton and Market (2012) did an oral history project on the African-American community of Timbuctoo in Burlington County, New Jersey. Their goal was to use a collaborative approach between archaeology and oral history to create a more complete picture of the history of this town. They analyzed the artifacts that they excavated from their archaeological research and backed these artifacts up with oral histories done by the descendants of the community. "This collaborative approach seeks to better understand the past of Timbuctoo

and to facilitate discourse on the constructions of race, class, and power in the present" (Barton and Market, p. 79, 2012).

In the Southern part of the country, Carol McDavid (2002) talks about the collaborative archaeological theory that happened in Brazoria, Texas. Throughout her text, she discusses the Levi Jordan Plantation Web Site Project where archaeologists and community members worked together to create a website based on the archaeological findings from past excavations on the plantation. Through the ongoing collaboration between these archaeologists and the community, they were able to build rapport with that community and create a more accurate, fuller story of the Levi Jordan Plantation. In addition, the community felt like they could trust anthropology and archaeology to come in and amplify their voices and stories.

Looking more specifically at Rosenwald schools, Kimberly Ransom (2021) in Pickens County, Alabama conducted one of the first oral history projects on Rosenwald schools. Throughout this literature, Ransom uses oral histories to reconstruct the lives of these children that went to school in a similar way to how I proposed to conduct my research. The only difference is that Kimberly was able to use family and family histories in her article as well. Through her oral histories, she found that the schooling conditions for these children before Rosenwald schools were not great. Their black schools received immensely less funding for their school than their white counterparts. She also finds that these students' lives aligned more with adulthood than childhood. She brings up the example of sharecropping and how certain students had to skip school to work and earn money. Her findings correlate with the research that was discussed in the history section of this article.

CHAPTER 4: MOUNT VERNON ROSENWALD SCHOOLS

4.1 Mount Vernon Rosenwald School:

Figure 4: Mount Vernon Rosenwald School in Iron Station, NC - Image from the Lincoln Times-News, 2016 (photo originally taken in late 1940s early 1950s)

Figure 5 - Mount Vernon Rosenwald School in 2022 - Image from Lynn Roberson with the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

The school that I researched is the Mount Vernon Rosenwald School in Iron Station, North Carolina (Figures 4 and 5). This school was built in 1925. “The large, tall bank of 9x9 windows, a defining characteristic of Rosenwald Schools, that stretched along the front and back of the school have long since been removed.” (Canestrari, 2022). The school is currently under

the ownership of the Mount Vernon Missionary Baptist Church which is located next door (Figure 8), and the community around this school wants to preserve it and the history it holds.

From my initial meeting with Ola Mae Foster and Mia Canestrari from the Rosenwald School Board and surviving Rosenwald students, David Patterson, Joe Patterson, and Rudolph Yng, we know that the building is a two-room building. The rooms were separated by large accordion doors. Each room (Figures 6 and 7) held 3 grades each (Room 1 had 1st through 3rd grades and Room 2 held fourth through sixth grades) and the average population of each room was approximately 10 students and 1 teacher (Canestrari, 2022).

Figures 6 - Interior of the Mount Vernon Rosenwald school - Classroom 1 - Image from the Lincoln Times-News, 2022

Figures 7 - Interior of the Mount Vernon Rosenwald school - Classroom 2 - Image from the Lincoln Times-News, 2022

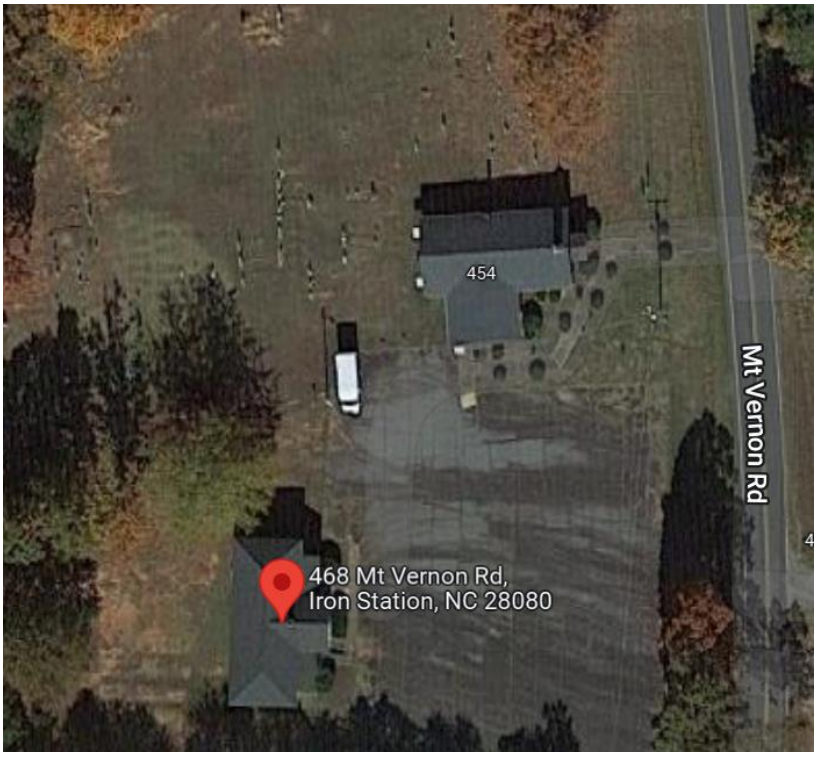


Figure 8. Aerial view of the Mount Vernon Rosenwald School (marked with red pin). The other building is the Mount Vernon Baptist Church. Google Maps, 10/20/2022.

4.2 Background on the Project:

Before getting into the methodology behind this research, I first want to highlight how this project came to be. The Mount Vernon Rosenwald School is owned and operated by the Mount Vernon Baptist Church. The church created a Board for the school in hopes to reinstate the original and preserve the school as a historical monument. One of the Board members, Mia Canestrari, saw where Colleen Betti, an anthropology doctoral student, was doing archaeological research at the Bethel Rosenwald School in Virginia. Canestrari found this research to be intriguing, so she reached out to Betti to see how this research could come to Iron Horse, North Carolina. Because she was still completing her doctoral degree in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, Betti was unable to take on this project. She then got Canestrari in touch with Dr. Sara Juengst, a professor at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and my advisor.

At the time this project was being discussed, I was struggling to find meaning in the proposal research I was currently doing. The research was interesting, but it was adding to an already heavily discussed area of interest and I could not see where my research would add anything more to the broad body of literature. The research was also planned to take place in Washington, DC and I was not sure how I was going to afford to travel up and stay to do my research. I felt almost defeated and second-guessed my acceptance into this master's program. Then there was the call from Dr. Juengst.

On this call, she let me know about this amazing research opportunity that she thought would be perfect for me, and it was local. She gave me a brief rundown of the project and gave me a couple of days to think about whether or not I wanted to scrap my old project and start back at square one for this one. Before this conversation, I had never heard of Rosenwald schools. Their history intrigued me and I felt moved to do this project. It was an archaeological project

that the community would be involved in and WANTED. This was huge. Not only was the community interested in having this research done, but they were also the ones requesting it. I felt that I was meant to be a part of this community archaeology project.

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY

5.1 Archaeological Methodology:

To investigate the daily life of children who were educated at this Rosenwald school, I used mixed methods of field excavation, artifact analysis, and oral history interviews. Archaeological excavation included two one-by-one meter test units. These small squares allowed us to systematically remove soil to identify and document any cultural materials (glass, plastic, charcoal, etc). We placed two test pits on the North Eastern corner of the school, on the North Western corner, and finally the last on the South Eastern corner. I picked these spots as Joe and David Patterson, former students of this school, remembered having a coal pit on the left side and a play area on the northeast side.

To be thorough, I also believed the backyard of the building could give more insight into the site. These small units were not deeper than 1-1.5 feet given the relatively recent history that we are investigating. The excavation was performed systematically using hand trowels and gloves. We took measurements and photographs every 10cm. Any dirt removed was passed through a ¼ inch screen to capture small fragments not seen while digging in the unit itself. All excavation supplies were provided by the Anthropology department at UNC Charlotte. Initially, there was only going to be one test pit in the Northeast sector; however, during the first dig, we found evidence of a wooden beam that expanded outside of the original pit. We concluded that this evidence was enough material to justify expanding the unit, and added Unit 3. Once the excavation was complete, we re-filled all open holes to make sure the earth is level.

5.2 Oral Histories:

Throughout my project, I also used oral histories to help amplify and tell the story of this school. Baum (2007) describes oral histories as "the tape recording of a knowledgeable person, by questions and answers, about what he/she did or observed of an event or events or way of life of historical interest." Through the accounts of how life was during the time right before Rosenwald Schools existed and how life was afterward, we can more thoroughly tell the story behind Rosenwald Schools.

Alongside the archaeological excavations, I also conducted oral history interviews with three surviving students of the school and their descendants. I was the primary oral history collector and community liaison. The oral histories were captured on audio and video and will be returned to the school in both versions. The oral histories were conducted through an open-ended, semi-structured group interview. I asked the students a series of questions regarding life at the Rosenwald School and allowed them to direct the conversation thereafter. This setting was ideal because it allowed focus on the day-to-day lives of these surviving students within the school (as that was my research question) but also allowed for the students to dictate what themes and topics were important to them that I may not have considered.

The interviews were transcribed by me with no software. When analyzing the transcript of the interviews, I looked for key themes regarding the use of the school such as their daily routine, other uses of the building, and the associations the students held with the building itself. While my research focused on the lives of students attending the school, this style of analysis allowed for other non-education related activities to become prominent.

CHAPTER 6: RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Throughout this investigation of the Mount Vernon Rosenwald schools, I used communal archaeology and oral histories to better understand how this school impacted the community in which it resides.

6.1 Oral history Findings:

Through my oral histories with the three students, I was able to learn more about the lives of the students that went to Mount Vernon Rosenwald School. Joe Patterson, David Patterson, Rudolph Yng, and I sat down for three hours and discussed their experiences at their alma mater. Of these three gentlemen, two are blood brothers and the third is like a God brother to them. Throughout the three hours, we discussed day-to-day life at the school, and life after the school closed for educational purposes.

To start the conversation, I asked them to describe an average day of school. “In the first grade you would come in and you would go into Mrs. Bitter’s classroom,” stated Joe, “ Mrs. Bitters taught first, second, and third grade in the same classroom. So, you would have a table you would go to and there were these tablets with the alphabet on the front of it. So, the first thing you would do in the first grade has copied the alphabet and start learning your alphabet. About 10 o’clock you would go out and you would play. ”

They went on to describe the playground that had swings and a seesaw. Of course, back when they were at the school, the parking lot and street were not paved, so they were able to run and play as long as they did not get too close to the road. They also told me about the water pump that used to be in front of the building where children would go and grab a drink while they were outside. “You pumped it and you ran around *cup hands as if he has water in it* cup

your hand and drank out your hands. Wasn't no cups or anything. Well, sometimes you could bring your cup." - Joe.

Around twelve, the young men stated that they went back inside for lunch. During these times, they emphasized that students were expected to bring their lunches or they would have to go without. "You get out around, I don't know, one thirty, two o'clock for the break. And then at three o'clock, you went home."

Throughout our conversations, we talked about the community today and how it is still a close-knit community. From this topic, we began talking about the baseball field that used to reside at the back of the school. "In the back was the baseball field. And, not only was it for the school, but it was the baseball field for the community." The three brothers reminisced on the community baseball games that they had with other black communities. "So every Saturday, communities, and black communities would just play with each other. Um, let's say, Poplar. And you know everybody would drive by car and come down here and they would play Mount Vernon." They laughed about how the community would act if one of the players hit the balls over the schoolhouse. "Ayeyay, he knocked a ball over the schoolhouse!"

The theme of the community constantly popped up during our conversation. Joe and David brought up the fact that there was no division between Methodists and Baptists when they were younger. Everyone in the community was basically a hybrid of both. "But back then you did not have church every Sunday because they did not have a lot of ministers back then", stated Joe. "So in this area here, you would go - say your church, then you have Sunday school and then you have services. Okay and then the next Sunday, you would only have Sunday school here and then everyone would go over to the Methodist church in the community." The three

men discussed how this created a tight-knit community because you always saw each other. The same kids you went to school with, were the same kids that you went to church with.

They also discussed how if you got in trouble at school, your parents would know before you got home. “And there were no telephones!” Joe stated. We also discussed respect within the community. Personally, growing up, you never were rude or disrespectful to any adult but especially the pastor, the respected elderly, and your parents. The Pattersons agreed and added that they also had to respect their teachers. When I asked them if they had any memorable moments with their teachers, Joe brought up a story about Mr. Wright who was the principal of the Mount Vernon Rosenwald school and also the fourth through the seventh-grade teacher. One day while in the fourth grade, Joe and his mates were learning about fractions. Mr. Wright then asked if they would rather have one-fourth of a pie or one-third. Joe stated that he would prefer one-fourth because four is bigger than three.

“And I will never forget that experience there. He stopped, went to the board, you know took time out, drew a circle to show me. Now, I'm pretty sure someone in that classroom thought the same way I did. But I remember that one teaching that he did with me. I’ll never forget that.” Joe said.

6.2 Archaeological Finds:

Throughout the four units, we found a plethora of artifacts including but not limited to charcoal, glass (of different types), nails, and old-style soda tabs. Each unit had its own unique artifact that helped us further understand what these children and later adults were doing in and around this school.

Unit 1 artifacts included glass, and nails, (Tables 1 and 2). There were 5 nails total that seemed to be the same type of nail but ranged in length and weight. This unit included two

levels, based on the emergence of a charcoal layer in the western side. Major features of this unit included wooden beams at the deepest level and the large charcoal patch in the western portion of the unit.

Table 1: Artifacts from Unit 1 Level 1

Type	Count	Weight	Color	Length cm
Glass	50	47.3 grams	clear	
Shotgun Shells	3	8 grams	Caramel/Brown	
Nail 1	1	1.5 grams	brown	3.1 cm
Nail 2	1	2.3 grams	brown	3.6 cm
Nail 3	1	3.2 grams	brown	5.2 cm
Nail 4	1	5.2 grams	brown	8.4 cm
Nail 5	1	6.4 grams	brown	8 cm
Glass	7	16.6 grams	amber	
Beam Parts	25	4.4 grams	Wood - oak	
Charcoal	76	317.4 grams	Black and brown	
Metal Ring	1	1.2 grams	Black and brown	
Unidentified Plastic	1	.05 grams	black	
Melted Metal	2	51.4 grams	Black and brown	
Porcelain	1	1 grams	white	
Siding	1	.2 grams	white	

Table 2: Artifacts from Unit 1 Level 2

Type	Count	Weight	Color	Length cm
Charcoal	57	144.5 grams	black	

Nail	1	2.1 grams	brown	
Nail	1	2.7 grams	brown	
Nail	1	3.8 grams	brown	
Nail	1	3.1 grams	brown	
Glass	31	58.6 grams	clear	
Glass Container Base	1	22.6 grams	clear	
NeHi Bottle Base	1	33.7 grams	Clear	

Unit 2 artifacts included glass, nails, (Table 3). Unit 2 was a 3x3 unit on the West side of the school. Artifacts from this unit included glass, chalk, nails, and charcoal. (Table 3). There were no identifiable features in this unit.

Table 3: Artifacts from Unit 2 Level 1

Type	Count	Weight	Color	Length
Glass	56	100 grams	Blue tinted	
Glass	255	178.6 grams	clear	
Glass	6	3.6 grams	amber	
Glass	15	23 grams	green	
Glass	2	5.2 grams	pink/purple	
Plastic	2	.1 grams	black	
Plastic	2	.2 grams	clear	
Plastic	3	.3 grams	white	
Fabric	1	.1 grams	brown	
Chalk	6	2.4 grams	white	

Charcoal	32	38.3 grams	black	
Metal (Melted)	4	4.3 grams	black/brown	
Glass	1	1.5 grams	clear	
Nail	1	20.3 grams	brown	3.2 cm
Nail	1	22.3 grams	brown	4.7 cm
Nail	1	21.4 grams	brown	4.5 cm
Nail	1	21.4 grams	brown	4.6 cm
Nail	1	20.2 grams	brown	2.4 cm
Nail	1	22 grams	brown	4.8 cm
Nail	1	22.8 grams	brown	4.5 cm
Nail	1	20.6 grams	brown	4.3 cm

Unit 3 was an 3x3ft extension to the east of Unit 1. In this unit, we continued to find wooden beams, along with the following types of artifacts: glass, charcoal, nails, siding (possibly from the old school), a bottle, etc. (Table 4).

Table 4: Artifacts from Unit 3 Level 1

Type	Count	Weight	Color	Length cm
Glass Bottle	28	221.9 grams	clear	
Charcoal	30	62.6 grams	black	
Clear Glass Container Piece	1	25.7 grams	clear	
Glass Rim	1	1.6 grams	clear	
Glass Shards	59	56.3 grams	clear	
Glass Shards	10	23 grams	Light green	
Glass Shards	2	6.2 grams	Dark green	

Glass Shards	1	.5 grams	Yellow amber	
Glass Shards Thin	4	4.7 grams	amber	
Glass Shards Thick	1	9.8 grams	amber	
Plastic	1	1.3 grams	brown	
Nail	1	1.7 grams	brown	2.5 cm
Nail	1	1.9 grams	brown	3.9 cm
Nail	1	4.5 grams	brown	6.5 cm
Nail	1	2.6 grams	brown	4 cm
Nail	1	1.6 grams	brown	2.2 cm
Nail	1	5.6 grams	brown	6.2 cm
Nail	1	2.5 grams	brown	1.9 cm
Siding	6	1.2 grams	grey–white	
Siding	4	.8 grams	white	
Unidentified Metal	1	6.5 grams	brown/black/silver	
Bottle Tab	1	.5 grams	brown	
Unidentified plastic	2	2.4 grams	black	
Tom's Chip Bag	1	13.7 grams	Yellow,red and brown	
Wooden Beam Parts	23	21.9 grams	brown	

Unit 4 was a 3x3 ft unit on the north east side of the school. Artifacts from this unit included glass, bottles, screws, nails, a ceramic car, marble, etc. There were no identifiable features in this unit.

Table 5: Artifacts from Unit 4 Level 1

Type	Count	Weight (g)	Color	Length cm
Ceramic Car	51	157 grams	Red, Blue, Cream, Black	
Glass	150	114.9 grams	Clear	
Screw 1	1	2.8 grams	Brown	
Screw 2	1	2.5 grams	Brown	
Screw 3	1	3.1 grams	Brown	
Nail 1	1	3.3 grams	Brown	
Metal	1	2.8 grams	Brown	
Screws	2	12 grams	Brown	
Metal Hinge	1	38.4 grams	Brown	
Misc. Metals	4	16.3 grams		
Ceramic piece with glaze	2	2.0 grams	Brown glaze on off white ceramic	
Bottle Cap	1	4.5 grams		
Plastic Hinge	1	8.4 grams	Brown	
Marble	1	2.5 grams	Green	
Clear Glass Bottle Fragments	52	367.4 grams	Clear	
Sun-Rise Bottle	2	16 grams	Clear	
Misc. Bottle Frags	89	114.4 grams	Green	
Glass	27	34.2 grams	Light Green	
Cheerwine	22	133.9 grams	Light Green	
Dr. Pepper	11	44.1 grams	Dark Green	

Green Bottle Glass	5	6.2 grams	Dark Green	
Lip and Neck of Bottle	1	32.8 grams	Dark Green	
Fractured Lip and Neck of Bottle	1	4.2 grams	Dark Green	
Amber Bottle Fragments	51	65.2 grams	Amber	
Can Tabs	27	18.1 grams	Silver/Brown	
Charcoal	10	31.8 grams	Black and Brown	
Unidentified Material	1	.8 grams	Marble	
Shell	1	2.9 grams	white	
Nail 2	1	1.1 grams		2.4 cm
Nail	1	2.3 grams		2.9 cm
Nail	1	1.3 grams		3.4 cm
Nail	1	1.9 grams		4.3 cm
Nail	1	1.2 grams		3.1 cm
Nail	1	2.5 grams		3.5 cm
Nail	1	4.2 grams		6.4 cm
Nail	1	3.9 grams		6.3 cm
Nail	1	8.1 grams		8.1 cm
Nail	1	14.6 grams		10.4 cm
Metal Cylinder	1	9.7 grams	Silver with brown rust	
Pennies	2	6 grams	Copper	
Brick Fragments	4	81.3 grams		

Metal Fragments	2	8.4 grams	Silver with rust	

Figure 9: All ceramic Car Pieces

The biggest find of the excavations was a small red and blue ceramic car in Unit 4. Unit 4 was on the northwestern side of the building around the area where Joe and David Patterson discussed their old playground having been laid. While it was found in the area where the playground used to be, this small blue car seems to be more of a decorative piece rather than a toy. I say this because the wheels are not operative, they are built into the ceramic itself and painted on.

Figure 10 - Wooden Beam found in Units 1 and 3.

Another big find was the wooden beam (Figure 10) in Unit 1 that carried over into and past Unit 3. There used to be a different school building sitting right where the new Rosenwald building was built (Angelo Franceschina, personal communication). Together, with the students and Angelo, we determined that it may have been a support beam for the old school building that sat on the property before the Rosenwald School. Since the beam went past Unit 3's parameters, we decided to leave the main part of the beam there until further archaeological research. We did, however, find fragments that broke off the beam and collected those for further analysis.

Unit 4 also gave us semi-complete glass drinking bottles. Three of them still had their logo papers on them. In the photos below (Figures 11-14), you can see a Dr. Pepper bottle, a NeHi bottle, a possible Sunrise glass bottle, and a Cheerwine bottle. there is still relatively color labelling on each of the bottles. As you can see in Figures 15-18, I attempted to place the bottle fragments with their respective bottle brand.

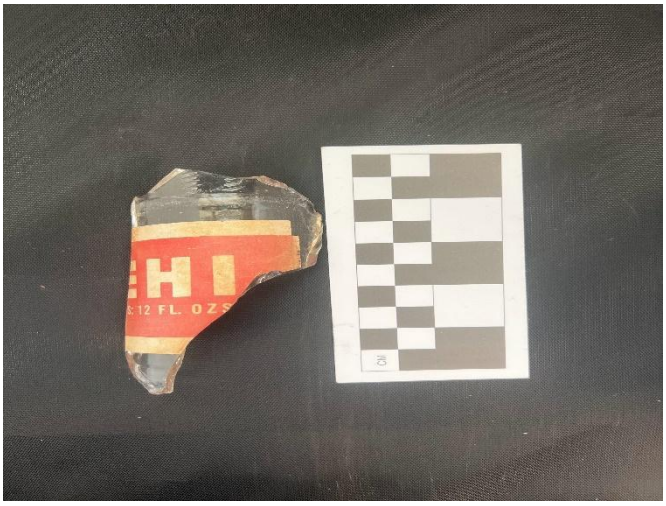


Figure 11 - NEHI Bottle

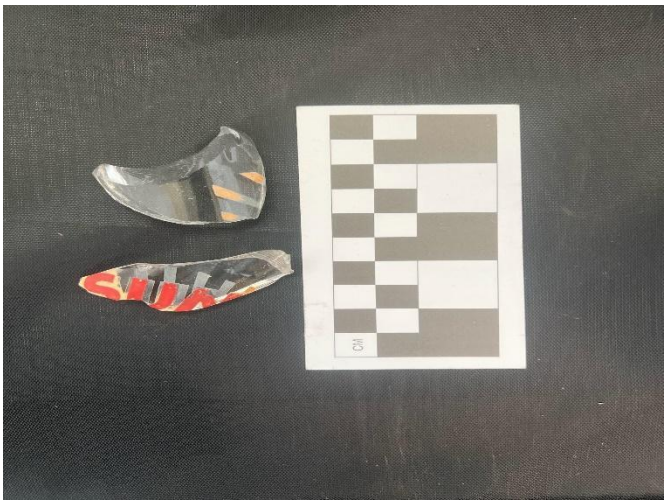


Figure 12 - Sunrise Bottle

Figure 13 - Dr. Pepper

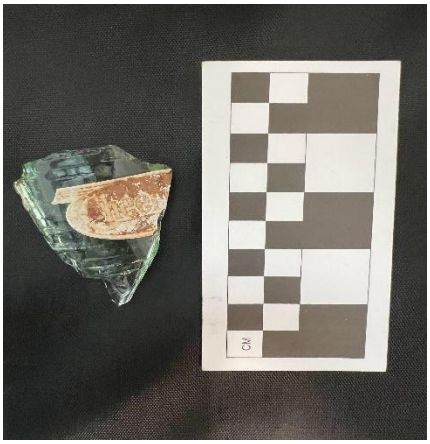


Figure 14 – Cheerwine

Tying my archaeological finds back to that of Betti (ongoing) and Love and Mason (2022), some differentiating artifacts from Love and Mason's (2022) research were floor pieces, a pair of cast iron sash weights, metal fragments of a three-ring notebook, and an intact graphite pencil. Both Betti and I found (a) marble(s) and had oral information in regard to the game of marbles and African American communities of this time.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

The archaeological findings discussed above along with the oral histories done with the three surviving students alluded to one main communal theme about this school building: It was and still is a place of community. Throughout all of this site's occupations, it has always been looked at as a community center where people could come and congregate, and enjoy each other's company.

7.1: Community:

Through my archaeological digs, I recovered quite a few glass soda bottles. The companies ranged from Dr. Pepper to NeHi. When we excavated the first few pieces of these bottles, I asked the students if it were common for them to have these whilst in school. "Those aren't ours," stated Joe Patterson. "We didn't drink soda like that when we were in school. They may be from an adult that was there for a community meeting or church event." In conversations with the students, all three brought up that this school building was more than just a place of education and learning, it was a place of community. Not just a place of community for this particular community, but a place of community for the Black community in this part of North Carolina. Within the oral history section of this literature, Joe spoke about how different communities would come to Mount Vernon to play baseball and have marble competitions. It was a place where different communities within the Black community would come, have fun, and socialize.

Throughout our conversation, Joe and David constantly brought up how close-knit their community was. Jow started, "You know the community, it was all intertwined. And if you left the school and you were walking home, and if you saw - if any adults, especially an elderly

person, sees you do something wrong-" Knowing this story from personal experience, I completed his sentence, "They're going to snitch?" "I tell you what!"

Bringing back in previous Rosenwald school research, community was a big part of these schools. Love & Mason (2022) and Betti both find through archaeological data that their schools were huge community hubs that allowed children to play and adults to connect. In Love and Mason (2022), their main goal is to call people to action to preserve these schools as places of community and important history. In this same way, my research shows that Rosenwald schools have rich history and important stories that lie within them. They must be preserved to keep this history alive.

7.2 The Building as a School

As stated earlier, the Mount Vernon Rosenwald school was a palimpsest in the Iron Station Community. Of course, the obvious occupation for this school was a place of education. The pencils, coal, and wooden beam all come from the building's origins as a school and a place where kids first through seventh grade would come to learn. Joe also informed me that students would bring a mason jar for water. This would explain the thick hollow pieces of glass that I found in Unit 4.

Looking at the building of the school, Joe brought up a very interesting fact about the building of the school. "The county got involved because Rosenwald donated the money. So, the county was like okay we will put in some money. So, they bought the lumber from this sawmill called Lincoln Saw Mill." Joe continues to inform me that the same Black men who worked at the sawmill, actually built the school. They then go on to tell me about Busy Bee which is a community-run organization that maintains and upkeeps the graveyards at the local Mount Vernon Baptist church and the Methodist church.

7.3 The Building as a Place of Play

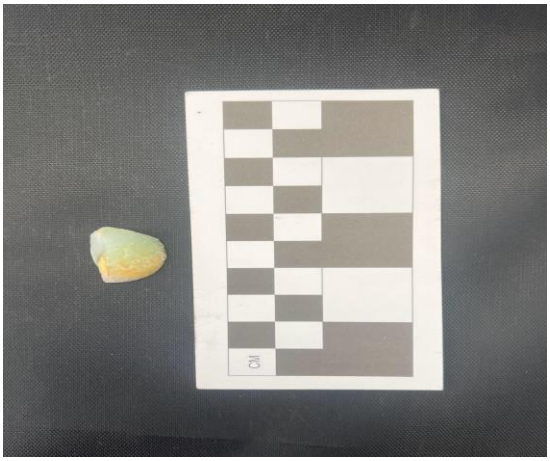


Figure 17 - Green and Yellow Marble found in Unit 4

Also in Unit 4, there was a broken marble. This marble was light green and pale yellow in color. When this artifact was uncovered, I could not help but to think of the marbles that Colleen Betti found at one of her sites in Virginia (Colleen Betti, personal communication). Through conversations with the surviving students at the Mount Vernon Rosenwald school, and reading about the marbles in Betti's dissertation, I learned that the game of marbles were an important part of these children's lives growing up. From here, the typical question is why this matters.

Child play comes in many different types and forms, all of which are beneficial to healthy growth both mentally, physically, and emotionally. "In play, children learn to navigate their physical and social environment, while also imagining and constructing new realities. They practice solving problems, testing out how to love, what is wise, and what is safe" (Harvard 2018). Through play, children can safely learn different skills without the weight of societal norms on their shoulders. They are able to test boundaries, express themselves, and open up in a different way than normal.

Research has also shown that child play can give great insight into what society looks like from a child's perspective. "Child characteristics, such as temperament, and parental influences, for example, parenting style, and cultural background, influence whether and how children play together" (Aalsvoort 2010). Children play based on what is happening around them. For example, there are viral videos of children playing house where they are reenacting events that happened at home. Through this play, other adults can decipher what may be going on at home. "At the same time, sociologists worry about play's role in reproducing society's troubling features, such as gender inequality" (Best 1998, Thorne 1993). In this same way, a young female buried with toys that are stereotypically associated with female gender roles, and a young male buried with stereotypically male rolled toys, then we can make a hypothesis about how that society was.

The marble and possible toy car suggest that this was a safe space for free child play. The oral histories completely solidified this assumption as all three students agreed that the school was a safe place for them to play. Children felt safe enough here to not only get their education but also to congregate and play after school. This also lets us know these Black children played. Far too often, history describes Black people, including children, as sad, depressed, and helpless. In an article written about my home state, Mississippi, Berry (2009) opens his article by saying, "At a very young age, black children in rural Jim Crow Mississippi encountered notions of race and racial difference." When people speak about Black children, it is always written as if Black children never had fun or had the same imagination that their white counterparts do. While these children were met with racism and prejudice consistently, places like school were sanctuary places for them to be free to be kids.

My findings in regard to children playing harkened back to Ransom (2019) and her oral history findings at the Pickens Rosenwald school. In chapter VII of her literature, she discusses how treacherous the journey to school was for these children, yet they were always willing to go. “Although the often unforgiving, conditions of the road was not a space designed for children, Black children made it a province for childhood. There they indulged their desires to play and relished in being young” (Ransom, 2019, p. 276). In the same way the Picken County Rosenwald school was a safe haven for the children that attend it, so was Mount Vernon.

7.5 The Building after Rosenwald Schools

The soda bottles and can tabs allude to this building being used by the church for church/communal events. Currently, I am unable to date the Nehi, Dr. Pepper, or unidentified bottle as there are no visible marks to depict age. Through conversations with my family, I learned that Sunrise was a short-lived brand and that aging it could be relatively easy.

According to Linda Jacobson (2016) from the UNC University library system, Sunrise was a beverage line that offered root beer and fruity-flavored drinks. They began production in 1910 in a small town called North Tazwell in Virginia. In the 1950s, the company was sold to Coca-Cola. From here, it looks like the brand was around for another 20 years before production stopped in the 1970s. That makes this bottle at least 53 years of age. Since these bottles were in the same strata layer as the Sunrise bottle, I can approximately age them to 53 (1970) years at the least, and 133 (1890) years old at most.

Of the sodas that I excavated, none of them were the top two brands, Coke or Pepsi. Multiple sources state that Coca-Cola was a “white man’s drink” while Pepsi was “a black man’s drink (Estes 2013, NPR 2008). Throughout both articles, they mention that Coke only used white models on its packaging and only sold its products in predominately white areas. Pepsi, on the

other hand, actively hired Black people, used them in ad campaigns, and even had an all Black salesman group that rode through the Jim Crow South. When it comes to Cheerwine, NeHi, and Sun Rise, very little is written about their stances on race. Cheerwine is considered to be a more Southern soda and was born in North Carolina which may explain its appearance within this archaeological data.

Figure 15 - Beverage Can Key Card - William Schroeder 2019

Figure 16 - Bottle Tabs

In Unit 4, which was the unit closest to the church, there were multiple pull tabs located. They all looked relatively similar to each other but different from the pull tabs that we have on cans today. When dating these pull tabs, I used the resource from the South Oregon University

from William Schourer (2019) (Figure 15) to compare to the bottle tabs I found as my dig (Figure 16). When comparing both figures, it looks like my tabs are dated from 1965-1975. These can tabs were found in the same unit and strata as the bottles. Therefore we can take the initial 80-year age estimate difference and bring it down to roughly a 10-year difference. These bottles are evident that this building was still being used for a place of community long after it closed it educational doors.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

The way history is told is truly important. As anthropologists, we have a unique opportunity to rewrite and correct the histories of those who are silenced and overlooked. We can amplify the voices that have been screaming their truths for centuries. “The operation of racist whiteness in current archaeology and related anthropological practices is demonstrated in the denigration and exclusion of Black voices and the denial of racism and its diverse appropriations afforded the white authorial voice” (Blakely 2020). As the anthropological discipline works to be more diverse and ethical, researchers cannot be afraid to go back and correct the history that is out there.

The stories and experiences told through these Rosenwald schools is, not only, important Black history, but also, American history as well. The stories told by the surviving students of the Mount Vernon Rosenwald school paint a very different picture than what “mainstream” history does. Black children in the Jim Crow South were not just sad, helpless beings. They were active participants within their communities. They worked hard to get an education to better themselves and further themselves away from their bondage pasts. They were still just as imaginative and creative as any other race of child.

Moreover, the stories told about the Mount Vernon Rosenwald school present an essential theme of community. Through the oral histories and artifacts excavated, light is shed on how these Black communities were fighting to be equal, seen, and heard. They understood that education was the only way to reach liberation and they continuously worked to ensure that the next generation would have better access to education than the previous. As seen through the oral histories, these black communities were typically close knit and watched out for one another.

Finally, national memory and history continuously victimizes African Americans and places them in positions of passive and vulnerable. More and more, researchers are moving to unveil the truth and rewrite these memories. This research serves as a call to action to other archaeologists, especially those of African American descent, to use their unique positions in life to amplify the truths of the past via these silenced voices.

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Appendix A: Tables

Table 1: Artifacts from Unit 1 Level 1

Type	Count	Weight	Color	Length cm
Glass	50	47.3 grams	clear	
Shotgun Shells	3	8 grams	Caramel/Brown	
Nail 1	1	1.5 grams	brown	3.1 cm
Nail 2	1	2.3 grams	brown	3.6 cm
Nail 3	1	3.2 grams	brown	5.2 cm
Nail 4	1	5.2 grams	brown	8.4 cm
Nail 5	1	6.4 grams	brown	8 cm
Glass	7	16.6 grams	amber	
Beam Parts	25	4.4 grams	Wood - oak	
Charcoal	76	317.4 grams	Black and brown	
Metal Ring	1	1.2 grams	Black and brown	
Unidentified Plastic	1	.05 grams	black	
Melted Metal	2	51.4 grams	Black and brown	
Porcelain	1	1 grams	white	
Siding	1	.2 grams	white	

Table 2: Artifacts from Unit 1 Level 2

Type	Count	Weight	Color	Length cm
Charcoal	57	144.5 grams	black	
Nail	1	2.1 grams	brown	
Nail	1	2.7 grams	brown	
Nail	1	3.8 grams	brown	

Nail	1	3.1 grams	brown	
Glass	31	58.6 grams	clear	
Glass Container Base	1	22.6 grams	clear	
NeHi Bottle Base	1	33.7 grams	Clear	

Table 3: Artifacts from Unit 2 Level 1

Type	Count	Weight	Color	Length
Glass	56	100 grams	Blue tinted	
Glass	255	178.6 grams	clear	
Glass	6	3.6 grams	amber	
Glass	15	23 grams	green	
Glass	2	5.2 grams	pink/purple	
Plastic	2	.1 grams	black	
Plastic	2	.2 grams	clear	
Plastic	3	.3 grams	white	
Fabric	1	.1 grams	brown	
Chalk	6	2.4 grams	white	
Charcoal	32	38.3 grams	black	
Metal (Melted)	4	4.3 grams	black/brown	
Glass	1	1.5 grams	clear	
Nail	1	20.3 grams	brown	3.2 cm
Nail	1	22.3 grams	brown	4.7 cm
Nail	1	21.4 grams	brown	4.5 cm
Nail	1	21.4 grams	brown	4.6 cm

Nail	1	20.2 grams	brown	2.4 cm
Nail	1	22 grams	brown	4.8 cm
Nail	1	22.8 grams	brown	4.5 cm
Nail	1	20.6 grams	brown	4.3 cm

Table 4: Artifacts from Unit 3 Level 1

Type	Count	Weight	Color	Length cm
Glass Bottle	28	221.9 grams	clear	
Charcoal	30	62.6 grams	black	
Clear Glass Container Piece	1	25.7 grams	clear	
Glass Rim	1	1.6 grams	clear	
Glass Shards	59	56.3 grams	clear	
Glass Shards	10	23 grams	Light green	
Glass Shards	2	6.2 grams	Dark green	
Glass Shards	1	.5 grams	Yellow amber	
Glass Shards Thin	4	4.7 grams	amber	
Glass Shards Thick	1	9.8 grams	amber	
Plastic	1	1.3 grams	brown	
Nail	1	1.7 grams	brown	2.5 cm
Nail	1	1.9 grams	brown	3.9 cm
Nail	1	4.5 grams	brown	6.5 cm
Nail	1	2.6 grams	brown	4 cm
Nail	1	1.6 grams	brown	2.2 cm
Nail	1	5.6 grams	brown	6.2 cm

Nail	1	2.5 grams	brown	1.9 cm
Siding	6	1.2 grams	grey–white	
Siding	4	.8 grams	white	
Unidentified Metal	1	6.5 grams	brown/black/silver	
Bottle Tab	1	.5 grams	brown	
Unidentified plastic	2	2.4 grams	black	
Tom's Chip Bag	1	13.7 grams	Yellow,red and brown	
Wooden Beam Parts	23	21.9 grams	brown	

Table 5: Artifacts from Unit 4 Level 1

Type	Count	Weight	Color	Length cm
Ceramic Car	51	157 grams	Red, Blue, Cream, Black	
Glass	150	114.9 grams	Clear	
Screw 1	1	2.8 grams	Brown	
Screw 2	1	2.5 grams	Brown	
Screw 3	1	3.1 grams	Brown	
Nail 1	1	3.3 grams	Brown	
Metal	1	2.8 grams	Brown	
Screws	2	12 grams	Brown	
Metal Hinge	1	38.4 grams	Brown	
Misc. Metals	4	16.3 grams		
Ceramic piece with glaze	2	2.0 grams	Brown glaze on off white	

			ceramic	
Bottle Cap	1	4.5 grams		
Plastic Hinge	1	8.4 grams	Brown	
Marble	1	2.5 grams	Green	
Clear Glass Bottle Fragments	52	367.4 grams	Clear	
Sun-Rise Bottle	2	16 grams	Clear	
Misc. Bottle Frags	89	114.4 grams	Green	
Glass	27	34.2 grams	Light Green	
Cheerwine	22	133.9 grams	Light Green	
Dr. Pepper	11	44.1 grams	Dark Green	
Green Bottle Glass	5	6.2 grams	Dark Green	
Lip and Neck of Bottle	1	32.8 grams	Dark Green	
Fractured Lip and Neck of Bottle	1	4.2 grams	Dark Green	
Amber Bottle Fragments	51	65.2 grams	Amber	
Can Tabs	27	18.1 grams	Silver/Brown	
Charcoal	10	31.8 grams	Black and Brown	
Unidentified Material	1	.8 grams	Marble	
Shell	1	2.9 grams	white	
Nail 2	1	1.1 grams		2.4
Nail	1	2.3 grams		2.9
Nail	1	1.3 grams		3.4

Nail	1	1.9 grams		4.3
Nail	1	1.2 grams		3.1
Nail	1	2.5 grams		3.5
Nail	1	4.2 grams		6.4
Nail	1	3.9 grams		6.3
Nail	1	8.1 grams		8.1
Nail	1	14.6 grams		10.4
Metal Cylinder	1	9.7 grams	Silver with brown rust	
Pennies	2	6 grams	Copper	
Brick Fragments	4	81.3 grams		
Metal Fragments	2	8.4	Silver with rustb	

APPENDIX B: Photos

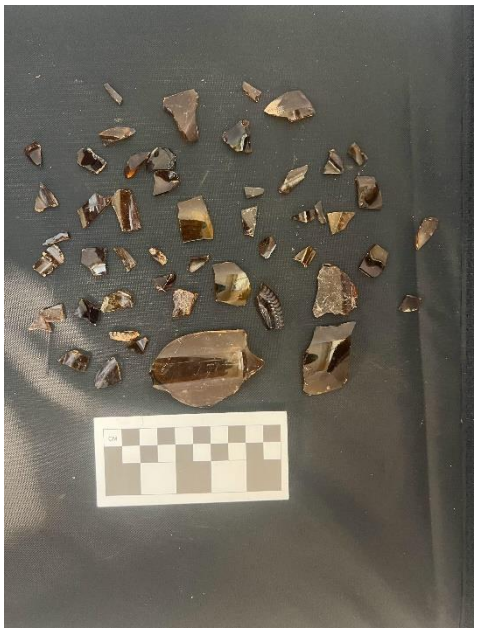
Appendix Figure 1

Appendix Figure 2

Appendix Figure 3

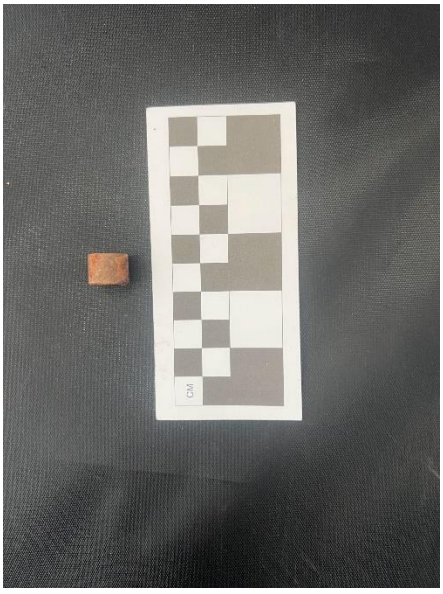
Appendix Figure 4

Appendix Figure 5



Appendix Figure 6

Appendix Figure 7



Appendix Figure 8

Appendix Figure 9

Appendix Figure 10

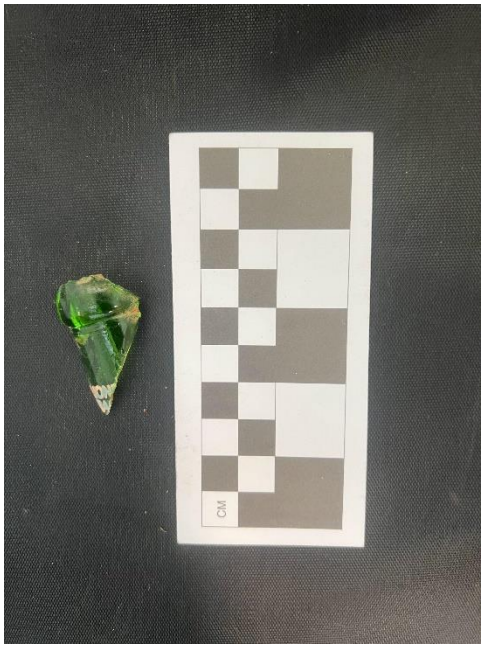
Appendix Figure 11

Appendix Figure 12

Appendix Figure 13

Appendix Figure 14

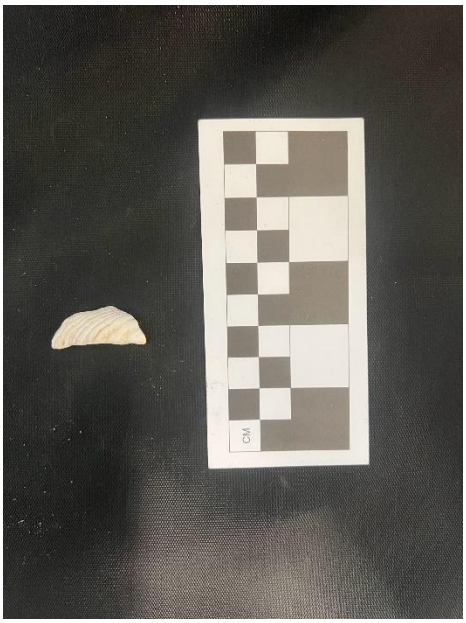
Appendix Figure 15



Appendix Figure 16

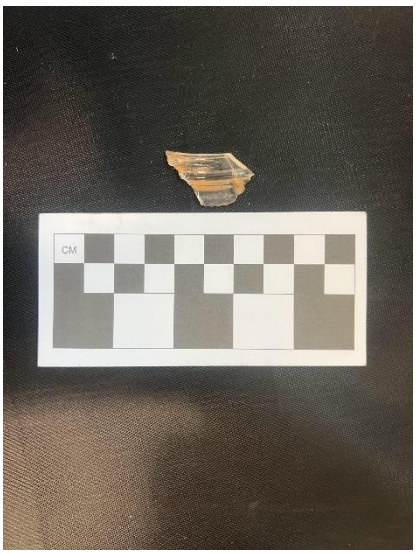
Appendix Figure 17

Appendix Figure 18



Appendix Figure 19

Appendix Figure 20



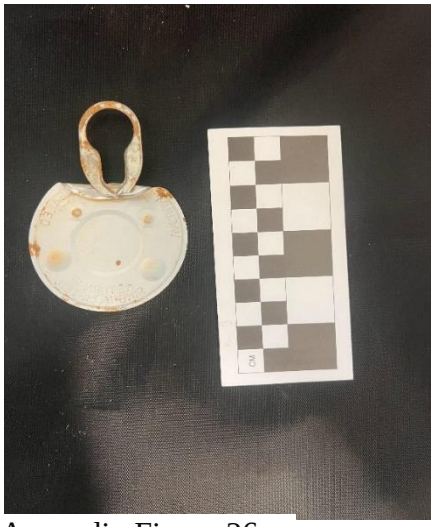
Appendix Figure 21

Appendix Figure 22

Appendix Figure 23

Appendix Figure 24

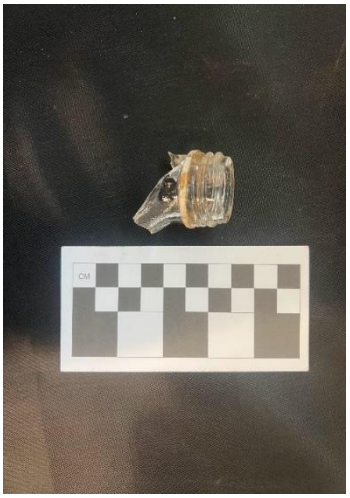
Appendix Figure 25



Appendix Figure 26

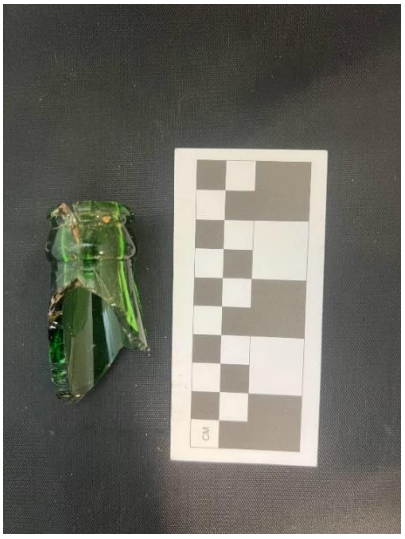
Appendix Figure 27

Appendix Figure 28



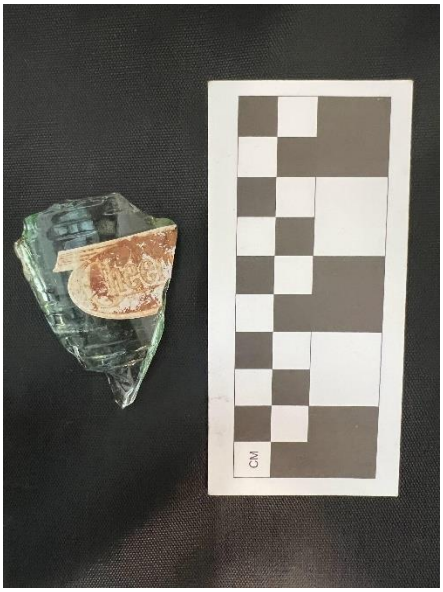
Appendix Figure 29

Appendix Figure 30



Appendix Figure 31

Appendix Figure 32



Appendix Figure 33

Appendix Figure 34

Appendix Figure 35

Appendix Figure 36